

How a Church Works **Discovering and Implementing Your Gifting Part 4** **Ephesians 4:7-8**

This morning we are close to winding up our teaching on the spiritual gifts that each of you have received.

Next week I will make some suggestions to how you can discover what your spiritual gifts are and how they can be implemented. If you want to know more, make sure to come Friday night at 7:00 for a time of discussion, question and answers.

If you are being stirred by this series and you want to know more, make sure to come Friday night at 7:00 for a time of discussion and question and answers.

I felt I have danced around the gifts, speaking about how important it is to be in an intimate relationship with God and to approach God in humility. It is only through humility and having an intimate relationship with God that we can know what the gift is and how it is to be used.

Since the first of the year I have been reading through the Gospels where the life and words of Jesus are found. I am amazed at all the things Jesus did. His wisdom, compassion, miracles, healings and many more things that displayed who He was, the Son of God.

At the end of the Gospel of John, John wrote, **John 21:25, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”**

There is no doubt that Jesus was the complete package. He not only the Son of God but He was an example of what a human can be in many ways.

We are called to be like Him aren't we? We are called to love God, love others, be forgiving, be kind and many of the other virtues He displayed. But we are not to be like Him in every way.

Certainly there are some things Jesus did that we cannot. Like take away the sins of the world, send out the Holy Spirit and few things like that. But Jesus again, Jesus was the example of what a human being can be when they have fully surrendered their life to God.

As we continue to explore how the church works, we can easily see that God has designed our individual responsibilities here on earth in such a way that we have to work together to accomplish everything He wants us to do.

Unlike Jesus we are not and never will be the full package in a human body that He was and we are not designed to be. Each of us are given strengths and gifts in certain areas and as we all identify what these are and we implement them with the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit, then we truly become the body of Christ here on earth.

We read in **John 1:14a**, “**The Word (Christ) became flesh and made His dwelling among us.**”

When God decided it was time to come and offer a new kind of life here on earth, He did so by becoming flesh as we are flesh and living among us. When Jesus did this is was the beginning of the incarnation process.

This is the process of incarnation.

Definition: Incarnation, something that is spiritual (Christ/God) taking on human/physical form.

The incarnation of the body of Christ is still occurring through the church today. That is why we are called the body of Christ. When we begin to identify and function in the gifting we have been given by God, the life of Jesus is working, manifesting, incarnates through us, His body, the church.

In reality you get a part of Jesus, I get a part of Jesus, sometimes we get the same part, sometimes a different part but as all the parts begin to work together then the body of Christ is incarnated, manifested, revealed to the world in all of its beauty and power.

This is the journey we are on as a church. We desire to be, in the best way possible, the body of Christ who reveals Himself through us, impacting the world around us.

This really takes the work off of us and puts it back on Christ. **When we are obedient and we learn what our gift is and we function in it, it is Christ incarnate who is working in and through us.** As Christians today discover this to be a live possibility, then life becomes gripping, exciting and the most powerful thing to be experienced in this life.

So, all this to say, know what your special gift is, know how God wants to empower it in you and certainly know that the results are results He will produce.

Now, look with me quickly and more closely at the gifts the Holy Spiritual gives to His people.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit and He distributes them to each just as He determines.”

And in Romans 12 we find another list but we will save it for next week.

Now this morning I want to just give a brief description of these gifts mentioned here and then I have a few closing thoughts. If you are stirred I encourage you to come Friday night so we can talk about these in a little more depth.

To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge.

1. Wisdom & Knowledge...” The gift of wisdom is direct, God given deep insight into truth (knowledge) and how it should be applied in any given circumstance.

Here we have two gifts which I believe are linked together. **The gift of wisdom is direct, God given deep insight into truth, knowledge and how it should be applied in any given circumstance.** I wish I had this gift working in my life at all times. When a challenge comes along in the church body or in someone’s life, these people have the ability to take their knowledge of the word of God and use it in such a way that it resolves or gives spiritual direction to the issue is they are facing.

Solomon of the Old Testament had this gift. He asked for it and was given such a large portion that no one ever had or ever will have as much wisdom as he did. We are told in James though, **James 1:5, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”**

God wants us to have wisdom, the ability to understand His word and how it should be applied. But again, there are some who are given, for God’s purposes, a larger portion of wisdom than others.

2. The gift of faith: The ability to see what God wants done, even though it looks impossible, and do it.

I have always wondered about this statement until I came to view it as not just faith in God as we go through circumstances but faith in God in what He is going to do in the future. These people are visionaries. They have the ability to see what God wants done, even though it looks impossible. Trusting that sense of faith, this person moves out and accomplishes the thing in God's name. Every great ministry has been begun by someone who has the gift of faith.

