



Sermon Transcription • 1 Corinthians 12 (NIV)

Spiritual Gifts

Pastor Ezra Okoti

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

We're in a new series on the Holy Spirit these past two weeks, we've been looking at who the Holy Spirit is - who he is and so different attributes that would be associated with who the Spirit of God is. This morning we will be looking at what he actually does in the life of the church and in particular, specifically we'll be talking about spiritual gifts. We'll be talking about spiritual gifts. Now what is a spiritual gift you may ask, and a spiritual gift is a special ability, a special ability that the Spirit of God will give a Christian for the purpose of service. It's a special ability that the Holy Spirit would give a Christian for the purpose of service. Now, spiritual gifts are not - they're not the same as the fruit of the Spirit. Now some of you would have heard of the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and so on. And these will be found in Galatians 5, spiritual gifts are not the same as fruits of the Spirit. They're also not the same as human talents. See you know you have a talented musician, or a talented speaker - public orator, or a talented administrator. Spiritual gifts are not the same as human talents. Why do I say this? Because a human talent is not enough - would not be adequate enough to serve God. Spiritual gifts are special abilities that the Spirit of God will give a Christian for the purpose of service. Now this is a very big topic, and we are not going to be able to cover every single aspect of spiritual gifts in the brief few moments we have. In particular, this topic is loaded with a lot of confusion and a lot of controversy. So thank you Jeff, for leaving me with this nice, wonderful, little subject to address this morning. So rather than hopping from one passage to the other, trying to discuss this issue of spiritual gifts we'll be looking at one passage. This is 1 Corinthians 12, that's the passage we'll be walking through or basically flying through and here Paul is writing to the Corinthian church, and the church in Corinth had a ton, multiple, spiritual gifts, but then the unfortunate thing about this church is they abused these spiritual gifts. They were abusing the gifts, they were misusing them, and so now he will write with the aim of correction and he will use instruction to do that. He wants to bring correction and he uses instruction to do that and he'll be focusing on the work of the Spirit of God - how he gives and how he distributes spiritual gifts.

And so this is the outline we'll be working through, and basically the outline is given to us by Paul and how he unpacks this subject in chapter 12. So he'll begin by talking about the Spirit of God and his work, his work begins at salvation. So we'll look at one faith. And then he will move from how the Spirit begins his work in salvation and go to how the Spirit of God works with God the Father and God the Son to accomplish his purposes. So we'll look at one God. And then he will move then to the Spirit is the one who gives the gifts, he's the one who gives the gifts. So he's one giver. And then finally we'll



see how he promotes unity in the midst of diversity, one body. So our four points this morning will be one faith, one God, one giver, and one body.

[One Faith]

So let's look at the passage, 1 Corinthians 12, I'll read the first three verses and then we'll talk about one faith. So 1 Corinthians 12:1-3,

“Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. [This means they are ignorant of something.] You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

So little bit of a background here. The church in Corinth was made up of a lot of Gentile converts. Now a Gentile would be a non-Jew. So Corinth was an eclectic city, a lot of people from all sorts of backgrounds lived in Corinth. People from all over the world because it was a very commercial city. And so as they came, they began to worship the gods of that time in Corinth. And the way the worship happened there was ridiculous where you would be worshipping these idols or these other gods, you would come into a worship space like this one and you'd begin to sing and chant and then it'd just be an ecstatic frenzy, a euphoric frenzy - where people would be yelling and screaming and chanting and rolling on the floor and all these crazy things happening and there'll be certain supernatural manifestations happening there, in other words, there'll be a lot of demonic stuff happening in those worship services. And so these are things that are not normal or ordinary. So all these people, in Corinth, who are now here worshipping these gods are seeing all these things happening in their temples, worshipping whatever god their worshipping and then they hear the gospel, and then they come to saving faith, they come to the church, and in the church they begin to see spiritual gifts being manifested there. And so they're like, “Oh this is awesome, this similar to what we used to do in our former worship.” And so they begin to associate the spiritual gifts with what they used to do when they're worshipping all these other idols and they began to bring some of those practices into the church.

