

# Concerning Spiritual Gifts • 1

## Corinthians chapter 12

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For the last few weeks, we've been doing a study on the Person in the work of the Holy Spirit. And the reason we've been doing this is as we typically just teach through the Scriptures, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.

But we finished up the New Testament here on Sunday morning, just a few weeks ago, and we're still completing the Old Testament. We have just a few books to go on Wednesday night.

While we're letting the Old Testament study finish up, I've been doing a series that I've been wanting to do for some time on the Holy Spirit. And if you'll indulge me here for just a moment, I want to review a little bit of what we've covered up to this point. To do that, I'm going to go ahead and put our graphic up on the screen, which is our Joe Anybody.



We introduced Joe last week to you and this is our graphic of an individual who is opening his heart to the work of God, to forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ, and Joe comes to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

And what that means, by the way, is that he confesses his sins and he prays for Jesus to save him from the penalty of his sin. And he accepts the forgiveness that Jesus purchased for him on the cross.

Do you know that's what makes a Christian you guys? Please understand, a Christian is not someone who goes to church necessarily. A Christian isn't even necessarily someone who reads their Bible. It isn't even necessarily someone who prays.

A Christian is someone who has embraced the work of Jesus on the cross for them personally, has opened their hearts to what Jesus did when He ransomed us from our sin.

Now, the Bible tells us that when we confess our sin and receive the wonderful gift of forgiveness, that Jesus makes possible on the cross. The Bible says that we then receive the Holy Spirit.

And so you in our graphic of Joe Anybody. He then receives the Holy Spirit to come in and dwell inside. That's depicted there on a graphic by the dove. And now a whole host of wonderful things begins to transpire in this person's life.

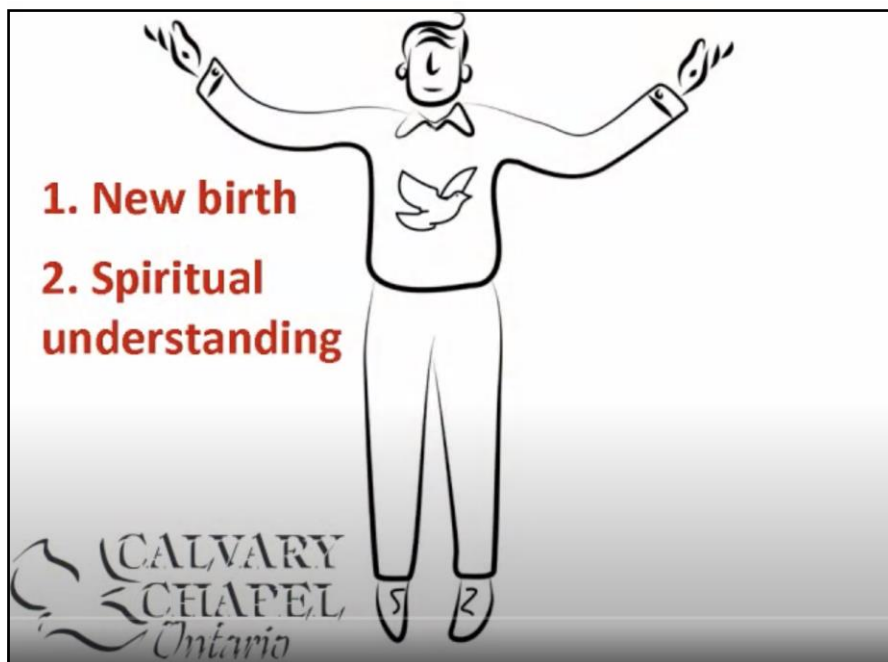
And just to cover in review some of the things that we've looked at, obviously, when someone receives the Holy Spirit, the first and most important thing is that they receive the new birth that is in Jesus Christ. That means he is born again, or she is born again.



The Bible says that we are all born naturally, but only those of us who receive the forgiveness of Jesus on the cross are born supernaturally or born again.

You'll remember Jesus had that conversation with Nicodemus and said, you must be born again. Nicodemus said, I don't get it. How can a person be born a second time? And Jesus says, I'm not talking about flesh. Flesh, all flesh can do is give birth to flesh. I'm talking about a work of the Spirit. You must be born again by the Spirit. And so that is what happens when a person opens their heart to receive that gift of the Spirit upon accepting what Jesus did for them on the cross.

