



Gifts of the Spirit

#7 Everyone's Burden

Sunday March 18, 2018

Courage Church, Detroit, MI

scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Acts 8:9-24, Numbers 11, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, John 13:35, Galatians 6:2

We are concluding our study on the Gifts of the Spirit this morning, and I am going to let you know right now, we are going to have a special time of prayer at the altar at the end of the service... I want you to start getting your hearts ready for that moment, even now...

WE WANT TO PRAY FOR YOU! We want the Holy Spirit to fill your life...

to fill our church...

to clothe us in his power here in this place, in such a way where we can then carry that same Spirit out into our communities, workplaces, homes and schools.

The reality is that Courage Church is a Church on a mission, and it is a mission that we will never ever even come close to accomplishing if not by the power of the Holy Spirit, not only filling us, but also leading us and directing us and partnering with us...

Because there is a huge vision for what we believe God wants to do this year, and the years moving forward, both in our neighborhood and expanding to other neighborhoods around our city.

and honestly, this may be the most important thing I say today... but I know that some of you have had a hard time with this series. I would be lying to myself if I had gone into this believing that we could spend so many weeks on something so divisive, and there not be any divisions that come from it.

Trust me, you can talk to Dawn, you can talk to Austin... or James or Spencer who did the program last year and were with me A LOT... any of them will tell you that I have felt the necessity of doing a series on the gifts of the Spirit for a couple of years now, and I have been putting it off... because I know that when you talk about things like this, it pushes people away... it freaks people out... and it offends people who have drawn a hard line in the way that they think that should or should NOT be done.

and as we try our very best to navigate this difficult topic... I just want to remind us all that LOVE must be the centerpiece... and that everything that we have is grace.

But BECAUSE there is so much to this topic, and because we want to do our absolute best to make sure that we aren't leaving people confused on anything, what we did was on our website, for each individual sermon that we posted, we also have a little form where you can go on there and ask a question... you can ask us to clarify something, or ask us a question we didn't address... and we will do our best to answer your question and will even post them on the site if they are areas that we didn't cover in our teachings.

We believe with all of our heart that in order for our church to move forward in the direction that we feel called to... and in order to see the type of revival we are praying for, we need to move forward totally empowered by the Holy Spirit... not afraid of it, but confident in it.

So lets take one last look at this passage that hopefully by now you are all very familiar with...

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 -

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Lets Pray

A lot of people ask about the idea of being “filled” with the Holy Spirit, or BAPTIZED in the Spirit. They ask “am I filled with the Holy Spirit when I get saved?” “Am I filled with the Holy Spirit when I get baptized?”

and what we believe is that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can, and has at times happened in the same moments as those things, but we believe that it is separate filling... and I will show you a couple of examples as to why we believe that.

We believe that when you get saved... when you come to Jesus poor in Spirit and realize “I cannot save myself” - that is the moment of Salvation, and in that moment we do believe that God’s Holy Spirit is involved, it is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sins, and Johns gospel (6:63) tells us that it is the Spirit who gives life.” - so does the Holy Spirit come into your life when you get saved? Yes, absolutely!

We also believe in water Baptism, which is that public declaration that WE BELONG TO JESUS...

and thirdly, we believe in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the difference between that and salvation is simple... the Holy Spirit comes in you and cleanses you and redeems you at Salvation, but it is at the Baptism in the Holy Spirit where the Spirit EMPOWERS YOU.

Jesus puts it like this, talking to his followers who already had a relationship with Him... in Luke 24:49 "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are *clothed* with power from on high."

I think that is probably the best way to explain the difference...

We are CLOTHED in the Holy Spirit...

Acts 1:8 says that you will receive power WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES UPON YOU"

Just to show you in the Bible how powerful a Christian is when they are clothed in the Holy Spirit... there is a story in Acts 8 of a sorcerer named Simon.

The Bible says that he practiced magic and that everyone called him great because of how powerful he was... so he was no stranger to the supernatural, which makes this all the more powerful.

