

Spiritual Gifts 101

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[0:00] The sermon text for today is 1 Corinthians 12, 1-11. At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare, this is the word of the Lord. And the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, thanks be to God.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed.

And no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all and everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, the ability to distinguish between spirits.

[1:10] To another, various kinds of tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one in the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Father, we truly give you thanks for this word.

This is the revelation of God. We would not know you, Lord, apart from a revelation. We would be lost in darkness apart from you speaking forth through creation and through especially this word which has been written down for the saints.

So we give you thanks for this word, Lord. Would you, as has already been prayed, would you use this word to build us up in Christ, to transform us into his likeness, to help us, Lord, to become who we already are in Christ by faith.

Build your church, Lord. We affirm what Jesus said, that he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Do that now through this word we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2:20] Good morning, church. My name is Mike, one of the pastors here at Shoreline, and we're so glad that you're here this morning. I want to open by just asking a question for you to think through here.

If you could be any superhero, whether Justice League or Avengers, who would it be? You don't have to answer aloud, but you can, I suppose. Batman, okay.

Which of the superpowers is most appealing to you? Okay. Is it, you know, super speed or superhuman flight? Is it x-ray vision or unmatched strength?

Bat-like stealth, apparently. Web shooting abilities? Shape shifting? Did you ever think to yourself, maybe while you're just sitting at your desk at work, if only I could just turn invisible right now, then everything would be better.

You know, I think our infatuation with superheroes sometimes informs our view on the spiritual gifts. To be sure, the spiritual gifts are divine abilities.

[3:26] But what exactly are they and who receives them and what are they for? Now, I'm hoping by the end of this sermon that you'll be able to answer those questions for yourself and explain to someone how they are both similar and quite different from the superpowers that we see in the comic books and on the big screen.

So our text for today is 1 Corinthians 12, 1 through 11. Please turn there in your Bibles if you haven't already. I want you guys in the Word. If you don't have a Bible, they're available on the back table, already bookmarked to today's passage.

Feel free to keep one of those. This year, we've been walking through the Apostle Paul's first letter to the problematic Corinthian church. And we've been considering in this walkthrough of the letter the church's call to display Christ in all things.

Now, if you were here last week, Andrew preached on the Lord's Supper and he mentioned a principle that I think really succinctly captures Paul's driving emphasis, what it actually looks like to display Christ.

He said that it's for our focus to be upward and outward and not inward. Upward, outward, not inward. This focus, Paul urges the Corinthians over the next few chapters, it must be evident in their display, in their use of the spiritual gifts.

[4:50] So in these first 11 verses of chapter 12, Paul is offering an overview, the who, what, where, when, why, if you will, of the spiritual gifts.

And so I've titled today's sermon Spiritual Gifts 101. Now I want to say here from the start, this is going to be a longer sermon than normal. So I hope you guys are ready for this.

There's a lot of content to uncover and I think it will also help us because we're going to be walking through the spiritual gifts for a few weeks here. This should hopefully give us some groundwork for the next several weeks.

So open your Bibles. If you don't have them open, get in the text. 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul begins by saying in verse 1, Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

So beginning in chapter 11 verse 2, just a couple weeks ago, Paul had shifted to the realm of corporate worship. This gathering right here, the gathering of the saints when they come together.

[5:48] And as we saw in chapter 11, the Corinthians were abusing the practice of head coverings in the first century. They were abusing the practice of the Lord's Supper.

And we're going to see as we read through the next few chapters that they were also abusing the practice of spiritual gifts, which becomes Paul's focus from now until the end of chapter 14.

As we're going to see over the next few chapters, this prideful, competitive, status-seeking spirit of Corinthian culture, which had infected the church, it was also corrupting their exercise of spiritual gifts.

So we've seen this already, right? We saw how this spirit led to rival factions over leaders. We saw how it led to lawsuits against fellow believers.

It led to mistreatment of the weak. It led to idolatry. It even led to divisions during the Lord's Supper. So all of this should come as no surprise to us that it's also affecting the spiritual gifts.

[6:50] Now Paul is about to spend some considerable time helping the Corinthians to understand what it ought to look like for Christ and the gospel to be displayed through their use of the spiritual gifts.