It'd be similar to - if you went to Africa, one of the things you will notice in Africa is the pastor would be the wealthiest person in the community. He'll have the best the car, he'll have the best clothes, he'll have the best house. The pastor was a very wealthy person, or is a very wealthy person in Africa. And so you'd go there and you'd wonder, “What on earth is going on there?” I lead a team of young adults to Uganda on a mission trip and I was privileged to be able to preach in a church there. So I get to the church with my team and I meet the pastor, he shakes my hand, and proceeds to show me where his office is. And as we were walking to the office we met one of these ladies who was one of the worship leaders in the church. And so she says hi to me and the moment I hold her hand she goes down on her knees. And I'm like, “Why...why, why, stand, stand up.” And she does the same thing to the pastor. And this is like - the pastor's are like little gods in this community. And I'm wondering, what on



earth is going on. And then it dawned onto me, you know in Africa you have the witch doctor in the community and the witch doctor is the person whom you go to, he's the mediator between you and the gods. So if you want favour from the gods you really have to be good to this witch doctor. Meaning you will bring him all sorts of things, all sorts of gifts and you'll be nice to him, so that if you're really nice to the servant of the god then it is more than likely the god will favour you and give you what you want. So it's the same thinking here. They look at the pastor and they see the pastor is like the witch doctor, he is the go-between, the mediator between you and God. And so if you want God to answer your prayer you'd better be good to the pastor and therefore I'm waiting for my BMW people.

[Laughter]

See this is the pagan practice that has been brought now into the church in that context. And lest you think those things just happen in the third world, they also happen here, where you find again people bringing the practices from their pagan lifestyle - they bring them into church. So for example, democracy. In Canada we value democracy and it is good that we are democratic, it is good that we are able to have a voice and speak and hold our leaders to account. That's a very good thing. But when you come to church now, and yes you ought to hold the leaders to account, and yes you'd have to push the elders and ask the tough questions, yes. However, in your asking the hard questions, in your holding the elders to account, you also have to realize that the elders are representing who? God. So when the elders come and speak to you, they're speaking the very words of God to you. And so for us then to shun what they're saying, this is a very dangerous thing - very dangerous thing. Because the church is not a democracy, not according to God, not according to God.

So this is exactly what's happening in Corinth, where the people, the Gentiles are bringing their, their pagan practices into church and Paul is now writing and saying, "No, no, no, no, this ought not to be, particularly when you're thinking about the spiritual gifts and the manifestations of the Spirit here." And that's why he will say, "I do not want you to be uniformed. You know that when you were pagan somehow or the other you were influenced and led astray to many mute idols. You were idol worshippers, and this I want you to know. That no one's speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is cursed.' Because in idol worship ahhh curses was very much a part of the game. You would be cursing all sorts of gods and cursing all sorts of people so that you could move your agenda forward. You would be petitioning the God to curse this individual or curse this other god so that your agenda would be moved forward. So Paul is saying, this is not the practice here. No one who is speaking by the Spirit of God will say that Jesus is cursed. And he goes onto say no one says Jesus is Lord - no one says Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit of God. Meaning it is the Spirit of God who awakens you and enables you to say, Jesus is Lord. If the Spirit of God is not at work in you, there's no way. The only way you and I were able to become Christians is if the Spirit of God came upon you and awoke you. The Spirit is the one who is at work. And he transforms lives, even the *unlikely* convert, the murderers, the rapists, the drug addicts, people who you'd *never* think in a million years that they'd be Christians and they hear the gospel and convert - how is it, is it that they're good choosers? No, it is the Spirit of God who's at work in their lives, transforming them, and drawing them. No one says Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit of God. So how you came to faith, how I came to faith, the Spirit of God was the one at work. The manifestations of the gifts point to the lordship of Christ. The manifestations of the



Spirit of God, the spiritual gifts, they all point to the lordship of Christ, to the glory of God. And all of it, the work of the Spirit, one faith. Next, one God.

