

PAUL AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I Corinthians 12: 7-11

Some years ago I was preaching in a house church in the Middle East. There was a young man who afterwards took quite a liking to me and desired to walk with me as we all made our way to a pastor's home for a meal. His questions were of the usual type: how did you become a minister? How did you know you were called? Of course an explanation was needed to describe all the events involved. Then the conversation took a turn as he began to inquire about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The young man had been reading various books on the subject. He certainly was familiar with the book of Acts. But all this caught my attention though. Most times when I receive questions of this type, what people really want to know is how "spiritual gifts" operate and/or how he or she can jumpstart their operations in their own ministry.

The average person who has spent time in a Pentecostal church will have heard the name "Smith Wigglesworth. I think his stories have been repeated enough times in my hearing that I can quote a good many of them by heart. More significant and to the point are the healing revivals of the early twentieth century. When Charles S. Price (1887-1947) and others traversed the United States and foreign lands preaching with the anointing and demonstrating the healing power of Jesus before thousands, these were major events. More attention should be paid to these old meetings in the 1920s and 1930s. There were many journalists from the early days, many of whom were sinners, who wrote up the campaigns and objectively passed on the stories and testimonies which arose in auditorium meetings and tent gatherings.

I thank the Lord that when I began to minister I was able to have personal interaction with many who were partakers of those early outpourings of the Spirit. One of my pastors of years gone by actually taught some morning meetings during the old A.A. Allen tent revivals. (Certainly, we do not want to give any false impressions which would lead you to think that we *agree* with everything tent preachers taught or did during this time-frame or even that we *deny* many of the later problems that publicly developed in someone's character).

Still, I can confirm the truthfulness of the many miracles of the 1940s and 1950s, I can go one better and bring this up to the 60s. My pops, *who was in no shape or form any kind of a believer in Jesus at this time*, used to take a great aunt of mine to Pittsburgh for some meetings with a Lady up there by the name of K. Kuhlman. Pops told me himself that the parking lot would be filled with ambulances and people were wheeled in,

there were stretchers too. He said one by one he watched as folks arose and walked, to the sheer amazement of the crowds gathered.

All this from the mouth of someone in whose house, and presence I grew up. There are many people I can honestly say I would never believe anything that they would ever say about God's power, but believe me, when it comes to the descriptions I have often heard around the house from the folks, I think I can bank on all their words. The world is full of unbelief. In fact, many do not want people to believe in anything but I refuse to walk away from the Pentecostal blessing simply because there are dissenting voices who vocalize their ignorance, and often loudly.

Of the many who have definitely impressed themselves on my ministry and belief I would have to mention the great A.N. Trotter (1902-1982), he was a Preacher's preacher and a man of God. His missionary impact in West Africa, along with his camp-meeting preaching in district camps is well known and established. All would do well to read any material they can find on or by him and listen to any available tapes. At a time when many Pentecostals preached with little education he was a mighty expositor of the word, and miracles abounded in his ministry from the pastorate to the mission field. I've been thankful through the years for the helpful insights of his son A.R. Trotter, who himself is similarly anointed in the manner of his father.

Every minister of Christ should find some time to sit under good teaching for his or her own edification. This is necessary for the preacher's own spiritual health and also to be able to learn from other veteran ministers. For years my wife and I have attended a preacher's convention sponsored by Bert Clendennen in Beaumont, TX. He is the founder of the School of Christ and what a man of God he is in his old age. There are not too many people touching the nations as he.

In each of Bert's convention meetings, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is always evident from the first song to the last sermon in the preachers meetings. I remember on one occasion David Wilkerson was there ministering. There was such deep conviction of the Spirit there that all over the auditorium you could hear adult men and women wailing because of their sins. If you have never sat amid services of this type chances are you really know relatively little of what comprises the anointing or manifestations of the Spirit.

Most times when you hear a Christian today say of a preacher, "He or She is anointed", very often what the Christian means is, that preacher is able to teach a subject well. Current understandings of the word "anointed" are skewed even more so as scripturally misguided persons try and describe what is and is not "anointed."

