



Message Transcript

Utilizing Spiritual Gifts

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. And just let me add my invitation to the men this Thursday night. There's some things I'm going to be sharing that you definitely want to be here and be a part of. It's going to be a great time for us. And as we've been worshiping the Lord this morning, seeking his face in prayer and now is ready to hear his living and active word, let's go before him.

Let's pray that our hearts would be ready to receive the living and active word of God. Let's pray. So, Lord, we give you glory, we give you honor, we give you praise for, Lord, who you are, for all that you are and all that you're going to do. And Lord, as we look into your word this morning, Lord, be clear to us. Allow your holy spirit to show us a picture of who you are so that, Lord, we not only receive your word, but we put into practice the very things that you show us.

And, Lord, I just pray for your help, that I would be accurate with the text and the words that I'm going to share. All for your glory, Lord, that you may be well pleased. And so, Lord, we just want to give you glory, honor and praise, and all of God's people who are ready to receive his word and apply it this morning very loudly agreed by saying, amen. Amen. I want to encourage you open up your bible to first corinthians, chapter twelve.

And what we're going to begin today, which will be about five weeks, as we walk through this, Lord willing, is to talk about spiritual gifts. That's what we're going to be talking about. Paul addressed the corinthian church in spiritual gifts, and I'll just say at the outset, when it comes to spiritual gifts, there's probably no greater source of division in the body of Christ than to talk about spiritual. As a matter of fact, for some of you who have been christians for a while, even as you hear me address the topic of spiritual gifts, one of the first questions that probably goes off in your mind is, I hope Pastor Jeff agrees with everything I believe about spiritual gifts. And that's not really the way we approach God's word.

We want to approach God's word and say, what does God's word say? What doesn't God's word say? And then make an assessment as to what that is. I also want to say this from the outset, too. Some of you who have been christians longer have been schooled and taught by a number of people, and the reason that you've been taught by them is that they love Christ and that you love them and that you know them.

The longer that you've walked in, the beliefs that you have, sometimes the more

difficult it is to let the word speak fresh again. So all I'm asking is let's just let the word of God speak. Let's let the word of God do what the word of God needs to do, and let's trust the word. So at the end of these messages, I'm going to be teaching on spiritual gifts. My goal is not so that you agree with me.

My goal is so that we get centered on the word of God. Amen. Amen. Amen. So what Paul's been talking about, after he finished talking about christian liberties in chapter eleven, we read that, he began to talk about kingdom authority based upon gender.

And we took a look at Christ was the head of man, man was the head of woman, and Christ submitted to God. So God was the head of Christ. And we took a look at that. And then last week, we talked about new covenant theology. And the reason that we celebrate the Lord's supper is because of all that Jesus did on our behalf, dying in our place, rising from the dead.

And as we take bread and wine or juice in remembrance of what he's done, we're remembering what Christ did. But also we realize, through the new covenant,

through his spirit, he dwells within us. Christ is in us, the hope of glory. And Paul spells those out before he gets into spiritual gifts. And in chapter twelve and verse one, here's what Paul says.

He says now, concerning spiritual gifts. Gifts has been added to the text. It would say, concerning spirituality or spiritual things or spiritual people. Just concerning the gift giver. Here's what he says, brethren, and I love this.

Don't you love this? About Paul? Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I mean, Paul, in spite of Corinth's self centered, indulgent lifestyle, in spite of the fact that they weren't living for Christ in every way, what's he calling? Brothers, sisters, I love you because we share the same father. Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

Your version may read ignorant. Here's what Paul is saying to the church in Corinth. I don't want you to be ignorant of spiritual gifts. The opposite way, I want you to be well aware of what spiritual gifts are all about. Hey, church, look at me.

I want you to be well aware of what spiritual gifts are all about. Paul thinks it's important enough to not only write chapter 1213, but also chapter 14. And so that's what we're going to drill down on here today. He says, you know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols. However, you were led mute idols.

Your version may read dumb idols. It just means idols don't talk. You were led away in what you were led away in by mute idols. You followed what seemingly brought a good experience, seemingly had some things that were a benefit, but they were mute. They don't even talk.

Now he's going to talk about. Listen to this. Verse three. Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the spirit of God says Jesus is accursed. And no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the spirit.

Okay? It means this. There are a lot of things that can draw your attention that are not of Christ. There are a lot of ways that you can go and have a seemingly good experience. But here's his rationale.

Someone that is filled with the spirit cannot say that Jesus is accursed. And no one can say Jesus Christ is Lord unless they're filled with the spirit. Now, you might say, listen, I know a pagan, and they'd say Jesus is Lord if you paid him \$10. I mean, people can say things, but you need to understand the first century, to confess Jesus as Lord was not just saying Jesus is lord. Confessing Jesus as Lord was to go public to God and to everyone else that there is one God, it's Jesus Christ.

There is no other. He is my master. He's the one I'll serve. He's the only way to the Father. And unless you believe in him, there is no other way to God, and you will be damned in hell.

That means to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. It means if you're listening to somebody say Jesus Christ is Lord. Nobody can say that apart from being filled by the Holy Spirit, there are people that can say things that are seemingly good. Or man. That's a cool idea.

Or man. That made me feel good. But nobody, but nobody can confess Jesus in his lordship apart from the Holy Spirit inside of them. So when you're watching somebody on tv, or you're listening to someone speak, or you're getting to know someone, the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is the lordship of Jesus Christ, that he is God and there is no other way. And here's what I think Paul is trying to explain to the Corinthians, who are very naive in their theology, is simply this.

It's my first point, that when it comes to spiritual gifts, that the purpose of spiritual gifts is the exaltation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Spiritual gifts are the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ for building up the body, which is the church, building up the body of Christ and thereby advancing his kingdom on earth. So the purpose of spiritual gifts is so that Jesus Christ gets exalted, so that the body of Christ gets built up so that the church can advance the kingdom of God in the world. That's the purpose of spiritual gifts. And this is what Paul is trying to point out to the corinthian people.

