

THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS

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I have been feeling for a while that it would be good to look a little bit at the gifts. Of course I'm speaking of the gifts of the Spirit. We know that there are different classifications of gifts, and different ways that the Lord works in each one of our lives.

As we approach the end time, which we know we are in right now, getting just so close, I really believe that everything we saw operating in the early church will also have its manifestation in the latter church. When I say the latter church, I'm not talking about the Mormon Church but the *true church* in these latter days. Praise the Lord.

This message is for everybody, but I really hope that the young people could especially focus on it. If God has given us the Holy Ghost, there is a way that He will move from time to time in our lives. Sometimes it's for our own benefit, at other times it's for the benefit of the church, or maybe for an individual in the church.

We know Paul spoke that *when Jesus ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men*. [Ephesians 4:8] In that context, we see the ministerial gifts: we see the gift of apostleship, of prophet, of teacher, pastor, and evangelist. [Ephesians 4:11] We all know what those five gifts are, but it does not stop there.

It's not that the ministry is up here, and down there is the laity, but we are *all* part of the same family of God. Praise the Lord. We *all* have a work to do and there is a unique way that God will use each one of us. Praise the Lord.

One way He's going to do that is through the gifts. I think when we say *gifts* the first thing that probably comes to our mind is tongues and interpretation. We might also think of healings, things that are visible or outstanding that we can see, or something that happens in a service that maybe we weren't expecting. Certainly those are gifts, but there are other gifts as well.

A lot of times we might even confuse the gift with the way the Lord *operates* or *administers* the gift. There is a way He can manifest a gift, many times the manifestation itself, we call *that* a gift. I will give a little example: dreams.

For some of us, the Lord uses dreams to activate a certain gift. We might say: well why didn't Paul mention *dreams* when he was mentioning the gifts? Yes in a certain sense we can say that having spiritual dreams is a gift, but what we're going to see more correctly is that the Lord can use a dream to *operate* a certain gift, and with somebody else He could use a dream to operate a different gift.

Before I get too far along, let's go to First Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

In other words: we should know about the gifts.

Paul is going to explain some very important things. He's not going to assume that we know about them, or just leave us to kind of feel our way through how the Lord moves. The Lord has a very specific purpose and use for gifts.

He says:

1 Corinthians 12:2

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

We know the Gentiles were pagans and they had many gods. Paul is going to address this in a minute. They had a god for the wind, they had another god for the rain, another god for the lightning, and sometimes it seemed like all three of those gods would get together. We know that this was paganism. We know that there is only one true God. Amen.

Now he says:

1 Corinthians 12:3

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:

Why would Paul even mention this? We have to understand that somewhere along the way, the words came to Paul's ears that somebody stood up and whether it was in the form of an interpretation, or a prophecy, or however it was supposed to be expressed, maybe they had a dream, but somebody said something to the effect that Jesus was accursed.

Now you and I, we would say: kick him out of the church, what are they doing here? Today, as we are two thousand years later, we would never hear that in an assembly. Thank the Lord. And if so, it would certainly never come from anybody who claimed to be a believer. That's a contradiction.

We have to know one thing: when the Lord is moving, whether it's the ministering of the Word or whether it's using the gifts, the enemy is always going to look to see if there's a way he can get in. If he can mislead, if he can deceive, or if he can destroy, that's his purpose.

Paul is saying right away: don't just take a spiritual manifestation and say: oh praise the Lord, the Lord has spoken.

This is something that does happen: many times people have a feeling that if somebody speaks in tongues or if there is a prophecy, a dream or a vision: praise the Lord, let's listen to what the Lord has to say. But Paul says *nobody speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed*. Amen. Praise the Lord.

He also says:

1 Corinthians 12:3

and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Today if we were to go in every church around the world, those that are so-called Christian churches, they're going to be saying *Jesus is Lord*. Amen. But what we have to remember is that this was written to the Gentiles when the Gentiles had just barely been introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we understand that?

Try to imagine if in the year 2020 there was no such thing as a Christian church, at least among the Gentiles. Just imagine if in 2020 you and I were out there serving pagan gods. Then we hear about the Lord in 2021 and now in 2022 there's an assembly, it's been functioning for a few months. I have to say: just the understanding that *Jesus is Lord* was *brand new fresh revelation* for these Corinthians. Can we understand that?

We think of what the Lord has shown us in this time, for example: the Three Watches. I believe that still feels new, amen, but really it's something that we have heard all the way back since 2019 and probably even before that. For some it's still new and really, relatively it is new.

Today people say *Jesus is Lord*. I mean: if we hear a message in tongues and interpretation, and in the message it refers to *Jesus is Lord*, does that mean that it's the Holy Spirit?

We have to understand that Paul was *establishing* that the Holy Ghost is not going to inspire someone to speak in the Spirit and the message is in some way going to contradict the message of truth. If that happens, the spirit that is inspiring the message is *not* the Spirit of God, it's *not* the Holy Ghost. Praise the Lord.

