

Different Gifts, One Spirit

Controversial Questions from Corinth, part 4 (3)

1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-30

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. **3** 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.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8** For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** 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. **11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. **28** And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? **30** Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (ESV)

Father in Heaven, as we have just seen your goodness to us in providing for us earthly fathers. In recognizing our fathers, we realize that our fathers aren't perfect; we might even realize that our fathers were far from perfect. Yet, Lord, You call us to honor them. We echo that because you are the true Heavenly Father and in You, there is no shifting and no change.

As we look to You now as we consider this topic of what it means to be gifted in the church, give us humility and give us openness of hearts and eyes to see what You want to say. We invite the Holy Spirit to teach us, to remind us of the words of Christ and the promises He made.

If we're not believers this morning hearing about the church and gifting in the church might seem strange, but we know that in Your wisdom and sovereignty there is no unintended consequence. Even if we might do things for evil or selfish vanity, You use them for good.

Open our hearts as we consider this passage this morning. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Recently a good friend of mine relocated, not only jobs but industries. He said it just wasn't feeling right and that he struggled. I asked him, “What do you mean you struggle with working?”
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Is your boss or supervisor abusive or harsh?” He replied, “No no no, my boss and my coworkers are great. I am struggling to fit in with my team. One of my coworkers is really good at being the project leader. One of my other coworkers is really good with details and spreadsheets.” I asked him, “Well, what about your strengths?” He responded, “Well, I think I’m really good with the people. I just like working with the tasks that need to be done. However, the problem is that there are three of us on this team and we’re kind of duplicated in our fit and roles on this team.” Years passed, but eventually he told me that he left that company on great terms.

I was able to visit him at his new company and, when I watched him interact with his coworkers, I remembered thinking, “I’m really happy for you because it looks like you really fit in this team. It’s the same kind of industry, but your role, gifting, age, and life experience are unique contributions to this team!”

We all know what it’s like when groups, organizations, structures, projects, and other collaborative things just don’t work. When we talk about this challenge, I think we come to this topic that, on one hand might seem unrelated, but in fact it has everything to do with it. There is this issue of gifts.

The Relevance of Spiritual Gifts

I use this term “spiritual gifts” lightly because I think we, Christians in the modern times, think of the list of gifts we’ve read like: tongues, miracles, helps, administration, etc. However, I think if you were to ask the Christians back in Jesus’ or Paul’s time, they wouldn’t have the term “spiritual gifts”; they would just think to use everything they have for their savior Jesus Christ. That brings us to another question that I’m sure many of you are wondering: how do I fit in this life, this world, or even this church?

As a pastor, I kind of automatically fit. I automatically have friends, or at least a lot of people who have to contact me or meet up with me. When I was attending church not as a part of the ministry staff, I think fitting into the church was one of my constant struggles throughout my childhood, college years, and even post- college years. I think you and I can relate: how can I fit in and thrive in a church like BCEC – whether it has a cultural heritage, whether it is small or large, whether it is urban or suburban, whether it has young people or old people? How do I thrive and fit in my life? That is the kind of struggle that I think teaching on how we are gifted can help.

If someone asked how to fit into a church, most of us would suggest socially engaging, joining a small group, or getting involved and serving in a ministry. Those are all good things; however, it

takes a lot of time to get connected and get to know people. What really unites all those things together is the teaching about how God has spiritually gifted each and every person.

Controversy Surrounding Spiritual Gifts

Before we get into the passage, I want to note this: **the concept of spiritual gifts is controversial.** Maybe it isn't in this part of the country or in this church, but it is elsewhere. We used to ask our potential staff, "What's your teaching on spiritual gifts like miraculous signs, speaking of tongues, etc.?" The topic of spiritual gifts is very contentious because there are some people who believe in the full display of spiritual gifts – doing miracles, healing, prophecy, etc. Some people feel very strongly that those gifts are not supposed to be practiced here today in this church and world. Despite the controversy surrounding the topic of spiritual gifts, that isn't Paul's point here.

