

Christ Community Covenant Church
Spiritual Gifts: Gifts Given to be Given Away!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - August 14, 2011

Gifts?

Do you have a favorite gift you have received?

Do you have a favorite gift that you have given?

What do you think makes this gift special?

It was given to me from someone who loves me

It is hand made

It is given knowing that I like birds - it was given to encourage me in my life interests

What is the deal with gifts?

China: Do not be too frugal with your choice of gift otherwise you will be seen as an 'iron rooster', i.e. getting a good gift out of you is like getting a feather out of an iron rooster.

Saudi Arabia: You should never buy gold or silk as a present for men, but silver is acceptable. Always give/receive gifts with the right hand. Saudis men enjoy wearing scent or cologne. The most popular is *oud* which runs about \$1,500 an ounce.

Thailand: Thais love bright colors, and it is acceptable to wrap gifts in brightly colored gift-wrap and ribbons. Remember, however, that ripping open the wrapping paper is offensive.

Europeans: Anything authentic American - such as Old West or Native American gifts, including boots or jewelry.

Did you know that God has given spiritual gifts to every Christian as an act of love and generosity and so that we will know and enjoy Him better?

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

"I do not want you to be uninformed . . ."

I think these next three sermons have the opportunity to change your life and to change the life of our church:

Personal Testimony:

They are given to you from Someone who loves you very much

Your spiritual gift(s) is (are) hand crafted

They are given to encourage you in your life Christian life and interests

They inform you of God's purposes for you

What exactly is a spiritual gift?

It is not a physical attribute

It is not a natural skill; it is not a learned talent

While these things (attributes, skills and learned talents) are part of God's plan for us and can be used for God's Kingdom, they are not in the same category as a spiritual gift.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge

according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to 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. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Spiritual Gifts are manifestations given to each believer by the Holy Spirit for the common good and the equipping of the saints for the working of the ministry until He comes.

1 Corinthians 12:7

“ . . . ***each*** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

The Bible teaches us that each of us who have trusted Christ have been given at least one gift that helps to define our role in the Kingdom. These gifts remind us that God knows each of us and loves each of us and wants to give all of us good things.

Ephesians 4:12

“ . . . ***to equip*** the saints for the ***work of the ministry***, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . ”

Here are some observations about this passage:

1. Equip the saints – these are for Christians
2. Work of the ministry – these are tools, working gifts, not frivolous gifts
3. For building up the Body – for the church and the Kingdom
4. Unity of the faith – to bring us together
5. Knowledge of the Son of God – so that we know God better

1 Corinthians 1:7

“ . . . so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The only way that we would not be lacking in any gift is if we are together. I don't have all the gifts but by gathering together we experience more of Christ

We are to occupy until He comes

Each has been given a gift in varying measure in proportion to our faith

Romans 12:3-8

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the 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.

- At least one gift, maybe more,
- In varying proportion or intensity,
- Some of us are aware of our gifts and have used them according to our faith, some of us not so much
- The gifts may or may not be life long

- You may receive a specific gift for a specific moment or need
- We are not to be jealous of one another, instead understanding the need for us to manifest our gifts in concert for the benefit of the Body.
- Understanding our gifts help us to define our “story” as we participate in God’s ‘story’

You can see that spiritual gifts have to do with the Kingdom of God and the Body of Christ, the church. Those who do not know Jesus have various natural skills, physical attributes, and learned skills. But they do not have spiritual gifts. These ‘manifestations’ are specifically for the Body for the work of the Kingdom. This is one of the reasons that I tell you that church attendance is not optional, it is only in the Body that the value of your gift will be understood and the exchange of gift currency can happen. I need you and you need me. And we need the whole Body. This is one of the reasons that we are worshiping together with the other churches in a few weeks. We need to know them and celebrate them and they us.

Perhaps the most obvious thing we learn from this text is that spiritual gifts are for *strengthening* other Christians. These gifts are given to be given. They are not given to be hoarded. In another passage Paul says to his friend Timothy, "I desire to share with you some spiritual gift *to strengthen you.*" What does strengthen mean? He's not referring to bodily strength but strength of faith.