Paul goes on in verse 2. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed.

And no one can say, Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. Okay, so here's the first point today. The criterion. The Lordship of Christ.

Criterion. The Lordship of Christ. As Paul begins this three-chapter discussion on the spiritual gifts, he reminds the Corinthians what used to define them before coming to Christ, what now defines them since coming to Christ, and what is it that defines them?

It's Christ and his Lordship over their lives. Paul is establishing here the overarching criterion for what constitutes a working of God's Spirit.

[8:00] How do you know the Spirit of God when you see him? How do you know that a believer, whether yourself or someone else, is actually operating under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

Well, Paul tells us how you know. Because they proclaim, you proclaim, Jesus is Lord. In your words, in your works, with your lips and your lives, you proclaim, Jesus is Lord.

Now this is a good word for us today because there are many Christians, and I think I've done this in the past, who chase after ecstatic, emotional, mystical, spiritual experiences, but ones that don't yield any heart or life transformation.

Ones that make you feel something powerful, but don't draw you closer to Christ. Don't raise your affections to Christ. Don't extend his reign further into heart and life.

Saints, this is the test of whether we are operating in the Spirit or not. Is what I am doing being done in submission to the Lord?

[9:07] Is it for his name and for his glory alone? Or is it because, as was happening in the Corinthian church, I'm seeking attention or acclaim or self-gratification?

Remember we said two weeks ago, we're supposed to be glory givers, not glory grabbers. Paul is helping the Corinthians to realize, as one commentator states it, that spiritual experiences are not self-validating.

In other words, just because you've had some spiritual experience does not mean it was of the Holy Spirit. And Paul's saying here, Corinthians, you had all kinds of spiritual experiences in your past life while worshipping dumb idols.

They're powerless, right? Those were spiritual experiences. So don't think that now that every supposed display of spiritual power is from the Holy Spirit. Now I think Paul's doing a second thing here as well.

And that is, I think that Paul is level setting. He's putting all the believers on an equal plane by reminding them that they are who they are by sheer grace.

[10:17] They are who they are by the mercy of God. See, they were pagans. They were Gentiles dead in their trespasses. Objects of God's eternal wrath.

That's Ephesians 2, 1 through 3. But in mercy, the Holy Spirit breathed life. We were just singing about this. He breathed life to their dead hearts, joining them with Christ in his death and his resurrection so that they could then declare from their hearts and faith, Jesus is Lord.

Lord, that was the mercy of God. That was the grace of God. And I want to ask before we move on, have you experienced this kind of transformation of heart?

Have you submitted yourself to the lordship of Jesus Christ for him to be the savior and the Lord of your life? If not, God is calling you today to acknowledge the error of your ways and to repent of your sin and to receive his mercy that he offers you through the once for all death of Jesus Christ on the cross for your sins.

He's calling you to submit to the loving lordship of Jesus Christ who offers you himself as life and salvation. Okay, so this then is who the Corinthians are, who we are in Christ through the gracious work of the Spirit.

[11:38] We are redeemed saints who pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ alone. And the connection to the spiritual gifts is that therefore any believer under the Spirit's influence will use their spiritual gifts in a way that trumpets Jesus as lord and king, giving praise and honor to him.

So this is the overarching criterion of the proper use of the spiritual gifts. And then Paul points them to the source, the source of the spiritual gifts, the triune God.

So he continues. Look at verse 4. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord.

And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. Same Spirit, same Lord, same God.

Now when Paul says Lord here, he's referring to Jesus Christ. When he says God, he's referring to the Father. Remember, back in chapter 8, verse 6, Paul had said, for us, there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.

[12:54] So here, Paul is pointing to Spirit, Son, Father, right? The triune God as the source of the spiritual gifts. All three persons of the Trinity are involved in the distribution of the spiritual gifts to the church.

So these are gifts given by God. And if they're given by God, then they are to be used for the glory of God, just as all things are from God, and all things are for the glory of his name.

Now Paul is also, perhaps a bit more subtly, pointing to the Trinity as the ultimate example of unity in diversity. Father, Son, Spirit are one in being in essence, yet they occupy different roles, right? And we see this all throughout Scripture. None of them is greater or lesser than the other in dignity and in worth and in value. Yet each of them fulfills a unique function.