Problems in the Corinthian Church

As we're going through this book of 1 Corinthians, Paul is talking about the problems the church is having surrounding the concept of spiritual gifts. I'll tell them to you first and then we're going to translate them to our context.

1. Division

The idea that "Because I have certain spiritual gifts, I'm better than you or more important than you." There was division in the Corinthian church and that is why Paul saw the necessity to teach on the topic of spiritual gifts.

2. Being Led Astray

The Corinthians were being led astray by these miraculous gifts. Someone would say, "Oh, I have word from the Lord" and would prophesy. It would confuse people because it seemed to go against what other Christians would say. We may not struggle with that here at BCEC because we don't practice word of prophecy very often, but that gives you the sense of where they are coming from. That is why in 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul tells them:

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. **3** 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. (ESV)

What this paragraph says is that there were great, deep divisions in that church. Those divisions not only had to do with who was better, but also the fact that well-meaning Christians were being led astray by people standing at the pulpit seemingly prophesying. What Paul says here is that **if the Holy Spirit is really working in that person, the only thing they should be saying is “Jesus is Lord”** and if they say things like “Jesus is accursed”, then you can be sure that that isn’t the work of the Holy Spirit.

Every church needs to be on guard against that, but thankfully, by the grace of God, that is not one of the major worries of our church right now. Giving you the context is important. However, I’d like to move onto the sermon proper, where I’d like to give you a preview of the three points we’ll be discussing from 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 and 27-30.

Preview

1. Why did the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts?
2. What are spiritual gifts? What counts as a spiritual gifts?
3. How do we use spiritual gifts?

1. Why did the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts?

This passage, particularly verses 8-11 and 27-30, is basically a list of different types of gifts. In order to answer the question of why the Holy Spirit gave us these gifts, we need to sift through these verses to pick up some key points. Starting in verse 4:

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Why did the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts? **For the common good.** If you were to look up the concept of the common good online, you’d find that it is actually a huge issue in social justice and in Christian acts of mercy. You’ve heard this phrase “the common good” in speeches by politicians, non-profit directors, and CEOs of companies because the common good is what everyone wants. However, the common good Paul is talking about here is the common good in the church.

Paul is saying that every single person in the church is given spiritual gifts in order to serve and bless other people. What that means is: **to the degree that you and I know our spiritual gifts and are using them, we are contributing to the good of this church.** The flipside is also true: to the degree that you and I do not know our spiritual gifts, whether because we're sitting on the sidelines because we're new or shy or we're too busy and are not intentionally using our spiritual gifts for the good of the body, we are causing suffering to the church. I'm not trying to guilt trip you; I'm just trying to explain what the Bible says.

The Illustration of the Rusty Bolt

I recently acquired an old, 1985 motorcycle and I've been practicing driving it and thinking about how to be safe. It's hard to imagine that when I was about ten years old doing my fifth grader thing, a motorcycle was being assembled, came off the assembly line, and would, 20-some years later, become my own motorcycle. I have to admit, since I've been riding this old motorcycle, several things have fallen off. One thing that has fallen off is a heat shield, designed to keep me from burning my flesh. Despite having put the heat shield back in place several times, it continued to fall off. Because I knew what it does, I figured it would be better to take it off completely since it'll probably start an accident. Another thing that has fallen off, more recently, is a rusted bolt. Like any intelligent person, I thought, "Well, there are plenty of bolts in my bike..."

This is great illustration because I have to wonder, "How does the bolt function on my motorcycle? Does it even belong on my motorcycle? If this bolt holds something important, I probably need to figure it out what it is." When the Bible says that each one of us has spiritual gifts, no matter how young or old we are, no matter how intelligent or non-book smart, and no matter how much life experience we have. It says that **every single Christian in the church has been given spiritual gifts for the common good.** To the degree that we are not utilizing our spiritual gifts, you and I are like that bolt that fell out. You don't want to put together your baby's crib and realize that you have a bunch of spare parts that aren't supposed to be leftover.

