

Good to have you here at Crossroads. Good morning. Let's take our bibles; let's now turn to that familiar book – 1 Corinthians. We're in chapter 12. We're continuing our series on Spiritual Gifts. Last Friday I was with my wife, children and several of our Elders and their families and we were at St. Constantine's downtown at the Greek Festival enjoying the festivities; eating too much baklava and other Greek related food. But I was sitting there, we were in the fellowship hall of St. Constantine's. We were watching the dancers and all of the activities that were going on and I couldn't help just think about the importance of culture and understanding people and really what makes them who they are; that development of culture and context in understanding people especially those from diverse cultures. As I was thinking about that I was thinking about our study that we've been in and especially this chapter about how important it is to understand context and the people involved in that context to understand any of the diversities or issues or problems that might be in that context. As we come to chapter 12 we come to a controversial subject today but it was also controversial in their day and when we understand their context we will better, in our day understand it. And so we're going to focus a little bit on that this morning. We worked through just a little bit of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 last week. We were basically laying a foundation for the study. We learned what is and what is not a spiritual gift and let me just give you a quick recap.

We saw four words out of the first seven verses that help define what is and what is not a spiritual gift. Verse 1 we found out right away that the first word we should look at is the word spiritual. Paul writes, now concerning spiritual gifts and I told you last week that actually the word gift is not in the original Greek. It's supplied by the translators. It's implied and the word spiritual is pluralized so it's spirituals. In essence what Paul is saying is now about or concerning the spirituals. Already that tells us something about spiritual gifts that they're spiritual in nature. They have nothing to do with our natural ability but rather they're supernatural. They're given to us by the spirit of God. You say, well, how did we get this title spiritual gifts? Well, you put verse 1 and verse 4 together and you get the title.

And that's the second word we looked at – the word gifts. That's found in verse 4. That's the word *charisma* and it's the idea that God has given you a gift. We've heard of this term charisma or charismatic but the idea behind it is this concept of a gift. It's not something that you definitely have been developed or developing in your life but rather it's something that God has given you at your new birth. So, they're spiritual; they're gifts and what are they for?

Well, we see that down in verse 5 for the service. They are called service. We use our spiritual gifts not necessarily for ourselves but for the service of the body. And then verse 7 – they are manifestations of the Spirit. We learned that manifestation essentially means to make known. They are given to be made known. Made known about what? Make us know? Make the gifts know? No. To make the giver of the gift known. So, they're spiritual. They're gifts. They're service. They're manifestation. That is what is the foundation of a spiritual gift.

And we started with that kind of building, that understanding. We said it's important to understand what they are before we launch off into the rest of the study and understand how they can be applied to our lives.

So, now that you understand that foundation let's move into chapter 12 and let's understand the use of spiritual gifts. Now as you do this, as you turn into chapter 12 I want you to remember the context. Let me just briefly remind you where we've been. Look back into your memory recesses; all the way back ten months ago when we studied the initial opening introduction of this book and we studied, initially Acts chapter 18. Paul's missionary journey around the Mediterranean. He stops at Corinth – an important city in the Roman Empire; a very large, metropolitan city. Some scholars believe there were up to a million people living there. Paul stays the winter in Corinth, about a year and a half and there while he's at Corinth he plants this church. He develops his leaders. He begins the arduous journey of instructing and teaching them theology and the Word. And when the winter comes to an end spring arrives he goes on with his church planting endeavors and he leaves Godly men in his place to lead the church. Sometime after that if you remember there were all kinds of problems that started developing at the church of Corinth and someone begins to write these problems down and they send an envoy to Paul with a letter explaining all of the issues that were going on in the church and they were massive. There were a number of issues that were basically imploding this particular congregation. Paul then writes the letter of 1 Corinthians in response to a number of their questions.

You say, well, what was going on in Corinth that made Paul write this letter? What were the questions? What were the issues? What were the conflicts? Well, that's what we've been actually looking at from chapter 1 all the way through chapter 11. Every time we move into a new series essentially what we're doing is we're looking at a new conflict, a new problem; something that had developed in the church that Paul was addressing. For example, in the very first chapter we learned about the divisions that were in the body. There were divisions between leadership; divisions about which pastor they wanted to follow; divisions in philosophy – should we follow man's philosophies or God's philosophy. There were factions. There were cliques. There were splinter groups. Imagine coming to church with that kind of atmosphere going on in the body – this sense of division.