They're bound together in a unifying love even as they operate diversely. and so it is to be with the church. Paul is saying as each member exercises their God-given spiritual gifts.

[14:09] But that's actually, that's getting ahead of ourselves a little bit. That will come into view a lot in next week's text. But before we go any further, we need to actually define what is even meant by the term spiritual gifts.

And that's what I think Paul is also doing in these verses. The definition. These are, Paul is saying, gifts of grace, service, and power.

Now Paul began in verse 1. If you look back at verse 1, he says, now concerning spiritual gifts. That he's talking about gifts is actually implied from the context.

The word gift is not actually present in verse 1. It's a different word. It could mean just spiritual things or spiritual persons. Now the Corinthians were clearly not regarding the spiritual gifts as gifts. And so in verse 4 and 5 and 6, Paul is, he's switching terms to help underscore what the gifts actually are. And so we're going to see these three different terms.

[15:13] Paul is redefining, he's reshaping the Corinthian understanding of the spiritual gifts. Paul says, verse 4, now there are varieties of gifts. Different word. It means gifts.

It means gifts of God's grace. Gifts of God's grace. That's verse 4 here. You know, in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 that many of you know, in Romans 6, 23 that many of you know, Paul talks about our salvation as a gift, a grace gift from the Lord.

It's something we did not deserve or earn. It is freely given to us by God. Now this is why every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, I say to you all to remember that as you receive the bread and the cup, so you have received life and salvation as a free and unmerited gift of God's grace for you. Hallelujah. That's right. Praise God. Now similarly, Paul is saying here that the spiritual gifts are freely bestowed upon the saints by the Holy Spirit.

Not deserved, not earned, freely given by the grace of God. So I just want to ask, what room is there for boasting? What room is there for boasting? It's excluded, right?

[16:28] These are gifts of grace. Secondly, Paul says, there are varieties of service. Verse 5, the spiritual gifts are gifts of service.

You know, you might say, but I thought that service was one of the spiritual gifts. Yes, it is. Look at Romans 12, verse 7. And it's all the spiritual gifts. These grace gifts from God are gifts of service. They're meant to be used in service to others. Now, I don't think it's an accident that Paul pairs service with Lord. Not only because we serve under the lordship of Christ.

He's the master. We're the servants. That's definitely at play. But also because Jesus Christ was the preeminent servant. He was the one who came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

That's Matthew 20, 28. Paul is calling the believers here in Corinth to imitate Christ. He said that in 11, verse 1. Imitate Christ in the exercise of their gifts of God's grace.

[17:38] But follow Christ's pattern of self-giving, servant-hearted love. These are gifts of grace. These are gifts of service. And then thirdly, look at verse 6.

Paul says, there are varieties of activities. The spiritual gifts are gifts of power. Why do I say power? The word activities, it means workings or operations.

And it's the noun form of the verb that immediately follows when Paul says, that God empowers them all. He empowers them all. These are gifts of God's power.

And you know, God's power is never separate from his presence. And so Paul calls each gift in verse 7 a manifestation of the Spirit.

It is a revelation of the Spirit. It displays the Spirit and his power. These spiritual gifts, they're gifts of God's power and presence among the saints.

[18:41] They give evidence to the reality of his existence and of his powerful presence in and through the church and of his effective working

in the lives of the saints.

You know, Shoreline, it's so easy for us to go from church gathering to church gathering, from community group to community group, or family worship to family worship, living as functional atheists, right?

As if God doesn't really exist or perhaps marginally better, functional deists. That is, as if God established things back then, he was working back then, but he's not really working anymore today. But church, Jesus Christ unleashed the mighty power and presence of the Spirit in the saints when he died on the cross and rose from the grave and ascended back to glory and then he sent his Holy Spirit to the church.

Jesus had said to his disciples in John 16, 7 that it is to your, do you guys remember? It is to your, what, that I go away? Advantage, to your benefit.

[19:46] Why? Because he was going to send the helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with them forever. And this is exactly what happened at Pentecost.

Read Acts chapter 2.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, leading them to speak in tongues and preach the gospel with all boldness. The Holy Spirit, saints, is God with us.

