



“Let’s Value the Varied Gifts”
I Corinthians 12:1-11; 27-31
July 18, 2021

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³and God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-4)

So there at the dawn of creation as is revealed to us in the first sentences of the Bible, we are introduced to the Living God. We are introduced to the Lord; to the Creator; to the God of all creation; to God the Three In One. Has it ever occurred to you that the first person of the Trinity we are introduced to in Scripture is not the Father, not the Son, but the Holy Spirit?

There the Holy Spirit was at the dawn of creation. There He was brooding over the surface of the deep with all of His life-giving presence and power. Every time the voice of God spoke, that power was released into all that God was creating.

So we read in those early pages of Genesis that as each day of creation unfolded, we see that the creative genius of the Living God was released into existence. Very early on there was the stellar realm, with sun and moon and stars, created by the power of God.

Then there was the planet earth with its oceans and with its various terrain, all created by the wisdom and the power of God. There within the oceans and skies and their covering the landscape, you have all of the creatures the Living God made and spoke into existence, including my favorite, the dolphins!

And including the owl, the Kingfisher, the elephant, the lion. The awesome Living God designed and created all of this by His power. God’s creative design was released all over the earth. Cats and dogs, and all the animal kingdom is wonderful. We see these and must say that our God is an awesome God in all that He has made.

What I want to help us to appreciate at Bethel Grace is that the same Lord of all creation is also the God of the new creation. The same Spirit that was present with His power at the creation of the world is present with His power in His new creation, the people of God. The redeemed. Those wakened up from death to life. Death to sin. Alive in the Messiah.

He creates His people and there are so many nuances of personality that He creates and there is such a diversity of gifts and supernatural empowerment that God is manifesting all throughout the body of Christ. He has created us and He has designed a whole array of abilities for the church of God to serve and advance the cause of Christ on this earth.

This morning we move from the dawn of creation to the city of Corinth all the way to Southern California. I want for us to appreciate the varied gifts of the Holy Spirit. Let's value the varied spiritual gifts that are at work, even among us here at Bethel Grace.

Let's take a look at what the Lord has for us as we continue what we started last week in I Corinthians Chapter 12. We will pick up in Verse 4:

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.

Then in Verses 12 through 26, Paul gave his famous body metaphor of the local church. He had some fun doing so, helping the church to understand that not everybody has the same gift. If everybody were an eyeball, where would the body be, after all?

Then at the end of the chapter, Paul picked up again and reiterated the point of diversity in gifting that he had been making all along in Verses 27 through 31:

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And 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. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Then Paul went into a chapter describing the love with which the Spirit is going to empower us to utilize the gifts that we have been giving for the good of the body of Christ to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Here in the verses that we have read, we have this whole catalog of spiritual gifts that Paul put out as a sampling of the different ways that the people of God who are born again in Christ are going to be gifted with by the power of the Holy Spirit for the common good.

As we prepare ourselves to dig in here, let me remind you that what we have in this text is a corrective passage of Scripture. The church of Corinth was a diversely gifted group of believers but as we mentioned last week, it seems that they were becoming fixated on the gift of speaking in tongues, so that those who were given that gift by the Holy Spirit were kind of becoming the limelight of the church.

They were getting the most attention. Other people were saying why am I not gifted like that. It even seems like there was a logjam of people trying to speak in tongues at the church gatherings. It really became a chaotic situation, where one manifestation of the Spirit was being favored above the other manifestations of the Spirit.

So Paul was saying, We need to just go back and start at square one and help the church of God to recognize and appreciate the whole array of different ways the Spirit is prompting and empowering and enabling different people to serve the cause of Christ in and through the local church.

Brothers and sisters, this is just a reminder for us of how the lingering sin in the people of God can get things twisted up, even as we are seeking to serve the Lord in Jesus Name. The very entryway into the body of Christ is when we realize that God is holy, holy, holy in every way and that each and every one of us has transgressed the Law of the Lord.

