

His Gifts

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discovering and using the gifts that God has given each member of the Body of Christ to touch people with the power of God.

Scripture: John 13:34, Romans 12:6, Romans 12:9-11, 1 Corinthians 13:1, Colossians 3:23, 2 Timothy 1:6, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Unity In Christ"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the transformative power of the early believers in Rome, emphasizing their supernatural ministry and individual gifts from God. He highlights the importance of using these gifts to touch people's lives with the power of God, urging listeners to discover and utilize their unique gifts for the glory of Jesus. Bieber stresses the need to operate in love, avoid compromise with evil, maintain unity within the Body of Christ, and cultivate zeal and a fervent spirit in serving the Lord.

Transcript

If we could somehow get back there and actually see that group of believers in Rome to whom Paul wrote his epistle, our first reaction would probably be disappointment. These are the people who changed the world? Why, there's nothing special about them! Slaves, poor people and even rabble. You'd think that after they became Christian, they could at least start cleaning themselves up a bit. Why, even the preaching isn't that great. So this is the famous apostolic church!

It's not until their worship is over that we begin to notice something different. Instead of, "Bye bye. See you next week. Say hello to Uncle Bill and Aunt Maude," it's like an army going into battle. Every single believer knows that he has specific work to do, and a specific gift from God to do that work.

As we follow them around through the week, we find that they don't walk up to people and say, "Come to our church. We have a wonderful minister! You ought to hear him preach! And a wonderful choir. And a marvelous educational program for the children!" Rather, they take their neighbors aside and say, "Did you ever hear about Jesus? Let me tell you what Jesus can do for you right now." They promise miracles, and miracles come. Every day, all week long, they're using their gifts to touch people with the power of God.

Gifts. Not natural gifts. It's not that they are good talkers or skilled at selling or adept at conning people. Each one of them has divine power, something supernatural within. In one it flows out through his hands as he puts bread on some empty table. In another it flows out through her mouth as she speaks. Another has eyes that can look into a man's face and see the burden that is weighing down that heart inside.

The basic elementary fact in the apostolic church and in every living church since is that the Church is not a minister and a few pious laymen and a couple hundred Sunday spectators. The Church is a Body of God-gifted people, headed by Jesus himself, in which each member of the Body is engaged in a seven-day-a-week, supernatural ministry, using his gift.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them, if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, if you have been born of the Spirit of God, you are right now carrying around in the earthen vessel of your body a gift. It may not be the same gift as the person next to you has. It may not be the gift that you thought you'd like to have. It is the gift Jesus wants you to have ... the gift Jesus wants you to use.

The King will show you what it is, if you don't already know. He will show you. You don't wake up in the middle of the night and hear an angel telling you that you have a certain gift. You discover the gift God has given you as you begin to minister in Jesus' name, to the needs that are right under your nose.

A man or woman may have a burden for the sick and pray for the sick for a long time before he discovers that God has given him a gift for healing. You may be sending groceries to poor families for a long time before you wake up and realize that God has given you a gift for this kind of thing, that when they eat the bread you send them in the name of the Lord, the presence of the Lord fills that house in a special way and starts to draw them toward his Cross.

An older woman quietly goes around doing things for people, helping them with their house work, visiting them in their loneliness. She does it so quietly you don't notice anything about it but her smile. That woman is exercising a gift, and everywhere she goes a trail of blessing and life and thanks to God follows her.

All you have to do is open your eyes. Look at the people you see every day. Start moving among them as a servant of the living Christ. Minister to them in whatever way seems open to you, by word or deed. Soon you will become aware of which way the power of God is moving through you. You will find your gift.

And when you have found your gift, use it. The more we pour out, the more he pours in. The more you use the gift, the stronger it becomes. There are several things to keep in mind as you use it:

1. Use your gift in love.

"Let love be genuine." You don't help those people or exhort that man or pray for that child to prove something or get a merit badge or gain a following. You do it because God's love in you drives you to do it. And if the love isn't there in your heart, pray for it. Ask God to pour it out on you. Because without that love, your gift is flat, hard and empty.