God with us, filling and empowering us by his presence. So let us expect him to be mightily at work. Let us pray for him to be mightily at work.

Let us look for the ways that he is mightily at work. ever proving the lordship of the risen and reigning Christ. That's what he's doing through the church for the everlasting glory of God.

The spiritual gifts are gifts of grace, they're gifts of service, they're gifts of power. Notice then how radically upward and outward the focus of these gifts are, not inward.

[20:51] the Corinthians were using their gifts for self-promotion and for status and power within the church. But Paul is saying, no, no, no, no.

The spiritual gifts are from God by grace, giving evidence to his powerful presence among the church that he created. And therefore, they're to be used in Christ-like service for others, for his glory alone.

Pleasing others for the praise of God and the pattern of Christ. Does that sound familiar to anybody? That was our main point just a few weeks ago. Pleasing others for the praise of God and the pattern of Christ.

We see how that, that was Paul's big picture, all of life principle from chapter 10, 31 to 11, 1. And that bears out in every area of the Christian life and here in the use of spiritual gifts.

Okay, so we've considered the criterion, the source, the definition, and now Paul turns to the aim. The good of the church.

[21:56] Verse 7. Now this was implied. We've already been hitting on it a bit. This was implied in the word service. But Paul isn't content for it to simply be implied. He wants to make it explicit.

And so he says, look at verse 7. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit. Why? For the common good.

For the common good. God has a purpose, a will, in manifesting his grace, power, and presence among the saints in the form of spiritual gifts specifically.

That purpose, Paul says, is the good of the church. The gifts are to be exercised with the aim of edification, of building up, of encouraging, of strengthening, of serving, unifying, all of those terms.

The church. Now this is, this is the outward focus that always accompanies an upward focus of heart. For me to be truly operating in the Spirit, which means submitting to the Lordship of Christ for the glory of God alone, then I will also be seeking the good of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

[23:12] Now this becomes Paul's driving emphasis in the rest of his discussion on the spiritual gifts. Andrew emphasized this principle last week of coming into the corporate gathering not with an eye to self, but with an eye to others.

I'm going to quote him. He said, if I look at our corporate gatherings primarily through the lens of how is this serving me, my heart is not reflecting the gospel. So let's develop this practice of actively putting our self-regard to death when we gather with the saints.

Let's come to church looking to die to our preferences for the sake of others. Now here's an easy way to remember this principle, church. Be a contributor, not a consumer.

Be a contributor, not a consumer. put on Christ and come to be served. Come not to be served, but to serve. Now perhaps you're sitting here thinking, well I would do that if only I had something to offer the church, but I don't feel like I do.

Well here's the next thing we learn in Paul's Spiritual Gifts 101 course. The recipients. Each believer. Each believer.

[24:33] Look again at verse 7. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. And then look down in verse 11. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

To each one individually. Paul is clearly teaching here that every single member in the body of Christ, every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit for the upbuilding of the church.

Now Paul doesn't add any qualifiers, does he? He doesn't say, you know, to those who have been Christians for at least five years or to those who are praying the most fervently or to those in ministry leadership.

No, no, no. He says to each. To each one individually. Brothers and sisters, if you're in Christ, if you confess Jesus as Lord, whether you've been a Christian for seven weeks or for 77 years, then you are gifted by the Spirit for the good of the church.

Now some of you might not have known this or some of you may have thought that the spiritual gifts were really only for the church leaders, but see now that they are for every single believer in Christ.

[26:00] Don't view yourself as second rate. Don't view yourself as in some sort of probationary period or on the JV team. Each of us is on the varsity, right?

You're in the Babe Ruth, no longer the Little League anymore. See yourself through the lens of the gospel of Jesus Christ and be encouraged. Be encouraged. Now at this point we've pieced together what I believe to be the main argument in this passage that spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit to each believer as proof of Christ's lordship and for the building of his church.

Spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit to each believer as proof of Christ's lordship and for the building of his church. So let's now consider the actual list of spiritual gifts that Paul offers in this text.

Number six. And we're going to camp out here for a bit just letting you know. The list. Varieties of gifts. Now before we read the list in verses 8 through 10 look back in verses 4 through 6.

