



Redeeming Grace Fall Conference

Spiritual Gifts

Unity of Body, Diversity of Gifts

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Introduction

1 Cor 12.1. 'Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.'

The central texts on spiritual gifts are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Rom 12.3-8; Eph 4.11-16, and 1 Pet 4.10-11.

Positive from the charismatic movement: what we can learn, from J. I. Packer.

1. They stress the activity of the Holy Spirit and the need to be filled with the Spirit.
2. They recognize the importance of emotions in the Christian life, in Christian speech and song.
3. They stress the importance of a vital prayer life.
4. They insist on the involvement of every Christian in worship.
5. Missionary zeal.
6. Emphasis on fellowship in small groups/community living.
7. Emphasis on childlike openness and warmth/spontaneity.
8. Reality of Satan and Demons.
9. Christianity is supernatural.

Negative: weaknesses in the charismatic movement.

1. Elitism—spiritual aristocracy and pride.
2. Sectarianism—only read charismatic books.
3. Anti-intellectualism—results in naïveté and imbalance/too simplistic at times.
4. Importance of theology slighted.
5. Claims to revelation which cannot be supported.
6. Spirituality is measured by gifts.
7. Super-supernaturalism—always expecting miracles; never see God acting through normal processes (Proverbs).
8. Health-Wealth gospel.
9. Demon obsession/Territorial spirits.
10. Conformism—group pressure.
11. Measure spirituality by experience: tongue-speaking, holy laughter, slaying in the spirit.

Questions about gifts of the Spirit I hope to answer as we think about the gifts.

1. What do we mean by spiritual gifts and how do we define the individual gifts mentioned?
2. What is the fundamental purpose of spiritual gifts?
3. Are spiritual gifts natural talents or supernaturally given?
4. Are the gifts we receive a permanent possession or a temporary manifestation?
5. Does everyone have a spiritual gift and may we have more than one gift?
6. Are the gifts still for today?
7. How do we discover our gifts?

Terminology for gifts

- *pneumatika* 1 Cor 12:1; 14:1 (be zealous for spirituals)
- *pneumata* 1 Cor 14:12 (zealous for spirituals)
- *phanerōsis tou pneumatos* 1 Cor 12:7 (manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one)
 - These terms indicate the gifts are divine—they come from the Holy Spirit.
- *charismata* 1 Cor 12:4; 12:31; Rom 12:6 (gifts). Perhaps Corinthians emphasized they were spiritual in having the gifts, and so Paul stresses they are gifts.
- *charis* Eph 4:7 (grace)
- *domata* Eph 4:8 (gifts)
 - These terms, clearly, stress that gifts are given to us, that they are gifts of God.
- *diakonai* 1 Cor 12:5 (gifts of service—designed to help others)
- *energēmata* 1 Cor 12:6 (results, effects, activities—they make a difference)

Definition of Spiritual Gifts: gifts of grace given by the Spirit designed for the edification of the church.

Spiritual Gifts in Paul's Letters and Quick Definitions

Romans 12:6–8	1 Corinthians 12:7–10	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11
<i>Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us</i>	<i>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good</i>	<i>And God has appointed in the church</i>	<i>And he gave</i>
		Apostles	Apostles
Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophets	Prophets
			Evangelists
	Ability to distinguish between spirits		
Teaching	Word of wisdom and word of knowledge	Teachers	Pastors and teachers
Exhorting			
	Working of miracles	Miracles	
	Gifts of healing	Gifts of healing	
Service		Helping	
Leading		Administrating	
	Various kinds of tongues	Various kinds of tongues	
	Interpretation of tongues		
Giving			
	Faith		
Mercy			

Word of wisdom and word of knowledge:

Faith:

Healing and Miracles:

Distinguishing of Spirits:

Apostles:

Helps:

Administrators (leaders):

Teaching:

Exhortation:

Giving:

Mercy:

Evangelist:

Themes Relative to the Gifts

1. The gifts are to be exercised under the lordship of Christ (1 Cor 12:3, 1 Pet 4:10-11).
2. Don't overestimate your giftedness. (Rom 12:3)
3. The variety in gifts and results comes from God himself. (1 Cor 12:4-6, 12:27-31)
4. Different gifts don't mean we are inferior or superior. (1 Cor 12:14-20)

5. Our gift is not to be ascribed to our own spirituality but to the sovereignty of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-10). Cf. 12:11, 18, 27.
6. God has given us gifts build up the body (Eph 4:12-16), to bring unity to the church (1 Cor 12:25-26), and to edify the church (all of 1 Cor 14), not to fragment the church.
7. The Baptism of the Spirit occurs at conversion (1 Cor 12:13, Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5 and 11:16)
8. Edification comes especially through the mind, through understandable teaching.
9. Focus on your gifts (Rom 12:6-8).
10. Paul makes it plain in chapter 13 that gifts w/o love are useless and worthless.

