

# The Gifts of the Spirit in the Life of the Church

## 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

### Pastor Guy Gray

#### **The Realm of the Spirit**

The Christian life is supernatural. There's no other way to put it. Being a Christian means more than adopting a set of religious ideas or trying to live out a particular set of spiritual values. To be a Christian means that the living Christ has come to us and given new birth. He has caused us to become "new creations" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is a supernatural work which God Himself does in us by His Holy Spirit. This means that from beginning to end, the Christian life is a life that is to be lived in the Power of the Spirit of God. This is also why the Bible has so much to say about the work of God's Spirit in the lives of believers. In the New Testament, believers are born of the Spirit—sealed with the Spirit—baptized in the Spirit—filled with the Spirit—led by the Spirit—taught by the Spirit—and given the fruit of the Spirit—gifted by the Spirit—just to name a few dimensions of the work of the Spirit in the life of believers!

This is why it is so important for us as Christians to understand and pursue the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our church. Without the work of the Spirit, in and through us, the Christian life is nothing more than self effort, with nothing supernatural about it at all. The question is how do we really know when the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives or in our church? There has been so much confusion and controversy in the church when it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit. This was another one of the big problems at the church of Corinth—they were out of line when it came to the experience and exercise of the Gifts of the Spirit. The same kinds of problems have been in the church right up to our present day. Fortunately, 1 Corinthians Chapters 12 -13 give us crucial insight into this important area of our Christian life.

#### **Jesus is Lord**

The problem at Corinth was that the Christians considered themselves "super-spiritual" and they thought that they excelled especially in the area of the Gifts of the Spirit. The truth is they had it all wrong. So again the question is: what is it supposed to look like when the Power of the Spirit is truly operating in our lives and our church. The first and most important answer is that when the Spirit is truly at work, the focus will be above all on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul says that the testimony of the Spirit is always that "Jesus is Lord." (1 Corinthians 12:3). This is important. The Corinthians had all sorts of ideas about spirituality and spiritual experience. But the real proof of a genuine work of God's Spirit is that Jesus Himself will be lifted up—rather than any other person, ministry, or experience. The Corinthians were very excited about spiritual experiences and gifts and personalities—but what about Jesus?

#### **For the Good of All**

Another proof that the Holy Spirit is truly working in a church is that people are using their gifts selflessly to promote the good of others and the church as a whole. At Corinth, the gifts of the Spirit were being used as status symbols so people could feel good about themselves. People viewed the gifts of the Spirit as God's blessing for their own private spiritual experience. Paul corrects them by showing the gifts of the Spirit are not just for ourselves as individuals, but so that we might serve others in the body of Christ. A church in which the Holy Spirit is truly moving is a church filled with people who are using their gifts to serve the needs of others. (12:4-7)

#### **One Spirit, Many Gifts**

There are many different kinds of Spiritual gifts, all from the same Spirit. God wants to bless our lives and our church with His gifts. Every Christian should be seeking to discover and use the particular gifts of the Spirit that God has for them. Over the next several weeks, let's pray as a church that we would experience the work of the Spirit in wonderful ways in our church! Let's be careful to remember that a true work of the Spirit means that the focus will always be on Jesus and not us or our own experiences. Let's also remember that when

the Spirit truly works, we will be reaching out in ministry to those around us in the Body of Christ and in the world. That is the kind of church that God is calling us to be!

#### **Questions for Discussion & Reflection**

This week, read through 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 every day and allow the Lord to speak to you through the passage.

What do you learn about the Holy Spirit and about spiritual gifts from this text?

According to verse 7, why is the "manifestation of the Spirit" (gifts) given to individuals in the church? Can you think of a time when you witnessed members of the body of Christ using their gifts for the benefit of all? What was the fruit of that in the lives of individuals or the church as a whole?

Have you ever been in a situation where Spiritual Gifts were being abused or misused? What was the fruit of that?

What has been a personal application for you from this passage?

Coming Up:

#### **SPRING BREAK PLANS?**

All High Schoolers are invited on a wilderness adventure-NIKO is a five day wilderness leadership training program where you take risks to discover more about who God has made you to be. Your learning environment will be the great outdoors, the "classroom of life." You will learn skills vital to working as a team, being a leader, and pushing yourself beyond your limits. March 25th-28th - Deposit due by February 27th. For more information contact Pastor Josh at 699.2226 or [josh@riverwest.org](mailto:josh@riverwest.org)

#### **Wednesday 3/5**

##### **PARENT PRAYER GROUP**

**7-8:00pm @ RWLG**

Come together in prayer with other parents of Jr. High & High School students the first Wednesday of each month. Contact Cynthia Weston for more information 638.3751

#### **FORGIVEN & SET FREE**

Have you had an abortion? Has it been difficult to accept the promises and the grace and the unconditional love of God in your life? Please call Sheri Harkavy 503 887-7080 or Raffa Scanlon 503 449-1316 (personal lines) to get more information about this completely confidential study.

#### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Friday 3/14**

**Parent Date Night:** Contact Anne Gurnee for information

**Saturday 3/15**

**Who's Coming to Dinner?** Contact Pastor Adam for information