**The Permanent Spiritual Gifts - BD26-01**

I’m very happy that you’re here this morning because we’re going to deal with a subject that may very well revolutionize your life. It may give a purpose and a direction such as you have never had before. It may, in short, enable you to find yourself in the Lord’s plan as it relates to you personally. We are going to deal with the subject of spiritual gifts, the vehicles that God has provided for every believer in order that each Christian may provide Christian service in the Lord’s work that is productive of divine good.

**The Wilderness Temptations of Christ**

We begin with a little review of what we have covered thus far in order to reorient us to our thinking. A few weeks ago we looked at the wilderness temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ where Satan tried to destroy the ministry of the God-man. He is trying to do the same thing today with your ministry. He tried to lead the Lord Jesus Christ into sin as he had Adam, so as to make salvation impossible for all of us. Satan hoped thereby to frustrate Project Footstool, the doom which has been declared upon him and his demons. Satan’s temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ took three directions. These directions are also leveled at you and me for they were leveled at the humanity of Christ:

1) He tried to get Jesus Christ to act in His humanity independently of God the Holy Spirit.

2) He tried to get Jesus Christ to act in His humanity to act contrary to the will of God on the basis of false interpretation of Scripture, an emotional appeal type of thing.

3) He tried to get Jesus Christ to act in His humanity to desert the plan of God by receiving the rulership of the world without the agony of the cross.

Satan makes these identical three appeals to you and me, day by day, in order to ruin our Christian service. The Lord Jesus Christ met and conquered Satan with sound Bible doctrine, in His humanity, which is the same thing that we can and must do, in order to be victorious. The background of Christ’s temptations was the fact that He had a two-fold nature that we describe as the hypostatic union, and also that he was impeccable—that he was not able to sin. The background of Christian service we looked at was that the church is the body of Christ in this age of grace. It has permanent supernatural enablements for every believer. It is a unique condition in a unique age. We looked at spirituality which is essential for the production of divine good through Christian service. Spirituality means that a person is filled with the Spirit through confession of known sins.

**Spiritual Gifts**

We also looked at preparation for Christian service. The preparation was the knowledge of Bible doctrine information concerning these spiritual gifts as the vehicles for serving God. We found that the Holy Spirit is the power for this divine good production through doctrine in the mind rather than domination of the emotion over the soul. We looked at the relationship of the spiritual gifts and the Trinity, in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. We found that Christians all have a different personality, but they have a common spiritual heritage. There were differences within the godhead relative to Christian service:

1) The Holy Spirit is the distributor of various spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4).

2) The Son is the one who provides the specific situations for the use of your spiritual gifts (verse 5).

3) In verse 6, the Father is the One who determines the results of the exercise of your spiritual gifts.

So this morning, if you sit here as a believer, every one of you has at least one spiritual gift which is the means whereby you are to serve the Lord. You have received this gift from God the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ will indicate to you the context in which you are to use your gift. There are many of you here who have the same gift, but you do not all employ that gift in the same situation. The Lord indicates where your particular application of your gift lies. You will also have God the Father who will determine the results of the exercise of your gift. Two people with the identical gift, fully spiritual, and full phased into the mind of God will yet discover that they have different results.

**Permanent and Temporary Spiritual Gifts**

Spiritual gifts are divided into two categories—permanent and temporary. There is no verse in the Bible that says this. This is the result of the exegesis of the text—the interpretation and analysis of what the Bible has to say about spiritual gifts. We find, consequently, the indications that some gifts were meant last throughout the church age, and they’re the ones we’re going to talk about this morning. Others were meant to operate only in the early stages of the New Testament church. We have hints of the fact that some gifts were temporary in 1 Corinthians 13:11 and Hebrews 2:4.

The Pentecostals maintain that all that was experienced in the New Testament church is for us today too. That’s why, in the Pentecostal groups, people seeking to reproduce the temporary gifts—performing miracles of healing, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, trying to pretend to have communications and knowledge of a certain type from God, and so on. The Pentecostals say that they believe that all of the experiences in the New Testament church we should experience today. However, very few of them are claiming success in raising people from the dead. Yet this was not an uncommon experience in the New Testament church.