The next thing that we covered, and there are other things as well, but we covered the issue that now that the person has received the Spirit, they are given understanding about spiritual things.



Now that is vitally important because Paul tells us that the man without the Spirit, in other words, someone who is not born again, cannot, cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritual truths and they are spiritually discern. Try as he may in the natural, he cannot understand the things of the Spirit because he needs the Spirit. And we call this, Illumination

And when we receive Jesus as our Savior and His Spirit comes to live within us, suddenly we begin to have understanding about spiritual things, whereby perhaps before we met the Lord, before we prayed to receive Christ, we read the Bible, and it was just a big confusing jumble of words and stuff. And we're like, what is this?

And then we open our hearts and we recognize our need of a Savior and He comes into and dwell. And now the Spirit of God makes sense. The Spirit of God makes sense of the Scriptures to our hearts. And He begins to speak to us and begins to apply things in our lives.

And it's a very exciting thing when a new believer begins to open their heart to that illuminating work of the Spirit. It really is a wonderful thing. And then we begin to see changes in that person's character, which is the next thing on our thing here. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago.



We begin to walk in a new spiritual character. Now this is referred to as the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is given to us in the Scriptures as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and all the rest. These are the literally the character traits, the communicable attributes of God, which He communicates to the believer as we begin to walk in a greater sense, a supernatural sense of loving, and caring, and a heart of peace, and all the things that go along with it. But again, it's a supernatural work. It's a work of God's spirit in our lives. Okay.

These are some of the things that begin to happen when a person opens their heart to Jesus Christ. But as we talked last week, as we began to talk about the next phase or the next stage of a Christian's growth and being open to those things. We find that this person needs something else and in, and that is spiritual power.



If you're in Acts chapter 1, I want you to look with me once again, beginning in verse 4, where Jesus talks about this. And He says, “

*On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

*<sup>6</sup> So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” (NIV)*

And then he goes on to talk about his original subject, “<sup>8</sup> *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

This verse in Acts chapter 1, or this passage, I should say, begins to outline for us what are our character of Joe Anybody after he's come to Christ, after he's received the Holy Spirit. The indwelling presence of the Spirit by which he is born again, by which he is illuminated to the things of the Spirit by which he has given the ability to walk in the character of God. He is missing still the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus said that power comes to those who receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, keep in mind, Christians, that by this time, when Jesus was speaking these things to them, they had already received the indwelling presence of God's

Spirit that had already taken place. That took place on resurrection night when Jesus appeared to them and breathed on them and said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” (John 20:22)

But now He is talking about something else, and He tells them why they are to wait for this work of God. He said, for “*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;*”

And so, we're going to look at this a little bit more thoroughly today and we're going to look at spiritual gifts, which are the power that we get from God as we are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Now, the best place to do this is in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. So I'm going to have you turn there. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And the reason we're going to 1 Corinthians is because not only is that where the apostle Paul talks the most about spiritual gifts, but it's where we get some really great information about the proper usage of spiritual gifts. Here's why.

The Corinthian church was whacked out and wild on spiritual gifts. They loved it. In fact, as we read through the book of 1 Corinthians, one of the things that we note right away is that these people were operating in the gifts of the Spirit. They loved the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but we also find out as we read through the Book of 1 Corinthians is that they were not always operating in the Spirit. Many times they were operating in the flesh, but they were calling it spiritual, and that's very, very common by the way. It's more common than you might think.

There's a lot of things that go on in churches today which are thought to be works of the Spirit, but are in fact nothing more than a work of the flesh. And it's very difficult sometimes to discern the difference between a work of the flesh because the soul, the flesh, can mimic and imitate sometimes the things of the Spirit. But the works of the flesh are deadly.

And so the apostle Paul spends a great deal of time in this letter, which we're not going to go through, obviously the whole thing. If you want to go through the whole thing. In fact we actually have my study on the Gifts of the Spirit, which we took out of our entire study of 1 Corinthians available in the bookstore. It's also available obviously on our website.