I would say Donna O'Leary has the gift of faith. The event she was given a vision for, Nite to Shine, has grown each year and touched many lives. Not just of the participants but everyone who is a volunteer.

To some, having such a large event would seem unsurmountable but not to Donna. She was given the gift of faith that if God wanted it done He would make a way.

3. The gift of healing: the supernatural ability to make physically sick people well.

Occasionally, the church has seen this gift operating but it is rare. I don't believe I have ever met someone who has the gift of healing like what we read about in the New Testament church. Unfortunately I think most of what we see on television is not true. But that is not to say that God does not give someone the gift of healing. The same is true of the next gift.

4. The gift of miraculous powers: Doing something that could in no way happen in the physical world without divine, supernatural intervention.

This of course is talking about the ability to do miracles. Now, I want to be careful here because miracles can be defined in many ways. It is a miracle that I stand before you today.

To have God move upon Michal and I to put in a resume, to have you select me, in a lot of ways that could be defined as a miracle. For someone to be impacted in a spiritual way could be defined as a miracle.

For some of you, for you to be sitting here this morning might be defined as a miracle. But what I believe is being said here is to do something that could not happen in the physical world. Healing supernaturally could be placed here. But some of the recorded miracles of Jesus are turning water into wine, walking on water, taking 5 loaves and two fishes and feeding 5,000 men plus women and children and the like. Doing something that could in no way happen in the physical world without divine, supernatural intervention.

5. The gift of prophecy: A prophet or someone with the gift of prophecy is someone who hears from and speaks for God in unique ways.

We covered this in an earlier sermon. The Old Testament is filled with the writings and actions of prophets. Starting with Isaiah through the end of the Old Testament we can read about prophets and their interactions with God and people. Moses could be called a prophet as he made the mysteries of God known to the Israelites.

Modern day prophets are those individuals who are given the most intimate relationship with God. They hear from God in different ways. They may have a dreams, visions or strong spiritual promptings and warnings about the church, different circumstances in the world or even in another person's life.

The gift of prophecy is given a higher status than the other gifts. Look with me at **1 Corinthians 14:1,3** **“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. 3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.”**

We are told two things here. First, desire the gifts. I have been saying this throughout this teaching. Gifts are special, very special blessings from God given to each believer. Desire to know what that gift is and how it is to be used in the church. But it also says that we are to eagerly desire the gift of prophecy. Why, because as we hear from God we are able to strengthen, encourage and bring comfort to the church and those around you.

So I would say to each of you, pray to God, asking Him to lead you into what it means to have the gift of prophecy, then ask for it and how it should be used.

This is the special gift of seeing that someone or something is in error and they speak out before that person or situation can do damage to the God's people. This is also called discernment.

I believe we are all to have discernment about people and circumstances but God gives some individuals within the church a greater measure of discernment for the protection of His church.

Last in this list is

6. The gift of speaking in tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues.

Certainly we know there is a lot of controversy concerning these particular gifts. There have been splits in churches because of the disagreement of these. But that is not from God. Our God is a God of unity, peace and of order.

Here is what I am going to say about these gifts. I am not going to be dogmatic, firm in one way or another. I am not going to say they are not operating. I have been exposed to them much like some of you have. I know too many Christian brothers and sisters who believe in them. I am

leaving this one up to God. If He, and His Spirit wants to distribute them to each just as He determines who am I to say?

But again I would say that our God is a God of order, peace and unity. We are taught later in Corinthians that if they are working within a church body, they are to work in a certain way and order.

Spiritual gifts are given to edify, encourage and comfort. Anything else is not from God.

The range of gifts is tremendous. They are not only for use in the church. They are for out in the world as well. Some of you who have the gift of teaching are already using it. Some of you who have the gift of wisdom or knowledge use it in your work. You see a problem and you see the answer.

In all the gifts, whether they are used in the church or in the world the important thing to recognize is they are from God, empowered by God and all the glory is due God for the results.

Let me say this again in closing.

We, the church of Wiggins Community, desire to be, in the best way possible, the body of Christ who reveals Himself through us, impacting the world around us.

As we understand this and operate in this, it takes the work off of us and puts it back on Christ. When we are obedient and we learn what our gift is and we function in it, it is Christ who is doing the work in and through us.

As Christians today discover this to be a real, living possibility, then our lives become gripping, exciting and the most powerful thing to be experienced in this life.

Knowing and operating in your spiritual gift is the best thing in the universe. I hope you will keep searching and praying for it to be revealed.

Let's pray.