

Meeker Christian Church
Pastor Jim Pelley
3-9-25
Spiritual Gifts 1

I was reminded that I often mention Spiritual gifts but only once in 3 years have I spoken specifically on the subject of Spiritual gifts. So today we are going to look at spiritual gifts. 20 or 30 years ago the subject rocked the Christian culture and many tools were created to identify spiritual giftedness. That has long since faded away in favor of more current fads, but there is value in knowing what the Bible teaches for our individual armor equipment, confidence and competence in kingdom service./// It is important for every believer to understand they have been gifted with the Holy Spirit; Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The practical application of that verse is that when we become a Christian we are gifted with supernatural interests and abilities to be about our lives as peacemakers in kingdom service in fulfillment of our purpose in creation and at the same time to help others in theirs. That is clearly shown in Ephesians 4:11-13 *11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;* What was the purpose of that particular list of spiritual gifts? reviewing verse 12 and 13 ... I believe that purpose is extended to all spiritual gifts whether specifically listed in the Bible or not.

Spiritual gifts in the first century were perhaps unique to their service needs as they are in our generation. That may also explain the variety of lists of Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament. i.e. They had no reason for technology oriented giftedness, but we sure do. On the other hand I am unaware of the need today for the gift of speaking in tongues, though it was a critical gift in the first century as their meetings often had a variety of ethnic languages and interpreting or hearing in their own language was necessary for the dissemination of the gospel. Today we have multiple technological gifted developments that take care of that. Same with the first century gift of healing, they had almost no medical technology or facilities and that gift was truly a need. I am sure you can come up with a multitude of differences between 33 AD and 2025 AD and needed giftedness.

And one more thought here, as we learned last week that Christians are to be peacemakers, so called spiritual gifts that cause division in any manner are suspect!

I appreciate the Old NIV translation on this passage: NIV Ephesians 4:11-13 *"It was HE who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare GOD's people for works of service, so that the body of CHRIST may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the SON OF GOD and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of CHRIST.* That is why I say if a gift is not fostering God's purposes, then it is suspect!

*today's key thought: Please note that Spiritual gifts are not just what we think of as natural abilities, talents or personality traits, though they may be in some cases. Generally we think of Spiritual Gifts as motivational, with spirit guided recognition of things to be done for the glory of God and strengthening our fellow Christians.

That recognition of the need or opportunity, is an identification of your spiritual giftedness, and guidance for your personal involvement in ministry. If you are a baptized Christian you have one or more spiritual gifts.

Right now is a good time to insert a personal observation: so many have told me through the years that they have no spiritual gift, or at least, have not identified their spiritual giftedness. That is a significant reason for this sermon...BECAUSE Any Christian, even if an invalid, physically limited, or anything short of total incapacity to think or reason has at least one common spiritual gift that is wholly and totally key for everything else we learn about God's plan and desire for lives on this earth. Remember this is a personal observation, not a quote from the Bible. I hope you see my point: --- The common Spiritual Gift of every Christian is prayer. If you have learned to pray, you have exercised a spiritual gift. If you will exercise that incredible gift of prayer, things will change,- including your recognition of other likely gifts.

Do you agree that non-christians have no gift, reason, or motivation to pray? And even if they do I doubt it would be heard unless it is a prayer for spiritual enlightenment and salvation... Prayer is unique or in the language of the Old King James version - a peculiar people and I add, with a peculiar gift! KJV 1 Peter 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light;*

and again in KJV Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Where else do you think and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works comes from??? Giftedness of Godliness for goodness-ness of good works. We are not saved by good works, we are saved for good works, and prayer is a top priority...