But Paul takes a lot of time talking with these people about the issue of spiritual gifts. And he begins this way in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 1. He says,

*“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”* Stop there.

This is a huge and very important verse to begin with when we look at the issue of what the Spirit longs to do in us as it relates to spiritual gifts. Because as we get further into this letter, we're going to find that what was going on in the Corinthian church was a great deal of ignorance. These people were operating in the gifts of the Spirit, but yet they were still ignorant about the gifts of the Spirit. And that's an important thing for you and I to remember.

Just because you walk into a church where the gifts of the Spirit are operational, doesn't mean that they're doing them correctly or biblically. Because the Corinthian church was wild into the gifts of the Spirit, but they were not functioning in those gifts biblically or correctly. And so Paul spends a great deal of time correcting and reprimanding them for the abuses and the things that are going on. And so he says, *“I don't want you to be ignorant”* about spiritual gifts.

What's interesting about that statement is that here we are today, here's the Christian church today, and we're still ignorant of spiritual gifts. I find a great deal of ignorance in the body of Christ, even though we have Paul's letter that gives us wonderful insights, tells us how these things should be used, and not used. And yet, we are still ignorant, largely, about spiritual gifts. And I have to ask myself the question, why is that?

Well, part of the reason is something we dealt with last week in our study about the Holy Spirit. We talked about a teaching in the body of Christ called, Cessationism. And the cessationist is an individual who simply believes that the gifts of the Spirit ceased to function at some point in the early Christian church.

And we talked last week about the fact that they usually cite the cessation of spiritual gifts as when the Bible was completed, or finished being written, or when the last of the apostles died out. And so they'll say, and you can read this in books and commentaries, they'll say, well, the gifts of the Spirit were only for the apostolic period of the church. And once the apostolic period of the church ceased with the death of the final apostle, the gifts of the Spirit ceased to be functionally needed in the body of Christ.

And if you missed last week's study, I'll encourage you to either get on the internet or get the CD over in our bookstore and listen to that one because I addressed the whole issue of why cessationism is not a biblical concept. It's

based on very, very flimsy biblical evidence, and it really just doesn't make any sense.

We believe that the gifts of the Spirit are functional for today, but unfortunately there's a huge amount of the body of Christ that really hasn't been taught. And there are some churches that do teach. There are some teachers that actually tell people the gifts of the Spirit are not for today, but the vast majority of churches just simply ignore it.

They come to the issues about the gifts of the Spirit and they just pass it over. They just, they don't really say much about it at all. They just well, and they might make some brief cessationist statement by saying, well, that's what God did back then and bada dada, da. But by and large, there's a whole lot of churches that just ignore the whole thing. And so what happens is people don't get taught, they don't get taught on what the Bible has to say about this. Even though it's right here in the Word of God.

I think another reason why there's a lot of ignorance related to spiritual gifts is Christians themselves have just not taken the initiative to look into the Word of God to study it for themselves and to know what the Bible has to say on this subject.

And then I think perhaps the other reason is that there's a fair amount of ignorance concerning spiritual gifts is because Christians have knowingly or unknowingly given themselves permission to believe things that aren't clearly revealed in the Word of God.

Now, I want you to hear me about this because this is important. Part of the ignorance about spiritual gifts is because information has been omitted. But the other side of ignorance about spiritual gifts is that some information has been accepted, but it's not biblical. In other words, people allow experiences to become their basis of truth. Let me give you a quick example.

Some of you have heard me talk about this in the past. I won't ask you to give me a show of hands, but I'm wondering how many of you have been exposed to the phenomenon in some churches called Slain in the Spirit. I'm willing to bet that many of you have. And it's usually a place where they have people come up to the front or maybe even stand up where they are. And somebody comes along and prays for them, usually touches them on the head, and they fall back. And there's usually catchers to, to catch them, and they fall back into the arms of someone, and they lay them out. And supposedly the Lord is doing this work on them while they lie there on the floor, slain in the Spirit.



Well, this phenomenon is actually known by a great many people in the body of Christ, but did you know there is not one single solitary biblical reference to being slain in the Spirit? It doesn't exist. It's not in the Bible so why is it practiced? In some churches across the United States of America, I can't speak for foreign churches. I haven't been there.

