

The Patio Pulpit For October 7, 2020
The Gifts of the Spirit Two
I Corinthians 12:8-10,

I love gifts. But who doesn't? I love the one's friends and family give me and the one's my church family will give me now that it's once again "Pastor Appreciation Month." But I especially love the one's Beverly allows me to buy for myself, like my Ludwig drums and my Takemine guitar and the three guitar amps I needed to go along with my five guitars. She is sweet like that.

And I love giving gifts. But who doesn't? Did I mention it's Pastor Appreciation Month? Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Recently I (we) bought Beverly two new cooking devices that have made cooking a lot easier. Less time over a hot stove.

But anyway, it seems to me that God loves giving gifts to His children, those who are in Christ (those are His children). And tonight we will continue the series I began recently on the gifts of the Spirit.

Lets take our Bibles and turn to First Corinthians chapter twelve and we'll begin reading at v.8, repeat. Did I mention it's pastor appreciation month, all month long?

Our first lesson covered **the who** of spiritual gifts meaning the Trinity as we saw in verses 4-7. ⁴ *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

⁵ *And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.*

⁶ *There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.*

And we saw **the why** of spiritual gifts,

⁷ *But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.* (1 Cor. 12:4-7 NAU)

Tonight we will begin with the first gifts listed in this passage, ⁸ *For to one is given #1, the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another #2, the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit*

Lets talk about the similar gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge

Talk about boring. Those are two gifts that the Charismatics and the Pentecostals have not exactly worn out by constantly teaching their congregations about. But they are two gifts that no local congregation wants to be without. And if one does think they sound ho hum, think again, these are given to the church by the Trinity just as sure as the more sensational gifts like tongues and prophecy and healings. If you have ever been to a church business conference or a board meeting, then you should be able to appreciate the words of wisdom and knowledge God makes available when there is a dispute about some matter important to the church. I love it when one of our folks speaks out during such times with a word of wisdom from the Spirit or a word of knowledge. The rest of us listen and agree with what the person said.

The word of wisdom or a message of wisdom is what happens in a local church when that local church finds itself not knowing what to do in a certain situation such as what to do with a piece of land some would like to sell while others say it shouldn't be sold. That's when the spiritual gift of the word or message of wisdom saves the day.

The word of knowledge is when the local church doesn't understand why such 'n such happened that has either been good or bad for them. And that's when one of us will casually say something that explains it all.

Both gifts are God-given insights that illumine the solution given through those so gifted in the moment of need.

After the church has heard the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, they are to act on what they now know to be the will of God.

Just a few months back I told Beverly that I would like to buy an inexpensive weed eater so I could trim around our driveway and walkway leading up to our front door. She let me buy one. Now what good would that weed eater be if I hung it up in our shed and never used it? But I have been using it since I bought it.

Today, Oct., 7, 2020, I edged around our walkway and our driveway in the cool of the morning and I enjoyed it, especially the part

where I could stand back and admire my work. Later in the day I walked into the far righthand corner of our backyard and looked at several bushes growing back there that were an eyesore in our otherwise nice looking yard. It dawned on me that we have a set of electric hedge clippers in the shed that haven't been used in years. So I got them out, plugged them in to a power source to see if they work, and they do. Tomorrow I'll take them and trim down the bushes enough so that I can then cut them down and haul them off.

God gives us the words of wisdom and knowledge that we might use them when they are needed. So, if you have an idea pop into your head during a meeting, speak up and let the rest of us hear it. It just might be the solution we need.

Now, lets talk about the gift of faith.

⁹ *to another #3, faith by the same Spirit,*

“But, Pastor Helms, I already have faith in Jesus. I trusted Him as my Savior many, many, many years ago.” I'm sure you did, and that's wonderful. But this isn't the saving kind of faith, it's a different animal all together. It's the special gift of faith that saves us out of some kind of seriously trying and overwhelming circumstance.

The best illustration of this gift of faith is what the apostles failed to have when they were in the boat with Jesus during the night and a terrible storm came up suddenly. The way the boat was being tossed up and down on the waves the apostles, all experienced fishermen except for Matthew, just knew they were going to drown, not Jesus, of course, but the rest of them certainly. And what was Jesus doing? He was sleeping. Remember how Jesus chided them for their lack of faith? The gist of the account goes like this, “I told you we are going to the other side of the lake, and that's where we're going, come hell or high water.” Even if they hadn't woke Jesus up, they would have made it.

Beloved, several of you have suffered through some really trying times and afflictions. You're going to make it, one way or the other. You're going to the other side. That's easier said than done for yours

truly. I haven't gone through endless suffering the way some of you have. Quite frankly, I don't know how you have done it. When God doesn't seem to answer prayers offered on your behalf that you might be healed and restored. But your faith and my faith tell us that we are going to make it to the other side even if we have to go through the storms of cancer and falls and financial disasters. And that reminds me of Job, he said "though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (13:15).

This is a different kind of faith than saving faith but please note that it is still by grace that we are given this kind of faith. It is a gift of the Spirit.

Lets close with this gift, 'lets talk about the gifts of healing.'

Whenever I hear about healing, I get an image of people like Earnest Angley and Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman and Benny Hinn and a hundred other quacks who have claimed to be healers. I have kept up with such deceivers for so long that they just pop into my head now at the simple mention of healings. There are many things one cannot see. And trying to convince believers in our day and age that there is a legitimate gift of healing is like trying to convince voters that Cal Cunningham is a morally upright gentleman or that Jim Bakker never intended to get rich off the backs of his millions of supporters. "...and to another #4, gifts of healing by the one Spirit."

The first thing I noticed with this gift is that it is plural, "gifts" of healing. I read the plural as applying to the innumerable number of diseases in our fallen world that God will heal accordingly. And like the other gifts of the Spirit, I do not see any Biblical evidence to persuade me that God no longer gives the gifts of healing. As long as disciples of Christ can get sick, God can heal. And, yes, we all know that He doesn't always heal us in the here and now but that's certainly how we are to pray. We're to bring our sicknesses before the church and ask the elders to anoint us with oil and to pray for our healing. Period. And when God doesn't heal us, we're to seek medical help. Perhaps we should first seek medical advice and help before we take it to the church. Who knows?

Modern medicine can work wonders these days. It's at times like that we need to remember the gift of faith that says we're going to the other side, come hell or high water.

In Jesus' name, amen.