

# Spiritual Gifts (Part II)

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[ 0 : 00 ] But in the previous session, the aim was to give you a basic overview of the spiritual gifts, how to think about spiritual gifts overall.

And did that by defining some of what they are and defining them against that which they are not. Things like talents and offices and responsibilities and spiritual fruit.

So this session we're going to get a little more specific. My wife asked me after the last session, so are you actually ever going to talk about the spiritual gifts? And I said, that's a good idea.

Maybe we should do that. So we're going to do that now. And so what we're going to talk about, first we're going to talk about the gifts themselves. And by the way, the Bible, I don't think there's any reason to think that they're the list of gifts that we get in the Bible.

And there are several lists. You look at Ephesians chapter 4. You look at 1 Corinthians 12. You look at Romans chapter 12. There's even a reference in 1 Peter 4, right? That these lists are not exhaustive.

[ 0 : 59 ] And I think it's very possible and very likely that there are more spiritual gifts. But what we're going to do is to focus on some of the gifts that we see in Scripture. And then we're going to talk about how those gifts are distributed.

And that will make hopefully a little more sense when we talk about that. And then lastly, I want to offer you a few ways to think about discerning your spiritual gifts. My hope would be that everybody leaves here with at least a somewhat clearer sense of what your gifts are.

And then we're actually going to take a spiritual gifts assessment. Yes, we are. Get fired up. The Christian Myers-Briggs.

We're going to do it right here, right now. But before that, we're going to actually talk about what the Bible says about spiritual gifts. So we said in the first session that the gifts are what?

They are the continued ministry of Jesus Christ through individual Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[ 2 : 04 ] Right? They are the continued ministry of Jesus. As we said in Ephesians 4, that Jesus distributes his power and his ministry among his people to continue his work.

So traditionally, we see Jesus playing three roles in the redemptive historical narrative, God's salvation history. Does anybody know what those roles are?

Boom. Man, beat you to the punch. Luke, out of the gate. Spiritual gift of knowledge. Spiritual gift of knowledge. Just whipping that gift out.

Spiritual gift of knowledge. No, Jesus plays the roles of prophet, priest, and king. And when we say that, what we mean is that Jesus is the ultimate of these three roles.

He's the ultimate prophet. What does a prophet do? What is the essence of the role of a prophet? They speak for God. They speak the word of God.

[ 3 : 10 ] Right? They speak God's truth. Who is more qualified to do that than the word of God incarnate? So he's the ultimate prophet. He's the ultimate priest.

What is a priest's job? It's to intercede. It's to facilitate and bring you into relationship with the God of the heavens and the earth.

Right? It's to mediate that relationship. And the Bible says that Jesus, I think, did we just lose power for a second? Jesus is the ultimate high priest.

He's the great high priest. Right? Priests in the Old Testament offered sacrifices to... Am I... I'm popping still? It's good. By the way.

Okay. How's this? Better? Okay. Thanks. Can you all just do... If I start getting close and fired up, can you just do this and I'll back up? Just give me a little hand signal. Thank you. Sonia will give me the hand signal.

[ 4 : 07 ] Okay. So the priest would offer sacrifices to atone for sin. Right? Who better to do that than Jesus who is himself the ultimate sacrifice?

So he's the ultimate priest. And what do kings do? They rule. Right? So Jesus, after his life, death, and resurrection, ascended to take the throne and is the king, the ultimate, the great high king of the heavens and the earth.

Right? So Jesus is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king. So when we think about those roles, one of the helpful ways, I think, to think about spiritual gifts is that they, as we think of Jesus distributing his ministry, we can categorize the spiritual gifts in terms of prophetic gifts, priestly gifts, and kingly gifts.

And so those are the categories that I want to use. And so first I want to look at prophetic gifts. So as we said before, the role of a prophet is to what? It's to speak God's truth, speak God's word. And so prophetic gifts tend to be gifts that center around understanding and communicating truth based on the word of God. That's what prophetic gifts concern themselves with.

[ 5 : 17 ] So the first gift is one that we read about in Ephesians 4, 11, and 1 Corinthians 12, 10. It's the gift of prophecy. That's your phone.

You can put it on airplane mode. It is on airplane mode. That's interesting. I'm curious. Somebody else's phone. Everyone's heard? Somebody's phone is getting picked up.

Yeah, mine's on airplane mode. But prophetic gifts are our gifts that center around speaking and communicating and understanding truth based on God's word. So the gift of prophecy, what do we often think of when we think of prophecy?

Right, right. Clairvoyance, right? Predicting future events. Nostradamus, right? In the Bible, prophecy is not so much about predicting the future, although people with the prophetic gift can say things, can communicate things that have implications for the future.

But the gift of prophecy is not necessarily about clairvoyance. It's not necessarily, it's not the same as the office of prophet in the Old Testament. Right, people who were actually speaking God's word before it was written down.