If I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

2. Never use your gift in compromise with evil.

"Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good." A man finds he has a gift of healing. Next thing you know he's incorporated. He's big time. He's making money at it. A woman finds she has prophetic powers. So she starts flashing her insights around among her neighbors and friends, until she's looked upon as a semi-divine oracle. A man with a skid-row mission finds that with a few minor changes in his message and a little public relations he can tap the local businessmen and triple his budget.

If you don't steadfastly hate what is evil and hold fast to what is good, you'll find yourself compromising, tolerating those lies until you can't even tell the difference in your own life between lies and truth. There can be no compromise with evil. None.

3. Remember that the power of your gift to bless people and draw them to the Master hinges on your unity with your brothers and sisters in the Body.

"Love one another with brotherly affection." We're one with each other. We're brothers and sisters by virtue of his holy blood. You will find that when you are at-one with your brothers and sisters your gift is at its best. When you are at loggerheads with them, when you're aloof, distant, resentful, your gift loses its power.

If I am not right with you, I might as well forget about going down to that bar to tell somebody about Jesus. If you're not right with your brothers and sisters in the Lord, your message to the sinners in the world is going to have a hollow ring.

4. Don't use your gifts in competition with others. There is no competition in the Body except in showing honor to one another.

General Motors runs on competition. Not only competition with Ford and Toyota, but one executive competing against another. You stay on the ball, because you know that there are ten men waiting to replace you the minute you goof. But in the Body competition has no place. When the disciples started competing with each other for the high places, Jesus explained that you don't compete to get honor but to show it.

"Let the greatest among you be as the youngest and the leader as one who serves."

"Outdo one another in showing honor."

"Let each esteem the other better than himself."

5. Never flag in zeal.

There are these skyrocket Christians who have one burst of enthusiasm and then they burn out. And there are the wet blankets who can remember when they were zealous, until they "matured" into that lukewarm rut they've been in for years.

If you don't have zeal, something is wrong. Moses was an old man. He still had zeal. Paul was middle-aged. He still had zeal. But there are believers who have barely hit their 20's and they're nothing but tired bores and remain so all their weary lives.

Never flag in zeal. If you're tired, go to bed. But when you get up in the morning, you'd better walk into the new day with the zeal of God or you'll soon lose every trace of zeal you have left.

"But I just don't feel any zeal. I feel dry." Then start looking for some. If you're contented with your lack of zeal, you'll never get any.

6. Be aglow with the Spirit.

Not aglow like the blushing maiden at the New Year's Ball. On fire, like a burning coal, with the Spirit of God.

People think this is a matter of chance or luck. "Some guys are lucky. The Spirit comes on them and makes them alive. The rest of us just sit around in the gloom and nothing happens." It is not a matter of chance. It's up to you to stir up that gift and make it burn, just as you stir up a dying fire. Shake it around. Put some logs on it.

Don't settle for anything less than the burning glow of the Spirit. Keep pestering God and disciplining yourself until you are on fire with his Spirit. And keep walking in obedience and staying in his word and ceaselessly praying so that the fire keeps burning.

7. Remember that with your gift, you are not merely serving men, you are serving the Lord himself.

You are his servant with this gift. You are doing his will. You are hastening the coming of his Kingdom. You are doing it for his glory.

It is easy to get so caught up in what we're doing, our success, our failure, our problems, that we forget what this is all for. It is for Jesus. Only for him.

The test of the worship that goes on in any church is not how many people felt inspired, or how many had tears roll down their cheeks. The test is how many people are really letting God sharpen their gift. How many walk out the door and exercise the gift God has given them and was quickening in them while they worshiped?

Are we a minister and a few pious laymen and a couple hundred Sunday spectators? Or, are we a Body of God-gifted people headed by Jesus himself, using our gifts seven days a week?

Our Lord tells us that when he comes back, each one of us is going to give an account to him of what we've done with our gifts. God help us to make the most of the time that's left, that we may stand before him without shame.

For he's coming soon.

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