Not only that but they were bringing their past pagan cultural background; their baggage from their past religions into Christianity and that was causing all kinds of problems. There was sexual immorality. There was fornication. There was even a case of incest within the church that Paul had to deal with. And all along the church is failing to discipline anybody; failing to settle conflicts; failing to hold anybody accountable and so there was really a mess. Add on top of that what we learned later in Corinthians that they were suing one another, divorcing one another; that there were all these issues that had to do with how they were using and misusing their Christian liberties and on top of that they

were divisive when it came to worship in the Lord's Supper. That's all that we've learned up to chapter 12. Now, when we come up to chapter 12 and we look into this topic of spiritual gifts guess what was going on in Corinth with spiritual gifts? They were having problems with them as well. So, this is not just kind of a simple teaching exercise on what the spiritual gifts are and how you are to use them. Paul is confronting a problem abuse that is all wide-spread that goes from one end of the church to the next and when it comes to spiritual gifts that too was an issue for them. We're going to see that as they were using their spiritual gifts they were actually misusing their spiritual gifts primarily because, again they were pulling contextually what they understood as worship of a deity from their background into the church.

Do you remember when we started I talked to you about the importance of the temple in the pagan society of Rome and we talked about, for example, the central temple in Corinth which was the Temple of Aphrodite? It was this massive temple. It was actually one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was this massive, massive building right in the center of Corinth. People from all over the Roman Empire would come. They would visit this temple and they would worship the goddess Aphrodite. And one of the aspects of worship was participating with the temple prostitutes. So ritual sexual intercourse was a part of their worship and this temple employed thousands of temple prostitutes. Not only that but they would all gather together in these main colonies, main square, the main center aspect of the temple and they would have these huge worship events. I was reading about the historical aspects about what was actually going on in Corinth in these temples from different commentaries. I read about twenty-five different commentators on this. Fascinating the history that has been revealed through archeology and other writing. These people would gather together and there would be just this sense of frenzy that was going on and there was these over sense of excitement and euphoria and there was this sense of utterances where there was all these different languages some that were simply created because of the hysteria and people would feel that the more out of body that they could maintain the closer they came to communing or speaking or in relationship with the deities.

This is what the Corinthian believers had as their background and so when they came into a Christian assembly and they began learning about the spiritual gifts and the impact of the Holy Spirit they brought that back, kind of thinking that they were once a part of into their present existence in Christianity and they were glowing or imploding from the inside out the entire church with their false worship.

In fact, Paul mentions that he gives us a window into what was going on in verses 2 and 3. Look at verse 2. He says, you know that when you were pagans you were lead astray to mute idols. That's what he's reminding them off. He says, but, you're not only lead astray you now are bringing that into your present assemble, verse 3, therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the spirit of God ever says Jesus is a curse and no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. See, they were involved in such

erratic behavior now in the church that some were even blasphemous with the things that they were saying in the assembly and they were attributing that to the Holy Spirit.

Well, Paul hears this and he says alright, that's enough. I need to re-train you in the spiritual gifts and essentially that's what he does in chapter 12, chapter 13 and chapter 14. he re-trains the proper use of the spiritual gifts. That's a little bit of the background.

Now, as we come to chapter 12 what we're going to see today is that Paul essentially develops for us a simple list of the spiritual gifts. He does that in verse 4 through 11 and then drop down in verse 28 through 31 another shorter list of gifts. There's not much details and I think that's on purpose because what he's doing is he's just building the kinds of gifts. You're going to see the word another; the word *állos* in the Greek about eight times or so one rapid fire after another. Why is that? It's because Paul is simply listing the gifts. He's going to define and then help us understand how to use them in chapters 13 and 14 but for now he's just setting the stage. So let's read the text and understand what the gifts are as listed and then we'll come back and we'll begin to unpack them.

Let's actually begin in verse 8 and following. He says, to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. Do you hear that just rapid fire one after another? Verse 11, all these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who appoints or appropriates or apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Now, drop down to verse 28. We'll see a few more. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Now let's stop right there. As I said that was just a simple list that Paul puts together. To define these gifts you're going to have move outside of this simple list because notice, Paul doesn't give us much definition. That means we're going to have to look at all of scripture. We're going to have to look at grammar and the historical usage of these words to fully understand how they operated in the church and that's what we're going to do.

To help you this morning I've broken the spiritual gifts into three categories. Now there's nothing masterful about this. You look at the commentaries and they'll break them into two gift list or they'll have six categories or some will have eight categories. I've just broken them down into three because I think it's the easiest to understand they seem to fit this way. So there is the teaching category of gifts; the signs category of gifts and the leadership category of gifts. Fourteen in all sum, over-lapping. What we're going to do this morning we're going to look at the teaching category. We're going to try to get halfway through this morning. We're just going to look at the one category – teaching.