[ 6 : 34 ] Right, so we're at a different point in the salvation history. So we actually have God's word written. We have what we call the biblical canon. We have a body of writings and scriptures that we believe are divinely inspired.

And there's a sense in which there are places in that scripture where there are warnings against adding to scripture. And so we believe in what we would call a closed canon.

God has ultimately revealed himself through his son and through the scripture. And Jesus actually says, if you want to understand the scripture, you have to understand it is all about me. Right, so because Jesus has come, we don't believe that prophets are people who can add to God's revealed word.

But what we do believe prophets are, and what this gift is about, is it's about speaking God's truth effectively in ways that edify people, in ways that pierce hearts, in ways that expose truth.

Not only about God's word, but about people. So there's a place in 1 Corinthians 14 that describes the impact of prophecy on the hearer. It talks about an unbeliever or an outsider entering, and then that person is convicted.

[ 7 : 50 ] And then that person is then called to account. And the secrets of his heart are disclosed. And so falling on his face, he will worship God. It's a fascinating passage that talks about prophecy as being the gift of preaching or speaking or sharing, either one-on-one or in groups, God's word in ways that reveal the human heart, expose sin, and draw people into worship.

Right, so that's an amazing description. It's the ability to speak God's truth in ways that pierce hearts. And as Melissa said a moment ago, it involves both foretelling and foretelling.

Speaking things openly, authentically, honestly, truthfully in a revealing way, and also communicating implications. Helping people understand the future implications and the direction that they're on, the path that they're headed down, right?

And how they need to think about that. So that's prophecy. Along with that, there's another distinct gift we read about in 1 Peter 4. And this is kind of a categorical gift, the categorical gift of speaking, which is essentially the ability to communicate publicly in an articulate and a compelling way.

Right, so this can be a spiritual gift. Along with that, there's the distinct gift of teaching. And again, teaching and speaking and prophecy are not all exactly the same thing.

[ 9 : 18 ] Because teaching is not just about knowing a lot, but it's specifically being good at explaining things clearly and helping people to understand and to learn effectively, right?

So it's not just being a good speaker. And it's not necessarily, as the prophetic gift would be, speaking in ways that would pierce hearts. But, you know, there are certain people who are able to teach and break down complex concepts in ways that make them accessible, in ways that you can understand, in ways that you remember, right?

And some of you have that gift, the gift of teaching. There's another, and that's in 1 Corinthians 12, 29, by the way. We see the gift of evangelism in Ephesians 4, verse 11.

The ability to relate well and to draw in non-Christians. The ability to help people come to faith. This is a gift. And again, it's not necessarily always found in winsome people or in people who have good speaking skills, right?

This is a distinct gift from speaking and from prophecy and from teaching, right? So a number of you know my story of coming to faith when I was in college. And I came to, I mean, God had been at work in me for years.

[ 10 : 34 ] But one of the people that God used is a guy named Gabe. And Gabe was a guy, you know, kind of a goofy, fun guy, just kind of part of our friend group. And, but, you know, not particularly winsome, not the kind of person that you would think would kind of go out and preach on a street corner.

And Pentecost 2, thousands are saved. He's not that kind of person at all, right? I mean, he was fun and interesting and funny and a great guy. But Gabe had the gift of evangelism.

And Gabe, God used that gift in my life. In other words, when I sat down to talk about Scripture and to ask questions about the Bible and about God with Gabe, I felt immediately that I could trust him. I felt immediately that he had my best interest in mind. And more than that, I felt that even as I was talking to him, that I was dealing with something that was more than him. In other words, I felt like our conversations were somehow opening my heart.

I felt that I felt myself becoming more and more and more receptive to God's truth simply in, and it wasn't that he was trained in apologetics. There were many questions that he, that I asked where he would say, that's a great question.

[ 11 : 42 ] I don't know. Right? But there was something about those interactions that opened my heart. It was the gift of evangelism, God working through him. Right? There's also the gift of knowledge in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 8, which is the ability to have deep understanding and insight about God's word and or other people.

And the key is it's kind of levels of insight and understanding that only God can give. Right? The ability to understand and to hold together lots of concepts, to see connections between things, to understand how different ideas relate to one another, to be able to hold all that clearly in your mind. Right? People who are particularly good at memorizing scripture and recalling that scripture in appropriate moments. You know, one of our bishops, who's now semi-retired, Bishop Thad Barnum, is incredibly gifted in this area.

One of the most compelling sermons I ever heard was when Thad Barnum preached by reciting the entire book of 2 Timothy from memory.

But he delivered it as though he were Paul speaking to us. And everybody in the room, every single person was weeping.

[ 13 : 03 ] Now, I don't know that you've ever had an experience hearing God's word proclaimed to you in a way that immediately made you weep like that. But an entire room full of people weeping. And part of that was his ability.

