THE HOLY SPIRIT
Session Three
Wednesday, September 20, 2017

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - Part 2

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would empower us for service. Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Power for what? Power for witnessing in both word and deed. How does the Holy Spirit empower us? By giving us gifts and by the joy of Spirit-produced fruit in our lives.

In our first two sessions, we learned that there are three groupings of the gifts:

- Gifts of Ministry used in leadership: Ephes. 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
  (We studied these last time we met)
- Other Ministry Gifts - available to all believers
- The nine gifts from 1 Corinthians 12

OTHER MINISTRY GIFTS

Romans 12:6-13

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

[9] Let love be without dissimulation (phoniness) Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. [10] Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; [11] Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; [12] Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; [13] Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

1. Prophesying - we covered this to some extent in Session 2

2. Waiting on ministry What in the world does that mean? I believe it means to devote yourself to it! To spend time with the Lord in the development of Spirit-given ability to minister to people.
The word “minister” can be either a noun or a verb. As a noun “minister” means a representative of a higher authority, and in our case that authority is God. As a verb “minister” means to give service to someone, or to help someone.

In this case, of spiritual gifts, we take the word “minister” as both noun and verb, but, in particular, the verb. As ministers, we are to spend time on this gift, to develop it, to devote all our energies and passion on it.

Remember the gifts of the Spirit are precious, not to be taken lightly. We are to receive them with joy and gratitude, and then DEVELOP THEM FOR HIS GLORY! Ministry is a lot of hard work! It requires commitment to it! WAITING ON MINISTRY MEANS USING THIS GIFT CAREFULLY, PRAYERFULLY AND WITH EVERYTHING YOU CAN PUT INTO IT.

3. Teaching

Teachers are the gateway to understanding and development. A good teacher is pure gold. I have been blessed in life by some tremendous teachers.

Even as a boy in Sunday School, I had terrific teachers. They taught me the Word! Early in life I had a basic comprehension of the Bible. The men and women in Scripture came alive to me; I felt as if I could see them, hear them, watch them. To this day, as I read the Word, the characters burst into life to me.

(I have met some outstanding Sunday School teachers in my half-century of ministry - but none more outstanding than ROGER. I will tell you his story in my lesson tonight.)

If time permits, I will bring to our discussion some incredible teachers in my life:

- Mrs. Moore - Senior High grammar
- Dr. Duane Myers - World History
- David Drake - Literature
- Ernest S. Williams - Theology
- Dr. Donald Johns - Ethics
- Oswald J. Smith - Missions
- Leonard Ravenhill - Discipleship
- And...so many others
Teaching eternal matters is a spiritual gift. It is a divinely-given gift of imparting truths that will endure for all time. Nothing should stop that divine flow if you are so gifted by the Holy Spirit. IT IS A LIFETIME GIFT!

4. Exhorting.

This basically involves encouraging!

One of the outstanding encouragers in Scripture was Barnabas. Here is one of the finest stories in all the Bible:

Acts 11:19-26 (New American Standard)

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. [20] But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. [21] And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. [22] And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. [23] Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; [24] for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. [25] And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; [26] and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Verse 22 is a block-buster. Until this time, the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem wanted to keep the Gospel for their fellow Jews only. Any report of outside ministry was not received warmly. But when news reached the leadership of the spiritual breakthrough among Gentiles in Syria, BARNABAS REJOICED! He didn’t grouse or complain, “Well....until now, we had this all to ourselves.....!” No, HE REJOICED!

Then comes verse 25: For years, the convert Saul of Tarsus had disappeared. He had been one of the leaders in the early persecution of the church, including the martyrdom of Stephen. When news reached the leaders that Saul - now Paul - had been converted on the road to Damascus, there was no rush to obtain his services. Almost in desolation, Paul had returned to his home in Tarsus, Turkey. Nobody went looking for him....until BARNABAS! He somehow knew what this man could become in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit!
Had it not been for Barnabas, and his gift of ENCOURAGEMENT (exhortation) the
world might never have heard of Paul...never had his wondrous books in the Bible:
Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II
Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon (and perhaps Hebrews). Next time you
read in these books, you can praise the Lord for BARNABAS. It was his
encouragement that brought Paul’s ministry to light.

5. Giving

You not ever have thought of giving as a spiritual gift, but it is. Romans 12:8  (New
Living Bible)  **If God has given you money, be generous in helping others with it.**

This is such a giving congregation that I know I am “preaching to the choir here.” It is
not the “accumulation” of “stuff” that pleases God but the proper distribution of it.

As a kid reporter in the early 1950's, I had the privilege of interviewing R. G.
LeTourneau, inventor of Caterpillar earth-moving equipment in Peoria, Illinois and a
multi-millionaire.

