

Supernatural Gifts - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the importance and ongoing relevance of spiritual gifts for the edification of the church body.

Duration: 56:05

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1

Topics: "Supernatural Gifts"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story about a missionary named Tommy who went to a village of cannibals. Despite the danger, Tommy obeyed God's call and went to the village, where he miraculously stopped the cannibals in their tracks by raising his hand and proclaiming the name of Jesus. Tommy then shared the gospel with them through song, leading to a great revival in the village. The sermon also discusses the gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of faith, healing, miracles, and prophecy, emphasizing the importance of these gifts in the church.

Transcript

Will you turn, please, to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I shall read again a few verses from the first portion of this chapter and then shall continue with 1 Corinthians chapter 14. You'll notice that the first word, now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, was that to which we referred last week.

For you that are joining us this evening that have not been here in the past, this is the continuation of a series of studies on so great salvation, the normal Christian life. We have had an outline that we've been following, and this, the message of this evening is part of the, actually the thirteenth point in this outline, and we are seeing it in perspective, that is, those of us that have been here week by week over the past months. Thus we're relating the message of the evening back to the subject, as you have before you, is the gifts of the Spirit today, being related to the ministry of the Spirit-filled life, being related back again to the experience of the fullness of the Spirit, and on back through the various steps and phases of development in the Christian life.

So this is part of a whole. I trust, however, that there shall be meaning and significance to Obviously, we can't review the entire procedure. Please understand that it is in relation to that which has been proceeding in the weeks, months past.

The Apostle was concerned about this church and our church and you as a Christian. He did not want you ignorant concerning pneumatica, charismata, the spirituals, these bestowals of God upon his own. You know that you were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols even as you were led.

Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Now we begin our in particular consideration of the gifts of the Spirit as they were in the church here in this first century. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all. I shall pause there a moment.

Our theme says the gifts of the Spirit today. I believe in the perpetuity of the gifts of the Spirit. I find nowhere in the Word is God indicated that he intended to take them out of the church.

They have continued down across the centuries. There's not been any major period in church history when there's not been the testimony of the operation of God through the gifts that he's bestowed upon the members of the body of Christ. I say it again, I firmly believe in the perpetuity of the gifts of the Spirit, and furthermore believe that had it not been for these bestowals that the church could not have continued.

I shall explain this just a little further, but let me say here that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man not for his own profit, not for something that will accrue to him, but the statement here is for the profit of all. For with profit to all perhaps would even be better. So we understand that these anointings, bestowals, enablings of the Spirit of God are that for the express purpose that the body of Christ should be profited.

Bear that in mind. Think of the church as you know it, as you see it about you, and ask if it couldn't stand some profit. I believe it could.

I do not believe that we are in such an exalted state today that we can dispense with anything that God has provided for his redeemed people. There ought to be an openness and an eagerness and interest on the part of all Christians in everything that the Lord Jesus gave to his church, and if you love him and are seeking to glorify him, this text ought to have significance to you. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man for the profit of all.

There was to be none omitted in the body of Christ, but every member of the body of Christ was to have some endowment or some enablement, some gift, every member of the body of Christ. Of this I am convinced, that he never intended any member to be without some contribution to the body of Christ. And now we notice that he lists nine particular gifts that are given.

These gifts are not given in order of their significance. I have had some who have tried to tell me that the order is always from descending importance to lesser importance, and so the last would be the least significant. But then I've had others turn around and say, no, it's always just the reverse.

They're listed in terms of their increasing importance. And I submit to you, therefore, that I believe neither. They're listed.

They're listed. So that's all we're interested in. And I can't believe that anything that he gives is without its proper importance.

So we attach no significance to the order of listing in any sense. We simply say they're listed. But the significant thing about this list is that there are three groups of three.

I mentioned them last week. I would dwell a little longer upon them, the groupings. You'll notice, as we proceed, that the first group is the group of knowledge gifts, enabling the Church, and since it's for the profit of all, I speak of the collective benefit, enabling the Church to be profited by knowing something that it couldn't otherwise know.

You'll notice the first is the word of wisdom. We understand wisdom to be the proper use of knowledge. Therefore, we would assume that the word of wisdom is to know what to do when one couldn't know by any natural process of experience, to know by divine illumination so that the Church would thus be profited by the presence in its number of those that had the gift of the word of wisdom.

