

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT (Bill Cahusac)

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

1 Corinthians 12:1-12

¹Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. ³Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. ⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. ¹²Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

The Greek text of v.1 doesn't mention gifts. A better translation is, '... as regards spiritual things...' Verses 4-6 speak, firstly, of 'different kinds of gifts' (Gk. *charismata* – hence, 'charismatic gifts', 'charismatic churches' etc. The same Greek root gives us *chara* = joy, *charis* = grace, *eucharistia* = gratitude. And so we say, 'cheer up', we give to charity, and we celebrate the eucharist. These 'spiritual things' are 'gifts of grace'); secondly, 'different kinds of service' (Gk. *diakonia*, also, 'ministries'); thirdly, 'different kinds of working' (Gk. *energia*, meaning 'energy', or 'activity'). There will always be diversity in the way God works in and through us, but it is the same (Holy) Spirit, the same Lord (Jesus), and the same God at work in everyone.

- *What different kinds of gifts, service, or 'energy' have you experienced?*
- *What do you think Paul meant when he wrote to Timothy urging him to 'fan into flame the gift of God which is in you'? (2 Timothy 1:6)*

Bill reminded us of **four attributes** about God, which we need to remember: (1) God is good. **Psalm 136** says 26 times that, 'His love endures for ever.' (2) It is God's nature to be generous. **Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:9-13** '... If you... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' (3) God wants to give us good gifts. (4) God wants to involve us in his work in the world.

- *What holds us back from exercising spiritual 'gifts of grace'? Do we doubt God's goodness, or our own usefulness? Are we waiting to be perfect first?*

Bill suggested **five attitudes** we should have concerning spiritual gifts: (1) Be Eager (**1 Corinthians 14:1** 'eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit'). (2) Be Expectant. (3) Be Patient. (4) Be Ready. (5) Be Brave – don't be afraid to step out, have a go, and perhaps get it wrong.

- *Is there anything you would like to add to this list?¹*
- *In verses 8-10, Paul names nine different 'charismatic' gifts. Which of these would you like to see in your life? What are you eager for?*
- *What spiritual gifts does the Church – the Body of Christ – need most right now?*
- *What spiritual gifts do we most need as a collective today?*

¹ Perhaps, 'Be wise' (especially when it comes to prophecy. Don't tell people who they are going to marry, or which country they should be moving to). 'Be receptive' (Generous towards each other as they step out in exercising gifts).