We are all sinners and we have all come under the judgment of God and have all come under the righteous wrath of God for sinful rebellion but, praise God, by the Spirit we are able to see His holiness and the cleansing and the forgiveness and the newness of life that comes through the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That is how we come to be joined together in the body of Christ. But we must recognize this ongoing, lingering sin in us that can make it so that things can get all twisted up in the body of Christ.

So we keep going back to the Lord for more grace; for more grace to see that our tendency to be envious of other people and their gifts will disrupt things. Or how our tendency to be arrogant and look down upon other people will twist things up and cause problems in the body of Christ.

We need to approach God for clear sight and we need for Him to carry us by His grace to give us a vision for how He is working all throughout the body of Christ, so that we will appreciate how He has gifted us and how He has gifted other people as well.

Brothers and sisters, this morning it is my prayer that we will truly value the varied gifts of God as the Spirit is moving among us. I pray that we will value these gifts first of all as we seek to understand what they are. I pray that we will value the gifts with God's help not only by understanding the meaning of them, but also by discerning what God is doing in us.

I pray that we value the gifts in such a way that not only do we discern how God has blessed us in this way, but we will actually be active. Then He is going to continue to help us value the gifts by helping us to appreciate the fact that God is gifting other people in other ways that we need for our growth in the Lord.

So here in this text in I Corinthians Chapter 12, we have all of these gifts listed. I understand that they are a sampling of the gifts. I think that there are more. Like we mentioned last week, there are four portions of Scripture where the spiritual gifts are taught. 12-12 and 4-4. I Corinthians Chapter 12 and Romans Chapter 12. Ephesians Chapter 4 and I Peter Chapter 4.

It is especially in I Corinthians Chapter 12 and Romans Chapter 12 that all of these different lists are given. The other passages teach in them in more general terms. We need to be active where God is gifting people and we need to be able to nurture the gifts that are given. But the most extensive lists of these manifestations are in the two 12 passages.

None of the gifts are identical and because of this I just get the sense that as Paul was speaking, the lists were not necessarily exhaustive. So we are going to go through and look at the ones that are listed here. Then at the end, I am going to suggest an additional two areas of gifting that, based on other portions of Scripture and what we see in the body of Christ, are active as well.

Now I want for us to move through this list of gifts. I have for you this morning a fourteen point sermon! There is an insert in your bulletin with a list of these points. As we go through these, I want you to listen and, thinking about the Spirit of God and His work upon your life, think about how you might be empowered by God to serve.

Then by each point, but a yes or a no or a maybe. You don't need to take extensive notes here. You can go back and listen to the sermon again. I don't want you to be writing notes on the previous point, I want you to be following here.

By the way, next week you can go and read the actual sermon transcripts thanks to our sister LaVerne who is using her gifts to transcribe sermons. They are there with the audio of the sermon. So understand that if you want to go back you can read what is there.

But just listen. Savor this. Take this in and let's seek to discern and by God's grace, truly value all of these different ways that God is at work. We are trying to get a basic understanding of the different ways that you and your brothers and sisters are being gifted.

A sampling of the spiritual gifts:

1. The utterance of wisdom (I Cor. 12:8)

Let us recall and rejoice that the Holy Spirit is the One who is unsearchable with wisdom and understanding. The utterance of wisdom is the ability that He gives some of His people to bring a heightened sense of clarity to hard and difficult situations.

Gifted with this, you will encounter complexity and you will have the ability to articulate solutions and help craft a path forward. There is wisdom, and it gets very, very practical out of the outflow of what Scripture has to teach.

This gift of wisdom is often manifested in those who have counseling abilities, either in a formal or an informal setting. This gift has proven so very valuable in the lives of the rest of us who serve on leadership teams, moving through the complexity of the days that we live in.

There is the utterance of wisdom. It is not only the ability to see a path in the midst of the complexity but also to help people move upon it. Next we see:

2. The utterance of knowledge (I Cor. 12:8)

The utterance of knowledge is to have the penetrating understanding of the breadth and the depth of revealed truth, even the more challenging mysteries of the faith.

