

# In Spirit and in Truth: Rooted and Established

## Freedom Church of Denton

### Spiritual Gifts

Volume 1, Lesson 10

- **In Devotion** (feel free to highlight, underline, and scribble notes. Take your time, working through the following material over the course of the next week...it would be better for you to get through one sentence with understanding than the whole lesson with no understanding!)

#### *Acts 2:43-47*

*And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

If the new believer is going to be healthy, he must recognize the importance of giving, serving, and sharing early on in his development. We begin to teach our children the importance of sharing even from the earliest days of their infancy. Who hasn't witnessed the struggle between a baby and his perceived heister over a binky, blanket, or rattle, even in the crib? Good parents do not neglect gently teaching them the value of releasing possession, even in this formative stage. Sharing is the bedrock principle that defines the health of the soul. Not keeping for ourselves what has been so undeservedly bestowed and received. And contrary to nature and the way that it often feels, giving is the secret that enables us to keep the precious gifts that God has given us.

We see this basic principle personified in the early church as we move in the progression from the devotional disciplines described in verse 42 (and the previous three lessons), to the benevolent disciplines in verses 43-47 (and in this and the following three lessons). Benevolence that compels us from the glory of the mountain to the need of the valley. Benevolence that moves us from sound doctrine into sound practice. Benevolence that accompanies the kind of saving faith described in the book of James. You and I are certainly not saved by works, but we are unabashedly declared Christ's workmanship. We were created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10). Our faith means nothing if it does not respond to the need that surrounds and beckons us daily, and that we have been so ably fit to meet (James 2:16). Devotion begets stewardship. Stewardship begets service. Service begets action. In these next four lessons, we will consider the stewardship of spiritual gifts, the stewardship of finances, the stewardship of worship, and the stewardship of discipleship. We will take the first of these into consideration in this lesson.

That giving has become one of the preeminent tests of the disposition of one's heart is clear from the priority that Scripture has placed upon it. There are two major gauges on the dashboards of our lives that indicate the health of our heart. They are our treasure and our tongue. And while a discussion of the tongue is another sermon for another day, we will meditate on the topic of treasure today. We must pay careful attention to how we tend to our binkies, blankets, and rattles! Jesus said where your treasure is there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21). In other words, there is no clearer barometer of the values and priorities of the heart than as revealed in a thorough examination of how one manages the assets that have been entrusted to him. The fact is that all of us have been entrusted with rich treasure from above and redeemed plunder from below. Treasure that encompasses the resources of heaven's orchards and storehouses, as well as the more temporal resources of our time and money.

It most certainly includes the precious gifts or "gracelets" (as some have called them) of the Holy Spirit, such as were found in the lives of the apostles in this passage. Luke stated that great awe came upon them all, as many great signs and wonders were being performed *through* the apostles. Not that they had any power or piety in themselves, but that they had merely become willing and faithful conduits through which the Spirit could magnify His mighty works. They had been blessed. They had become blessings. They had learned that they had been called, not so much to see what they could get *from* the body, as they had to see what they could give *to* the body. Similarly, you and I should become less concerned about getting fed by others, and more concerned with learning to feed ourselves so that we may eventually feed others. Peter had been admitted in Christ's school of servant-oriented discipleship in the inaugural days of his relationship with Jesus. He and the other apostles had no sooner been summoned to the mountain in Mark 3 by Jesus, when just three chapters later all of them were sent out as lambs among wolves with Christ's mission, authority, and gifts. From that time till the period described in Acts 2, barely three years into his walk, the spiritual gifts that Peter walked in had reached their maturation, and he had become a pillar in the spiritual house of God. Quite the testament to the effectiveness of Jesus' discipleship and the completeness of Peter's consecration!

The gifts that Peter walked in, as well as the other apostles, were of divine origin, needing no apology and no qualification. They were employed in the highest of integrity with the greatest of efficacy. They were of such power, import, and purpose that the apostles would ask God again, in Acts 4:30 to stretch out His hand and heal, and [that] signs and wonders [be] performed in the name of [His] holy servant Jesus. They believed that the gifts were good and could be sought and received if sought from a heart of holy integrity. In fact, it was Jesus Himself that had previously said, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask! God is good. God's gifts are equally always good!

The spiritual gifts or, *charisma*, as they are denoted in the Greek, are divinely conferred gifts or powers bestowed by the Holy Spirit. They are appointed for the church for the purpose of edifying and building up the body of Christ, while sometimes serving as signs for believers and unbelievers alike. At least some of them will find their cessation when the perfect has come, in the realization of eschatology at the Second Coming of Christ, when we see Him face to face, and know Him fully as we are fully known. The gifts are good, are to be desired earnestly, and stewarded humbly, to the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ and for the edification of the saints. They are

properly gifts of the Holy Spirit and not of men. They are not to be prohibited nor quenched. They are not to be abused or misused for one's own glory. They consist of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" manifestations. Gifts of the Holy Spirit always serve to glorify the person and name of Jesus Christ and not any individual. The Word of God is clear that the Spirit exists to glorify the Son in the same way that the Son exists to glorify the Father (1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The exercise of the gifts is not only the manifestation and natural function of living the Pentecostal life, but it is also a condition of its continued maintenance. In other words, the moment that we cease to act, as the apostles acted, we will also begin to choke or quench the flame of the Holy Spirit. Action, giving, and ministering are the conditions that allow for the free administration of the Spirit of God. "Go and tell" has always been preferred over "come and see."

