

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

Part 10

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River of Life
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Three Groups of Gifts From 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Wisdom (Revelation) Gifts

- Word of Knowledge
- Word of Wisdom
- Discerning of Spirits

Prophetic Gifts

- Gift of Prophecy
- Gift of Tongues
- Interpretation of Tongues

Gifts of Power

- Gifts of Healings
- Gifts of Miracles
- Gift of Faith

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.

- 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
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- **Last week we talked about what "occasioned" the instructions from Paul the Apostle Regarding Prophetic Gifts**

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.

When Prophetic gifts operate correctly – People’s hearts are revealed and good things happen!

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18-22, Paul gives us a clear instruction on how to “weigh a prophetic word”

1 Thessalonians 5:18-22 *“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”*

1. Do not put out the Spirit’s fire
2. Don’t treat prophecies with contempt
3. Test everything (Context here is prophecy)
4. Hold on to the good (What do you discern is indeed from God)
5. Avoid every kind of evil

There is often an interpretive phase in Prophecy that is part of weighing a word we have received – unless it is a direct command like “RUN!”

We will go much deeper in the “Hearing the Voice of God Class”

1 Corinthians 14

32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,

34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

35 If they want to enquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. 36 Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. 39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Prophecy is given to build up the Church so the Church may be strengthened, encouraged and comforted.

- What does [1 Corinthians 14:32](#) mean? *“The spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” (NIV)*
 - Some say that when the Spirit comes upon them they lose control and have to speak out at that moment.
 - This argument was being used by insensitive and immature people in the Corinthian church.
 - A prophet may feel an urgency to share a word from the Lord, but never loses control. Paul makes that clear.

Scriptural examples:

- [1 Samuel 19:18-24](#) The Spirit comes on Saul’s men and they prophesy. (Note they were not by vocation prophets.) The Spirit moving on the human soul almost always results in a verbal response.
- A New Testament example occurs in Ephesus in [Acts 19:6](#)

Prophetic Gifts: Examples in Scripture

Acts 15:32 Judas and Silas, prophets sent to strengthen and encourage the brothers. (The role of the prophet is not always to foretell.)

- Many pastors are actually prophets. They speak prophetically in their preaching rather than in a teaching style.

There is a balance here between order and spontaneity. 1 Corinthians 14:26-33

“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. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two - or at the most three - should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.”

Gift of Prophecy in Operation

Room was made for those exercising the gift of prophecy

- Prophets were not out of control - they were to yield to one another and seek order.
- Prophetic gifts are always to be measured against the Word! The Holy Spirit will not contradict Himself
- Be careful not to confuse chaos with spirituality as many followers of Jesus have.

What if someone makes an error?

- We must distinguish between sincere mistakes and demonic or false words!
- A typical mistake is to go beyond God's leading.
- God will use different personalities.

Why does Paul single out women?

In Greek Culture and Many Jewish Traditions – Men and Women had worshipped separately

- Now, for the first time – women were in the same worship[gatherings
- Christianity elevated the status of women amazingly!
- But, most women experiencing this new freedom had not been educated in the Church or in their society
- **What is the issue here? What occasioned the writing of this direction?**
 - **Women were openly asking their husbands questions during the worship time**
 - **It was disruptive to the flow of worship**
 - **Paul tells them they need to ask those questions at the “OIKOS”**
 - **35 If they want to enquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home (OIKOS); for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.**
 - **Is Paul saying women should not speak in a church meeting? No WAY!**
 - **Women prophesied, hosted house churches, served on apostolic teams, were teachers, etc.**

Why does Paul single out women?

Christianity elevated the status of women tremendously:

- Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- Acts 2:17-18 “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

But the way, if men had been speaking out and disrupting the gatherings of believers – I believe Paul would have said the same thing!

Whether man or woman – to speak out of order without regard for others and to Honor God’s Presence is wrong.

The Church: A safe place to experience God's gifts and power

The Church needs to be a safe place for God's people to develop and grow in prophetic gifts.

- It is important to note that [1 Corinthians 12](#) (Instructions on gifts) and [1 Corinthians 14](#) (Instructions on prophetic gifts in a local church gathering) have [1 Corinthians 13](#) right in the middle!
- Spirit in which we operate in prophetic gifts: Humility, Kindness & Gentleness, Considering the other person's needs before your own, Glorifying God and building others up rather than satisfying our ego needs!

Prophetic Protocols in a public gathering

- There should be clear protocols based in God's Word for prophetic ministry when believers come together to worship
- Protocols protect the prophets themselves, the people who hear and preserve the integrity of the Word
- On the next page I have listed the prophetic protocols we use at River of Life¹³

Prophetic Protocols Based in God's Word

At River of Life Community Church we believe God speaks to His people as He has in every age. Every gift given to the New Testament Church continues to be in operation in the Church today! The gifts found in Ephesians 4, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are all vital to help the Church mature and to reach a world lost in sin.

God calls us to steward well the gifts He has given. In 1 Corinthians 14:33 we are told, *“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”* We are also taught in the same chapter that prophetic words and revelations must be weighed. Our desire is that River of Life would be a place where people can grow in their gifts, a place where there is freedom, and also a place where there is accountability and safety.

