**Bible Study 15th June 2023 – The Gifts of the Holy Spirit part 2**

Last week we had a brief overview of the gifts that God has given to us.

Firstly, God the Father has given us two very precious gifts:
1 - His Son, Jesus - **John 3.16**
2. The Holy Spirit – **Luke 11.11-13**.

Secondly, Jesus gives gifts to His church – **Ephesians 4.8-16**.

Thirdly, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some gifts are natural gifts that can be enhanced by the Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives such as those listed in Romans 12.6-8: service, teaching, exhortation/encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, acts of mercy. But others are supernatural; there are nine of these which Paul refers to as “spiritual gifts” in 1 Corinthians 12.8-10.
We also looked at the analogy that Paul uses of the church being the body of Christ. 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.

Finally, we read 1 Corinthians 13 and saw that it is important that these spiritual gifts are used in love.

This week we are going to start looking at the spiritual gifts in more detail. In **1 Corinthians 12.8- 10** Paul give a list of nine gifts which he refers to as “spiritual gifts”: word/utterance of wisdom, word/utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits (discerning of spirits), various kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues.

Different writers on this subject have made various attempts at classifying these gifts. The way that someone classifies them will have an influence on how each gift is defined.
Harold Horton (an AOG minister) in his book “The Gifts of the Spirit” puts them into three groups:

Gifts of Revelation: word of wisdom, word of knowledge & discerning of spirits
Gifts of Power: faith, miracles & healings
Gifts of Inspiration: tongues, interpretation & prophecy

W.R. Jones (who was a member of the Executive Council of the Elim Pentecostal Church in the 1970’s) puts the gifts into the same three groups but calls them:
Gifts of Illumination
Gifts of Action
Gifts of Communication

The problem with these classifications is that “discerning of spirits” is moved from 7th in the list to 3rd.
Personally I think that the more natural way to group these gifts is in the order in which they are given:
Word of wisdom and word of knowledge
faith, healing and miracles
prophecy and discerning of spirits
tongues and interpretation.

As I said last week these gifts are supernatural. Harold Horton, who believed strongly in the supernatural nature of the gifts wrote this:
“As children of God we are partakers – now- of His mighty, miraculous super-nature. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, partakers of His divine nature. (2 Peter 1.4; 1 John 3.2).”
“ The offspring of a bird display every bird-like faculty and characteristic. The moment they are born they are miniature copies of their parents. They eat, breathe, move, think, like a bird. There comes a time when, like a bird, they spread tentative wings and take to the air. The son of a bird can fly! It can also sing. The offspring of an earth-born creature cannot fly: nor sing. It has the wrong nature. The heaven-born sons of God should evince heavenly, that is supernatural, beyond-natural, characteristics. God has provided in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the resultant gifts of the Spirit, means for the reproduction of His divine faculties in His children.

According to David Petts the baptism in the Spirit is the “gateway” to the gifts of the Spirit and the first gift that we should expect to receive is the gift of speaking in tongues. So we are going to start by looking at the gift of “various kinds of tongues” (1 Cor. 12.10). Also referred to as speaking in tongues (Acts 10.26; 1 Cor. 13.1, 14.2,4,5,6,13,18,23,27,39), speaking in new tongues (Mark 16.17), speaking with tongues (Acts 19.6; 1 Cor. 12.30) speaking in other tongues (Acts 2.4).

When we use the word “tongue” we usually think of the muscular organ that we all have in our mouths.
“A tongue” can also mean a language. On the front page of the Authorised Version of the Bible, which was translated in 1611, it says “translated out of the original tongues” i.e. it was translated into English from the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

When Charles Wesley wrote “O for a thousand tongues to sing my Great Redeemer’s praise”, it didn’t mean that he wished he had a thousand tongues in his mouth but that had wished he could speak a thousand languages in order to express his praise to the Lord.

David Petts (Body Builders p. 118) defines the gift of tongues as “the supernatural ability, imparted by the Holy Spirit, to speak a language one has never learned.”

On the day of Pentecost there were 120 people who were all filled with the Holy Spirit and “began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (**Acts 2.4**). They didn’t all speak the same language. It may have been that everyone of them spoke in a different language, which would mean that God was being praised in 120 different languages. What we know for definite was that there were at least fifteen different languages spoken (**Acts 2.8-11**) because visitors from fifteen countries heard their own native language.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of what Jesus had promised His disciples (**Luke 24.46-49; Acts 1.4-5, 8**). The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to give them power to be witnesses. The sign that the Holy Spirit had come upon them was that they spoke in other tongues.

What happened on the day of Pentecost was unique in that there was a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and there appeared to them tongues as of fire resting on each one of them (**Acts 2.2-3**). What was also unique was that when they spoke in tongues the languages were understood by other people who were visiting Jerusalem (**Acts 2.6**).
This is the only occasion in the Bible where people who understood the language being spoken in tongues were present. There have been many verified cases recorded when someone has spoken in tongues and someone present knew the language. Read David Petts “Body Builders” p.134-135.

Speaking in tongues itself, however, is not unique. On the day of Pentecost all 120 of them, including the disciples, the brothers of Jesus and Mary the mother of Jesus all spoke in tongues. And Peter said that this was not just for them but the promise is to all who repent and are baptised (**Acts 2.38-39**).

There are two other occasions when people are recorded to have spoken in tongues but the languages were not recognised. Firstly, In Acts Ch. 10 we have the account of the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and some of his relatives and friends. Cornelius was a Gentile but he was God fearing man whose prayers and alms had ascended to God. God sent an angel to tell him to send for Peter. Meanwhile God gave Peter a vision of “unclean” animals that He told him to kill and eat. When Peter told the Lord that he couldn’t eat unclean food, God said “What God has cleansed, you must not call common”. When the men arrived, Peter understood why he had been given the vision and he went with them and preached the gospel to Cornelius and his friends.
Read **Acts 10.44-48** – the Holy Spirit fell on them before Peter had even finished preaching and they knew because “they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God” (**v46**).
Being baptised with the Holy Spirit first and then being baptised with water was not the usual order of things (**Acts 2.38**) but in case anyone had any objections to baptising Gentiles, God showed that He accepted them by filling them with the Holy Spirit and the sign that confirmed it was that they spoke in tongues (see **Acts 11.1-18**).

**Acts 19.1-7** is another account of people being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. On this occasion the believers also prophesied.

On the day of Pentecost all 120 were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. All those in Cornelius’ house were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and as Peter said on the day of Pentecost “the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off…” (**Acts 2.39**).

The conditions are repent and be baptised (**Acts 2.38**) and ask (**Luke 11.13**).
I would encourage every Christian to ask God to fill them with the Holy Spirit and give them the gift of speaking in tongues.
Those who already speak in tongues I would encourage you do so more in your private prayers and also to pray for other gifts. One gift that we are specifically told to ask for is the ability to interpret tongues (1 Cor. 14.13).
We’ll talk more about tongues and interpretation next week.
Give out copies of “Body Builders” to those who would like one.