**Bible Study 8th June 2023 – The Gifts of the Holy Spirit part 1**

The Bible tells us that all three members of the Trinity give us gifts.

Firstly, God the Father has given us two very precious gifts:
1 - His Son, Jesus - **John 3.16**. Through Jesus we also have eternal life (**John 3.16, Romans 6.23**) but the gift of Jesus, the Son of God, is the most important and eternal life means more than just living forever; it is living forever in the presence of the Lord - “we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 5.17).
2. The Holy Spirit – **Luke 11.11-13**. Through the Holy Spirit we have many other gifts and we are going to be studying the gifts of the Holy Spirit over the next few weeks but it is important to remember that the Holy Spirit is a person and He, Himself is the gift of God – **Acts 2.38**. Over the next few weeks I’m going to be encouraging you to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts but what is even more important is that we earnestly desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Jesus gives gifts to His church – **Ephesians 4.8-16**. His gifts were people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These gifted people have been given to the church to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. People sometimes talk about someone being called to “the ministry” and by that they mean being the pastor of a church. However, Ephesians Ch.4 tells us that pastors and the other gifts that Jesus has given to the church are to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” i.e. we are all called to be ministers.

Thirdly, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Read **1 Corinthians 12.1-11**. Paul refers to these gifts as “spiritual gifts” (Greek: pneumatika – this is derived from the Greek word for spirit - pneuma). In this passage Paul lists nine spiritual gifts. There are different views about how to define each of these gifts, mainly because of the limited information that we have about some of them. Even within Pentecostal circles there are differing views about what is meant by, for example, “the ability to distinguish between spirits” (discerning of spirits).

However, what is clear is that this is a list of supernatural gifts. “Gifts of healing” is not referring to a medical doctor but to a supernatural spiritual gift; various kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues does not refer to someone who is naturally gifted in learning other languages but a supernatural ability to speak in a language that you don’t understand and the ability to interpret the meaning of what has been said.

In **verse 4** Paul uses the word “gifts” (Greek: charismata – this is derived from the Greek word charis – grace). These gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. Just as salvation is by grace; it cannot be earned – it is a free gift (**Ephesians 2.8-9**). In the same way, we cannot earn the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they are given to us by the grace of God. The Corinthian church is a perfect example of this. Paul has to write to them about immorality in the church, about people partaking of the Lord’s supper in an unworthy manner which has brought God’s judgement upon some of them and about the fact that some of them were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. And yet, in spite of all this, he says that they “are not lacking in any spiritual gift” (**1 Corinthians 1.7**).

In **Romans 12.6-8**, Paul gives another list of gifts (charismata) which seems to include a mixture of both supernatural and natural gifts. Every natural ability that we have is ultimately a gift from God (**v3 & 6**) and can be enhanced by the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives. But there are some gifts that are supernatural and this is what Paul is referring to in **1 Corinthians 12.1-11**.

So far we have talked about:
1. The gifts which Christ gave to the church which are people: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.
2. Supernatural spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit: the word/utterance of wisdom, word/utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues.
3. Other gifts which are natural abilities that can be enhanced by the Holy Spirit: service, teaching, exhortation/encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, acts of mercy (also helps & administrators – **1 Cor. 12.28**)**.**

All of these types of gifts are important and they are all needed in order for the body of Christ to function properly. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ and we all have different gifts. Read **1 Corinthians 12.12-27**. Just as the human body has lots of different parts each with its own function and each part of the body needs the other parts, all of us have different gifts and we all need each other so it is important that we all use the gift/gifts that God has given to us. See **Ephesians 4.15-16**.

It is also important that we use these gifts of the Holy Spirit in love. Read **1 Corinthians 12.31 – 14.1**. This is a passage that is often read at weddings but the context is about the correct use of spiritual gifts.
Next week we’ll start looking in more detail at the various spiritual gifts.