Why is it practiced? The answer is because Christians have given themselves permission to believe things that aren't in the Bible. Again, either knowingly or unknowingly. What they do is they simply walk into a church, and they see things going on, and they maybe ask somebody, what's that? And somebody says, well, that person was slain in the Spirit. And they just, oh, okay, slain in the Spirit. And they use the term and they perhaps participate in some sort of this phenomenon and they walk away thinking, okay, slain in the Spirit. I know exactly what that is. Never once asking the question. Is it in the Bible?

See, Christians, we believe that if something isn't in the Bible, it's dangerous. And that for you and I to create a position, a doctrinal position on something that is unbiblical, is ultimately going to create ignorance. Paul said to the Corinthian church, I would not have you be ignorant of spiritual gifts. Again, ignorance is from withholding information and from embracing information that may not be biblical.

Paul goes on here. Look with me in verse 2. He says, *“You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.”* Paul wants the Corinthians here to be humble as he begins to address them on the subject of spiritual gifts.

And he says, I want you guys to remember that when you were pagans before you came to Christ, remember how gullible you were. Remember how open you were to thinking that these dumb and deaf, these idols that couldn't speak in a million years, you somehow thought they were speaking to you. You thought these were real. You thought these were valid. And he says, I want you to remember that. I want you to remember you were led astray during that time, and it is it's possible to be led astray now too.

People, listen to me. We have a great deal of pride in the Christian church that we need to jettison as it relates to spiritual things. We sometimes walk around like there's no way in God's green earth that we could be led astray by spiritual anything, let alone spiritual gifts. But how many times in the Bible does it warn believers about being led astray? And so there are people being led astray by things even that are purported to be like spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were being led astray as it relates to some aspects of these gifts.

And so he goes on to give them a guideline in verse 3. Look with me in verse 3. It says, *“Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God (is ever going to say) says, (something like) “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”*

This might sound like really elementary stuff to you and I, but the fact of the matter is, this is where the Corinthian church was in terms of their gullibility. If somebody came in and purported to have a message from God, even if it said things that were damaging, they would just open their hearts to it, regardless of what the message was. And Paul says, there are guidelines here that you guys, there are tests that you can give to these things.

If someone is speaking by the Spirit of God and truly inspired by the Holy Spirit, they're not going to say things negatively against Jesus Christ. I mean, that's ridiculous. The Holy Spirit is not going to bad mouth Jesus Christ. And if and so you know that if somebody makes a wild, crazy statement, you know that person isn't speaking by the Spirit of God. I don't care what they're claiming to you.

And by the same token, when you see someone genuinely moving in the Spirit, there is going to be that genuine praise that makes that declaration that Jesus is, in fact, Lord of all.

A.W. Tozier writes about this particular phenomenon of gullibility and he makes the point that there are some Christians that are so gullible that they actually pretty much believe anything as long as it is unusual or sensational. And that's true. As long as it comes with a lot of froth and bubble, they're just right there and ready to just take it in, hook, line, and sinker. Regardless of whether it's biblical, regardless of whether it meets the standards of God's Word. And we have to war against that sort of gullibility and so forth. Paul reminds them that there are tests related to these things and we'll see more about that in just a little bit.

Look with me at verse 4. Verse 4 goes on to say, *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”*

I want you to notice, this is called unity in source because Paul makes the statement here that no matter what the spiritual gift may be, it all comes from God. It all comes from Him.

And one of the things that the Corinthians were doing, and we don't have time to get into this in detail, is they were elevating certain gifts in such a way as to make some people out to be more spiritual than others. And Paul is simply making the point that spiritual gifts all come from God and He dispenses them according to His wisdom, according to His oversight and so forth.

And then he goes on in verse 7 to say, “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*” And as you continue to read through 1 Corinthians, you're going to find out that statement right there is something that the Corinthians desperately needed to hear because they were exercising spiritual gifts in order to look spiritual. And there was a one up-man-ship sort of a thing going on in the Corinthian church. And people wanted to rise to the occasion of the exercise of spiritual gifts so they would look good in the eyes of other people.

