

January 27, 2019

Gifts for the Common Good part 3 and 4 and 5

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Review from parts 1 & 2

Spiritual Gifts:

1. What are they? - How do we identify them or what qualifies them as spiritual gifts (vs 4-7)
2. Who gets them?- Everyone who by the Spirit of God Jesus Lord (vs 3, 6, 7, 11)
3. How much is given? - Exactly the right amount and its different for each person (vs 11)
4. Why are they given? For the common good of the body(vs 7)

Today:

How do we understand the list?

1. WE must remember that the only verb in verses section is carried out by the Holy Spirit. It is he who “gives” these things and therefore is credited with caring them out in the body through the agency of the disciples or followers of Jesu
2. What is on the list? 9 things are mentioned between verses 8-10
 - a. Utterance of wisdom, Utterance of knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healings, Working of miracles, Prophecy, Ability to distinguish between spirits, Various kinds of tongues, Interpretation of tongues
 - i. Then at the end of chapter twelve we see 4 additional gifts and 4 repeated :
 1. Apostles, Prophets, teachers, Miracles, Gifts of healings, helping, administration, various kinds of tongues
 - a. Total of 13 gifts mentioned in chapter 12
 - b. Even with 13 gifts or categories listed, the theme of the chapter is still unity. The emphasis is on the one, same Spirit who gives the gifts and on the one body which benefits from the gifts
 3. Utterance of Wisdom and Knowledge
 - a. Literally “word” of wisdom or knowledge - from Logos
 - i. So some get a “word” of wisdom and some get a “word” of knowledge
 1. Through all of scripture wisdom and knowledge are distinguishable and used interchangeably- they are two sides of the same coin - 26 other times the ESV translated

wisdom and knowledge in the same verse and they are always mentioned in parallel (meaning they are communicating the same thought)

a. Wisdom and Knowledge can be thought of like an Oven:

- i. A repairman and a baker think of an oven a little differently but they both appreciate the purpose and product it produces
 1. The one knows how it works but has little knowledge on how to work it
 2. The other has only a basic knowledge of how it works but what they produce with it reveals great wisdom in how to work it

2. I have come to understand Paul's use of wisdom and knowledge in this context as a prime example of unity and since this whole section is about unity, and oneness, and all these things being given by God he begins his list by mentioning two things that are distinguishable but inseparable- they are the siamese twins of the bible

ii. As for the idea of "word" or "utterance" we must remember that Christ is the word in John 1 and in 1 Corinthians 1:24 Jesus is the power of God and the *wisdom* of God.

1. The wisdom and knowledge that the Spirit will utter to his people will always be Jesus

4. Faith

a. At this point we need to make a distinction between what theologians call the "gift" of faith and the "grace" of faith

- i. Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
 1. The construction of the verse in Greek leaves no doubt that "this" refers to the faith. So faith is not our own faith but a faith given to us by God- it is a gift a *grace* of God and every christian get this *grace* of faith

ii. When it comes to the gift of faith there are times when the Spirit gives an extra dose of grace to a specific person in order to encourage the body. Hebrews tells us that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (11:1) and at times the Spirit gives a special measure of faith to someone to for the purpose of pointing the body to Jesus

5. Gifts of Healings and Workings of Miracles

- a. I am treating these two things together because one (healings) is a subcategory of the other (Miracles), also I believe that it is important that we note that these gifts are mentioned in the plural.
 - i. Miracles and healings are hard to separate. All healings are certainly miracles, but not all miracles are healings
 1. Miracles in the bible are many and very widely, from seas being parted (Exodus 14) , to little oil jars filling many other jars (2 Kings 4), to metal axe heads floating (2 Kings 6), to walls crumbling because people marched around them (Joshua 6), to a kids lunch feeding thousands of people (Mat 14)
 2. Healings are a particular kind of miracle. And I think the reason that there is a distinction between miracles and healings is because healings are personal were as miracles tend to be generic or general - meaning they are for a broader audience.
 3. Regardless of whether or not the Miracle is a generic or specific they are always supernatural and uncommon. Even in the lives of those people through whom God often worked miracles, they were the exception and not the rule
 - a. Moses did not go around to school assemblies turning his staff into a snake, Elisha wasn't on "Israel's got Talent" making axe heads float, and even though we are told in several places in the Gospels that "Jesus healed them all" there were still those with diseases, and disabilities while Jesus walked the earth
 - i. If he had healed everyone there would not have been a lame beggar at the temple gate for Peter and John to heal on their way in to worship (Acts 3)
 - 4.
 - ii. It seems important to point out that both of these gifts are stated as plural. This is helpful in our understanding because it seems to emphasise that these gifts are singular events rather than gifts held by a single person who can use them at his or her discretion
 1. This was Paul's experience: God gave him the grace to heal the cripple at Lystra (Acts 14:10), many people in Ephesus (Acts 19:12) the demon possessed Philippi (Acts 16:18) and

Eutychus after he fell out of a window (Acts 20:9–10). But Paul could not heal himself from the thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:8–9) or from the ailment that he had when he preached in Galatia (Galatians 4:13–14). And evidently he could not heal Timothy from his stomach ailments (1 Timothy 5:23) or Epaphroditus from his life threatening sickness (Philippians 2:26–27) or Trophimus whom he "left ill at Miletus" (2 Timothy 4:20). Sometimes Paul was given gifts of healings and sometimes he wasn't because it a gift of God. Think of Peter and John walking into the temple in Acts chapter 3 we remember that the man had been taken there every day for years and we also remember that Peter and John were going daily to the temple. IF the gift of healing is something that is possessed and can be exercised at will, what took them so long?

