

062219

- I. My Notes... WWC message 6/23
- II. Series: Gifted to Serve
  - a. Title: The Gifts – Part I
  - b. Text: 1 Cor. 12: 7-11
  - c. Quote: “God will not give me humility, or patience, or holiness, or love as separate investments of His grace. He has given only one gift to meet our need, His Son Christ Jesus.” – Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*
- III. Introduction
  - a. I think that as we journey together, we get to share life... I'm not talking philosophically. The implication here is that we get to be involved, to get to know one another and the stories that have become part of our makeup. Maybe that is some of the reason Social Media platforms are so ingrained in people today. Sharing your story, letting others know things about you – interests, thoughts, those things that get your attention or make you smile – are part of letting others see YOU. I mean, c'mon, who doesn't laugh at the videos of cats chasing laser pointers. Ok, I know I'm being ridiculous... moving on. I firmly believe people want to be connected, they want to be accepted... Even the most obstinate, bitter people are often looking for a path to acceptance – all they often find is judgement. Let me share a story I recently read with you.... It may be fiction (or not) but the message and inspiration are timeless.
  - b. The man slowly looked up. This was a woman clearly accustomed to the finer things of life. Her coat was new. She looked like that she had never missed a meal in her life. His first thought was that she wanted to make fun of him, like so many others had done before.

"Leave me alone," he growled.

To his amazement, the woman continued standing.

She was smiling – her even white teeth displayed in dazzling rows.

"Are you hungry?" she asked.

"No," he answered sarcastically. "I've just come from dining with the president. Now go away." The woman's smile became even broader.

Suddenly the man felt a gentle hand under his arm. "What are you doing, lady?" The man asked angrily. "I said to leave me alone."

Just then a policeman came up. "Is there any problem, ma'am?" he asked.

"No problem here, officer," the woman answered. "I'm just trying to get this man to his feet. Will you help me?"

The officer scratched his head. "That's old Jack. He's been a fixture around here for a couple of years. What do you want with him?"

"See that cafeteria over there?" she asked. "I'm going to get him something to eat and get him out of the cold for a while."

"Are you crazy, lady?" the homeless man resisted. "I don't want to go in there!"

Then he felt strong hands grab his other arm and lift him up.

"Let me go, officer. I didn't do anything."

"This is a good deal for you, Jack," the officer answered. "Don't blow it."

Finally, and with some difficulty, the woman and the police officer got Jack into the cafeteria and sat him at a table in a remote corner. It was the middle of the morning, so most of the breakfast crowd had already left and the lunch bunch had not yet arrived. The manager strode across the cafeteria and stood by the table.

"What's going on here, officer?" he asked. "What is all this. Is this man in trouble?"

"This lady brought this man in here to be fed," the policeman answered.

"Not in here!" the manager replied angrily. "Having a person like that here is bad for business."

Old Jack smiled a toothless grin. "See, lady. I told you so. Now if you'll let me go. I didn't want to come here in the first place."

The woman turned to the cafeteria manager and smiled. "Sir, are you familiar with Eddy and Associates, the banking firm down the street?"

"Of course, I am," the manager answered impatiently. "They hold their weekly meetings in one of my banquet rooms."

"And do you make a goodly amount of money providing food at these weekly meetings?"

"What business is that of yours?"

"I, sir, am Penelope Eddy, president and CEO of the company."

"Oh."

The woman smiled again. "I thought that might make a difference."

She glanced at the cop who was busy stifling a giggle. "Would you like to join us in a cup of coffee and a meal, officer?"

"No thanks, ma'am," the officer replied. "I'm on duty."

"Then, perhaps, a cup of coffee to go?"

"Yes, ma'am. That would be very nice."

The cafeteria manager turned on his heel. "I'll get your coffee for you right away, officer."

The officer watched him walk away. "You certainly put him in his place," he said.

"That was not my intent. Believe it or not, I have a reason for all this."

She sat down at the table across from her amazed dinner guest. She stared at him intently. "Jack, do you remember me?"

