

## Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gift – Part II

### 1. Review and Overview

- a. Imagine this Christmas leaving your presents unopened under the Christmas tree and never opening them. You take the tree down and you leave the presents there. You look at them every once in a while and even go over and shake them, but you make no effort to open them. You have guests over who ask you, “why do you still have those presents in the corner?” You reply, “I’ll open them someday, when my life becomes less chaotic and difficult.” There is a problem with this scenario. You cannot use the contents of those packages until you open them. You cannot benefit from them until you unwrap them. In fact, you probably won’t even know what they are until you open them! It is the same thing with our spiritual gifts...you won’t know what they are until you make a decision to take the time to unwrap them and discover them and figure out how to use them.
- b. Judging from the sparse attendance at our Sunday Night session on the practical steps to unwrapping our spiritual gifts, I can only make one of two conclusions: Either everyone in this congregation already knows and is using their gifts...or you’ve decided to leave them under the tree and stare at them.

### 2. Lets review a few things about Spiritual Gifts that we learned about last week:

- a. **Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities given to believers to equip them to minister supernaturally to others...producing supernatural results.”**
  - i. I found most commentators didn’t have that last bit on their definitions... “producing supernatural results” but I added it. I did so because everywhere in the bible where someone uses their spiritual gifts, God’s shows up and does something that only He can do. It might not be understood or seen, but it is supernatural in its effect.
- b. **Each Spiritual Gift is a manifestation of the Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12:7).
  - i. By manifestation we are to understand that the work of God, literally, the glory of God becomes visible when you exercise your spiritual gift.
  - ii. You might say, “I don’t ever see God.” I say, “pay attention when people are using their spiritual gifts and you will!”
- c. Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural talents which you get when you are born. Spiritual gifts are given to us when we are “born again.” Every Christian has at least one.

### 3. 1 Peter 4:10-11

- a. NAS: *10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.*
- b. AMP: *10 As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as [befits] good trustees of God's many-sided grace [faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor]. 11 Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God; whoever renders service, [let him do it] as with the strength which God furnishes abundantly, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (the Messiah). To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever (through endless ages).*

### Analysis of the passage

4. V10 *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
  - a. The passage starts off with two key words: Each One has received:

- i. Each of us has received a spiritual gift. You may not have opened it, you may not know what it is...but you are still responsible to use it.
- ii. Received =Literally “*Lay ahold of*”.
  - 1. It is not about a passive act (our meaning of receive), but one that involves our dedication, focus, and intention.
  - 2. God has given you a gift. If you don’t open it, you have not truly “received” it.
- b. Employ it, (use it) to serve one another:
  - i. The idea is that if we are bad stewards of the manifold grace of God, it is as if that grace was given to us in vain
  - ii. It is as if that grace is wasted, because it only comes to us instead of moving through us.(David Guzik)
  - iii. Spiritual gifts make each of us dispensers of God’s grace.
  - iv. Do you know the difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea?
    - 1. One has fish, the other cannot support any life.
    - 2. why? The Sea of Galilee lets the water run through it where the Dead Sea has no outlet.
    - 3. It is pitiful when we spend God’s grace on ourselves, living like a stagnant pond instead of acting like a flowing river.
- c. Good stewards of the manifold (rainbow) grace of God.
  - i. Good stewards (oikonomos from oikos = house, + nemo = to deal out, distribute, apportion) is literally “one who governs a household.”
    - 1. The word speaks of the responsibility for the proper use and disposition of something entrusted to one’s care.
    - 2. In the first century, land owners placed stewards over great estates. These stewards were slaves captured from other parts of the world. Often these slaves were the leaders of their countries or business types. They would become the manager of their master’s estate.
    - 3. The owner of the estate would hold the steward accountable to faithfully fulfill the trust committed to him.
    - 4. God wants us to faithfully administer our gift like a manager of an estate.
    - 5. God placed us as a trustee of our spiritual gift.
    - 6. Listen to these warnings:
      - a. *"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more"* (Luke 12:48).
      - b. *"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much"* (Luke 16:10).
      - c. *"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful"* (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).
    - 7. "I fail or succeed I my stewardship of life in proportion to how convinced I am that life belongs to God." – Pearl Bartel.
    - 8.
- 5. V11a: Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God
  - a. We gloss over this passage because it seems to say to us, “if the preacher preaches, let him preach the word of God.” That isn’t what it says.
    - i. It says, “whoever” – that does not limit it to the person who is called to the pulpit. It is for everyone.
  - b. Take this passage to the next word, “speaks.” The word here is the common Greek word for “talk” or “utter a sound.” Speaks" here refers simply to the act of speaking.