My understanding of this gift is that if you are empowered with it, you will have a marked level of theological understanding that is based on patient, focused, Spirit-empowered, deep contemplation of Scripture, and those who have written deeply about Scripture.

Keep in mind, not only is this the experience of such knowledge, but it is the utterance of knowledge. You are going to have the ability to help communicate these things to the body of Christ as a whole. This is the utterance of knowledge.

Then comes the gift of:

3. Faith (I Cor. 12:9)

The gift of faith is not to be equated with the saving faith that all believers are given as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Rather, this is a Spirit-enabled confidence about how God works and is present and active even in the midst of the most difficult of times.

Even many in the body of Christ will come across some situations and say well I guess it is all over and it is a lost cause. They might say that that marriage does not have any hope. That church has no hope of being revived.

Then the person who has the gift of faith will say, Oh, no! No, God can do that totally. Don't you lose your confidence in what God can do. Maybe if there is a song that is kind of a theme song for this gift, I am tempted to say it would be comparable to the theme song of Rocky Balboa.

Those with the gift of faith will say that God will make a way where there seems to be no way. This gift of faith is the confidence in the faithfulness of the Lord to His people. Now we are going to come to the gifts of:

4. Healing and miracles (I Cor. 12: 9, 10)

We are taking the gifts of healing and miracles together because so many biblical miracles are healings and healings are something of a subcategory of miracles.

When we think about what is and is not happening in our day in terms of miracles and healings, let us remember that the Holy Spirit is sovereign and He is free and powerful, and the Holy Spirit can do whatever He wants, wherever He wants, in whomever He wants.

The Holy Spirit is all powerful and He reigns. So the Spirit is free to release any miracle wherever He wants and whenever He wants. That being the case, we must look through biblical history and see how He has actually chosen to manifest His power.

It becomes evident as we look through biblical history that the Holy Spirit has chosen to perform stunning miracles in clusters at punctuated points in redemptive history. It would seem that He has done so to indicate a new era in God's ongoing covenant with His people.

For example, there was this flurry of miracles that were at work during the time of Moses and Joshua at the Exodus and at Sinai, where there was the giving of the Law and the people were moving into the Promised Land.

Then we read that there was another flurry of miracles that took place at the times of Elijah and Elisha, when the illustrious prophets of Israel were coming in with their increasing momentum of ministry. Then the greatest burst of miracles obviously took place when the Messiah came into the world.

The Holy Spirit was empowering the Messiah's apostles, not only to follow Jesus in the ministry but to write Scripture and to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom in that initial way. So we see that these miracles and healings have come in clusters to indicate and authenticate new eras in redemptive history.

Paul was writing to the New Testament church in the midst of one of those moments in history. Today we are not at the onset of the age of Gospel grace, with Christ having already come into the world, nailed to the cross, and risen from the grave.

We are in the midst of it so we just recognize that we don't see the same kind of miracles happening in our day that were so powerfully happening in New Testament and even Old Testament times.

We don't see people calling down columns of fire from heaven. We don't see people feeding massive multitudes from meager rations of food. We don't see somebody touching the eyes of a person blind from birth and them having sight restored.

At least we don't see that very commonly with the same kind of concentration that happened in certain points in biblical history. So these were sign gifts, indicating these movements of God leading forth into the continued movement of God. But these were initial gifts in these different eras of redemptive history.

Now before those of you with the gift of faith wonder what I am talking about. Brothers and sisters, our God is an awesome God. He is more than able to perform miracles at any moment.

He can intervene and there is such a thing as divine intervention. God is imminent and He hears and He answers prayer.

So if there is a sickness and we are longing for healing from the Lord, we can call upon Him for that healing. There are times when God provides it. But it seems to me that most of the time, God works in His people in another way.

Understand that God is present and what He does is He gives you endurance in the midst of it. He shapes Christlikeness in you. He is forming and shining the Messiah through you in the midst of the frailty of the human body. This has a glory of its own.