That word that he repeated three different times. Varieties. There are, he says, varieties of gifts. Varieties of service. Varieties of activities.

[27:25] That word is underscoring the diversity of the gifts apportioned out by God to the saints. One commentator writes, The triune God loves diversity.

So much so, as someone has remarked, that when he sends a snowstorm, he makes each flake different. We manufacture ice cubes. God's love for diversity.

It is readily seen in nature and in humanity and is on display in his bestowing of varieties of spiritual gifts. And so here are some of those varieties that were manifested in the Corinthian church.

Look at verse 8. Paul says, For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit and to another faith by the same Spirit to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit to another the working of miracles to another prophecy to another the ability to distinguish between spirits to another various kinds of tongues to another the interpretation of tongues.

How many did you count in that list? I count nine spiritual gifts in these three verses. So let's take a look at each of these in turn, okay? First, Paul says, there is the utterance of wisdom and I'm going to pair that with the utterance of knowledge.

[28:47] The utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge. Now we often distinguish knowledge from wisdom in that knowledge is possessing information, specifically understanding God's Word, whereas wisdom is applying that knowledge to real life.

However, I think it's unclear that Paul actually intends any sharp distinction here in these two gifts, especially considering he's been using these words over in an overlapping way all throughout the

letter.

The emphasis here seems to be more on the first word, utterance, which is the Greek *logos*, which means word. That's probably a better translation is word.

Paul is likely referring to someone's ability to speak an insightful message that accords with the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now this certainly overlaps with the gift of teaching, but it's not necessarily the same thing.

And this could be something spontaneous or something prepared, but either way, it's from the Spirit and it's for the building of the church. The third gift that he lists is faith.

[29:58] This needs a little explanation from up here. Except that I want to say that clearly some of the spiritual gifts are things that all believers possess, but of which some believers are given an extra measure.

If you are in Christ, you possess faith in Christ. But we see even in Scripture examples of a tremendous amount of faith we see in church history. I'm reminded in James, James says that the prayer of faith will make the sick person well.

And then in chapter 13, Paul talks about faith that can move mountains. So all believers possess faith. Some are given an extra measure of faith. And we see that.

Fourth, there are, Paul says, gifts of healing. Now both words are actually plural. It really is gifts of healings. And I think this would suggest that this gift manifests itself in all kinds of ways.

and also that it's unlikely that any believer is given a unilateral gift to be able to heal whenever. Now certainly when we look at the book of Acts, we see examples of healings performed by the hands of the apostles and the disciples.

[31:08] But it doesn't seem that they could just heal unilaterally.

Fifth, there is the working of miracles. Now this is certainly overlapping with healing.

Right? Restoring sight to the blind is a miracle and it is healing, giving strength to the lame. But this could also include other things like casting out demons for example.

Now at this point, I should acknowledge there is a theological camp known as cessationists that believe the miraculous gifts of the Spirit like healing and miracles and prophecy and tongues.

They believe that those have ceased whereas continuationists believe that they are still in operation as the Spirit wills. And we believe here at Shoreline that these miraculous gifts have not categorically ceased as the cessationist state but that today as ever the Holy Spirit continues to apportion whatever gift he wants to whichever believer he wants as he wills.

Now we don't find the argument for the cessation of gifts to be compelling. And the testimony of the church through the ages seems to accord not with cessationism but with the continued operation of these so-called miraculous gifts.

[32:26] And the reason that I said there so-called is because every one of the spiritual gifts whether spectacular in human eyes or not represents a miraculous working of God's power.

Now this is one of the lessons that Paul is driving home with the Corinthians. They were elevating the spectacular gifts over the others and Paul is saying that distinction is not warranted.

Paul is flattening distinctions between different kinds of spiritual gifts. All of the gifts are gifts of grace service and power. All of the gifts have been given to the saints for the building up of the church by God.

Now even still it makes sense for us to wonder so why don't we see the miraculous gifts in operation more often? And you know some correlate a lack of these gifts with a lack of faith or a lack of obedience in some way saying that true believers must display the miraculous gifts.

Now I think that this perspective has done harm to the church often leading people to manufacture spiritual experiences like we talked about at the beginning but God does not promise to manifest these gifts in every church.