The Importance of Every Spiritual Gift

Sometimes we feel like we're the spare part, that we aren't necessary. We think that there are other people who have the same abilities and same gifts. Maybe that's true, but the key thing is this: every single Christian has been given spiritual gifts by God for the common good. If you're

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a believer and this is your church, I just want you to know: **we need your spiritual contribution.** We need that more than your money attendance. We need your spiritual contribution in this church.

If some spiritual gifts seem less impressive, maybe it's because we need more of them. When I was a kid growing up, I thought that leading worship was super awesome. I'm sure all preachers and worship leaders struggle with their share of pride. Do you know what a gift that is often not noticed? The gift of shepherding, caring for people. The thing is: **the church only needs a couple song leaders, but it can never have enough people that know how to love others, visit people, pray for people, etc.** Sure, maybe we think that we need really gifted pastors, preachers, and worship leaders; however, you need a lot of children's workers. Who is more important: the one pastor or the thirty children's workers? You might say the one pastor, but actually, the thirty children's workers because you need thirty of them and they all need to be gifted.

We need this for the common good. We need this because God, in His goodness, says: how do I help every church, whether it's a wealthy church or a poor church, whether it's in North America or in Africa? How do I make sure that every church has what it needs? In the wisdom of God, God has given every church a few things: the Word of God and the spirit of God. Whether they have buildings or not, whether they have large sanctuaries or not, they have everything they need to do what God has called them, through the people that He has placed in that church.

Why did the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts? For the common good. We need your spiritual contribution today. Again, it's a guilt trip; In fact, I think it's a very empowering thing knowing that your spiritual contribution matters. Yes it is one little bolt, but **that one little bolt might be the bolt holding everything together.** You might be thinking, "Yeah, maybe I believe, technically speaking, that my contribution is important, but it looks pretty good without me. I'm not really missed. When I leave, it won't really make a big difference." I'd respond in this way: **if things look pretty good without you, imagine what God could do with your contribution in the mix.**

If you're not a Christian, know this: this is what it means to be in the family of God – to receive the spirit of God, know that you are an adopted son or daughter and have forgiveness, and then to be given by God great gifts to use. These gifts are not necessarily the same as having a lot of

money or having a lot of training; these gifts are things you could use today, which leads to our second point.

Our first point is that God gave spiritual gifts for the common good. If you ever hear the phrase “the common good”, I want you to think “God thought of that first”. If you hear the president talk about “the common good” in his speech, I want you to be reminded of Paul quoting Jesus. If God gave us the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts for the common good of the church and the world to be served by the church, what are the spiritual gifts?

2. What are spiritual gifts?

Let me begin by saying two things that they are not. They are not:

1. Spiritual gifting is not equivalent to spiritual maturity.

Spiritual gifting is not the same as spiritual maturity, depth, wisdom, and humility. Someone could be very spiritually mature and wise, but have average, normal spiritual gifts. At the same time, someone could have extraordinary spiritual gifts, but may not be very spiritually mature. When we look at this passage and it talks about someone who has the spirit of teaching or spirit of prophecy, it doesn’t necessarily mean that that person has the spiritual maturity to handle that role.

Spiritual Gifting and Maturity in Church Ministry

A classic example is concerning buying a building. There are a lot of gifts required for that. The challenge that we face as a church is that we don’t just care about the tactical, specific gifts required; we also care that the men and women serving in these roles love the church, the Lord, His people, and His mission.

That’s why Project Destiny staff are so challenging to find. First of all, they don’t get paid for all the time and effort they put in. Second of all, they actually have to get a lot of training. On top of the availability, financial reality, and the skill sets they need, we need them to be in love with Jesus because that is really what we’re offering to these students. That’s the hard part.

