

1Cor 12- The Blessing of Spiritual Gifts

Valleys Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 21st April 2013

Intro

- Today teaching on Spiritual Gifts, then we will have worship and practise them.

We are to know spiritual gifts

- 12:1-'Concerning spiritual gifts brethren *I do not want you to be ignorant*'- Paul has a great desire that the Church at Corinth knows about spiritual gifts and their proper use.
- God wants us to know spiritual gifts- know what they are, know what they are not, know they are for us, know them experientially, discern how to use them appropriately and effectively.
- **What are spiritual gifts?** They are abilities given to us by God to serve Him and the Church more effectively. Sometimes they are the more supernatural sounding gifts- 12:9 'gifts of healings' and 12:10 'workings of miracles' and sometimes they are the more natural sounding ones- 12:28 'helps, administrations' (which are gifts given by the Holy Spirit because in the same context as this list (which includes Apostles etc.) Paul says 'are all Apostles...etc...earnestly desire the greater gifts'. What designates them Spiritual Gifts is that they are abilities given or empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Some Christians believe there are 9 spiritual gifts because 9 are listed by Paul in this passage in verses 8-10. However, the Bible does not seem to have a single, definitive list of all the possible spiritual gifts; but lists various gifts in different places, with some overlap-

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 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; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:4-8 (ESV);

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 (ESV);

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, Ephesians 4:11 (ESV);

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:9-11 (ESV)

- **Other spiritual gifts seen in scripture:**
- Music or praise that carries the anointing to set captives free, release the prophetic or crush the plans of the enemy- David to Saul-1 Samuel 16:23;
And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. 2 Chronicles 20:22;
- Physical strength- Samson- Judges 14:6
- Visions (as distinct from prophecy)-
And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. Acts 10:10-11 (ESV);

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on

into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:9-10 (ESV)

- **Dreams** -Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Matthew 2:13 (ESV);
"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Joel 2:28 (ESV)

- **Interpretation of dreams- Joseph:**

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." Genesis 41:15-16 (ESV)

Daniel:

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel 2:19 (ESV) (Daniel).

If interpretation of tongues is a spiritual gift, rather than coming under the broader category of prophecy, then surely also the interpretation of dreams is a spiritual gift.

- **Craftsmanship**-Exodus 31:1-11; Exodus 35:30-35;

- **Who can have spiritual gifts?**

- All believers can have them, and should seek them. Each one of us-

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Joel 2:28 (ESV)

- **What gifts can we have?**

- The Spirit decides-

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. 1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV)

Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 1 Corinthians 12:30 (ESV)

- We can desire and seek them-

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV)

- Paul wanted all Christians to speak in tongues, but even more so to prophesy,

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. 1 Corinthians 14:5 (ESV)

Therefore there may well be the potential to operate in any gift, but the reality is that we will have more faith and grace for certain gifts and should not come into condemnation.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; Romans 12:6 (ESV).

- Each one of us has something from God to contribute-

What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 1 Corinthians 14:26 (ESV)

- **How do you receive the gifts?**

- Be filled with the Holy Spirit-

And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. Acts 19:6 (ESV)

- Desiring them -

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:31 (ESV); Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:1

(ESV),

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV),

So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:39 (ESV)

- **Impartation-**

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— Romans 1:11 (ESV);

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. Numbers 11:25-26 (ESV).

This can come through various means:

Laying on of hands/prophetic word -

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 1 Timothy 4:14 (ESV); For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 2 Timothy 1:6 (ESV).

Through hearing teaching or testimony-

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, Acts 10:44-46 (ESV).

- **Asking God in faith for them-**

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV);

E.g. asking for wisdom-

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8 (ESV);

E.g. asking for an interpretation-

Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. 1 Corinthians 14:13 (ESV)

- **Being in or near the anointing-**

When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” 1 Samuel 10:10-11 (ESV);

Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then he himself went to Ramah and came to the

great well that is in Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" 1 Samuel 19:20-24 (ESV)

- Obedience, courage. Stepping out in faith under the prompting of the Holy Spirit-

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, Acts 9:10-11 (ESV)