[33:43] God reserves the right to apportion the gifts that he chooses to whom he chooses. And there does also seem to be a pattern both in Acts and throughout church history now this is only a general note here but there seems to be a pattern of signs and wonders accompanying the spread of the gospel to new places but becoming less frequent as the word of God and the gospel takes deeper and deeper root.

but even as I say that even as we uphold every work of God as miraculous including what seems to us to be more mundane it is still good and right for us to evaluate the state of our faith in God. Do we believe that God is able today to work in these miraculous ways? Church let us pray for more faith to believe. Lord I believe help my unbelief that should be a common prayer in the saints let us pray for an outpouring of God's spirit on the church even as we affirm his sovereignty in apportioning the spiritual gifts.

Okay a lot more could be said there but we're going to move on in the list to number six prophecy. Now there is a lot of debate over what constitutes prophecy and we're going to be talking about it a little bit more in chapter 14.

For now I just want to say two things. First the function of prophecy in scripture it generally seems to be comfort or exhortation or warning or rebuke and in that way it's similar to preaching and teaching it serves a similar function as preaching and teaching.

[35:24] Second however prophecy in form is distinct from preaching and teaching in that it seems to be characterized in both the Old Testament and the New Testament by spontaneous revelation from the Lord which is then transmitted by the prophet to the people.

Now this can certainly happen in preaching and in teaching but it doesn't necessarily. Okay seventh Paul lists the ability to distinguish between spirits.

Now he lists this immediately after prophecy because I think he has in mind an ability to weigh whether a prophecy is truly from the Lord. In chapter 14 towards the end he's going to say he's going to call on others in the congregation to do just that to weigh what is said by a prophet. For Paul says the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets and the prophecy needs to be weighed against the word of the Lord. Is it true? Is it really from the Lord? Now this gift of distinguishing between spirits I think also encompasses just a generally wider ability to discern you know in other contexts what is of the Holy Spirit versus what is of the world?

What is of the demonic? I think that is in view here. Number eight Paul lists various kinds of tongues. There is at least as much debate over tongues as there is of prophecy.

[36:46] And again we're going to be talking more about this in chapter 14 when prophecy and tongues become Paul's main focus. But simply put speaking in tongues is speaking in a language unknown to the speaker.

Okay? Unknown to the speaker. Now whether that is another human language or not is another matter and ultimately in my opinion it doesn't really matter in the end.

But we're going to get there in chapter 14. The ninth thing that Paul lists is the interpretation of tongues. Apart from an ability to interpret tongues the gift of tongues becomes useless in the corporate gathering.

Now Paul talks extensively about this in chapter 14. So again we're going to talk more about tongues and about prophecy in three weeks when we get to chapter 14. So those are the nine spiritual gifts that Paul lists in these three verses.

And at the end of this chapter if you look in your Bibles at verse 28 Paul lists he offers another list. Paul says and God has appointed in the church first apostles second prophets third teachers then miracles then gifts of healing helping administrating and various kinds of tongues.

[38:02] So if you compare these two lists he adds some he removes some he changes up the order he intermixes the role with the gift itself and then if we turn to Romans 12 verses 6 through 8 Paul offers another list.

He tells the Romans having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us there's that grace word again charisma let us use them if prophecy in proportion to our faith if service in our serving the one who teaches in his teaching the one who exhorts in his exhortation the one who contributes in generosity the one who leads with zeal the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness we're not done yet.

And then if we turn to Ephesians 4 verse 11 we see another list from Paul and this one includes the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and the teachers and finally there's Peter 1 Peter 4 verse 10 and 11 many see these as the two categories of gifts but Peter says as each has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies that's a lot of gifts and when we look at these lists of spiritual gifts we can't help but start thinking of some questions so I want to just work through some common questions that we have in