Questions:

1. Does every person have a gift and how do we discover our gift(s)?
Rom 12:6, Eph 4:7, 1 Pet 4:10, 1 Cor 12:7, 11
2. How do we discover our spiritual gift(s)?
3. If Paul says that the Spirit gives all gifts and the possession of one gift rather than another does not imply inferiority or superiority, then why does he say to desire the greater gifts (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1)?
4. And why seek gifts if they are sovereignly given?
5. Are gifts supernatural or natural talents?
6. Are gifts permanent possessions or can people exercise a gift that isn't normally theirs?

Nature of the Gift of Prophecy

- Not preaching; rather, communicating revelations from God received spontaneously

Wayne Grudem's view:

- NT prophecy is fallible unlike OT prophecy, in that it is mixed with error.
- Apostles as successors of prophets. NT prophets are different from OT prophets. According to Grudem, NT prophets can make errors.
- Therefore, prophecy is not an authoritative word of God but an impression mixed with truth and error.
- Grudem argues that in Eph 2:20 ('the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets') that the apostles and prophets are the same entity, so Paul speaks of the apostles who are also prophets.

A more convincing view is that NT prophecy like OT prophecy is infallible and inerrant.

- Arguments that would counter Grudem's view:

The Nature of the Gift of Tongues:

1. In Acts 2, the gift is in human languages because people from all over the world hear the apostles 'speaking in his [their] own language'
2. Peter says in Acts 11:17 that Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10:44-48) received the same gift as he. Cf. also Acts 19:6
3. Regarding the reference to the 'tongues of angels' in 1 Cor 13:1

4. In Acts 2:11 those who speak in tongues proclaim the mighty works of God; this sounds like a prophetic gift. But in 1 Cor 14:2 tongue-speaking is directed to God not men, and unlike in Acts 2 no one understands what is being said. Still, this doesn't indicate tongues are ecstatic utterances. The word *glōssa* (tongue) may be incomprehensible but not non-cognitive.

The burden of proof . . .

The Place of the Gift of Tongues:

1. Contribution of 1 Cor 12: all gifts are important.
2. Some say Paul expects all believers to speak in tongues because he says, 'Now I want you all to speak in tongues' (1 Cor 14:5, and 'I speak in tongues more than you all,' (1 Cor 14:18) but these statements need to be read in context. See also 1 Cor 12:30: seek greater gifts.
3. Tongues aren't forever; they will cease (1 Cor 13:8-13)
4. Tongues without a corresponding interpretation are not edifying: 1 Cor 14:2-3, 5, 6-19.
5. Tongues without an interpretation are a sign of God's judgment. Prophecy preferred (14:20-25).
6. Tongue speaking in church should be limited to 2-3 people (1 Cor 14:27-28).
7. Paul doesn't forbid tongue-speaking, but order is required.
8. Tongues are not the baptism of the Spirit 1 Cor 12:13

Private Tongue Speaking:

1. Tongue-speaking edifies oneself (1 Cor 14:4).

2. Paul speaks in tongues more than all of them (1 Cor 14:18). See especially 14:28 and 14:13ff.
3. Remember: Paul was not discussing the issue of private tongue-speaking in 1 Corinthians but tongue-speaking in church.

On the *Permanence of Gifts*

A Common View: Gifts will cease with the writing of the NT (1 Cor 13:8-13)

Weaknesses of this view

1. The different verb *pauomai* ('cease') isn't interpretively significant because it is there merely for stylistic variety.
2. The meaning of *to teleion* ('the perfect') is crucial
3. Greater maturity isn't evident post-canonically.
4. Paul had no conception that he was contributing to a completed canon of writings.
5. The perfect refers to seeing God face to face (1 Cor 13:12), which most naturally refers to the coming of Christ. 'Face to face' often refers to theophanies in the OT (Gen 32:30 [Jacob saw God face to face]; Deut 5:4; 34:10 [Moses knew the Lord face to face]; Judg 6:22; Ezek 20:35).
6. Paul's view of knowledge doesn't support this reading.

Argument for Cessation of Some Gifts (Reformed view).

1. In 1 Cor 13 the 'perfect' refers to the second coming but the text doesn't demand that the gifts last until then.
2. The gift of apostleship has passed away: James Acts 12/Paul as last of the apostles (1 Cor 15:8)
3. Nature of prophecy and apostleship.

4. When did prophecy cease?
5. Not all gifts have passed away, but apostles and prophets as foundational gifts have. Cf. also tongues, healing, and miracles.
6. Harder to know about the gift of faith and distinguishing of spirits.
7. God gave gifts and miracles to attest to the validity of new revelation in Christ (Heb 2:4).
8. See B. B. Warfield *Counterfeit Miracles*.
9. Perhaps God is pleased in cutting edge missionary situations to have the same signs and wonders we see in the NT era.
10. Why all the gifts aren't crucial today
11. The Reformers were cessationists.