The truth is that we had many things in the early New Testament church that are not occurring today. We don’t have very many people today like the apostle Paul who could confront some carnal Christian who makes some carnal fantastic expression of his carnality such as Elymas did to Paul, and have that Christian strike that person blind such as Paul did to Elymas. And perhaps you’re glad we don’t. But obviously we don’t have anybody with that kind of power. Nor do we have anybody with Peter’s power to be able to stand and look another believer in the eye, and listen to this believer talk, and say, “You’re lying, and you’re going to drop dead. The fellows that you hear walking in the door right now are coming here to carry you out.” Peter did this to Ananias and Sapphira. And probably most of us would be relieved to know that that’s no longer around.

**Temporary Spiritual Gifts**

So we have many things, obviously, that aren’t the experiences today that were the experiences of the New Testament church. Temporary gifts, as we shall see, were designed to give divine authentication to the establishment of the church, and to the divine revelation before the New Testament Scriptures were written. When they had served this purpose, they ceased.

**Permanent Spiritual Gifts**

Permanent gifts are for the building up of the believers in the local church, and consequently they are to last throughout the church age until the rapture. These are gifts that are given to you, grace gifts, at the point of your salvation. At the point when you were spiritually born again, you inherited certain spiritual capacities, and you will discover that people who seemingly have very little to offer in the way of natural gifts, can be fantastically productive spiritually. Why? They have abilities for spiritual performance that God gives them which they do not have when it comes to natural performance.

We begin with the permanent spiritual gifts:

**The Gift of Evangelism**

1) The gift of evangelism (Ephesians 4:11). In the Greek, this is “euggelistes,” and the word means messenger of good. This is the service of giving out good news about salvation. It deals with truth which has been preciously revealed relative to the gospel. The evangelist is not an originator of information as, for example, was the prophet or the apostle. This is an exceptional ability for reaching the lost on an extensive scale. This is a person who can get up and explain the gospel, unbelievers hear it, and they believe it. There are some people who could stand up before thousands of people, and they could explain the gospel, and they could put it out in very clear and very exact and very doctrinally accurate terms, and yet when the invite people to accept, there is practically no response. Now what’s the difference? God has not given everybody the gift of being able to explain the gospel and getting people to believe it and to respond to it. But there are some believers who have the spiritual knack for getting next to a person and delivering the gospel, and this person says, “I see it.” And he believes it. The content and message of this gift would have to be the gospel. It is not the business of the evangelist to be getting up and preaching about specific sins as a pastor-teacher might.

This gift is exercised in the various localities where the unbelievers are found. For this reason, it is in the nature of an itinerant ministry, a traveling ministry. This is the missionary church planter, the type of work that our missionaries do on a regular basis—going out, speaking the gospel, to a group of unbelievers as Paul did, and the winning a few, bringing them together, planting the church, and setting it in operation. The capacity of the evangelist gift is to explain the gospel basis to have people respond on an extensive scale.

Please do not confuse this with the modern day revivalist who comes into a congregation in order to spark up a bunch of carnal Christians into some kind of spiritual activity. Christians are in that carnal position (in part) because they lack doctrinal instruction from the pastor-teacher who is on the scene. If that pastor-teacher was doing his job, he would not have to bring in a revivalist to try to spur his people on to some kind of Christian activity, service, and devotion. The evangelist is to do his work in that extensive area where there are unbelievers, or where unbelievers are gathered together. It is not the place of the evangelist to be called into the local church to perform his job there. Sometimes an evangelist becomes the pastor of a local church, and that is murder, because he has the gift of delivering the gospel. So Christians sit there listening to the gospel in one form or another. And they shrivel and shrink and get smaller because of the spiritual malnutrition until they’re sniping at one another and fighting one another. Everything is being done in the capacity of the flesh, and the evangelist wonders what he should do. Then he discovers what he should do, and he moves on. This is another sign of non-functioning in the Lord’s work—rotating leadership in the local church.

