

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Part 6

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River of Life

Pastor Joe Daltorio

Pastor Francis Chan Charisma Magazine Interview:

*“I received a lot of questions about why I titled the book **The Forgotten God**. Some thought it was, is, a bit extreme. I don’t think so. From my perspective, the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten. That’s why I have a book and a film on the subject. While no evangelical would deny His existence, I’m willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced His presence or action in their lives over the past year. And many of them do not believe they can.”*

“Perhaps we’re too familiar and comfortable with the current state of the church to feel the weight of the problem. But what if you grew up on a desert island with nothing but the Bible to read? Imagine being rescued after 20 years and then attending a typical evangelical church. Chances are you’d be shocked (for a whole lot of reasons, but that is another story.) Having read the Scriptures outside the context of contemporary church culture, you would be convinced that the Holy Spirit is as essential to a believer’s existence as air is to staying alive. You would know that the Spirit led the first Christians to do unexplainable things, to live lives that didn’t make sense to the culture around them, and ultimately to spread the story of God’s grace around the world.”

“There is a big gap between what we read in Scripture about the Holy Spirit and how most believers and churches operate today. In many modern churches, you would be stunned by the apparent absence of the Spirit in any manifest way. And this, I believe, is the crux of the problem.”

“Whole denominations have been built around specific beliefs about the Holy Spirit. I know people who have lost jobs at churches and Christian colleges because of their beliefs about the Holy Spirit. I even had a girl break up with me while I was in seminary because we believed differently about Him! It is not one of those issues that is easy to float over. This is especially true if you belong to a particular “camp” with a specific belief or bent.”

“Which is why I ask the question: Are you willing to pursue truth in your journey to know and be known by the Holy Spirit? Do you have enough humility to be open to the possibility that you have been wrong in your understanding of the Spirit? It’s easy to get into “defensive mode,” where you quickly disagree and turn to proof texts and learned arguments to defend what you’ve always believed. Rather than guarding your perspective, consider taking a fresh look at familiar passages to make sure you haven’t missed something. You may end up with the same theology you’ve always had, but maybe you won’t. Don’t let your views be determined by a particular denomination or by what you’ve always been told. Within the context of relationship with other believers, seek out what God has said about His Spirit. Open up your mind and your life to the leading of the Spirit, regardless of what others may think or assume about you.”

Gifts of the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

1. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to any believer who is full of God's Holy Spirit
2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit can be at work in any believer at any time as God directs
3. The Holy Spirit has us rather than us having the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine partnership and God is the senior partner!

1 Corinthians 12:1-7 (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.

God wants us to know about Spiritual Gifts

1. We need to seek God and not gifts.
2. Our gifts is part of God's destiny for us
3. It is part of our obedience to be who He created us to be
4. Paul tells his disciples – I don't want you to be ignorant
5. Important part of apostolic instruction to the church

Strange spirits – 1 Corinthians 10:18-22 (NIV)

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Paul warns of strange spirits, BUT know that it is God's Holy Spirit working in us

1. 1 Corinthians 12:3

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.

2. Are there counterfeit gifts?

3. We need to be discerning. All of us have a past, before Christ. We need to purify our hearts and align with God to be used in a powerful way.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

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.

Each person who has come to Christ and is filled with the Holy Spirit can be used in any of the gifts of the Spirit at any time!

1 Corinthians 12:7

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

“To each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit”

Acts 2:1-16 (NIV)

¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome. ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel

What Happened That Day?

1. Pentecost was part of a major feast for the Jewish people
2. Many Jews that had been dispersed throughout the world came to Jerusalem to worship and bring an offering to the temple
3. The temple swelled to ten times its normal size between Passover and Pentecost
4. Pentecost was one of the three original feast given by Moses to Israel

Followers of Jesus were together in one place

1. They had been obeying the command of Jesus to wait
2. It has been 10 days since Jesus gave His last instructions and ascended to Heaven
3. They are sitting together in a house – perhaps praying and seeking God
4. People heard what was going on and began to assemble as the Spirit fell

What happened when the Holy Spirit came?