Now you notice it didn't say the gift of wisdom. It didn't mean that someone was given to the Church who was particularly wise. Some great wise person came.

It's not speaking of a natural endowment, natural ability. It's speaking of a supernatural equipment by the head of the Church to some member of the Church, and it's called a word of wisdom. By this we understand that there would be times when this person, speaking by the enabling of the Holy Ghost, would have that wise word of instruction as to what to do.

I illustrated it last week and repeat that. To another is given the word of knowledge. Here again we would define it by saying knowledge is to know something that one couldn't know by learning or by recollection or by applying principles received from an instructor.

The word of knowledge was to know something that was important for the good of the Church that couldn't be known otherwise, but by the direct and immediate illumination of the Holy Ghost. Now you will understand that the reason for this is shortly to be seen. For instance, and I repeat, knowing there are some here that were not here last week, Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Ghost.

How did he know? How did he know what they had done? How did he know how much they had received as against the amount that they gave? How did Peter know this? And the answer is, he knew by the gift of the word of knowledge this enabling of the Holy Ghost. Now this isn't difficult to understand and in the same principle is applicable in all of the gifts. You are a spirit.

Now I'm speaking of you. You are a spirit living in a body. The part of you that's regenerated at the new birth is the spirit.

The part of you to which he comes in his covering and doing anointing presence is the spirit. Now you are a spirit living in a body and so obviously your body is some relationship to his work. But nevertheless, when your spirit is clothed or covered by God the Holy Spirit and you are sensitive to God, there is nothing that he can't tell you.

Do you see? And if he wants to give a word of wisdom, he has all wisdom and it is simple for him to give that word of wisdom. If there is some item of knowledge that's needed by the church, and in this case had it not been for the operation of the word of knowledge, Peter might have accepted the gift of Ananias and Sapphira and the church had been infected so that God's judgment would have had to have come upon it. Now we will see, as we study, and we have in time tonight, but were you to study carefully the 14th

chapter, you would find an interesting fact there.

You see, in the early church, one of the most important people was the janitor or the doorkeeper. They didn't have nice buildings such as these in which to meet. In the temple, in the earliest days of the church life, they met in the open and they had no problem because the glory of God was so upon them that no man durst join himself to them.

But then a little later we find that something else is happening and there is an attempt to infiltrate the church. And so there would, you see, no one could come to worship. No one was welcome at worship unless they were vouched for.

Had to be someone that allowed them in. When these days of persecution, they, I don't know what steps they'd take to keep them out, but at least they discouraged, they didn't advertise and invite everyone to come. Because they, the approach of the early church and some of the writings of the fathers indicated, how can people that do not know Christ have any profit from worship? They have no participation.

They don't know the invisible Lord. And so what's the use in the first place of their coming? No profit to them and great loss to the others. So they did everything they possibly could to keep out anyone that didn't have a real vital testimony to a knowledge of Christ.

And so when one came, he'd have to be sponsored. And there was such a thing then as a password. Perhaps you'd be interested in knowing what the password was.

It was Maranatha. This was the password that was given so that when they met, they each would know the other. And then there was a symbol also.

It was interesting that the symbol should be a fish. And the, because the words of, in the Greek, made up the first letters in the words to Jesus Christ our Lord. And they had been taken together to make the word fish.

So this was the secret symbol. For instance, a man in slavery being led by the chain would come into a village and he would stand at the well and with his toe would just trace a little outline of a fish and rub it out, put it in parts, draw it together, and rub it out. Somebody else over there would do the same thing and they knew they had brethren.

There was fellowship. There was an opportunity for ministry to members of his body. And so there was a great attempt made to keep the church pure in its worship so the Lord could have his way among them.

Well, then there would be some that would come in and claim to be Christians. Well, what are they going to do about that? Well, the first Corinthians 14 gives you the illustration of the word of knowledge. And it said that the glory of God should be so upon them and this gift of the Spirit should be so in operation that one would cry out in the midst, God is in this place of a truth.

Well, why? Because everything about him would be disclosed. What he'd done, where he'd been, what he was, the whole thing would be disclosed. Knowledge was thus going to be a protection of the church.

And it was a simple matter for the Spirit of God, filling any one of the believers, to communicate to them that which was there. They might not even know who it was that was there, but still it would be in such a way that the individual, under false pretenses, having come into the gathering, would cry out, God is in this

place. And thus the church would be protected from this invasion.