So this is not the revivalist. This is a call to service, however, which is different to that call which every one of you here this morning has to evangelize the lost. All of us have the duty of evangelizing the lost. 2 Timothy 4:5 and 2 Corinthians 5:20 indicate that we are all ambassadors. Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. Even the past-teacher will be doing the work of an evangelist on occasion as he presents the gospel to unbelievers who may be present in the local assembly. Every Christian, as he moves out in life, has the responsibility of evangelizing the unbelievers, which means to tell him and explain the gospel to him so he has the information on how to be saved and he knows what to do with it. This is something that he has to have in his mentality. That’s why we say there is no difference between head and heart belief. It is the information of your mind that go positive toward and accept relative to the gospel that leads you to eternal life. This business of people talking about believing with the heart really means getting emotional—getting some kind of a feeling or a kick. Maybe you say, “Well, I knew the gospel for years, and I listened to it, and I didn’t believe it.” Well that’s because you didn’t want to believe it. That’s because you were negative. That’s because, perhaps in the providence and election of God, His point of time for your salvation had not arrived. But at the point of salvation, you took the information that you had in your mind, and you said, “Yes” to it. And that’s the only information that you acted upon. And whatever feelings may have stemmed from that decision had nothing to do with your salvation. When the Bible uses the word “heart,” you would do well to think of that in terms of the directive side of the mind—the side of the mind that makes decisions for actions, and that’s where the decision for salvation is made. It’s not made in your empty emotions.

So here’s the gift of evangelist. He gains the lost into the body of Christ, and the pastor-teacher then trains these believers in godly living and in service which produces divine good.

**The Gift of Pastor-Teacher**

Gift number two is the gift of pastor-teacher. We find this in Ephesians 4:11. The Greek indicates that this is a combined gift. In Greek, it is “poimen-kai-didaskalos.” It is a combination gift. The pastor means to shepherd—to lead, provide, and protect the flock. The teacher part means to instruct in the Word of God. This is the only place in the New Testament where this combination gift is mentioned. And the Greek does indicate that it is a combination gift. Elsewhere the gift of teaching is listed alone (“didaskalos”). That means that there are some people who have the gift of teaching who do not have the gift of pastor-teaching (1 Corinthians 12:28). A pastor, as the chief elder in a local church must have this gift of teaching. You cannot be a pastor of a local church, you cannot be the chief elder, the executive head of a local church organization without the gift of teaching. 1 timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9 clearly indicate that the pastor must have the capability for teaching. The pastor-teacher in the local church holds authority as the executive head of that one local church organization. He does not hold authority over other local church organizations as an apostle did.

In Acts 20:28, we read that the elders are to feed, which means to pastor—to shepherd, the flock. And Acts 20:17 indicates that this task is also given to the elders. In other words, the pastor is an elder in the local assembly. In Acts 20:28, Paul says to a group of elders that he has called to meet with him at the church in Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves unto all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to feed (to pastor) the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.” Verse 17 says, “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.” This is the group he’s talking to. We have three terms here: elders, overseers, and pastor. These are all the same people describing various functions of that one position (gift). So the pastor-teacher is an elder in the local church. We have this same idea in 1 Peter 5:1-2. The Holy Spirit appoints a pastor-teacher for direction of a spiritual congregation of the Lord’s church. The Lord leads a congregation to recognize that one man is the executive head of that local organization as pastor-teacher. He administers the local assembly in connection, and in cooperation, with a plurality of elders. The congregation may, by consensus, as by the leading of the Holy Spirit, terminate the authority of the pastor-teacher, and his place as executive head of the church.

