



*feeding...gathering...carrying...leading. (Isiah 40:11)*

Brothers and Sisters,

Stuart continued to explore a basic theology of the spiritual gifts this week, after speaking previously about how to approach this study in the first place. Last week he exhorted that we cannot begin with giftedness, we must begin with the Godhead! "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). It starts with God's presence - "manifestations of the Spirit". Requires the participation of all members - "to each one is given". And results in the church's profit - "for the common good." You cannot privatize the gifts of the Spirit, but must move in desire and maturity for the sake of the body, or at the expense of His very gracious influence in our lives.

This past Sunday he focused our study on the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12, all of which are extensively demonstrated in the book of Acts. There are three things Jesus taught in the upper room - the work of the Holy Spirit, the call to ask, and the world. Jesus said extensively that we would need the work of the Holy Spirit to do the works of Jesus, so it should come as no surprise that this would happen to two really obvious ways: character and charismata. The charismata gifts are expressed as tools to help us to know (wisdom, knowledge, discernment), to do (faith, healings, miracles) and to say (prophecy, tongues, interpretation).

### **GIFTS OF KNOWLEDGE: Wisdom, Knowledge, Discernment**

*Get wisdom (Proverbs 4:7). The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright (15:2).*

Knowledge is the **communication** of "what" providing the truth. Wisdom is the **application** of the "what" and shows how to guide one to that truth. Paul is not setting up a hierarchy of gifts in his communication, but often begins his epistles with the difference between the world's wisdom and God's (1 Cor. 2:1, 2 Cor. 1:12, Ep. 1:18, Phil. 1:9). Thus it shouldn't come as a shock that this is where he begins in the list of manifestation gifts. The gifts function as a team, constantly overlapping and enhancing one another towards a common result, revealing Jesus (Col. 1:1-12, 2:2-3). It is impossible for a mature manifestation of the gifts to only draw attention to the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is a self-effacing member of the Trinity, always pointing to Jesus, and Jesus always draws us to the Father. Wisdom and knowledge not only reveal Jesus, but the evoke godly character (fruit of the Spirit) in the believer. Paul starts with these gifts as Corinth was steeped in sensationalism, thus beginning with wisdom and knowledge keeps the emphasis on Christ, Christ-like character, and content. Content which is meant to bear the truth of God into peoples' lives for their good. These two gifts are also functionally important when it comes to the public communication life of the church and are especially needed for peaching and teaching.

### **Word of Wisdom**

This is not about natural gifting - *not persuasive words of human wisdom* (1 Cor. 2:4). A word of wisdom comes as a specific revelation of God's nature that enables us to think in a specific moment about specific situation, rightly. It is often immediate, brings illumination to whoever receives it, and bears an answer to a specific question or asking. Like all gifts it is grounded in God's word and therefore His will. It is about intimacy with Jesus, loving and listening to His voice. It will never contradict scripture. Therefore, desperately needed in preaching and teaching.

In all our lives we require this word of wisdom in our communication with others, with believers or as a witness to others. The Lord will write the script for you as you are speaking to aid in **revealing Jesus!** This is Jesus promise; the Holy Spirit will teach you at the time the words you need to say (Luke 12:12).

### **Word of Knowledge**

Clearly, this often overlaps and connects with the word of wisdom. Words of knowledge are not an ability to convey information, telepathy, or mind reading - all of which scripture forbids. These always bring the fruits of fear, dependency, and control. Rather it is a very specific, penetrating word of Godly knowing. People who bear that word do not become gurus, but point to Jesus. Typically, the word comes with regards to things that are hidden, and brought to the light. Jesus often operates in the word of knowledge, for example the conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4:17), or Zacchaeus (Luke 19). In all cases, this gift is always meant to draw people deeper into God's purposes for their lives. The gift does not humiliate or belittle, though it might be uncomfortable. It is a wonderful extension of God's grace to somebody! Often times this gift comes as a rebuke that brings loving correction, but it can equally come as a blessing.

### **Discernment of Spirits**

This gift is desperately needed as there is an unholy trinity at work around us: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Each of which needs to be discerned. The early church was plagued with this distraction at every point, and greatly needed the discernment of spirits. This gift works for our protection, purity, and to promote what is good. Discernment doesn't solve the problems, but it exposes them for all the other ministrations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is clearly a **spiritual** perception of what is functioning and working behind what is being observed in external appearance. There are three designations of spirits in scripture: human spirits (emotions, etc.), demonic spirit (Matthew 9:27), and divine (presence the Lord and His angels). These spirits are always around us, thus discernment is non-negotiable for the work of discipleship, and defiance against the curse of the enemy in our lives.

### **GIFTS OF ACTION: Healings, Miracles, & Faith**

Healings and miracles are both noted in the plural, as no two healings or miracles are alike, each is uniquely tailored for the person and situation. This wets our expectation of the variation of ways the Lord can manifest for each individual person. Furthermore, in this culture there is a ripe work of counterfeit healings and health methods which can invite the demonic into the life of the believer. We must be careful to examine our participation in practices, such as yoga, which may evoke and invite a healer other than Jesus. All healings are miracles, but not all miracles are healing (such as calming of the waves). It is about what God trying to say through the miracle, pointing to the love and care of God!

There will be a continued message to examine the gift of faith and the gifts of speech (prophecy, tongues, and interpretation) in coming weeks. Many thanks to all of you for the generosity of your giving to the youth mission trip to Benin on Sunday. God truly provided in abundance. We raised over \$5000 (wow!) through the offering, auction, and BBQ – all of which will go directly to the ministry and people in Benin. Our deepest appreciation for your support!

May we all grow in our expectation of God's presence in our lives, through the Holy Spirit, revealing Jesus to the world around us!

Pursuing Him,  
Monique (on behalf of Stuart)