- i. Now we know the context is that of spiritual gifts, so what is being mentioned here is if you have one of the speaking gifts, (teaching, prophesy, encouragement, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, tongues, interpretation of tongues) then this sentence is being directed at you.
- c. This verse is an instruction on HOW to speak for those who have a spiritual gift that is one of the speaking gifts.
  - i. How many of you are Sunday School teachers? Keep your hands up. Are there any of you here who have the gift of encouragement? How about some of the other speaking gifts?
    - 1. This verse is very important to you.
    - 2. Don't ignore this verse.
    - 3. Your life can be changed by this verse if you will let God's word penetrate your heart. Listen to this next key phrase:
  - ii. *"let him do so as one who speaks the oracles of God."*
    - 1. The word for "Oracle" only appears 3 *other* times in the New Testament, and when it appears it means something very profound.
      - a. Acts 7:38 Peter uses it to describe the Law or Oracle of God spoken through Moses.
      - b. In Romans 3:2 Paul uses it to describe the "words of God" that the Israelites were entrusted with.
      - c. Hebrews 5:12 says, *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food"*
      - d. The Greek word for Oracle was used to describe a saying originating from a divinity in Greek literature.
      - e. In Christianity "oracles" came to mean divine revelation
    - 2. What Peter is telling those of us who possess a speaking spiritual gift is that we are to use it with the same seriousness, reverence, and importance as Moses did when He spoke the words of God.
      - a. **We are not to take lightly our speaking gift.**
      - b. Our gift of speech in whatever form it might take, whether preaching, teaching, prophesying, encouraging, speaking words of wisdom or knowledge... whatever form our speech takes, **we are to use it with awe!**
      - c. Don't take it lightly!
      - d. **Do you spend time preparing, praying, communing with God before you must use your gift?**
      - e. The more you are in prayer and communion with God prior to speaking or teaching, the more likely your words will contain the power and authority of God. .
    - 3. My sermons may not be the most profound, the most gifted, or the most powerful you have ever heard. They might not even be the most interesting. But I want you to know one thing about them.
      - a. I do not take the preparation for my sermons lightly. I take it dead serious.
      - b. I know that God desires to speak through me. I prepare and study diligently for my sermon each week.
      - c. I review, I even read it aloud and re-tool it every Saturday so that God can use me and the words He has given me to His utmost. I honestly have to say that I spend between 15 and 25 hours a week in sermon preparation and study each week.
      - d. I also regularly read books and try to improve myself, so that I can do better at preaching and teaching.

