

When You Are Filled With the Holy Spirit

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Wait For It

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Preached On: Sunday, June 10, 2018

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I know many of you are in the same boat I am, that you have or at some point are presently enjoying the joys of parenthood, is anybody surprised, do you find it convenient that my son did not tell me he was going to be on the video? That being said, there are two things I want you to hear about this past week that resonate with me. The first one is this and since my son was on the video, I feel like I have fair game to share this, when I asked my two that were on the trip, when they came to the door I said, "What was the best thing about the week?" The first thing they said without hesitation was the missions. Now you think about it, we sent 100 teenagers across state lines, they didn't mention the fun and games, they didn't mention the shopping, the first thing they said was the mission projects was our favorite part. The second thing I want you to hear is I was in contact with adults throughout the week, is that every day there were people who came to know Jesus on that trip and a lot of them were the parents of the kids of which you saw in that video. So an unbelievable fruitful opportunity that our church got to partner with the community of north Atlanta.

Let's pray together.

Lord, as we continue this time of worship, as we celebrate what you've done in days past, Lord, today we pray that we might be able to celebrate what you're going to do today present. Lord, as we open your word, challenge us, convict us, show us where we need to be in light of who you are. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of 1 Corinthians 12. As you're turning to that passage of Scripture, if you're a guest or visitor with us or for whatever reason were not able to join us last week, we began a series, we began a study throughout the summer season that is very what we might say traditionally non-Baptist. We are going to look at, we are going to study the persona and the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. So over the course of this entire season, we're going to be studying various passages in the Scripture that define for us and show us who is the Holy Spirit, how does he operate in our lives, where is he and how does he move? Today, the message is going to look or seem a little bit out of order. In fact, if you were putting the series of messages together or the study together, most likely you would have put today's message near the end. The reason I want to put it toward the front of the series is because as we study who the Holy Spirit is and as we study the role of which he has in our lives, I

thought it would be advantageous, I thought it would be beneficial for us to go ahead and study a concept known as spiritual gifts on the forefront so hopefully our study throughout the season will allow us to filter our own personal spiritual giftedness through what we're learning about the person and the role of the Holy Spirit.

So today as we turn to 1 Corinthians 12, it begins in verse 1 with, "Now concerning spiritual gifts." You almost get the idea as if they've been wanting to hear about this and finally after 11 completed chapters, we get to the spiritual gifts and I want to jump to verse 4. It says,

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of

healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

This passage of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 12 is the longest passage that we have as far as volume is concerned regarding what we know as spiritual gifts in the New Testament. Now over the course of the study today, I just want to look at a couple of concepts regarding spiritual gifts. I want to distinguish spiritual gifts from what we call the fruit of the Spirit, then I want to describe what spiritual gifts are in totality, but then probably what you're interested like the church at Corinth, I want to talk about the distribution of these spiritual gifts, which one do I have, how many do I have, how does this actually work in my life.

So I want to begin today with distinguishing spiritual gifts from what we often call the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22 and 23, it says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, etc. Here we have in 1 Corinthians 12, we have a completely different description of what we might call spiritual gifts than the fruit of the Spirit and they're different in two ways: the first way is the quantity or the number of them. When you go into Galatians 5 and it mentions the fruit of the Spirit, it does list nine attributes of the fruit, however the singular for fruit is utilized. In other words, the fruit of the Spirit, the natural outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives that produces love and joy and peace and meekness and temperance, that is a singular concept. In other words, there are times we need temperance and there are times we need meekness. There are times we need love, there are times we need peace. And what you see with the fruit of the Spirit is the singular supernatural expression of God moving as an outward expression of the Holy Spirit moving within us.

Now when it comes to spiritual gifts, it's very different quantitatively. In fact, it may seem similar in this passage because we read about nine spiritual gifts and there are nine fruits of the Spirit in the book of Galatians, however allow me to share with you a very important distinguishing factor: spiritual gifts is in the plural where fruit was in the singular. And if you go to the book of Romans 12 and Ephesians 4, you discover that there are other spiritual gifts that are mentioned and listed in addition to the ones that we just read. Now if you were to take all these passages and you were to combine them together, you would discover that there are by most assumptions 24 specific spiritual gifts that are mentioned. There is the gift of giving and such that are mentioned in other places throughout the New Testament.

