

The Holy Spirit- Session 4

The Gifting Spirit

Tonight we are going to be looking at how the God the Spirit, is a gifting Spirit. We are going to be looking at the Bible together to see why he gives gifts and how these gifts should be used. So by the end of tonight I hope to have shown you, using a positive and a negative example from scripture, why the Spirit gives gifts and how those gifts should be used.

Their positive purpose – Ephesians 3 and 4

Turn to eph3

Paul is writing from prison to these Gentile believers 3:1, and doesn't want them to be discouraged 3:13 by this fact. So he writes v2-12 to let them and us in on a cosmic secret. Let's listen in on it

3:8-11 8Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What is Paul's job v8-9? Preach the gospel to the gentiles (to reveal the mystery)

What is God doing now v10-11? – he is using the united to church to show the totality of his wisdom to the heavenly realms. This is what he had always planned to do through Jesus.

As we read the word church here in eph 3 we need to realise that this has already been a big theme of the letter. And just before ch3 is the end of ch2! In which Paul has been at pains to show the gentiles are now in Christ Jesus so though once they were far away now they have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Its Gods plan to bring these 2 different groups Jews and Gentiles together. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

So as we read Eph 3:10 we glimpse at what is going on. Maybe these rulers in the heavenly realms sneer at God and say how can we really know you are wise? What would God do? Well point at a local church and say that's how.

Now that seems to be quite a big thing for us to ask of any local church, let alone ours. This is the Goal. What is Gods method, how will he keep us united?

Well follow me through eph3 after the section we have briefly looked at, Paul prays that these Ephesians will grasp the ungraspable, the depth of Gods love. Then he says ch4 v1 I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

This is basically the application of the letter. The next couple of chapters go on to flesh it out. Then in verses 4-6 we get this stress on oneness, one body ,one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. This is the united message that we believe in.

Then we come to our passage let me read that to you. 7But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8This is why it^[a] says:

"When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men."^[b] 9(What does "he
ascended" mean except that he also descended
to the lower, earthly regions^[c]? 10He who
descended is the very one who ascended higher
than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole
universe.) 11It was he who gave some to be
apostles, some to be prophets, some to be
evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,
12to prepare God's people for works of service,
so that the body of Christ may be built up 13until
we all reach unity in the faith and in the
knowledge of the Son of God and become
mature, attaining to the whole measure of the
fullness of Christ.

14Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back
and forth by the waves, and blown here and
there by every wind of teaching and by the
cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful
scheming. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love,
we will in all things grow up into him who is the
Head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body,
joined and held together by every supporting
ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as
each part does its work.

So as we come to this bit of Ephesians there is
still that question hanging in our mind. If God is
going to be glorified in the heavenly realms
because of a united church, how are we all going
to stay united? How are we going to try and keep
the unity of the spirit? Well here is the answer.

Paul starts contrasting the oneness of the faith
that we have in v6, with v7 the difference in grace
Jesus has given.

Paul uses this psalm to explain his point in v7,
that Jesus gives different grace gifts. Paul applies
this to Christ's ascension.

In v9 and 10 Paul expounds the meaning. You
can only ascend something if you are not already
at the top of it. If I am at the top of the hill I
cannot climb it. If I am at the top of the stairs I
cant ascend them can I, well only if I descend

them first, then of course I can ascend them
again.

Do you see that's what paul is saying v9-10 Jesus
was in heaven, he was at the top of the stairs. So
before he can ascend into heaven he needs to
descend to the earth. Because jesus descended
to the earth, he became a man, he can now
ascend as the victorious King to the highest
heaven.

The point is Jesus ascends back to heaven
triumphantly and so gives out gifts to men v8, he
v7 apports grace differently, this is not saving
grace, rather Jesus gives grace gifts. Well what
are these gifts?

Look at v11 11It was he who gave some to be
apostles, some to be prophets, some to be
evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.
How would you describe these 4 gifts? Apostles,
prophets, evangelists, pastor teachers. They are
all speaking jobs aren't they; they are all actually
teaching, instructing jobs. And why did Christ
give these gifts?

V1212to prepare God's people for works of
service, so that the body of Christ may be built up
13until we all reach unity in the faith and in the
knowledge of the Son of God and become
mature, attaining to the whole measure of the
fullness of Christ.

These teaching gifts were given to prepare every
member of the local church for works of service.
What's the result of people being prepared for
works of service, LOOK at v13 SO THAT the
church is built up until we reach v13 UNITY,
another way of saying it we become mature.
Remember the question at the start.

If God is going to be glorified in the heavenlies
because of a united church, how are we all going
to stay united. How are we going to try and keep
the unity of the spirit?

Well its simple, churches that use the teaching gifts will be ones that prepare their members for works of service which will build up the church. In these churches, they are always moving towards unity and maturity and are glorifying God.

When false teaches come along they have no effect, because the people are not infants rather they are well taught and mature.