[One God]

So it's not just one faith, but one God. Look at 1 Corinthians 12:4-6,

“There are different kinds [notice the language here now. There are different *kinds*] of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different *kinds* of service, but the same Lord. [Notice the difference, Spirit, now Lord.] There are different *kinds* of working, but in all of them and in *everyone* it is the same *God* at work.”

So here you will see, he will talk about how there are different gifts, same Spirit; different kinds of service, same Lord, Jesus; different kinds of working, and in all of them the same God. So you find the Spirit, the Son, and the Father that Paul mentions here. Now some of us have this idea that the Holy Spirit is like, you know, Robin in Batman. So he's kind of like, Batman is the main character, Robin is kind of the side kick. So in the gospel, Jesus is the main character, the Spirit is like the sidekick is the assumption sometimes that we may have regarding the role of the Spirit. And Paul is saying, “No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.” He will clarify two things, the first: we worship a triune God - Father, Son, and Spirit. And Father, Son, Spirit, they work together - they work together to accomplish the purposes of God. So where the Father is, you will see the Son and the Spirit. Where the Son is you will see the Father and the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, you will see the Father and the Son.

For example, creation, God spoke creation into existence. He says, “Let there be light.” And there was light. And, “Let there be animals.” And there were animals. So the Father spoke, where was the Son? The Son was the agent because nothing was made that wasn't made through Christ. Christ was the agent, so Christ was there. Father spoke, Christ the agent. Where was the Spirit? You read in Genesis 1, and the Spirit of God was doing what - hovering over the waters. So you see Father spoke, Son agent, Spirit is there covering, hovering, guarding creation. Or let's talk about salvation. The Father planned out salvation and he sends the Son. The Son becomes incarnate, and so he is born of a virgin, lives a sinless life, dies on the cross and rises up. So the Father planned it, Jesus now comes and pays the price and what does the Spirit do? The Spirit now applies redemption to you, so he begins to convict you and draw you; and he convicts you and draws you, convicts you and draws you in: Father, Son, Spirit, all working together. Theologians will call that the economy of the Trinity, or the economic Trinity where the Father and the Son are all working together. The point here being the Spirit is not - the Spirit is not Robin. The Spirit is not just a side gig here, no, no, no, no, no. The Spirit is very much God, he is God himself. He does not depend on any individual for his deity. Father, Son, and Spirit, they are all working together.

But the second thing that Paul wants the Corinthian church and subsequently ourselves as well is there is unity in the Trinity even though they have diverse roles. So there is diversity in roles and yet there is unity. We believe in one God. Father, Son, Spirit, they all have different functions. There's diversity within the Trinity - same thing with the body of Christ. When the spiritual gifts are given they're different people will have different gifts and yet in the midst of diversity, they ought to be unity,



is the point that Paul is after here. The Spirit of God is not just the side gig, he works very much - all he does, he doesn't do on his own, the Father is there and the Son is there and they all work together. They all work together to accomplish the purposes of God, and in them there is unity even though there is diverse roles. There's one God.

[One Giver]

And then it's not just one God now, specifically Paul now moves to become very specific regarding the role of the Spirit. The role of the Spirit in the church particularly on this issue of spiritual gifts. Now this is where the confusion and the controversy is. So if this is what you came for, here it is! 1 Corinthians 12:7, one giver, verse seven.

“Now to each one.”