And thus the word of knowledge was to enable them to know something they couldn't otherwise know. The word of wisdom was to know what to do when they couldn't otherwise know what to do. This, of course, is clearly given in Moses the word of wisdom when the Spirit of God spoke to him.

How did he speak? Out loud so that everyone heard? No. It was the word of wisdom operating through this great gifted leader, Moses, so that he knew that he should raise his staff over the water and step out, and the waters would part. He knew what to do when there wasn't any way at all to do it.

In fact, every one of the ones that are listed in the roster of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were instrumental in believing God for something absolutely impossible, that it never happened before. In Elijah's case, when the axe head falls into the river, and the student there in the seminary says, and it's a borrowed axe, well, he's in a bad way. What is he going to do? How are they going to get the axe head out of the water? And so Elijah looks to the Lord, and he has a word of wisdom, knowing what to do when he couldn't otherwise know.

All right, this is an illustration of the use of the knowledge gifts. We have one more we add to it, and that is the discerning of spirits. And you will notice that it is, and this is in the tenth verse, to another the discerning of spirits.

We've linked it this way under knowledge gifts in order that it can be seen. For instance, here is someone that is creating a certain kind of havoc or difficulty in the church. Now we understand that difficulty can rise from two sources.

It can arise from perverse personalities, from wicked men. There's unquestionably in the Scripture that wicked people do wicked things, and God deals with them as wicked. And then there's another thing, and that is that the enemy, that Satan, is often pleased to find personalities which over some issue have opened the door, and he will work through that personality.

And so the gift of the discerning of spirits is necessary in the church in order to decide which is of Satan and which is of just human perverseness. In either case, the church is responsible to deal with it. The discerning of spirits would enable one to know, for instance, when it was sickness caused by the actual presence of an evil spirit.

There are germs that cause sickness as well as the powers of darkness. Those of us that have been on the mission field realize that there's tremendous power of Satan in afflicting the body and in actually in the sense of removing the affliction for that which he causes to some degree he can relieve. And so you will find that they're held in demon power by what seems to be supernatural.

It isn't. It's the same sort of thing if you were to cut off the circulation and something would result from that and then release it. But nevertheless, it's imperative that there be this gift in the church, the discerning of spirits.

But it isn't only the discerning of spirits. It is the discerning of where the prince of spirits is working. Now this gift is tremendously important.

I would submit to you that the gift--and now I change the expression a little. It says the discerning of spirits. I'll take just the first word.

The gift of discernment. The gift of discernment is tremendously needed. The seeing, seeing what is of the Lord, what is of men, what is of Satan, and being able to trace the origins.

Seeing. Some one person can stand and look out and sees clearly. Another standing in the same place looking in the same direction sees only fog and haze.

Why? Well, one has a lens that pierces through the fog. I remember in having a haze lens on my camera in Africa and picking it up and looking, it was quite amazing the effect that it had upon the light haze. Of course, the heavy fog would be impenetrable.

But just the light haze, it would distort. I remember a young pastor speaking to a friend of mine saying this. He said, when I'm with you, everything seems so clear.

I can see, but I know I'm seeing through your eyes. I can see issues. I can see the source of them.

I can see the implications of them. But when I'm alone, I just can't seem to tell my right hand from my left. Everything looks alike.

There is the necessity for discernment. This gift of eyes to the Church so that the Church can know how grateful we are to the Lord for giving to the whole body of Christ, in no sense just of the Alliance, the ministry of Dr. A. W. Tozer. Here is one that has unquestionably been given by the Spirit of God to the Church of Christ with a ministry of discernment, seeing.

Seeing when others don't and telling what he sees. It's extremely lonely to see, especially when others do not wish to see what is there. Years later, they will come and say, well, now I see what you meant.

But it's extremely lonely. But how grateful we ought to be to the head of the Church, the Lord Jesus, that down across the centuries, he has given to his body these that have received from him this gift of discerning, of spirits, of seeing the issues, seeing what's involved. As I said, frequently theirs is an extremely lonely lot because others, not seeing it, are turned to prone to say it isn't there and to criticize the ones that have seen it.

But nevertheless, the head of the Church has been extremely gracious to his Church by giving these three knowledge gifts. Now the next are power gifts, three power gifts. I delineate them.

You see the significance. You see why the three knowledge gifts are valuable to the Church. Now we will consider the three power gifts that are set forth here.

