

11. Ministry Gifts, Part 2

Spiritual Gifts—God's Way

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

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So this is going to be the second half of our ministry gifts and next week we will finish up with the manifestation gifts and then we will be done. So let's just do a quick review here in terms of the gifts. And so we are going to be looking specifically at the ministry gifts today and this is the second list that is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And let's review just the types of spiritual gifts, first of all. There is the motivation gifts. These are found in Romans chapter 12 verses three through nine. There are seven of them. So there is prophecy and... let's see if I... I don't know if I can remember them all now. Prophecy and giving and administration and teaching and serving and mercy and organization or administration. And so those are the seven gifts and God says that he gives one of those seven, not all seven, not two, not three, just one, one of those seven gifts he gives to you at the moment of your salvation and that becomes your motivation. It is kind of how you are wired. I am wired as a teacher. Faith is wired as an organizer and Richard is wired as a teacher. We think Melody is wired as prophet, so we are all wired a little differently which means that we look at the world through different lenses and we look at ministry. And different things motivate us.

And one of the best ways to know what your gift is, is what irritates you that other Christians do. For me it irritates me when people think that something else is more important than the Word of God. That is the bottom line for me. If somebody treats other things more important than the Word of God. You know, it is more important to go run an errand than to hear the Word of God. That ticks me off, ok? Somebody claims that it is more important to, you know, go have some kind of fun when the Word of God is being taught. That rattles my cage. Whereas, you know, someone who has the gift of administration, they probably get upset that things are going undone because nobody is organized enough to get it done, ok? So that is one way, one good way of knowing what your gift is.

But each one of us has one of these gifts and these are the things we are to focus on.

Now, by the way, let me give you something to write down here. This is going to be maybe the most important thing I say to day. So although you are going to find this lesson rather unique, it may answer some questions about some of these spiritual gifts that you have always wondered about.

Now let me say the most important thing I am going to say right now. That is that you need to understand there is only one ministry of the Holy Spirit you are ever to seek. That is the filling of the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, there is only one ministry you should ever seek and that is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't seek for a certain gift or a certain experience. Just simply seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God. That is the most important thing.

Now the motivation gifts, though, are the things that we are supposed to figure out and we are supposed to concentrate on. We are supposed to learn how to develop. Then we have a second category of gift which is the ministry gifts. We looked at these. We are going to look at these in two parts. Last week we looked at Ephesians 4:11 through 12 and there we saw the ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, teacher and our pastor teacher and also the evangelist. And so we looked at those four ministry gifts. Today we are going to look at the second list of ministry gifts found in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verses 27 through 31.

Now these are gifts that are given by God and the church meaning that God gives you an opportunity in the church to serve. You use your ministry gifts within the context of the body of Christ. Now there is a third category of gift we will talk about next week and these are the manifestation gifts in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, also. And these are the gifts that... they are a little different. You are never to seek these gifts. These are gifts that happen in someone when I use my motivation gift teaching of teaching in the church someone may get one of these manifestation gifts. So, for example, there is the word of faith. Maybe something I say in a lesson will encourage someone to believe that they know what God's will is for their life and to have the courage to step out and do it, you know? If they have a word of knowledge maybe it is suddenly and biblical truth dawns on them that never dawned on them before. That would be the word of knowledge.

Now most of these manifestation gifts are the ones that are the most confusing today, people have really perverted their understanding of them. We want some mystical experience, so we so we turn on the TV and here is a guy on the TV that says, "Right now someone just turned on the TV and he has got liver disease."

Ok?

And they say, "I have just had a word of knowledge that there is someone in my TV audience that has liver disease."

Well, guess what? If you are broadcasting, you know, to a few million people, chances are good that one of them is going to have liver disease, ok? But this isn't what the biblical word of knowledge is. So next week we are going to sort out those word of knowledge issues, all right? And then there is the what I call the miscellaneous gifts, is there is one gift in the Bible. It is called a spiritual gift in 1 Peter chapter four and that is the gift to hospitality. It is not listed under any one of these others. So there is just a... this is a gift, I think, we don't practice often enough. It is just being hospitable, inviting

people over to your house, letting them spend the night, just getting to know them is one of the greatest ways to develop strong Christian friendships is just to have people in your home and to fellowship with them and eat with them, et cetera, so just an awesome opportunity.

Now what is the relationship between these three kinds of gifts? Well, we have gone over this several times, but it bears repeating. So every Christian has one motivation gift. This is the seven gifts listed in Romans 12. Your job as a Christian is to figure out which of those seven is your gift. And I am sad. You know, there is people in our own church because they haven't taken advantage of this, they don't get it. Somebody asked somebody here the other day what do you think your spiritual gift is? He said, "Well, I think it is hospitality."

Well, they missed, you know, if they had listened to the lessons he knows he has got one of these seven and hospitality isn't one of them, ok? And he needs to figure out which is his gift so that he knows how to best use himself in the body of Christ. I am not... you know, I am not an organizer. And I am also ... I don't have the gift of mercy. Now I try to practice it. We are supposed to practice all seven qualities, right? But I have been told by my son particularly that I do not have the best bedside manner in a hospital. Last time I took Richard to the emergency room and they made him put on one of those backless gowns, I said, "Oh, you know what? I think if I connect the dots, we can get a picture of the Lincoln Memorial or something like that," and, you know, on his freckles. And that was not what he wanted to hear, you know. So, you know, I have all the tact of a submarine with screen doors. So I am probably not the best person sometimes to see you in the hospital. I have developed that technique through my own suffering. I found out what it is like to be suffering so I am little bit more sensitive than I used to be.