So if you have a disease and it does not get healed, if you have a cancer and it does not get cured, don't think that means that God is not present and powerful. He is very much present. He is very powerful. He is with you. He is shining His glory through you in ways that are wonderful as Christ in you is being developed and formed, as you are carried along by the power of the Spirit.

So those are some thoughts about the gifts of healing and miracles. As we continue we see the gift of:

5. Prophecy (I Cor. 12:10; Romans 12:6)

Prophecy takes place when a child of God is carried along by the Spirit of God to speak the truth of God, aligning the people of God with the will of God. This is a spoken gift, proclaiming the truth of God.

There is tendency for us to see the word prophecy and think of it in terms of predictive prophecy or foretelling, but even in the specially anointed prophets in the pages of Scripture, while there was some element of predictive prophecy in their writings, most of their writings contained not as much foretelling but forthtelling.

This is speaking the will of God to people for their lives right then and there. So the prophets of the Old Testament were pulling the people of God, urging them back to obedience to the Law of Moses. That was their calling and that is what they were called by God to do.

In the New Testament, those who were given this anointing of prophetic speech to the people of God, they kept pulling people back into the grace of the Lord as the Spirit spoke to them to have their lives continually realigned with the revealed will of the Lord. So with the gift of prophetic speaking, there is an element of confrontation that is very, very frequent. There is sin here and, by God's grace, we need to get back into the will of the Lord.

Even with that, however, while there is the call to repentance that is so ongoing and frequent, there is consolation that comes in knowing that God has grace for His people and He is going to always be forgiving us for our ongoing stumbling into sin and that He has power to keep renewing us into the image of Christ.

This is the gift of prophecy. We continue and see the gift of the:

6. Discernment between spirits (I Cor. 12:10)

This is the God-given ability to discern between the power of the Holy Spirit and some counterfeit power from the demonic realm. People with the gift of discernment, they are like the warning lights of the church. Kind of like the lights that come on the dashboard when there is a problem in the working of the engine.

If you have the gift of discernment, you will have warning signals going off in your heart when there is something false that seems to be having an influence among the body of Christ; when there is somebody who is coming intent on harm

The demonic reality is a reality and there are some gifted with this special discernment of the manipulation of the people of God and the things of God. This is something that the Spirit of God empowers among the church.

This is the gift of discernment. Next comes the gift of:

7. Speaking in tongues and/or interpretation (I Cor. 12:10)

This is important for us to take to heart. This gift refers to the filling of the Spirit to praise God in a foreign language. Then as far as interpretation goes, it is the power of the Holy Spirit to understand what has been spoken in that foreign language.

This is mentioned here in I Corinthians Chapter 12. The nature of it comes to us in greater detail in Acts Chapter 2 and in I Corinthians Chapter 14. If you want to dig in, read about what was clearly happening at the dawn of the church in the pages of the New Testament.

What we discern both from Acts Chapter 2 and from what it says in I Corinthians Chapter 14 and Verses 10 and 11, the word used for tongue is actually *languages*. These were actual languages of people. They were languages of the earth.

The Holy Spirit was empowering this ability to be articulate in a language that had not been studied before, or to be able to interpret a language without it having been studied before. That is a pretty stunning thing and would seem to me to be among the sign gifts, the miracles that we just spoke about a few moments ago.

As you dig into the detail of Scripture, you will find that this was the Spirit of God giving people this ability. On the one hand it seems that it was a judgment upon Israel who was rejecting Christ. However, then it was also an indication of the Spirit's intention to spread the Gospel all across the globe, to all tongues and tribes and nations. It was a very, very miraculous gift.

Now I believe in the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit to manifest whatever gift He wants, whenever He wants, wherever He wants, with whomever He wants. My understanding as far as what seems normative is that this was something that was very active there in the early church age.

Because of the reasons I just mentioned to you in the freedom of the Spirit, I remain open to the possibility of the ongoing nature of this gift, but I am very cautious about it. If I am being totally honest with you, in many cases I am doubtful about much of what is purported to be speaking in tongues, because it doesn't seem to line up with what we see revealed in Scripture. That is my humble opinion.