There were other gifts at work there. But part of that was his ability to take in and to remember and then to recall vast amounts of scripture. Right? Along with knowledge, there is discernment.

1 Corinthians 12.10. The ability to tell the authentic from the false. Right? The ability to tell the genuine from the counterfeit.

People who just have a gut instinct and they have a sense when something is true and they have a sense when it's fake or when it's false or when it's not of the Lord. Right?

The ability to test the spirits. To know what is of the Lord versus what is not of the Lord. Right? A lot of things are said and done in the name of the Lord. People with discernment can tell what things are actually.

[14:01] They have a sense about it. Right? So these are some of the gifts that would fall into the prophetic category. Now if we move to the next category, we're shifting our attention to the priestly gifts.

And again, I'll say with all of these, I understand that there may be slight nuance differences in how we define these gifts. What I'm trying to do is to represent the best of my understanding of what scripture has to say and the teachings of Christian history and tradition have to say about how we understand these gifts.

And to give you some general ways of thinking about them and distinguishing between them. The priestly gifts are abilities related to, as we said, understanding and meeting the basic needs of other people.

So they're marked by empathy, by compassion, right? By a willingness to enter in. A willingness and a joy and a desire to show that selfless love.

The desire to see others formed and healed. These are the priestly gifts. Right? So the gift of encouragement in Romans chapter 12 verse 8.

[15:14] The word there is parakaleo, which is incidentally also the word that is used to describe the Holy Spirit, the paraclete. Right? So parakaleo.

Encouragement is not just saying nice things all the time. You know, a lot of people will just kind of like spout off compliments and, oh, they have the gift of encouragement. What a Barnabas that person is.

Right? Not necessarily. Has anybody ever heard that before? Annika has. Not necessarily. Not necessarily, right?

The gift of encouragement or the gift of exhortation is the ability to come alongside someone in their struggles. That's what parakaleo means. To come alongside someone in their struggles.

To encourage them, but to do it by sharing their burden. Right? By walking alongside them. Sharing their burden in a healing way.

[16:09] So a lot of really good counselors in some summer in the stream, a lot of really good counselors have this gift. Right? To enter in and to speak meaningfully and encouragingly alongside someone.

Which is very different than speaking to someone. You understand? There's a big difference. That's one of the things that differentiates a prophetic gift from a gift of encouragement. The one with encouragement speaks as they come alongside.

Right? There's a helping gift. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 28. Let's just be honest. Not all help is helpful. Not all helpers are helpful. Right? Sometimes, hey, no thanks. I got it. I'm all good. Right? Why? Because not all help is helpful. And I think it's okay to admit that. But people with the gift of helping are able to understand and intuit what is helpful. Right?

[17:11] They're able to offer help that is actually helpful. So these are people who are capacity builders. These are people who in a group, they make everybody else better at what they do.

If you've ever been around a person like this, they're the people who may not necessarily even need to be told by you how to be helpful. They just know and they just go ahead and they do it. Right? And they build everybody else's capacity by freeing them to do what they're called to do more.

Right? This is what a person with a gift of helping does. The gift of healing. Now this is sometimes categorized in the kind of miraculous gifts category.

And so this is one of those gifts like prophecy or tongues that people have debated over. But hey, read James chapter 5. James chapter 5 clearly calls us as Christians to pray for healing.

It says in verse 14, Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And you know, there are many stories in the Bible and many stories since the Bible was written and the canon closed.

[18:21] There are many stories throughout church history, many stories in the present day of God miraculously healing people. And that's just a mystery that we as Christians have to wrestle with.

God sometimes miraculously heals people. But there are also many times when we pray for healing and it doesn't happen. You know, it's very instructive that Paul himself had a thorn that would not be healed.

It doesn't happen all the time, right? And that's why we said in the first session, we made it hopefully very clear that gifts are manifestations of the Spirit. In other words, they're not manifestations of my

innate ability, right?

If you have a gift, you can't just flip it on like a light switch. Right? They're manifestations of the Spirit working through us, ultimately determined not by our will but by God's will. But some people, God chooses to work through them to bring healing.

And this can be physical healing. It can be emotional healing. It can be psychological healing. There are certain people who are just simply, they kind of have a healing presence.

[ 19 : 25 ] You feel more whole when you're around them. So the gift of healing. There's a gift of pastoring, Ephesians 4.11. These are people who are marked by a, and also shepherding, right?

Pastoring or shepherding. People who are burdened with the desire to see others grow spiritually. And they're endowed with the ability to provide what people need to grow.

So, right? So they have the burden and the desire. Now, as I said before, gifts are not offices. So there are a lot of people with pastoral shepherding gifts who may not be pastors, right? You may work at a bank or you may work in a business or you may work in a restaurant or you may stay at home with your kids or you may do any variety of occupations.

But you may, at the same time, have the spiritual gift of shepherding, right? You're good at encouraging others to grow in their faith.