So lets just draw out those 2 main types of gifts that will lead the church to glorify God in the heavellies.

There are the teaching gifts v11, v12 the gifts to build up the church (works of service)

A quick aside on apostles and prophets. These two gifts were foundational gifts, they were gifts on which the church was built on. Because the church is no longer just starting off, and also because we have the complete cannon of scripture (the Bible is complete), then these gifts aren't around any more.

Look with me at ch2 v20 you are members of God's household, 20built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. These apostles and prophets are the foundation. (just to say the new testament does also seem to show us another gift of prophecy, which isn't foundational, more on that later)

So the teaching gifts that are still in existence now are the gifts of the evangelist and the pastor teachers. Use of these gifts prepares us for works of service which will build up the body of Christ. Being able to do a work of service is because Christ has given you that grace gift to build up the church.

What happens when the gifts aren't practiced?

IMPLICATION

Get to a church with teachers,

Serve in a way that will build up the church

Don't do washy washy things to attain unity, rather get mature.

Goal: God glorified in the heavellies. Method: unity because of maturity, be cause all use gifts, because teaching gifts exercised.

Ok so we have seen the positive purpose of spiritual gifts in Ephesians is to build up the church, leading it to unity that shows God to be wise in the heavenly places.

There also a few other places in scripture which lists spiritual gifts, which we aren't going to touch on tonight. If you want to look them up when you get home, as well as Ephesians 4 which we have just looked at and 1 Corinthians which we are about to look at, the other 2 are Romans 12:6-8 AND 1PETER 4:10-11.

We have done spiritual gifts positive purpose, now we are going to see a negative example of the use of spiritual gifts.

A negative example – 1 Corinthians 12-14

1 Corinthians is quite a sharp letter, containing stinging rebukes. Paul wrote it to a bunch of believers in Corinth, and to be honest in quite a few areas of personal life and life of as a congregation, they weren't really behaving very Christianly! One of those areas was their use of spiritual gifts. So as we study this, please bear in mind, Paul is writing into a specific situation. Its not that he sat down in his study and thought it

would be a good idea to jot down all he knows about Spiritual gifts so that we could have a helpful manual.

With that lodged at the back of our mind, lets dive in.

Lets read 12:1-3

1Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. 2You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

The reason Paul writes is because he doesn't want them to be ignorant. He wants them to be informed. You see in the past when they were pagans they used to follow mute idols. Basically they were drawn away by something with very little power, they didn't follow Gods way, because of a piece of wood. They would never have turned to Jesus except for the work of the Spirit. Look at v3 No one can be a Christian without the work of the holy spirit.

This is really important to remember, I know you looked at this last week but, its vital. The spirit works to open blind eyes, breathe life into dead people, the spirit and only a work of the Spirit will cause someone to honestly say Jesus is lord. That is to say it and believe it.

Ok time for you guys to do a bit of work. You are going to study v4-7. I want you to answer these questions.

Why is there a refrain of same God in v4-6? Oneness of faith

Who receives the gifts of the spirit? Each one

From whom? Spirit

Why? Common good

We then get this gift list.

7Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] 11All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

What's Paul's main point here? Is there any repeated phrases or themes? By one, and the same Spirit (v7,v8a, v8b,v9a,v9b,v11). Paul is trying to make it clear that all these gifts are from the same spirit. And notice v7 they are given for the common good. Does that remind you of Ephesians? The works of service are done to build up the church. The manifestation of the Spirit are for the common good.

But what are these manifestations of the spirit? Well there's the message of wisdom, and the message of knowledge (what's the difference – I don't know) by means of the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit (this isn't saving faith, but something different), to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy (we will see more of this later), to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b]

Now its worth pointing out that if we look at all the lists of spiritual gifts in the new testament we can draw out a few points.

- Some list types contain different types of people and some lists different types of gift.
- Some gifts involve an overlap of several other gifts
- No list is exhaustive – ie no list contains all of the gifts- the implication is we don't know them all
- There are some gifts that we can only guess at what they would be

What is important for us as we work through 1 Corinthians 12-14 is that all the gifts are God given, v11, and are for the common good v7.

With that in mind how should these Corinthians behave?

12:12-30

What is the image used in v12? One body made up of many parts

Why v13-26? V13 baptised by (saved by) one and the same Spirit, all given the same spirit to drink. The body is united.

Different parts are still in the body even if they don't want to be v14-16 Those who think they don't belong are needed

A body needs different parts, otherwise is wouldn't work v17-20

Those who think they can go it alone, cant v21-26

What were some of the possible problems in the Corinthian church? V17 everyone wants to be an eye

Lets look at the end of ch 12

We need to be clear that v27- 28 follow what we have just seen, Paul wants the Corinthians to know they are all part of one body. Once Paul thinks he has made it clear he moves to talk about gifts again, knowing that there are different gifts and they are all needed by the body. Paul now shows there are greater gifts, but we must remember that having a gift doesn't make you superior in the body, all gifts are needed, they are all given by the one and the same spirit.