But you need to figure out which of those seven is your gift.

Now once you figure that out, the thing is you are given a ministry gift in the church and that ministry gift is your opportunity to use your motivation gift. Now what happens when you use your motivation gift in a ministry of the church, God produces the manifestation gifts in other people, not you, other people. So this is where people maybe... maybe you taught a lesson on bitterness and you told people how to get rid of bitterness in their life and they went home and they put it into practice and as a result of that God healed them of a persistent problem physically, a problem they had. They would have gotten a gift of healing because of that, ok? And so that is the idea there.

So, again, three kinds of gifts. You use your motivation gift in a ministry opportunity and God produces the manifestation in someone else.

What are the purposes of spiritual gifts? Now we really haven't talked about that too much, but in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 it makes it clear that the purpose of the spiritual gift is to edify the church in her ministry. So you are supposed to be using spiritual gifts to edify the church or build up the church, ok? Now a lot of people today that have perverted the doctrine or the teaching of spiritual gifts, they go for spiritual gifts for the

purpose of trying to make themselves look better or to get an emotional high out of it or get an emotional experience. This is where a lot of the charismatic confusion comes from. But the purpose of gifts is to edify the church. And Paul makes it clear. Hey, you know, don't speak in tongues, for example, in 1 Corinthians 14, unless it edifies the church, unless there is an interpreter. We are going to talk specifically about tongues here in just a little bit. So that is an important point.

Gifts are to profit others, not yourself. You look at 1 Corinthians 12:26. Paul makes it very plain that the reason we are to use spiritual gifts is to profit and be a benefit and a blessing to others. Now, if you ever use a gift just to make yourself feel better or look better or look more spiritual than somebody else, then that is not a proper use of a spiritual gift.

So I remember a fellow one time, I liked this fellow. This fellow's name was Jack. I liked Jack. Jack was a good guy. He was a, you know, a good old boy and we would get in the pick up truck and we would go out to the oil well where he worked and we would do stuff out there together, but Jack had some weird ideas about spiritual gifts. And I still never will forget, you know, he was... you know, he didn't come to church regular. He talked to me a lot, but he didn't come to church, you know, He talked to me, but never let me stand in front of a pulpit and talk to him, you know. But he was a good old boy and we spent a lot of time together and an interesting thing about him is that he would always try to talk to me about how spiritual he was. And, of course, I thought, "Well, if you are spiritual, you ought to be in God's house on God's day because Hebrews 10 says, "Forsake not the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhort one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching."

So that was the first clue I had that maybe he wasn't as spiritual as he thought he was. And then one day he told me that somebody had dumped about 30 kittens off on his ranch, just dumped them there and all the sudden he had all these kittens running everywhere. And, of course, you know what happens. Kittens grow up to be cats and they are almost as prolific as rabbits and then you end up with more kittens. And so, you know, he took them off and, you know, put them somewhere else and they all came back to his ranch, you know? And he tried that twice. He said the third time he put them all in a sack and he threw them in the water and they came back up on his pond and so he put them in a sack again and threw it at them. And this time he said that he prayed over them in tongues and finally the cats drowned.

I thought, "Well, they were probably just tired." You know, I don't think praying in tongues made the cats drown. But this was not an appropriate use of spiritual gifts even considering what I think about cats, ok? And so in spite of what I think about cats, still not an appropriate use of the gift.

And so the thing we need to know is that the gift only fulfills its purpose when it gives glory to God. If it gives glory to anybody else, calls attention to anybody else, makes you focus on anybody else, then it is not a spiritual gift used properly. Spiritual gifts used properly cause us to focus on God. All right?

Here we go.

1 Corinthians 12:5 is where we have the phrase for these ministry gifts and it refers, in King James, it calls it diversities of administrations, but these are the Greek word διακονια (dee-ak-on-ee'-ah) from which we get deacon, from which we get ministry. These are often given by ordination. They are jobs that are given within the church.

So let's look at a few of these. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 27 through 31.

It says:

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ¹

So those are the... that is the list right there. These are our ministry gifts and he says:

Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"²

He says, "Now, first of all, don't think that you should have every one of these ministries."

The reason that there is a church is because we need other people to minister in it besides you. Each one of you has a motivation gift. We don't have all seven. That is why we need each other because you know about needs that I am not aware of. I know about things that you are not aware of because we have different gifts that kind of alert us to that.

He says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."³

Now a little note not is passage of Scripture is the more excellent way is in the next chapter. What is in 1 Corinthians 13? Who remembers? It is the love chapter. He says, "Listen, the real focus on spiritual gifts ought to be loving God and loving others."

Now if you are practicing that, chances are you are using your gift in the right way. However, if you are focused on a spiritual gift and you are thinking how to makes you look, that is not being loving, that is being selfish, a different thing.