Some of the simple keys to the power of God relate first and foremost to teaching the **Word of God**, not to simply telling tear-jerking emotional stories. The norm in many Full Gospel circles is to take their favorite human mentor's book and teach from it—telling stories and steps to deliverance and all—as though it is God's first, latest and last word on the subject. This, in my opinion, is not the most profitable thing to do. If you are called and sent by God to deliver the Good News Message of Jesus, then do it and get your own experiences and testimonies instead of indirectly instructing your people in the fine art of 'how to trust a human rather than place their trust God.

Also there needs to be a greater emphasis on **prayer**. Not the kind where people walk around the sanctuary trying to “decree” a thing, but the old fashioned Holy Ghost filled altar services where men and women and children came, petitioned the Lord and wept their way to victory. What has happened to the concept, “praying through?” These old paths will need to be sought out again if there is going to be further demonstration of His power. America has large churches by the score and my travels confirm one thing over and over: empty—if any—altars and prayer meetings and long teaching series on faith and miracles with rarely any genuine miracles at all, except maybe, the massive supposed miracle piles of money on the increase in the coffers.

These so-called Post Modern Preachers must rethink and re-tool if they are going to see God's anointing in these last days. Sinners have conducted enough investigations of preachers to make us angry at the world for attacking the Kingdom of God and also, caused us to be angry at various ministries for pulling the wool over the eyes of their people while they fleeced them one by one. If I wanted to it would be possible to write up a list of all the persons I know personally who believe they are called to a healing ministry who still today cannot give you the names of five persons---to visit or call by phone—who could attest to having been made whole in their healing services.

More honesty needs to be had in all this. Listen, the gifts of the Spirit are real but if no one has ever told you this before here it is: Everyone in the Body of Christ is NOT going to function in them. You might ask, why? Well, there is simply too much carnality, sin, TV worship and so on. Too much time is spent in the bleachers at sporting events rather than on the knees praying. Most will not acknowledge this but it is still the truth. Many want the miracles of Mr. Wigglesworth but do not want to live Christian life as he did. Smith Wigglesworth was a puritan. He lived as far away from the world as possible. But why desire to be like an evangelist of days gone by when the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is given to lead you towards a greater hunger for the living Jesus of the Gospels?

The age we live in has invaded the Church. If you don't believe me look at the titles of sermons today. There are so many "bailout money series" being preached today because of the current financial crisis in America that it still astounds me. Yet this is all proof of two important truths: (1) There are many churches that are always one step behind the world, (2) and, the titles prove that they are watching the world for its guidance on what Christians should be saying and doing. This is a mess!

Today's backslidden church watches filth at the movie theatre—nudity and all—and still can't fathom why weak Sunday morning prophetic utterances are so meaningless. This is not to be too judgmental yet it is true anyhow. In some ways it is judgment that is lacking in the house of God and even the Apostle Peter (I Pet 4:17) says this needs to be fixed. Our desire to be non-offensive to sinners has given rise to methods that the devil himself applauds on Sunday when he attends degenerate churches.

So we now have reared a people whose conscience allows them to live as worldlings while at the same time listening to sermons that say to them, "God wants you to prosper just as you are, it doesn't matter if you continue to divorce over and over again breaking the covenants of God, or extort from your neighbor in the church; just know that God's plan for you is prosperity." People want to live as fleshly as possible, enjoying all their pleasures while crying about how they want to see revival, and then expect to be able to cast out devils when they shout the Name "Jesus".

*One other thing that needs addressing is the idea that you need a crowd of faith for the manifestations to occur. Any scan of the Gospels or the Book of Acts would prove to you that the gifts are too for the Market place. A whole generation has been raised to believe that the manifestations of the Spirit are to be ruled and regulated in church services. This obviously is some of the blow-back from the Healing evangelists on TV but READ YOUR BIBLE friends, God works in the streets and inside homes and on hillsides also. I have laid hands on countless persons and seen them filled with the Holy Ghost and healed in living rooms across America. And the majority of these I have seen have happened in places outside of Church.

Now having said all that let us move onward to some kind of rational and personal explanation of these powerful manifestations of God.

Corinth has a rich history which stretches backwards into the Greek heroic age. It was originally a capital city of Roman Greece and was one of the larger cities of the Empire. It was subsequently razed and destroyed at their loss in a war but

was rebuilt by Julius Caesar in about 46BC. This is significant because its re-emergence came on the heels of the death of Republican Rome and the birth of the newly inaugurated Imperial Roman leadership.