To strengthen someone by a spiritual gift means to help their faith not give way as easily when trouble enters their life. We have spiritual gifts in order to help other Christians keep the faith and maintain an even keel in life's storms. If there is anybody around you whose faith is being threatened in any way at all, take stock whether you may have a spiritual gift peculiarly suited to strengthen that person.

It is all moot if we do not know our gifts and desire to strengthen others!

I really believe that the problem of not knowing our spiritual gifts is not a basic problem. More profound is the problem of not desiring very much to strengthen other people's faith. Human nature is more prone to tear down than it is to build up. Our more basic tendency is to be jealous and stingy or worse, apathetic. So the basic issue is becoming the kind of person who wakes up in the morning, thanks God for our great salvation, and then says, "Lord, O how I want to strengthen people's faith today. Grant that at the end of this day somebody will be more confident of your promises and more joyful in your grace because I crossed his path." The reason I say becoming this kind of person is more basic than finding out your spiritual gift is that when you become this kind of person, the Holy Spirit will not let your longings go to waste. He will help you find ways to strengthen the faith of others,

1 Timothy 4:14

"Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you."

2 Timothy 1:6

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands"

Seemingly we can neglect or allow our gifts to go fallow. Then it will seem that you do not have a gift.

Now, concerning knowing what our gift may be, we have some passages of the Bible that help us out a great deal know what they look like. God does not desire to keep this all a secret!

HANDOUT

How many gifts are there and what are they for? Good question.

- There are four main passages that deal with the subject of spiritual gifts.
- These lists are not exhaustive.
- There are other passages in scripture that seem to indicate other gifts than these, but I tend to be conservative on these. Not everything you think of is a spiritual gift (the spiritual gift of ping pong) - Ken Marquardt
- The list I gave you lists 22 gifts, and many of them can overlap. It is probably not a good idea to get to legalistic about the number and form of these gifts.

In general we can look at a passage in 1 Peter that gives us a broad overview of the nature of spiritual gifts

1 Peter 4:11

Gifts for “whoever speaks” (Teaching, Apostle, Prophet, “Word” gifts)

Gifts for “whoever serves” (all the others)

1 Corinthians 12:28

Apostle	Prophet
Teacher	Miracles
Kinds of healings	Helps
Administration	Tongues

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Word of Wisdom	Word of Knowledge
Faith	Gifts of Healing
Miracles	Prophecy
Discernment of Spirits	
Tongues	Interpretation of Tongues

Ephesians 4:11

Apostle	Prophet
Evangelist	Pastor-Teacher

Romans 12:6-8

Prophecy	Serving
Teaching	Encouraging
Contributing/Giving	Leadership
Mercy	

1 Corinthians 7:7

Marriage	Celibacy
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What if I don't know my gift?

- Pray about it,
- Invite the elders to come and lay hands on you and pray,
- Ask believers who know you well and understand well the doctrine of spiritual gifts to counsel you and make suggestions that you can seek the Lord over,
- Spiritual gifts inventory, go to our web and take the test.
- SHAPE Class

The Currency of Grace and the Body of Christ

Grace is the currency in the household of God. We are called to be stewards of grace. That's the way we should think of our responsibility in the church—all of us. We are recipients of grace –

God's unmerited favor - and it is our duty to disburse this grace for others. The vehicle by which we make these disbursements is our spiritual gift. So now we have another definition of spiritual gifts: they are abilities by which we receive the grace of God and disburse that grace to others.

Gifts given to be given away! - All for the glory of God

1 Peter 4:10-11

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—***in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*** To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

The final point that we draw from this text is that the aim of all spiritual gifts is "that in everything God might be glorified through Jesus Christ". This means that God's aim in giving us gifts, and in giving us the faith to exercise them, is that his glory might be displayed. He wants us and the world to marvel at him and to think he is fantastic. And there is nothing more thrilling, more joyful, more meaningful, more satisfying than to find our niche in the eternal unfolding of God's glory. Our gift may look small, but as a part of the revelation of God's infinite glory it takes on stupendous proportions.

Prayer