All right, now, here is something I need you to pay very close attention to. In 1 Corinthians 12 verses 27 through 31 it lists the gift of miracles, healings, helps,

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:27-29.

² 1 Corinthians 12:30.

³ 1 Corinthians 12:31.

governments and tongues. But it lists them under the ministry gifts. Now later we are going to find a separate list of manifestation gifts and you will see healings and tongues there as well, but they are not the same thing.

So I want you to separate in your mind that we are going to see the gift of tongues twice, once as a ministry gift, once as a manifestation gift. You are going to see the gift of healings twice, once as a ministry gift, once as a manifestation gift.

Now the manifestation gifts happen to individuals. Ministry gifts are things that the church do. So there is a ministry gift of healing. There is a ministry gift of tongues. There is a ministry gift of helps. Those are not to be confused with the manifestation gifts that we will cover next week. So we have got to keep these separate or you will be really, really confused.

All right. So by way of ministry gift, just review, the... I don't know why we having to hold this a little higher today. But in Ephesians four we found the apostles and remember the Latin word of apostle is *missio* from which we get missionary. That is a special gift. It takes a special calling of God to go to a foreign field, learn a foreign language and minister to people there and live in that culture and adapt to it. It is a special gift of the Lord.

And then profits are proclaimers of God's truth. And they confront others with their sin and then teachers or pastor teachers Ephesians calls it, of course, are instructors and those that teach God's Word. And then there was the evangelist. And the evangelists are those... we are going to go do some evangelism tonight. We are all going to... out close to the Addison airport and we are going to, you know, hand out tracts and maybe we will find someone to talk to that we can share Christ with. We all need to do the work of evangelism, but there are some people whose calling is just simply leading people to Jesus Christ and that is their full time ministry and that is an awesome ministry to have.

Now there are two little words you need to notice in this Scripture and in 1 Corinthians 12 when it says that you have got all these gifts it says "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that..."⁴

Do you see those two words there in 1 Corinthians 12 probably about verse 28? Watch this again. I want you to underline the words after that.

It says:

"God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that..."⁵

Underline those two words.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:28.

⁵ Ibid.

“...miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”⁶

Now that is the Greek word *επειτα* (ep'-i-tah) which simply means that what comes after those two words in English or that one word in Greek is of lesser importance than what came before.

So the main ministries of the church are proclaiming the Word of God, teaching the Word of God, sending out missionaries. Those are the main ministries of the Church. After that, of lesser importance, according to Paul are these other gifts that come. And what are those? Healings, helps, governments and diversities of tongues.

So order is always significant in Scripture. You will miss the mark, you will miss God's design if you try to put all the spiritual gifts on the same plane because they are not. God himself says, “After that, of lesser importance are these other gifts.”

So let's look at what these other gifts are. The gift of miracles. Did Jesus work miracle? Yeah, absolutely. He worked miracles. A little tougher question, maybe, of course, what about these guys? What about Paul? Raised Eutychus from the dead. You know, I would all agree that raising somebody from the dead was a miracle, but who did that? You know, it was God that did it, exactly.

Peter and John, you know, they said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”⁷

And this lame man got up and walked. Did Peter and John work that miracle? No.

What about Peter, you know, Tabitha or Dorcas and this young girl that gets up from the dead. He didn't work that miracle either. God did.

So we need to understand, first of all, that miracles come from God and that people do not perform supernatural miracles. The word “supernatural” means something that is not natural. It is above natural. It is something that God has to do. And you and I are not supernatural so we are not going to do supernatural stuff.

So I want to give you a little word of warning. The next time you hear Benny Hinn claim that he does miracles, first of all, if he does anything, you know, God... you know, if there was a miracle, God did it and if he did anything it wasn't a miracle, ok?

Now a miracle, by the way, is either a supernatural act or a natural occurrence with supernatural timing. In other words, how many of you have ever had this happen? You had a serious financial need and you prayed about it and God sent the exact amount you needed at the exact moment you needed it.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Acts 3:6.

Now getting the money wasn't supernatural. But getting the exact amount at the exact moment was pretty incredible. And I have had that happen a number of times before and, you know, I have seen it happen even here at the church where we had a, you know, a precise need to meet a God given goal and he waits till the very last Sunday before the deadline and then he meets the need. And that is always exciting for me to get to see it. It has strengthened my faith to watch the finances here. And it has been, you know, something I thought was going to be a horrible experience and it has been a wonderful experience for me. Just been very encouraging to be a part of that.

And so the thing is the ministry gift of miracles is... what it really is in a church is that you would have dynamic believing prayer to ask God for miracles. Now I don't know about your prayer life, but sometimes I forget to ask God for the miraculous. I ask him for stuff that should be able to happen anyway, you know? I ask for little things.

Now to God everything is little, but from my perspective I think some things are big and some things are little. I will kind of ask the little to the medium, but I don't ask for the big stuff.

You know what? I... James talks about this. He says, "You have not..." Why? Because you ask not. I think the reason we don't see more miracles in people's lives today is because we don't ask for them. We don't ask for the big miracles. We don't ask for the thing.

That guy that just seems like he will never be saved and he is totally unrepentant and you talk to him time and time again and there is no hope for him, well, you kind of give up praying for him. Don't do it.