Let me show you something else from the prophet Micah and chapter 6 verse 8 and some prophetic foundational requirements in a Christians life to be ready to accept responsibility of properly using the Spiritual gifts GOD gives to each one. Micah 6:8 *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

That prophecy is infused in peacemakers and it is now easy to see how that 700 BC prophet's revelation can be interpreted in light of Spiritual giftedness...He has shown you, O man, what is good; that is the purpose of prophecy throughout time. And what does the Lord require of you - Succinctly answered in the rest of the verse: *to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

Our spiritual giftedness is from the grace of God endowed and entrusted to grateful beneficiaries to be used in expressing appreciation and thanksgiving to God for His mercy and love. A quick definition of these terms: Mercy - God withholding from us what we deserve... but Grace is -The gift of God to us that we do not deserve and cannot be earned.

Review with me Ephesians 4:11-13. *11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry ... GOD did not create nor intend that there should be any freeloaders in HIS kingdom. I really appreciate the authors who have titled a study of

Spiritual Gifts as THE SPIRITUAL AND MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS. i.e. when a gift is given it is to be a motivation to do something under the guidance and direction of the LORD JESUS...

When Boyd, our oldest son in the late 1980's spent two years in Kampala, Africa he reported the low motivation and poor work ethic of the population. After being raised on the ranch where his brother said: "all we ever do is work, work, work," it was a shock to Boyd to learn it was common knowledge and apparently socially and culturally acceptable that one works about 1/2 of the time they are on the job. In fact it was reported that would be an improvement in most cases. That frightening attitude I am told is becoming more acceptable in our own culture especially working from home resulting in the hue and cry of industry for workers who are self-motivated. The point is contrasting cultural acceptabilities to GOD granting Spiritual giftedness. GOD expects you to be self-motivated to use that gift or gifts for the glory of the name of JESUS your SAVIOR.

I alluded earlier - that to disclaim the possession of a Spiritual gift or to refuse to use it is not an act of humility but is rather tantamount to disclaiming your SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. As Matthew 25:28-30 and the parable of the talents has shown us - use it or lose it! OR The point of that parable was to be productive & proclaim it...Use your gifts that way - be productive and proclaim it!

Our scripture lists another reason for receiving a spiritual gifts: *"for the edifying of the body of Christ,"* The very reason of one's existence on this earth is to bring glory to the name of JESUS. A great way to do that is the Andrew principle of: John 1:40-42 *40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).* You may sometimes be convinced by satan to think you are ineffective in bringing others to Jesus - but look at the Andrew principle: to bring others to Jesus with the realization that they may be powerful witnesses for the gospel in their lives...and you gave them a first opportunity to hear about salvation.

The three main passages listing spiritual gifts of their first century are Romans 12:6-8, 11 Corinthians 12:4-11, and 1 Corinthians 12:28. We could include Ephesians 4:11, but that is a list of offices within the church, not spiritual gifts, per se. I think this variety of listing shows that spiritual gifts are not limited to those listed, but are -illustrative- of examples of spiritual gifts. In other words, Your gift is likely closely related to or illustrated by terms like these:: Prayer, Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Exhorting, Sharing, Leading, Mercy, Love, Enthusiasm, Hope, Hospitality. Your gift may be used to introduce others to the saving grace of our LORD and it may be used to strengthen others spiritually as we further see in verse 13 of our Ephesians text: I called it the Andrew principle earlier.

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ - Whatever your gift may be, it is crucial to the body of believers in which you are a part. --- You can learn more of that in I Corinthians 12.

There is never a time that your gift is not essential because there are always folks who are growing spiritually. Our goal is to all become as much like CHRIST as possible. Are you there? no - nor is anyone else in this body of believers or any other church? You see, we don't expect a six week old pup to be an expert bird dog - then why should we expect young or new Christians to be perfect? And in the purest sense of the word, we are all young Christians because we are growing or another way of saying it is we are in the process of sanctification. But pause for just a moment - how does that

bird dog become proficient - by being trained. That is what our church is here for- that is what our spiritual gifts are for -- to equip and encourage those whom the Lord is bringing into this fellowship of believers. And by the way, God often uses you like the Andrew principle, as His means of inviting and bringing others to the salvation experience of being a peacemaker and sharing the gospel.