

Superheroes...Best superhero? Best superpower? Flying? Invisibility?

**We love normal people with Special Abilities**

## **TODAY: The Spirit gives gifts to the church through the church**

The Apostle Paul helped start the church in Corinth— spent about **18 months** with these new Gentile believers – now **writing a letter in response to questions...**

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the **special abilities** the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2 You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3 So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. **4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. 1 Cor. 12 (NLT)**

## **There are other gifts in Scripture**

- **Ephesians 4** – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers (**ministry gifts**)
- **1 Peter 4/Romans 12** – speaking, helping others, prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, showing kindness/mercy (**motivational gifts**)
- **1 Cor 12 – MANIFESTATION GIFTS**

## **TWO THINGS TO NOTICE ABOUT THESE LISTS:**

1. **NOT EXHAUSTIVE** – you may have a gift not listed here – **listening, creativity, gift of always picking the slowest moving checkout line...**
2. There is not **a defined hierarchy** of gifts (helping vs. leadership OR prophecy vs. faith)
  - a. Paul emphasizes prophecy in chapter 14, but **AS WE WILL SEE**: he is **addressing a very specific imbalance and misunderstanding** as it relates to prophecy and speaking in tongues

## **BIG QUESTION:**

## Holy Spirit Week 4

If the Spirit gives gifts TO the church THROUGH the church – **WHAT SHOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?** Paul tells us in **chapter 14**

How will we approach this text?

**PRINCIPLES – PRACTICE – PREFERENCE**

*Interpretation-application-contextualization*

**AS WE MOVE OUTWARD:** More room for different and differing opinions and thoughts

IN 1 CORINTHIANS 14, WE FIND **FOUR TIMELESS PRINCIPLES**

## Order > Chaos

**Start at the end of chapter 14** – Paul's summary statement

37 If you claim to be a prophet or think you are spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself. 38 But if you do not recognize this, you yourself will not be recognized. 39 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

THIS church is **chaotic and out of order** and that does not glorify God.

### Church in Corinth – different from today

- They didn't meet like we are...**House churches** – 50 to 60 people
- **Synagogue style seating** – men on one side, women on the other
- The Corinthians came to faith in Jesus – **coming out of mystical pagan practices** (that included prophecies – but not tongues)
- Valued the **style MORE than the content** (rhetoric)
- BECAUSE OF THAT...Tongues was **considered a more spiritual gift than prophecy** because it was in an unknown language (**more mystical**) – wearing it as a badge
- Trying to **prove their spirituality** by speaking in tongues...
- Resulted in chaotic gatherings where people were spouting off in tongues and not considering the outsider – **not loving or fruitful**
- **AMAZING: THE GIFTS CAN HELP OR HINDER THE GOSPEL!!!**

**Paul calls for order, because ORDER is in the very nature of God**

- God is a God of **order** – **Genesis 1**

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- God is a **planner** – His eternal plan of redemption was already in place when the foundations of this universe were being laid (Rev. 13:8)
- God is into **details** – we see this in many OT texts like the **instructions on building the temple**
- God is into **careful organization** – we see this in how he divided the Israelites into tribes and different lands and in NT writings on leadership
- God is into **quality administration** – that IS one of the spiritual gifts
- God **communicates BOTH in the moment and in advance** to his people

**ORDER** when we gather – not chaos and confusion

## Contributor > Consumer

**We are a consumeristic society.**

- We go to movies, sporting events and concerts to consume **entertainment**.
- We travel and go places to consume **experiences**.
- We go out to restaurants to consume **food and drink**.
- We shop in stores and online – **consuming more and more product**
- At home, we sit on our couches and consume **information** as we watch the news or consume **stories** as we watch our shows – **IN MY CASE: consume shows about food dreaming about actually consuming food!**
- All day and night long now...we consume content on our **phones and computers...**
- **And then we go to church on Sunday...**

Why do you come to church??

26 Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

**Gathering as the church is not a spectator sport.** This is for participants!

Part of growing in Christ and being disciplined is **moving from a consumer mentality to a contributor mentality.**

**CONSUMER:** *What did I get out of the service? Did I like the music? The band? The preaching? Did I feel something today? Was it funny and interesting? Does the church*

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*offer programs for me and my family? Is the pastor or are the pastors readily and quickly available for me when I need them? Did enough people greet me? Are there enough events to keep me or my kids busy and out of trouble? How was the breakfast spread? How is the coffee??*

**CONTRIBUTER** – *Where can I serve today? Who is new and how can I help them feel at home? Who can I connect with? Who needs a friend, a prayer, a hug? What or who can I be praying for? What am I going to give this morning – time, treasure, talent? What is the Spirit saying to me today that might strengthen and serve others? How can I lay down my preferences this morning to see someone else be served?*

**Going to Syracuse Met's game – you go to watch, not play...** You're not in the stands, you're in the dugout – ready to go out!

