

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

15 October 2023

Using the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Text: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace".

1 Peter 4:10

As we have seen, God is the great giver of good gifts.

He has given us life, purpose and his Son, Jesus "The Christ", to be our Savior, Teacher, Friend, Lord and Helper.

God has also given us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and enable us to do God's work.

The Holy spirit was given on the day of Pentecost to accomplish a number of significant purposes.

He came to identify Jesus Christ as the risen, living Lord and Messiah.

He was given to unite the followers of Christ into a living body in which Christ could dwell and continue his work of redemption in the world.

The Holy Spirit was given to identify the church to the Jewish people as the new Israel through whom God would carry forward his eternal redemptive purpose.

He was given to enable and to empower the church to succeed in preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth.

He was given to impart and to plant the confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" at the very center of every person's being.

The Holy Spirit was given to produce, within each believer, the nature and character and personality of Jesus Christ.

While the Holy Spirit is the great gift of God to each believer, the Scriptures teach us that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to every member of the church that each one might fulfill the function God has for them.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit.

References to the variety of gifts of the Holy spirit for ministering in the church and through the church to the world are listed in several different books of the New Testament.

Paul listed some of the gifts of the Spirit in his letter to the church at *Rome*. *12:3-8*

One of the major sections on the gifts of the Spirit is chapters *12-14* of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

In this passage, Paul was dealing with a problem that was dividing the church, an exaggerated emphasis on the value and use of the gift of speaking in tongues and a lack of emphasis on love as the supreme gift of the Spirit.

In the letter to the *Ephesians*, Paul listed more gifts of the Spirit. *4:11-12*

The nature of the gifts of the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are all "grace gifts."

They are bestowed by the Holy Spirit, rather than merited or earned for outstanding service.

They may take the form of talents, but in reality they are gifts from the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are his sovereign gifts.

"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines." *1 Cor. 12:11*

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are functional gifts.

The gifts of the Spirit are not like decorative ornaments to be worn or boxes of candy to be enjoyed.

Rather, they enable believers to minister as the body of Christ and are intended to produce harmony and effectiveness in service.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are primarily for the congregation, that is, for the good of the church. This is not to imply that the individual is not edified or built up by receiving a gift from the Holy Spirit.

To every believer there is given a gift from the Holy Spirit.

“We all have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us”. *Rom. 12:6*

As far as we can observe, the Scriptures teach that each believer has received at least one gift from the Holy Spirit.

Discovering and using your spiritual gift.

How are we to be certain concerning our spiritual gifts?

Is there a way by which we can discover them?

We should study the scriptural lists of the gifts of the Spirit and then examine ourselves sincerely and honestly to see if we have some talent, gift, or inclination that would indicate that God has placed upon us the blessing and the burden of a particular gift.

We should experiment with acts of faith as we feel led, trusting the Spirit for guidance.

We can do this by identifying needs about us that we believe we can meet and then do what we can to meet those needs.

We may discover that we have the gift after we have met a particular need.

We should examine our spiritual satisfactions.

If we get a particular joy out of doing a certain type of Christian service, it could be that we are working in the area in which the Holy Spirit has gifted us.

We should evaluate our effectiveness in service.

Certainly it would follow that if we cannot carry a tune, we do not have the gift of singing solos or being a part of a singing group.

The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the church.

If what we attempt to do does not build up the church, then it probably follows that it is not an area in which we have a gift.

We should recognize the affirmations of other believers.

Many times others who are more mature in the faith will recognize your gifts before you do.

When others commend you for a service that is rendered, they may be giving you a clue concerning what your gift might be.

God has given, to humankind, the gift of his Son.

We receive this gift in our heart.

He then becomes our savior, teacher, friend and helper.

Then he sends the gift of the Spirit as we become children of God and this gift is also placed in our hearts to guide and help us be God's people.

As God's children, members of his family, we have gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to each of us in order that we might be a living vital functioning part of the body of Christ.

May God bless each of us and help us use our gifts for his kingdom as we each recognize and respond to the gift or gifts that the Holy Spirit has given us for ministering to the world.

A part of that gift to us is helping us to not be led into temptation.

We pray each Sunday that we are not led into temptation but are delivered from evil.

It is a sad truth that this battle with temptation is a continuing battle as long as we live on this earth.

We must be on our guard each moment of each day for the tempter never sleeps or slumbers.

Even Jesus had to have his guard up against temptation.

Jesus knew more about the power of temptation than any of us.

But Jesus also knew the power of the father to assist in resisting temptation.

As we pray this prayer and ask God to assist us we are acknowledging his sovereignty in all things, even our ability to resist temptation.

The idea behind the word here translated lead is to bring, as in moving something from one place to another.

It most likely expresses the Hebrew idea of causing something to be brought or led.
This petition then affirms that God is in a position to cause things to happen, to bring us or lead us, as it may please him.
God is affirmed to be Sovereign.
Over circumstances.
Over spiritual forces.
Over us.
It personalizes the sovereignty of God.
It is so easy to see God as having control over everything except our lives.
It is easy to slip into an attitude that sees all of life as being out of control.
But this petition affirms that God is in control of all things.
It also acknowledges the significance of temptation.
God himself cannot sin, nor can he tempt anyone to commit sin.
Therefore it is always a mistake to blame God for our temptation to do something that is wrong.
God is in no way responsible for the temptation.
God can test, as he did with Abraham, but he does not tempt us to sin.
He might want to know the depth of our commitment and the strength of our faith.
Temptation is always an allurement to sin.
It is Satan trying to disconnect us from God and put space between us and our maker.
This petition is also an acknowledgment of our surrender to God's authority over our life.
It is a renunciation of the lordship and leadership of self and the giving of all to the lordship of God.
We are to give God complete control.
We must surrender to God our free and recreational time and allow him to choose the places we go and the things we do.
Only when we surrender everything to the Lord can he protect us from temptation.
For the petition "Lead us not into temptation" to be part of your daily prayer, it must be the desire of your heart.
You cannot pray this petition unless you consider personal sin to be a serious matter.
As long as you take sin lightly, this will never be your earnest prayer.
Praying this petition could lead to new freedom and a new walk with God in your life.
Try it, you will like it, I guarantee it!
And better yet, so does God!