Notice the language, to each one. Now again, let me just emphasize this, when Paul is writing as we're reading this chapter, as we're reading these verses, he's not talking to you, specifically. He's not talking to you specifically, he's talking to the church, corporate. He's not talking to an individual. He's talking to corporate. So always have that at the forefront of your mind as we are reading here. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for [what] the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different *kinds* of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

So before we jump into the controversy, let's just take care of the simple stuff first. 1 Corinthians 12:7, where he will say, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” In other words, the spiritual gifts that are given to an individual are not meant for that person only. There for the good of the whole. So an example, one of the things that you may not know about our dear friend and brother Jeff Bucknam, is this. You know when you see me I'm going to have fun, yah? One of the things that you may not know about Jeff, is Jeff is an introvert. He is a very shy guy. If Jeff were to walk into our church and see a lot of people here, and if you didn't know who he was - if you had no idea who he was, Jeff would be one of these people who would sit right at the back. And at the end of the meeting he'll probably be the first persons to leave. Not because he's antisocial - no. Not because he doesn't want to meet new people - no. He's an introvert and he's shy. I have trouble with my brother and gone to so many conferences with this guy, I know him well. He's shy. So at the end of the meeting, “Ezra, let's go, let's go to Tim Hortons, let's go, let's go, let's go.” And then we'll debrief the conference at Timmy's. This is Jeff. So he'd be prepping his sermon in the week and he'll be talking to anyone who has a voice, you'll be talking about his sermon. He talks verbally, talks verbally and he'll



come and say, “Ezra I don’t know if it’s really coheres, let me run it by you.” And he’d run it by me and all that. “Yeah, Jeff, it’s okay, it’s good.”

“I don’t know man, it’s good.” And then just before the service begins, he’d be praying and pacing, the worship band is singing and Jeff is behind the curtain behind me here wondering, “Okay will it go well, will it be a good sermon, will it be a good sermon, will it be a good sermon?” And then he comes and he stands right here and what comes out? You see a lion. You see passion, you see confidence, you see boldness. And everytime I think about it, I tear. Why? Because I see the Spirit of God at work. Right there in the brother I know and love. I know Jeff way more than any of you do, and I know what he’s like behind the scenes, and I know what he’s like at this pulpit, and many of us are here because of the ministry of this guy. But is it because Jeff is awesome? Is it because Jeff’s gifts is like so great that he should write a book and have his picture right there ... [laughter]. No, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for what? For the common good. And it’s not just Jeff, it’s not just Jeff. Ron Friesen, who was right here praying for all these young people. Ron has been in ministry with young people almost 40 years, I was 5 years old when the guy began. And when you look at Ron you wouldn’t think much of him. [Laughter] Oh dear, that didn’t come out the right way <laughing>. [Laughter] Oh boy. But when you watch, there isn’t a youth pastor in the Fraser Valley, there isn’t a youth pastor in the Fraser Valley who Ron hasn’t influenced significantly - not one in the entire Fraser Valley, and in other parts of Canada. So many young men and women have been influenced by Ron, and his ministry. Both just kids who come to participate in a program, and those who have gone on to be youth pastors. When you look at Ron what do I see, what do you see - the Spirit of God at work.

When you look at Vic Schellenberg, the same thing. When Vic has to deal with a lot of people with all their needs and all their struggles and all their challenges - week after week just listening to the muck that people have, the challenges and the struggles and the difficulties. When you just sit down and your listening to people’s struggles and problems, week in and week out, you’re always doing funerals of kids and adults and things like that. What are we seeing there? You and I may have a very difficult time doing that, not for Vic, not for Thaleia, not for Paul - what are we seeing there? The Spirit of God at work, and it’s not just them, it’s all of the volunteers, all our greeters, all our care group leaders, all our care group hosts, people who open their homes and allow other people to come and sit on their couches and walk around their homes and have community and fellowship there. And yet some of us, you would never open your home, never have people over. And yet there are others who are free, “Use my house as much as you want.” What’s going on there? The Spirit of God is at work in the lives of people for the common good.