Corinth dwelt under the mythical oversight of the Sea god Poseidon and its grand and strategic position added to its luster and pride. As a city of prominence it hosted people from many varied nationalities. No, it was not a traditional university town in the sense its rival, Athens. However it was a culturally sensitive area.

Corinthians historically enjoyed the liberties of Roman belief and chafed at borders, boundaries and other supposed hindrances to their lawless ways. Into this milieu you are cast as you begin to read the letter to the Corinthians, and it is on the basis of their confused beliefs that Paul must address several stand-out issues relevant to church life and individual sanctity. Furthermore, Greco-Roman provinces were full of people who took full advantage of people's fears, so they sold their wares and preyed on the superstitions of the naïve.

On that note, let us quickly affirm that there are hundreds of charlatans selling video and audio materials promising to activate *spiritual gifts* in your life if you do what is required of their teaching courses. This kind of foolishness is what has given birth to the present calamities often seen in Full-Gospel circles where the supposedly healed, die.

Also it has fostered false prophecies which have lead people into everything from bad marriages to leaps of faith into overseas missions. But not so fast! Let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater. There is some legitimate truth in Paul's concern for this Corinthian ignorance mentioned in verse one of chapter twelve. The one way to counter ignorance is with wisdom and Paul proves this to be true as he outlines the basic features of "giftedness" (in the form of charismata) in this chapter. There was a time when these features of the ministry of Paul were wholly ignored. Now that Christian television is dominated by charismatics of one stripe or another the topic has grown. I'll put my cards on the table quickly and tell you that I have sat under some of the greatest ministries in the body of Christ. Some of them were popular some of them were not so popular. Yet there was a presence of God that could be felt in each meeting.

These were men who walked with the founders of the Assemblies of God, The Church of God in Christ, the International Church of the Foursquare, Deliverance Evangelistic Centers, et cetera. Amid all these personages was a genuine desire to live life with Jesus in submission to the Word of God. After all, it is the Word of God that changes lives. The teaching of scripture is as foundational to all other aspects of ministry as the jab is necessary for combinations in the sport of boxing. I have

discovered from preaching many, many, revivals around our nation that the centerpiece of the service is the Word.

When the Word is preached properly, thoroughly and biblically, demonstrations of the Spirit are made possible. It is with these demonstrations Paul finds himself constrained to delineate in First Corinthians. The people at Corinth had more than their fair share of problems, and the previous chapters dealt candidly with them. Now Paul is faced with smoothing over the improprieties of their stupidity as it regards spiritual things. As can be seen, chapter fourteen is a concentrated effort to help them understand the truths of how oral gifts and manifestations are to be performed in congregational life.

I can underscore the need for such a dissertation by citing the many times I have been invited to minister in fellowships where everyone begins the service screaming out in loud tongues (I Cor.14:8-16), and then prophesying or as the old saints used to say, prophe-lying one untruth after another. Is there any wonder kids have grown up in our Full Gospel Churches, afterwards backsliding to evangelical centers that believe absolutely nothing with respect to the anointing and the power of the Holy Ghost. These youth grew up amid confusion, never believed in any of it, sat under a ministry in rebellion to God's scripted order and plan, then became adults and joined the local Episcopalian Church to the heartbreak of the parents. Still, the parents can't figure why? Mercy!



Paul sounds off first by noting the *Word of Wisdom*: this manifestation needs extensive treatment. I'll only give you a few clues. In chapters one and two, when you come across the word "wisdom" it is the same Greek word referred to in chapter twelve. It defines a compassionate use of the knowledge presently on-hand. And the results of employing such wisdom will always ultimately impact your future circumstances. Joseph's dreams in Genesis are evidences of this type of manifestation.

As far as modern definitions of the 'word of wisdom': For years the church has followed the basic teachings of the 'Man of God' Lester Sumrall—who I believe was exceptional in nearly every way possible—who transmitted the teachings of one Howard Carter, a famed teacher, bible college president and prophet from England many years ago. It was Mr. Carter's belief—since he is said to have learned the "Gifts" while serving in jail as a conscientious objector in WWI—that the word of wisdom was information given which concerned future events only.

I can only strongly disagree by stating that it is not in the Greek text in that manner. As much as I enjoy the testimonies of so many of these

giants from generations gone by, few, if any of them, could study the bible in their original languages or understood anything about Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic nuances. So for this manifestation particularly, it is best to stay with the Greek wording and definitions readily visible in classical Greek. Whatever God does say can never be contrary to what is already written in the Good Book. If things run counter-parallel to scripture, in the end, I shall remain with scripture, regardless of supposed God-blessed testimonies arising from a spurious interpretation.

