

Introduction



His Person



His Works



His Indwelling



His Baptizing



His Sealing



His Filling



His Gifting

3

His Helping



# The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, January 22, 2011

## The Spirit's 'Speaking' Gifts

*"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11).<sup>1</sup>*

In our last lesson, we introduced the "equipping gifts"; that is, those gifts that are specifically identified as gifted persons who provide for the equipping of the others in the church, so that they may do the work of the ministry. We drew this from Ephesians 4:11-12; "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . ." We established that, according to His design, the other gifts that the Spirit gives to His church cannot function as they should without these foundational gifts in place.

And now, in the next two lessons, we'll consider the "serving gifts" that these "foundational gifts" support.<sup>2</sup> We established that, on the basis of 1 Peter 4:11, there are two categories of these serving gifts--neither one of which is more important than the other; but both of which are necessary for each other's fullness in the church. Next week, we'll consider the "ministering" gifts. But this week, we'll consider the "speaking" gifts.

We call this first category "speaking" gifts because of Peter's instruction: "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God." Because of their function in the Body of Christ, these tend to be primarily "up-front" kinds of gifts. They meet the "instructional" and "exhortational" needs of the church. Remember that these are not merely "talents" and "natural abilities" (which, though the Spirit may use, are not the same thing as "spiritual gifts"). These are special enablements, bestowed on each believer, as the Holy Spirit chooses, for the purpose of empowering those individual believers to fulfill their 'speaking' ministries to others in the church. They are:

I. **PROPHECY:** the ability to proclaim a specific message from God to the people of God with authority and power, and in such a way as to result in the people being admonished, or exhorted, or encouraged. (This is distinct from "prophets"; which was the Spirit's gift of persons who were foundational to the church; see Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 12:28.) Paul wrote, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith . . ." (Romans 12:6). He lists this in cooperation with other "speaking" gifts (1 Corinthians 12:10); and as a gift that is clear and distinct in its utterance; and that offers a message that is clearly discerned as from God (1 Corinthians 14:1-3, 6). This particular gift has often been associated in the history of the church with the idea of biblical preaching, in the sense that it is the act of "speaking forth a message from God" (see 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, and possibly 1 Timothy 4:14). But it can also be seen in those remarkable cases in the history of the church in which--in the absence of a clear written word from God--a special revelation is given to meet a specific need (see Acts 13:1-3).

II. **TEACHING:** the ability to study, explain and apply truths from God's word in such a way that the people of God clearly learn--in a logical and applicational way--what they are to believe and do. Paul distinguishes this

gift from prophecy or from ministering (Romans 12:6-7). It is a gift that is to have a position of priority in the church (1 Corinthians 12:28) because of the way it brings a clarity of God's message to His people (14:6).

- III. EXHORTATION:** the ability to challenge and motivate believers to respond to God's call on their lives, and to put into practical action the specific things He desires them to do. A warning is in order: Not everyone who loves to "exhort" others actually have the spiritual gift to do so. It's something that, when faithfully performed, is well received and applied by the others in the Body. We can know that this gift has been used because it builds others up rather than brings them down. Paul commanded that this gift be exercised faithfully by those who possess it (Romans 12:8). It appears to be in close association with--and a natural outflow of--the gift of prophecy. Acts 15:32 tells us, "Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words."
- IV. WISDOM:** the ability to know how to recommend and apply spiritual truth to a particular situation in the best way, so that the result that God desires is achieved. It's a gift that is to be considered distinct from--but in close association with--the gift of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8).
- V. KNOWLEDGE:** the ability to discover, understand, and systematize pertinent spiritual truth or information that the body of Christ needs in a particular situation (1 Corinthians 12:8). Paul wrote, "But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?" (1 Corinthians 14:6).
- VI. DISCERNMENT:** the ability to distinguish and clearly identify the spirit of truth from the spirit of error; and thus protect the church family from harm (1 Corinthians 12:10). The apostle John wrote, "These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1 John 2:26-27). He wrote of himself and the other apostles; "We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6).
- VII. TONGUES:** the ability to receive and express a spiritual message in a language that the speaker has never learned (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 14:1-5; see also Acts 2:4-11). The proper use of this gift is always associated with the gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:5, 13, 27-28); always in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:27, 32-33), and ultimately with the goal of being understood by the body of Christ (vv. 5, 7-19). The church is to be carefully balanced in the use of this gift. It is not to seek it over the clear message of 'prophecy'; but neither is its proper use to be forbidden. "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:39-40).
- VIII. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:** the ability to translate a message that was publically uttered through the gift of tongues, so that the body of Christ can understand and discern the message, and become edified by it (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26-28).

---

<sup>1</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*;  
copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>Much of the material for this study was adapted from “Your Giftedness to The Body: A Biblical Study of The Nature, Purpose, and Use of Spiritual Gifts” from Bethany Bible Church, 2005.