looking at all the spiritual gifts in the New Testament the first thing are these lists comprehensive? are they comprehensive? you know it is striking that every single list has different gifts right? even the two lists that Paul offered in the same chapter to the Corinthians has different gifts in light of that I don't think we should see these lists as exhaustive or as comprehensive but rather as representative I think there are other ways that the spirit gifts the saints that are not explicitly spelled out here things like hospitality which is often referred to as a gift because we see people that are gifted in hospitality and there are other things these are not comprehensive question two what's the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural skill or ability? now when we look again when we look at this listing of gifts it seems intermixed with seemingly natural seemingly natural and supernatural seemingly ordinary and spectacular right? [40:51] helping seems pretty ordinary tongues not ordinary Paul doesn't make a distinction between the two does he? he doesn't say here are the miraculous spectacular gifts and here are the more ordinary ones Paul as I mentioned earlier is flattening distinctions between gifts the ones that seem more spectacular like tongues and then the other gifts that seem less so like helping or administrating I think we ought to resist drawing too hard of distinctions between supposed natural giftings or abilities and spiritual gifts now I don't think we should go so far as to say something like my spiritual gift is woodworking okay I don't think we should go that far but to be sure your skill of woodworking is still a gift from the Lord right?

Paul had said in 1 Corinthians 4 verse 7 what do you have that you did not receive? if then you received it why do you boast as if you did not receive it? even our natural abilities our gifts from the Lord to be stewarded under the Lordship of Christ for the building up of the church and also the Spirit uniquely apportions spiritual gifts like the ones listed in Scripture to each of his saints for the same purpose so I'm I'm merely suggesting that we ought not get overly fixated on categories okay instead we ought to fixate on building up the church for the glory of Christ in the power of the Spirit that ought to be the thing that we fixate on now similarly here's a third question what is the difference between the fruits of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit?

now again there is clearly some overlap faith is a spiritual fruit produced in the life of a believer by the Holy Spirit right? so is exhortation so is generosity and giving so is mercy these are fruits of the Spirit so again we should resist drawing hard distinctions between these things now one important difference to note is that spiritual fruit typically has to do with godly character and all believers are called to embody the fruit of the Spirit in his power church we are if you are in Christ you are a new creation Paul says in Ephesians 4 23 created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness so one implication is that a believer cannot say well I'm not very patient but that's okay clearly I don't have the spiritual gift of patience you know no wrong look if you're impatient repent you need to repent you need to put off the old self you need to put on Christ in the Spirit's power and if you struggle with patience pray for it regularly the Lord will work patience in you by the Spirit okay now this leads me to a fourth question so I shouldn't serve in areas where I'm not gifted right it depends okay I think it depends now the thing is I think this reasoning is used more often maybe I'm just speaking personally here I think it's used more often in selfishness than in a genuine desire to maximize effectiveness for the church's edification if someone is terribly disorganized then yes perhaps they should not serve in administration right if you're disorganized you probably shouldn't be Shoreline's admin that's why we have Christina Maloney because she is amazingly organized okay it's probably not selfishness that would keep that disorganized person from that role right it's probably self-awareness it's probably a desire to not tank the church but to help the church to flourish but if you simply don't like children that doesn't mean you shouldn't serve in Shoreline Kids look if there's a need and you have an ability to meet that need in the body of Christ then perhaps the Lord is calling you to die to self and to get out of your comfort zone and to serve the body and look if you don't feel good at having people in your home that doesn't mean you shouldn't practice

Christian hospitality okay well I mentioned before I think some are especially gifted in hospitality and you all should be teaching everyone else how to be hospitable but both Peter and Paul call all believers to practice hospitality again my concern it should be less about me and whether I'm serving in my area of greatest strength and more about whether I'm building up the church in love

for the glory of Christ you know like Moses he was called to lead Israel despite feeling inadequate God so often calls us to serve in ways where we feel weak to humble us and to deepen our dependence upon him and to display his power through our weakness and at the same time I've said that phrase a lot at the same time we do want to be exercising those spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us so that leads me finally to a fifth question how do I know what my spiritual gifts are?