You take holistic responsibility for the nurturing and the care of other people in the community.

There's a serving gift. Romans chapter 12, verse 7.

[ 20 : 31 ] And by the way, I want to say, I would encourage you to be thinking about yourself and the people you know as we're going through these gifts. Think about how God uses you and think about how God has used other people in your life.

As we say these gifts, reflect, have I ever experienced this from someone, right? Because in a little while we'll talk about discernment. And I'm going to encourage you, if and when you see the gifts of the Spirit at work in the lives of other people, especially if they're impacting you, you should always tell them, right?

You should always speak up when you feel like you're seeing a spiritual gift at work. What's it going to hurt? Right? Right? So there's the gift of serving in Romans chapter 12, which is the ability to see and to meet practical needs, kind of like the gift of helping.

Again, these are people who just know what needs to be done and they do it. And they're the first people there, right? We always have people, we always have needs that exist within a church service.

You know, we need people to read and we need people to pray. And we never have any problem getting volunteers for those positions. But then we say, you know, we also need people to come and to help set up. And that requires coming a couple of hours early.

[ 21 : 45 ] And we always have a hard time getting those spots filled. But there are certain people with the gift of serving who are simply willing to do that. They're willing to be selfless. They're willing to give up their morning or their early afternoon.

They're willing to come. They're compelled to do it in a way that other people aren't. That's a spiritual gift, right? There's the gift of giving, Romans 12, 8. People who are readily and sacrificially giving in ways that benefit others above and beyond what is expected, right?

Every Christian is called to give sacrificially. And yet I know I've told the story a number of times of the husband and wife professor couple who I knew were some of my mentors in seminary.

And they had worked up over the years to giving away 50% of their income. They both felt called to it. They both got tremendous joy from doing it. They shared the gift of giving and generosity, right?

There's the gift of hospitality, which is the burden and the ability to welcome people and to serve them and to make them feel at home. Not necessarily being a good cook, not necessarily having a nice house, has nothing to do with Martha Stewart.

[ 22 : 55 ] This is the ability and the burden to welcome and to serve and to make people feel at home, to include people. We'll say that more in a little while or more about that. And then lastly, in this category, the gift of mercy.

Romans 12, 8. And this is worth talking about a little bit. Because if anybody has the gift of healing, I would really appreciate you healing my cough.

It's driving me crazy. The Greek here in Romans 12, 8 literally says, mercy in hilarity. Isn't that interesting? Mercy in hilarity.

But this is often translated mercy with cheerfulness. And that's really important. People with the gift of mercy have the unique ability to be able to deeply empathize with those who are struggling and in pain.

And yet they're able to do it in a way where they do not lose their cheerfulness. They do not lose their perspective. In other words, they don't get pulled under. Right?

[ 23 : 57 ] One of the things that you learn if you do lifeguard training is the idea that a lifeguard can jump in like you see in Baywatch. And, you know, grab a drowning, struggling person.

And by sheer force of their skill and ability, pull them out. You know, kind of one arm around their neck and swimming for the shore. Right? That just is not realistic. And the reason is simple. That somebody who is drowning is much more capable of pulling you under the water than you are pulling them out of the water.

And so rule number one is always don't dive in without a rope or a float or something that you can use to help bring that person to shore. You have to stay tethered, if at all possible, to the side to be able to pull yourself out.

Otherwise, you might drown along with them. So people with the gift of mercy, you might think of that gift as that buoy or that float or that rope. It's that spiritual power to dive deep into somebody's struggle and yet to not get pulled under by it.

Right? Sometimes you're meeting with somebody who's in pain and they kind of share their perspective. Right? And this is all the reasons why I'm hopeless. And at the end, you're kind of sitting there like, yeah. I'm kind of hopeless now.

[ 25 : 09 ] You know? And you kind of don't know where to go from there. Right? So people, I think, with the gift of mercy are able to maintain that broader perspective and they have that extra spiritual power to be able to pull people out of the darkness of suffering.

Right? And you know people like this. Certain people that they are able to remain even keel. Right? They connect with you, but they're not destabilized by you. Right? So that's the gift of mercy.

Third category, final category, the kingly gifts. So kingly gifts, very obviously, concern the ability to lead and to know what direction a group needs to go and to organize and to communicate vision and to motivate people to move in the same direction.

So first we have the apostolic gifting. Just want to be clear. Again, not the office of apostle. This is not like Paul or Peter.

But this is the small a apostolic gifting. But it concerns the same function. People who have the ability to start something new.

[ 26 : 13 ] People who can plow new ground. People who are able to envision something that does not yet exist and to bring it into being. And by the way, many missionaries are people with apostolic gifting.

Because they're able to go into other cultures and with other languages and other practices and outside of their norm and outside of their comfort zone and to begin to build relationships and start ministries.

Right? So that is the apostolic gifting. But it happens just as often and just as well right here in our community as it does in any other place.