And so what I wanted to do prior to getting into all these chapters, and because these texts tend to be somewhat controversial, is just lay a basic foundation for you. For some of you, this may be very simple. For others of you, this may be all new, but just give you an understanding of this. So what we have is we have the Father God,

and what we have in the Bible is trinity. So you have the Father, you have the Son, and you have the Holy Spirit.

And here's what it says about them. They are three distinct persons, and yet they are indivisible. It is one godhead. So it's not three different gods, and it's yet one God, and it's three in one all at the same time. So if you ask me to explain that to you, here's what I would say.

Here be one word. Glory. Okay? That's how you explain the Trinity. There's no way to explain the Trinity.

As I've said before, you can't say, well, it's kind of like an egg. It's got a shell and a white and a yolk. Jesus, Father, son, and Holy Spirit are nothing like an egg. They're not three different compartments. Well, it's kind of like, you know, h two o, because, you know, sometimes it sticks steam, and sometimes it's.

What is it? Liquid, and sometimes it's ice. Not all at the same time. Like, how do you explain this? And that's Father, son and Holy Spirit.

So what we have in the Bible is the father sent his son to be the savior of the world. There's all sorts of scriptures that would talk about this. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. So what you have is you have the father who's in heaven, okay. And just a little precursor.

If there is such a gift as artwork, I didn't get it. Okay, so you have the father who's in heaven, who sent his son to the earth. Are you with me so far? Say yes if you're with me so far. Okay, so the father sent the son into the earth.

Now this is where you that are artists are not going to like this, but I'm going to try to draw a picture of Jesus. I'm making him bald with a smile this morning. Okay, but just so you get the idea, we'll give him some muscles because Jesus is strong. All right? This is like version 5.0, just so you know.

So I've gotten much better than I did earlier services. Okay, so that's, it's representative. Okay. And what we see throughout the gospels. Why are you laughing?

What we see in the gospels is what, if you ever want to know what the Father is like, all you have to do is look at the son. Right? In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God. And the word was God. So in the beginning you have father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In John 14, it says, and the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. So what we have in Jesus is the Father sending his son as the exact representation as to who he is. That's what Hebrews one tells us. So if you ever want to know what the Father's like, you just look to the person of Jesus. Jesus says, I and the Father are one.

If you've seen me, you've seen my father. I only do what I see my father doing. If

you want to know what it looks like to be fully human and fully divine all at the same time, look no further than Jesus. He's the exact representation of what that is. And what we have in the gospels is what it looked like when Jesus got here in Matthew 4:17, one of the first things Jesus said is, what?

Repent. From that time on, Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand or it's near or among you. Why? Because when you have the king talking in your presence. I'm the king.

I'm here. This is what the kingdom looks like. And all throughout Jesus ministry, we saw demonstrations of the kingdom. I mean, think about some of the things he was able to do. He gave sight back to the blind, healed people from all sorts of illnesses, and he fed 20,000 plus people with five loaves and two fish.

He walked on water, he raised the dead. He did all sorts of things that authenticated that he's fully God and he's fully man. And this is really good news, because as baptism, what we see is we get a stronger picture of the Holy Spirit, who's also God, who has always been here. And at his baptism, the Holy Spirit comes down

and rests and descends on Jesus and remains on him. And what we learned from the New Testament, the Holy Spirit's job is to glorify the Son, and the Son's job is to glorify the father.

Very simply put. So the Holy Spirit's job is, let's make Jesus look really, really good. And Jesus' job is saying, dad, I want to make you look really, really good. And what you read about in the gospels is what it looks like when the Holy Spirit's working through the perfect eternal son, bringing glory to the Father. And how did he bring the greatest glory?

By doing something only a God man could do. No human being could do it. He came to earth, he fulfilled the law, he laid down his life, died on a cross, bled out for all the sins of the world. He died and he was buried in a grave. He paid for everything.

It's paid in full. That's the good news. It means if you come here this morning and you've been looking for a relationship with God, or how do I get to God, or how can I get right with God? So simple. Jesus Christ died in your place for all of your sins.

And by confessing him as your lord and believing in your heart, God raised him from the dead. You'll be saved. Because after Jesus was buried, what happened three days later? He rose from the dead, right? He's as alive as he's ever been.

And in the gospels, we see the picture of all of his life up until the time he was dead, buried and raised, commissioned his disciples. And then there was one of the guys that wrote the Book of Luke, which was Doctor Luke. He also wrote part two. It was called the Book of Acts. Right?

And what happens at the beginning of the Book of Acts after Jesus rises from the dead? Where is he now? Where did he go? Anybody? He ascended back into heaven, didn't he?

So at the beginning of the Book of Acts, we have Jesus returning to be with the Father, seated at the right hand of the throne of God. So here's my question. Where's Jesus body now? It's not rhetorical. You're all silent.

Where is Jesus body now? Okay, yeah, he's in heaven, there's no doubt. But where's the extension of his body? See, his body's on earth because that's how the Bible would define his church. Would you agree?

In the book of Ephesians, it says that we are his body, the church, it's where jesus resides. And so a better picture of this would be if we'd remove this. The Bible says jesus is the head of the church. So really this is more what it looks like right now. Right.

So jesus is in heaven. There's no problem with the head, right? Well, there kind of is right now, but we're on earth. When jesus taught his disciples to pray, they prayed like him. What did they pray?

Our father, who art in where heaven, hallowed be thy name, means holy be your name. Then what's he prayed? Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is where in heaven. So what did jesus do when he was on earth? I'm going to give you a

physical, tangible representation of what the kingdom looks like on earth, the same way it's being done in heaven.

Jesus ascends to heaven, teaches his disciples to pray. What's he teaching them to pray? Hey, that we should pray that God's will would be done on earth the same way that it's being done in heaven. So now the Holy Spirit is still here. I'm going to make it his right.

But now where he works through is what's called the church or the body of Christ. It's one and the same. Whose job is to bring glory to Jesus, which brings great glory to the Father.

Are you with me so far? Okay, so when you read through the book of acts or you read through the Gospels, it's pretty exciting stuff because we read about all that Jesus did and all that he taught. And it's like incredible teaching. There's never going to be a better teacher or preacher than Jesus. Incredible miracles, incredible things.

