

1 Corinthians #24
Charismatic Gifts for the Great Commission
Ephesians 4:11-12

In our study of "spiritual gifts" thus far, we have seen that a clear distinction is to be noted between the Gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The *Gift* of the Spirit is given to *every* child of God the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. In other words, Jesus Christ takes up residence in the heart of every believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. The *gifts* of the Spirit are given to individual believers as and when the Spirit in His sovereignty pleases.

We have also looked at the "fruit of the Spirit" which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). These nine graces, which represent the "fruit of the Spirit," are to be represented in *every* child of God, and that is the reason we have been told in Galatians 5:16 to "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

In our last study we looked at the gifts of "apostles" and "prophets" from the list of the ministering gifts that Christ has given to His Church. This week, we are going to look at the remaining ministering gifts as they are listed in Ephesians 4:11.

The third gift of the Lord to His people, as listed in this list of ministering gifts here in Ephesians 4:11 is that of "evangelist." The Greek *verb* translated "evangelist" means to bring good tidings. The *noun* form of the word, "evangelist" refers to the messenger of good news. The word "evangelist" is used three times in the New Testament. Philip one of the seven ordained in Acts 6:5 is called "the evangelist" in Acts 21:8. Paul uses the word in 2 Timothy 4:5 when he admonishes Timothy, the pastor of the church at Ephesus, to "do the work of an evangelist." The third time the word is used is here in Ephesians 4:11 in the gifts of God to His churches.

The Greek word for "evangelist" involves two ideas. *First*, it refers to the *kind* of message preached, the good news of salvation. *Second*, it refers to the *places* in which the message is preached, which places are defined in the Scriptures as "scattered abroad." The different "scattered abroad" places can be seen in the itinerate ministry of Philip. The gift of the evangelist is a distinct gift which few men possess in superlative degree, but when it is found, it is the third of all the ministering gifts of the Holy Spirit, preceded only by the gifts of apostleship and prophecy.

Those famous evangelists through the years have been men so greatly used for God to bless the world, that they have left an indelible mark for the cause of Christ. We need them desperately. May God grant that the gift of evangelist be given with increased frequency and meaning to each of our preachers today.

Strangely enough, the word "pastor," the fourth gift of the Lord to the churches, is used only once in the entire New Testament, here in Ephesians 4:11. The Greek word is "*poimen*," (poy-mané) meaning "shepherd." The New Testament uses three titles to describe the same office in the Church: "*episkopos*," (ep-is-kop-os) meaning "overseer," "*presbuteros*," (pres-boo-ter-os) meaning "elder," and "*poimen*" (poy-mané), meaning "shepherd."

The word "bishop" "*episkopos*" (ep-is-kop-os) refers to the work of the pastor. The word "elder" "*presbuteros*" (pres-boo-ter-os) refers to the dignity and rank of his position. The word "shepherd," "pastor," "*poimen*" (poy-mané) refers to his relationship to the flock. All three words are referred to in Acts 20:17-18. The qualifications of a pastor are written in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9, and in 1 Peter 5:1-4. Pastors are to be obeyed and to be held in high honor, as seen in Hebrews 13: 17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." Those who are worthy are to be given "double honor," as seen in 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." The Greek word for "honor" is the word "time" (tee-may), and it means "a value," or "money paid," or "of the highest esteem." I am not telling you that I ought to be paid twice as much as our laymen receive, but I want you to see the high premium that God puts on the "pastor" who is faithful to "labor in the word and doctrine."

The "pastor" is the gift of the Spirit that is most preciousy cherished by the people of Christ. A worthy pastor is a true benediction from heaven!

The next of the Spirit gifts to the assemblies of Christ is that of "teachers," listed in three of the categories named by the Apostle Paul (Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11). It is the God-given ability to explain the Holy Word of God, especially to newborn babes in Christ. It is a gift greatly needed in the churches.

Remember, the ability to teach and the gift of teaching is two totally different things. In other words, a person might very well have the ability to teach, even teach in our schools and or colleges, but if they do have the gift of teaching, then they will be dismal failures when it comes to teaching the Word

of God. You see, the Word of God must be bathed in the blessed Holy Spirit before it is taught, therefore actually allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through the person doing the teaching. **Because if the Holy Spirit does not speak, then nothing worth while is ever going to be said.**

The Great Commission is carried out through two main channels of work: *preaching*, which is directed to the will; and *teaching*, which is directed to the understanding. With these two gifts in powerful evidence, any people can make an impact for Christ on a pagan world.

In Romans 12:6-8, Paul brings to light the Christian's attitude toward these ministering gifts, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teaches, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

There is literally a profusion of rich gifts of the Holy Spirit to make sweet and noble the work of the Church. They are precious endowments that bless the congregations of the Lord and make us fit us for godly service. We who belong to the household of faith are to be like our Savior who, according to Matthew 20:28, came, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." In spirit and in attitude we are to be like Him who said in John 13:14-15, "If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done unto you."