So that's the apostolic gifting. Along with that, leadership. Romans 12, 8. The Greek literally translates leading in zeal.

Right? So leadership is the ability to inspire and unite people around a common vision. Right? Certain people have the ability to communicate direction, to communicate vision in a way that where other people respond, I want to be a part of that.

[ 27 : 18 ] Right? So that's the gift of leadership. A distinct gift alongside leadership is the gift of administration. But when we say administration, you should not necessarily think of a secretary.

Administration, the word actually for administration, literally means shipmaster. So a shipmaster is someone who is very good.

Right? The shipmaster sits and they oversee the whole operation of the ship. And they run the crew. They manage the crew. They make sure everybody's doing what they need to be doing. And they're the people who know the best way to get from A to B.

Right? They know how to navigate the waters. They know how to run the crew in an efficient way. They know how to get where they need to go. Right? So the gift of administration is somebody who's gifted at operations and logistics and knowing how to organize and knowing how to get things

done.

Right? So sometimes you see the gift of leadership and the gift of administration together. But very often they're distinct gifts and distinct people. There's another gift, wisdom.

[ 28 : 24 ] 1 Corinthians 12, 8. These are people who are especially good at solving problems. At finding solutions. They're people with a high level of insight.

Right? They're people who have a very reliable sense of gut feeling about things. And there's the gift of faith. 1 Corinthians 12, 9.

Now this is not saving faith. You know, sometimes I think we can confuse that. This is the gift of faith that enables people to trust God in tremendous ways.

Which often means that they set huge goals with tremendous confidence. Right? Now the way to distinguish it is the people with the gift of faith, their goals actually happen sometimes.

Right? These are not pie in the sky delusions. These are actually goals and hopes that are established through this gift.

[ 29 : 24 ] They enable people to dream of possibilities and to pursue things that other people would immediately write off as being impossible. Right? The gift of faith is also not necessarily opposed to doubt.

Right? Because doubt exists in everybody. Right? As we say many times in this church, there's not really a distinction between belief and unbelief.

Because everybody believes something. And doubting one thing simply means that you're believing something else. Right? So it's not necessarily opposed to that. But the gift of faith is the ability to trust God and to act on that trust in tremendous ways.

So that's the gift of faith. So those are some of the gifts. I do want to say a little bit about the gift of tongues. I know that in this room with all of the backgrounds, and maybe this came up in your discussion group, that there are people who are totally freaked out by that.

I know that there are people who have had maybe negative or weird or off-putting experiences.

There are people who have maybe seen instances or heard of instances where people were speaking in tongues, and they knew that it was totally fake.

[ 30 : 34 ] You know, you have the kind of, you know, wisecracking friend who goes and pretends to speak in tongues. Or at least I had that friend who goes into a charismatic Pentecostal community and pretends to speak in tongues just to see if somebody will interpret it.

Right? And not even a Christian. Right? Just hummina, hummina. And what does that mean?

Right? And so there's all ways that we maybe have experienced negative aspects of this gift, and it's often very misunderstood.

But again, the simple reality is that the Bible acknowledges that this is a manifestation of the Spirit that does happen in the life of God's people. And along with all the negative experiences, I also know for a fact that there are people right here in this community, in this room, who do speak in tongues.

Who pray in tongues. Right? And so there are some things to think about with this. The problem really comes when this gift becomes distorted or overblown or disruptive. And that is always Paul's main concern with this gift.

He says in 1 Corinthians 12.30, not all Christians speak in tongues. I mean, that's as explicit as you can get. He says, do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

[ 31 : 47 ] And the clear answer is no. And it's worth pointing out that he also says in Romans 3, we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law, which means faith alone is the means by which we're united with Christ and justified.

So anytime somebody says, unless you speak in tongues, you are not a true Christian, point them to Romans 3. Right? But if you look at 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 and 14, Paul is dealing with tongues by trying to minimize their use.

In other words, he's saying, you know, he's putting caveats around it. There needs to be an interpreter. And when you gather, you should only have one or two people stand and do this. And the sense is, is that this had become very disruptive in the life of the church.

And lots of people were standing up and they were saying things that other people had no idea what they were saying. And Paul's trying to say, no, worship needs to be ordered. It needs to be structured. It needs to be focused on Christ and the gospel.

You don't need to be carried away with these things and allow them to become too big in the life of your community. And so his central teaching on tongues is that they always need to be done in love and in ways that build up the church.

[ 33 : 05 ] Right? And he uses the image of a clanging gong. Right? And he, you know, that tongues not done in love and without interpretation are like a clanging gong.

Right? Now that's a very specific reference to idol worship when they would think that the gods and goddesses were asleep. And so they would hit a gong really loudly, literally to wake the gods up. And so he says, what he's saying is actually kind of a, kind of a, you know, it's kind of a shot to the kidneys. Right? He's saying all of that speaking in tongues that you're doing, that you think you're so great in doing that, that's no better than idol worship.