From the very beginning Paul is telling us that we still have to measure the gifts according to the *revealed Word*.

Today we're not going to measure a gift just because somebody says *Jesus is Lord*. Is Jesus Lord? Of course he is! That has been established since the beginning of the church. Amen. So we're not going to have a gift operating and going against that.

Paul says:

1 Corinthians 12:4

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

It would have been natural for these Corinthians to think that when somebody spoke in tongues, somebody else prophesied, and someone else had a dream, for them to think that it was one spirit doing this, another spirit doing that, and another spirit giving the dream.

Now you might say: well Brother, is it possible that there is an angelic being behind this? Certainly we know the Lord does use angelic beings. Amen. But it is still all authorized, motivated and orchestrated by the Holy Ghost. We don't go looking: was there an angel that inspired me or what's the angel's name? We have to understand: it's the Spirit of God that's in control of it all. Amen.

He is the Spirit that is inspiring, and how He does it, that's up to Him. We know as far as the people, we all have different ways that the Lord uses us. We're going to read about this in a minute.

1 Corinthians 12:4

there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

I have to say: thank God for the gifts. The gifts are also for the edification and the benefit of the church, the body. Praise the Lord. There are times when I have a need and a gift in somebody's life can meet that need, and vice versa. Praise the Lord. The Lord uses the gifts: yes sometimes it's for our own benefit but also there are times it's for others.

Remember what Jesus told Peter: he said *Peter, do you love me?* Peter said *yes I love you*. He said *feed my sheep*, right? He also told him to feed his lambs. [John 21:15] What was that? He was telling Peter *use that gift in your life for the benefit of the church*. Praise the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:4

Now there are diversities of gifts,

Different gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4
but the same Spirit.

We are not going to have one gift working against another gift. If it's truly the Spirit of God, they are going to work in harmony.

1 Corinthians 12:5
And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

In Spanish it says there are different *ministries* and we just talked about that. We're not going to have the preacher contradicting the prophet or the evangelist contradicting the apostle, or things like that.

The Lord Jesus Christ, he is *the head of the church* [Ephesians 5:23] and Paul said that *he gave gifts to men*. [Ephesians 4:8] Amen. So it's the same Lord watching over the ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:6
And there are diversities of operations,

The way I would look at that word *operations* is the way the gift is activated in our lives. We already mentioned a couple of those: dreams and visions. Paul does not mention them as gifts on their own, but those are avenues by which the Lord operates gifts. Amen.

We've read about Miriam and Aaron when they started feeling that they were not getting the recognition they thought they should have. The *Lord*, basically I'm kind of paraphrasing the situation but He said *Miriam, Aaron, and Moses, come here*. They were brothers and sister. The Lord said *if I want to show something to a prophet, they might have a dream or something like that*. He said *but with Moses my servant it's not so*. He said *I speak to him face to face*. He said *why weren't you afraid?* Right there we know that Miriam got leprosy.

Yes God was merciful and He healed her but before He did, she had to stay out *isolated from the camp*, I'll put it in modern terms: *isolated outside of society*. I think it was a week, it might have been a month. Being out there all alone, I'm sure that was not an enjoyable experience but that was the punishment. [Numbers 12:1-15]

Right there we see one way that the enemy will come in. If we're not careful he can convince us that we are not getting enough attention: I have an important gift, others should be able to recognize that. I have to say: we should just be thankful to God that He has chosen to use us.

Let's remember: we were sinners, we were lost, and we had a judgement sentence of death hanging over us. The only thing we deserved was suffering and death. But instead of drinking that cup, praise the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ took my place and he took your place. He partook of the cup, he suffered and died, and he made a way so that you and I could be viewed as worthy before the Lord.

By believing on him and of course believing the Word *as it is revealed to us about him*, we are saved from hell and from eternal punishment. I didn't say eternal hell but eternal *punishment*.

If we are not careful we can think: I'm not getting enough recognition. We have to get to the place where that's not what's important. It's *doing the will of the Lord* that's important. Praise the Lord. I should just be thankful and really amazed that He has chosen a wretch like me. By His grace not only has He saved my poor soul but He's even chosen to use me in a supernatural way. Praise the Lord.

Now Paul says here:

1 Corinthians 12:7

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

If we think that we are not important, well in a certain sense, yes. I hope we can understand: I'm *not* saying that we are not important, but just as I was saying: He's everything, right?

On the other hand, we know there are people who have gifts operating in their lives. Let's not always think that's somebody else. God has something to manifest in *your* life and He has something to manifest in *my* life.

Here Paul says:

1 Corinthians 12:7

the manifestation is given to every man

Amen.

We understand that means man and woman, right? Philip had four daughters who prophesied. [Acts 21:9] There are many other examples of how God used women as well, so *everybody has their gift*.

