

Nine Supernatural Gifts of the Holy Spirit

by Keith Malcomson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual gifts, their source, and their purpose in edifying the church, while also highlighting the need for a right relationship with the Holy Spirit and the operation of gifts with love.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

Keith Malcomson preaches on the importance of understanding and properly operating spiritual gifts as given by the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the ignorance that can hinder believers from fully utilizing these gifts, whether through lack of knowledge or through improper use. Malcomson highlights the sovereignty of the Spirit in distributing these gifts according to His will and the need for believers to earnestly desire and seek these supernatural endowments with a heart of zeal and love. He explains the purpose of the nine gifts listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, stressing that they are meant for the edification and building up of the church, not for division or selfish gain.

Transcript

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Ignorance

I Cor.12:1, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." This ignorance concerning spiritual gifts which Paul addresses is a lack of knowledge and understanding concerning them. It is a neglect of exercising the brain to consider them. There are believers who are ignorant because they simply do not even think about these things or exercise their mind to understand them through study of the scriptures.

There are two ways a man can be ignorant of the gifts. First is ignorance which comes through a lack of knowledge about the existence, continuance or operation of the gifts. Second is an ignorance which comes through a misunderstanding about the gifts--in other words an abuse or improper operation of them

which exceeds or contradicts that written in the scriptures. These two extremes reveal ignorance and are often a reaction against the ignorance of the other. Both forms of ignorance are dealt with by a return to a clear biblical understanding of the gifts.

The ignorance at Corinth was the latter. After Paul pioneered the church he had obviously taught them concerning these gifts. This church believed in the gifts and operated the gifts but their ignorance was concerning correct conduct and order in their use of the gifts. In these three chapters 12, 13 and 14, Paul addresses himself to setting the public operation of the gifts in correct order.

Gifts

In First Corinthians 12:1, 14:1 and verse 12 we read of "spiritual gifts." This word in the Greek is pneumatikos and could be translated as 'spirituals.' When used by Paul this word speaks of something which is not natural and certainly not carnal. These are not natural talents or natural gifts but rather spiritual gifts. Their source is not man and not from earth but from the Holy Spirit. This Greek word is derived from pneuma which is the word for the Spirit in the New Testament. He is the absolute source of genuine gifts. Please note that it is the gifts which are called 'spirituals' not the individuals used. Gifts most certainly do not mean that the person is spiritual or mature. In fact the case can be quite the opposite as it was in Corinth.

A second word used by Paul is charisma which is simply translated as "gift" (12:4, 9, 28, 30-31). It means endowment, a favour bestowed, or something granted. It is derived from the word charis which is the common Greek word for grace. So we can see that these gifts not only find their source in the Holy Spirit but are pure bestowments of the grace of God. They cannot be earned, bought or given by the will of man. Gifts are a result of God's grace.

In Romans 1:11 Paul joins these two words together when he says: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" Here Paul calls them pneumatikos charisma. These gifts listed by Paul are spiritual gifts which are graciously granted by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's Sovereign, Supernatural Gifts

We see from Paul's instruction to the Corinthians that these gifts are specifically given by the Holy Ghost--not men, ministries or churches. He gives these gifts to individual believers according to His own will. Their distribution is totally according to His mind for He knows all things, all hearts and every situation. He chooses what gifts to give, to whom they are to be given, and for what purpose they are to be given. When the will of the Spirit in the distribution and operation of the gifts is ignored it reveals a denial of the sovereignty and supremacy of the Spirit (12:11; Heb2:4).

When men play games with the gifts, counterfeiting them and giving them by their own power according to their own mind then these false manifestations are no longer the gifts of the Spirit and are no longer supernatural. All modern practises of teaching people how to speak in tongues or to prophesy reveal terrible ignorance. To tell a man to just say the first thing which comes into his mind reveals a deep misunderstanding concerning the supernatural element of these gifts and in fact denies that these gifts come from the Spirit, that they are supernatural and that they are under His sovereign control.

Manifestations

In verse 7 Paul speaks of these gifts as "the manifestation of the Spirit." This word "manifestation" means exhibition or expression. They are expressions of the Holy Spirit, of His character, His workings and His will. These gifts are His literal 'shinning forth' in the midst of the gathered body. These are the means He works by in the public gathering of believers. It is Him working, speaking, directing, comforting, aiding, teaching, convicting and edifying. If that be so then when the gifts are neglected, restricted, limited, abused, counterfeited or rejected it affects the true and real shinning forth of the Holy Spirit in the public gathering.

As soon as we lose the awe of these nine gifts as being the actual shinning forth of the person of the Holy Spirit in the midst of our gatherings we run into problems. As soon as a person thinks that the gifts are his own possessions to do with them as he wills rather than simply being an obedient vessel for the sovereign Spirit we run into serious problems. Gifts separated from the real genuine operation of the Holy Spirit are no gifts at all. At best they are cheap imitations.