And I want to tell you up front you need to put on your academic hats as we move through this list. It's going to take some careful exegesis. It's going to take some careful study and defining for you to understand these spiritual gifts. Now, what are we doing this? Because ultimately I want you to be able to evaluate yourself and your own passion and decide is this a gift that God has given to me. I want you to have a clear understanding of the gifts so that you can see if this gift is applying to you so that you can use it for the edification of the body. So we're going to be very careful and systematic as we go through this. So, I need you to put on your academic, thinking hats this morning as we unpack this.

Now, notice there are six types of teaching gifts mentioned by Paul: wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, discernment, tongue and interpretation of tongues. You say, well, why isn't tongues and interpretation of tongues under the category of signs? Aren't they sign gifts? Yes, they are. We'll get to that when we get there but right now I want you to see them in the teaching category.

By the way, just thinking in context again why do you think Paul would list six different styles of teaching gifts for the Corinthians? Well, think about it. Teaching is the furthest from this erratic, nonsensical utterances that they were bringing in and dragging in from their pagan background. Teaching is linear. It tends to take a group of people from point A to point B. It brings order to a service and I think that's exactly what Paul wanted to establish. I think there's also something of, when I say I think I'm not just imagining this. Careful study is what I'm saying. I'm in agreement with others who have the same type of traditional, concerted, understanding of the text when we say this word order also is important. Word order from the greatest to the least – Paul sets this up, why? Again – to bring order to the congregation at Corinth.

Now, we're going to look at the first three under this teaching category. The first, the utterance of wisdom in verse 8. Look at that in the text. He says to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom or the gift of wisdom. What is the utterance of wisdom? Well, let's break it down. Utterance. Utterance is from the Greek word *logos*. Those of you who are Greek students what is the *logos*? *Logos* is the Word, right. It can also be defined as the act of speaking. It can be just simply defined as what I'm doing. I am speaking. You are listening. I hope and you are tracking with me as I speak. That's *logos*. I'm speaking a word.

Now, couple this with the next word, *sophía*, wisdom and it simply means wisdom, practical wisdom. It's the idea of someone who is skilled in the affairs of life. Do you know those types of people? People who are just wise. They understand life. They understand how to unpack life. They're wise with their decision making. They're wise with their counsel. That's *sophía*. By the way *sophía* was a catch-word in the Corinthian community. It was used sixteen times. Why is that? Why would Paul specialize; use this word? Well, what could the Romans value? The Romans and the Greeks they valued wisdom. They loved their philosophers, right? They had a whole list of philosophers and

in the Corinthian context wisdom was the gateway to be popular; to be well thought of; to be well spoken of. The more wise you were the better people thought of you. And so what Paul was saying, look, it's not your wisdom, this utterance of wisdom is about. It's about the Word; the wisdom of the logos so the better translation here is the Word of wisdom. This is the idea of the teacher who speaks the wisdom of the logos or the scriptures. This is the teaching gifts. Some think this is the expositors gift – the one who studies; the one who interprets; the one who applies the Word.

Now, I have in your program a definition. Look at it. The ability to practically apply truths of scripture to life. It's the ability to practically apply what you read and understand in the scriptures for others in life; that they might lead their life. Where does this ability come from? Look at verse 8. From who? The Spirit, right? What's the purpose? To edify the body.

Now, just by the way, historical context the early church fathers understood this phrase – utterance of wisdom as a teaching gift; the idea that there were those within the body who were able to take the scriptures and help others understand it in a useful way for the affairs of life. You look back in church history, early church fathers those are usually the disciples of the apostles; live somewhere within the first one-hundred to two-hundred years of the early church. These were people who knew the apostles; those who wrote the scriptures. And we read of people like Tertullian who said “this is the utterance of wisdom. It's the Gospel knowledge” or Clement of Alexandria – “knowledge of the Gospel” or Origen who said it's the “proclamation of the logos”. That's what the utterance of wisdom, this gift of wisdom needs to be understood as – those who teach the scripture.

Now let me stop for a moment. Let me have our attention because what we have in modern Christianity is a divergent of definitions at this point. Not everyone understands the utterance of wisdom as that which is a teaching gift but rather they understand it as some type of special word that they receive from God outside of the present revelation we have in scripture. It's as if they receive something from God. Have you ever heard that? It's a phrase that's often used. It's a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge and we're going to get there when we get to that gift in a moment. It's often used with in charismatic or Pentecostal backgrounds.