Billy Graham prayed 47 years for one of his friends to be saved before he finally came to know the Lord. Don't give up. God can work a miracle even in the hardest of hearts.

Similarly, we ought to ask God to do things that are supernatural. Ok? So God has chosen to work through our prayers. And this is illustrated several times in Scripture. One time I can think of, do you remember when Moses was up on the mountain with Hur and Aaron and the Israelites were fighting the battle against the Amalekites down in the valley and Joshua was leading the army and they went for a little while and then Moses got tired of praying. He had been up there standing, holding his hands. He let us hands down and get tired of praying. And then all of the sudden the Amalekites would start winning the battle.

And then, you know, Moses would try to do it again and suddenly the Israelites started winning. This went back and forth because Moses was a Baptist. He had no upper arm strength. And so, you know, he... you know, Baptists are not used to doing this, right? Ok. So he had no upper arm strength. He got really tired after a long time. And so what happened is finally Aaron gets on one side and props up this arm. Hur gets on this side and props up this arm and then Israel wins the battle.

Now, did God need Moses praying to win the battle? No. God doesn't need us for squat, ok? Why did he do that? He did it because he wanted to illustrate that God has chosen to work through the prayers of believers.

So when we don't see God working more, God isn't at fault. We are, because we haven't been praying. He has chosen to working through the prayers of believers.

So when we praying faith God is able to bring about events with precise timing or with supernatural power to bring glory to himself.

Now, by the way, who got the glory from that whole story in Exodus? Well, God did. It was clear that the battle was due to the results of the prayer. And that is why God put that story in there. Hey, this is the results of the prayers that made that work.

Now, so what was it that Paul and Peter and John really did when they worked those miracles I mentioned a moment ago? They prayed with faith. God worked the miracle. What did they do? They prayed with believing faith.

So this is not the gift of miracles that a lot of TV preachers claim to have. It is the true gift of miracles where only God alone gets the glory.

Now how do we practice the gift of miracles in the local church? Well, if we were to practice... remember this is a ministry gift. Now we are going to talk about he manifestation gift of miracles next week. What is the ministry gift of miracles?

It would mean that if we wanted this ministry in our church we would have organized times of prayer where we didn't just pray for, you know, God help the doctors to figure out what is wrong with Mrs. so and so. Because, you know, the problem with that prayer. And I am not saying it is a bad prayer and don't feel bad if you ever prayed that payer, but every time we pray for God to give the doctors wisdom, then if God gives the doctors wisdom, who gets the credit for the healing? Usually the doctors.

Meanwhile, you know, I had a disease for eight and a half years where I walked with a cane and I went to doctor after doctor after doctor and none of them healed me and then one day God showed me something from Scripture and I followed it and I got well. Who got the glory in that situation? God did. He wants to do things so he alone gets the glory.

And, you know, it may sound wrong to some of us for God to glorify himself, but God always does what is righteous. The most righteous thing you could do is glorify God so it is right for God to glorify himself. You and I, if we go around and glorifying ourselves, that , on the other hand, is just the sin of pride. Ok? The whole universe is built around glorifying God. That is what we are created for.

“And for thy pleasure they are and were created,”⁸ Revelation 4:10.

⁸ Revelation 4:11.

So we are here to please God. We are here to glorify God. And so we need to make note of that.

And so just a... only God should get the glory.

So we need to have an organized ministry of believing prayer and also we need to have strong faith to ask God for more than the usual, ok? So, you know, I tell you. God is kind of dealing with me on this because I can see the need in the future that we need, you know, maybe a bigger place to worship or we need another place where we can have a second congregation to worship. Those are things that are expensive and I can't see where it is going to come from, but do you know what? It is cheap for God and he has all the resources.

So this would be a thing where if we got a group of believing people together and said, "God, would you make it possible for our church to grow beyond the bounds where it is and would you provide for the needs that we are going to have in the future?"

So we should ask God to go beyond the normals and we should also ask him to go beyond generalities. I mean, how often have you prayed, "God, bless our church and God bless our family"? Well how? Have you asked him how to bless you? Is it financial blessing you need? Is it blessings of health you need? Is there a blessing of someone in your family that is not saved that it would change your whole family if that person came to know Jesus Christ and that would make life truly awesome? Is there someone in your family that has got a problem with bitterness and it is causing your family to be ripped apart at the seams and you would like to be able to see that change? Well, ask him specifically.

You know, when we pray generally, we get general stuff and we never go back and praise God. But if we pray specifically... And, listen. One of the best exercises you can do for your kids, parents, is get a notebook, write down your prayer requests, journal them and then when God answers them, go back to the kids and say, "Look, we prayed for new shoes and God provided them." Ok?

Just two weekends ago, I think it was two weekends ago, yeah, I was at a wedding and I saw the bride's mother and it was the most beautiful dress I had ever seen her in and I just knew she didn't have a lot of finances. I said, "Candy, that is the prettiest dress I have ever seen you in."

And she said... she started talking about what a great miracle it was. She had been praying about it and she got some kind of deal where the whole dress was 22.50. And it was, you know, probably a 300 dollar dress. And so she had a nice dress for her daughter's wedding. But it was in... as a result of a specific answer to prayer. God cares about stuff like that, so pray specifically, ok? Don't just pray generally. Ask God for big and bold things instead of requests so small that you could have probably done it on your own if you had worked a little harder at it, ok?