Why is this important for each and every one of us? Because as we're going to see, the fruit of the Spirit is just a supernatural expression of what we know as the Holy Spirit, but spiritual gifts have a very distinguishable quality about them. In fact, as you study the New Testament, spiritual gifts are different and here's why: they don't just naturally occur. You see, in Galatians 5 when it talks about the fruit of the Spirit, it says that as we walk with the Lord, as we study his word, then love will naturally take place, and peace

will naturally take place, but in 1 Timothy 4:14, I want you to hear what the Apostle Paul says to a young minister by the name of Timothy. Listen to what he says, "Do not neglect the gift that is within you." In other words, when it comes to spiritual gifts, we get the idea that they can lie dormant in our lives, we get the idea that we can allow them to be brushed to the side of our lives, they can lose their focus in our lives. He says, "Do not neglect the gift that is within you." Then a couple of pages over in what we know as 2 Timothy 1:6, listen what the Apostle Paul tells the same Timothy, "Stir up the gift that is within you." Now you and I can't stir up love and we can't stir up peace and we can't stir up meekness, that's the fruit of the Spirit, that's just the Lord supernaturally working through us, but when you talk about the spiritual gift of knowledge and wisdom and prophesy and such, that's something that's got to be stirred up, that's something that's got to be focused on. In fact, if you'll notice the last verse we read in verse 31, "But covet earnestly the best gifts." We're not only told to stir up our spiritual gifts, we're actually told to desire the best gifts for our life. Now we'll talk about particularly what that means in just a moment.

So there is a distinguishing difference between the fruit of the Spirit and spiritual gifts but let's talk about the description of spiritual gifts in this passage. Let's begin with a quantitative or a numerical analysis. Chapter 12 is just the beginning of a study on spiritual gifts in the book of 1 Corinthians. In fact, chapters 13 and 14 deal with the same subject matter. There are three entire chapters that deal with spiritual gifts and if you've studied the book of 1 Corinthians, all of chapter 14, the entire chapter discusses one of the most prevailing yet most disturbing and debated and discussed of all the gifts, it is the speaking in and the interpretation of the gift of tongues. Now hopefully this is comforting to you because in our culture we struggle with this and the church, we struggle with this gift and they struggled with it 2,000 years ago so we're in the same boat as they were. What I want you to understand though when we talk about the description of spiritual gifts though is this: that just because it receives the most attention does not mean that it is more important than any others. In fact, the attention it receives in chapter 14 is because it's being misused, misapplied, and misutilized. What we discover in chapters 12, 13 and 14 of 1 Corinthians is that spiritual gifts quantitatively no matter how many times they are mentioned, that one is never described as being more important than the other or any being less important than the other. In fact, if you'll notice in verse 12, it begins, "For as the body is one," and it goes on to give this incredible illustration of why would the hand say to the foot, "I have no need of you"? Or why would the eye look at the ear and say, "There's no use for you"? In fact, much the opposite, what we discover that when it comes to spiritual gifts, it doesn't matter if you're a foot, a hand, an eye, or a mouth, all of them are of equal value and equal worth and necessary to the body of Christ.

So when we talk about spiritual gifts as far as their description is concerned, I think oftentimes we fall into this what I call the grass is greener on the other side trap. "Boy, I wish I had their gift. Or I wish I had a different gift. Or God, why is this my gift?" What we see in this passage is it doesn't matter if we're a foot or a hand, an eye or an ear, all of us when it comes to our spiritual gifts have been designed to work together in the capacity of how the Lord has called and equipped us irrespectively of how he's called or equipped somebody else. In fact, I think one of the great misunderstandings of the

spiritual gifts is we spend so much time focusing on somebody else's gift rather than saying, "God, how have you wired me?" So quantitatively, don't think just because an entire chapter is given to one that it is of greater importance than any of the others, but qualitatively when we talk about this concept of a body, we understand that according to what we just read, that the hand, the foot, the eye and the ear are designed to work together to edify one another and to go forward with each other.

Now, I know many of you are aware that for my entire life and now as a dad, I'm a sports fan and one of the things that I enjoy about sports at my age is the fact that I get to sit in a chair and watch them. It's a nice experience but several years ago, one of my children was on a recreational what we call Little League soccer team. It was one of those leagues where, you know, you place like 6 on 6 and there weren't even really lines on the field, just kind of the outside borders and the referees, they played it kind of loosey-goosey. They didn't get real particular because they just wanted the kids exercising, they just wanted them to learn the game.