Now, let me just say parenthetically I don't have any type of vendetta or ax to grind against charismatics or Pentecostal church. Many of you may have come out of that background. I have several friends who are in charismatic church; come from Pentecostal backgrounds and I value them as friends. I value what they have brought to the body of Christ. So, I want you to hear me clearly. My desire is not to be offensive to those who may have come out of those backgrounds but, rather, I want to teach you what I believe the scriptures are saying about these gifts and I believe there's been a divergence of definitions within the body, especially today of how we understand these gifts. Those from the charismatic or Pentecostal background would see this gift of the word of

wisdom as some special ability given to receive from God. Those who are in a more conservative vein of applying and understanding the scriptures would say, no, the historical, grammatical, biblical context says that it's actually a reference to teaching the already revealed revelation of God.

This especially comes into play with the next gift – this utterance of knowledge or word of knowledge. If you come out of a charismatic background then you will have heard that phrase. What does this gift entail: this idea of the word of knowledge? Well, let's start with the grammar again. Utterance – same word – logos – the word. Knowledge, gnósis. It means simply to know or to understand. This is the ability to grasp the meaning of God's revelation. A conservative group of scholars together would have a sense of agreement that this is a gift that is given to those who have the ability to dig deep into the Word of God and understand its complexity. Many times our seminary professors or Christian college professors, those who are the teachers here who have Classes at Crossroads they have this gift. They love to study the scriptures. They love to dig down and they write about it and then they enjoy coming together in a classroom setting and teaching it. This is that gift, I believe as the word of knowledge; the scholars gift.

It's not necessarily the gift of special revelation and I want to tell you why. Because I think our charismatic brothers and sisters enter into a dangerous area when they say that they can receive special words of wisdom and knowledge. My question to them is well, what type of wisdom or knowledge is this? Are you saying this is coming from God to you because if you're saying that then you need to call it what it is. It's revelation. It's scripture. That means we need to put it in our bibles but we have a problem with that because the scriptures are considered complete.

This book is often referred to, if you hear in the future, it's called a cannon. This means is all these books are together. That's what that means is a cannon of scripture, we believe is closed. In other words, we don't believe more scripture is being added to it. Why do we believe that? Because the scriptures themselves teach us that. In fact, it warns us not add any other scriptures to it; not any other divine revelation to it. You say, where does that teach us that? One of these is in Revelation 22, the very last book of the bible. Hold your place in 1 Corinthians. Come back to Revelation 22. It's easy to find; last book of the bible; last chapter of the bible, verse 18. And what does verse 18 say in Revelation 22? John, who was the last living apostle, writing the last piece of scripture writes I warned everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, anyone adds to them God will add to them the plagues described in this book. And so, when those who are our friends in the charismatic church tell us they have received special revelation from God I caution them and say you need to be careful because you're treading on dangerous ground on this point. We believe we have the completed Word of God and that it is sufficient for all that we need, therefore, we do not need special revelation other than what has already been given.

So, what is the word of knowledge? The word of knowledge is similar to the word of wisdom. It's just a different dimension. Both of them have to do with the teaching gifts of extracting knowledge from the Word of God for the benefit of others. Now, we have just a few more moments. I want to look at one last gift. And I want to go out of order from 1 Corinthians but I want to stay in order from our categories and we're going to look at a gift that's been in the news lately – the gift of Prophecy. Look at it in verse 10.

To another the works of miracles, to another prophecy is given. Prophecy. What does prophecy mean? When you hear the word prophecy you probably are thinking those who have the ability to look into the future and tell us what is coming. That's the basic understanding of the word prophecy. It's often a misunderstood gift because actually there are two aspects or two definitions to this gift, these two I've placed in your notes, your programs.

For example, the first definition is one who predicts and foretells future events as a means of divine revelation; one who declares and forth-tells divine revelation. Both of these are correct but the word prophecy itself, *prophēteia* simply means to speak forth or to proclaim. That's all that it means. It means to speak forth. It's the idea of public speaking. Pro is before; *phēteia* is to speak. So, it's to speak before. You have to take context and apply it within context to understand how it's used. Many times we see throughout the Word of God that the idea of prophecy is the idea of foretelling of events to come. We see that in the Old Testament especially. And a prophet was important, why? Because it, listen – confirmed the Word of God. That's what prophecy always did. It would confirm the word of the prophet; the Word of God. That's why it's always important for your prophets to be one-hundred percent accurate. If you're not one-hundred percent accurate, guess what? You're not a prophet.