Now let's talk about the gifts of healings. Every time the Bible mentions healing and it puts the word "gift" and "healing" in the same verse, they are always both plural. So it is never the gift of healing.

And I hear people all the time say, "Well, somebody... so and so has the gift of healing."

No, he doesn't because that is not biblical. There are gifts of healings, but there is no such thing as the gift of healing.

Now, the only person I know of that ever had the gift of healing was Jesus Christ. He could heal anybody, any time, anywhere that he desired to do so because he is God. But we don't have it. So when Benny Hinn brings up the person in the wheelchair on stage and he, you know, shoves her hand and forehead and shakes him real good while he is saying something over him and then the wheelchair falls over and suddenly they stand up, that isn't a gift of healing that he has. And I am not going to say what it is, but it is not the gift of healing. He doesn't have it because it is not biblical.

The Bible makes it clear that there are gifts of healings and so in 1 Corinthians 12:9, for example, it says... he is talking about manifestation gifts here. He says, "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit."⁹

So, in other words, if I teach something and the Holy Spirit moves on your heart that you need to put that truth in your life and it may be that a disease you have is actually being caused by an acidic condition in your body and the Bible says that bitterness is as a canker which is the King James word for cancer. It is very possible for some people to forgive someone that they are bitter against and be healed of cancer. Interesting fact, not saying this is true in every case. Not saying you should immediately think this is the case if you are diagnosed with this. But an interesting fact is that a majority percentage of women that have breast cancer are bitter against another woman. Isn't that interesting?

And many times when they ask for, you know, when they forgive that other person, their symptoms decrease. Sometimes they even go away. But the Bible says bitterness is as a canker. Your immune system is lower when you are bitter. There is a lot of sickness you can get because you are bitter. Get rid of the bitterness, you will be healthier. So this is something that you need to work on.

And so that would be a gift of healing to someone who heard a message about bitterness, ok? So he has individual gifts of healings and a gift of healing, but nobody walks around and says, "Man, I have got the gift of healing. I can take care of you." Ok? That is just strictly not biblical.

The Young's literal translation translates it a little better, I think. It says, "And to another faith the same spirit and to another gifts of healings in the same spirit."

⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:9.

So it really ought to be gifts of healings.

Now in 1 Corinthians 12:28. He mentions it in the context of ministry gifts. He says, “After that God has sent some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities, tongues.”

So God always makes sure that these are put in the plural to emphasize the fact that nobody has the gift of healing. God gives individual gifts of healings to people who need healing.

By the way, God is still in the healing business.

Isn't it sad, thought? Richard brought out few weeks ago when he was talking about King Asa the verse in 2 chronicles chapter 16 where it says he “was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.”¹⁰

The first place we ought to go when we are sick is to God, not the last place. What we do is we first try to self heal. We self medicate, take nutritional supplements. That doesn't work. We go to the doctor and expect him to solve it and when the doctor gives us no hope then we get on our knees and pray. That is backwards. Ok? We need to start with the prayer thing. All right.

So grammar is really important for us here. God wants us to understand that no one of us has ability to heal others, but he does at his discretion give individual gifts of healings to people who need it and I think he does that as a result of our prayers.

So there are gifts of healings.

Now how do we have this ministry in the church? Paul is discussing the ministry of the church here in this passage we are studying today. Healing was a part of Christ's earthly ministry. It ought to be a part of our ministry today.

So how do we get involved in healing? Well, one way we can do this is we have medical missions. So we have what is called the Baptist Medical Missions Institute, BMMI and we send medical missionaries, we send doctors to other countries that don't have adequate health care and they not only minister health there, but they minister to their spiritual needs. They share the gospel with them. They pray with them and people are delighted to have that. That is one way we can participate. So a portion of our income here every month, actually, goes to that ministry. So that is one way to practice that gift.

And then, you know, another way to practice this gift would be, well, you know, the medical clinics operating on biblical principles.

¹⁰ 2 Chronicles 16:12.

It would be wonderful. I have a dream one day where, you know, we have got a physical therapist. I am still praying for a chiropractor. And then, you know, hopefully we will get a medical doctor or two. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have a clinic where people could come and we look at things not from the normal medical school perspective, but look at it from what does God say about this? What are the primary causes?

Because guess what? Man is three parts. He is spirit, soul and body. When we go to the doctor he is only ministering to the body. A lot of doctors don't care about your soul and sometimes we separate that. So we go to the, you know, we got to eh doctor for the body and we go to the psychiatrist for the soul and we only go to the preacher when we think we have a question about the Bible.

Well, we need to minister to all three parts of man at the same time. You know, when somebody comes to counsel for me and they are experiencing depression, I understand something about that. There are physical causes of depression. I have advice to give them for when they are depressed. There are also battles of the soul that are being fought and there are five battles of the soul listed in the book of Joshua and I can ask them questions and figure out which one of those battles they are fighting that is causing them to be depressed.

Also understand that there are three spiritual causes of depression and which one of those is causing them to be depressed? You need to minister to all of them at the same time and that is why it is so dramatically important.

