

The Local Church 2 - Part 4

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald discusses the importance of recognizing and exercising spiritual gifts within the local church for mutual edification and growth.

Duration: 7:35

Scripture: Romans 12:6

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Church Ministry"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and utilizing the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit to believers. It highlights the need for humility in acknowledging these gifts as sovereign blessings from God, not earned through personal efforts. The focus is on exercising these gifts for the benefit of the church and the edification of others, rather than for self-display or pride. The passage in Ephesians 4:11-16 is explored to understand the purpose of these gifts in equipping believers for ministry and building up the body of Christ in unity and maturity.

Transcript

I realize that. But others, yes, you feel quite at home in that, and the Lord seems to bless. Sometimes the advice, the counsel of elders is very, very helpful in a case like this.

You might ask your elders, what do you think my gift is? Sometimes elders are a better judge of that than a person himself. A young fellow might think he's another answer to world evangelism, but his brothers might realize that not quite yet, anyway. Hasn't developed to that extent yet.

Every believer is gifted. We should know what our gift is. It's not pride to say what your gift is.

Not pride. You had nothing to do with it. It was a sovereign gift of the Holy Spirit.

You didn't pray it in. You didn't earn it. God gave it to you the time you were saved.

And so I don't think there's anything prideful to say what your gift is, and most people would know anyway. In the local assembly, there should be liberty for the exercise of gifts. Turn to 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 26.

It gives you an interesting little insight into churches in the early days. 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 26. How is it then, brethren, whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue,

has a revelation, has an interpretation, that all things be done for edification? Seems that in the early days of the church, there was a meeting at least in which there was liberty for the brothers to exercise themselves in the ministry of the Word of God, in praise, in worship, in adoration of the Lord, in giving out a psalm, a teaching, or one of the gifts of the Spirit, to exercise it in that way.

There should be liberty for the exercise of the gifts. The gifts were given not for self-display, but for the benefit of the body. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Seems that in the early days of the church, people would have the gift of tongues, for instance. Without ever studying Italian, a man could get up and speak fluent Italian. And sometimes they paraded that.

Sometimes they paraded that. And they were saying in themselves, I hope these people will be impressed as I stand up here and speak in Italian. They didn't care whether it was interpreted or not.

In other words, friends, they were showing off. And that's why Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 12. The gifts were given for the profit of all, not for self-display, but for the benefit of the church.

Good thing for us to exercise our gift for the benefit of others. The names of the gifts are given three places in the New Testament. There's a list in Romans chapter 12.

There's a list in 1 Corinthians 12 here at the end of the chapter. And also in Ephesians chapter 4, there's a list as well. And I'd like to think with you now about that list in Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4. And this is very basic as far as I'm concerned.

And so we're going to dwell on it for a little. Ephesians 4, 11. He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things to him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Now, when we read that at first, to some of you, that might just be a holy jumble of words. But it isn't that at all. So I'm going to go back and see if we can clarify it just a little.

Let's go back to verse 7. To each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. If Christ gives you a gift, and he does, he gives you grace to carry on that gift. It's very important.

If God wants you to do something, he'll give you the power to do it. God's will never leads us where his grace does not empower us. If he wants you to do it, he'll give you the power to do it.

That's what verse 7 says. Therefore, he says, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. This means that when the Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven after his work at Calvary, it was a tremendous victory.

He passed through the atmosphere, through the hosts of evil ones, Satan and all his minions. He led captivity captive. It was a triumph over his foes.

And he gave gifts to men. Now it says in the psalm, where this is quoted from, Psalm 68, 18, he received gifts for men. Apparently, as one of the fruits of his labors there at the cross of Calvary, God gave him gifts.

He turned around and gave them to men. Paul elucidates that here in this passage. Now this, he ascended, what does it mean? But that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth.

Here, it speaks about the ascension of Christ. Well, Christ had been in heaven from all eternity. How could he ascend? Well, of course, it presupposes his coming down to earth, doesn't it? That's what happened at Bethlehem, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, when he took upon himself a human body.

So Paul is saying here, now when it says he ascended, what could that mean? But that first he had to descend. He's saying, yeah, but what does that mean into the lower parts?

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