Paul says, you know what? That isn't what spiritual gifts are all about. Spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit for the common good and if a gift is imparted to an individual when there is a gathering of believers, it is imparted in such a way that the body will be blessed. Not just you look spiritual. In fact, that's not what it's about at all.

And so he's going to get in now to a list of spiritual gifts, but I want to make and emphasize one very important point with you before we begin to read through this list and talk about them. Spiritual gifts have nothing to do with natural learning. Hear me now. Spiritual gifts have nothing to do with natural gifting or natural learning.

Well I tell you, I have a wealth of wonderful Bible commentaries that I have at my fingertips. In fact, they're all on my laptop. And I have this incredible, I don't know how big of a room I would need to put all those books if they were all in book form. Fortunately, they're all digital, and they're all on my laptop, and I can read just scores of comments from people on things of this sort.

But let me tell you something I learned about reading commentaries about the gifts of the spirit. Don't read a commentary about the gifts of the Spirit from a cessationist. He doesn't have a clue what he's talking about. And what they end up doing often is they end up describing Spiritual gifts through natural definitions. And it's like, wait a minute, that doesn't have anything to do with it.

Spiritual gifts are spiritual abilities by God to the individual where the person would not have had that ability before. All right. Do you remember in Acts chapter 2? We read this last week. We won't take time to turn there, but

remember in Acts chapter 2, what happened when the believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit? The Bible says the Spirit fell upon the assembled believers there and they began to speak in other languages. But here's what the Word says, as the Spirit enabled them.

In other words, they weren't speaking languages they'd ever learned before. Okay. They were speaking languages that they didn't understand. That's one of the things that's interesting about the gift of tongues. People misunderstand it. They think that when God gives the gift of tongues, we suddenly have the ability to speak in a language and understand it. We don't. It just, it comes out of our mouths, but we don't even know what we're saying. And they just began to speak.

And you'll remember that people gathered, in Acts chapter 2, remember? People gathered around and said, what is this? They heard this sound and they said, what is this we hear. These men are Galileans, but yet we hear them declaring the wonders and the praises of God in our own languages, but they don't know our languages. How can they be doing this? They saw it as a supernatural event. Okay.

If these people all would have been by trilingual and whatever all else, and people heard that they would have come along and said, oh, that's cool, they can all speak different languages. They must have gone to school, or they must have lived in those cultures, and that wouldn't have been any big wonder.

But you'll remember that it says in Acts chapter 2, it says, perplexed and amazed. The people said, what is this? Because it was a work of God's Spirit; a supernatural work. And again, people don't get weirded out by the word supernatural, it just means beyond the natural, okay? Beyond my ability in and of myself, God will empower me to do something.

And these gifts of the Spirit are supernatural abilities that transcend man's natural giftings, man's natural learning. And so forth. All right, let's go ahead and go through the list. Here's what it says.

Verse 8. *“To one there is given through the Spirit (notice that, through the Spirit) the message (your Bible may say, the word) of wisdom, to another the message (or once again, the word) of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,”*

All right, now you guys probably know what knowledge and wisdom is. Knowledge is knowing, okay? When I take my car to a mechanic, I want to take it to somebody who knows how to fix it, right? He knows what a combustion

engine does and what it, sometimes what it shouldn't do. And he can listen to it and diagnose it. And he can, cause he knows that sort of a thing. That's knowledge. Now that person gets that by learning. He goes to school or he works under someone as an apprentice, but he learns to know a combustion engine so he can work on them, right? That's knowledge.

Wisdom and I'm talking about natural stuff here. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. You with me? So it's one thing for a mechanic to say, ah, that sounds like a camshaft, or that sounds like you've got a compression leak, or you've got in this, or you've got a that. It's another thing for him to say, here's what you do to fix it, and to actually get in there and do the work. That's wisdom because he knows how to apply his knowledge. With me. All right. So knowledge and wisdom. We understand those things from a natural perspective.

But now remember, these are supernatural things. Paul says here, *“To one there is given through the Spirit, (the word or) the message of wisdom.”* And to someone else, a word or a *“message of knowledge.”* And this is really just what you would expect it to be.