I went to East Abbotsford last weekend for the first time, I had never been - East Abbotsford Campus they meet at ACS, Abbotsford Christian School. And so I went there and they have this community time. So I went to the community time, kids are running around the gym. And they have these baked goods that Greg Harris keeps talking about, these baked goods at East Abbotsford. And I was like, “Yeah whatever, let me just go and try.” And so I saw one of these scone that was there and it is a maple, bacon scone. It has bacon on it. So I saw the bacon and I was like, “This one is for me.” So I grab it, and I tried this thing, I kid you not, the best scone that I’ve ever had in my life, it is worth you going and trying that place out. [Laughter] My point here is this, there is a congregant who attends East Abbotsford, he’s a baker, and he and his family and a group of others, they bake these things



fresh every day - every Sunday morning. They wake up early and they bake this stuff. They begin preparations the week before, leading up to Sunday morning. And they bake all these baked goods so that people, who visit the campus, people who attend there, can have fellowship around something nice to eat. Is it that this baker is an awesome person - yeah, he's an awesome person, but it's the Spirit of God who enables him to do this. So to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common, for the common good.

But you may ask, "So now Ezra where's the controversy, where's the controversy there?" Well the controversy here. You could divide, if you were to write down the spiritual gifts and to put them in categories you'd put them in three categories. The first would be the verbal gifts of the Spirit. The verbal gifts would be: teaching, preaching, prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, all those are the verbal gifts of the Spirit. The next category would be the serving gifts, the serving gifts which is leadership and giving and mercy and faith and discernment. Those are the serving gifts. Then the third would be the sign gifts or the miracle gifts. And these ones include miracles and healing and tongues and interpretation of tongues. Guess where the controversy lies? This one. These miracle gifts. The miracles, the healings, the tongues, the interpretation of the tongues. These miracle gifts or the sign gifts, that's where the controversy is. And so today in the evangelical world there are two camps. And one camp, they are called the cessationists and the other camp is called the continuationists.

Cessationists believe that ... they believe that all the miraculous gifts, these miracle gifts, these sign gifts, the miracles or the healing and the tongues and so on, all those ceased during the Apostolic Age. So the early church, when the apostles died, that was the end. So after 80, 90 no more, no more gifts of healing and miracles, and tongues. Now let me nuance that a little bit. So for example in the early church you had Peter. So Peter, the Spirit of God was so upon him that he would show up in a city, in a town and if you had a sick person, someone who's ill, they're struggling they have cancer, they have this they have that. You would bring them, and then you'd lay them down along the street, and as Peter is walking, if his shadow is on this side, if his shadow touches the sick person, they get healed. This is the way the Spirit of God had rested upon Peter was so much so that his shadow, when it touches a sick person, they'd get healed. So when someone is dying they would be seeking, "Where is Peter, let's bring Peter here." Because we know the Spirit of God is so heavy on Peter, if he touches this person they'll get healed. Or Paul, the Apostle Paul; he would have an apron on him and people would take the apron that was on him, and they would take the apron to Chilliwack, they would take the apron to Whistler where a sick person was, he's not there physically, it's just the apron. The apron would touch the person, and the person would get healed. This is how heavy the Spirit of God is upon him. So the cessationist will say, the gift of healing, as it operated in the life of Peter, or in the life of Paul and the other apostles, doesn't happen today. So if someone is so sick you can't call Jeff, why? He will never have that kind of power like you know, Paul. Can't call Ezra either, can't call Vic either, can't. It's not there, they ceased with the Apostolic Age. Now while God can still do and perform miracles, so cessationists believe God can do anything, he can heal the blind, he can heal the deaf, the lame, he can do anything. But, we should never expect that that kind of gift would rest in one person, such that you seek after that person to come and heal as Peter or Paul or the other apostles did. That's what the cessationists would say.



The continuationists would say the opposite. Continuationists would say, “Nah ah. The spiritual gifts operate today, the very same way they operated in the early church. They operate the very, very same way.” So you could have the Spirit of God upon an individual, upon Vic, or upon Thaleia, and so you have someone who’s sick, Thaleia can pray for you and you can get healed. And she can do it consistently as she’s walking in the Spirit, allowing the Spirit of God to use her as an instrument. Continuationist would say that still happens today.