Let's look at the list:

First apostles

Second prophets

Third teachers

Then workers of miracles

Gifts of healing

Able to help others

Administration

Tongues

Paul ranks the gifts. It's a bit like the Olympics. In first place apostles, then the silver medal goes to prophets, in third its teachers, then everyone else. In last place we see tongues, just like in the list v7-10. We will see in a bit why that's significant.

Like in Ephesians we get apostles, prophets and teachers. Apostleship is something that stopped with the end of the New Testament age. The apostles were eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus therefore, there are no apostles today.

Then we have prophets and then teachers. Its clear again that these first gifts – are about INSTRUCTING God's people, the church, in what God is like and how we should live. This instructing ministry is so important because it build up the church.

The following gifts are also for the benefit of others, miracles, healing, those able to help others, administration. Then we get tongues, generally a personal private thing. Paul then fires of those questions. Look at v29. Making the point

not everyone has every gift. But v31 we should eagerly desire the greater gifts. What are they?

Well surely they are the gifts which will encourage, help and edify other people. Because that is the most excellent way in ch 13 it's the way of love. If have these gifts without love I am nothing. CH13 is a stinging rebuke, they have been using their gifts with out love and so by implication they are a clanging gongs.

Paul instructs them 14v1 to follow the way of love and desire spiritual gifts. Why is this the way of love? Well remember, spiritual gifts build up the church, this is a loving thing.

So in all they now do the priority needs to be love.

This has 2 implications:

- Speaking in tongues is inferior because by itself it doesn't help anyone else
- Prophecy is superior as it is able to build up people.

Lets read the following and see why I say that.

1Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy (why). 2For anyone who speaks in a tongue^[a] does not speak to men but to God (what does that mean). Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit (tongues are between you and God, no help to others).^[b]

3But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. 4He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church (so prophecy is better). 5I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,^[c] but I would rather have you prophesy (why?). He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues(that isn't interpreted), so that the church may be edified.

6Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring

you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? (Paul is only of use to the church if they can understand him) 7Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? 8Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

9So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 10Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. 12So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. (not ones that make people feel like foreigners because they can not understand)

13For this reason (that is we should look to build up the church) anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. 14For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. 16If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand^[e] say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? 17You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

18I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. (that's quite sticking isn't it)

That's Pauls whole thrust isn't it? Speaking in tongues is inferior because by itself it doesn't help anyone. Whereas prophecy is superior as it is able to build up people.

Ok I think its worth Pausing for a moment to consider New testament prophecy. Just to say it is not the same as the OT prophecy were the

prophet could say thus say the Lord. In the OT Gods words come through the prophets, but we no longer need any more of Gods words, we have all we need in the Bible. So prophecy is either predicting the future, or applying scripture in a very spiritual way, or speaking into a specific situation or persons life, or a mixture of those ideas. If you want to know more ask some questions at the end.

We now come to the final section 14:20-40 where Paul is telling the Corinthians to grow up and think.

In v20 – 25 we see that if these gifts are used properly then it will convert non Christians. Intelligibility is the key thing. If we speak in tongues, this will harden unbelievers in their unbelief v21 and 22 and v23. prophecy however is for believers v22. When an unbeliever hears that he is convicted v24 and converted v25.

In v26-40 we see that when they meet together it should reflect Gods orderliness.

26What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 27If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. (we get this idea of people standing up and sitting down, no one is talking over some one else, there is order, so that people can LEARN)

29Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

(The implication is surely that their meetings shouldn't be chaotic, rather orderly like God)

As in all the congregations of the saints, 34women should remain silent in the churches. (just like the person with the uninterrupted tongue in v28, or the speaker in v30) They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (Paul here can't mean that women are not to say ANYTHING in the church meeting because back in ch 11 he was quite happy for them to pray and to prophesy. When Paul asks the women to be silent it must relate to some specific part of the meeting. Surely given the context, Paul is saying that the women of the church shouldn't publicly evaluate the prophecies given by the standard of the Bible (v29)— because that would be to take on the role of the teacher/leaders in the church – a role that Paul is quite clear elsewhere should follow God's creation pattern and be male.)

36Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. ^[1] (in other words these prophets must submit to Pauls words.)

Then we come to the 2 points of application; firstly Respect for all gifts, but priority for ones we can understand 39Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. And secondly orderliness 40But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way

Implications for us

- Don't envy others gifts
- Don't look down on others gifts
- Work out how we can practically love others rather than naval gaze

- Seek to excel in gifts that build up the church
- We would rather speak 5 intelligible words to instruct others, than 10000 in a tongue
- Seek to build up the church by everyone doing what they can
- Make everything clear for an unbeliever to understand.

Some questions to guide our service, in terms of using our spiritual gifts:

Is it loving?

Will it build up the church towards unity and maturity?