The pastor’s job, as such, is to teach Bible doctrine. In this way, he shepherds the flock. Period. The pastor’s job, as pastor, is to teach Bible doctrine, and in this way, he shepherds, he feeds, he protects the flock. Period. There is no other requirement placed upon him. He is not called to visit you. He is not called even to counsel with you. He is not called to play tennis with you nor to drink tea with you—to go to picnics or to water. All of these things, if he is in his right might, he will be happy to do. But, all of these things are extraneous relative to what God says he is to do relative to the congregation. This is often very misunderstood, and a lot of pastors have themselves tied up in a lot of human good production in all of their ministry because they have never learned this divine New Testament principle. They are called to explain Bible doctrine so that God’s people can produce divine good so the body of Christ can be built up. Period. That’s a fantastically burdensome demanding job until you think that it is impossible for you to do it one more time. The pastor may do other things in the local church. However, when he does these he is exercising other spiritual gifts that he may possess. Paul did this very often. He possessed other spiritual gifts. In the course of his ministry, as apostle and as evangelist and as teacher and in exercising the gift of helps, and so on, he would do other things. But he was doing that while exercising other gifts, and a pastor may do the same. The pastor-teacher gift is exercised in the local church when the church is gathered together in a group in worship. The pastor-teacher is not exercised one-on-one. It is exercised as a group so that the believers may exercise the privacy of their priesthood. I will not end this service asking you to turn in a slip of paper telling me how many minutes you spent in prayer, and how many Bible verses you memorized, and how many people you witnessed to this week. That is your business as an individual believer and the exercise of your priesthood. It is not one-one-one.

The ministry of the pastor-teacher is called the pastorate. So there are some people here this morning who have the gift perhaps the gift of evangelist, and others who may have the gift of pastor-teacher.

**The Gift of Exhortation**

Gift number three is the gift of exhortation, found in Romans 12:8. The Greek word is “parakaleo.” This means literally to call to one’s side for aid. As a spiritual gift, it connotes an appeal for aid in order to reach a spiritual goal. It’s an appeal to people to move toward a spiritual goal. This gift always looks to the future in its exercise. It is not relative to some past problem as, for example, the gift of mercy would be. This is always looking toward the future. It may be moving from a past position, but it is always relative to where the people should be going—where you should be moving in the plan of God.

What this means is the ability to make pertinent active application of Bible doctrine principles so that a Christian is moved to the proper action in the Lord’s work that he should be taking. A teacher may teach doctrine. He may have an enthusiastic response from the congregation because they have heard the Word preached. Nevertheless, those same people may have no sense of application or obligation to act upon the truth that they learned. That’s a problem. It is possible to teach the Word in such a way that people do not really see themselves in the Word. They do not really sense the implications of the Word to themselves relative to their future actions. They miss what the values and the goals and the use of their lives should really be. Satan is always seeking to neutralize the Word in the minds of Christians. This is why we say the devil is not against Bible study groups. He is just against those groups which motivate Christians to fruitful action in the Lord’s work. That’s what Satan is against. He doesn’t mind you meeting in your sweet little Bible classes with your little ladies’ group where you share your mutual problems and distresses about your no-good husbands often, and you pray for one another, and you share your cookies and tea. He doesn’t care about that at all. Beautiful! He helps you work out the lessons, as a matter of fact, and keep it interesting so that the ladies keep coming back. But when you start exhorting so that people see themselves in the Word that you’re dealing with, then he says, “That’s all, friend.” Then he starts spoiling, which is his pattern.

The local congregation needs people with this spiritual ability to strip believers of the old sin nature’s fronts, delusions, emotional domination, and complacency. This gift is exercised by encouraging people, by appealing the members, by rebuking the believers, by clarification of values and goals in view of Scripture. This gift, I can guarantee you, is one that is highly resented by negative believers, but it is humbly welcomed by those who are positive. Those who are negative seek to squelch this gift more than any other gift in its expression in a local assembly, because people find it embarrassing, and they have a tendency to view it as a personal affront and attack upon themselves. The gift of exhortation is an essential gift for the ministry to maintain clarity of genuine goals in its work for the Lord. Any congregation which lacks that gift is in trouble because the preaching of the Word is not enough. It needs somebody who’s got the knack to put us downwind of ourselves and to strip us of all the delusions and fronts that we put on, and to see ourselves in the mirror of the Word of God. This is a very precious gift, and it may be yours.

