

Gifts of the Spirit

Pastor David Loveless

Passage: Ephesians 4:1-16

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. **8** Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” **9** (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? **10** He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) **11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Background

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul reminds them of the great unity they have both gained and can maintain through the work of the Holy Spirit. One of the ways the Holy Spirit keeps the church unified is through equipping and empowering each believer with “gifts” to be used to encourage and strengthen others in the faith. Today, Pastor David Loveless will help us understand several of these gifts of the Spirit, how they operate in the church and world today, and how each of us can faithfully and boldly walk in our God-given gifts so that the whole “body” (church) can grow and “build itself up in love.”

Service Notes

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The “Getting Started” section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the “Talk it Over” section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Our hope is to have meaningful conversations around God’s Word, not simply answer all the questions. Finally, the “Live it Out” section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- What comes to mind when you think of spiritual gifts? How can we pray for you this week?

Talk it Over

- **Read Ephesians 4:1-10.** In these verses, Paul calls believers to live a life “worthy of the calling.” What do you think that means? How does Paul describe this kind of life (vs. 2-3)? Why would Paul describe these characteristics before talking about unity and spiritual gifts (or roles) within the church? Do these characteristics promote unity or disunity? What’s the connection? Why is important to remember what unifies all believers (vs. 5-6)?
- **Read Ephesians 4:11-16.** Paul mentions five specific people/gifts that Christ has given the church. Each one may look differently, but what is the goal of these “gifts” given by Christ (vs. 12-13)? How does the Spirit use these specific gifts/roles to “equip the saints”? What would each of these gifts look like in the life of the church today? Sometimes we think only the pastor(s) DO the ministry work, but according to this passage, who carries the responsibility and privilege of the “work of ministry” (vs. 12)? What does this mean for your life? Why is this so important to remember? How does this encourage you or challenge you? What happens when everyone is using their spiritual gifts and maturing spiritually in the church (vs 14)? In what ways do you believe God may have gifted you in any of these five areas? How are you using your spiritual gifts to build up the “body” of Christ? How can you better discover and use your own spiritual gifts?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 27-31.** How does Paul describe spiritual gifts in this passage (vs 4-7)? What is his emphasis? What are the gifts Paul mentions (vs. 8-10)? What would these gifts practically look like today? Who is the One who gives and empowers these gifts? Why is this necessary to remember? How is vs. 27-28 similar to the Ephesians passage? What is Paul’s point in asking these questions (vs. 29-31)? What is the MORE excellent way Paul is referring to (see 1 Corinthians 13)? How should 1 Corinthians 13 shape the way we understand spiritual gifts (chapter 12)?

Live it Out

- In what ways can you more faithfully use your spiritual gifts to serve others this week? What is one practical action you can take?