1. There was a sound – “like the blowing of a violent wind”
2. They saw what appeared to be a flame of fire
3. Flame of fire separated and appeared over the head of each person
4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
5. They began to speak in other tongues
6. Actual languages and not just ecstatic jibberish (15-17 languages are mentioned depending on how you divide them.
7. There were people who were in Jerusalem that actually spoke these languages and were amazed

What did this demonstration mean to a first century Jew?

1. Hebrew word for Holy Spirit is Ruach, meaning breath or wind – the Holy Spirit is the Holy Breath of God breathed upon us!
2. Tongues of flames or fire – Fire was a common demonstration of God's presence throughout Israel's history
 - a) Pillar of fire that led Israel out of Egypt
 - b) Fire of God's manifest presence in the tabernacle and the temple
 - c) Fire of God that came to consume Elijah's sacrifice
 - d) The fire from the Holy of Holies – The sacred place in the Temple was coming out of the inner court to rest on each believer
 - e) The curtain protecting the Holy of Holies had been torn in the Jewish Temple when Jesus died on the cross – the way was made clear
 - f) God's presence would now dwell with men
 - g) Now they truly were the Living Temple of the Holy Spirit!

They were filled with the Holy Spirit

1. Weren't they filled with the Holy Spirit when they believed in Christ after the resurrection?
2. "The Spirit came upon them" – "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" – "Filled with the Spirit" all seem to be used interchangeably.
3. Yes, the Disciples already had the Holy Spirit when they received their salvation

a) John 20:21-23

²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

- b) This manifestation of the Spirit given to the Church is one of POWER (Dunamis)
- c) It is power to BE a witness

We are commanded to always be filled with the Holy Spirit

1. That is not the indwelling Presence of God at salvation – But the power to live our lives to the fullest in Christ!

Ephesians 5:17-20

¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

2. We must take the initiative
3. Having a heart filled with praise AND a mouth that speaks praise are a key to being filled with the Holy Spirit
4. We can never have too much!
5. It is the key to being a powerful witness for Christ!

Tongues as a unique New Testament sign

1. Why tongues?
2. All the other New Testament gifts appear in lives of prophets and holy men of the Old Testament
3. Tongues are unique to the New Testament
4. When baptized in the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues and prophecy are two normative signs (Acts 4, 10, 19)
5. God was making it clear that His covenant was with all peoples, language groups and nations!
6. They are a sign that the curse of Babel has been reversed!
 - a) *Babel – One people, one language, one evil purpose*
 - b) *Pentecost – Many peoples, made one by the Holy Spirit, for one Holy purpose*

Peter's explanation that day

1. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised by the Prophet Joel
2. Power of the Spirit was for the young and old, men and women, rich and poor
3. This outpouring marked the beginning of what the prophets called, "The Last Days"
4. Those days would begin with the Acts 2 outpouring and culminate with the return of Christ and the Judgment of nations

What the day of Pentecost means for us today

1. Empowered for a Purpose
 - a) From the beginning of the Church onward followers of Jesus were to be empowered to walk in the same way Jesus did
 - b) The same Holy Spirit that worked in Jesus' life in His earthly ministry is now dwelling in the Church
2. Jesus' ministry then should be the same ministry through His followers now
 - a) The gifts are divine enablings from the manifestation of God's Holy Spirit dwelling in the followers of Jesus
 - b) Now the same Spirit that empowered Jesus is activated in the hearts of every believer

Prophecy attributed to Smith Wigglesworth (The Apostle of Faith) in 1947

“During the next few decades there will be two distinct moves of the Holy Spirit across the church in Great Britain. The first move will affect every church that is open to receive it, and will be characterized by a restoration of the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

“The second move of the Holy Spirit will result in people leaving historic churches and planting new churches.”

“In the duration of each of these moves, the people who are involved will say, ‘This is a great revival.’ but the Lord says, ‘No, neither is the great revival but both are steps towards it.’”

“When the new church phase is on the wane, there will be evidence in the churches of something that has not been seen before: a coming together of those with an emphasis on the word and those with an emphasis on the Spirit. When the word and the Spirit come together, there will be the biggest move of the Holy Spirit that the nation, and indeed, the world has ever seen. It will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesleyan and Welsh revivals of former years...”



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COMMUNITY CHURCH