

Dr Mutiso : Spiritual gifts of the Holy Trinity : lecture notes for the pastors seminar, Sept 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

Ignorance is not bliss “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1) Ignorance of spiritual gifts may be the chief cause of retarded church growth today!

The major Biblical passages on spiritual gifts are all in the context of the body of Christ. These are Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. “God has arranged the parts of the Body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be” (1 Cor. 12:18). This means that God has not only designed the body, but that he has determined what the function of each individual member should be.

2. WHO HAS SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Not everybody has spiritual gifts. Unbelievers do not.

But every Christian who is a member of this body has at least one gift (possibly more). 1 Peter 4:10 says that Christian has at least one gift. The gifts are given to each person for the common good of all (1 Cor. 12). 1 Cor. 12:18 stresses that every members is placed in the body according to God’s design. This is good news to the average believer. God loves you and considers you so special that he has given you a personal gift so that you can serve Him.

“Every true function of the body of Christ has a member to perform it and every member has a function to perform”. (W. T. Purkiser a Nazarene scholar) The gifts are a work of grace (1 Peter 4:10, Rom, 12:6). The manifestation and the operation is determined by the measure of faith each person has (Rom. 12:3,6).

3. WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT

“A spiritual gift is a special attribute given to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the body”. (c. Peter Wagner).

This is purely an expressing of God’s grace. Nobody deserves the gifts neither are they given as a sign of godliness.

4. DISCOVER, DEVELOP AND USE YOUR GIFTS

A primary exercise for any Christian is to discover, develop and use their gifts. Discover comes before develop because gifts are received not achieved (1 Cor. 12:11). It is God who gives as the wills. Nobody else is qualified to distribute them.

5. WHAT THE GIFTS ARE

Primary Passages: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4

Secondary Passages: 1 Corinthians 7, 13, 14, Ephesians 3 and 1 Peter

5.1 THE GIFTS OF THE FATHER

The basic (ministry) gifts..... We all have (Roman 12).
These originate from God the Father.

- **Preaching, Prophesying**

This is speaking forth or speaking on behalf of another. Preaching involves public proclamation of truth with force and clarity so that it produces conviction. Preaching touches the hearer so that they are moved to respond to God.

- **Service, Ministry**

Those with the gift of serving are sensitive to the needs of others. They love to help and to show concern. As they serve they release others so that the latter can serve with greater freedom. Quite often this gift is exercised at great personal costs. This gift is exercised mainly in the background.

- **Teaching**

The teacher loves to clarify Biblical truth. He or she loves to study, read, explore ideas and discuss them so that they are clear to him or her. He is then able to teach. Teaching validates truth and practice.

- **Exhortation, Encouragement, Stimulating Faith**

People with this gift hear and feel with others who are in pain. They hold those in difficulties by the hand and walk with them through perplexity. They are excellent in giving encouragement especially because they are gifted to say the right words at the right time. Quite often they will solve or help others solve complex problem.

- **Giving, Contributing, Generosity**

The people with this gift enrich God's work. They love to meet needs. Often they are also very good managers of money so that they can give more. Giving sacrificially is not a problem for them. As they give God also blesses bountifully so they always make others rich yet they themselves never lack.

- **Leadership**

The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God. Leaders must have followers. If leadership quality is due to a gift (in contrast to some legal power or position), the leader's followers will be voluntary. Whereas discerning leaders never get too far ahead of their followers, they are always up front directing others. Gifted leaders neither manipulate nor coerce. They generate a confidence that they know where they are going and what the next step is to get there. Most people want to be led, and they willingly allow their leaders to influence them.

The best leaders are relaxed. They know what has to be done and they know they cannot do it themselves. So they develop skills in delegating and transferring responsibilities to others. Many leaders dislike administration, so they make sure they have delegated that responsibility to someone who has that in their gift-mix.

- **Mercy**

The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

Those who have the gift of mercy engage in one-on-one relationships. They seek out those who need help and develop a personal ministry with them. They show a practical compassionate love. Kindness comes naturally and they expect no repayment. Although the gift of exhortation helps people mainly through words of love, the gift of mercy helps people mainly through deeds of love.

The recipient of the gift of mercy are the ill, the retarded, the prisoners, the blind, the poor, the aged, the ugly, the handicapped, the shut-ins the homeless and the mentally ill. The gift is directed toward both believers and unbelievers. It involves a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus.

