

New Covenant - the Gifts of the Spirit -Part 5

by Zac Poonen

The greatest gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of prophecy, which is to speak to people in a way that draws them close to God.

Duration: 9:29

Scripture: Matthew 7:24, 1 Corinthians 14:1

Topics: "Spiritual Gifts", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's word, using the example of Moses being blessed despite disobedience. It delves into the significance of earnestly desiring spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy, as the greatest gift to build up the body of Christ. The distinction between being a prophet and prophesying is highlighted, along with the purpose of spiritual gifts to bless others and the difference between the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Now just because somebody's ministry is blessed doesn't mean that they're doing the right thing. Now some people say, at some moments ministry is being blessed. It doesn't mean they're doing the right thing.

You know there's a place in the Old Testament in Numbers chapter 20 where it says that Moses was told to speak to the rock the second time. Moses got so angry he hit the rock. He disobeyed God.

But was there a blessing? Yes, there was such a blessing that the water flowed from the rock that two million people could drink water. Imagine a person being a blessing to two million people and he himself has disobeyed God. So once the blessing was over to two million people, God said, OK, Moses, you come here, I've got a deal with you now.

You disobeyed me. But Lord, I was a blessing to two million people. Don't tell me all that.

You disobeyed me and therefore you will be punished. You will not enter the land of Canaan. That's the clearest example that a man can be disobeyed in his private life, man or a woman, can disobey God's word and still can be a blessing to two million people.

There are people whom Jesus said, we'll say to the Lord, Lord, I cast out many demons in your name. Don't you think those people were blessed? But the people who cast out the demons went to hell. Lord,

we did miracles in your name.

So that's just in passing. Now I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, we read about these gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And I want you to notice first of all, that it says in the last verse, after giving a description of these gifts, verse 31, earnestly desire the greater gifts. You never get anything from God if you don't earnestly desire it. God doesn't give it.

Because when we don't earnestly desire something, which God said you must earnestly desire, it shows that we are telling God, I don't really value that. Oh, I can get along without that. If God says, I want you to have something, you say, no, no, no, I don't need it.

I can get along without that. The Bible says, earnestly desire spiritual gifts. Have you obeyed that command? I want to ask all of you.

Or have you left it just to one or two people to seek it? You know when I started earnestly desiring spiritual gifts when I was 21 years old and I got baptized. And I was in an assembly called the Brethren Assembly, which didn't teach one single thing about spiritual gifts. But I read the Bible.

And I saw here that I must earnestly desire the spiritual gifts. So I said, okay, well I must earnestly desire spiritual gifts, I'm going to do it. And then again it says in chapter 14, verse 1, a second time.

It's like that Acts chapter 2, a second time it says the women will prophesy. Here it says a second time in chapter 14, verse 1, earnestly desire spiritual gifts. Boy, how many times does God have to say to us? Before we listen.

And especially if you want one gift to desire, don't desire for healing and miracles, desire prophecy. That is the greatest gift by the way. The greatest gift is not the gift of miracles, of doing miracles.

The greatest gift is not the gift of healing. I mean if you are a person fooled by all the advertisements of Christian evangelists, that's another thing, you can believe them if you like. I believe the Bible.

The Bible says the greatest gift is the gift of prophecy. To be able to speak to people in a way that will draw them close to God. You know if Jesus hadn't spoken to people, and he had only healed, healed, healed, healed, there wouldn't have been 120 waiting for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

There would have been no church. The church was built by the word. Jesus said, he who listens to my word and obeys it, builds upon a rock that will never shake.

That's the church. It was not built by miracles, it was built by the spoken word. And throughout the Bible, in the Acts of the Apostles, you see that is the spoken word through which the church is built.

And that's why on the day of Pentecost, it was a tongue of fire that was on the heads of all those people. So the Bible says that everyone can prophesy, but it says you won't get it unless you honestly desire it. Now when I read that, 46 years ago, I said, boy, I don't care whether my church tells me to desire prophecy or not, they didn't even believe the gifts existed.

I said, so what? The Bible says it exists, and I'm so thankful that I earnestly desire to prophesy. And I understood there in verse 3, 14.3, what it meant to prophesy. It is to speak to people in such a way as to

build them up, that's edification, exhortation is encouragement and challenge, and consolation is comfort.

To speak in such a way that you encourage people, challenge them, comfort them, and build them up. We must all desire for that. It's the greatest gift in the body of Christ.

And for that we need the power of the Holy Spirit upon us. And we never stop seeking for it, because God wants to give it to us more and more and more and more. And if you, there's a difference between prophesying and being a prophet.

A prophet is one who has a permanent gift of prophecy. Prophesying is, anybody can have for a short time, and I'll show you that in chapter 14. It says here in chapter 14, verse 29, in the New Testament church meeting, let two or three prophets speak.

Only two or three prophets in a very large church. In a smaller church, one or two. And then, after that, verse 31, you can all prophesy.

Only two or three prophets, and all can prophesy. You see the difference? And he goes on to say in chapter, he says earlier in chapter 12, and verse 29, all are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets. If all are not prophets, how can all prophesy? Because to be a prophet is different from prophesying.

Prophesying is an occasional thing. A man may, or a woman may prophesy for two or three minutes. And once in a while, it can be a really powerful word.

But a prophet is someone who always can prophesy. Because there's a permanent gift on him. So, now we turn to chapter 12.

We read about, in chapter 12, 1 Corinthians 12, we read about a lot of, an illustration of the body. He's talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And then he talks about the body.

And he says here, verse 14, the body is not one member. The foot needs the hand, the hand needs the foot, the eye needs the ear, the ear needs the... And he's talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You see the connection? If this is the body of Christ, he's using the example of the body.

And we know it's the body of Christ. In the body of Christ, one person is an eye. One person is a ear.

It's an illustration, don't take it literally. And one person is a hand, one person is a foot. Each has got a different gift.

But each has got a function. And he says, if the whole body, verse 17, were an eye, where would the hearing be? I mean, if your whole body is full of eyes, eyes, eyes. This is ridiculous, that's not a body.

And he says, if everybody was a prophet, or everybody was an apostle, or everybody had the gift of healing, that's ridiculous. But God has given these different gifts to different ones. And so he speaks here about, there are many gifts, verse 4, of the same Holy Spirit.

There are varieties of gifts. There are varieties of ministries. You know, these gifts are exercised in different ministries, the same Lord.

And the effect of these ministries are the same, the same Father, so Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in those verses. And to every single person, now here's the verse for you, to every single person, if you're a

believer in the body of Christ, that's for you, is given some manifestation of the Holy Spirit, for the good of other people. You know, that's the difference between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

If I have the fruit of the Spirit, joy, for example, who is blessed? You or me? Me. My life is full of joy. Or if I have peace, who sleeps peacefully at night? You or me? Me.

The fruit of the Spirit blesses me. My nerves are calm if I have the gift of patience, of the fruit of patience. Long-suffering.

But the gifts of the Holy Spirit are always to bless other people. If I have the gift of prophesying, it's to bless others. If I have the gift of healing, it's to bless others.

If I have a word of wisdom, it's to help others. This is the difference between the fruit and the gifts. So if you're a very selfish person, you'll have no desire for the gifts of the Holy Spirit at all.

You see why many people don't seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit? It doesn't help me in any way. I'm not particularly interested in helping others. Oh well, of course you don't need the gifts then.

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