Look with me for the next few minutes at 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

In 1 Corinthians 12:8 the Apostle Paul names the first two gifts of the Spirit as "the word of wisdom" and "the word of knowledge." **These have to do with *mind*, the *understanding*, when it is consecrated to God. The first of the nine gifts listed in the passage is "the word of wisdom." This gift has to do with the making known, to the people of the Lord, God's plan and purpose for His Church. It has to do with the spiritual principles that govern God's elective choices for us. It presents the deep, spiritual truths that lie back of God's will for our lives. It reveals to us what to believe and how to do in the wisdom of God.** In 1 Corinthians 12:32 one of the twelve tribes is described in these words, "The

children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.” They had the gift of wisdom. In Acts 5:38-39 that famous Rabbi Gamaliel said, concerning the persecution that rose against the first Christian disciples, “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nothing; but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; lest perhaps you are found fighting against God.” He had the gift of wisdom. Acts 6:1-7 reveals that the apostles were led by the spirit of wisdom to elect the ministry of deacons in order that the Church may be properly cared for. Acts 6:9-10 tells us that Stephen, one of the seven, was so filled with power that his opponents “were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke.” Acts 11:1-18 tells us that Peter was wondrously used of God to explain to the Church at Jerusalem the opening of the door of conversion to the Gentiles. Acts 15 tells us that James, pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, presided over the Jerusalem Conference and delivered the final pronouncement concerning the law and the Gospel. This is the gift of “the word of wisdom,” knowing and explaining the mind and the purposes of God for our lives.

Second only to "the word of wisdom" is the gift of "the word of knowledge." This is the gift of appraisal and of judgment concerning things as they are. It is the ability to grasp the truth about a present situation: seeing, knowing, understanding, as the Holy Spirit sees, knows and understands. In other words, it is the ability to look past the present circumstances and/or crises. For example, in 2 Kings 5:20-27 we are given the remarkable story of the prophet Elisha as he revealed to Gehazi that he knew of his being dishonest, “Don’t you realize that I was there in spirit when Naaman stepped down from his chariot to meet you?” That is the word of knowledge. Later in 2 Kings 6:8-12 there is the story about Elisha knowing the war plans of the king of Syria. The king became upset and questioned his leadership concerning a traitor, “Which of you is the traitor? Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?” The answer came swift and certain, “And one of his servants said, It is not us, my lord; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom.” That is the word of knowledge. In the New Testament the gift is most meaningfully and gloriously illustrated in Matthew 16:16 when Peter said to Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus replied, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” That is the word of knowledge. Jesus revealed the word of knowledge in John 4:16-18 in His conversation with the woman of Samaria, “Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come here. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”

It was with this gift of knowledge that Peter revealed the covetous corruption in the Jerusalem church, recorded in Acts 5:3, as he spoke to Ananias and Sapphira, "...why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" **It was with the gift of knowledge that John wrote of the Seven Churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3. It is with this gift of knowledge that God's leaders in the churches today are able to make right judgments and appraisals of the moral, doctrinal, and organizational situations that arise.** It is the gift of knowledge that allows godly leadership to look past the present circumstance and crisis to seek the complete picture as it unfolds.

The next grouping of these gifts of the Spirit has to do with "sympathy of heart," that are given to comfort and encourage God's people. Three of them are named in Romans 12:6-8, "God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly."

We see the gift of "mercy" in these words, "And if you have a gift of showing kindness to others, do it gladly." **The Greek word translated "kindness" literally means "mercy" or "compassion," especially in the presence of human misery, such as abuse, sickness, death and loss.**

This gift has its counterpart in the Old Testament Hebrew word used in Psalm 103:13-14, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." This Hebrew word translated "pitieth" actually means "compassionate love." **Therefore, this gift is the sharing of God's love to those who are in difficult situations and are surrounded with problems.**

But notice that the one possessing the gift is not to feel himself burdened with it, as though he were weighted with all the woe of the world. He is, rather, to minister in the assurance of God's victorious love and mercy. He is to minister "with cheerfulness." **In other words, the love of God that we share with people ought to "lift up their spirits," and not to cause them to be more depressed because of our presence.**

There is also the "gift of encouragement," as seen in these words "If you gift is to encourage others, (then) do it!" **The Greek word translated "exhort" in the**

King James actually means "to encourage." This word is seen in John 14:16 when Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." What we need is this day and time is for God to raise up some "encouragers" to overcome some of this negative "junk" that is being spread around in the Body of Christ.

And last of all, we see in this passage "the gift of giving," "If you have money, share it generously." **The "gift of giving" refers to a material ministry manifesting the love of Christ. In other words, it is not giving because demand or emotions, but by the wisdom of the Spirit of God.**

Although Christian stewardship is far broader than the use of finances, giving money is a prominent part of it. Giving is a part of worship; it is more important for its spiritual expression than for its financial significance. The stewardship of money is an indication of the reality and depth of our commitment to Jesus Christ. And when you try to use your money as leverage in Church, my friend, you have a major problem in your walk with God.

All of these gifts are great, but none of these are to take the place of the Giver. The greatest of all gifts is that of salvation, and that gift has been made possible by the finished work of Jesus Christ. And if you are here tonight, and have never been saved, then why not tonight?