

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

Part 9

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River of Life
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no-one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.

⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NIV)

*⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom,
to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,*

*⁹to another faith by the same Spirit,
to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,*

*¹⁰to another miraculous powers,
to another prophecy,*

to another distinguishing between spirits,

*to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,
and to still another the interpretation of tongues.*

¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Prophetic Gifts: gift of prophecy, gift of tongues, gift of interpretation of tongues

Gift of Prophecy: Speech supernaturally inspired by the Holy Spirit in the language of the speaker and those who hear it. It can be a word of encouragement, direction, revelation, or it can involve revealing future events.

- We have already dealt with this gift in Ephesians 4 as a leadership anointing
- Now we will look at the gift of prophecy given as a general gift to all
- Prophecy is a gift to be eagerly desired.

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 “Follow the way of love and **eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.** For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no-one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. **But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.** He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.”

Prophecy is a gift given to reveal God's Heart to His People

Applications for the gift of prophecy

- to strengthen and encourage the Church
- to communicate a sense of God's destiny for His children
- to reveal future events
- to confirm God's specific direction for a local body of believers for a specific time and place
- to correct sinful behavior and call people to repentance
- to affirm a certain teaching of part of God's Word that applies to the Body of believers in that moment

1 Corinthians 14

6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? 7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes?

8 Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? 9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. 12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. 13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

Why Does Paul make a heavy distinction between prophecy and speaking in tongues?

All Scripture has a context – We need to understand the context here

- Theologians say the epistles (letters of the New Testament) are “Occasional”
- They don’t happen in a vacuum – they are responses to real events happening in the community and culture at large
- What occasioned the writing of 1 Corinthians?
 - There were abuses of the prophetic gifts in the public meeting
 - There were division among loyalties to leaders (I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, etc.) which indicate immaturity
 - Leadership in Corinth seemed to be “personality-based” rather than the “servant-model” that Jesus had given the disciples
 - They were strong in the gifts of the Holy Spirit Paul tells them in chapter 1, but they were weak in Godly character and the fruits of the Holy Spirit
 - People were standing in a public assembly and speaking in tongues (with no interpretation) expecting everyone to be blessed by that
 - Some people were speaking for long periods and not letting others speak

Why Does Paul make a heavy distinction between prophecy and speaking in tongues?

- **What occasioned the writing of 1 Corinthians? (cont.)**
 - **The result was chaos and competition rather than the peace and harmony as people walked in yielded to the Holy Spirit**
 - **People visiting these assemblies thought that these followers of Jesus were crazy**
 - **That is why Paul under the anointing of the Holy Spirit gives clear protocols for how we operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit**
 - **God is NOT A GOD of DISORDER, but of PEACE**
 - **Paul is not against speaking in tongues – he is showing us the proper place and usage for the gift**

Is there a time to speak in tongues publically and not have an interpretation?

- **Yes, I believe it is a valid expression of praise when people are praying in unison out loud or singing spiritual songs together**
- **Singing in the Spirit can be a beautiful symphony of praise**
- **It reminds me of a good orchestra tuning up**

1 Corinthians 14

15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. 16 If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20 Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

21 In the Law it is written: “Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,” says the Lord. 22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. 23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

1 Corinthians 14

24 But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, 25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”

26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. 29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.