So let us give a sample argument then. Cessationists say they’re no longer here, continuationists say they’re here. So let’s take a fun example, speaking in tongues. Cessationists will say, tongues are not for today, speaking in tongues not for today. Speaking in tongues was for - tongues were a sign gift, a sign to who? The unbelieving Jew, and where do they get that from? 1 Corinthians 14:22 to be particular. They’re sign Jews, so you only see tongues three times in the book of Acts and the life of the early church. The first time in Acts 2, the disciples are there, Jews from all over the world who are not Christian, Jews were coming to celebrate the Passover. And so as they’re right there celebrating the Passover, the Spirit of God comes upon the apostles and they go and they begin to speak in other languages, so maybe Peter was speaking in Russian, and Matthew was probably speaking in a different ... Romanian, and so and so is speaking in Latin, in Swahili and so on. And what are they saying? Declaring the glory of God. So all these Jews from other parts of the world, they see, “Oh Peter has never been in Russia, but he’s speaking fluent Russian. And he’s declaring the glory of God, oh let me listen.” And so on the day of Pentecost 3,000 get saved, because of Peter’s gospel proclamation - why? Because of this sign to the Jew. Next time you see it in Cornelius’ house, Cornelius was a Gentile. Jews and Gentiles, or Jews never worshipped in the same space as non-Jews, never. A Gentile is a non-Jew. So in Cornelius’ house, Peter is there and he begins to preach the gospel to these non-Jews, these Gentiles. And as he’s preaching the Spirit of God comes upon the Gentiles and they begin to speak other languages. And what are they saying, praising God. The Jews with Peter, look and they see, “Oh the Spirit of God has been given to the Gentile as well.” In other words, God has also chosen the non-Jew, which means we can all worship together - a sign to the Jew. The last time you will see it in Acts 19 in Ephesus, Paul goes to Ephesus, he finds disciples but these disciples are disciples of John - they believe John’s message, “Repent the Messiah is coming!” They didn’t know that the Messiah had already come, died, and rose again. So Paul begins to share the gospel with them and then asks them, “Do you know the Spirit of God?” They say, “No we don’t, what’s that?” He begins to tell them what the Spirit of God is, he lays hands on them, the Spirit of God comes and what do they do - they begin to speak in tongues, other languages. And the Jews with Paul realize, “Oh the disciples of John have also received the gift,” and they’re like, “Oh wow.” And they become true Christians, a sign to the Jew, for the Jew to realize - John who said, “Make way for the Messiah is coming.” Yeah the Messiah John was talking about is Jesus Christ. After Acts 19, no more tongues. Tongues ceased and where would they argue, like what is the verse they would appeal to to say they ceased? 1 Corinthians 13, a passage we will be preaching next week, you’d better be here. [Laughter] That’s what the cessationist will say, the continuationists would respond by saying, “Oh come on, come on.”

Let us first begin by talking about what is the purpose of gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:7, “Now to each one the manifestation of the gift is given for the common good.” So it is for the common good. It’s for the



common good, so let's begin there and not only that, when the Spirit of God came in Acts 2, he did not come just, it was not just the mere dawning of the new age. It wasn't just ... when the Spirit of God came in Acts 2, what he brought was not just limited to the early church, no, it was for the entire period from the time when Jesus went up to the time when Jesus will come down the Spirit of God was given. So when talking about tongues in particular, they will say, look at verse 10 of our passage. Paul writes to say to another, the speaking of different *kinds* of tongues. So why are we saying that the tongues in Acts in 2 have to be the same in 1 Corinthians 12:13-14. They are different *kinds*, and that is why Paul would say, they would argue in 1 Corinthians 14:2, when someone speaks in tongues they speak to God, and no one understands him. They utter mysteries in the Spirit, which means there are different kinds of tongues. So the tongues you see in Acts are not necessarily the same, identical tongues you hear about and read in 1 Corinthians 14. There is no Biblical evidence to show that tongues are done. No verse that will say with certainty that tongues have ceased.