Now that does not mean: I have a gift of healing so every month God is going to heal somebody, or I have the gift of tongues so every Sunday I'm going to speak in tongues.

He's the One who decides when He's going to activate that gift. Especially when we get into what we might view as some of the higher gifts, it's not something that we are going to see necessarily every Sunday. It might not even be something we see in church: it could be something that the Lord does outside of church.

Every person does have their gift. Don't just think: well I've been saved, praise the Lord, and it looks like there are some out there who have gifts, but we never expect that the Lord can operate a gift in our own life. He already did: when you believed His Word, in a certain measure that was *faith*. Praise the Lord.

Every one of us has our own personal story even though the instruction *repent, be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost* [Acts 2:38] that doesn't change for anybody.

What brought us to the point that we made the decision to get baptized? It was *the Lord* that dealt with each one of us in a supernatural way. For some of us it was a dream, for some of us it was a certain feeling as we heard the Word being preached. For others it was something that happened. Amen. We remember Brother Victor's testimony: the car crash. That was personal for *him*. I had *my* experience. For every one of us it was *individual*.

It was the Holy Ghost working in a supernatural way in your life and in my life. It wasn't just that the preacher knew how to preach. If that was the case, we need to find that preacher and send them out there to preach to the world. I mean the preacher needs to preach but it's the Holy Ghost that quickens the Word.

Now he says here:

1 Corinthians 12:8

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

Tonight I'm probably not going to get very far into the individual gifts, what they are and how they operate. There are a lot of misconceptions about the gifts and I want to look at that more tonight.

I once heard a well-known minister teach on the gifts. This minister supposedly followed Brother Jackson and had a world-wide ministry. His teaching was: we all have all of the gifts. The way he taught it was: it's more of just how close we get to the Lord, how far up the Lord is going to use certain gifts in our life.

First of all: not everybody is called to minister, right? And really, that's the highest gift there is. Now when I say that, please don't misunderstand: that does not mean that the minister is greater than somebody who's not.

Some may think: oh the ministers, what wonderful gifts! But it's what the gift *accomplishes*: the ministry has the *greatest impact* on the body of Christ.

I like an example Brother Jackson used. He said: think of a quarter, it's worth twenty-five cents, right? We might look at a penny and say: that's not worth as much as the quarter. That's true as far as the amount that we can purchase with it but the penny still has value, right? And if you have twenty-five of them, it's worth the same as a quarter. So we don't look at a person's gift and lift them up but we just thank God that He put that gift in the church. Amen.

I thank the Lord for that. Imagine a church with no ministry. What would we do? I thank God that He has set ministers in the church. But this idea that we all have all the gifts and we just work to have a higher and higher gift, I don't see that in the Word and it didn't work that way.

This one had *one* gift and this one had *another*.

He says here:

1 Corinthians 12:8

one is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1 Corinthians 12:9

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:10

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy;

Now before I continue, could it be that somebody has more than one gift? Sure but again this idea that we all have all the gifts, that's not the way it worked in the early church, that's not what Paul is explaining, and that's not the way it works today.

1 Corinthians 12:10

to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues;

1 Corinthians 12:10

But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

He has *not* given it all to everybody and we just see how far along we can go. But I will say: it's to *everyone*.

I mentioned a dream I had back in the 90s but it's been a while, maybe not everybody has heard it or remembers it. I dreamed that we were at a convention at Faith Assembly. It was at the end of the convention, like the Sunday morning service, even though they would have a Sunday evening service. In a sense it was like if they had an announcement to make to everybody, they made it in the morning because a lot of people were traveling in the evening.

In the dream, somebody came up to the pulpit at the end of the Sunday morning service and they said: we had our financial meeting and we have a good amount of money left over. So what we decided to do is: we have a gift for everybody. They said: if you will look under your seat there's a little box attached to the seat and we put a gift in there: that's *your* gift. I saw the people, everybody was like: oh wow! Some of them got a pen, others got maybe like a bible case. There were a lot of different things but more than one person got a pen and more than one person got a bible case.

I thought: I wonder what I got and I looked under my seat. Most of us wouldn't even know what this is now, but there used to be these things, they were like a tablet of wax and there was a plastic sheet over it that was connected to the wax at the top. It was hard like cardboard underneath and with this pencil you could push down on it to write or draw and you would see the wax through the plastic film. So you could write or draw and when you were done, you could pull up that plastic and it would clear it and you could write again. I thought: wow that's interesting I don't see anybody else with that. Also, mine had *five* sheets, which normally there is only one, but there were five sheets and somehow I could write on all five sheets.

Now I know that's not going to happen in real life. I didn't know what it meant when I dreamed this dream, but when we went to the convention, there was a minister who ministered on the gifts and a little later I got thinking that probably those five sheets had something to do with the ministry, the *fivefold* ministry.

We're really out of time. We're probably going to continue to study this a little more because I'm certainly not done. Let's go ahead and stand tonight.