Well, on my son's team we had a young man. I won't call his name but we had this young man on our team who was very gifted athletically. I mean, he was fast and he was strong and he could really kick the ball. Here's the problem: it didn't matter what direction he was headed, when he came into contact with the ball, he kicked it as hard as he could. Do you see the problem with this? If he was not pointed at the goal that we were designed to score on, he would score against us. He would take the ball from us and he would celebrate. He'd say, "Look what I did!" You personally may have excelled, you personally may have scored a goal, although it be for the other team, but you have hindered and you have harmed our own. In fact, even within our family, I won't call his name, we'll tell our boys occasionally, "Don't be a..." and we'll call his name out. Why? Because what we're communicating is, "Your actions though they may highlight you and they may promote you, they're hindering the goal of the team." So when it talks about spiritual gifts, no matter what your spiritual gift is, it doesn't matter if it's a hand or a foot. Your giftedness, how the Lord desires to move in your life, should never operate contrarily to the body of Christ. It should never receive so much attention that it takes all of the limelight and the purpose of the mission. It should never work against and it should never stand alone. It says that we are one body.

Now having kind of distinguished between the spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit, having described them as the members of a body that operate together, one not being of greater value than the other, let's get to the part where you're interested in and the church of Corinth was interested in, what about the distribution of these gifts. How does one receive, again how many do I have, how does this operate? Now go back to verse 4 where we started. It says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit," then it begins to list them. Let's talk about your spiritual gift or gifts quantitatively here. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, now I feel like unfortunately in our culture today, I have to qualify what that means. I didn't say if you go to church. I didn't say that you're a part of a

particular denomination. I said if you're a believer in Jesus Christ. Let me clarify what that means biblically. That means that you've come to a point and an understanding in your life where you have sinned. That means you're the one that's got the problem. You're the one that's messed up. You're the one who said, "Okay, God, I know what direction you want me to go but I want to go in a different direction." You're the one who said, "Hey, I know, God, you want me to go forward but I want to go backwards." Sin is any time or anything we do that is contrary to the ways and will and word of God. Romans 3:23 makes it very clear, "For all have sinned." Secondly, we have to understand and believe that Jesus Christ is the only means of the forgiveness of our sins; that when we call upon him we believe not only did he live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death, but he rose from the dead so we could be forgiven and we could be saved, and Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord should be saved."

Now, you may be asking yourself, "Well, Jeff, why did you go to such great lengths to explain what most of us have known the majority of our lives?" And here's why: I think sometimes within the "church setting" we misunderstand one's natural gifts and abilities and talents as a spiritual gift. A spiritual gift is the movement of the Holy Spirit in an individual who's admitted that they've sinned, asked Jesus to save them, and has called upon him. In other words, it's not natural ability. It's not natural talent. In fact, your spiritual gift may run contrary to your fleshly giftedness.

So quantitatively if you're a child of God, if you're born again, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you have at least one spiritual gift. At least one, but I can promise you you don't have them all. You say, "Well, isn't this the land and the world of participation trophies where everybody gets everything?" Not in this case and here's why, because one of the gifts is the speaking in tongues, and the other gift is the interpretation of tongues and you can't be both at the same time. So there is nobody who has all of them but every single one of you as a believer in Jesus Christ has at least one of them. You might have two of them. You might have three of them. In fact, over the course of life and the seasons of life, you may have some that run prominent in some season of life that go a little more subtle in other seasons of life. You may be a believer for 10 or 15 years and then all of a sudden the Lord starts moving in a prophetic way in your life and you're thinking, "Where did this come from?" It came from the Holy Spirit. That's who it came from. What we read in verses 4 through 7, allow me to give you the New Revised Jeff Southern version of this. Are you ready? God can give you what he wants to give you, when he wants to give it to you, and you don't get a say-so. In other words, he has the opportunity to work through your life the way he best sees how your life should honor and glorify him.