It's like, wow, look at that kingdom. I want to be a part of that. He taught his disciples about the kingdom and they went around and what did they do? They did everything Jesus did. And then Jesus told them, do not rejoice because demons submit to your name.

Rather, rejoice because your name is written in the lamb's book of life. Don't rejoice because of what the Holy spirit does through you. Rejoice because you belong to me. Right? So in the book of acts, what we have is the exact same thing we have in the gospels.

It's just that Jesus is now in heaven, ruling from heaven, giving authority to his church. And what do we see? We see the church doing the exact same things that Jesus Christ did. And for many of us, we read the gospels and we read acts and we're like, that's awesome. I've never been to a church like that.

I don't really see that stuff anymore. Why is that? Well, it's because there's a lot of people that teach things different, in my opinion, than what the Bible would teach. Now, there's a different view on this. And just so you know, Paul wrote first corinthians

13 for one reason and one reason only.

I believe. As he's talking about gifts and then he talks about prophecy in tongues. Here's what he says in the middle. Check this out. Here's how you know you're doing the greatest job with your gifts.

Love one another. It means this, there are no two people you will ever meet that will fully agree on everything about spiritual gifts. You never will. You never will. There will always be someone that thinks a little bit differently than you.

That's okay. And what it means is that when I teach what I'm about ready to teach, it doesn't mean you get in small groups to debate it. I don't believe in that. I do believe in that. No, no, no.

We get in small groups to love one another. And while we're called to have a critical mind, and while I've been walking with the Lord for 28 years, which is a lot less

than some of you and a lot more than others of you, it doesn't mean that I have everything right. It means that I have had to wrestle with these things, and I'm still wrestling with these things. And you have permission to wrestle a critical mind. We always welcome here, going back to the word, we always welcome here, disagreeing with your pastor if the word says something different, we always handle here.

Critical spirit. No, we don't handle that here. God never asked us to be critical of other christians. Now, there's a couple different views of how this works. One is called a cessationist position.

Cessationist position would read a lot of what I'm going to read to you in one corinthians, chapter twelve, as well as some other passages, and we'll say something like this. And just so you know, most of the people I've been taught by cessationists love them all, love the Lord, groan because of them, all sorts of things. But their view would be that much of what God did, Jesus did in the gospels and certainly what he did in the church died off when the first apostles and prophets died off. Those gifts, many of those gifts no longer exist. Okay, here's my challenge with that.

What I've been challenged with for 28 years, I can't find one scripture that says that. My Bible says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, that I don't see anything where there's this transitional period. And some will say, well, in the early church, they needed to establish it until they had the word of God. And once you had the word of God, you don't need that. That's a theological argument.

But I would say this, the world is just as much in need today as all the spiritual gifts as we were in the first century. Okay, I will concede many cessationists will say this. Hey, Jeff, we believe in all the miraculous. We believe that Jesus still heals. We believe in all that.

We just don't believe that God gifts individuals to do that. That God doesn't work through people like that, but he can do them. Here's what I would respond. Who else is he going to work through? That's all he's got.

And I think it's a trick of the enemy to say, hey, listen, God doesn't operate that way anymore because if he can get you to believe, because for some churches, he'll get you to believe there's no holy spirit. But in other places, God doesn't work through

you like that. God can't work for you like that. And so we never even think about things like that. So when I was taught the book of acts, I was taught that the book of acts is a descriptive book and not a prescriptive book.

And to a point, I definitely believe that. So take, like, acts, chapter three. Peter and John are going up to the temple at the time of daily prayer, and they see this guy who's been lame from birth for like 38 years or something like that, and he starts panhandling. He's like, hey, get some money for us. Peter says, hey, look me in the eye.

Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazarene. Get up and walk. And the man gets up and walks, goes in the temple, everybody starts celebrating, okay? It's describing what took place. I agree with that.

It is not prescribing church that every time you see someone beg for money or if you're outside King Super and somebody says, can I have some change? Say, I don't have any change. But what I do have, I give you walk. I mean, that's not what it's

saying. Okay?

But what I do believe happens when we think like that is there are times in our life where God may prompt us to do something or act in faith a certain way, that we shut that stuff down. Because you know what? I don't want to look foolish in front of somebody else. Here's what I do believe. I believe the Holy Spirit is just as active in the church and active in individuals today and calling us to be open to what he wants.

Okay, so that's a cessationist position. And just so you know, I love all my brothers and sisters in Christ who are cessationists. I am not one of them. I would be what's called a continuationist. I would believe that all the gifts are as operative today as they were in the first century and that God gifts individuals in his church to accomplish his mission in the world.

That's continuationism. And the reason, like I said, that I believe that is I can't find anything in scripture that says opposite. As a matter of fact, in John, chapter 14, verses twelve through 14, Jesus says, the things that you've seen me do, you will do these things and you will do them even greater. I mean, how do you explain that?

Sometimes it means people take it to me, well, Jesus preached to this size group, so we'll preach to a larger size group.

Or Jesus saw this many saved in his ministry. We'll see this many. No, no. Jesus healed people. Jesus saw sight restored to the blind.

Jesus said, you'll do everything I've been doing and do it in great measure. What's that mean? It means that the Holy Spirit hasn't changed. I read about a story in the Bible where Jesus cast demons out of a guy and 2000 pigs drowned. Okay, where are the demons today?

They're just as operative as they've always been. Now, we don't talk about them very much, but they're just as operative as they've always been. We think, well, that happens in third world countries. As if Satan's got this little map of the globe and says, hey, demons, you can only operate over here. No, they operate here too.

And we'll talk about them in a little bit. But here's why we get scared to talk about

that stuff. And let me tell you why I've been scared in my journey as a christian to talk about this stuff is because some of the stuff I've seen on tv or some of the venues that I've been in are just a little bit freaky. Let's just be honest. And if you're sitting here with some fear in your heart, like, holy cow, Jeff's going to be wearing a three piece laser suit next week.