Then you want to teach people good health. The Bible... I don't know if you realize that all those dietary laws in the Old Testament they weren't just so God could have rules and regulations for his chosen people. They were also to keep his chosen people healthier. So, you know, as much as you like catfish, it is not a clean fish in the Old Testament and it is a bottom feeder and it picks up what is on the bottom of the pond. It picks up the refuse and so you get that and you are probably getting less healthy fish than if you ate bass or croppie which I like bass better anyway, ok?

Same thing. You know, I like shrimp, but it is not a clean animal. Quite technically, shrimp is the roach of the sea. Now I will still eat it because I like it, but it is high in cholesterol. It is not really good for you, but it is a crustacean. Crustaceans are not clean animals in the Old Testament. There is reasons. You know, they used to have a problem in the Mediterranean area where you would eat shell fish and then very often you would get a parasite that would go into your body, crawl out through your digestive system into your leg and become a long worm that lived inside your leg and you get these painful sores and bulges here and the only way, really, to get rid of it, if you wanted to get the whole worm. The only thing worse than having a whole worm in your body is having part of a worm in your body, if you know what I mean.

So eventually this worm would cause an ulcer on your leg and would come out through the ulcer, just one end of him and they would take it and they would take a stick and they

would gradually begin rolling it up, very slowly. An inch or so per day and then they would tighten it again. It would take several days, but eventually they could wind the whole worm around the stick and get it out. One of the symbols for the American Medical Association is a serpent around a stick. Well it comes from two things. One it comes from this because, you know, getting a worm out of the leg is a pretty popular part of that culture. It is also because of the serpent that was on the brazen rod and God says look to that and I will heal you.

But there was an actual, you know, contextual thing that was going on there in the area around the Mediterranean Ocean. So the point is that you and I need to be looking for ways to teach people good principles so they don't get sick to begin with. And that involves certain disciplines we need to follow. It involves certain health practices. It is not saying that the dietary laws help you in your salvation or make you more approved unto heaven, but it might give you more years to serve the Lord if you understood them, if you followed them. So we want to restore people to spiritual and mental health and that is often something they need to do to be healthy physically.

Now, let's look at the ministry gift of helps. The word used here is what, in Greek, is we refer to as a hapax legomenon. It means it is one time word. It is only used one time in all of the Scripture. So this is a Greek word that only occurs one time. You will never see this again. And it means a perception of a need, a laying hold of responsibility to aid. So there is lots of opportunities in church to help those who are in leadership, and also to help those who just have needs in their life. You know, widows often don't have anybody to come over and help them paint or help them work in the yard. So that is an opportunity for you to practice the ministry gift of helps. So where can we start with this? Well, first of all, you know, look for ways to alleviate the burdens on others. And I appreciate so much those who say, "You know, pastor, how can I help you in that area?"

The other thing James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."¹¹

So a fatherless person is just a person without a dad. Can you do something to encourage that person. That is pure religion.

A widow, technically isn't just someone whose husband has died, but in Bible times a widow is somebody who has no husband. Today that would be not only a woman who was a widow, but a woman whose husband has left her, ok? Do you have a special ministry to that kind of person? Because God says that is pure religion to minister those needs.

There is another word here. This is the word "governments." This is also a hapax legomenon, meaning, again, that it is a Greek word that only occurs one time in the New Testament. And this is a ministry given to some in the church to help guide and over see the ministries of the church. It is a... there is the role of an administrator. And there... you

¹¹ James 1:27.

know, maybe there are subdivisions under this. So we need somebody to administer, you know, the property and buildings and then somebody to administrate things like, you know, faith Bible institute and somebody else in some churches to, you know, keep Sunday school records, track that to things of that nature.

By the way, something interesting about this. It is listed toward the end of the list. Now order I always significant. I think it is significant that the most effective administrators are the ones you never see them do what they are doing, ok? If they are really effective at it, they do things behind the scene. They get it done and you don't ever really notice the work that goes into it. You don't really ever notice the prayers and the effort. Their job is to keep it running efficiently, not to call attention. Hey, look what I am doing, ok? That is the most efficient kind of administration.

Now let's talk about the one last one before we close and that is the ministry gift of tongues. Now, remember I said earlier you are going to have to separate in your mind if there is a ministry gift of tongue and a manifestation gift of tongues. So I am going to try to drill in on the ministry gift of tongues today. We will talk about the manifestation gift of tongues next time from a biblical perspective. But this is the ministry gift, not the manifestation gift. They are not the same thing, ok?

What this refers to is varying languages. And this refers to a language or dialect used by a particular people distinct from that of other nations, what the word means here. It is a dialect. It is a dialect. It is not this battle that you hear men charismatic people making where they just run off with a bunch of babble and then they get all ecstatic and happy about it and nobody really knows what happened.

This is more like what happened in Acts chapter two where you had the gift where they... everybody heard one of the 120 that happened to be there at the upper room. They heard them speaking in their own dialect or their own language.

But there were significant reasons for a ministry of tongues in the early church. So you need to remember that it say spiritual gifts are given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. So all spiritual gifts are supposed to do these things. They are supposed to perfect, or, you know, make more holy the saints. They are supposed to do the work of the ministry and edify the body of Christ.