- b. So I'm saying that miracles and healings are giftings that happen when God wills it, not when you or I do. Just because it happened last time does not mean that it will happen this time

6. Prophecy

- a. This gift has polarising interpretation in the Church
 - i. On one side you have people who say prophecy is preaching
 - 1. The argument goes this way: To prophesy is to speak the words of God, preaching is declaring the words of God recorded in scripture therefore preaching is prophesying.
 - a. This understanding is supported by examples such as the many of the prophets of the OT
 - i.
 - ii. On the other hand you have those who say prophecy is speaking on behalf of the Spirit whatever is on their mind and usually about future events
 - 1. These people feel they can say something because they have some feeling so they say it, they put a Holy Spirit stamp on it and call it prophesy and there is no accountability or recourse if the things they said that the Spirit told them to say does not come true.
 - iii. In the middle you have some who want to say that
 - iv. I say both are right and both are wrong.
 - 1. To declare things based upon the revealed will of God is what preachers do

- a. The men called prophets in the OT often told the people of God things God had already told them
 - b. Prophet and Judge are used interchangeably in the book of Judges and 1 Samuel (see the stories of Deborah, and Samuel)
2. But “prophet” is also used to describe people telling things that are outside the revealed/written will of God.
- a.

7. The ability to Distinguish Among Spirits

a. First to structure:

- i. A “wooden” or “rigid” or “literal” translation of this text is “to another now distinguishing of spirits”
 - 1. It is important to not that both the ESV and the NLT have added words here to make it flow better or sound better to our ear and while it sounds nicer I believe it is harmful in the long run
 - a. It has been my understanding of this text as a whole that the gifts here mentioned should be thought of more as momentary empowerments by the Spirit for the purpose of glorifying Christ and building up the body rather than ongoing prescriptions of spirituality for an individual.
 - b. The way that the ESV and the NLT have chosen to communicate this idea of the Spirit empowered judgment or distinction between gifts unnecessarily emphasises the the idea of an ongoing ability rather than allowing for the possibility of a one time event (which I believe is more likely) or the ongoing empowerment.
 - 2. The word that is used here (διάκρισις) is a noun that has very verbal tendencies that means “the act of judgment” and is often rendered “distinguishing” or “discerning”
 - a. Hebrews 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to *distinguish* good from evil.
 - b. The emphasis of this word is being able to distinguish between two things that look alike.

- i. This is the first time in nearly 30 years that we have not had a pair of Identical twins running around SFBC - First the Abney boys, Andrew and Brian, and then the Jones girls, Nellie and Nettie and I must confess that I never had the gift of distinguishing between twins. They looked alike they sounded alike and in many ways they acted alike. But to those who know them intimately they were distinguishable

b. A word about spirits

- i. The Bible does not shy away from spirits. We all have them in ourselves and we apparently can have other ones or the one inside of us can be influenced

- 1. Ex 28:3 -spirit of skill, Num 5:14 spirit of jealousy, Num 14:24 Caleb had a "different spirit," Deut 2:30 Sihon, King of Heshbon has his spirit "hardened" by God, Josh 2:11 Spirit of Jericho melted, Judges 9:23 evil spirit sent between the leaders of Shechem and Abimelech, 1 Sam 1:15 Hannah is troubled in spirit, 1 Sam 16:14-16 God's spirit departs for Saul and a "harmful" spirit is sent by God to torment him and his servants could recognize it, 1 Sam 28:8 "spirit of divination," 1 Kings 22:19 "lying spirit", 2 Kings 19:7 a spirit put into the king of Assyria to cause him to hear a rumor, Neh 9:10 God's "good spirit" remembered from the days of old, Psalm 51:10, 12 "right spirit" and "willing spirit", Proverbs 16:8 haughty spirit, 17:27 "cool spirit," 29:23 Lowly in spirit, Isa 11:2 the spirit of the Lord is said to be the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of God, 19:14 spirit of confusion, 28:6 spirit of Justice, 29:10 spirit of deep sleep, Zac 12:10 Spirit of Grace, 12:2 spirit of uncleanness, In the synoptic gospels we read of many unclean spirits, Romans 8:15 we are given not spirit of slavery but a spirit of adoption, Rom 11:8 spirit of stupor, 1 John 4:6 spirit of error.

c. Identification is Key

- i. Why is it so important to be able to distinguish between spirits?

- 1. **1**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2**By this you know the Spirit of

God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

2. Mat 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.
 3. Because what we do when we distinguish between spirits is we identify source. When we identify the source we can identify motive. And when we can identify motive we can establish the validity of the message. Remember, it is the Spirit of God who causes people to say "Jesus is Lord"
 4. If the spirit in question is the Spirit of God than Jesus will always be made much of, he will always be magnified, Jesus will always be exalted, He will always be glorified, and he will always affirmed as Lord
 5. If then spirit in question is not the Spirit of God than there will always be an attempt to diminish the Lordship of Christ which is HIs by right because he hung on the cross.
8. Various Kinds of Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues
- a. Speaking in Tongues is when the Spirit of God causes a person to speak in a language previously unknown to them in order to reveal the person and work of Christ to those who understand and those to whom the tongue interpreted.
 - i.