He's gonna have a toupee and he's gonna be throwing people down on the ground. I'm out of here, right? It's not gonna happen. It's just not gonna happen. Because I think spiritual gifts done right do not draw any attention to the person who's doing it, but brings all, what glory and exaltation to Jesus Christ for the purpose of building up the body so that we're encouraged to go out and advance the kingdom in the world.

That's why I think gifts are operative. That's why God gives them to his church. And here's the truth. The truth is Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Let me tell you what that means.

It means in the same way that we read the story of David and Goliath. When

David stands up to Goliath and Goliath says, who are you to bring me fight at me with sticks? And he's like, no, no, no. You don't understand. He goes, I am coming at you in the name of the Lord Almighty.

Like, today is your last day. You're done. It's not me coming against you. And just as Goliath was no match for David, God's anointed the world and all of its demons are no match for a church that is exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

You get a picture of the gates of hell, like, being thrown back as the church being offensive is taking it to them. That's what the Bible is all about. I mean, there is no match for the church of Jesus Christ. But what God needs, he doesn't need our talents and our gifts. Why?

Because the Bible says the flesh counts for nothing. The spirit is everything. I mean, God doesn't need a talented Jeff. Why? Because the Bible says in Ephesians 16 610, and following to put on the whole armor of God.

Why? Because our battle's not against flesh and blood. It's not against this world. It's against where. It's against all the cosmic powers of darkness.

So how are we going to beat the enemy? We beat him here. That's why prayer is such a big part of our church and seeking the Lord. Because I want to tell you something. Everything good that God does always happens in the spiritual, invisible world before it ever happens in the physical, visible world.

Let me say it again. Everything good that God does always happens in the spiritual, invisible world before it happens in the physical, visible world. Remember Daniel, when he was praying for some help and God sent an angel to him. But how long did it take? It took 21 days to get there.

He said, hey, Daniel, I was released day one, but I got in a fight over Persia, and there was all this battle going on. If God could open our spiritual eyes to see what's really going on in the world, we would realize God doesn't need a more talented you.

He needs a holy spirit filled up you to accomplish what God wants. That's what Paul's talking to the corinthians about. And just so you know, any of you good parents out there, you know what it's like if you have more than one kid and they fight over something?

Has that ever happened in anybody else's house besides me? Okay. You know what you do with that? Like, you know, as a good parent, you may walk in and say, hey, we're done with ps four for the night. I'm taking the controller.

We're shutting this thing down. You can have it back, but I'm just shutting it down. You would expect the apostle Paul to tell the corinthian people, because of their self indulgent lifestyle, their abuse of all the gifts, hey, we're shutting down the gifts. Just worship God, listen to the word, and quit all this stuff. But he does just the opposite.

He tells them to earnestly desire spiritual gifts. He says, do not forbid the speaking of tongues. He said, I pray that all of you would prophesy. I mean, if there's any time you would think Paul would say, shut this thing down. This is a mess.

This would be the greatest opportunity. And he spends three chapters saying just the opposite to a bunch of self indulgent christians that were living a carnal life. It tells me, I believe God wants to do more than we're allowing him to do. Now, one of the reasons that we don't see. See a lot of this line in the church is because, much like, when you have physical muscles that you don't exercise, they atrophy, right?

I mean, a couple months ago, Pastor Mark called me and said, hey, I lead this spin class. You want to come and spin? Just so you know, it's a really cool word for stationary bike. And I went, it was some ungodly hour, like, at 530 in the morning or something like this. And Mark's there all duded up in his gear, and he's got music playing, playing, and he's ready to go.

And I got on the bike, and he showed me on there, hey, you can set the tension a little higher. And I was like, well, how do you set it a little lower? And he goes, go left. And so I did that, and we're going. The longer we went, the more excited he got, the more he sweated.

I mean, we got, like, a half an hour into this thing, and we got done. I thought we were done. It was just a water break. I thought we were done. And he's like, wasn't that awesome?

And he's talking to the whole class, and everybody's sweating like, that was great. Don't you feel those endorphins? I'm like, I ain't feeling any of that. I'm feeling pain. Right.

Why? Cause those muscles hadn't been exercised spiritually. When muscles aren't exercised, they atrophy as well. If you've been given certain gifts and you choose not to use them, they atrophy spiritually. But if you exercise them, you can get to a place where you enjoy them.

And I've heard people talk about spiritual gifts, like, well, if you enjoy what you're doing, it's not of the Lord. Let me tell you something. I don't preach because I have to. I'm blessed that I have the opportunity to. I mean, I'm kind of buzzing right now just talking about Jesus and his gifts and what he wants to build in our church.

And I buzz so much that by 02:00 on Sunday afternoon, I'm usually spent, like, it's nap time for me because it feels so good to tell people that Jesus Christ is Lord and that his word is true and that his spirit is alive and active. I get fired up about that. And if you're in an area where you're using your spiritual gifts, that's exactly how you can grow into it right now. A few weeks ago, some of you guys don't know, but I had voice surgery a couple months ago, and then I ended up back up in the hospital for back spasms. I couldn't move.

They took ct scans of me after the emergency room. They could find nothing wrong with me. The doctor came in, and she said to me, she's like, you've been here 4 hours and normal er visit's three. She's like, there's nothing wrong with you. If you can just get up out of this bed, you can go home.

And I said, admit me. I could talk. There was nothing wrong with my head. I could eat food, I could breathe. I just couldn't move my body right.

The problem in the church today is there's nothing wrong with the head. Jesus Christ is the same. Yesterday, today, and forever. The problem is the body is just laying lame and limp, and we don't get to use them the way we need. So think about this for a second.

I've been told from people that tell me on our radio spots that about 40% of people that listen to christian radio don't go to church. And I don't know if that statistic is true or not, but I will concede this. There's a number of people that love the Lord Jesus Christ that don't participate in church at all. And you gotta realize gifts are for the building up of the body. So if you're a Christian, it means you've been gifted to help other people.