Now, if it does other stuff and not those three things, then it is not a proper spiritual gift. And that is what we need to focus on. And he says we do these till we call come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

So all true gifts edify the church and cause Christians to mature to become more like Christ.

So what were the purposes for the ministry gift of tongues? Number one purpose was it was to introduce the gospel in many languages and fulfill the prophecy of Joel.

So in Acts chapter two it says:

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and
in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia,
in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene.¹²

In other words a whole bunch of different languages and everybody heard in their own language, not babble, in their own language.

It says, “We do hear them speak in our tongues.”¹³

So they heard them speak in dialects, not nonsense little babble. And they... it was to spread the gospel and to fulfill a prophecy of Joel. Second purpose for tongues was to confirm that the Gentiles became believer. The Jews needed a sign and it was actually a sign back in the book of Isaiah we will talk about in just a minute, but it was to confirm that they became believers.

So God gave Peter a dream and he told him to go to the home of a gentile to share the Gospel with him. Three men show up right after the dream when he wakes up. They escort Peter to this Gentile's house. Peter was pretty much a Jew. He usually avoided contact with Gentiles. He goes to the witness to their household. They are converted and one of the proofs he had of their conversion was that they spoke in tongues. And this was a sign that had been prophesied in the Old Testament saying, “This is what is going to happen when I start giving, when I start including the Gentiles in the land of grace. This is one of the things that you are going to see.”

Another person for tongues is just simply to provide truth to the unchurched before the New Testament was written. So there were people in Jerusalem who were from other geographies and other places and they were culturally dispersed and they had an opportunity to hear the gospel in their own language. There is nothing so special as your mother tongue. You will respond to things in your mother tongue. I mean, you can go to Taiwan and you can teach in English and chances are they will understand a lot of what you say if not most of what you say. But that is not the same as preaching in Chinese with is their mother tongue and it really ministers the language to them better.

So the New Testament wasn't complete until the near the end of the first century and 1 Corinthians is one of the earliest books written. It is written about AD 56 and we see a lot of tongues speaking still going on at this time.

But Christians needed instruction and conformation in their own language prior to when they had manuscripts available.

¹² Acts 2:8-10.

¹³ Acts 2:11.

I will tell you. I will tell you as close as I ever came to the gift of tongues, the biblical gift, not the babbling gift or the nonsensical stuff, because that is not biblical.

But I remember one time that a minister from a church in Luffton, Texas call me up and he says, “Do you have any Chinese Bibles?” And I said, “Yes.” He said, “Well, there was a family in our community that visited our church a few times and their teenage son got hit by a bus and he is in intensive care in Tyler.”

And I said, “Well, I will follow you up there.”

And so I got on my motorcycle and I followed him up to Tyler, went into the hospital and here was a Chinese lady and the dad wasn’t around right now. The son was in intensive care. And I began talking to her and she spoke almost no English at all. She was just going to church because she was a Christian even though she couldn’t understand the messages. And my Chinese was pretty inadequate and pretty small.

But what happened is as I was talking to her, I understood phrases that probably if you said them to me today I would just go huh, you know? I remember her saying to me in Chinese that she thought her son knew about Jesus in her head, but had never received him in his heart. Now if you said that to me in Mandarin today I don’t think I would have a clue what you said. I thought you would have just ordered more chow mein or something, ok? But I understood her that day. And not only that, I was able to stay stuff to her that I probably can’t say today. There were words I had heard when I was in Taiwan. It wasn’t a new language to me, but it was things that my brain had otherwise forgotten and filed in the back and God brought them to the forefront of my mind. And I was able to communicate quite well with her and I was amazed.

And then later that night and Judy had gone to another hospital for there was another Chinese family and so that night she came home. I said, “Let’s go back to Tyler. I want you to meet his lady and I want you to talk to her.”

And we got here and Jenny started talking to her and they started into their Mandarin gibberish back and forth and they were perfect... I did not understand any word of the conversation. Why? Because there was no need there. I didn’t need the grace anymore, so I didn’t have it anymore.

So there was a valid gift in that ministry.

Well, what is another purpose for tongues in Scripture. It is to edify the Spirit of a believer.

In 1 Corinthians 14:4, “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.”¹⁴

Now let me point out something here. The purpose is to edify other believers, not you. If

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:4.

you speak in tongues, if you had the biblical gift, your purpose would be to edify others and not yourself, ok? And so if the pastor came up here today and he preached an entire sermon in Chinese it would edify about five people. The rest of us would be somewhat unedified because we wouldn't have a clue what had been said. That is why when he does preach in Chinese he translates so that you can edify the ones whose Chinese is their mother tongue and the rest of us who were not adept at that, ok?

But the purpose is to edify other believers not just yourself.

Paul went on to say, that prophecy was better than tongues because it edified the whole church and not just an individual. So choose a better gift. Choose something always try to edify the whole church.

There is another purpose for tongues. This is purpose number five. It was a sign of judgment against the Jewish people.

In Isaiah 28 he says:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.
To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.¹⁵

He is basically saying to the Jewish people, "You are going to reject the Messiah and when you do, you are going to see other languages come in and the prophets are going to speak in other languages and this is a sign of judgment that you have missed out on the Messiah."