**The Gift of Ministry**

Number four is the gift of ministering. We have it in Romans 12:7 and in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This refers to services of a general nature performed in the local church. I have a feeling that we have good reason to think that every believer possesses the gift of ministering. In Romans 12:7, we have the word ministry, which in the Greek is “diakonia.” This word means simply a service that is performed. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, we have this same gift referred to. We have the word of helps which in the Greek is “antilepsis.” This word means “laying hold of so as to give support.” You lay hold of something so as to provide support. Both of the words give a very insightful understanding to what the gift of ministering is all about. It is a practical service which a Christian in the local congregation takes hold of in order to support the ministry of the Word. There is no end of variety to this gift in its expression. This gift implies being a help to the local congregation, often in ministries which are unseen, unnoticed, unmentioned, and yet which contribute to the welfare of God’s people. And the more Christians cop out on this gift, the less can be accomplished through the leadership gifts of that local church. I think that this gift probably incorporates your natural abilities. I think that this is the point at which God the Holy Spirit sanctifies your natural capacities and brings them under a directive control, so that they are spiritually production. I do not think that people get up in church and sing solos so that the congregation is blessed without God the Holy Spirit exercising a spiritual gift of some sort through that believer. I don’t think that a man does carpentry work on the church building, or a lady washes the windows, and all of the productive blessing that comes from that, without God the Holy Spirit having exercised a spiritual gift through the person in the process of that practical ministry. I think that here is where your natural abilities are sanctified and used by God the Holy Spirit, under this gift. That’s why there is no end to the variations of this gift.

It is an essential service to be performed, however, in consultation with the pastor, with your leader, for coordination of effort, and maximum benefit, and in order to avoid hindering the work of the church. Every now and then somebody genuinely with the gift of ministering comes charging in to do something when it’s only a hindrance to the work because they didn’t consult with the leadership to see what needed to be done. Somebody comes charging in and says, “Oh, this room looks terrible. We should paint this room.” So they paint it. But had they consulted with the leadership, the leadership would say, “Great, we’re glad you’re exercising your gift of ministry, but first we’re going to fix the cracks and get rid of the termites.” Otherwise you have termites all over the wall, preserved forever.

Or we have somebody who says, “We need a piece of equipment.” And they charge out and they take their money and they buy this piece of equipment. And they bring it in. And I’ve had this happen so often. I usually don’t say much about it and let it go. But often it’s something that we had three times over. They just didn’t know where to find it in the supply room. Maybe nobody else knew where to find it either, for that matter, but they charged out to do something.

You can use the gift of ministering as a rat hole operation, to no avail, if you do not have the spirit of consulting and coordinating with your leadership, who alone is generally in a position of having the overall view of the work… And you can exercise the gift of ministering when you know where things are going and how your gift can fit into the slot where it then it would do maximum good production, and that’s the way it should be. This is a very valuable gift, and probably everybody here has it. Your problem is to find it and get with it.

**The Gift of Administration**

Number five is administration (Romans 12:8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28). This is the ability to provide leadership for special activities, special segments of the work in the local church. Romans 12:8 uses the word “rule,” or “lead.” In the Greek, it’s “proistemi.” This means literally to stand before, or to stand in front of, which or course is what the leader does. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, you also have this gift referred to by the word “government.” In the Greek, it’s “kuberno.” This means “to guide.” It’s from a verb which means “to steer,” like a man who guides a boat would steer the boat. This connotes somebody who stands up there and steers the operation.

I want to warn you that this is not necessarily the smartest Christian. It is not necessarily the most naturally talented leader in your group. It is not the most aggressive believer that has the gift of leadership when it comes to spiritual things, although we tend to think this. When we want a local leader, we find someone who does a beautiful job of leadership out there in the world. So we identify them as a leader and we put him in charge of a segment of the Lord’s work, and the success out in the world comes into the Lord’s work, and he’s a bomb because he does not possess the gift of spiritual leadership. Don’t make that mistake. It is, again, the sovereign selection of the Holy Spirit. Someone who may be an unimposing figure out there in the ordinary channels of life may be a tremendous guide who knows how to steer the boat when it comes to the Lord’s work.