- e. Do you know why? Because I am called to do so as if they are the oracles of God (and not just man).
- f. It is this exercise of my spiritual gift that I take very seriously, because I know three things about it:
  - i. God is made manifest when I use it.
  - ii. God's message is contained somewhere within it, and God help me if I don't deliver it faithfully, in awe of who He is.
  - iii. God's supernatural power is present and at work when I use my spiritual gift.
- d. There is a N.T. example of someone with the gift of Prophecy (a speaking gift) who used it with this kind of intensity and seriousness.
  - i. Acts 21 where the prophet Agabus comes down from Judea. He takes Paul's belt and he ties up Paul's hands and feet. And he says "*In the same way the Jews will tie up the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.*"
  - ii. Now if I was Paul, I would have said, "What are you trying to do?" But Agabus was a prophet, and God was using him to give Paul a prophetic object lesson on what was going to happen to him in the future.
  - iii. God still speaks prophetically through His people today.
    - 1. You may have a friend down the street who's going through a painful divorce. And they feel like it's the end of the world. That they will never be happy ever again.
    - 2. But you are absolutely convinced that God still has a wonderful plan for this person's life. And so you tell your friend, "God's not through with you yet. He's going to help you through the dark times. He's going to strengthen you through the scary times. And you're going to come out of this situation as a better person in the Lord than you were before. You feel led to quote him Psalm 30:5 which says "*weeping may remain for a nighttime, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*"
    - 3. If God gives you a message like that to share with a friend, that is a prophetic word of encouragement.
    - 4. Take it seriously, take it reverently, recognize God is at work and doing something that will lead you to stand in awe of who He is and what He does. Prepare prayerfully beforehand!
- 6. V11b: *whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies;*
  - a. I find 3 different classifications of Spiritual Gifts in the bible, 2 of which are mentioned in these passages: Speaking Gifts, Serving Gifts, and Sign Gifts.
    - i. (explain them briefly here)
    - ii. List serving Gifts: (Helps, Shepherding, Mercy, Giving, Hospitality, Administration)
  - b. Serving by the strength which God Supplies.
    - i. The word here is Choregeo, from which we get chorus.
    - ii. "Supplies" is a more powerful term than the idea "gives." "Supplies" is a term for someone who pays the expenses of putting a play on stage.
    - iii. In ancient Greece a philanthropist would pay the expenses for the chorus. So "supplies" came to mean to defray the cost of bringing out a chorus at the public feasts. Usually some wealthy person paid the expenses of a chorus for the performance of a drama. The drama was a very expensive operation. In Athens wealthy citizens bore the burden for the expenses of the Greek dramas.
    - iv. Here God is the philanthropist.
      - 1. God foots the bill and defray any expense when it comes to ministry.
      - 2. God is a God of grace when we exercise our gifts.

3. That is what God does. He isn't just directing our actions, but He is providing all we need to do our part as well!
  4. Remember the comparison for the Spirit Led life where I compared the train to a pace car? One only leads, while the other leads **and** provides the power to follow.
  - c. Peter is emphasizing that believers are not to try to use their gifts in their own strength.
    - i. To do so will negate the supernatural effect of the gift, and if it is in our strength, we will also take credit for the results!
    - ii. The exercise of spiritual gifts must come from faith, obedience and surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit and reliance upon grace."
  - d. So, when you exercise your serving gift – before you act, remember who it is really for, whose power you want to flow through you and why you are doing it ... (see v11c for the glory of God).
  - e. I strongly suggest praying and dedicating your acts of service to God for Him to work through you before you do them.
7. V11c *so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.*
- a. "so that" explains the why of all of this instruction.
    - i. God is glorified when you do it His way!
    - ii. You are here to bring glory to God. You do so by unwrapping and using your gifts as a good steward of God's grace.
    - iii. Stewards serve others by distributing their gift to meet the needs of others.
      1. A good steward manages God's provisions well. As a minister of Christ, God entrusts us with the treasures of the gospel. The first requirement is trustworthiness.
      2. What kind of steward have you been with God's gifts to you?
        - a. Have you opened your gift?
        - b. Have you neglected your gift?
        - c. Do you use your gifts to serve others? There is room for everyone in the service of the King.
      3. If someone were to give us a gift at Christmas and we threw it in the attic without opening it, it would be an insult to the giver.
        - a. Neglecting our gift indicates our lack of appreciation for the grace of God
        - b. **When Christians receive special supernatural endowments to do the work of God and leave them lay dormant, they insult God who gave them the gift.**
        - c. God gave every Christian a special endowment to do His work.
        - d. Will you stand at the judgment seat of Christ empty-handed with no representation of using our gift responsibly?
          - i. It will do you know no good to say to Him then, "Well, I'm not talented. I really do not have anything to offer the church. I'm just a bird without wings. I can't do anything. All I can do is sit. All I can do is be a religious spectator all my life. I watch others serve. All I can do is pity myself."
  - b. *"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership"* (1 Timothy 4:14).
  - c. *"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands"* (2 Timothy 1:6).
  - d. Let us pray.