What I will say is to beware of anybody who says that speaking in tongues is an ongoing sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There are some churches, even some evangelical churches, who say that this gift is ongoing to such a degree that if you are not manifesting this gift of tongues, you are not experiencing the fullness and, what they would call, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

That, brothers and sisters, goes against the very nature of what is taught in I Corinthians Chapter 12 where Paul asked do all speak in tongues, which is an implication of no! So I think this is best understood as one of the miraculous sign gifts that accompanied the coming of the Messiah and the Gospel of the Kingdom in Christ as it was proclaimed through the apostles.

I remain a bit open, but cautious about this gift. I hope that gives enough clarity as far as where I am with the gift of tongues. Continuing to a gift that I am more comfortable with:

8. Teaching (I Cor. 12:28; Romans 12:7)

Teaching is the Spirit-empowered ability to communicate biblical truth in a clear and articulate way. If you are being gifted with the ability to teach, He is going to give you the heightened sense of the ability to see all of what is given to us by God in Scripture.

You will see the portions of the Bible that are historic narrative. You will see the prophetic portions of Scripture. You will see the portions of Scripture that are of poetic devotion to the Lord. You will see wisdom literature. You will see the precious Gospel accounts of the coming of the Messiah. You will see the doctrinal portions of the New Testament in the letters that were written through the apostles.

You will read all of these things and like other Christians the Holy Spirit will help you to understand, but you will also have the sense that you have to communicate these things to other people. When the Spirit is giving you teaching gifts, at least in my experience, in my personal devotional reading I am outlining passages of Scripture.

With the gift of teaching there is the desire to communicate the truths of the Bible with as much clarity as possible. That is what teaching is all about. We continue and come to:

9. Helping/service (I Cor. 12:28, Romans 12:7)

These two may very well be the same gift. I Corinthians 12 names helping, then Romans Chapter 12 names serving. Some have suggested that there might be a slight distinction between the two, with service being something that is experienced more in terms of group endeavors and helping having to do with particular individual need.

I think that is an interesting suggestion. That may or may not be the case. It could be that service is manifested toward groups and individuals and the same with helps. So we should not try to split hairs here.

People with this gift may have as their motto in life: see a need, meet a need. All Christians are to humbly serve, but those with the gift of service see how Jesus humbled Himself and washed feet, and something gets activated in them to do whatever is necessary. And that same humility needs to characterize all of us.

Those with the gift of helps are like don't ask me to coordinate something or lead something or to come up with a new effort, but just tell me what needs to be done and I am your person. Helping and serving is a precious gift through the body of Christ.

There was a woman in the book of Acts named Dorcas and she was somebody who had the gift of serving. She died and when she died, the impression you get is that the people felt like everything was going to collapse, so she was raised to life again by a miraculous working through an apostle.

The gift of serving is vital! We continue and I am taking the next two gifts together because I think they are such a precious tandem of gifts.

10. Administration (I Cor. 12:28)

11. Leadership (Romans 12:8)

How wonderful to think that the Spirit is present and active. The Spirit of God empowers things like this, even among us. I pray that there is an ongoing sense of the reality of this as we continue through this survey.

If you are empowered with the gift of leadership, the Spirit of God is going to be giving a clear vision of an endeavor that needs to happen for the sake of the mission of the church and for the sake of the building up of a particular area of church life.

You see this destination for the greater good and health and building up of the people of God, and you can see how the life of the church can be enhanced and you must get people there. You see the destination and God gives you the ability to communicate it to people in such a compelling way that the troops are rallied, and they are ready to go with you there. This is leadership in the church.

The thing about the leader is that they become so driven with the destination that they want to get the church to, that they are willing to pass through dry and thorny wilderness terrain to get there. Then the administrator comes alongside the leader and says I see the vision. Let me help you

pave some roads to get the people there. Let's design a roadmap so that everybody is with us and knows how we are going to get there, so that nobody is lost along the way and we arrive in the most efficient way possible. They administrate.

Sometimes you have these gifts that are being empowered in the same person. So not only do they see an effort but they also know how to coordinate the effort. But often the leader and the administrator come together as dynamic duo.