We begin in the ninth verse, to another faith by the same Spirit. Now this is twofold, as I pointed out. It is faith in the sense of having faith.

I mentioned last week that George Mueller undoubtedly is one that the Lord gave to the Church with this gift of faith, to believe God for the impossible, for things that hadn't happened before. He also had the ability of God, the other phase of this same gift, of quickening faith in others. There are some people with whom a few minutes is sufficient just to raise the level of your faith to heights it's reached before.

Well you say, well what about this? When I'm with him or with her, my faith leaps and I am able to trust God for things. Well what is this? Well it's very possibly, though I don't know the case in point, very possibly the gift of faith that someone has been given of the Lord. This gift, both to exercise it and to quicken others in the exercise of it.

Oh how important it is that there should be some in the Church that have the gift of faith. Because generally speaking, we try to treat the Church as a democracy and get the common denominator of opinion. And the Church isn't a democracy.

It was never intended to be a democracy. It's never had any, God's never given one word to indicate that the people are to rule the Church. The Church is a theocracy.

Christ is the head over all things to the Church. Doesn't do any good to take a vote when the Lord has spoken, he's spoken, that's all. There isn't any answer.

What's the difference what the people think? Reminds me of the time that Abraham Lincoln had a cabinet meeting and a great issue was being settled and the vote was 11 no and one aye. And he says, the ayes have it, it's mine. And this was the way it ought to be.

It couldn't be a theocracy, it couldn't be a democracy. He was entrusted with responsibility. And Christ has been given to the Church as its head.

All right. Then if he's been led captivity and he's given gifts unto men, he's given someone with the gift of faith. And if we knew who they were in the body, and they were one mind, we could talk to them and say, well, what is the Lord told us to believe for? And there you have the place where there's to be an encouragement.

Just as those who have eyes to see are to have a ministry for the profit of the entire body, and the body is to recognize this gift and to realize that God is speaking, though everything is to be tried and every man is capable of error. Nevertheless, it says we're to try and to test, but to recognize that the Lord uses gifted ones, those that have received this special ministry from the Spirit of God for the profit of the group. And one of these is the gift of faith.

Now all of you have been fortunate enough to meet someone. I have along the way. Some that have had this gift.

And my, to be in their presence, you just sense a great release, and a great joy, and a great delight in trusting the Lord. Because they've shared with you that which the Lord has given for your profit and for the blessing we trust through that of the church. The second of the power gifts is the gifts, notice here, the gifts of healing.

Actually the word healing is in the plural also. Gifts of healings, and you'll find it later on in the chapter, as stated that way. The gifts of healings by the same Spirit.

Now we recognize that there's been more medical knowledge in the last 75 years than in the previous 7,500 years. And when Dr. Simpson first began this ministry they hadn't even begun to use a disinfectant and germicidal practices, or that is disinfectant practices, in the hospitals. As many of the surgeons would wear a Prince Albert coat, trusted with the remnants of other operations.

The scalpel would be wiped on the sleeve, tucked into the pocket to wait for the next occasion of surgery. And that would be just a hundred years ago here. Just not long, and there's been tremendous progress.

And we're grateful for all of this, but you know it's still strange, isn't it? That most of the time the doctors use the the ultimate first, and if that doesn't work then what's left? And the first one that ever turned me to

trust the Lord for healing was the doctor. I was pastor of a church, Baptist Church in Minnesota, and a lady that I knew was dying. She had four little children.

I went to him and was prepared to stand by. You know I had the usual approach. We prayed for and tacked on the little question, if it be thy will.

And if she died then we could say, God answered our prayers. And if we didn't, or if she did get well, we could say, God answered our prayers. And if she died, we could say, well it was the will of the Lord.

And this wasn't good enough. And the doctor met me in the hall. He said, you know I'm not a church man, but I want you to know something, preacher.

If you know anybody, now we talked about this a little, and he'd asked me my opinion. I didn't know what he was getting to then. He said, I've talked with you too, and if you know anybody that believes in healing, you better call on them, get them on the phone, and get them to pray for this woman, because I've done everything I could do.

Oh, we could take call specialists in, but I don't think there's anything they could do. But I know this, that when people pray, something happens that we doctors can't explain. And I'm just concerned enough about this woman, and about her children, and about her husband, to say to you, if you know anybody that knows how to pray, get them on the phone, and get them praying for her.