This requires, of course, a divine ability to think and to act objectively under the pressures of conflicting views and desires of the members of the congregation, that are all directed toward the leader. He has to lead according to divine viewpoint even when he’s accused of not doing so. The person with this gift is able to create a sense of confidence among spiritual believers as to the direction of the Lord’s will. This gift, of course, is held by only a few people in the assembly; that is, the chiefs—not by all of the Indians. This gift is to be honored by a positive response to the leadership which it provides. Hebrews 13:7 says, “Obey your leaders (in the local assembly).” It is to be honored. You may not always agree with your leaders and you may not always agree with the direction they are moving. But you treat them with respectful obedience while they’re in that position of authority, because God will correct. In time, if the direction is wrong, He will revise it.

We are also told that this gift is to be exercised with diligence. The word is “spoudade.” This means to hasten to do something. It means hasten to do a thing, and thus it connotes the idea of exerting yourself—putting yourself out with zeal. If you are a spiritual leader in the local church, you will have about you a sense of urgency and a sense of zeal and a sense of putting yourself out. People will not be standing around waiting for you to move. Nothing is so devastating to a local assembly as leaders who are forever planning and never jumping off in the operation. Months can go by while leaders are planning to tackle a problem or to enter into a phase of ministry. They plan and they plan and the plan. That’s a sure sign that you have somebody who doesn’t have this gift, because anybody with this gift is going to do it with urgency, and he’s going to get with it.

A good talker does not indicate a good spiritual leader, so let’s get over that idea. You good talkers who have been parading around as something special as spiritual leaders may not be that at all. The Bible says, “By their works, you shall know them,” not by their plans.

In 1 Timothy 5:17, this gift is related to elders in the local church because there are some elders who do no labor in teaching the Word as a pastor-teach does, but who do labor in administration and leadership. So, elders would be necessity require this gift. You should not be an elder if you do not have the gift of administration.

**The Gift of Giving**

Number six is the gift of giving (Romans 12:8). The word is “metadidomi.” This word means to give a share of. It refers to the temporal goods possessed by the Christian. This is not a reference to the duty of every believer, rich or not, to contribute financially to the support of the conduct of the local ministry. Every Christian is supposed to put something in the offering box, rich or not. You notice I didn’t use the word “poor.” It’s kind of hard to find poor people today. It’s not supposed to find people who are not rich. But everybody is supposed to contribute to the Lord’s work. This does not refer to that. 2 Corinthians 9:7 refers to that general responsibility of giving.

This gift is the special capacity to be entrusted with financial resources—large financial resources, and to supply large sums of money to the conduct of the Lord’s work. We have many Christians who have large temporal resources, but they’re unable to part with it. If they had the gift of giving they would be able to part with it very readily. They part with some of what they give, and maybe a large part of what they give, but they don’t really part with much in comparison to what they keep. And that’s how the Lord views it as per the story of the widow’s mite.

Some contribute liberally, but they contribute to causes that are of little spiritual value, and they may even be constructive to the Lord’s work. This gift enables a person to give apart from any thought of some return of personal gain or credit that he may accrue. It is to be exercised with liberality. Romans 12:8 says, “Practice this gift with liberality.” This word In the Greek is “aplotes.” It means simplicity, frankness, openness. It means to exercise this gift with an openness. It connotes not squelching the gift that God has given you. It means not sitting and planning someday to use the gift. It means not sitting around building bigger barns, and after you get them built, then you’re going to start stripping yourself of your excess holdings.

Obviously, it doesn’t do any good to encourage Christians to be liberal if they’ve got it with God’s work. We need to be liberal today, and now, for this is the day salvation, this is the day of opportunity. It doesn’t do any good to be telling Christians to do this. Unless they’ve got the gift of giving, they simply will not be able to part with their possessions. I don’t care how much they have. They will not be able to part with what they possess. They will forever be preparing for their old age. They will forever be preparing for their retirement. They will forever be preparing places that they can eventually go to, and things they can eventually do, but they will not realize the eternal returns of their possessions.

Every now and then somebody comes and says, “Let’s have a good sermon about giving and stewardship because the offerings need to be increased.” I’m not so naive to think that messages like that will move spectacular support for the Lord’s work from people among us who are capable of doing that, because it takes this gift of giving to do it. There is no way around that.

