

Spiritual gifts: 1 Corinthians 12.1-13

Many thanks to Barbara Brighton for today's TFTD. Barbara attends Hallwood Ecumenical Parish in Runcorn and have just been licensed as a Reader.

Gifts - we all like to receive them, and in this passage in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul is talking about the spiritual gifts that God wants to give to us. In the opening verses of this passage Paul begins by saying he does not want us to be uninformed about them.

In verse two of this passage Paul speaks about the Corinthians former way of life before they became believers, and in verse three clearly shows is that a person who curses the name of Jesus is not speaking by the Spirit of God. It is only those who have a living faith in Jesus that can truly say Jesus is Lord because the Holy Spirit is living in all believers. I think this verse is a warning to make sure that in the area of spiritual gifts those who have these gifts are true followers of Christ.

An example of false prophets can be found in 1 John 4:1-3, John is asking us here to test the spirits to see if they are from God, and goes on to say every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. It is important to notice that unlike natural gifts that people have these spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit. It's also important to remember that it is God who activate these gifts (v6). Just as we would unwrap a gift to discover the contents inside, let us begin to unwrap these gifts of the Holy Spirit that God waits to impart to those who are open to receive them.

The Gift of Wisdom: the first gift mentioned in this passage is wisdom. In

the Old Testament in 1 Kings 3 God asks Solomon in a dream “Ask what I should give you” (v5). Instead of asking God for long life and riches, Solomon asked God for understanding to discern what was right (v11). In the book of James, we read in chapter 1:5 ‘If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.’ Wisdom is something that we all need to make good decisions, to know if something is the right course of action. I think the gift of wisdom here may go beyond normal wisdom that you and I pray for.

The Gift of Knowledge: We read of Daniel that he had an excellent spirit, knowledge and understanding (5:12). Proverbs 18:15 says ‘the ear of the wise seeks knowledge’. This gift of knowledge is more than just knowing about the subjects you may be studying. As this is one of the gifts of the spirit it goes much deeper. I believe it is a special insight about a situation or circumstance.

The Gift of Faith: we can all have faith and as Christians we sometimes feel we are lacking in faith. There is little faith (Matthew 6:30 and 8:26) and also great faith (Matthew 8:10 and Luke 7:9). The disciples said to Jesus ‘Lord increase our faith’ (Luke 17:5). Stephen was a man full of faith (Acts6:5) and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. The gift of faith is a faith that never doubts or wavers, it is a faith that believes before it receives.

The Gifts of Healing: there are many examples of Jesus healing people in the gospels. One example in Mark 5:21-43 was the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the healing of Jairus’s daughter and there are many other examples of Jesus healing people. We could say ‘But this was Jesus. I am just an ordinary person,’ but Jesus wants to take an ordinary person like you and me and do extraordinary things through us. It is the Holy Spirit who can impart the gift of healing to those who are open to

receive it.

The Working of Miracles: Jesus performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (John ch 11) and in Acts 19:11 we read that 'God did extraordinary miracles through Paul '.

The Gift of Prophecy: 2 Peter 1:21 'no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.' Prophecy is someone speaking out a message that people need to hear. This is a word from God that He wants to speak through a word of prophecy to give help, guidance or encouragement.

The Discernment of Spirits: two examples of demon activity were Jesus casting out demons from a man from the country of the Gerasenes (Luke 8:32-35), and Paul ordering an evil spirit to come out of a slave girl (Acts 16:18). A person with this gift will be able to discern whether a person has any demonic activity going on in their lives.

The Gift of Tongues: on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and in Acts 2:4 we read 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them ability'. The gift of speaking in tongues was not just for then it is a gift for today. When we speak in tongues God imparts a heavenly language to us which can be used in private prayer but can also operate in a service as a person is led by the Holy Spirit to speak a message to the people in tongues.

The Interpretation of Tongues: If someone speaks a message in tongues in a service, an interpretation must always be given, and you will read more about this in I Corinthians 14.

God has gifted us with natural abilities and gifts, but there are spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit wants to give to his people too. Let us be open to receive the gifts that God wants to impart to us and use those gifts to touch lives for His glory.

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