Quantitatively, you have at least one. Now I know some of you are out there going, "I don't even have a clue about my one. Could you help me out?" Hang on until the end of the service. We'll help you out there, okay? But let's look at this qualitatively. Back to verse 31 where we ended, "But covet earnestly the best gifts." I want to address this verse both from an individual and a corporate perspective. When it says covet the best gifts, oftentimes people look at the list of spiritual gifts and say, "Well, obviously the one that's mentioned first must be more important than the one that's mentioned last." Kind of the

justification for that is that Judas is always listed last in the list of the apostles, and there may be some validity there but allow me to address this individually. When it says covet the best gifts, that means you need to desire of God for what is best for you, not what is best for somebody else. In other words, not what you want it to be, what you hope it to be, but God, what is it that you desire it to be so that I can honor you more greatly in my life. So when it says covet the best gifts, not only should we heed 1 Timothy 4:14 not to neglect our spiritual gifts, not only should we heed 2 Timothy 1:6 to stir up the gift that was in us, but we should covet the best gifts. In other words, "God, whatever is best for you to do through my life, that's what I desire, not necessarily what I want or what I wish."

That's the individual side of it. Here's the corporate side of it because you and I operate as a body. We're called the body of Christ. In fact, we're larger than even just this one campus in this one local body, the church is universal and speaks many different languages and has many different colors, and we operate together. So how do we as an entirety, how do we covet the best gifts? I want you to go back to verse 8 and I want you to notice something that I think the Lord does and we'll close with this. He says, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit." Now once you go onto verse 9, we can all agree that the listing of and the descriptions of these spiritual gifts get a little bit uncomfortable to lifelong Baptists. You've got healings and you've got prophecies and you've got discerning of spirits and speaking of tongues and interpretation of tongues, and we get all a little bit nervous about others. On the other side of the equation there are some who spend all of their time focusing on those final six. Can I give us a suggestion today? The church of Jesus Christ as a totality, do you know what we need? We need some wisdom. We can talk about all the supernatural we want but do you know what wisdom is? Wisdom is knowing when to do it, where to do it, and with whom to do it with and we are plagued by poor decisions. We are plagued by poor perspectives on how to deal with it and interact with this world at large with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We need some wisdom. In fact, James 1 says if you want wisdom, pray for it, the Lord will descend upon. I think sometimes we spend so much time saying, "Man, I want the gift of healing," that's a wonderful thing but don't you need wisdom on who needs the healing? Don't you need wisdom on how the healing needs to take place?

We need knowledge. It says the gift of knowledge. We have all the tools at our disposal in our culture today but are ignorant at best and we need faith to believe that God can move and operate beyond our own human perspectives. I'm not going against the final six that are mentioned, I'm just saying when it says covet the best gifts, as we look for that which is visible, as we desire that which is tangible, can you imagine what the body of Christ would look like if we allowed the Holy Spirit to lead us with wisdom, knowledge and faith? It would be an unbelievable display of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May we as individuals and as a body covet the best gifts.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. You know, maybe you're that person, that individual this morning that a little bit earlier in the message when we talked about being a believer, being born again, being a Christian about the distribution of

spiritual gifts, maybe you're that person that said, "Do you know what? I've never done that. I've never taken that step of faith." I've got great news for you. What I described earlier is all you need to do today. You don't have to sign up to take a bunch of classes. You don't have to jump through a bunch of hoops. You don't have to sign a bunch of pieces of paper. All you need to do is have a very sincere and serious conversation with the Lord.

Now you don't have to have this conversation out loud. In fact, you don't even have to say the same words that I might say but maybe your conversation would go a little something like this. "God, today I just want to confess what you already know about me. I'm the problem. I've messed up and I've sinned and I understand today that Jesus Christ is the only means of forgiveness in salvation. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was born for me. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to pay the price for my sins on the cross and to raise from the grave so I could be forgiven and saved. So today, God, I don't have all the answers to the problems of life but I do know that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem. The best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me and I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, if you're that person today, we want to celebrate with you. In just a moment I'm going to pray over us, we're going to stand and sing. I'd just encourage you to step out and step forward, we'd love to know how the Lord is moving and working in your life. But maybe today you had that conversation years ago or decades ago, maybe you never followed through with baptism and maybe the Lord has said this is the church you're supposed to plug into, or whatever it may be, we just want to truly celebrate what God is doing in your life.

Lord, as we come to this time of decision, thank you that in spite of our rebellion, in spite of our flesh, you desire nothing more, nothing less for us to be perfectly in the center of your will. Thank you not only that you were willing to reach down and save us but you're willing to equip us for the journey through your Holy Spirit. Help us, O God, this day, this time in this hour, to decide whatever it is that you've laid upon our hearts. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm going to ask you stand with me as Brian leads us. Any decision, I'll be here at the front.