Now, hold that thought for a moment and watch this... Acts 8:14-16 explains the situation:

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, **for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

Did you catch that? This entire group of people have already been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen on them... they have received grace... they have publicly confessed Christ, but they weren't yet empowered to carry out the work of Christ.

and Simon the Sorcerer is among them, and when he sees the working power of the Holy Spirit, he says "I want what you have, it is more powerful than what I have! and basically, he gets out his wallet and offers them money."

And Peter rebukes him HARD - saying "MAY YOUR SILVER PERISH WITH YOU that you would think you could BUY the Holy Spirit" -

and Simon is genuinely convicted by this... and he repents and says "please... pray for me, that the things that you have said would happen to me would *not* happen."

The magician sees the power of God at work and realizes that he is no match for it, and realizes, "I am on the wrong team!"

and that is the power that comes when we are clothed with the Holy Spirit. It demonstrates the power AND the love of God to the people who need it the most.

Zach told me a story, and he gave me permission to share it with you...

it happened several years ago...

Zach was at work, and one of his co-workers had called in sick that morning... but suddenly Zach got a very clear word from the Holy Spirit saying to stop what he was doing right then, and pray for that man who called in sick, because he wasn't sick... he and his girlfriend were, at that moment at an abortion clinic because she was pregnant, and they just didn't know what to do and were panicking, so he called in sick and they went together.

But Zach gets this word from God, and so he prayed. It was all that he could do! But there is power in prayer! God in Ezekiel says "I am just

looking for someone who will stand in the gap on behalf of people” -
PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!

and the next day, when he saw the man, he said to him, “I know you weren’t sick yesterday.”

and the guy was like “what do you mean?”

and Zach told him, “I know that you guys are pregnant, and that you were at the abortion clinic...”

and the guy looked over at another guy who works there... who was the only person in the world that he had told where he was going and he was furious!

But his friend promised him “I DIDN’T SAY ANYTHING”

and Zach explained that it was the Holy Spirit that told him that, and that he prayed for them.

and as it turns out, the couple got to the abortion clinic, and ended up leaving and keeping their baby.

That is what is called a “word of knowledge” - Pastor Austin talked about it a few weeks ago... God spoke clearly to Zach’s mind painting a specific picture of something that was *actually* going on... it was a knowledge of something that Zach would otherwise have NO WAY OF KNOWING.

there are certain things that have literally NO EXPLANATION, besides the fact that we have a God who cares so much about us, that he would whisper things like that into the minds of our friends, so that they can intercede on our behalf.

And that is the perfect example of what the gifts of the Spirit are for... it made the difference in the life of a child being born... it likely was the difference in the relationship between the couple, and it was an obvious sign to an unbeliever that “whatever God Zach worships, speaks to him”

Another example that I have shared with you before, but Chavonne once gave me the most simple word that she felt like the Lord was speaking to her, and honestly, it has carried me through a lot of trying times...

and we will talk about this a bit more in a few minutes, but when it comes to our church, I often tend to focus on trying to build... and when it doesn't get bigger, it weighs on my mind... but she came up to me once and said that she feels like the Lord was saying to her:

“Just watch what I can do with a few faithful people!”

and there is no doubt in my mind, this was prophetic, because since then, we have seen how just a few incredibly faithful people have made an absolutely enormous impact on the lives of many many people through our church.

and I can't help but get excited thinking, if a few can do that... what will happen when Jesus begins to add more?

But do you see in those two examples, how one Spiritual Gift made God so real to the unbeliever, and how the other BUILT UP THE BODY OF CHRIST? Totally different situations... I was weary, and God built me up... that couple was confused, and through a word of knowledge that lead to intercession, they received clarity that lead to LIFE.

The last line that we read in our passage says (it would be verse 11):

“All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.”

You see, the Holy Spirit sees ALL things... He knows what is going on in the depths of our hearts and He knows what is going on behind closed doors when nobody in the world knows what we are doing.

Sometimes we speak in tongues, and we can be praying and interceding on behalf of someone for something that we don't even know is happening, but the Spirit does.