Right? If it's not done in love and if it's not done in ways that edify and build up the whole body. So he doesn't argue against it. In fact, he argues for it.

And I think it's pretty clear that he has this gift himself. And yet at the same time, he says it needs to be kept in balance and we need to keep perspective. So those are some of the gifts. Again, not an exhaustive list.

[ 34 : 07 ] That, I wanted to go through all those. And now I want to say a word about how the gifts are distributed and then a word about how we might go about discerning the gifts. I like the way Tim Keller talks about, and you know, he's an odd one to maybe go to in talking about the spiritual gifts given his background as a PCA minister.

But, and some of you don't know what that means, but that's fine. But, but I do think that, I do think that he's really helpful when he talks about thinking in terms of people having what he calls a gift matrix.

In other words, everyone has a different gift matrix. Which means there are a number of factors to consider. It's not nearly as clear cut as saying, oh, well, Luke has this gift and Laura has this gift and Tommy has this gift, right?

That the gifts that we have, and most of us probably have multiple gifts. There's no reason to think that you just have one. You probably have a number of gifts. Paul certainly did. But that that's not the only factor.

That there are other factors to consider. And you might think of them in terms of your gift cluster, your gift context, and then your gift capacities. So just a quick word on what that means.

[ 35 : 21 ] You don't just have one gift. You have a cluster of gifts. And what you need to understand is, is that they interact with one another. To produce very unique results. Right?

So you, you can have two people who share one gift, but because of the other gifts that they have, that plays out very differently. They're not, again, like distinct light switches that we turn on and off. They blend together. Right? So you can see this most evidently in different kinds of preachers who are all effective, but for different reasons. Right? So think about the effective preaching that you've heard in your life.

And think about why it was effective. So you may have one person who has a gift of speaking that is clustered with a prophetic or an evangelistic gift. And maybe that person is particularly effective at preaching to skeptics and unbelievers.

Particularly effective at opening people's hearts to God's truth in ways that they haven't been before. Right? And then you may have another preacher with a gift of speaking clustered with healing or mercy gifts.

[ 36 : 24 ] And maybe they're not necessarily as effective at preaching to skeptics and unbelievers, but they're really good at preaching to the brokenhearted. And they're really good at preaching and speaking words of comfort and healing.

Right? And so you have different kinds of preachers because of their gift clusters. Right? Or to move out of that category, maybe you have somebody with a gift of hospitality and encouragement. Right? Think about what that would look like. And maybe they minister particularly well to people best over dinner in their home. You know? That you come in and you are welcomed and you feel like you're one of the family and your needs are provided for and you are built up.

And you feel like they have entered in to your life as much as you have entered in to their home.

Right? That's the gift of hospitality and encouragement at work. Right?

But you also might have somebody with the gift of helping and serving. And maybe that person ministers best without ever saying a word. Right?

[ 37 : 28 ] So again, this isn't about introverts versus extroverts. Not always does it entail talking and interacting on a deep level with people about their lives. Right? There are some spiritual gifts that happen and work through you without you ever having to utter a word.

So gift clusters. That's the first thing. What is your cluster of gifts? Right? And how do they interact? The second aspect, as 1 Corinthians 12.5 says, is there are different kinds of service, meaning there are different contexts where we serve best.

Right? Some people are best suited to work with adults. Some people are best suited to work with children. Right? Some people's best context is an urban context.

And some make more sense in a rural context. Some make more sense, particularly good sense, in an overseas or a cross-cultural context. Right? Some people do better with less structure.

And some thrive and need more structure. Right? Some people are particularly well suited to learn new languages or adapt to new situations. So all of these are contextual things.

[ 38 : 36 ] So you can have somebody with a gift of prophecy or the gift of healing or the gift of mercy. But they also have certain kinds of service that maximize those gifts.

Right? Right? And then the last thing is that 1 Corinthians 6.12.6 describes not only different kinds of service but different kinds of working.

Which I think essentially means different capacities that people have. So in other words, your gifts can occur with different levels of strength. Right? Some people are particularly effective at teaching and speaking in small group gatherings.

Some people are particularly good at speaking in much larger group gatherings. Right? Some people can minister at certain levels with certain kinds of pain or hurt or suffering.

And some people are particularly suited for deeper levels of suffering. Right? We used to differentiate in the counseling world between the worried well and the walking wounded. Right?

There are the people who are generally okay but they just need support.

[ 39 : 38 ] And there are the people who are struggling just to meet basic needs of hygiene. Right? And some people are better suited to care for one versus the other. Right? Different capacities.

So the point is this. Each one of us is unique. And no two people are the same. And no two gifts look exactly the same from person to person. And our job is essentially to figure out what our gifts are and figure out what our gifts are not.