It would be, first of all, knowledge that God would give, that transcended your ability to know. I remember a number of years ago, about 26 probably years ago, some of you have heard this before, but I was in Montana and I was on staff at a church there. And I went with my pastor, my senior pastor, to go meet a man in a different location. And we'd never met this man before, but he called and asked if we would meet him and talk with him and so forth. And I was just in a phase of just listening and learning at that point in my Christian walk. I was a young man in years and I was a young man in the Lord.

But we went to go meet with this man and we sat there in this room talking to him. And you know how people can do. They tend to talk around their problems and not get at the specific. And the guy talked for a couple of minutes about really nothing in general. And then my pastor who was with me, just leaned forward to the man, he said, you think you're homosexual, don't you?

And there was nothing in the man's manner, demeanor, words, or anything that would have suggested anything of the sort and I was a little bit caught off guard to hear him say such a thing. I thought wow, that's bold. But immediately this other person just got these big eyes, that deer in the headlight look and he burst into tears. And he said, how did you know? That was a word of knowledge?

God will drop a nugget of information in your heart about someone, or something, and you know it. You just know it. You've never met him. You've

never heard anything about what's going on in their life. And you know a specific issue about their heart or a condition of their heart. We read about this, frankly, a little bit later on in the Book of Acts when Peter is sent to Samaria because there is an outbreak of people getting saved there. And he goes up to Samaria, but remember there's that one man who wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit because he saw what happened when Peter and John laid their hands on people.

And he said, please give me this ability so that those who I lay my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit. And you'll remember Peter rebuked him and he said, the Lord rebuke you for having such a statement or such a thought in your mind. And then he said this, for I see you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.

Now, Peter didn't know the man. Peter had just met the man and yet he said through a word of knowledge, I see you're full of bitterness. And so a word of knowledge gives insight into a particular person or situation by the Spirit. And it's something that you wouldn't or couldn't know apart from Him just dropping it in your heart.

A word of wisdom then is a directive word. A word of wisdom would be something like the Lord would have you to go to that person and ask for forgiveness. Or the Lord would have you go back to your mother and tell her this. It's a directive from the Lord. It is the application of knowledge. Okay. But it always gives a direction; gives a specific path to take.

And it is important by the way, to remember that God is not the only source of supernatural knowledge. And I'm not talking irreverently here. I'm just simply saying that just because somebody has a supernatural insight doesn't mean that it came from God. Okay. The enemy can counterfeit these things and he has information that he wants to pass along to wow people as well, but that stuff leads to bondage and death. And so we need to walk in discernment related to these things.

He goes on in verse 9 to say, *“to another faith by the same Spirit, ...”* Remember when Peter walked on water, he just got this supernatural just endowment of faith. We've talked in the past about George Mueller. Remember him? The 19th century Christian man who had orphanages in England. Never once asked for money. Never once. And if you came to George and said, George, do you need money for your orphanages? He'd say, not telling, literally. He so wanted to leave it up to God, but God gave him faith to just press through and never once asked for funds.

I've had some instances in the 29 years I've been ministering where I've prayed for people and there was just something special there. I mean, you got to know that in 29 years I've prayed for a lot of people and for a lot of issues. Physical, emotional, and so forth, circumstantial, situational.

But usually, you pray for somebody, you lay hands on him, you say, Father, and you believe. You believe in your heart God can do this. God can heal this person. God can touch the situation. But there are times when I'm praying for somebody and I know that I know that I know, it's done. It's done. It's like all I can do at that point is just praise the Lord.

And I've been praying for people before and actually laughed out loud just because God just has communicated with me, this is a done deal. Just praise Me, and that faith just wells up in your heart that says, it's over. It's finished, and it's just one of the most wonderful things. But I can't make it happen. When I'm praying for somebody, I can't make that happen. It's the Holy Spirit who does that. And He does it as He determines.

He goes on in verse 9 to say, *“to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,”* Notice *“gifts”* is in the plural as if to say, there are gifts of healing related to some diseases, and infirmities, and other gifts for others. God will give to an individual, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the ability to pray for people and see those diseases cured.