Okay then, who's right? Who's right? At this point, I would remove my preacher hat and say as a pastor, this is a secondary issue. It's a secondary issue, meaning you can be a cessationist and still a Christian, you can be a continuationist and still a Christian. The cessationist, yes their concern is about this excesses and their concern is also about the abuses of the spiritual gifts. And your concern is duly noted, however dear cessationist, do not hinder the work of the Spirit of God. And to the continuationist, we'd say, yeah it is great that you're open, it is great that you're open to the Spirit of God, but you ought to be open and cautious. Why? Because not every miraculous gift is of the Spirit. Why? Jesus himself said, "Not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom. On that day, there'll be some who will come to me and say, 'Lord did we not cast out demons in your name?' And I will say depart from me you workers of iniquity, I never knew you." So not every miraculous sign is the work of the Spirit. So therefore, dear continuationist, you have to discern, even in your openness to the moving of the Spirit of God. The point is - the Spirit is the source of all spiritual gifts, and all spiritual gifts, whatever form, they serve multiple purposes - they will glorify God. So when you hear stories of healings and salvation, yeah we glorify God. Yet is the Spirit of God at work there. Or it also sounds for evangelistic purposes -they adorn the gospel of Jesus. For the non-Christian they see God working as the Spirit of God are being manifest. They are drawn to the gospel. Or spiritual gifts also serve pastoral purposes. How? The care that people receive, hospitality, the love people hear, ultimately they edify the entire body of Christ. They edify the entire body of Christ. And all that happens because of one giver, one giver.

[One Body]

I'm running out of time. One more point and we're done. One body, one body. So from 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 he will talk about, in this passage, 1 Corinthians 12, Paul will talk about the human body and how the human body has all these parts. The eyes, and the ear and the nose and the hands and so on, the feet. And all these parts, all of them have different functions and yet it's just one body. So he will say, using that illustration, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31, he will say,

"Now you [collective] are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then



gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. [All this God has placed and then he'll ask a rhetorical question, verse 29.] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? [This is a rhetorical question to which the answer should be, no. Why? Because the whole body is not an eye. The whole body's not a hand. The whole body's not an arm, it's not a nose. There's a nose, there's an eye, there's an ear, there's a leg, there're hands. But they're all united so in the body of Christ not all will speak in tongues, not all will interpret, not all will be prophets, not all will be teachers. But then he will end with verse 31] Now eagerly desire the greater gifts."

Again he's not talking to you as an individual, he's talking to the whole. So I'll end with a question, what's your spiritual gift dear Christian? What is your spiritual gift? Because to each one is given a gift, each one. So what's yours? And maybe you don't know. So a few helps. First, maybe you want to pray and ask God to show you what your gift is. Second, you may want to just jump in and serve. There are *multiple* places where you can serve in our church. If you want to know, just got to our info kiosk there's a card there that is written, serve, or ask whoever is behind the info kiosk, "Can I have the card with serve on it?" There are so many areas, pick one and begin serving and see. Maybe that area is your spiritual gift. Just begin serving somewhere. What are your interests? Figure out what your interests are. And what's the motivation for this? What's the motivation, you have a gift and that gift ought to be for the common good. But he will end by saying, "Now eagerly desire the greater gifts." All of us, not just you individually, you desiring the greater gift. "Oh I want to preach like Jeff." "Oh I want to preach like Ezra and sweat like him." [Laughter] It's not for you specifically, it's for all of us as a congregation to discern together and to desire together. Lord what gift do we as Northview Community Church need in our midst for the greater good. It may be you it may not be you, but it's a gift for the common good. We ought to desire gifts that would be a blessing for all of us. Amen? Let us pray.

So Father, thank you for the gifts that you give us. Thank you for the remarkable ways that you continue to bless the local church. I pray Father for our church today, Lord would you continue to raise among us, different people who can serve in different ways, Lord. From just being greeters, to ushers, to people who preach and proclaim and lead and guide our congregation. For people who pray and care for people, both in the sanctuaries here and also in the homes in community groups, Father. We pray that your gifts would continue to grow, in our church Father, for our edification as your children, but ultimately for your glory. We commend ourselves now Father to you, in Jesus name, and God's people said, Amen.