At work, if your marriage falls on the rocks, your boss, as compassionate or caring as he or she might be, might say, “Hey, is everything okay at home with your marriage? I’m really sorry to

hear you aren't doing well... but can you work on Saturday?" Maybe you're a paralegal, a doctor, or a school teacher and people say to you, "I'm really sorry about your marriage problems... by the way, the meeting is in five minutes." In a Christian context, whether you're an elder, deacon, pastor, small group leader, children's worker, or even just a brother or sister in Christ, someone might say to you, "Wow, your marriage is struggling? How can we help with that? Do we need to release you from certain responsibilities so you can spend more time with your family?" We don't just love your contribution to our organization, we love you. We don't just love the resources and skills you bring to our project, we love your family. That is why it is so important to remember that, according to the Bible, gifting does not equal maturity.

As we look at this passage, we see that there are varieties of gifts, services, activities, etc.

2. Spiritual gifting is not equivalent to vocational calling.

Spiritual gifting does not equal "you need that job" or "you take that job" or "you avoid that job". This is going against conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom tells us this: what you're good at and what you love to do should dictate what vocation you have. Our brother in Christ Brian is a perfect example. He loves Jesus, tennis, and kids! Why not do a summer camp where he gets to bring together all his passions? The question here is: how do we bring all this passion together? I'd say as a general principle, that principle is a great way to live and is at the heart of the Bible. However, isn't it true that throughout the Bible we find many men and women who did not feel gifted but were still called?

One of the earliest people was Moses. Moses was not a good public speaker or leader who didn't like to be in front of people, yet God used him to be one of the greatest leaders in the Bible.

Another person was Esther, who felt like she was just a woman caught up in political unrest and never intended to become a queen, yet God called her.

In general, sure, if you have a spiritual gifting and you can find a way to use that gift, bless others, and get paid for it, then that's awesome. However, **just because we don't feel gifted does not mean that we are automatically off the hook from having to obey God.** Part of serving in a church is, when someone asks, "Hey, would you be willing to serve in this role?", considering our spiritual gifts, but also saying, "Well, I don't think I'm gifted, but I'm open and available and if I am needed, pray about it, and have people to advise me, then I am open to serving in that role." The opposite is true as well: **just because you are great at something**

doesn't mean that God will give you a vocation related to that gift. You might say, "Hey, I'm a great public speaker" and he might respond, "Okay, go over there and wait on tables."

In general, spiritual gifting can help us sense our calling in life. However, we need to be more nuanced in our discernment. Often times, you and I might be called to things we don't feel gifted at. Then, the Lord shows us that He gave us those gifts all along. The very gifts we thought we were really good at get tested and we realize that we might be good beginners, but not good long-term people.

The Possibilities of Spiritual Gifts

Let's return back to the text and I want to share with you a brief list of the spiritual gifts in this passage. Then, we will take a look at other passages that talk about spiritual gifts. Starting in verse 8, we see that most of these gifts are miraculous signs, prophesy, etc. because that is what the Corinthians are struggling with.

⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Paul gives us this list of spiritual gifts like wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, prophesy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, etc. There are four particular passages in the Bible many theologians go to for more extensive lists of the spiritual gifts. It's easy to remember. It's in two 12's, 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, and two 4's, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. If you were to study those passages, you would see added to the list of spiritual gifts things like: leadership, teaching, mercy, giving, etc. I think most of the gifts are self-explanatory. However, there are many spiritual gifts that are often misunderstood.

The gift of healing was not being able to pray and have God heal people; rather it was having the power of the Holy Spirit to heal someone physically. I don't just mean to heal someone of back pain. In the Bible, healing was clear and miraculous; people would be healed of paralysis, blindness, and other serious medical miracles. Many of the healings you see in modern times have to do with minor injuries like back pains or sores, but what about healing from cancer or

amputated limbs? Does it happen? I don't get to personally witness it. Can it happen? I believe the Bible says it can? Has it happened? I absolutely believe it has.

The gift of prophecy is the gift of being prophetic and calling forth.