And that came to me a pastor from a doctor that had no claim whatever of faith in the Lord. And I would say that in addition to the training and skill that he'd acquired as a physician, that he was exercising something of the gift of faith, at least trying to quicken it. Though, of course, his had come from a pragmatic point of view.

He didn't understand it, but he said anything is going to, don't let this be neglected, because of his humanitarian concern for the home. When an elder deacon came to me in that church, and said, Mrs. so-and-so has asked us to come and anoint her, I spent 45 minutes trying to prove to him that James was written to the Jews in dispersion, and that she was a dispersed Jew. It was all right, but otherwise we couldn't go.

And when I finished 45 minutes of dialogue, parroting everything I'd heard, he said, well, I guess you don't believe in healing. I said, I believe in it, but you've got to be dispensationally correct on these things. And so he said, well, I better see if there isn't somebody else.

And this was, this was just a few years ago in my own personal experience. And so, when God brought me to the place a few years ago, where I had reached about the end of my tether, with several things that were wrong, and none of which were amenable to treatment, why, the scripture took on a new dimension to me. And I'm glad to say that along the way I've encountered some that have the gifts of healing.

I believe it's the sovereign will of the head of the church that every company of believers should have in them those that have the gifts of healing. That they should be unexploited, perhaps even unnamed. I've mentioned in the past, I mention it again, I know of a church, and their pastor doesn't even know of the woman.

She asked me not to tell him, and I'm sure from conversation with him he's never known. But this little woman has the gift of healing. Oh my, it's sweet.

She loves the Lord. She's just a widow. She just lives for the Lord.

But she's available. Oh, absolutely available to the Lord. So in her devotions she says, Lord, is there anyone I can help today? Anyone you want to touch through me today? And sometimes it's in her own village, and sometimes it's on the bus.

She lives down south, but the bus drivers more or less know her because she's a frequent rider. And she'll just feel impressed that she should go somewhere, visit someone. And so she'll get on the bus, and get to the little town, and tromp off in her fast little gate, and go to the door, and open it, and cheerily say, Well, how's everyone here? And then someone from the bedroom will sob out and say, Oh, I'm so glad to see you.

So glad to see you. I am so glad you've come. Just this morning I was telling the Lord that if you'd come, that something would be done.

She has a gift of healing. I'm sure she does. Everyone that's ever come to her, this is her testimony, and I have no reason to doubt it.

Anyone that's ever come to her, asking her, saying, The Lord has led me to ask you to pray, has been healed. Now she's told me this some years ago. I haven't seen her for four or five years.

But I am confident that this quiet little heart that's there, is one whom the head of the church has given to the church. You say, Well, who is she? Well, I couldn't tell you. The Lord knows.

He knows you, and her, and all the others. I believe that this church should have many in it, some of them at least in it, that have the gifts of healings, that have been given by the head of the church. This gift and ministry belongs in the church.

There's no question about it. Especially, as I say, when there's so many problems and difficulties. But notice, not only the gift of healings, but the gift of miracles.

And there's a difference. I am confident that many dear people do not receive from the Lord because they're not trusting the Lord for healing. They're hoping for a miracle.

Have you ever stopped to realize the difference between the two? Well, this is the difference. The miracle instantaneously bypasses the usual laws of recovery. It's instantaneous.

Whereas with healings, it is from the moment of the ministry that the person begins to recover. With the Lord, he had both. He had miracles and healings.

It was said of some, and they recovered from that hour. Or they began to recover from that hour. Then there were those that were miraculously restored.

Oh, I have had occasions when some have asked us to anoint them, and after having prayed for them, they've looked up so sweetly and said, well, thank you, brother, for praying anyway. Perhaps next time. You see, what they were, they weren't trusting the Lord for healing.

They were hoping for a miracle. And they didn't have faith. And the ones that ministered didn't have miracle intentions or miracle gifts.

They were hoping for a miracle. Now, most healings are not miraculous. Most healings are not miraculous.

Most healings are simply that moment when one takes hold of him, he begins, and sometimes it's greatly accelerated, but he begins to restore and to strengthen. And so, here is this gift of miracles. Now, I am confident that in every field, wherever missionaries have gone in pioneer work, there's been this gift.

I wish I could bring to you, I've thought something of it, but his age and his occupation, but oh, how I wish I could bring to you dear Tommy Titcombe of the Sudan Interior Mission, a graduate of Nyack Missionary Training School. That's one claim we have to him. But, oh, this dear man, what a marvelous, marvelous ministry God gave him.