Now, I appreciate Harold Campy and his timeliness because recently he said the rapture was to occur yesterday on May 21. And actually it was to occur at 6:00. If you noticed it did not occur. We're still here. In fact, I told last night's 7:00 service, we were celebrating the after rapture party at the service. Harold Campy went all over spending millions of dollars telling people that May 21 at 6:00 and we're a little confused about what time zone Harold was in that that's when Jesus was going to return for the church and that was going to usher in the beginning of the end of the world. The problem with Harold is that he was wrong eight other times before and shortly before 6:00 yesterday he posted a statement that he was wrong and he was changing the date to October 11. The problem is he created a sense of, in some places, hysteria primarily because of his misinformation. And he did it in such a public way: billboards, buses. He had commercials. Watch this commercial from the Harold Campy camp. Watch this.

Harold Campy commercial.

Now, was Harold Campy right or wrong? He was wrong. Some of you are still wondering. No, you're still here. He was wrong. He was absolutely wrong which makes

Harold Campy what? A false prophet. If you were a false prophet living in the day of the Old Testament; in other words you came and said I have a word of knowledge or I've got a word of wisdom or I have a prophecy of foretelling something that is mysterious that no one else knows and you were wrong, according to Deuteronomy 18:20, you don't have to turn there. I'll tell you what happens. They take you outside the camp; outside the walls and they stone you to death. Why? Because you are corrupting the revelation of God.

One of the sad realities of what Harold Campy has done is he's put on his literature and his billboard – the bible guarantees it. When a layman looks at that they are looking at May 21 and they're looking at that little statement and they're thinking, well, the bible must guarantee that May 21 it's all over. And then when May 21 comes and goes guess what they're thinking? Well, we can't trust the bible. Or we can't trust the believers who are proclaiming the bible. You see, you and I understand that there is going to be A day. There is a day of judgment. There will be a rapture. The scripture tells us nobody knows; no man understands the hour or the day. No one knows. The problems is Harold Campy corrupts this and suddenly now people will no longer trust those who are proclaiming the Word or the Word itself. That's the danger of the false prophet.

Do you believe that the predictive element of the gift exists today? Do I believe that the gift of prophecy, of foretelling the future is alive and well within the church today and the answer is no. I do not believe it's operative today. Why? Because of the very same thing I told you earlier. We have a closed cannon. We have all the revelation we need. Previously the idea of prophecy was to confirm the Word of God. What confirms the Word of God now? The Spirit of God confirms the Word of God.

What is prophecy today? Well, I think prophecy is best illustrated as how it is used throughout the Word of God and that is a declarative sense; a forth-telling. So when you hear the word prophecy I don't want you to hear mysterious ability to tell the future. I want you to hear the man who has been given the gift to forth-tell the already revealed truth of God. It's the preaching gift. That's the gift of prophecy and that's clearly how Paul was moving the Corinthians to conceive and think about this.

Look at chapter 14. This is where we'll come to an end. Chapter 14. We're going to unpack this in a few weeks so let me just read it as is. Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, and I want you to hear this, verse 3, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in tongues builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

What is the gift of prophesy today? It is the forth-telling. It's the declarative gift of telling the scriptures; teaching the scriptures for the building up of the body of believers.

Series: 1 Corinthians
Spiritual Gifts Pt. 2
1 Corinthians 12:8-10
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 05.21-22.11

Now, how do we apply this? Well, if you're here this morning and you're thinking gift of wisdom; gift of knowledge, gift of prophecy this is something that resonates inside of you and you say I love to study the Word. I love to dig down deep and try to understand it. I love that aspect of being able to present it to someone who may not understand it and see them come to the fullness of knowledge through my teaching. If that's you then you have these gifts or a gift or one these gifts and how are you to use it? You are to use it for the edification of the body, not just for yourself. It's not doing the rest of us any good. Use it so that we might propel the church forward in maturity. So, if you have the gift of wisdom, if you have the gift of knowledge, if you have the gift of prophecy the call from the Word of God is don't let it lie dormant. Actuate it. Use it. But if you're here this morning and say well, that doesn't really sound like me. What am I supposed to do? Well, you're supposed to come back next week and we'll continue unpacking this list of gifts one after another until suddenly it goes off inside your mind and you say wait. That's sounds like me. That sounds like what I'm passionate about and you'll come to an understanding of how God, your Father has gifted you with a special gift that might edify the body of Christ. Let's pray together.