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The *Word of Knowledge* is simple enough: None of us are as encyclopedic as God. He is omniscient and Omni-present but he also is able to reveal past, present and future data to any and all that he chooses. He is sovereign too. And He does not need some ancient creed or medieval Reformer or church covenant to limit and/or restrict his abilities—as if they really could. A ‘word of knowledge’ could impart information to you through a variety of means: a dream, conversation, more importantly, the reading of the Word.

This manifestation is a spiritual operation though. So you can’t acquire this info anywhere other than God. It is not a word of knowledge derived from reading the latest literary journal. If God shares info with you it is on account of the fact that it needs to be told at that moment. There is purpose behind all that God accomplishes. And divine operations are distributed as the Spirit of God desires.

The Apostle Paul’s knowledge in Acts 27 is paramount. He knew by divine revelation that no one would lose their life during the storm if they stayed on the ship. This was a demonstration of this gift. Simply put this is not derived from human devised literature. God can and may reveal truths to you in a dream or some other fashion. I remember one time when God revealed to my wife that I was sick while I was in Peru. I did not want to tell her that I was ill and have her worry. She prayed for me, that night I turned my face to wall as Hezekiah did and asked the Lord to heal me.

The next morning I woke up well. I told this same story some years ago in a church service in Delaware and a lady approached me after the message to ask me what month and day that was? Once I told her she had a diary there with her and showed me how the Lord had awakened her in the middle of the night to pray for me. She said she prayed until she believed all was well! I have been to too many places and in harm’s way far too many times to disregard the activity of God on behalf of His saints. Each manifestation of God in this world of ours is awesome.

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Paul's mentioning of *Faith* (in verse nine) is unique. It is obvious that he is not talking about "saving faith", the manner by which we are made new in Christ. These are believers reading this material. In reality, all faith is "instrumental", by that I mean that it is the means used by God to bring something to pass. Faith especially is needed for troublesome times. Specifically, Paul is writing about an explosion of "trust" inside a believer's bosom that causes him to believe beyond shadows of doubt.

In a real sense it is a creative faith (but let's not get too carried away with adjectives) in that it instigates change in a situation. That is what faith is all about. Faith in God led to our conversion. Thus faith again and again leads to other changes. It was an act of "faith" in Acts 13:11 for Paul to tell a sorcerer on the island of Cyprus that the Hand of God would fall on him and he would be 'blind' for a season. Who would utter such a thing unless a burst of sudden faith came to speak forth those words?

For years in Cleveland, Ohio, my pastor was Joseph Frano, a man sent from God. I often think back on the powerful services we used to have in the old Jewish Synagogue on Harvard Avenue where we gathered for worship. Few people I've met in life possess such a strong spirit as he. Our Church was filled with people who had been healed of many infirmities under his ministry. Teaching God's Word to hungry souls in both Cleveland and Akron, Ohio weekly, and ministering on radio, his Deeper Life teachings changed thousands of people.

It was refreshing to return from the Middle East and sit under one who was the son of Preachers and himself had been in ministry for more than 5 decades. Many times I've sat and watched as folks would stand to testify of being healed of cancer or some other malady when the doctors had given up on their case. And with nothing but the Word of God, the gift of faith and a bottle of anointing oil I watched on more than one occasion people's lives changed instantly. We would sit in his little office and he'd tell me of how his mother, a preacher herself, was healed of a several pound stomach tumor—it made her look as though she was pregnant--while at a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting. Oh, what a difference a strong commanding "faith" makes in our day to day affairs.

Another story along the lines of faith relates to an occasion when he took his mother to Lorain, Ohio and there in downtown she began to speak in fluent Spanish for over an hour. When the Spirit of God was done the people around her began to talk to her in Spanish but she had to let them know that she could not understand a word they were saying. And it is said that there is today still a church there that was born out of a mother's decision to yield to a this 'manifestation of faith' to speak forth!