[46:25] how do I know what my spiritual gifts are? the first thing that I want to say is that it's less important for you to know what your spiritual gifts are than for you to exercise them you say Mike how can I possibly exercise my spiritual gifts if I don't know them?

and I think I'm starting to sound like I'm repeating myself here because church if your chief concern again is the glory of Christ and the building up of the church then you are going to be active in serving the body and if you are active in serving the body then almost certainly you will be using your spiritual gifts in our age of personality tests like the Myers-Briggs and the disc assessment and the Enneagram and I've taken all of them okay I've taken all of them we've become awfully self-referential in our thinking it is orders of magnitude less important what personality label has been placed upon us than the life of Jesus Christ being manifested in us and through us and I think it is similar with the spiritual gifts okay and I've taken a spiritual gifts test I have first and foremost church be active in serving the body for the glory of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit with that said at the same time it is good and helpful if we know what our spiritual gifts are okay because we can then channel our time and our energy in ways that are most beneficial to the church there's a reason the Spirit gives gifts right that's why this is here we don't want to be ignorant of the ways of the Holy Spirit if you're active in service to the body you are already well on your way to discovering your spiritual gifts okay because your gifts will be manifested in relationships with other believers this is the space where they are manifested as we fellowship before and after the service as you go to community group as you disciple people your gifts are being used and stewarded and manifested by the Holy Spirit if you still aren't sure then read these passages read these passages that are on the screen read them pray through them ask the Lord to reveal the ways that he's uniquely gifted you to serve the body of Christ talk to him if you still aren't sure then ask somebody else in this body that knows you well whether that's a spouse or a family member or a member of this church they will probably have our brothers and sisters they have good insight and wisdom to offer that can help us to discern where our giftings are and yes there are also spiritual gifts tests that you can take when they are viewed rightly when they are viewed in the light of everything else that we just said then they can be helpful tools but I would put them in the category of potentially helpful not essential okay potentially helpful not essential don't take a spiritual gifts test if everything else that we just said is not already in place because I think that you may find that it's more damaging than it is helpful to you we can talk more about that if somebody has questions about that

I would love to talk to you about that we cannot possibly cover it's 1127 we can't possibly cover all the questions that arise when we consider the spiritual gifts in just one question or in one sermon there's also the question of whether you can have more than one I think you can that's why I've been using gifts in the plural this whole time Paul was an apostle he was a prophet he had gifts of healing he had all sorts of gifts okay I think you can have more than one there's another question of whether these are lifelong or they're for just a season and again I think they can be both I think that we see that sometimes gifts are manifested spontaneously and then sometimes they're things that were given over the course of a lifetime or anywhere in between now this is why I've called this sermon Spiritual Gifts 101 okay it's just it's an introduction here we're going to be covering more ground as we move through these chapters but again if you have specific questions come talk to me come talk to one of the other elders we'd love to talk about this but I want to leave us with one more point that we see in the last verse of today's text the call faith and service so look back in your Bibles at verse 11

Paul says all these all those gifts we just saw are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills Paul bring after listing all those gifts Paul brings the Corinthians back again to the source of all the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit and that they are given to each believer according to his divine will so this then church this is a call to each of us to faith and to service to believe that what God has revealed in his word is true that Jesus Christ took on flesh and he lived a perfect life and he died in our place and he rose from the dead and he ascended

back to glory and he has poured out upon his church his presence by the Holy Spirit for the building and the flourishing of the church let us believe these things in faith

God is at work among us and in us and through us the living God and he is preparing his bride the church for that day when Jesus Christ will come again and take us all to be with him filled with faith then empowered by the spirit let us church let us pour ourselves out in service to one another each and every one of us look whether you're brand new in the faith or well seasoned whether you're you're you know firmly rooted in this region or you're here just for three months or for six months or three years let us each each of us labor to build up God's church under the lordship of Jesus Christ in the mighty power of the holy spirit let's pray father this is glorious I mean what passage in your word isn't this is glorious this is the gospel on display that you have remade us into people who are in the likeness of Jesus Christ and you have left us lord with your presence you will not leave us or forsake us you've given us your spirit your holy spirit to be with us forever until the end of the age this is what

[53:19] Jesus said to his disciples when he sent them off with the great commission lord we want to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations using father our gifts that you have poured out upon us by the spirit lord help us we are so self-centered I am so self-centered in my thinking help us father to turn from the inward perspective to outward and upward father we want to live for your glory for the glory of Jesus Christ we want to live for the flourishing of your church for the building up of your church and as I prayed at the beginning we cling to Jesus his promise that he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it help us to believe lord help us in our unbelief and use us in service to your church for your glory in Jesus name we pray amen amen