5.2 THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The tools ----- We all seek (1 Cor. 12)

These are given by the Holy Spirit as he chooses but Paul encourages us to seek them (1 Cor. 14:1). They are to be exercised in the context of love and with maturity (1 Cor. 13 & 14)

They are broadly divided into three groups:

- Gifts of utterance: Tongues, Interpretation, Prophecy
- Gift of knowing: Knowledge, Wisdom, Discernment
- Gift of doing: Faith, Healing, Miracles.

5.2.1 Gifts of Utterance

- **Tongues**
There are four types of tongues. The first is the prayer language with which we worship God. This is private and does not need interpretation. The second is a public tongue. This is a prophetic messages to the body that comes in an unknown language and that must be interpreted. Paul encourages those giving messages in tongues to pray for the gift of interpretation (1 Cor. 14:5, 27, 28, & 29). The third is tongues of men (Act 2:4 – 8). The fourth is tongues of angels (1 Cor. 13:1).
- **Interpretation of Tongues**
It is a gift of the Holy Spirit whereby an interpretation (not a translation) of message given in a tongue is done. There should be a maximum of three such messages in a meeting together with interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13, 29 & 25).
- **Prophecy**
This is an impression, a thought, a vision or an audible voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to a person who then speaks out what the Holy Spirit is saying to him, or her. The words are spoken for edification, exhortation and comfort. (1 Cor. 14:3, 31).

5.2.2 Gifts of knowing

- **Word of Knowledge**
This is an impression, a thought, a vision, or an audible voice of the Holy Spirit about a situation e.g the woman at the well (John 4:6-19).
- **Word of wisdom**
This is an impression, an audible voice of the Holy Spirit, a thought or a vision about how to deal with a situation e.g King Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-18).
- **Discernment**
A thought, vision, or audible voice from the Holy Spirit which reveals the spiritual forces affecting a person, ourselves or situation. These are revealed so that they can be dealt with through prayer or deliverance.

5.2.3 Gift of Doing

- **Gift of Faith**
This is a gift from the Holy Spirit that makes us pray with extraordinary confidence and authority. We know that our prayers will be answered!
- **Gifts of Healings**
This is a special ability that the Holy Spirit gives certain members of the body of Christ to bring healing and restoration of health apart from the use of natural means. These gifts are different. Some have faith for certain illnesses or conditions. (1 Peter 2:24, Mark 16: 16)
- **Miracles**
Miracles are instant deliverance or healing as compared with healing which may take place over a long time.

5.2 THE GIFTS OF CHRIST

The five-fold ministriessome become (Ephesians 4).

Only a small minority eventually grow into the offices of apostles, prophets evangelists, pastors or teachers. These serve the whole body not local congregations although they must be based in and have been sent by local congregations.

- **Apostle**
The apostle assumes and exercises leadership in the body of Christ and exercises extraordinary authority in spiritual matters. This authority is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those led. An apostle will quite often be a leader of many churches. An apostle ventures into new frontiers bringing the gospel and planting churches in previously unreached areas.
- **Prophet**
This is the office of a prophet. The prophet operates consistently with prophetic gifts but tends to address wider societal issues. He or she is also concerned about future events (Deut. 18:22).
- **Evangelist**
The evangelist shares the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become responsible members of the body of Christ. People are moved to accept Christ through what an evangelist says. The evangelist has a compelling desire to share the gospel and he or she sees result in form of bountiful harvest of souls.
- **Pastor**
The pastor guides and guards a flock in a local community. He nurtures that local church towards maturity. He has a shepherd's heart. He is responsible for feeding, healing the wounds; developing unity, helping people identify their gifts and doing whatever else is necessary to see that they continue in the faith and grow in their spiritual lives. A pastor is a shepherd – one who leads, feed and protects his flock.
- **Teacher**
The teacher communicates biblical truth in such a way that others learn. This role again is for the entire body. Teaching requires lots of time in study and preparation. Since the teacher handles a lot of biblical data some of which is not popular they are not threatened or defensive when criticism comes. Such attitudes and intuitions are not learned. They are part of the supernatural dimension of the gift.

6. ARE ALL GIFTS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

- No. None of the primary passages are complete in themselves.
- Combined they do not seem to be complete either
- Many scholars agree with this conclusion.
- Other possible gifts are:- Craftsmanship, arts, Music, worship, intercession, deliverance, administration, etc.

7. HOW DO YOU DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS?

- Go over the list of gifts again and see where you seem to operate naturally.
- Start experimenting with the ones you think you have
- You will find that you enjoy your gifts a great deal and will be obviously successful with them
- The gifts will be confirmed by other members of the Body.

Discover your gifts! They will facilitate your service for only you can do what you have been gifted for. The Church will be all that much rich when you finally move into your ordained areas of services utilizing your specific gifts.