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The *gifts of healing* (in a first century sense) are definitely different from medical science, and I am embarrassed when I hear people preach on this as though Paul was saying that one day the water will be cleaner and folks will not die from drinking it because medical technologies will be better suited for the masses (do you know of any cases where people died from contaminated water in antiquity?). Gifts of healing are given to bring wellness to infirmed bodies. God chose/chooses those he would like to use to initiate the restoration of someone's health and there is little else left to be said. Yes, some are gifted in one or more areas when it comes to praying for the sick but taken as a whole it is still rare.

Much of the other that goes under the banner of the gifts of healings are people trying to inflate their ministries by leading you to believe that they can turn healing power on and off like you turn on water sprinklers. Without a doubt God has never left himself without a New Testament witness on this issue and miracle healings will be occurring until the Lord returns. Jesus did them, The Apostles did them, the 70 disciples (in Luke) did them, Paul and his team of ministers too healed the sick. You can read the writings of the apostolic fathers and see that there was never a belief that when the last apostle died healing power lay buried in the grave also. There is no day of miracles, only a God of miracles.

There are enough translations of early church writings available now that the layman should be armed with this info instead of leaving their faith in the hands of their preacher who would rather see people remain ill instead of see his precious doctrine upended. Yes but even then, the cessationist preacher will request prayer for his spouse, or child when they are hospitalized or are terminally ill.

But since he does not believe in 'prayer for divine healing' I suppose it would be interesting if a parishoner should ask his or her minister if they—the congregation—should not just pray for the preacher's spouse or child to die? The preacher ridicules divine healing anyway. I'll bet you one million dollars that the preacher does not want to lose a one of his family members. People often say that they do not believe in miracles of healing, I simply say, "Just wait until you need one" then talk to me.

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The *working of miracles* is immediate and progressive. Jesus did walk on water but he also watched as ten lepers were made whole on their way.. Miracles are not limited to one category. There are supernatural events of *nature*—His calming of the sea is an illustration, *multiplication*—the miracle of the loaves and fishes, *discovery*—as when Jesus told his

disciples to go fish and that the fish caught would have a coin in its mouth. With Jesus there is no limit to what he can or will do. Even maimed persons received limbs in Matthew 15:31.

The whole point of the miraculous nature of the God is that his wonders leave us in awe. So remember keep your definitions linked to scripture or you will end up removing the wonder of this operation and come to conclude that He is speaking of the unfolding petals of a beautiful flower at Spring. Yes, the horticulture of this world is marvelous but they are not Pauline descriptions of the working of miracles.

Some time ago there was man, Hubert Lindsay (Holy Hubert-as he was often called), a blind red headed prophet who ministered in power. His ministry was accompanied by not only miracles of mercy—healings and so on, but by miracles of Judgment—of the Ananias and Sapphire type. One story related tells of how he had his tent up in the South and thousands were in attendance each night as preached the sermon, “The Omnipresence of God” from the verse in John 14:16 where Jesus said, “I’ll pray the Father and he shall send you another comforter”.

Under the tent one night a woman stood and began to scream: “False prophet, false prophet.” A local pastor tried to intervene and Hubert told him to sit down this was between him, the woman and the Lord. In front of everyone Hubert said: “Lady if you are right, then God will judge me right now on this platform in front of all these people, but if I am God’s child then you will never make out from under this tent tonight alive because the judgment of God will fall on you.” The lady became enraged, headed down the aisle towards an exit and fell over dead there on the ground. Someone yelled call for a doctor and Hubert told them to call the undertaker the lady was dead and in hell. Hundreds immediately ran to the altar that night and were saved.

No, we do not glory in anyone’s death and never should, but there is a reality to the positive and negative power of God that few know of or care to mention. Lester Sumrall went far in teaching the Church that the judgment of God is still a reality today but few heard his voice. I am sure we will get to heaven only to discover that many passed over into eternity long before their time.

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Paul then mentions *Prophecy*? Well, here is the matter in a nutshell. Inspiration takes on a number of forms. I have heard some *evangelicals*—mostly people who believe miracles ceased many moons ago—say that a book they wrote or a prayer they inscribed was inspired

of the Lord. I guess for them this justifies their liturgical ritual or publication.

In my opinion, I think that we need to see this operation as Paul saw it. *A prophecy was deemed such if one spoke as though the Lord himself were instructing him in what to say at that moment.* The implications of what is being said may affect a number of things but as a definition I am sure the above says enough. This is witnessed to by Zacharias who prophesied in Luke 1:67-79 at the birth of his son, John, the Baptist. Zacharias had much to say and with the help of God he said it well.