So in the book of Acts when they are speaking tongues, not only was it a way to spread the gospel to people in their own tongue who happened to be in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, it was also a sign of judgment against the Jews. So it is kind of funny that charismatics really get carried away with this gift and yet they are choosing a gift which is really a sign of judgment and that is not an appropriate thing.

Now Acts 11 says this.

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?¹⁶

Now, by the way, this is just proof that some Gentiles had become Christians, but something else you need to know. Not every time in the book of Acts that a group of

¹⁵ Isaiah 28:11-12.

¹⁶ Isaiah 11:15-17.

people get saved do they speak in tongues. Not every time do they get baptized. You know, there is different reasons for different groups.

Now I just want to finish up with some quick prerequisites because tongues are so confusing. Let me give you this and then I will probably just go through them hurriedly and we will review them next week.

If tongues are to be practiced they have to edify every believer. So this says, “Let all things be done unto edifying,”¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:26. So if it edifies only you, it doesn’t edify the believers. You shouldn’t do it.

Here is another one. And I will review these next week. It must not confuse unbelievers.

So Paul said, “If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?”¹⁸

In other words, if a lost person walked in and we are all speaking in tongues, what would they think? You know? They would think, “There is something really messy going on here.”

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 14:33, which, by the way, that is the chapter dealing with tongues, Paul says this. “God is not the author of confusion.”¹⁹

So if tongues produce confusion, they are not from God because he didn’t author confusion.

Tongues also are to be minimal in a church.

He says, “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”²⁰

That is a ratio of one to 2000. It is better to have one word everybody understands than 2000 that nobody has a clue on, ok? So it needs to be minimal and it is probably the least effective way of communicating.

It must then be done only by a few. It said now you go to some church services and everybody wants to speak in tongues at the same time. Scripture is very clear, though, that if tongues were to happen it is to be by two or at the very most three and there should be on interpreter who has the gift of interpretation and can interpret all that.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:26.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 14:23.

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:33.

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 14:19.

And the gift was limited to men in the Scripture. It was not extended to women. You go to most charismatic churches today, what happens? You are going to speak to a lot of... you are going to see, first of all, they are dominated by women. And, secondly, everybody wants to do it. That is not the biblical use of this gift.

You must be an interpreter, verse 28.

“But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”²¹

And so if there is not somebody there that speaks that language, then shut up. Ok? Quite frankly, that is what it says.

It must not be disruptive. And verse six or the six characteristic here, verse 32, 33.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.²²

So real spiritual... he says prophets can control prophecy. In other words, they can... they are given the message from God, but they know how to control their mouth. And when I preach my prayer is that God hides me behind his cross and he puts his Spirit in control, but I want you to know that I do know what I am saying when I say it. Sometimes I am ashamed of it later, but I know what I say when I say it and I do have the ability if I am a little smarter that day, a little wiser, I do have the ability to stop my mouth before I say something stupid, ok?

Now apparently there is a preacher on the internet that Richard and I listened to this last week that does not have that ability to shut his mouth before he does stupid. So there are preachers that can't do that. But you and I need to understand that prophets are in control of prophecy so he says, “A person speaking tongues should be in control of the message coming out of his mouth.”

And what you talk about today when you talk to charismatics about the babble that comes out, they will tell you, you know, it just came over me. In other words, I had no control. That is not the proper use of the spiritual gift.

Should never be disruptive in a service. You have heard of the Toronto blessing. That is where, you know, they start laughing so hard that they fall down and that and they call it holy laughter. Holy laughter went on for about two years and then the next thing that came out in churches was holy vomit because they had laughed so hard they would lose control of their digestive system and they would vomit but then they would say to everybody, “Oh, that was, oh, boy, the Spirit really moved on me. I threw up today.”

I am serious. I am just... I am not making this up.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 14:28.

²² 1 Corinthians 14:32-33.

So this is going way beyond.

All right. So next time we will cover the manifestation gifts. Let me just point out something to you. The reason I went through those prerequisites very quickly is if you really look at those prerequisites I just gave, you will find out that virtually every occurrence of what the charismatic church calls the practice of tongues today violates Scripture. I am going to go one step further. I am going to tell you I believe it is patently dangerous.

There is a great book, if you ever want to read it, by a gentleman by the name of Martin Brubeck. Well, he wrote one and also John Walber who used to be president of Dallas Theological Seminary wrote one. Merrill Unger. Several good books on the subject. But there is one book to just look. It is called *What Demons Do to Christians*. And it is very worthwhile read if you are interested in how the charismatic movement can actually lead people into being oppressed, not possessed, but being oppressed by demons.

So next week we will talk about the manifestation gifts and we will talk about the manifestation gift of tongues.

By the way, I do think there is a ministry of tongues that is valid in the church today besides, you know, teaching English as a second language. That is a way to minister to people. But also I think when we sing, when Richard comes up and leads the songs here in just a few minutes, what is he doing? He is encouraging us to use our tongues to sing aloud the praises of God. That is a biblical use of the tongue in church. And I think that is a vital part of our ministry. It is not to be done just as warm up band for the preacher.

So I would encourage you when you sing songs today, look at the words. Think about the words and do that every Sunday, because there is a lot of great theology in a lot of our hymns. Let's go to the Word in prayer.