This gift is vital to the extended functioning of the local church ministry, and you can readily see why this is one that Satan really wants to stifle.

**The Gift of Mercy**

Next is the gift of showing mercy (Romans 12:8). The Greek word is “eleeo.” This words the ability to enter sympathetically into the misery of another so as to take appropriate action. It connotes the fact of need on the part of the object of mercy. It indicates resources on the part of the Christian who has this gift to meet that need. This is a service which is directed primarily, it seems, toward the sick and afflicted. It is the capacity to enter into another’s situation and to be a comfort to a person. This is more than human kindness to a person in distress. Many people try to comfort even with Scripture verses. When somebody is sick, they visit them in the hospital and they try to comfort them with Scripture verses, and they sound inane. It doesn’t really take words to receive comfort from somebody who has this gift. Not all are spiritually gifted to visit the sick, and some are a downright disaster.

This gift is therefore exercised in a climate of cheerfulness, no matter what the context of the burden may be. The word cheerfulness is “hilarotes.” It connotes a readiness of mind. It comes from the same word “propitious,” where God is satisfied toward us. This is a mind that is satisfied and ready to do what needs to be done, and to do it promptly, and you welcome (it). Some of you have the ability of really showing mercy to people who are afflicted, and you do an excellent job of it. There are other people who are not too good at this. They may show kindness on a human level, but they don’t have this which raises and buoys up the spirit of a person in this situation.

**The Gift of Teaching**

Number (eight) is the gift of teaching (Romans 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:28). The word is “didasko,” and it means to give information to hearers so they understand clearly what the person is giving them—what he is trying to explain. This is the most important gift in the church age (1 Corinthians 12:28). For this individual believer, this is the most valuable gift, for this is the means by which one receives Bible doctrine. This does not mean that the one who possesses this gift is more important than other believers. It is not the same as the pastor-teacher in Ephesians 4:11, although it’s part of it. Many Christians, no doubt, can (talk) very well, but they do not have the knack for explaining (spiritual things) in a way that others understand. If you do not, you should not try to be a Sunday School teacher.

The teaching gift does not imply a superior knowledge, necessarily. Although, a teacher must learn doctrine through the grace system of perception, so that he can have something to teach. Some people have the gift of teaching, and they stand up and they teach their ignorance. This is not how God meant for this gift to be used. You may have a natural gift of being a teacher, but that does not mean you have the gift of teaching spiritual things. Many Christians possess this gift, but little knowledge with which to use it. So a gift takes a convert from his human viewpoint ignorance at salvation to divine viewpoint ultimately.

**The Gift of Faith**

The final gift we will discuss is the gift of faith (1 Corinthians 12:8). In the Greek, it is “pistis,” and it means a firm persuasion. This is a conviction which is based upon hearing doctrine. This is more than faith with which one believes in God unto salvation. This is the ability to trust God for some fantastically large and unusual need. This is the person who moves out when everybody else is saying, “We can’t afford it. How are we going to do it? We shouldn’t try this.” This is the gift when somebody raises up and says, “Now listen, I believe that God wants us to do this. You might even press me to defend this, and I can’t defend it. But this is my conviction that this is what the Lord wants us to do, and I think we should do it without necessarily seeing the ways by which this can be accomplished.

And we move out. How many times this gift has been exercised in this assembly. People who had the gift of faith who stood up and swayed congregations of people. I have seen business meetings in this church where I was confident the vote was going to go negative on some action, only to see someone stand up and say a few words, and I was astounded to see everybody swing and follow the right direction. They were about to make the wrong move and they made the right move because somebody with the gift of faith stood up and exercised his gift in the assembly.

The gift of faith connotes a firm conviction of unshakeable proportions in the truth of God’s promises and doctrines—a complete and irrevocable surrender to God’s care. It connotes a line of action inspired by this gift, apart from the evidences of the senses and the reasons.

So here are nine spiritual gifts. There may be others. These may be general categories that include others. But these are nine specific gifts, and probably these are the areas in which you should seek to function. These are in all likelihood what represent the basic areas that God the Holy Spirit has given you capacity for service.

John E. Danish, 1971