So in the area of the gifts it is vital that we are in right relationship with the Giver of the gifts. He will not ignore disobedience of His written Word which He inspired. Sadly some place greater authority on so-called gifts than the written Word of God. Others live in a manner and attitude of sinfulness which the Holy Spirit will not ignore or excuse yet they think they can be used effectually in the operation of these spiritual supernatural gifts. Oh what damage is done when we separate right fellowship with the Spirit from the operation of His gifts.

Sadly in recent decades much has been made of things which have been called manifestations of the Spirit which are nowhere mentioned in the New Testament, the early church or in Paul's list of the manifestations of the Spirit. Man has replaced supernatural manifestations which cannot be explained naturally with such foolishness as pushing people over or of prophesying their own imagination and thoughts. This is a replacing of the genuine gold with man's brass.

Covet Earnestly

Though we cannot choose the gifts or operate them by our own will, as it is the Spirit's sovereign will that gives them, we are however instructed to "covet earnestly" and to "desire" the gifts (I Cor.12:31; 14:1; 14:39). The Greek word used here is zeloo which also means 'to have great warmth of feeling for, zeal for, or to burn for.' So we are clearly instructed three times in Paul's teaching concerning the gifts that we are to have a real zeal and to burn in our seeking for these supernatural endowments. That is our responsibility the rest is His.

It was A.W. Tozer who coined the phrase "seek not, forbid not" concerning the gifts of the Spirit in order to convey the thought that we should not forbid the true operation of these gifts in our day but we should also not go seeking for them but simply seek the Giver. While this has a certain amount of truth in it it is not completely correct. It may sound spiritual to say 'don't seek the gifts just the giver' but it is not biblical. Paul three times instructs these Christians who already were operating these gifts and who had need of correction in the order of their use to actually continue to burn fervently in seeking for them.

A More Excellent Way

Some have suggested that Paul teaches in I Corinthians 13 a "more excellent way" (12:31) than the way of seeking after gifts. They suggest that Paul teaches that "charity" (love) is a better way than the way of the gifts. But this is not at all what Paul is teaching. He is not teaching love in place of gifts but gifts

operated with love. He contracts the operation of genuine gifts by themselves with the better way of operating the gifts with love. The most excellent way is the way of being used in these gifts with love as the motivating factor and the governing influence. Those who want to replace the operation of the gifts with charity are just as wrong as those who operate gifts without love.

It was Harold Horton who described love as the charioteer and the gifts as the horses drawing the carriage. Love guides, guards and directs the operation of these mighty supernatural gifts. Such gifts let loose and operated without love would be disastrous.

Nine Gifts

There are nine specific different gifts listed and named by Paul in these verses. They are defined as "diversities of gifts" or varieties of gifts. Each is distinct from the others. There is no confusion between them. Each has a unique definition, purpose and manifestation. Yet they all come from the One Holy Spirit, the one Person (Rom.12:6).

Just as there are nine gifts of the Holy Ghost there are also nine fruit of the Holy Spirit which are headed up by love itself. It is not a case of choosing between gifts or fruit but it is gifts and fruit together manifest by the Spirit of God. Fruit grows with time, gifts are given instantly. The fruit is essential as the mark of true conversion but the gifts are only essential in edifying the church. One is foundational to salvation the other vital for public ministry to the body of Christ.

Let me just give you a simple short overview definition of each gift.

i) The word of wisdom: This is not natural, common or learnt biblical wisdom but wisdom that comes as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Every believer does not possess it. It is granted for ministry in the local body. Note again it is not a gift of full wisdom concerning all things but a "word" of wisdom. It is a portion of the Spirit's perfect wisdom. The word used here is logos meaning a spoken thing. It is wisdom spoken to us or through us. It is wisdom revealed, not wisdom known in secret. It is a word of wisdom which is to be operated in the public gathering of believers for their edification. It is the Spirit's wisdom suddenly and supernaturally revealed through any member of the body chosen by the Spirit on a particular occasion. Wisdom is a revealing of God's purpose, plan and desires.

ii) The word of knowledge: Again it is stated that it is a "word" of knowledge meaning a speech, discourse, spoken thing or utterance. Natural knowledge comes through the five senses but this gift brings forth knowledge which the Spirit alone knows. It is knowledge imparted through an utterance. It is facts and details which are not naturally known by the speaker but by this gift revealed through him for the good of all. It is an utterance of precise knowledge of past, present and future things that could only be known by God. It is not taught knowledge but imparted knowledge. It is a small portion of the Spirit's full knowledge of all things and leads to a spiritual edifying of all.