And if you stay away, you're hurting the cause of Christ no matter what. And some of the people that are the biggest critics of the church, I used to be one. I've told you that I confessed that repented, and then God put me in a position where I could help lead. One. Some people that are biggest critics of the church have made the least amount of investment in the church.

Cause it's hard to give your money, your time, your energy, your resources to God and to God's people, and then have people talk bad about the church, it actually will bother you. But if we could concede for a moment that some of the people who are generally christians in our country, they don't even come to church. And then there's a number of people who say, well, I read one corinthians twelve, but I don't believe in these gifts anymore. And then some of the people that are left are like, yeah, I go to church, but I'm not really filled with the spirit or walking with Christ. I mean, this is what we have to work with right now.

My artwork makes sense, doesn't it? This is what the church can look like to people. I mean, how many of you, by show of hands, know somebody that is not a Christian or outside the church who have some sort of challenge in their life by show of hands? Just some sort of challenge that could use a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ? Right now, every hand went up, or should.

It just means if it didn't, you need to get outside your own little world. But it goes up. Why? Because everybody's got financial challenges. Everybody's got hurts, everybody's got pains, everybody's in need of a savior, everybody needs their sins forgiven.

But if this is all you're operating with, a couple things happen. Really, the only gifts that end up remaining in the church are teaching, which is a spiritual gift. Right. Or helps, which is a spiritual gift. Or administration, which is a spiritual gift, and a few others like mercy, which is a spiritual gift.

But what about if your gifts don't fall into this little area of the right arm, then what do you do? You say, well, I guess I'm just called to help other people do their thing, but there's really no work for me here. I'm gonna find a different place to serve. No, the church is for everybody. God placed you on his kingdom team.

Imagine, if you will, an NFL game where some coach said, hey, I just want the four best NFL offensive players, the four best NFL defensive players, the four best NFL special teams players. We'll only put four guys on the field instead of eleven at a time. I don't care which four guys you pick. I want to be on the other team. We'll beat you every single time.

Right. And what happens in the church? There's no problem with the church, and there's no problem with Jesus Christ. The problem is we've either been deceived into believing or we just haven't acted upon the very thing that God has gifted the church in all of his glory to operate the way that it's always been able to operate. And so we read the book of acts and say, wouldn't it have been great to live back then?

Wouldn't have been awesome if we could have lived back then. Wouldn't it? So great when God actually did awesome stuff? And then I think instead of having a smile on Jesus face, it kind of just gets plain. He's like, I'm willing to do all the same things today as I've already always been willing to do.

But you won't let me. You won't let me, church. That's why we want to grow in these gifts. That's why Paul's telling the corinthians, gifts are important if they're used right. If gifts are to draw attention to Jesus and to glorify him, which is who the Holy Spirit is trying, trying to glorify.

He's not trying to glorify you. When God's gifted you, it's not to make you famous. When God's gifted you, it's not to make you good. When God's gifted you, it's

not. So people look at you and say, oh, that guy's so awesome.

She is so incredible. That's not why God gives you. God gifts you so that you'll use whatever he gives you to love and build up the body of Christ so that the body of Christ is fired up and takes the next step, which is, hey, we're not just about us. We're about advancing Christ's kingdom in the world. Amen.

So that's a foundation that I'm laying for, where we're going, what we're doing. But I want to let you know that everybody's gifted, and the reason we need gifts is because in the church, God doesn't need a better version of you. God needs the filled up version of you with his spirit to accomplish his work. I mean, even in the Old Testament, it's not by Zechariah four six, not by might, not by power, but by thy spirit, declares the Lord. It's a person who has surrendered to the will of the Holy Spirit in their life, allowing the Holy Spirit to use them to build the body of Christ and advance his kingdom.

Amen. So this is why Paul goes on to say, I'll give you the second point. There are different kinds of gifts, there are different types of service, and there are different

levels of effectiveness, but all gifts are intended to glorify Christ church. Okay? There's different kinds of gifts, different types of service, different levels of effectiveness, but all the gifts are intended to edify Christ church.

In other words, build up the body of Christ. God's gifted you to build up others who are believers so that they can be effective in their service to the king. Notice what he begins to say in verse four. Now, there are varieties or differences or dispensing of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are varieties of ministry but the same lord, and there are varieties of effects or effectiveness, but the same God who works all things in all persons, but to each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. Let me point out a couple things to you.

Notice how he says this. All gifts come from the same spirit and the same lord and the same God. What do you have? Father, son, and spirit. All the gifts are to bring glory to the trinity.

That's what they're for. And notice what he says. He says, who works all things in all persons? Every single person on the team, God's kingdom, team is gifted. God

didn't save you and say, man, I can't use you.

You're sidelined. You know, just show up every now and again. That'll be good. No, everybody's gifted to give something back to the lord, okay? And then he says in verse seven, but to each one, that's everybody, but each one individually is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

The manifestation of the spirit is when you are alive in Christ to the full, that brings God the greatest glory through how you're gifted. And the common good means it profits other people in the body of Christ. It builds other people up. Now, think about this. There are different kinds of gifts, different ways that they can be used, and different effectiveness to each.

It means this, whatever your gift is doesn't. Does not define what you should be doing with your life. Well, I have the gift of pastor. I guess I have to be a pastor. No, you don't.

God can use the gift of pastor in a variety of ways. I have a teaching gift, so I guess I got to be a pastor. No. God can use a teaching gift in a variety of ways. Some of you that have the gift of teaching, the area of service that you end up being called to is four year olds in our children's ministry.

I think I have some teaching gifts. That's not my most effective area of service, I can assure you. Right. And different people have different capacities or different levels of effectiveness, and God's Holy Spirit is the one who apportions them. There are people all over our country and around the world who have stood up to preach today, and they all have different gifting, and they all have different levels of effectiveness, and who gave them that?

It's the Holy Spirit, so we can grow in our gifting, and God wants us to use what we have and not sit around. I wish I had somebody else's gifts. I wish I had that. But to put into practice what God gives us, I mean, think about this little short nun from Calcutta, India. Remember her?