Sometimes the Spirit can make it CLEAR to us what is happening and how we need to pray, so that in the end it can be a testimony to someone else for just how great our God actually is.

and the point of saying that is to show you that this is not something that we should be afraid of... Paul tells us in fact, that we ought to EARNESTLY desire the Spiritual Gifts... we know that God is no respecter of persons, and that what He did for one He will do for others, so in the same way that God spoke to Zach about a situation, where Zach's intercession likely was the difference maker in the life of that baby... God can speak to you in the same way.

There is a very powerful story in Numbers 11, and I pray that this stirs you awake this morning IF you have been in this place and you have been passive, both about the Holy Spirit AS WELL as the church in general... and the work of the ministry being done through it in the city of Detroit and beyond.

Genuinely, I believe with all of my heart that if our body can grab ahold of what is going on here... AND if we can come to terms with how important the work is that God wants to do *through* our church *in* our community, I believe that the key that will make all of the difference in our entire ministry is found right here, in the ancient book of NUMBERS.

So Numbers 11 begins with the people of Israel doing what they *seemed* to do best... complain.

They had recently left Sinai, and they were on their journey to the promised land. Now, if you remember from the earlier weeks in this series, the Israelites, before being freed had been slaves for 430 years... 430 years they lived without rights, moving bricks all day long 7 days a week, no vacations, no holidays... and then God, through a series of absolute miracles, set them free.

And now, in freedom, they are moving onward toward the land which God had promised them, and they began once again to complain, saying that they were BETTER OFF IN EGYPT...

complaining about meat, and food...

They were acting like ungrateful bums, complaining about everything. Always looking back on what USED TO BE, forgetting that it was absolutely awful.

So Israel is complaining... and finally Moses just throws his hands in the air. He says "I can't do this God!"

in fact, Moses asks God: "Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of ALL this people *on me*?" (Numbers 11:11)

in fact, Moses goes so far as to say: God, if you expect me to do this alone, then please just kill me. Moses is very transparent here, he is very honest with God. He knows that he is in over his head, and he tells God straight up: "I can not carry all this people alone." (Numbers 11:14)

"The Burden is too heavy for me."

now, lets pick up after that, in verse 16 and 17 it says:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, **so that** you may not bear it yourself alone.

God tells Moses, essentially, "YOU ARE RIGHT" - this is not the job of one person, but of many people, and God says, "in order for that to work, I need the same Holy Spirit that has empowered you and given you the strength to carry Israel this far, I need that Spirit on others... so gather 70 men you that you trust, and lets build a Spirit filled TEAM to lead this mission."

In other words:

the same Spirit that is on you... I want to put that on EVERYONE.

and we can read this and we can get so excited about the part that says “the Holy Spirit is available to us all!!!” and we can miss the reason why God gave it in the first place.

He said he wants to do that SO THAT the burden of *the people* (Israel) would be with all of them, not just Moses.

I know that this is not comfortable church... I get it...

its much easier to come in here and learn something interesting, and have the Holy Spirit fill you so that you can have some feeling that convinces you that you are closer to God than you were before you got here... and all of that may be the case... we want this to be a place that you grow when you enter...

but the Holy Spirit’s job is to empower us to do the work of the ministry that in all honesty, you and I in our own power and our own strength ARE NOT CAPABLE OF DOING.

I have to remind myself of this every day. and my wife will tell you... if I am honest with you, I throw my hands in the air on almost a daily basis and cry out to God “God, I can’t build this church.”

“I can’t do it!” -

now that is *not* a confession of someone who is giving up...

it *is* the confession of a broken human being who has come to terms with the fact that none of us are going anywhere unless Jesus is driving.

and its when we begin to think that we know what we are doing that the straight line begins to bend... and things start to get off, and we need to recenter!

Paul says it like this in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 “**I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

My job is not the result... Nor is yours. We just need to keep showing up... We just need to keep being willing to be used by the Spirit. We need to wake up in the morning, and put on the armor of God, praying in the Spirit continually because in our own strength we can't do it.