Old Jack searched her face with his old, bloodshot eyes "I think so – I mean you do look familiar."

"I'm a little older perhaps," she said. "Maybe I've even filled out more than in my younger days when you worked here, and I came through that very door, cold and hungry."

"Ma'am?" the officer said questioningly. He couldn't believe that such a magnificently turned out woman could ever have been hungry.

"I was just out of college," the woman began. "I had come to the city looking for a job, but I couldn't find anything. Finally I was down to my last few cents and had been kicked out of my apartment. I walked the streets for days. It was February and I was cold and nearly starving. I saw this place and walked in on the off chance that I could get something to eat."

Jack lit up with a smile. "Now I remember," he said. "I was behind the serving counter. You came up and asked me if you could work for something to eat. I said that it was against company policy."

"I know," the woman continued. "Then you made me the biggest roast beef sandwich that I had ever seen, gave me a cup of coffee, and told me to go over to a corner table and enjoy it. I was afraid that you would get into trouble. Then, when I looked over, I saw you put the price of my food in the cash register. I knew then that everything would be alright."

"So you started your own business?" Old Jack said.

"I got a job that very afternoon. I worked my way up. Eventually I started my own business, that, with the help of God, prospered." She opened her purse and pulled out a business card. "When you are finished here, I want you to pay a visit to a Mr. Lyons. He's the personnel director of my company. I'll go talk to him now and I'm certain he'll find something for you to do around the office." She smiled. "I think he might even find the funds to give you a little advance so that you can buy some clothes and get a place to live until you get on your feet. If you ever need anything, my door is always opened to you."

There were tears in the old man's eyes. "How can I ever thank you?" he said.

"Don't thank me," the woman answered. "To God goes the glory. Thank Jesus. He led me to you."

Outside the cafeteria, the officer and the woman paused at the entrance before going their separate ways....

"Thank you for all your help, officer," she said.

"On the contrary, Ms. Eddy," he answered. "Thank you. I saw a miracle today, something that I will never forget. And.. And thank you for the coffee."

("In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16)

- c. We are going to start looking at Gifts today. I need to make some points of clarity first. In the NT we see many gifts in action. Let's be clear on this... gifts are given so that others may experience the love and power of the Lord God and come to know Him in a practical manner. As far as explanation and for understanding there are 3 passages that address these Gifts. 1 Corinthians 12 (where we are today), Romans 12 (where we will be next week), and Ephesians 4 (we will follow with this). In 1 Corinthians 12 the gifts of the (Holy) Spirit are addressed; in Romans 12 it seems to explain that these gifts are from God [(the Father) see 12:3]; and in Ephesians 4 the gifts are

given by the *Risen Lord* (see 4:8). Now, you make think I am trying to separate the Trinity into 3 different gift giving portions – I'm not. I am doing my best to explain, and I'm probably not very good at it, that there are different gifts that all honor and glorify the Lord God – they come from Him and point others to Him. Remember what we talked about last week, "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6 NLT2).

- d. What we are going to look at are ways that, thru us, the message of God's love and grace can reach everyone. And in the process a few needs might just be met too... all this to the glory of the Lord God Almighty
- e. And let me make this point again, maybe clarifying some thoughts. There are things inside you that some might refer to as "giftedness". They are abilities or talents or traits that make you the individual you are. (Remember, God values your individuality). These are part of your makeup. And these "gifts" are enough to honor God. Now, there are times that an assist (please give me some license to explain here) may be needed. That is where, in the life of a believer, Spiritual Gifts may come into play. They are abilities that are given by the Holy Spirit (to address the present need) that enable the believer to serve Jesus Christ, to be of help or assistance to others, in the church and in the world—spiritual gifts that enable the believer to help in ministering to people and in leading them to Christ

#### IV. Text

- a. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (CSB)

A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good: to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a

message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of tongues, to another, interpretation of tongues.

One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.