- Not being ignorant of spiritual gifts- two extremes of ignorance- being into Biblical truth but no experience of Spiritual Gifts or being into Spiritual Gifts but no emphasis on Biblical truth- we need to be firing on both cylinders.
- 12:3- when they were Gentiles they were led into idolatry because of ignorance of God's teaching- in the world many New Age people use 'spiritual gifts' (false ones). Now that they are saved and using spiritual gifts they need to know when a spiritual gift is not God speaking, but the person or the enemy seeking to mislead them.
- The basic test Paul gives here is 1. whether Jesus is glorified by it and 2. Whether it agrees with Scriptural truth.
- Most error in spiritual gifts is just us getting it wrong in our attempt to be obedient to God, and this is fine and we need to admit when we do and forgive each other the bits that are 'us' and not God. We are family and are learning together.
- However, sometimes things are shared which can take people really off track and into error and these need addressing sensitively by the leaders. It doesn't matter what manifestations and feelings come in a meeting, if the content of what is shared dishonours or belittles the person of Christ then it is not the Holy Spirit speaking.
- Equally if the prophetic word, powerful though it may be, is un-scriptural then it is not the Holy Spirit speaking and will lead to error if it persists- particularly on something as important as the deity of Christ. This is what distinguishes the cults from believers. When Paul says in v3 that it is by the Holy Spirit that someone says 'Jesus is Lord' he means the confession that Jesus is God- this takes the Holy Spirit to do- try it with someone from a cult! Paul then backs this up by using a Trinitarian formula in the very next verses v4-6 -Spirit, Lord (Son), God (Father), indicating that spiritual gifts come from the Tri-une God and so usage of them should not deny a doctrine such as the Trinity, as many cults have done in their 'prophetic' words.
- Not only is Biblical truth important in the weighing of prophetic words but also truth in general- as in -does this message relate to the facts, or is it demonstrably false? If it is false then it isn't God and should be disregarded without worrying about it- we all have off days. Also compare with other things God has said to help weigh things. Share with leaders to help discernment.
- "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil". 1Thess 5:21-22

We are to use spiritual gifts harmoniously

- No one wants to hear out of tune music- me at a Christmas event I played at once (a long way away) and a child barely able to string 2 notes together performed, everyone very gracious! Orchestras that have not tuned up can be painful to listen to. That is how we are when we despise each other's gifts.
- See verses 4-6 Paul uses the illustration of the Godhead as a team- three in one- Father, Son, Holy Spirit but all One to illustrate that we are all different regarding our gifts but we should be united as one in their usage-i.e. not divided.
- The temptation with all of us is to despise people who are different from us- to get irritated by them- this is opposite to what this passage is teaching us. We should celebrate our differences and be harmonious with them rather than hostile.

- V8-11 'through the SAME Spirit'-4 times- Paul's point is the same God who gives you your gifts has also empowered that other person to use their very different gifts, so if we are fighting against the person we are really fighting against God.
- We are not to despise our own gifts-v15- we all have a unique role to play and we fit the part better than anyone- if you don't do your bit something is missing and the body becomes disabled.
- Equally we all need the gifts of those around us- none of us has all the gifts- what we lack is covered by one another's gifts-v21
- The gifts that may not seem exciting and very visible play a crucial role for the health of the Church. Paul uses the example of the human body- the parts we are unable to have on display are not any less important than the parts others can see- a person may look healthy on the outside but if their internal organs are in a terrible state their health will not be good. The 'behind the scenes' servant roles are vital for the health of the Church. Never downplay your unique contribution.

We are to edify others (build them up) with our gifts

- Read 14:26
- Edify means to build up. 12:28-31 gives a list of gifts and tongues is last because it only edifies the person with the gift (unless interpreted for others). Therefore Paul sees the most important thing as building others up. We all have the potential to do this each time we meet.
- 'Whenever you come together'- i.e. When the church meets- see v23 (i.e. Homegroup, Sunday mornings etc.). Spiritual gifts can be used effectively in evangelism outside of meetings and also within meetings. Here there is an expectation that they will be especially be present when the Church comes together.
- 'Whenever..each one has'- this should build an expectation in us that we can get something from God to share every meeting, and not just a few people but 'each one' of us.
- '..has a psalm , a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, a interpretation'- you might read a psalm or a piece of scripture, or start up a song or pray out, or share a testimony- this is all encouraging for others- it builds them up and is called 'body ministry'. When the Church comes together it should not be 'one-man ministry'- this is unbiblical, it should be the whole body participating.
- Some Churches have very professional bands and lively worship but there is no sharing from a congregational level- this is not right, we need to live out the scripture which says 'each one has'.
- Consumerism mentality vs. Contributor mentality. Self-indulgent 'receiving' vs. What Paul is speaking about here- making it our goal each meeting to edify others as he did- he spoke in tongues more than the Corinthians but would rather share something helpful to build them up than to get them to look at him thinking 'wow he must really know the Lord'. Be filled, but then give out- we are filled to spill.
- Courage to break the silence- don't negate your contribution- doesn't have to be long- just a few words- there is a first time for all of us to share and we all go through that fear barrier- why not break it today?

Summary

- We are to know spiritual gifts
- We are to use spiritual gifts harmoniously
- We are to edify others (build them up) with our gifts