And then by the way, once you know what you are called to do and what you're not called to do, then you should start praying for God to send people in your life with complimentary gifts. Right?

So, you know, we, our parish council, realize that there are certain gifts that I have and strengths that I can bring.

But those are part of a larger list of things that this church needs in terms of its leadership. And we recognize that while I may have a gift of leadership, I do not necessarily have a gift of administration.

I am no shipmaster. Right? And we need a shipmaster. Right? And so that's why we made the shift to bringing on Deborah. Because we realize that Deborah has the ability to do those things in ways shipmaster.

[ 40 : 50 ] The children's ministry is in that building. You guys are in it. Oh, man.

Shipmaster. Boatmaster. Captain. Captain. So many better words I could have used. We needed a captain.

We needed somebody who could come in and organize the ship and get us where we need to go. And that's why we hired Deborah. You're welcome, Deborah, that that will now be living on in infamy forever.

I did that just for you. Now, how do we discern our gifts? How do we discern our gifts? There's not a lot in scripture about how to discern your gifts.

There's very, very, very frustratingly little in how to discern our gifts. I think there's a reason for that. I'll tell you in a minute. Before we get there, though, I do want to suggest a few ways.

[ 42 : 03 ] The easiest but by far the least preferred method is to take a spiritual gifts inventory.

Now, let me caveat that. They can be very useful in giving you a general idea, right? Helping you narrow things down. Especially if you're somebody for whom all of this is new territory.

A spiritual gifts inventory could be very helpful in orienting you and pointing you in the right direction, right? The problem comes, and I said we're going to do this in just a little bit.

The problem comes if this is the only thing that you use to discern your gifts. If you just kind of, you know, fill it out and kind of show it to your church and say, All right, well, put me to work. This is what I'm here to do, right?

That causes problems. Because at the end of the day, they depend entirely on self-reporting. And maybe you all are much better at this than I am, but I don't think we always know ourselves as well as we think we do.

[ 43 : 04 ] And I think that other people's experience of us may not necessarily be the same as our experience of us, right? And so they're not always that reliable.

Moreover, you could have gifts that are up to this point more or less dormant, right? And you may answer no or zero or none of the time when in fact other people would say, you know, you might ought to consider that that's a gift that God has given you, right?

And thirdly, they don't always line up necessarily with what we'd like to do. Now, sometimes they do. Sometimes our gifts are things that make us come alive. Sometimes our gifts are things that we look at God and we're like, how in the world do you give me this gift, right?

So everybody wants to read scripture and pray, right? Nobody, very few people want to sign up for children's ministry or set up sound equipment, right? It's because we would all prefer to have certain gifts over others, right?

But what are the gifts that God has given you? So least preferred but still useful. Another method that might help in kind of order of least to most preferred, another, the kind of second one that I want to suggest, is to think and introspect about the issues and the needs and the deficiencies that you tend to notice first.

[ 44 : 18 ] Because your gift set, your gift matrix, so to speak, is not just, again, a set of light switches. This more likely than not shapes how you are oriented to the world and it shapes how you are oriented to the problems and the needs of the world, right?

It informs how you perceive problems and where you go to first, right? So in a church context, when there are lots of needs and lots of holes and lots of gaps and lots of things that always need to be done, what are the things that you notice first, right?

What are the things that you respond to first and feel most competent to respond to? So for instance, my wife is always tuned in to the aesthetics of a space in terms of how the aesthetics are going to make people feel.

Does it feel warm? Does it feel inviting? Or does it feel cold and sterile? How does it, how does the space affect? And then on top of that, she's always tuned in in groups of people when there is somebody to whom no one is speaking, right?

She just tunes in and it burdens and bothers her tremendously. Nobody is talking to that person or that person doesn't, right? And she notices these things and she feels the burden to fix it, right?

[ 45 : 35 ] Now I would say that those are things that would indicate that she has a gift of hospitality, right? She wants a space and she wants an environment and she wants factors that make people feel welcome and included.

That's a gift of hospitality, right? So some people tend to notice disorganization and they notice inefficiency. And more than that, they can imagine exactly how they might streamline or organize a system or a process, right?

They're like, I could make this so much better. I could make it so much more efficient, right? We've been blessed to have a number of those people serve in our parish council. And that is the right place for people with that gift to serve.

They know how to make things work in efficient, organized ways, right? So that's a gift of administration potentially coming out. Some people notice things no one else notices. And they just intuit and they respond to those things without even having to be asked.

So that's the help or serving gift coming out. So what are the things that you notice, the things that burden you? I'll say this. If there are things that you tend to criticize in this church or in your small group, often when people come to me with good-hearted, well-meaning critique, one of my first questions will be to say, have you considered what role you might play in fixing this or alleviating this need?

[ 46 : 58 ] Not necessarily because I'm just trying to recruit somebody. It's an honest question because I think sometimes the things that we can tend to be most critical of can actually be windows into our gifting.