Understand that these gifts can be manifested for the church for the glory of God at different levels. It can be just for the overall structure and mission of the church at the big picture level. It could be for particular ministries and it can even be for particular events and endeavors. So there are multiple levels in which these things come across.

This is the gifts of leadership and administration. We continue and see the gift of:

12. Exhortation (Romans 12:8)

Some of you will have the eyes to see those who are struggling; those who are experiencing challenges; those who have heavy hearts. The reason that you will have the ability to see these things either in groups of people or particular individuals is because the Holy Spirit sees these things.

The Holy Spirit is the Lord. He is El Roi. And He has eyes to see. This gift of exhortation is so precious. The Greek word is parakaleo. It is one of my favorite Greek words. It means to call alongside. It could be that you are calling somebody to come along side, or you are being called to come along side somebody else.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit Himself is called the paraclete, the One who comes and imparts support in life, so that it is the exact opposite of a parasite, something that drains life out. The paraclete comes and imparts life.

The person gifted with exhortation comes alongside the struggle and says they are going to help you. Sometimes this word parakaleo is translated to exhort, so sometimes it is strong. Here is the direction we need to get you on.

Sometimes parakaleo is translated encourage. Other times it is translated to comfort and console. There is this beautiful sense in which it sees needs in people's lives and it is going to come and help. It is comparable to a counseling gift like we talked about with the word of wisdom.

We continue and see the gifts of:

13. Contributing/generosity (Romans 12:8)

With these gifts, you have the ability to see needy people and worthy causes. You have the ability to recognize worthwhile ministries that honor God. The Spirit is doing this in you. You will just have the ability of how to garner resources in support of these different endeavors.

It is often going to come out of your own personal contributions. In addition to that, those with this gift, they will have the abilities to rally other people to give as well. These are the people that are the precious brothers and sisters saying we need a bake sale. We need to have a fund raiser.

Sometimes I wonder if there is a connection between the two words generous and generate, because there is the ability to not only give, but also to direct resources to needy people and ministries in need.

This is the gift of generosity. Then comes the gift of:

14. Mercy (Romans 12:8)

With mercy, the Holy Spirit is going to be burdening and stirring your heart with and for people who are suffering; people who are sick; people who are in rest homes; people who are homeless; people who are in grief.

With the gift of mercy, there is such a heart of compassion for people that you will even be stirred with sympathy for people who are experiencing a whole world of trouble because of their folly and sin. Yes, they blew it, and whether or not that person even confesses the fact that they blew it, you have the sense of compassion for what they are going through.

Mercy is something that the Spirit is gifting very powerfully in a number of the people in this church. We are all to be merciful, but there are some people who have a heightened sense of it by the design of the Spirit of the Living God.

In most cases when a person shows mercy, they go in with cheer. They are not going to enter into a place where the person is sick and bring storm clouds with them. If mercy, doing it with cheer, says the book of Romans. You are not going to come in and be flippant, but you are going to bring some light and some sunshine, some joy in the Lord that is appropriate for the situation.

This is a sampling of the spiritual gifts from all the different lists that we see in the New Testament. Now there are two more, so, alas, it is a sixteen point sermon! There are two areas of activity in the church where I absolutely believe the Spirit is empowering them.

One is the:

15. Music worship (Eph. 5:18-20)

Musical worship. Some of you have the abilities with melodies and with the doctrines of the Lord taught in Scripture. There is ability to put them together in music. There is the ability for some to write songs.

Others have the ability to go before gathered groups and put their attention solely on the Lord with music. There is the sense in which even melodies played on instruments without singing can minister to the hearts of God's people.

So, yes, the Spirit of God is absolutely at work in the ministry of music, even if it is not specifically listed in one of the gift lists that we have been going through. It is a wonderful gift and we appreciate God for the way He has gifted people with this.

In addition to that:

16. Artistry/craftsmanship (Exodus 31:1-11)

Artistry and craftsmanship are those of you who are gifted with design and working with wood in construction or painting and things like this. You who have this gift will love two men in the pages of Scripture.

