The Ministry Week 2

We believe in the ministries that Christ has set in His Church, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and in the present operation of the manifold Gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the New Testament.

We are an Elim *Pentecostal* church, and the Holy Spirit gifts should be a distinctive of us.

1. **I want you to have a proper understanding of the Spiritual gifts.**

Sometimes because someone attends a Pentecostal church it's assumed that they know everything they need to know about the spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit. But this is not necessarily the case.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, who were moving in the gifts of the Spirit and who thought they knew everything they needed to know, yet in addressing the subject he said:

> *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1*

2. **I want to address fears and uneasiness around the spiritual gifts.**

I've been around long enough to see gifts mismanaged and used from the wrong motive. I've met the wide-eyed whacky

self-ordained prophet who has supposedly confirmed his word from God with a body jerk and the "heat" in his hand.

In the coming weeks I will briefly highlight how the spiritual gifts have been mishandled in the past, so that we can avoid making the same mistakes. I will address the fears, and in so doing bring security and safety, and stepping out into the spiritual gifts becomes the natural thing to do.

3. The gifts are given so that the church may be built up, and we need building up.

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7*

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. MARK 16:20

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power." 1 COR 2:4

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

HEBREWS 2:3-4

4. I believe that God has so much more for us than we are already experiencing.

Now this is not to devalue that which we are already seeing, but there is so much more.

I do not want this church to be just like any evangelical church, where people come and apart from the sign above the door they would not know that we are a Pentecostal Church.

a) The Gifts have not Ceased

A lot of people say that when Paul says

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." 1 Cor 13:10,

he's talking about tongues and prophecy stopping when the New testament has been put together.

But the "perfect" time as Paul makes clear in the verses that follow is when we see Jesus face to face. In heaven there will be no need for spiritual gifts because we will be perfect living in eternity with Him, where all things will be made known.

b) Why did the gifts cease in the church?

History tells us that in an attempt to protect itself from persecution and error, the church institutionalised.

By AD 110 Ignatious, Bishop of Caesarea writes to one of his churches and tells them that only when the bishop is present when they celebrate communion is it valid. And gradually it became norm that only the Bishop exercised any gifts, and so the Holy Spirit was

quenched amongst ordinary members of the congregation.

John Wesley writing in 1750 said

I am fully convinced of what I once suspected. That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were soon withdrawn , was that dry, formal, orthodox men began to ridicule what gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture.

The Bishop would say "If I don't have the gift of prophecy, then neither can you… because that challenges my position… and if you do have the gift of prophecy then it's not real… you are a fraud.

5. We need to talk about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, because this pastor wants to see fruit in your life.

Experiencing the Holy Spirit and the gifts are for His glory, and about the fruit in the lives of those who experience them and in the lives they touch.

6. We need to talk about the spiritual gifts, because these gifts are for you.

Sometimes the Spiritual Gifts are referred to as Charismatic gifts. Charis = grace. The gifts that God gives for us to use are undeserving.

If the Corinthian church with all their awful faults were recipients of God's grace gifts, surely you and I with all our faults and all our immaturity also qualify to be recipients of God's gifts.

7. **We need to talk about spiritual gifts because it is biblical to desire the spiritual gifts.**

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit. 1 COR 14:1

Desire = Greek word = *zēlóō* (an onomatopoetic word, imitating the sound of boiling water). to bubble over because *so hot* (*boiling*); (figuratively) "to burn with zeal"

8. **We need to talk about the spiritual gifts because we need to be a ready and prepared people.**

What is a Spiritual Gift?

A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in the ministry of the church. WAYNE GRUDEM

This is a very broad definition, and I notice that the Elim Foundational statement says that "we believe in the *manifold* gifts of the Holy Spirit".

Some say that there are 9, 12, 19, 21, 28, 100+ spiritual gifts

Paul describes celibacy as a gift 1 Cor 7: 7-8

Paul describes voluntary poverty as a gift. 1 Cor 13:3

These are not the gifts that I will be talking about in the next couple of weeks. I will be concentrating on the 9 gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12.

Nor will I be particularly saying anything about the Romans 12 gifts. I will say something about them now.

> *God in his kindness gave each of us different gifts. If your gift is speaking God's word, make sure what you say agrees with the Christian faith. If your gift is serving, then devote yourself to serving. If it is teaching, devote yourself to teaching. If it is encouraging others, devote yourself to giving encouragement. If it is sharing, be generous. If it is leadership, lead enthusiastically. If it is helping people in need, help them cheerfully. ROMANS 12:6-8*

You don't have to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be a gifted musician.

Musicianship is not a spiritual gift, but when that natural ability is surrendered to the Lord to be used by Him it becomes a spiritual gift.

Although certain abilities have been with us since our birth they have been enriched and empowered when handed over to God following our new birth. EDMUND HEDDLE

If it is serving, let him serve. ROMANS 12:7

Serving is the natural ability to give practical assistance.

c.f. Gift of "helper" 1 CORINTHIANS 12:28

> *Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them* [4]*and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." ACTS 6:3*

It is service that brings a spiritual blessing. Helping becomes a spiritual gift when it used in the church from a motive to give God glory.

If it is teaching, let him teach. ROMANS 12:7

Teaching is the natural ability to impart information intelligibly with others. When it becomes a spiritual gift, it includes the ability to study the scriptures and impart to others a right understanding.

If it is encouraging, let him encourage; ROMANS 12:8

Encouraging is the natural ability of the encourager. When it becomes a spiritual gift, it includes the ability to stimulate faith and obedience from the promises in scripture.

If it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously. ROMANS 12:8

The natural inclination to share what you have.

When it becomes a spiritual gift, it includes the urge to give regularly and generously to the work of the Gospel / missions etc.

If it is leadership, let him govern diligently. ROMANS 12:8

When it becomes a spiritual gift it is used in the church setting with godly wisdom.

If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. ROMANS 12:8

Showing mercy is the natural ability of human compassion. When it becomes a spiritual gift, it becomes the outpouring of compassion of Christ upon those in special need or distress regardless of personal inconvenience or suffering. And this gift involves doing it cheerfully.

If you want to be used by God, it starts by surrendering to Him your God given abilities for Him to use.

Biblical Examples

Natural abilities surrendered to God empowered for His glory.

Moses

Naturally who stood up for others. (Exodus 2)

- Stood up for the Hebrew beaten by Egyptian.
- Intervened 2 Hebrews fighting.
- Stood up for 7 daughters of Midian driven away by shepherds.

God takes that gift to the next level. He tell Moses, you are going to use that gift to represent my people before Pharaoh.

"I will be with you" EXODUS 3:12

Saul

Zealous persecutor up to Acts 9

Paul filled with the Holy Spirit became zealous for the Gospel

That zeal and tenacity that God had naturally gifted Paul with when surrendered to God – could be used for His glory.

When God gifted you with the natural abilities that you have, He did so for you to use them for God's glory.

And Saul is an example of someone using the gift inappropriately – but by the time he is Paul he is using it appropriately.

The gifts he has given you he expects you to use for His Glory.

God didn't give you a voice and musical talent so that you could appear on Britain's Got Talent and earn loads of cash, he gave you that talent to use for God's glory.

Here's the challenge,

Are you ready to cooperate with God so that your natural gifts become spiritual gifts?

Are you ready and are you willing to use the gifts, talents and abilities that God has given you for His Glory?

Are you willing to let God empower them with His Holy Spirit to build His church in Sowerby Bridge?