You know, what she spent her life doing? I mean, I really see one main gift in

that woman, mercy. All she said was, I just want to love people like Jesus would love them. I want to be the hands and feet of Jesus to really hurting people. That's all she did.

I mean, she's had a gift of mercy. She was just a short little nun. You ever heard about her? See, sometimes we think we need all these other things, and we need to have other people around us and other people. If you'll just be faithful with who you are in Christ, God will do the rest.

You say, well, how do I discover my spiritual gift? I'm so glad that you asked that question. I mean, there's things that you can do. You can take a spiritual gift inventory. There's nothing wrong with that.

I'm not a huge fan, and here's why. I looked at nine different tests this week with one of our pastors on staff and on those nine different tests, there were between seven and 27 spiritual gifts that you might have. I mean, that's how different the body of Christ looks at this. And again, I love all the people that wrote the tests, right? Some people would include the gift of celibacy.

Some people even include the gift of martyrdom. I suppose if you have that gift, you get to exercise it once, and then you're done with that one. So that's not a big deal. I mean, but how it is. And you can learn different things about yourself as you do this.

But let me tell you the best way to learn your spiritual gifts. Be involved in the body of Christ. If you get in a small group, other people will discover your gift sooner than you. And if you've been a Christian a while, think back to what it was like when you first became a Christian and how you acted. Some of you that have a teaching gift, as soon as you became a Christian, the word was like, word, word, word.

I gotta get in the word. I gotta get in the word. Some of you that were more apostolic or evangelistic, first thing you did was run tell all your friends about who Jesus was and how they needed to get saved, right? I mean, it's just part of who you are. I mean, think about it.

You ever been in a small group, and on night one, you walk into a small group, everybody's nervous, nobody knows everybody. You're just getting to know each other. You're eating some food, and some point during the night, either early on in the middle, or by the end, somebody will say this almost every time, hey, would it be okay if we just passed around this sheet of paper and everybody put their name, email address, and phone number? I'll compile a list and send it out to everybody. Has that ever happened to anybody here?

Okay. You don't need to take a spiritual gifts inventory. No, you have the gift of administration. Okay? You just do.

Because even if you did that and then you gave it to me as an entrepreneur or my wife as an artist, we'd lose it and ask you to give it to us again. That's just how we're gifted, right? I mean, I learned a long time ago I don't have that gift. I mean, two years ago, I got to go to the Super bowl to see the Broncos, and I was flying into San Jose, California. And so I was talking to my assistant because it was Super bowl weekend and prices on cars were really elevated.

And so I said, hey, listen, see what you can do. And she came back with the price, I'm like, man, that seems kind of high. I don't know if I want to pay that. Let me do some checking. Well, have you ever checked airline prices or rental car prices?

And they, like, drop, and then they go up and drop? I found a rental car in San Jose for \$5 a day. So I booked it like, that fast, and I came back in the next day, and I said, lisa, hey, listen, you don't need to give me a car. I got one for \$5 a day. She's like, \$5?

There's no way. I'm like, I'm telling you, look at this Expedia. It's there. I own it. She's like, that's incredible.

She's like, I can't beat that. Which was all well and good until we landed in San Jose, California, and I walked to the counter, and they said, yes, sir, you don't have a car here. And I pulled out my sheet, and I said, yes, I do. It's right here. They said, that's San Jose, costa Rica.

So I don't book my travel anymore. Y'all other people, that's just so natural for them. That's not natural for me. I have to work hard at it. And, hey, just because you don't have a gift doesn't mean you don't serve.

So if I take a spiritual gift inventory, some people have the gift of helps, which means you're fired up to do whatever you can to help facilitate ministry. But if somebody said to me, hey, Jeff, we need you to help set up chairs, I don't say, well, that's not my gift. Let somebody else with the gift of helps do that. No, it means I still help. I just may not get the spiritual buzz out of it that they do.

Some of the people that greet in our lobby have the gift of help. They are so fired up to be able to do that. Some of the people that help around our church facilities have such a gift to do that. And just so you know, this is my belief, my conviction, that just because you're given one gift or two gifts doesn't mean that God can't use you in different ways at different times or allow the Holy Spirit to work in your life in a unique way for a given moment where he could choose to use you that way. And so it's really important that we understand gifts and that we understand that the purpose of gifts is to glorify Christ for the benefit of God's people, to build them up.

Now, I'll have you write down these verses. There's three other places in the New Testament that talk about gifts, and I want to give you the freedom to wrestle with this. Like, I know as I'm talking, some of you are like, thank goodness we're finally talking about gifts. I'm so alive. Here's my assignment for you.

Chill out, okay? Just relax. We'll grow in this stuff. Some of you, as you're listening to me, are saying, I'm a little bit scared by some of this stuff, and I'm not sure. Here would be my word to you.

It's okay. And just take your time and wrestle with the text of scripture. And let's let God show you. Let's let God show us what he wants to do in our church. But here's a couple other verses you can write down.

Romans, chapter twelve, verses 16, seven and eight. Romans, chapter twelve, verses six, seven and eight. First Peter, chapter four and verse eleven, which basically says, if you have speaking gifts, speak unto the Lord. If you have serving gifts, serve

unto the Lord. And then ephesians, chapter four, verse eleven and twelve, where God has called some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, teachers to equip God's saints.

That's building up the body of Christ for the work of ministry or service. That's where you can look. And so this is what's going on. But I want you to see, know this. Know this.

You're on God's kingdom team. If you're a Christian, he's gifted you for service, and it's to be the fullness of who you are. That's what the reason is. And if you think about your gifting for a second, too, I might even add this. When you're spiritually gifted in a certain way, there's certain things that happen in the body of Christ.

Pay attention to what brings you great joy. Pay attention to what frustrates you. Pay attention to what makes you sad. Pay attention to what angers. If you have a certain gifting, like for me, I know I have a gifting to preach God's word.

It used to drive me nuts. Being in a church where nobody opened the Bible and preached, it drove me crazy. Like I'm talking crazy crazy. It drives me crazy today.

Why?

Because it's part of my gifting. Like, if you're not going to preach this, I'm going home. I don't want to hear what you have to say. I want to hear what God has to say. That's part of my gifting.