When he reached the mission field, he carried his whole outfit in one package, one box. And when they, he reached there, got to the field, the staff increased by a whole hundred percent, just increased completely. It went from one to two.

And this was, and they worked together for a little while, and finally they had a field staff meeting conference, and they decided that it wasn't right for one tribe to have two, and so Tommy was the one upon whom the lot fell, and he went out to open the work in the Yagba tribe. And he went into this tribe of people. Under, the path into the center village of the paramount chief had human skulls strung on a vine across the path.

And when he went under it, he bumped them and they rattled with an eerie noise as he moved down. And he walked into the village, threw his package down on there, and said to the chief, where am I going to live? I've come to live with you. Well, they were going to have supper, and they probably were expecting to have him for supper, but he'd asked to stay and spend the night.

And so he stayed, moved, said, well, that's your house. So he moved in, pigs and everything, slept over a grave, and stayed there for two years, eating the native food, never asked any questions. You know, there's two things you have to do.

Where he leads me, I will follow, and what he feeds me, I will swallow. And Tommy learned that very well. And he was sure that some of the gravy once had carried a bow and arrow, but that was all right.

He never asked any questions. And he stayed there for two years, witnessing. And when they wouldn't let him witness in the village, he went up on the top of the hill and shouted the gospel down through the thatch of their huts, and developed in that little body a tremendous booming voice.

And then there came a time when they were meeting in his house for prayer. They'd had morning prayer, every morning the thirteen believers came, and they would meet there with him, or he with him was the thirteenth. They'd meet together.

And this particular day, five hundred people came outside, all in war paint, calling for his blood, and saying they were going to kill and eat the crowd. And they stayed there for eleven days, and all they had was water. There was a little water and some dry corn tied to the rafter up above in the ceiling of the house.

And so these men stayed there for these days, just waiting on the Lord. And afterwards, they said, why didn't you kill us? Why didn't you burn us? Oh, we couldn't do that. Those figures in white with their drawn swords wouldn't let us get anywhere near your house.

We couldn't do that. They wouldn't let us. You see, the angel of the Lord encamps about them that fear him.

And there came a day when they'd gone off to the hill to sacrifice, to get these figures in white away. And leaving for the first time in eleven days this horrible chant, the door opened. Tommy looked out and saw them and said, come with me.

And they went right into the center of the village, under the sacrifice tree, hung with the bones and skulls of victims that had been, human victims that had been killed and eaten. And they stayed there. They said, we'll all be killed.

They said, we'll be killed if we stay there. The Lord told us to come. And when they came, went past the house and followed the tracks, came rushing into the village.

And Tommy stood there and waited until the Lord told him the proper moment came. And he raised his hand and said, stop, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. And those furious, enraged cannibals stopped as though they were stretched over a string.

They couldn't move. Couldn't move. And then he began to sing to the same tune they'd been chanting, gospel words about Christ.

He said, if you like that, open your mouths. Open your mouths like crocodiles. And they all did.

Now he said, sit down and I'll sing some more. And so they sat down. And for two and a half, nearly three hours, he told them the gospel in song that the Spirit of God gave.

Telling them of their lives. Telling them of their sins. Telling them of God's grace.

And the Holy Ghost came down. And from that day on, he moved back to his hut. And within the next six weeks, the church increased from thirteen to over sixteen hundred believers.

He'd awaken in the morning and there'd be a hundred people sitting out in the yard, groups of two or three, sobbing over their sins. All day long, with hardly time to eat, all he did was talk to those that had been pierced through by the arrows of God's conviction. There came a time when there was a smallpox epidemic there in the Yagba area.

And he went to the Lord, what is it? God told him that if he would tell the people that there was, anyone that moved on the compound wouldn't have smallpox, that he, God would respect it. And they moved on to the compound. And anyone that put their tent and built their little temporary shelter on the compound, there wasn't one that had smallpox.

God gave him a miracle ministry all the way through. In the casting out of demons, in the healing of the sick, in the deliverance of those that were held in demon bondage. He came on a scene one day when a woman was lying in the air, suspended with nothing beneath her, simply by satanic power.

And without properly waiting on the Lord to get the mind of the Lord, he went in and touched her. And it was as though he'd been buffeted. He landed about 50 feet away, just drawn by invisible powers, buffeting him and assailing him and assaulting him.