The gift of tongues is the ability to speak and have people who speak other languages understand. There are two uses of tongues in the Bible. In my view, the majority of tongues consists of discernable, human language. If I have the gift of tongues and I'm saying something to you, you're listening to me in Italian or Portuguese. It is less so an angelic, Pentecostal language. If you have a charismatic or Pentecostal background, I realize that I might be stepping on your toes. There are a few places in the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 13, the next chapter, where Paul says, "If I could speak with a tongue of men and of angels, but not of love, then I am nothing." In Pentecost, the book of Acts, the gift of tongues was predominantly speaking in known, human languages.

There are also the gift of mercy, the gift of compassion, the gift of faith, the belief that God will do something even though he hasn't explicitly promised it, and many other gifts.

Now, here are two big questions that many people ask:

1. What is the difference between the spiritual gift of teaching and simply being a good communicator?

How do we know what is the result of training or education and what is the actual gifting from God? I'm not 100% sure because I don't think the Bible goes into great depth about those things. It is very clear when it comes to the gift of faith or the gift of prophecy, but when you get into spiritual gifts like the gift of teaching, it is hard to discern the difference. The spiritual gift of teaching is more about the resulting change in people's lives.

For example, you might think someone is a great communicator; he or she is clear, funny, and confident. However, the Bible essentially tells us it is not the preaching points or the outline that marks a gifted teacher; it tells us to look at the people he or she has taught and whether there has been spiritual change in the lives of those people in Jesus' name. I would apply that concept to the gift of communicator and the gift of administration as well.

You can have a great communicator give a great keynote talk, but I'm not sure if the Holy Spirit would use that for lasting, eternal soul-change. That means that if you watch someone teach, you cannot tell how much of it is spiritually empowered and how much of it is technical prowess. We need to look at the people he or she is serving and whether they are growing in greater love for God's word, cherishing the word of God more, etc.

In fact, I think some people are incredibly gifted teachers. I know they would disagree with me because they are focused on how they feel in front. I'm looking at the people they lead and I'm telling them, "You are gifted. You may not believe me and you may not ever get credit in this world, but you are gifted with this particular gift. You just need to look at the lives of the people you are touching."

2. Are the lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible all inclusive and the only ones possible?

I'm going a little deeper in this because as we continue in the Bible, it is not likely that we will come back to this topic of spiritual gifts. Some people wonder if there are spiritual gifts like the gift of music or the gift of working with children.

There are two major viewpoints on this. One viewpoint is: whatever spiritual gifts are listed in the Bible are all the spiritual gifts. Another viewpoint is: there are many ways the Holy Spirit could gift you and is not limited by the list in the Bible. What do I think? I think that if you want to add to the list of spiritual gifts, it would be difficult to argue that there are no other spiritual gifts possible because nowhere in the text does it say that these listed spiritual gifts are the only ones possible. However, I also believe that the spiritual gifts listed here capture about 95% of the types of spiritual gifts you and I will ever see.

For example, someone might be a gifted music leader. I would say their spiritual gift might be the gift of leadership and they happen to use music. Another example, someone might be gifted with children. However, there are many different ways to be gifted with children: playing with them, being generous, teaching them well, etc. The spiritual gift could be the gift of mercy, generosity, or teaching, shown through interactions with children.

I would be very cautious to say that we could add spiritual gifts to this list. At the same time, I would also be very cautious about saying that there is no other way to further breakdown these spiritual gifts more specifically. Paul is concerned with the miraculous, wondrous spiritual gifts

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because those were the gifts running amuck in the Corinthian church. In contrast, if you go to the book of Ephesians, Paul is talking about the spiritual gifts of teaching, leadership, etc.

To recap our main points so far: why does the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts? For the common good. What are these spiritual gifts? They are spiritually endowed abilities that God has given all His children in Christ. Spiritual gifting is not the same as spiritual maturity or vocational description. Do not be limited by those things or let those things guide you completely. It is also important to recognize that God may call you to something you don't feel gifted in because maybe He has gifted you but you just don't know it yet, which leads to the next point.