BUT THE SAME SPIRIT WHO WORKS THROUGH ME ALSO WORKS THROUGH YOU for the SAME EXACT PURPOSE.

and its bigger than you and its bigger than me.

and when I come in here, and someone prays with me, or I just feel like the Spirit is present and filling me... I soak it up, and dwell on it.... I allow it to refresh my Spirit... but then I need to get on my feet and go out there and do the work that the Spirit's gifts have enabled me to do.

Ephesians 4 says that God gave us the Apostles, the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Shepherds AND the teachers to **EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, for the BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST** (Ephesians 4:11-12)

This experience that we sometimes call "church" even though "church is so much bigger than this"... this **GATHERING** time that we have which we should not forsake... it is **NOT** a place we come to learn something cool and then go home **NO** different...

It should be a place that we come to be **EMPOWERED** by a Spirit greater than our own, and be **EQUIPPED** by the leaders who God has placed us under, **SO THAT** we can go back to our neighborhoods and our blocks and our cities and we can shine the light of Jesus Christ.

I can't do this thing by myself. Dawn and I can't do this thing by ourselves. Dawn and I and Austin and Sarah and Emily and Drew and James and Brian and Laura and Stephanie and Corinne and Vill and A.J. and Matt and Chavonne and everyone who serves in any way right now...

we can't do this by ourselves.

Moses couldn't do this by Himself.

The Spirit of God moves through people who are united. The Gospel writer John says that people will know that we are followers of Jesus because of how much we love one another (John 13:35)... Galatians tells us to bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2)

If there is one thing that I pray that the Holy Spirit speak clearly to you it is this:

WE ARE THE CHURCH. I know that this thought puts a damper some of our modern day dreams of being progressive, but you are *not* the church. I am *not* the church. I am an arm. You are a leg... I am a PART of the church... We are his *poiema*... together reflecting Jesus. and your gift has a role in that but it isn't a solo race we are running, and if you are trying to run a relay race BY YOURSELF, you may start off ahead, but you are eventually going to fall behind, because the people who are doing it RIGHT, are sharing the load that you are trying to bear alone.

in the Bible it is always plural language...

Jesus calls us "a city on a hill" - cities are made up of *many* people. One person is NOT a city. One person is a person. And with the power of the Holy Spirit that person can make an incredible difference... but ultimately the body of Christ is a many membered body, and the gifts of the Spirit, though not the only reason, should be enough reason for you to understand WHY we are a many membered body.

Because we all offer something that someone else doesn't have, that is equally important to the mission.

Some prophecy, some have the gift of healing, some speak in tongues and others interpret, and together, we are it... the only redemptive plan for the world. The many membered bride that Jesus is returning for, and in this next season of ministry that we are stepping into, we simply can not enter into it out of sync... out of unity. This is why we need the Holy Spirit so desperately.

Look at what happens a few verses later in Numbers, if you would just move down to verse 24-29:

First, verse 24:

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent.

See the word tent? A very significant word... it could also be translated as tabernacle... which originally was a tent, and then was later built as a physical structure by Solomon, and when it was destroyed was built again...

though different from this, it is the closest Biblical image that we get to something similar to the building we are sitting in right now, that is what it eventually became. So they are all at the tent...

and here is verse 25-29:

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But **they did not continue** doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they **had not gone out to the tent**, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"

So there were 70 elders, and two of them, rather than going to the tent where everyone else was meeting, they stayed in the camp, and they were prophesying in the camp.

So Joshua, (who was Moses assistant and would later lead the Israelites after Moses dies) says to Moses that they need to be stopped. And in all fairness to him, though Moses soon pointed out that it was misguided, what Joshua was doing was trying to be in one accord with his leader... He is being incredibly loyal and faithful to Moses, and he wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page as Moses, and that they didn't have people going rogue off on their own doing it any old way that feels right to them.

But Moses stopped Joshua and said something very incredible. He said:

“Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!”