There are two words in the English language that speak to the state in which something exists. They are *static* and *dynamic*. Something that is said to be *static* is in a state of equilibrium and rest. Something that is changing or moving is said to be *dynamic*. The English word dynamic, as well as dynamite, comes from the Greek word *dunamis* which denotes *explosive power that resides in a thing by virtue of its nature*. This is the type of power that is attributed to the Holy Spirit in the Word of God in several places. He is the active and inherently atomic power of God. He is a change agent, transformative. His power is manifest in action, and as we cooperate with the Spirit of God in service and in action, we facilitate the manifestation of His power in this world. When we cease to act on our faith, we begin to inhibit the rivers of living water that Jesus promised would flow from our innermost being. If you want to witness the manifest power of God in your life and ministry, you must become like Jesus, not only in his heart but also in his practice. You must go where He says go and do what He says do.

Years ago, the Lord began to deal with me on this very point. I remember being confronted with the following convicting question: Son, if you were my Son Jesus, in the incarnate flesh right now in this community, where would you be? Where would you find yourself? What would you be doing? Who would you be spending your time with? It was only when I answered this question truthfully and started to follow in, as best I could, what I believed would be His footsteps in our city, that I started seeing His gifts flow through me more freely. Oh, for the grace to be more like Him in all our ways!

**Note:** the above discussion is not meant to discredit the need for routine rest, withdrawal, and time in the inner closet and on the mountain as well documented in the previous three lessons. In fact, one that is closely following Jesus' footsteps will regularly find himself alone in God's presence

- **In Meditation**

This lesson was intended to be a general introduction to the gifts of the Spirit and their importance rather than an exhaustive exposition of each of the gifts. That will come later. Nonetheless, in the verses that follow, it is my hope that the Spirit will begin to teach and empower each of you as you are awakened to the wonder of His might and power and how gracious He is to include you in His plan! I would just caution that you never glory in this, but that you glory in the fact that your name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life!

As you consider the following references, first pray and invite the Holy Spirit to come and teach you as only the Teacher and Comforter can. Admit to him your complete inability to understand anything spiritual apart from his grace and illumination. Then consider each of these verses, taking notes on anything that the Spirit brings to your attention; perhaps a Sin to confess, a Promise to claim, an Example to follow, a Command to obey, or a Seed of righteousness to sow. If successful, you are learning to read the Word of God with your S.P.E.C.S. on!

**1 Corinthians 12:7-11** \_\_\_\_\_

What is the purpose of manifestations of the Spirit according to this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

List all the gifts of the Spirit in this passage \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 12:6-8** \_\_\_\_\_

List the gifts of the Spirit in this passage \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1** \_\_\_\_\_

What do these verses teach us about the gifts? Is it ok to seek the gifts? If so, what is the heart that Scripture requires of the one who seeks? \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Timothy 1:6-7** \_\_\_\_\_

What does this passage teach us about the gift in Timothy's life? What do you think that gift was? How did he receive it? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this passage imply regarding the gift of God in our life in terms of its permanence or transience? Can the gift wane? What can be done to reinvigorate it? How can we keep our axe head sharp? \_\_\_\_\_

## In Application

**In groups of 3-5 do the following exercises, recording your thoughts:**

1. Take the lists of the gifts above and try and recall instances in the life of Jesus when He may have exercised each one

2. Do the same thing for the life of Peter
  
3. Do the same thing for the life of Paul
  
4. Try to think of as many examples as you can of other disciples of Jesus that walked in any of the gifts listed, even if they were not a part of the original twelve
  
5. Go around to each person in the group and ask for examples that you have either witnessed in your own life or the life of someone else for each of the gifts
  
6. Have the rest of the group speak to each person in the group regarding how they may have witnessed God gifting that person

### **In Prayer**

God, thank You that You are a good Father that knows how to give good gifts to Your children. Thank You that have given me the precious gift of Your Holy Spirit and that You have given me gift(s) of the Spirit according to the measure of the grace that You have specifically given me. Allow me to use it according to the proportion of my faith. Increase my faith. Help me to walk in the boldness that You have given me, according to the Spirit of love, power, and a sound mind that dwells within. Teach me to keep my axe sharp, but if need be, how to continue to fan into flame the gift that is within me. I pray that I will do this to Your glory alone and the edification of the church and that I will be forever grateful that You have rescued me from my sin and written my name in the Lamb's Book of Life. Amen!