Now, that may not bother some of you that can hear a good christian speaker who's like, man, I really got something out of that. I won't get anything out of it because I'll be so angry the whole time I'm listening. Right. Pay attention to those things in your life. It's part of your gifting, right?

When you see things in the body of Christ, that's out of a line. That's out of line. Don't complain. The reason you see it's out of line is because you're gifted to do something about it. Amen.

Amen. So notice this, as Paul is going to go on to say in 8910 and eleven, he's going to talk a little bit about the gifts. And let me just make the third point. The Holy Spirit dispenses gifts to every believer as he decides is best. The Holy Spirit gets to choose.

Now we can earnestly desire spiritual gifts. We're going to talk about that. We can even ask for spiritual gifts, but we don't want to be like a four year old kid. Give me this, give me this, give me. That's not what it means.

We can eagerly desire gifts, but we're going to allow the Lord to choose what is best for in us. And then to the extent that we exercise that, that's what brings honor to God. Now I'll read this section and then we'll go through notice he says, for to one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit, to another, the word of knowledge according to the same spirit, to another faith by the same spirit, and to another, gifts of healing by the one spirit. Do you see that juxtaposition? One spirit, the same spirit.

One spirit, the same spirit. It's the Holy Spirit that's doing this. Then he says this,

and to another the affecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, and another various kind of tongues, and another interpretation of where's the spirit? Next verse. But one and the same spirit works all these things, distributing each one individually, just as he wills.

It's one and the same spirit. It's the spirit of God that does all this. He decides what's best. So let's just take a look at these gifts. Let's take a look at what they are.

He talks about wisdom. Wisdom biblically is excellence in christian living. It's choosing to do right. It's making the right decisions. It can be studying God's word.

And this is what God's word says. And this is how we should live. But have you ever been around somebody where you have a real complicated problem. This is going on at work and this is going on at home, and these are going on with my kids, and these are my finances. And somebody's able to say an apt word to you, like in three sentences or a paragraph, like, here's what I'd do if I were you.

And all of a sudden it's like, yeah, that just makes sense. That's a word of wisdom. Okay, how about a word of knowledge? A word of knowledge can be a gift, especially if you have a teaching gift that God can use. When you're studying God's word and through the spirit, he gives you knowledge about his word to talk to other people about.

That's also a word of knowledge. Another word of knowledge is some of you in here. This happens to you from time to time, where you will just happen to know things about people that you meet or that you know nothing about, but you happen to know something about them. And it could be that God gave you that word of wisdom so that you can be interceding for them or praying for them or asking them if you can encourage them or help them. I mean, I've heard of ladies, you know, that have had this word of wisdom.

Like, hey, I went up and congratulated this woman on her pregnancy that she was having a son. And they said, how did you know that? We haven't told anybody yet, and we don't even know what we're having. And then they go to the sonogram a week later and they find out they're having a son. And how do you know that stuff?

That's called a word of knowledge. Okay. That can be a gifting. Some of you that have that gifting, you probably put that down and said, that's just weird that I know this stuff. Why do I know this stuff?

Normatively, you know that stuff? So you can be praying for the person or praying for the things that God reveals. It's a word of knowledge. How about faith? We're all called to have faith.

We're all called to have faith in God's one and only son. But faith is really the ability to believe God for things before you see them happen. For some of you, having faith is when God shows you, hey, I'm bringing your prodigal child back. You can believe me for this. I'm going to do this.

He doesn't tell everybody else he's going to bring the child back. He's told you, and you're praying until you see that. Or perhaps you're a pastor that tells a church, when you're three years old, we're buying a building. We need to raise \$2 million by

next weekend. I know what's going to happen.

Right? That's faith. That's believing it before you see it, when it doesn't make sense. And some of you are more gifted in that area. How about gifts of healing?

And notice what it says in the Bible. It's not gift of healing, it's gifts of healing. Now what does that mean? I believe that God gifts some people within the body of Christ to pray for people. Now let me be clear on this.

If you have a gift of healing, it doesn't mean every single person that you pray for will be healed. It just doesn't. I've prayed for people that have recovered from brain cancer and I've prayed for people that have died. God is the sovereign one. He gets to decide how all that stuff works.

But it doesn't mean that some of you aren't gifted. And oh, by the way, for those that would say, well, if you really have that gift of healing, go to children's hospital and

make sure everybody there is healed and then we'll believe you. That would be like saying Billy Graham never had a gift of evangelism. I mean, I went to one of his crusades and everybody didn't get saved. Right?

I mean, just because you have a gift, it's not about the result, it's about what God has gifted you to be. I do believe in the body of Christ. There are gifts of healing. Another word on gift of healing. Gifts of healing.

It doesn't mean we don't use modern medicine. When I found out about my throat, I found the best doctor that I possibly could and I had people praying for my healing. And I believe both resulted in me being back on this platform. Right? How about this?

How about affecting miracles? Let me just really quickly say what a miracle is. A miracle means only God could do this. It means if you told the story, whether you talked to a pagan or a christian, they would say if that really happened, that had to be God. That's what a miracle is.

Okay? A miracle is not. We went on vacation this weekend and we forgot to leave enough dog food, but we got home on Monday and our dog was still alive. Okay? That's not a miracle.

If your dog, while you were gone, got up and made three course meal and washed the dishes while you were gone, that's a miracle, right? I mean, we gotta be really careful what we call a miracle, but God still does miracles, you say? Well, Jeff, what are they? I don't know. That's why they're miracles.

They're those things that when they happen, we would say, that had to be God. There's no way that would happen otherwise. And we're not drawing attention to the miracle prayer or the miracle worker. There's no such thing. Because in the New Testament, Jesus never drew attention to himself when he did miracles.

It wasn't like, look what I did. See that guy? He couldn't walk. Now he does. No, the miracle happened, and when people saw the miracle, they gave glory to Jesus or they rejected him.