And after some time he recovered and they'd all gone back. And this time he found out how the Lord would deal with it. And the girl was delivered, miraculously delivered.

The whole ministry in those first 20 years of Yagba ministry was the ministry of the gift of miracles. No other explanation how 20,000 people were brought out of cannibalism to the Lord Jesus Christ through the ministry of one man and his dear wife. I could go on until ten o'clock tonight telling you of things he's told me and others and written of those early years.

It was a ministry of miracles. He'd come from Nyack. He'd been there in those early days of the 1900, one and two with Dr. Simpson.

The only concept of Christ he had is that the Lord Jesus is alive. And if he's alive, he has all power. And gifted with the gift of miracles, he went out to the field.

And there came a day, and I happened to be associated with him at the time when he was in the field. And he came back to the center of the place with a station at bed there in Yagba country. And on this given day, when he took leave, they came out from the home.

He preached that morning to an immense company. And when he came out that afternoon to get on the truck, it was parked right there. The village was filled.

The streets were filled. Everything was filled. And here they were, the people that had spent those eleven days calling for his blood, now elders in the church.

And here was one of the men that had been with him for those eleven days. All around him. And they got on the truck and it slowly began to move.

And all these people that were held in cannibalism began to raise in their own language, all hail the power of Jesus name. For they'd come to know Christ through the demonstration of the power of Jesus name. Following in the train of the Apostle Paul who said, I will not dare to speak of anything that the Lord has not done through me.

How to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem roundabout to a lyric home. And when finally the history of the Baleen Valley is written, you will find that it too is a history of miracles. The miracle-working power of Christ.

Now it's a gift that he gives to the church. It isn't something that is always present in every congregation, but it's something that's always to be present in the church. Now, this is the third of the power gifts.

The gift of faith, the gifts of healing, and the gifts of miracles. And we come to the utterance gifts. We just touched them.

He gave to one prophecy. I think we will stop with that and we will go over here to the fourteenth chapter and see for just a few minutes what is meant by prophecy. Obviously we don't mean teaching because the scripture says, be not many teachers, for theirs is the greater condemnation.

I stand before you as one, an elder among elders in the congregation, and one whom the congregation has been prepared to recognize as a teacher. I believe that every elder is a pastor in that sense in which the word is attributed and every elder is to fulfill the function of pastor as under-shepherd of the Lord. But

there are some elders that are chosen of the Lord and perhaps gifted of the Lord and equipped of the Lord to be teachers.

And it's in that capacity that I stand before you. So we're not speaking of teaching and we're not speaking of foretelling something about the future. Most prophecy in the Old Testament did not have a future content to it.

There was that that did, but most prophecy was a foretelling of the word of God. A foretelling of God's mind and God's word. Not a foretelling of the future, but a foretelling.

So with that in view, we understand the gift of prophecy does not mean that when you have been so equipped you will be a teacher. And it doesn't mean that necessarily that you'll even be an exhorter. Over in the twelfth chapter we find the gift and the ministry of exhortation.

But we find here this word prophecy. Now notice in 14.1, follow after love and desire spiritual gifts. I like the way Moffat translates this.

I think it's a little nearer to the original language. Make love your aim, then set your heart on spiritual gifts. But love your aim.

We dealt with this at considerable length two Sunday nights ago and when I spoke on the ministry of the fruit of the Spirit. Make love your aim, but some would just stop there and put a period there. Surely 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that there's a more excellent way.

It's the gifts in love. Every Christian ought to have the fruit of the Spirit. Not all Christians, not all believers will have all the gifts of the Spirit, but all can have and ought to have the fruit of the Spirit.

And there were some in Corinth that were content to have the gifts without fruit, as you would see. So the more excellent way is the gifts and the equipments and all in love. And bear in mind what I told you, that according to our little illustrative analogy here, the fruit of the Spirit is the thumb, the gifts of the Spirit the little finger, and your hand is greatly crippled if you don't have a thumb.

And so we are not... Make love your aim, but then set your heart on spiritual gifts. Desire spiritual gifts. But why? Now let me pause just a moment because I must conclude, though I do not feel in any sense finished.

Perhaps the Lord will lead me to continue some other time about this. But desire spiritual gifts. They're not forced on you.

God isn't coercing. God isn't making you. So there must be cooperation and desire.

And thus he's given it. But notice, follow spiritual... Make love your aim, follow spiritual gifts or desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. Let your desire be here.