Moreover, there is an element of prophecy is preaching but to say it this way is a misleading statement. The book of Acts contains about 18 or more sermons and addresses. None of them are in any way connected to what Paul is writing of in First Corinthians 14. The utterances marked out in First Corinthians 12-14 are not well crafted sermons delivered to congregations from manuscript. These are Spirit driven, spontaneous sayings, and improvised oral messages.

Believe me I have heard many sermons that preachers thought were “inspirational” that did little for me. Often I have sat through them praying for the Lord’s return and that I would be “counted worthy to escape.” Some of the older sermons I have read that are based on Reader’s Digest type stories are in no way prophetic. One must stick with scripture, in context and in circumstance. If we deviate from the Pauline path of clarity and interpretation the end of the road says, Dead End! Who wants to drive down there just to be faced with turning around again?

One other component of this is the ability to read scripture and understand the times as Daniel was able. In this regard, my own father-in-ministry, Dr. Hilton Sutton has shown to the Body of Christ that by taking one’s time and keeping scripture in context some amazing discoveries can be made of what has happened, is happening and will happen on the bible prophecy calendar. We are living in the days just prior to the coming of the Lord and we should be looking for His appearing.

Dr. Sutton’s participation in the Salvation/Healing Revivals of the fifties and sixties needs chronicling. All this ‘ministry gift’ experience of his coexists right alongside his prophetic ministry and few know of it. He has related to me countless stories of the meetings of days gone by under Dad Ritchie. The son Raymond T. possessed a truly anointed ministry as it pertained to divine healing.

Surely if God was able to use Daniel to foretell the Messiah and the time of his death he can also reveal historical gems of the future that will illuminate the minds of the humans. The manifestation of prophecy in one's life –occasionally--in no way announces that someone is a prophet. However a true prophet of God will be able to be readily used in the manifestation of prophecy. The Old Testament prophets and prophetesses were people with flaws and still were written up as on target and on point as they declared the mind of God to the nations.



Here is one demonstration--*discerning of spirits*--I think should leave us all curious. This particular operation happened often in Jesus ministry. Don't forget He was God in the flesh, he knew a devil when he saw one and he knew a man in whom was no guile when he met him (John 1:47). This is not an operation where a person "suspects" something of another person. There are far too many suspicions controlling conversations in churches today.

In my earlier years of ministry I lived for a brief time in North Carolina. There I had a pastor named Donny Ray Hester, who had come up through the ranks in the Deliverance Evangelistic Temple movement. He loved to sit me down at his kitchen table, reminisce and speak with me of his going to various cities to get in on the meetings of one of his fathers-in-ministry, Apostle Arturo Skinner. Many older saints in the Pentecostal way will remember him from radio and his rallies around America. His miracle crusades included just about any and all kinds of supernatural demonstrations of the "gifts."Mr. Skinner ministered deliverance to thousands of people.

Brother Hester would tell me of the many infirmed persons he and sister Hester saw healed in those meetings and the demon spirits discerned and cast out. Multitudes of captives were freed in Jesus name through the discerning of spirits. I'd sit and listen, take it all in and hunger even more for God. Skinner died young, as did pastor Hestor, but the Saturday morning prayer meetings where we met with God early in the morning and praying in the Holy Ghost still lives on in me. This is why brother Hester possessed a revival ministry that touched so many.

God, by the power of the Holy Ghost does often empower a person to be able to recognize an unclean spirit. And unclean spirits are in every direction in America these days—read Romans 1 to get a clear picture. Because of the way I am teaching this lesson I don't feel compelled to illustrate this with a number of examples. However, I can tell you this, I have seen untold numbers of whoremongers, sodomites and liars run to the altar across America as we have preached the Word of God in purity

of heart. Sometimes it was because of a perception I had while ministering, other times something else was in play.

All over the world I have encountered demon possessed people who were desperately in need of being set free. This manifestation is clearly marked out in Acts 16:18 where Paul frees the little damsel who was soothsayer as scripture calls her. She made money for her handlers and the Apostle liberated her in Jesus name. Every supernatural operation of the Lord has a specific goal: to see someone blessed in Jesus name. There is no blessing at all in bondage, and to be caught in the snare of the devil requires power from on high. Our present need is for more people who are yielded to God. The nations of the world today do need Christians who can be used by the Lord to recognize good and bad spirits and be used accordingly.