In verse 10, *“to another miraculous powers, ...”* And this literally in the Greek means, acts of power, or acts of *dunamis*; dynamite. And this speaks of when the Holy spirit chooses to override the laws of nature and do incredible things that you and I would consider a miracle in any other way.

He speaks also in verse 10, *“to another prophecy, ...”* And prophecy is simply forth telling a message. People you have to understand something. We think of prophecy as just telling the future, that's a small part of prophecy. The word prophecy simply means, speaking the words of God. The Lord dropped something in your heart and you speak it out. But you speak it in a greater sense of authority than you would speak it from yourself.

And you've heard that here at Calvary chapel from time to time. We've had people come up during worship, just take the microphone and say, I feel like the Lord would have, and then just begin to say something. And it's not necessarily a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom. It's just a message from the Lord. It might just be simply, I love you and I know what's going on in your life. And I

want you to bring those things to me or whatever the thing might be. And it's not weird. It's not scary. It's not wacky. It's just God speaking.

And I've talked to some people over the years who have said, well, I don't believe that prophecy is for today. And I'll say, well, why? Well, because I've got the Bible. The Bible's already finished being written, and there's no need for prophecy anymore. Well, number one, you can't prove that by the Scripture as far as that prophecy isn't for today. But number two, I know the Bible is finished. That's how we judge prophecy. That's how we judge.

When somebody gets up and says, thus says the Lord, it better square with the Word of God, or we're going to kick them off the stage. I mean, the bottom line is the Word of God is the standard by which we judge these things. But just because the Scripture is finished being written, doesn't mean God doesn't have anything else to say to you or say to me because I believe He is speaking and He wants to speak to his Children.

Now He's not going to do anything contrary to the Bible. He's not going to ever, He's not going to add some revelation that contradicts what's already here. If we get some of that, we're dealing with a false prophet. Okay. There's just no way around that, that's just the way it is. But that doesn't mean that prophecy or the gift of prophecy by the Spirit is no longer functioning in the body of Christ.

Listen, the prophet isn't somebody with a long beard carrying around a staff and a robe. A prophet, a person who exercises the gift of prophecy is simply someone that says, I've been praying for you, and I feel like the Lord has a message for you. And you say, well, let me hear it. Well, the Lord wants you to know, da-da-da-da-da. That's prophecy, you guys. It doesn't have to be this earth shattering, thus saith the Lord, sort of a thing from the mountain. It's just this simple, gentle, sort of a thing.

It's interesting almost by way of confirmation of this whole thing. I got to tell you something real quickly. I did all my studying yesterday. I always study on Saturdays for Sunday morning and I finished up about midnight. And I tucked myself into bed and I got up this morning in the 6 o'clock hour. And I came out to the living room, and I opened up my laptop to go over my notes like I usually do, and the Holy Spirit said, that's not what I want you to teach on. I want you to do something else.

And I was like, you're kidding I mean cause... And then Sue got up and she came walking through and she must have seen that look on my face that only 33 years of marriage can prepare you for, and she said what. We're losing..., you



don't even have to... What! And I said, oh the Lord, I just, this isn't right. And so she sat down and she encouraged me a little bit and... You're talking about the power of the Holy Spirit guess you get to exercise it here this morning a little bit cause by this time it was 8 o'clock. And our first service is at 9. So I put everything together in about 15 minutes, but it was just one of those things. But I don't know why I connected that comment right there. I forgot where I was going. So prophecy, a word, a message from the Lord.

It goes on to verse 10, “*to another distinguishing between spirits, ...*” Which is the ability to know the difference, to discern the difference. By the Spirit between what is of the Spirit and what is not of the Spirit. And you know what? We need that.

The Word of God also does that too. By the way, the Bible says the Word of God is like a double edged sword. Remember what it says in Hebrews? It's able to separate bone from marrow, soul from spirit. (Hebrews 4:12) But there's also a gift that God gives in the body of Christ to discern and to know. It's like red alert. That's not from God. Shut that one down right now, sort of a thing.

And then it goes on to talk about, “*to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, ...*” I told you last week, don't get weirded out by the word tongues. It just means languages. But again, it is the supernatural ability to speak in a language which you've never learned before, even though you don't know what you're saying.