I asked him, “Sir, I know you are a follower of Jesus. Are you a tither?”  He looked
at me as if I’d lost my mind. “A tither? You mean ten percent? Why I give God
93% of everything I make.”

I responded, “How can you do that?”  His response is on the web: “I shovel money
out, and God shovels it back. But God has a bigger shovel!”

I have met other business people like that as well....such as Stanley Tam, a silver
reclaimer, who lived in Lima, Ohio. A great Christian and Missionary Alliance member.
These are people who have been given the Holy-Spirit-originated gift of giving. They
just give and give and give. I have never looked at the financial books in this church -
ever! I have no idea what anyone gives. But I know there must be a lot of folks here
who have that splendid gift of giving! They enjoy God’s “bigger shovel.”

6. Ruling  (Governing)

There are people who have a spiritual gift of being in charge of things. I have known
pastors who were great preachers but whose churches went into bankruptcy. I don’t
claim to have this gift to any degree; however, I have someone with me who is excellent
at administration - or ruling. Dave Thomas is that person and he is ably backed by the Church Council, the board of this church. I am amazed at the talents of the men and women you have elected in ruling capacities of First Assembly.

Since the Assemblies of God were formed away back in 1914, we have had 13 General Superintendents.

- E. N. Bell
- Archibald Collins
- John Welch
- William Gaston
- Ernest Williams *
- Wesley Steelberg *
- Gayle Lewis *
- Ralph Riggs *
- Thomas Zimmerman * (Served the longest – 25 years)
- G. Raymond Carlson *
- Thomas Trask *
- George Wood *
- Doug Clay * (Just elected in August)

* Superintendents I have known or with whom I have ministered.

These were/are brilliant leaders with the spiritual gift of ruling. Their job is gargantuan. When we meet on the Executive Presbytery every two months or go, our agenda is normally about 500 pages long. It involves credentials, finances, missions, employees, church buildings, etc.

The General Superintendent is ably assisted by 67 district superintendents, elected by ministers in their state or area. In our district, all Assemblies of God churches south of the Suwannee River, about 350 congregations in all, we are led by Superintendent Terry Raburn, who has held that position by vote of their constituents for over 20 years. All of these leaders have governance, the gift of ruling. It requires more than “brain power;” it requires the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

7. Showing mercy

Matthew 5:7  **Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**  – Jesus

All followers of Jesus should be merciful, and, to some extent, probably are. But this gift goes beyond that. It involves a lifetime of mercy, of understanding, of help that transcends the normal experience of mercy.
Mark and Huldah Buntain

46 years ago, a young minister’s wife was confronted with a massive challenge. Her husband felt a call to be a missionary in Calcutta, India. I have been in Calcutta, and I can tell you, it would take a call from God to go there to live and work. But Huldah Buntain, and her husband Mark, obeyed God’s call and followed it. Mark gave his life for the work, and is buried near the massive church, hospital and school he founded. When he died, tens of thousands of people of Calcutta packed the streets to honor him. Huldah still lives there, still ministers, still cares. It has been my privilege to know them both and even be in their tiny apartment where Huldah still resides.

Lillian Trasher

The year was 1910 and her wedding was just two weeks away. Lillian heard a missionary and also heard God’s voice calling her to the mission field. Her fiancé did not hear the same call. Lillian broke her engagement and, with no committed finances, she made a reservation on a ship headed for Egypt. Just before sailing, she opened her Bible and her eyes fell on this verse: Acts 7:34. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. From the day she arrived in Alexandria, it was the children that gripped her heart. She began to take in homeless children with almost no money for food. Over and over God met the need and, as a result, Lillian raised literally hundreds of Egyptian children and led them to the Master. I had the extreme privilege of knowing her.

These are only two of the thousands of folks to whom the Holy Spirit gave the gift of showing mercy!

8. Helps

Over the past few days, we have seen hundreds and hundreds of Christ’s people, of many churches and fellowships, pitching in to help their fellow humans who suffered from Hurricane Irma.

Although not recognized in the news, First Assembly invested tens of thousands of dollars in relief efforts - through efforts by our own folks and with $30,000 given to Convoy of Hope. Many of our people wore themselves out delivering food and water, cutting trees, repairing homes, etc.

I remind you also that through the years, no church in the Assemblies of God have
invested more in missions at home and around the world. I only state this because we had inquiries, “Why isn’t First Assembly doing anything to help people?” But we are—we have and we will. We believe in the gift of “helps” by the power of the Holy Spirit. The gift of helps is that gift by which a believer is enabled by the Holy Spirit to relieve or assist another by helpful deeds.

Next time we will study I Corinthians 12 and the nine gifts listed there.