Then he contrasts it, and we'll deal with that subsequently. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God. For no man understandeth him, albeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort. Years ago, I was driving Dr. Walter Lewis Wilson, dear man of God, greatly blessed and through his writings, many of you.

And there in Minneapolis, I was his chauffeur for this week of meetings.

And I would meet him at the Curtis Hotel, and because of the... And I asked for the privilege just so that I could have any spiritual contribution that I might be able to get out of him in the few blocks that I was chauffeuring him down to the First Presbyterian Church for this united week of ministry. And he said to me one day, see, isn't it strange? So many places that you go, you have to bring something. You get so little.

It's like going for a meal and having to carry your own food. Why is it that most Christians have so little to share? And then he answered it. Well, perhaps it's because they know so little of the Lord, and so few of them have the gift of prophecy.

But notice this. This was to be given to any member of the body of Christ for edification. What does edify mean? To build up, to strengthen.

Do you have this gift? He says that you were to covet to prophesy. You were to make this rather than you might prophesy. What is the purpose of it? So that you can be known as a great preacher? Preaching isn't involved.

A great exhorter? That isn't involved. A teacher? No. What is the reason for this gift? So that you can build up, edify, and strengthen believers.

Oh, if every member of a community of believers had this gift of prophecy, speaking forth the appropriate word to strengthen the heart of God's children. Would you not say that the church today needs this? Desperately. Desperately.

Everyone ought to have loaves, truth that he can share, to edify, to nourish, to strengthen. For people are being assaulted and buffeted. We ought to desire to be able to edify.

Not to criticize. Oh, if everybody that criticizes could just edify, the church would be built. Criticism is a horrible sin.

God has condemned it with the direst of denunciations, and yet people will do it with impunity, using their tongues to destroy, instead of realizing the Holy Ghost has given the gift of prophecy to edify. The tongue is a little member, and God designed that it should be the instrument of building up the dear people of God, who need to be built up. Then it says to edify and to exhort.

Exhort. Exhortation. This is the ministry of the gift of prophecy.

Exhortation. To exhort. To entreat.

To implore. To draw people on. Cause them to run with you to seek the Lord.

Exhortation. And then to comfort. Edification.

Exhortation. Comfort. I think this brings into focus the gifts of the Spirit.

For the profit of all, three knowledge gifts, wisdom, knowledge, discerning. Three power gifts, faith, healing, miracles. And three utterance gifts, the first of which we've considered prophecy, for the glorious purpose of edifying, exhorting, comforting.

Do you see? Every member, he divides to every man severally as he wills. I don't believe anyone will have all the gifts of the Spirit, but I believe everyone in the body of Christ should have some. Not just one, but some.

And they're all needed. They're all important. And the head of the church, in his solicitude for his church, it says, desire spiritual gifts.

Oh, make love your aims. Then desire any ministry because you know the purpose of it. And especially that you can edify, exhort, and comfort.

Well, may God bless this to your heart. And may God early grant to us the joy of seeing all the gifts and ministries and operations of the Spirit of God again in his church as they ought to be to the glory of Christ. Shall we bow our hearts in prayer? Oh, how we thank thee, our Father, that thou hast raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

We thank thee that he's alive at thy right hand. Thou hast given him all power in heaven and earth, a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. And we are among those that have bowed.

Should there be one that up until tonight is not bowed to receive him as Lord and Savior, might they do it tonight, do it this evening before leaving? Then, Father, for thy children. Oh, we've lived on such starvation diet. We've had chaff and wind instead of the whole wheat of the truth and of the Word.

We've been afraid. We've been frightened, scared out of our heritage, robbed of that which the head of the church has given. Oh, Lord, speed the day when we can take thy Word, all of it, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

Return again to the church, its heritage. Father, we do pray thee tonight that here thou wilt gather a company of people that want all thy truth, that don't want to stop short of it, they don't want to go beyond it. It's just as bad, Lord, to go beyond as to stop short, save us from this.

But Lord, we do want everything the Lord Jesus died to make ours. We want to be what he died to make us. We want to manifest his glory.

We want to have him seen, not ourselves. And so we just plead the precious blood of Christ upon us. Let our meditation be sweet in the Lord.

And grandfather, that the day shall early come when here thou canst have all thou dost desire. And for this we'll give thee all the praise in the resistless, matchless, glorious name of the risen Christ, the head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Good night. God bless you.

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