And then “*...the interpretation of tongues*” is the supernatural ability to interpret to a... It's only done in a crowd where a group what has just been said, even though you don't know that language. Okay. If you did know that language, it wouldn't be a supernatural gift. You just simply be saying, okay, this is what they said.

Let me tell you a quick story. Pastor Chuck Smith tells about when Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa was it's in its early years. And he tells about how they were, it was a Sunday night and they were, they'd gotten through the teaching of the Word, and they were having what they eventually called an afterglow, where they just worshipped and so forth.

And a woman got up and spoke in tongues. But she did, she actually got up, grabbed the microphone, and she spoke in this supernatural thing. And then another woman got up and gave the interpretation of what had been spoken. Later on after the service, there was, this is back when the hippies were still coming to the church and stuff. Somebody brought up a friend to pastor Chuck

and said, my friend wants to have some questions for you about tonight's service.

Pastor Chuck said, sure, shoot. And person said, I have a question. Why did somebody get up during the service and give a message in French? And then why did the other person get up and then just interpret it in English for everybody?

And pastor Chuck said, well, before I answer your question, he said, let me tell you a couple of things about those women cause I know them both. The first woman who got up to speak is a very, very close friend of mine and my wife's and I happen to know, she doesn't know a lick of French. And he said, the other woman who got up to interpret, I know doesn't know French because that was my wife.

And the man said, that was, first of all, the first person spoke beautiful, aristocratic French; word for word gorgeous. And the second person interpreted it perfectly, and I know because I lived in France for a number of years. And that person said, I need to know this God that can do that sort of a thing.

Now we're told in the Scripture that the gift of tongues is actually a sign for unbelievers. That's a rare sort of an occurrence. The Corinthian church was weirding out and they were talking in tongues all the time. I mean, they were like big into this thing. But Paul said, you know what guys, I would rather speak one word of instruction when I'm with you, than 10,000 words in a language that nobody can understand.

What that really means is that the gift of tongues and it really is wonderful and it's amazing, but there really isn't a whole lot of use for it in the body of Christ when we're gathering like this. Functionally and especially the bigger the church gets, the weirder it can get. And that's one of the reasons people will say to me, pastor Paul, why don't we hear the gift of tongues here at Calvary Chapel? Why? Do you just want to be sensational? Do you want to just be tickled? Is that why you want somebody to speak in tongues? Because we're here to instruct in the Word of God.

Now, the gift of tongues is a wonderful, glorious gift for one's own personal prayer time. Paul talks about that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. You can read about it yourself. He talks about praying with the Spirit, but the point is, there had just gotten to be total weirdness in the Corinthian church. But when these gifts are used appropriately, when they're used in order, and peace, people get saved, and they become encouraged.

When they are abused, people run for the door as fast as they can, and they never come back. And that's one of the really sad things about a lot of churches, unfortunately here in the United States that do operate in the gifts of the Spirit, is that they're walking in just total disorder.

And, I am determined as the pastor of Calvary Chapel, Ontario, we are not going to throw out the baby with the bathwater. We are not going to be a dead church as it relates to the gifts of the Spirit, but neither are we going to be weird.

We are going to walk in the order of God's Spirit. And when God is in control, doing things the way He wants to do them, there's peace, there's order, and there's life.

And you and I ever need to be afraid of what God's Spirit wants to do. He is a perfect gentleman, and He will never impose anything upon your life that you frankly don't want. It's a crazy thing about Him, but that's just the way it is.

He loves you so much and He is such a gentleman. He will not impose Himself. He will encourage you. He will convict you even, but He will not impose. And so we're going to walk in that same order and sweetness that the Holy Spirit wants to walk in among us.

Let's stand together. We're going to close in prayer. We're going to have some people down front here this morning to pray with you for whatever might be going on in your life. If you've got a difficult, challenging situation right now, or if you're just maybe praying for somebody else, or maybe you just want somebody to pray with you that you might receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you've never experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I'd love to pray with you about that too.

Again, doesn't get weird or wacky or noisy or strange or anything. It's a very gentle, very wonderful, but yet very powerful work of God's Spirit whereby He enables His children to walk in ways out beyond our natural means. And you know what? We need that today. We need to walk in His power.

So let's pray.