Maybe you're noticing it because God is calling you to do something about it. And you should always ask that question, right? So if you're in your small group and you're like, nobody ever takes the initiative to make it clear whether or not we're going to have food.

And I always find out at like 4 o'clock and then I have to like run by Chipotle on my way to small group and it drives me crazy, right? Maybe you're noticing that because that's a role you're called to play. So don't, you know, maybe before you hammer your small group leader, right?

Or just quietly resent them, right? Let's just be realistic, right? You should think maybe this is related to a spiritual gift that I have that I need to be activating in the life of this group, right?

So the first two ways that I just mentioned are self-assessment, self-assessment inventory, and noticing your burdens, your issues, the areas that you tend to be critical of.

[ 48 : 04 ] Maybe that's a window in. Those are both great. But again, the one problem with both of these methods is they both rely pretty much on introspection. And you will never actually really successfully discern your spiritual gifts if you're only relying on introspection.

It's not enough. So coming back to the thing that I said a moment ago, I think that the reason that the Bible doesn't really tell us much about how to discern our gifts is because every place that the Bible talks about spiritual gifts, it is assuming that everyone listening is actively involved in serving in the life of the church.

It assumes that the people that are wanting to do the discerning are already involved, already doing things in the life of the church. And that is by far the best way to discern your gifts is to roll up your sleeves and to plunge in and to serve in a variety of ways, right?

Don't necessarily wait to figure out what calls to you. A lot of the work of the church does not necessarily always make you come alive and like butterflies and rainbows in your heart.

It doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes it's just hard work that needs to be done. But I guarantee you, if you roll up your sleeves and you plunge in and you serve, you will begin to learn more about yourself and your spiritual gifts.

[ 49 : 26 ] So you may have undiscovered gifts that come out. God may have ways that he wants to use you that you would never expect. So find the holes and the gaps and the needs and begin to plug them as best you can.

And by the way, don't assume that your occupation will necessarily have anything to do with the way that you are called to serve in the church. It may. It may not.

But if you're employed as an accountant, you may not necessarily be the one that's called to be the church treasurer, right? It could be that there are other spiritual gifts that you have that you're not even aware of.

It could be that you would be best utilized teaching and leading a Bible study, right? Or leading in a mercy outreach in the city, right? There are ways that God may want to use you that you have not yet come across.

And the last thing I'll say is this. As you plunge in and as you serve, do your best to allow yourself to be known. Which means two things. Presence and persistence.

[ 50 : 30 ] It doesn't happen overnight. Some of you are here because you're hoping to make friends. It's not going to happen overnight. But I can guarantee you that if you are present, meaning you show up, when people plan a happy hour or a hymn sing or go to a movie or dinner at their house, go.

Be present. And then be persistent. Keep showing up. Keep seeking relationships. Don't wait for people to come to you. Go to them. Initiate.

Stick out your hand. Make it happen. And by opening yourself up to those relationships and then opening yourself up to the feedback from the people who know you best, you're going to learn what's working and what's not.

You're going to learn where you're bearing fruit. And along with that, and this is the last thing I'm going to say, we're responsible not only to discern our own gifts but to help people discern theirs. And so I want to, it's equally important not only for you to serve and you get involved, but as I said a moment ago, whenever you see people's spiritual gifts at work, whenever you look at somebody and you say, that was a particularly encouraging experience, or I noticed something unique about the way that happened.

[ 51 : 36 ] Whenever you notice that, even if it's just a hunch, just go to that person and say, you know, I really think that you should think about this. This is an area that I feel like God uses you. And the best way to do that is when it happens in your own life.

God really used you in my life in this way. That's just feedback. You know? We can't know that conclusively. But offering each other feedback. Again, what's the risk? What's the harm? So that's some ways that we can go about discerning our spiritual gifts. So I'm going to stop right there. And I think I'm going to invite Deborah to come up and give us some announcements.

And then I'm going to ask Melissa to come and help us understand how to take this spiritual gifts assessment. And what we're going to do is this. We're going to send you guys back out. So what I want you to do is to grab an assessment, a spiritual gifts assessment. And I want you to reform your groups. And I want you to go and I want you to fill out these assessments. And once you're done, so sit together with your group.

[ 52 : 37 ] Fill out the assessment. And then just share your results, you know? And your feelings about your results. Wow, this is interesting. I didn't expect this. Or this totally confirms what I already thought. Or, you know, this is something.

You know, and just kind of react to it together and process it together. We're not going to reconvene here before lunch. So lunch is at 1230. And then after that, we are wide open.

And I think Deborah may tell us a little bit about the rest of the day. So the point is, you can continue into lunch. Maybe your group can just grab food and continue talking. Or you guys can break up. But regardless, you have between now and 1230 to do that.

And so let me ask Deborah to come up and give us the deets. Thank you. Thank you.