Then there are *divers' kinds of tongues and interpretations* of tongues. The Day of Pentecost was a most unusual happening. This miracle of speech and hearing was unnatural to say the least. Also it must be observed that the texts of Acts two is different from what Paul is laying before the Corinthians now. In Corinth, people are speaking with other tongues as a result of a gifting from above which was lately connected the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. You can't move in this gift apart from fullness in the Holy Spirit. And I might add that fullness must be determined according to what it meant to Paul and the followers of Jesus in their day—Acts 2:4; 8:15; 10:46; 19:1-12.

All too often our understanding of “gracious gifts” is determined not by textual evidence but by various verses neatly stitched together which have no likeness—one to the other--in the first place. In a local assembly there should be no outstanding outbursts of *glossolalia* or tongues unless there is a corresponding interpretation (I Cor 14:19-25). How can anyone find edification through pronouncements in a language they are unable to discern? Whenever I enter into a service where I am a visiting minister I normally ask—if it is a Full Gospel Church--about how manifestations are administrated there. No one wants to be out of order.

During my early days at Jimmy Swaggart's church in Baton Rouge—this was before I became an evangelist-at-large at Family Worship Center--I felt impressed of the Lord to go and stand over near the seating area of the preachers because the Lord had told me that a tongue would be administered and that I would give the interpretation. So off I headed toward where Mr. Swaggart was seated. I was quickly met by one of the ministry attendants who politely queried me on my reason for being over there.

I told him that I felt that Lord would have me there and that someone was going to give an “utterance” and I wanted to be there to give the interpretation, but that I needed to know their procedures there. I could tell by his response that he felt I needed to back over to the front row and just sit down (FWC receives many strange folks now and then). He also told me that I wouldn’t need to worry about any utterances in other tongues—he did not believe that I had even heard from The Lord.

As he turned to walk away a lady named Deborah Washington spoke in an unknown tongue. I gave the interpretation and the power of God fell in that place—not because of me or anything like that. We sat there in the sanctuary, in the presence of God, for a couple of hours. Not a baby cried and no one left. The reason I remember it so vividly is because his son Donnie had preached a message on hope that night.

Being involved with JSM, ministering in Church and Chapel and being on the radio broadcast ‘*a study in the Word*’, I learned a tremendous amount. Brother Swaggart is a mine of information, not to mention a World Class Evangelist. So to sit and weekly hear his bible studies on nearly every subject possible was gravy on the meal. There are many who do not understand the ministry of the Gifts of the Spirit so it seems best to find folks who can explain them simply and who do live with their practice in their daily lives.

Dwelling here in Nebraska I do know that if you want to learn anything about farming it is best to avoid the city boys who have grown up on playgrounds and in the parks. To learn a thing or two about farming and livestock, you would need to find people who ride in tractors for a living and raise feed and cattle for their occupation. This is no less true in spiritual gifts. You can consult John Calvin’s commentaries if you want to or even listen to preachers who despise present day manifestations but you will never learn about the ways of the Holy Spirit until you get around some people who have a clue and a few stories to tell.

There are many things the older commentaries can safely guide you in, but “charismata” is not one of them. For that you need to study the writings of the New Testament and learn the truth of Hebrews 13:8, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever*”. A simple guideline is this: if it is mentioned in the Gospels, practiced in the book of Acts, and outlined and defined in the Epistles, and of a Holy character, then it is God’s wish and intent for it to be a part of the Church until Jesus returns.

I have rambled on and on about “the spirituals” of First Corinthians 12 and of people who I consider to have been formative in my own life and

thinking. Let me now encourage YOU to dig into the Word for yourself and launch out into the deep and prepare to encounter things hitherto unknown. To do this you will need to sacrifice time and energy and walk with God by faith.

As far as my own Pentecostal spiritual lineage it is my firm belief I descend from pretty good stock. But I also believe we should follow Paul's example from Philippians' 3 and 'count all things loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ', it is best to know Jesus for one's self. It must be a personal relationship. The illustrations above I have mentioned to support the basic theme of this message: the Holy Spirit that anointed Jesus, filled Paul and Peter, is, still to this day, active in His role as the third member of the Triune Godhead.

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