It wasn't about drawing attention. Okay, again, it's about drawing attention to Jesus prophecy. If you'll permit me, in a couple weeks, when we get to chapter 14, I'll talk more about it. The best definition for prophecy, my understanding, is first corinthians 14 three. It is a word spoken that edifies, exhorts, or consoles.

It's a word that is spoken that comes out of your mouth for somebody else. That edifies them means it builds them up, it exhorts them, helps them take a step of faith, or it brings comfort or consolation to them. Have you ever been in that situation where you're just talking to somebody and all of a sudden you don't quite know what to say, and all of a sudden something comes out of your mouth and it was really encouraging for that person or really built them up or brought comfort, or have you ever been on the receiving end of that when something has something comforting or encouraging or exhorting to say to you? That's a word of prophecy. I'll be clear on this again, but I want to say it now in case you're not here when I talk about it.

One thing we're not going to do in our church, here's words you want to get out of your mind. God told me to tell you. Okay, let's just never talk like that. Here's what

God told me to tell you. This book.

This is what God's told me to tell you. This is what God's told you to tell others. But there are times if you feel prompted to tell somebody something, we'll walk through how you might be able to do that in a way that's building and edifying or consoling to them, rather than, hey, God told me to tell you this, and you better do what I say. That makes you the authority, and it doesn't bring comfort or conviction or anything. It just.

It's hurtful. Okay, so we'll talk more about that when we get there. How about distinguishing of spirits? Distinguishing of spirits? Listen, I believe that demonic is just as alive as it's always been.

And I'm not telling you, let's freak out about all this stuff, but let's just, let's just be real. There's a demonic. I want to be really clear. If you're a Christian, you have the holy spirit inside of you. No demon can possess you against your will, he just can't.

You have the Holy Spirit. There's no demon that's going to take you. You're God's and his forever. But what the bible would talk about is what's called strongholds, okay? They're strongholds.

If you continue to live away from Christ or live carnal from Christ, you can have a stronghold in your life. Here's my question. What's holding on to you strongly? Demons. Can christians have demonic oppression or influence in their life?

100% yes. Have you ever met somebody who's a Christian and you've seen fruit in their life or you've seen fruit in their ministry and you're like, there's no doubt this person's a Christian. But there's like that 10% of the time when you're around them. I mean, they have anger worse than a pagan does. They just fly off the handle.

They prayed about it, they've done everything. It just doesn't seem to leave. I mean, could it be that there's a stronghold in their life from something that needs to be released or maybe in your own life when you think about, hey, I go to church, I pray, I go to church, I pray, I worship, I love the Lord. But there's this thing in my life, no matter what I do, I just can't get rid of it. Can we just call it what it is?

It's a stronghold in your life that came from somewhere, sometime with something. I mean, you can say, well, demons don't exist and live with that for the rest of your life. Or you can say, you know what? There's a way to walk through the word and hear the truth of scripture so that you can live free. That's what it means.

And distinguishing the spirits, some of you have the gift to know that before it even happens. I'm telling the story kind of against my wife's will in some ways, but I remember when we were first married, kind of in always when we were first married, we went out to dinner with a couple. The guy was in the process of divorcing his wife and he had a girlfriend. And so we were. I was trying to minister him.

We went out with the girlfriend and him, and I was trying to tell him, hey, stay with your wife. We had dinner. We get in our car to go home, and we close the doors, and as soon as I'm pulling out, my wife said, in the event that God ever grants us with children, I will never leave our children alone with that guy. He's an abuser. And I said, what are you talking about?

I'm like, how can you say that? You can't say something about somebody else unless you have knowledge of. Do you have any evidence of this? All this kind of stuff? We got in a fight, you remember?

Okay, word of the men, they'll always remember. And I was like, this is just ridiculous. There's no evidence. I mean, how do you know this? About three weeks later, I was talking to my friend.

I was over at his house. I'm like, dude, what are you going to do? I was like, are you still talking to. Yeah, but it's never going to work out now. I said, why?

He goes, well, she was over here last night. And he goes, we got in an argument, and he goes, I pinned her down. I was choking her. He goes, I almost killed my wife. And she fled out of here.

And I came home that night, and I was like, how did you know that? And Kim would be the first to tell you. She doesn't walk around and know everything about everybody, and it doesn't happen all the time. But there are times in her life where that becomes a very obvious thing to her. Why does she know that?

To pray for protection, to be able to speak. That can happen. Can the Holy Spirit gift people that way? Yes. Some of you are gifted that way.

You know it, right? How about various kinds of tongues? Let me just say a word on tongues now, because we'll come back in chapter 14. Tongues are unknown languages to the speaker that worship the Lord. That's what a tongue is.

It's an unknown language to the person speaking it that worships the Lord. And if you'll permit me, I will walk you through that when we get to first corinthians 14, and then interpretation is simply this. Interpretation is when that tongue is spoken that's unknown to the speaker. That person says, I know exactly what that means. Here's what it means.

That's interpretation. Right? And when I get to verse 14, I think we'll be able to spell a lot of that out. But all this to say, as your pastor, I believe God wants to operate all those things, how do they work? They work when we are really humble before the Lord, when we are completely filled up by his spirit, when our purpose is to exalt Jesus.

Our purpose is to build others up, and our purpose is to grow in the body and. Yeah. Could this be a little messy? Yeah. But God's called us to shepherd his church, not shut it down.

And so I want to see us grow in this. And as a church, that's what we're going to continue to do. We're going to build up the body of Christ. We're going to continue to grow in the things of Christ. And we want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in everything we do.

Amen. And so I would just encourage you, if you're leaving here, and say, I'm

totally ungifted. I don't even know what I am. I don't even know what I need to do.

Here's what I would tell you to do.

Worship the Lord and honor him, and it will naturally just be a part of who you are. Amen. So would you stand with me as we pray? Lord Jesus, we just give you praise, glory and honor for who you are. Lord, we just ask that you would bless our church with the fullness of all that you are for your kingdom.

Lord, if we're wrestling or if we're excited, Lord, we pray we just go back to your word and allow your word to speak. And, Lord, that you would have your way. All for your glory, we give you praise in Jesus name. Amen.