



WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED*

SERMON 4 : BECAUSE OF WHAT HE GIVES

SPIRITUAL GIFTS – 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11

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This morning's sermon does not propose to answer all the many questions you may have or to provide a definitive direction as to your gifting as an individual. However what I do hope happens is that this sermon will ignite within us all a desire to further explore, to dig deeper. In your small groups, doing the SHAPE course or in your personal devotions.

Now friends, the whole subject of Spiritual gifts has at certain times and places been controversial.

Depending on one's denomination and experience, there would be different views on this topic.

However, we need to understand that Spiritual Gifts are not a denominational thing – it's not a Pentecostal thing, or Charismatic things, an Anglican or a Lutheran thing - it is firstly and foremostly a Biblical Christian teaching.

Someone may ask, but if it is a controversial subject, why even bother talking about it, or studying it? Well, friends, if we don't. If we choose to place it in the "I-don't-understand-therefore-I- don't- talk –about-it" category of our faith, then there's a couple of dangers we run into. Firstly, we run the risk of men and women trying to operate in areas they are not spiritually gifted for. Kind of like the square peg in a round hole image.



The other risk of course, is there could be men and women sitting in the pews Sunday after Sunday never realizing or being able to identify the God-given gifts locked up inside of them.

Firstly,

I. WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

“A spiritual gift is a God-given ability which enables a believer to effectively serve the body of Christ.” (Ray Pritchard)

1. **A spiritual gift must not be confused with a natural talent.** A person may have a natural talent in some area and not be spiritually gifted in that area at all. Sometimes talents and gifts go together; sometimes they don't.

2. **A spiritual gift is not be confused with the fruit of the Spirit.** The fruit of the Spirit refers to the nine character qualities mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control).

Romans 12	1 Corinthians 12	Ephesians 4	Other passages
exhortation giving leadership mercy prophecy service teaching	administration apostle discernment faith healings helps knowledge miracles <i>prophecy</i> <i>teaching</i> tongues tongues interpretation wisdom	<i>apostle</i> evangelism pastor <i>prophecy</i> <i>teaching</i>	celibacy hospitality martyrdom missionary voluntary poverty

Now we won't expand on any of them but here are some of them (I encourage you to dig into each one of them in your small groups).

II. WHO

Logic tells us that in life, with every gift, there has to be a giver and a recipient.

In the case of spiritual gifts, WHO gives them?

Well our text reminds us in v11 that the Holy Spirit does:

“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

When we realize that the spiritual Gifts, just like our salvation, is not something we earned. It has been freely given to us by the Holy Spirit according to His sovereign choice and grace that is a very liberating thing. Because we begin to understand that when it comes to working together as the body of Christ, it shouldn't matter if my brother or my sister is better at something than I am, because

“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.” (1 Cor 12:11)

So, God, the Holy Spirit, is the Giver?

If He's the giver, then WHO'S the recipient?

You and I are? Christians.

Some Christians? No. You see, friends, the gifts of the Spirit are not limited to a select few. All Christian believers who have been *saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, have been given one or more Spiritual gifts.

1. Romans 12:6—"**We have** different gifts, according to the grace given us."
2. I Corinthians 12:7—"Now to **each one** the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
3. Ephesians 4:7—"To **each one** of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."

Now that we've looked at WHAT spiritual gifts are; we've considered WHO the giver and recipients of these gifts are, let's reflect on the WHY?

III. WHY ARE THESE GIFTS GIVEN TO GOD’S CHILDREN?

Well firstly and foremostly, these gifts are given to bring glory to the triune God.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If any one serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” Listen to the words of I Peter 4:10-11.

Whenever you and I yield ourselves and the gifts He’s given us to God, it brings glory to Him.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 54:6)

Could I say one more thing here. When it comes to spiritual gifts, ***the gift is never the object/goal.*** The Giver of the gift is! In other words, we don’t chase after the gift for the gifts itself, we pursue the Giver. The Giver is primary – the gift is secondary

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)”

I wont spend too much time on this point, because we will be looking at it in a bit more detail next week, but another purpose of spiritual gifts of course is for mutual edification - the building one another up.

Ephesians 4:12 “to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”

Friends, for those who know what your spiritual gifts are, may God grant you the grace to sharpen/hone them to use them skillfully for His glory. For those still on the journey of discovery, may God continue to lead you and make known to you that which He’s already given to you and what he’s designed you for.

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