**Eph. 4 – Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors & Teachers – WHY?**  
**To equip the body for the work of ministry!!**

**CONTRIBUTER > CONSUMER**

One other thing....Paul gives **many warnings and directions about how to use the gifts and how not to use the gifts...**

**BUT NOTICE** – **he never says stop using them altogether.** *Because this is messy, difficult, confusing.... let's just forget it.*

**Paul is FOR the gifts of the Spirit.** *He tells them to desire spiritual gifts, to not forbid tongues and to seek to prophesy.*

Before I lean into the restrictions and directions Paul provides, I want us to make sure we understand – **HE EXPECTS CHRISTIANS TO CONTRIBUTE** WHEN THEY GATHER and to do so through the gifts of the Spirit – **ALL OF THEM.** *(Helps, serving, teaching, encouraging, words, faith, healing...)*

## **Others' Good > My Gift**

**When we talk about spiritual gifts, some might think:**

*"I don't care what other people thought about it – it's my gift to exercise."  
"Telling us to consider others is quenching the Spirit"*

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*“If they think I am weird, scary, off-putting – that’s their problem.”*

## **PAUL IS SAYING – No, that IS your problem!**

The Holy Spirit wasn’t sent to make you **weird**.

The Holy Spirit was sent to make you like **Jesus**.

23 Even so, if unbelievers or people who don’t understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. 24 But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don’t understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. 25 As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, “God is truly here among you.”

## **Paul is saying – we must consider the unbeliever in our midst. That is NOT quenching the Spirit to do so – it is in step with the Spirit!**

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. 19 But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.

## **Tongues last week**

**Tongues w/o interpretation – for personal edification ONLY – do it on your own time! IN CHURCH – MUST BE INTERPRETED**

Corinthians were showing up **and more concerned with exercising their gift** than they were with serving one another.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. **Use them well to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10**

That’s why there is so much **emphasis** on prophecy here – it could be easily understood and received. **It isn’t less spiritual than tongues!**

## **What is prophecy?**

It is a Spirit-prompted, Spirit-sustained, utterance (SPOKEN) that is rooted in a true revelation (1 Corinthians 14:30), but is fallible because the prophet’s perception of the revelation, and thinking about the revelation, and report of the revelation are all fallible. It is thus similar to the gift of teaching which is Spirit-prompted, Spirit sustained, rooted in an infallible revelation (the Bible), and yet is fallible but very useful to the church.

- **Forth telling** – proclaiming the word of God (sermon)

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- **Fore telling** – God revealing what He will do – in line with his nature and confirmed in other ways
- **It does not have an authority that is on a par with Scripture** – it MUST BE TESTED.
- **It MUST exalt God, edify and encourage the body and it should be intelligible to even the outsider.**

**There's no indication** in Scripture that prophecy has to be spoken in a certain **tone**, level of **volume**, in fancy **language**, or at a specific **time** in the service or in a specific **way**.

**But what is clear is that any gift – prophecy included – must be used to SERVE OTHERS and never to SERVE ONESELF.**

## Clarity > Spontaneity

Spontaneous can be spiritual, but it is not inherently more spiritual.

### What Paul really values when we gather is clarity

6 Dear brothers and sisters, if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language, how would that help you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. 7 Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. 8 And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle? 9 It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space. 12 And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

### BUT ISN'T THE GIFT SPONTANEOUS? YES AND NO

**The revelation OFTEN is, but the release NEVER is.**

**32 Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take turns.** 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the meetings of God's holy people.

**Why shouldn't I say out loud what God has revealed to me?**

1) *It may be just for you*

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- 2) *It may not be the right time*
- 3) *It may not fit with the direction of the service*
- 4) *To give others the space to do so*
- 5) *Someone else just did and this doesn't seem to connect*

**CLARITY > SPONTANEITY**

### **PRINCIPLES – PRACTICE – PREFERENCE**

#### **PRACTICE:** Never violate the principles...

*Example: No one should speak out while someone is already speaking*

*Example: Any time someone speaking in tongues loud enough for others to hear, it must be interpreted*

*Example: Any gift that results in more confusion and not more clarity, is out of order*

#### **Jeff Leake:**

- **Interruptive Model – FINE, BUT NOT SACRED**
  - From the seats, unidentified, affirmed and explained afterwards
- **Inclusive Model**
  - From the stage, introduced, affirmed and confirmed beforehand

#### **PREFERENCE:**

##### Sunday mornings: COME AND SEE JESUS

- **Safe and welcoming environment** - where else???
- **Gifts able to be heard and received by everyone** – as church grows
- **MORE people using the gifts** - introverts
- **Platform the Gifts** – how? Share with a leader, in advance...

#### **Pray:**

- 1) Spirit, thank you for the gifts
- 2) Helps us to use our gifts
- 3) Let it never hinder the gospel, let it always help the gospel