3. How do we use spiritual gifts?

Three D's I'd like to share with you. Note that they are not explicitly from this text, so I won't be spending too much time on them.

1. Discover your gifts
2. Develop your gifts
3. Deploy your gifts

If I could add a fourth D, I would say: do it all over again. As we look through other parts of the Bible, Paul talks about honing your gift, to work on your craft, to be diligent. In Romans, Paul says: if you're going to teach well; if you're going to give, give generously. There is some debate, concerning 1 Timothy 1:6, which talks about the idea of fanning the gift anointed to you into flame, as to whether it means the gift of faith and courage or an actual technical spiritual gift. Here is the basic idea: **you will not necessarily discover your spiritual gifts by taking a spiritual gifts inventory test.** What is more helpful is this: **just pick a place to serve and do it.** After that, I think the only thing you need is honest feedback.

For example, I used to think I had the gift of faith. The reason is because whenever I took these spiritual gifts inventory tests, the results never came back saying that I doubted. The inventory test asked questions such as "do you ever wonder if God will provide for you?" and "do you ever struggle with doubt about how you'll be able to get money in the future?" I also thought that I didn't have the gift of teaching or leadership because the inventory asked me questions like "when you say things, do people usually listen to you?" and my answer was "no..."

I realized later that I didn't have the gift of faith; I had affluent parents. Later, when I became a college student and had to work for my own self, I took that exact same spiritual gifts inventory test and I definitely did not score well for the gift of faith. **I realized it wasn't my spiritual gift when that area was tested.** This is the fun, but hard part of it. You cannot tell me you do not possess a spiritual gift unless:

1. You've tried it.
2. You have been trained in it.
3. You have been encouraged in it.

If one of you tried to ride a bike and then fell off and said, "I'm just not called to ride a bike" you would think that was ridiculous. However, this happens in ministry all the time. Someone will try to teach children once, maybe he or she substituted for a class, followed the curriculum, and felt terrible about his or her performance, and say in the end, "I just don't feel gifted with children." Perhaps that's the case, but I don't think he or she has given that gift a fair shot.

If you have tried it, have been trained in it, and have been encouraged it, then perhaps some of that encouragement will include, "Okay, you've given it a good shot and I've been praying for you and encouraging you, but let's agree that this area may not be your strongest gifting..."

There are so many **people who are selling themselves short because Satan has discouraged them from using their potent gifts for God.**

What I want to leave you with is this: God loves you so much; he didn't just save you, he saved you and gave you a mission, right now, in this church. If you're worshiping here regularly, then you have a job here at this church. I don't mean for you to pick a job like hospitality team; what I mean is bless people with the gifts God has given you. Some of your gifts will never have a job title. There is no team for "be nice to the person sitting next to me because he or she looks like he or she is having an emotionally tough week". I care less about the roles and the organization charts being filled. I care more about God using you, encouraging you, and training and equipping you. Let's remember that this week.

Heavenly Father, I feel like this message was a lot more technical, although still theological because all the Bible is theological. Maybe I wish I could have gone more for the heart and gotten more explicit Gospel in here, explaining why we don't use our gifts. Help us to see that your love for us is not about our spiritual gifts. You don't love us because of our spiritual gifts or lack thereof. You give us spiritual gifts because You love us.

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As an expression of our love for You, we pray that you would encourage us. Maybe we feel like chopped liver, ungifted and useful. Lord, I pray that You would forgive us and encourage our hearts. Maybe we haven't taken the time to be trained or equipped. Lord, help us to take initiative, find someone, or make our needs and availability aware so that we might be able to use our gifts. Finally, Father, use us for the common good of the church so that more people, men, women, and children, may fall in love and repent before Jesus Christ. We pray this in your name. Amen.

Sermon preached June 15, 2014.