You will specifically love how the Spirit was working through them—Oholiab and Bezalel. Do you remember them? It says specifically in Exodus Chapter 31 that they were filled with the Spirit for artistry and craftsmanship. It is a beautiful, beautiful gift.

There are times when I look at paintings that have been brought from the stroke of the brush of a brother or a sister in Christ, and my hearts gets stirred with appreciation. These gifts are at work as well.

What we must appreciate is that there is a whole kaleidoscope of gifts that the Holy Spirit is empowering in the local church. This is what it says in I Corinthians Chapter 12 and Verses 4 through 7:

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.

Each person born again in Christ is given a manifestation. Not just the staff. Not just the leaders. Not just the elders. Not just the deacons and deaconesses. Everyone in the church who is born again and has the Spirit is given an ability or two to support the cause of Christ and to add to the life and the health of the church.

In view of this, let me run through these ending applications.

When the Spirit is filling our church:

1. We will be humble.

We are going to be humble. Keep in mind there were things happening that triggered Paul to write all of this in the first place. And here is one of the cautions that come up from this portion of Scripture.

There might be a tendency in you because you are gifted in one way, to question why everybody else is isn't as passionate as you are in the particular area that you are gifted in. There is the sense in which Christian character encompasses so much of this.

There might be a tendency for the teacher to have the sense that we are living in a time of great biblical illiteracy, so let's go. Why aren't more of you teaching classes that need to be taught? Come on!

There might be a tendency for some of those with the gifts of help or service to say, You teachers, why do you spend so much time in your books? You are not doing anybody any good studying all the time. Let's go out and do something—when the Holy Spirit is empowering each one in their own particular area of ministry.

So we need to be humble about that and recognize that we need what God is empowering through other people, the church as a whole. With that comes the understanding that:

2. We will be appreciative.

We will be appreciative of how the Lord is working through different people in the church.

3. We will be active.

That is what really comes across in Romans Chapter 12. Read through that text. Recognize your gift and implement it and use it. This is what the Spirit is going to be prompting you to, so let's not resist the Holy Spirit.

4. We will be active in the right areas.

That comes across very clearly when you see what Paul said in Romans Chapter 12. Read through that text and it will say if a teacher, in your teaching. If in leadership, with zeal. Focus there.

We don't need the administrators trying to focus all of their time on teaching. We don't need all of the teachers trying to focus all of their time on administrating. We need to have the people gifted in different areas doing the lion-share of their service in the areas that they are gifted in.

5. We will have endurance.

Understand this: even when you are in your wheelhouse, even when you are serving in the area that the Spirit is gifting to you, that does not mean that ministry is always going to be easy in that area.

This world is fallen and it is full of thorns. Even Paul who was gifted as an apostle, do you remember how he entered Corinth? He entered with fear and trembling. So while on the one hand there is such joy in ministry, so often there will be times when it is hard.

But that does not mean that we feel like we are not gifted anymore. No, we have endurance in serving the Lord. This is what the Spirit will be helping us with, and we must follow the Spirit in that.

As we are active in what is happening, with the Spirit's work in us, it just happens organically. We get in the word in the morning and are praying for the Spirit to use our lives and we will manifest the gift of wisdom at the table with somebody you are with later that day.

Or teaching or serving, you will just see things and go and serve. So much of it happens organically, so just be asking the Lord to open your eyes to the opportunities that are in front of you every single day.

Then a lot of this comes under the organization of the church. If you have been going through this list and would like to talk with a leader about where you are gifted, we would love to talk with you.

One way you can make us aware of that is to write your name and phone number on that piece of paper and put it in one of the offering boxes. If you would like for us to come alongside of you to help you discern and utilize your gifts, we would be happy to talk with you about it.

So we see that there is an array of ways the Spirit of God works and with that, I am going to call upon the Lord. Please join me and let's ask that He will be at work as He wills in all of these different ways that He has empowered us.

Will you join me in word of prayer?