Prophetic Protocols Based in God's Word

We ask that everyone honor the following protocols:

- If you are not a member or a regular attender of River of Life, we value what you have to say, but would ask that until we get to know you better, you would write down what you feel God is giving you and submit it to one of the elders or staff or you can go to one of the Prophetic Team Leaders and share your message with them.
- If you are a member of River of Life and believe God is giving you a prophetic word, a message in tongues, or a word of knowledge or wisdom, please approach one of the pastors or Prophetic Team members who will help you find the appropriate time and way to share it. If we confirm that it is something that is to be shared at that moment, we will direct you to a microphone so everyone can hear.

Prophetic Protocols Based in God's Word

Write down what the Lord is giving you. If you receive something during the week, please write it down and e-mail or call the church office and we will help you find the appropriate time and place to share it.

Personal prophecies need to be weighed in the same manner as those given to the entire church. Please write down the word and record it and ask for confirmation from the pastor or one of the leadership team.



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

2. Gift of Tongues

Definition: The supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to a believer to speak in a language which the speaker has not learned by natural means.

- The hearers may or may not be familiar with the language.
- Tongues and interpretation of tongues are the only two gifts not found in the Old Testament.

Tongues and interpretations of tongues are unique signs to unbelievers today.

- It was a reverse of the curse of Babel. At Babel, the languages were confused and nations separated to prevent people from unifying for an evil purpose. Now by the power of the Holy Spirit, people from distinct and different nations are given the power to speak languages declaring the power of God, signifying God bringing people together for one glorious purpose to proclaim the Gospel to all nations.

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

2. Gift of Tongues

Why tongues?

- A sign that the Gospel would be preached to all nations! That the Church would be international in scope is clear.
- The Church was to be comprised of all the peoples of the earth and God makes that clear long before the Church in Jerusalem understood.
- Out of all nations, one people set apart to God.

Scriptural example:

- Read again 1 Corinthians 14:1-26
- *Read this chapter with the idea that Paul is addressing abuses - that is why we hear so much about tongues here. He is addressing a dysfunctional Church.*
- The Corinthians had apparently elevated the status of this gift to the detriment of other gifts and without regard to building others up

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

2. Gift of Tongues

- They were wrongly applying the gift - speaking in tongues in a public gathering without interpretation - expecting people to be encouraged and built up.
- Paul doesn't say speaking in tongues is wrong - the Corinthian abuse of tongues is wrong.
- He even says he would like for all of them to speak in tongues, but in a public meeting it is better to prophesy!
- Learn to excel in gifts that build up the church.
- Let's take a look at Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 14

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

2. Gift of Tongues

Private exercise of tongues in worshipping God brings edification - but it is not for public use.

- *Jude 20 “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”*
- Other than times when the Spirit was poured out and all spoke in tongues and prophesied, there are no recorded examples of tongues in worship.

Application of the gift of tongues

- When accompanied by the gift of interpretation, it is virtually the same in application as the gift of prophecy.
- *Xenolalia* - When a person hears a tongue in his own language, spoken by someone who has never learned the language naturally.
 - Claudio Freidzon - Argentina

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2. Gift of Tongues

Acts 2

- *Glossalalia* - More common function of the gift is when the hearer and speaker don't understand the language.
- It appears that the fact the message is delivered in an unknown (to the speaker and often the hearers) language is an additional sign to those who hear to incite faith.

Praying in tongues can be a powerful tool in prayer and worship in the private devotional life and, when it is appropriate, in a public gathering.

Tongues accompanying the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2, Acts 4, Acts 10, Acts 19 - All examples of people being filled with the Holy Spirit

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2. Gift of Tongues

Can all speak in tongues?

- Paul seems to indicate in his time that not all did. However, there is a strong association between people receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.
- It is definitely a powerful gift in intercession and personal edification.
- I think all believers can and should receive this gift. Many do when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit for the first time.

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3. Interpretation of Tongues

Definition: Supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to a believer to give an interpretation of a message in tongues. The message in tongues is unknown to the interpreter and is given in the common language of the hearers.

Scriptural example:

- What we have already read in 1 Corinthians 14:1-26
- Tongues plus interpretation of tongues is essentially the same as prophecy with the added miracle of the miraculous sign of speaking a language never learned by the speaker.

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

3. Interpretation of Tongues

Application of the gift of interpretation of tongues

- This gift should accompany the gift of tongues when a message is given publically in a gathering of believers.
- Working in tandem with the gift of tongues, it is virtually the same as prophecy.
- The interpretation is not necessarily a word for word translation, but is a thought for thought translation given in inspired speech by the Holy Spirit.
- Often this gift will be used in prayer as a confirmation of what is prayed in tongues. This can be a real faith builder.

What is it like to speak in tongues or prophesy the first time?

Speaking in Tongues

- Different experiences
- They spoke as God gave them utterance – God does not force us to speak, there is an element of stepping out in faith
- **Prophesying for the first time**
 - Inspired ideas, words, pictures coming to your mind
 - A knowledge that this is something that did not originate with you
 - But, it is your ideas, using your language, your style, your experiences
 - Don't speak in absolute terms, but present what God is giving you and allow others to weigh it.
 - Old Testament Prophet model differs from New Testament use!



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