iii) Faith: Faith is both a gift and fruit. One grows as we walk with God; the other comes instantly at times of great impossibility when we need to believe to a greater degree than anything natural. One has to do with character, the other with power. Often this gift of faith will operate before miracles or healings take place. We speak in faith and act with authority in faith. This faith makes us speak and act in a way we would not normally. It is the faith of God, a full conviction and confidence imparted to an individual suddenly. It is not worked up, it does not grow, it simply shines forth immediately so as to enable a person to edify the body. It is the ability to operate, think and act in contradiction to what the five senses say.

iv) Gifts of healing: In the Greek this is actually 'gifts of healings' (12:9, 28, 30). Both words are plural. There is diversity in connection to this gift and how the Holy Spirit manifests in this manner in the church in order to heal the sick. It is one gift manifest in a plurality of ways. It is the one gift in this list that is not restrictive to a set pattern. The healing mentioned is *iamai* which means to sew together, mend or repair. It is to be made whole. Healing deals specifically with every manner and form of sickness or brokenness of the physical body. It also includes the healing of all manner of mental affliction and even demon possession. No person possesses the ability to heal every person. Each healing is a gift. This reveals that God cares about the body just as he cares for the eternal soul.

v) The working of miracles: This is the *energeia* of miracles. This is where we get our word 'energy' from. This is the operation or the active showing forth of miracles. This gift reveals itself in manifest works in the church. Works produced by the power of God. The word miracles used here is *dunamis* where we get our words dynamite and dynamo from. This is a manifestation of the divine power of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing things which could never be accomplished by any power of man. By this gift the dead are raised, evil doers die, and extraordinary things happen which affect nature or the natural realm of mankind.

vi) Prophecy: We must immediately distinguish this gift of prophecy from the gifted ministry of prophet (Eph.4:11). A prophet is a gifted man given as a ministry by Christ into the body of Christ. But prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit granted to any member of the local body. A prophet's ministry may entail future predictions, guidance and also a teaching and preaching ministry. But the gift of prophecy is restricted to edification, exhortation, and comfort (14:3). The gift of prophecy does not involve prediction but is an overflowing exhortation by the Spirit of God in the congregation.

vii) Discerning of spirits: This is not the "gift" of fault finding or criticism. That's why the gifts must be couched in love. This is a supernatural revealing of things by the Holy Spirit which could not otherwise be deduced. The word "discerning" means to separate, discriminate and to judge. It is the ability to make a difference and distinguish clearly between things. This is not just having a discerning opinion about 'something' but rather it is the shining forth of the Holy Spirit in granting the ability to accurately discern the spirit that is operating. This may mean one of two things: i) It may mean the sudden ability to discern if the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit is working through a person. ii) Or it may mean the discerning of a person's heart, motive, purpose, intention and plans. This gift is not only negative in revealing the bad but also positive in revealing the good. Someone who only ever discerns the bad may be missing the mark. This gift is a protection for the church in discerning deceivers.

viii) Divers kinds of tongues: This is a manifestation whereby an individual is enabled to instantly speak in a language he has never been taught or known. He does not know what it means neither do the hearers. But when interpreted by another through the "interpretation of tongues" a message is brought forth to the edification of all. It is an operation of the Spirit. It is not just saying the first thing which comes to mind. It is a flowing forth of the Spirit in distinct words with a message for the church. We must distinguish between this gift which is only for public gatherings for the edification of other believers and which must be interpreted each time from those tongues which are granted as an initial sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and used for personal edification and which are used in prayer and singing unto God in the public gathering. The gift must be interpreted but not the prayers and singing in the spirit (tongues).

xi) The interpretation of tongues: This gift always works in tandem with the gift of "divers kinds of tongues" and always follows it. Without tongues there is no need for interpretation. Again this is not a learnt ability

or knowledge of a known language. It is a gift imparted which gives the ability to interpret the gift of tongues. The result of this gift is the same as prophesy. It is the Spirit who gives the interpretation of the tongues previously given.

The Purpose of the Gifts

The primary purpose why the Spirit gives these nine gifts to the church is "edification." This means to build up. It is a building term meaning to raise up a structure to completeness for the purpose of dwelling in. Of course we know that the church is to be the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit and so these nine gifts are given by Him in order to bring this about and to maintain the building as fit for His habitation (I Cor.3:16; Eph.2:21-22).

The gifts were not given to cause division, disruption, pride, arrogance, selfishness or competitiveness. All such things grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. These gifts were given with clear resounding instruction to make the edification of the church the goal and purpose of their use. We are even instructed to zealously covet and seek them with this intention and motive (14:12). To guard the operation of the gifts we are given the compelling command "Let all things be done unto edifying" (14:26).

This work of "edifying" the whole body through the operation of the gifts is just a revealing of true agape love and is an outworking of the "more excellent way" (12:31) in which each believer excels to the edifying of all (12:12).

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