Moses tells Joshua that he wants EVERYONE to have the Holy Spirit! He wants EVERYONE to be empowered. Because if everyone is empowered for ministry, then everyone will be growing, and the people who they come in contact with will be growing, and the church will be growing.

People will grow in their love for God when they see the miracle workings of God, and Moses says “it is absurd to limit what God is doing only to this tent.”

The tent is great... but it may be time to take it down...

because even the 68 who had prophesied at it, by the time that they left, what did it say?

verse 25 one more time:

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But **they did not continue** doing it.

“They did *not* continue doing it”

The Spirit fell in the church... they did all the Spiritual stuff... but the moment they walked out that door their lives went RIGHT BACK TO THE WAY THAT THEY WERE BEFORE.

I have said this to you so many times, and I will never stop saying it: the church is a body, it is not a building, and if we think we are Spiritual because of what we cultivate in here... I will tell you, it is NOTHING if our lives don't reflect it when we leave.

68 people who GOD was EMPOWERING to help carry Moses' load... to move Israel forward for the glory of God... And they experienced it, just like we do, but they didn't live in it, like God wants us all too.

You know, right before that amazing thunder and fire moment at the very first Pentecost on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19, God tells Israel that they will be for him a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.

and to the Hebrew people, they not only saw that as God drawing them unto himself as a chosen people, but also that they were given the keys... the responsibility... for making the world a better place... or, I read one writer put it this way: "to make the world a dwelling place for the Divine"

To make God known in all of this brokenness.

What was the job of the priest? To show people God... to lead people to God. And when God says that he wants them to be a whole nation of people who do that, what is He saying? and what does it mean for us?

It means that every single one of us have a role to play in this community of people that exists to show others who Jesus is.

again, like Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount... we are a city on a hill... a city is not person... it is a collection of people... and this is HOW WE LIVE:

we live by the Spirit of God, prompting us with all of the ways that we can usher in the Kingdom of Heaven into the city of Detroit.

and This is how I want us to close out this series, this is the last thing that I want to say about this:

In this sandwich that Paul gives us... 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14... He begins the whole thing by saying “concerning spiritual gifts... I DON’T WANT YOU TO BE IGNORANT.”

we talked about this in the first week, another way to say it would be: I don’t want you to ignore them... I don’t want you to leave them out because you haven’t taken the time to understand them.

He starts that way, I believe, because its easier to ignore them. Its easier to leave out the mess, and live in what is manageable... but what Paul does is he then goes on to show us a better way...

a way of power, that sandwiches love...

a way that builds up the church... and grows community, and ushers in the Kingdom of Heaven in a way unlike anything in the entire world can do...

He shows us how through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can lay hands on the sick and they can be healed... how we in a moment can have absolute clarity about a situation that we should know nothing about...

he shows us how powerful a prayer language can be...

but then he ends, in verse 38 of chapter 14... by saying the *opposite* of what he says at the beginning.

He says “if anyone hears this and chooses to remain ignorant, then let him stay ignorant.”

I tried my best to TEACH YOU these last few weeks about the Holy Spirit... but you have to decide whether or not you will embrace the teaching, or you will ignore the teaching.

If anybody can leave this place with an understanding about the Gifts of the Spirit that I pray you were able to grasp these last few weeks, and yet still

choose to IGNORE him... then what Paul is saying is “fine... let that person go on without the power.”

This is NOT life or death... it doesn't mean you aren't saved...

it just means you are ignoring the one thing that Jesus said would fill our lives making us greater in this life than even HE WAS when He walked the earth in His...

You can go on, limping through life alone... and Jesus still loves you, and we still love you... but I know better than to tell you that that is what is best for you. The Holy Spirit IS FOR YOU.

and as a church this morning, I think that we need to stand together in unity and say “we will NOT ignore them.”

“We will not be ignorant of them”

“We will experience the Holy Spirit... his miracle working power...”

and we will not be like the 68 in the tent with Moses, who had an encounter with the Holy Spirit, but didn't continue in it...

But rather that we would carry the Spirit with us everywhere that we go.