- b. Just a reminder here... the goal is understanding. The Apostle Paul wrote to us so that we would not be “unaware” (ignorant).
- c. These gifts are there and available to every believer
- d. The gifts are given for growth of believers and help to others
- e. These gifts are a result of the “Fruit of the Spirit” (cf. Gal. 5:22-23) and bring about maturity that honors and glorifies the Lord God
- f. It's not just about “signs”, the purpose is to reveal love – to serve – to help others find hope

## V. The List

- a. Originally, I was going to break this down a different way. It seems to be better to address to entire list of gifts explained in the NT
- b. So, we will look at each gift with a brief explanation
- c. (Word of) Wisdom – Communication, insight to help solve a problem or deal with a circumstance
- d. (Word of) Knowledge – this isn't from books or classes. This comes by the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit; it is given to help in a current situation or circumstance where answers (understanding) isn't easily there
- e. Faith – this isn't faith (belief) that brings salvation. This gift is associated with gifts that bring signs and miracles. It is trust and belief in times of crisis or

desperation. It is a certainty that often doesn't make sense (to the world) when the opportunity arises. This is the divine intervention that brings physical results

- f. Healing - different healings for different diseases. It is used of God in ministering health to the sick, appears as a sign gift, and is involved in the work of telling others of God's love and desire for a relationship with them.
- g. Miracles – this appears to be miraculous instants, other than healings, that help in a specific situation. There are times when circumstances and situations arise, and believers need a miraculous deliverance of some sort. Apparently, this is what the gift is. “When it is in God's will for a storm to cease—for an enemy to be temporarily blinded, for a fire to be turned or put out, or for an innumerable number of threats against believers to be altered— God raises up some believer and gifts him to work the needed miracle”  
*Preacher's Outline Study Bible – 1 Corinthians*
- h. Prophecy – {this might be the most abused gift in order to manipulate and control others}. This is speaking under or by the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit to either (or both) predict future events or proclaim the Gospel. Neither prediction or proclamation should be minimized despite of the misuse of the gift.
- i. Discerning of Spirits – there are always people trying to lead believers astray. There are those who will try to manipulate and control. The Church, Believers, need this gift. The Apostle John warns believers, “My dear friends, don't believe everything you hear. Carefully weigh and examine what people tell you. Not everyone who talks about God comes from God. There are a lot of lying preachers loose in the world.” (1 John 4:1 MSG)
- j. Tongues – {another very abused gift}. It is something deeply emotional, ecstatic, a deep awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit accompanies this. There are all kinds of people trying to “explain” (justify) this gift. Let me try to clarify some ideas:



- i. It isn't a gift given to prove you are born again
  - ii. It may be an unknown language
  - iii. It may be a known language that the person presenting the gift is unaware of
  - iv. It may occur publicly or privately
  - v. More than anything it is a Gift from the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of those around the gift – ultimately pointing them to Jesus
- k. Interpretation of Tongues – this accompanies the public demonstration of the gift of Tongues. Believers are gifted with the interpretation of the message given in tongues

VI. Whew!

- a. There is a lot of confusion about living what many would call the Christian life
- b. It's a lot less complicated than we make it
- c. God has given gifts – gifts so we know we are His and that we can use to help reveal His love to others
- d. People, yes believers too, see success and they want part of it, or they want to mimic it
- e. They look for things to make them noticed – all the while forgetting (or may minimizing) the truth that God has noticed them and wants them just as they are
- f. Then truth happens – they find that the gifts someone else has doesn't fit or work for them. They get depressed, feeling worthless, thinking there has to be more than this
- g. That's the problem with seeking the gift instead of seeking the Giver and trusting Him – no matter what!

- h. Everyone has a role, we all play a part. There is always something to give.  
Your gifts are not any less because they are gifts that might be behind the scenes
- i. Let's Pray
- j. Be ready, there are gifts to help with the ministry you have been called to.  
May love and grace abound.
- k. Grace first... Grace Always
- l. Live simple, live practical, love eternally