

Concerning Spiritual Gifts

~Other Speakers S-Z: Smith Wigglesworth:

In 1 Cor. 12:1 we read, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." There is a great weakness in the church of Christ because of an awful ignorance concerning the Spirit of God and the gifts He has come to bring. God would have us powerful on all lines because of the revelation of the knowledge of His will concerning the power and manifestation of His Spirit. He would have us ever hungry to receive more and more of His Spirit. In times past I have arranged many conventions, and I have found that it is better to have a man on my platform who has not received the Baptism but who is hungry for all that God has for him, than a man who has received the Baptism and is satisfied and has settled down and become stationary and stagnant. But of course I would prefer a man that is baptized with the Holy Ghost and is still hungry for more of God. A man who is not hungry to receive more of God is out of order in any convention.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of being filled with the Spirit. It is impossible for us to meet the conditions of the day, to walk in the light as He is in the light, to subdue kingdoms and work righteousness and bind the power of Satan unless we are filled with the Holy Ghost.

We read that in the early church they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. It is important for us also to continue steadfastly in these same things. For some years I was associated with the Plymouth Brethren. They are very strong on the Word, and are sound on water baptism, and they do not neglect the breaking of bread service, but have it every Lord's Day morning as they had it in the early church. These people seem to have everything except the match. They have the wood, but they need the fire and then they would be all ablaze. Because they lack the fire of the Holy Spirit there is no life in their meetings. One young man who attended their meetings received the Baptism with the speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. The brethren were very upset about this and came to the father and said to him, "You must take your son aside and tell him to cease." They did not want any disturbance. The father told the son and said, "My boy, I have been attending this church for twenty years and have never seen anything of this kind. We are established in the truth and do not want anything new. We won't have it." The son replied, "If that is God's plan I will obey, but somehow or other I don't think it is." As they were going home the horse stood still; the wheels were in deep ruts. The father pulled at the reins but the horse did not move. He asked, "What do you think is up?" The son answered, "It has got established." God save us from becoming stationary.

God would have us to understand concerning spiritual gifts and to covet earnestly the best gifts, and also to enter into the more excellent way of the fruit of the Spirit. We must beseech God for these gifts. It is a serious thing to have the Baptism and yet be stationary; to live two days in succession on the same spiritual plane is a tragedy. We must be willing to deny ourselves everything to receive the revelation of God's truth and to receive the fullness of the Spirit. Only that will satisfy God, and nothing less must satisfy us. A young Russian received the Holy Spirit and was mightily endued with power from on High. Some sisters were anxious to know the secret of his power. The secret of his power was continuous waiting upon God. As the Holy Ghost filled him it seemed as though every breath became a prayer and so all his ministry was on an increasing line.

I know a man who was full of the Holy Ghost and would preach only when he knew that he was mightily unctionized by the power of God. He was asked to preach at a Methodist church. He was staying at the minister's house and he said, "You go on to church and I will follow." The place was packed with people and this man did not turn up and the Methodist minister, becoming anxious, sent his little girl to inquire why he did not come. As she came to the bedroom door she heard him crying out three times, "I will not go." She went back and reported that she heard the man say three times that he would not go. The minister was troubled about it, but almost immediately after this the man came in, and, as he preached that night, the power of God was tremendously manifested. The preacher asked him, "Why did you tell my daughter that you were not coming?" He answered, "I know when I am filled. I am an ordinary man and I told the Lord that I dared not go and would not go until He gave me a fresh filling of the Spirit. The moment the glory filled me and overflowed I came to the meeting."

Yes, there is a power, a blessings. an assurance, a rest in the presence of the Holy Ghost. You can feel His presence and know that He is with you. You need not spend an hour without this inner knowledge of His holy presence. With His power upon you there can be no failure. You are above par all the time.

"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." This is the Gentile day. When the Jews refused the blessings of God He scattered them, and He has grafted the Gentiles into the olive tree where the Jews were broken off. There never has been a time when God has been so favorable to a

people who were not a people. He has brought in the Gentiles to carry out His purpose of preaching the gospel to all nations and to receive the power of the Holy Ghost to accomplish this task. It is of the mercy of God that He has turned to the Gentiles and made us partakers of all the blessings that belong to the Jews; and here under this canopy of glory, because we believe, we get all the blessings of faithful Abraham.

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." There are many evil, deceiving spirits sent forth in these last days who endeavor to rob Jesus of His Lordship and of His rightful place. Many are opening the doors to these latest devils, such as New Theology and New Thought and Christian Science. These evil cults deny the fundamental truths of God's Word. They all deny eternal punishment and all deny the deity of Jesus Christ. You will never see the Baptism of the Holy Ghost come upon a man who accepts these errors. Neither will you see a Romanist receive. They put Mary in the place of the Holy Ghost. I would like you to produce a Romanist who knows that he is saved. No man can know he is saved by works. If you ever speak to a Romanist you will know that he is not definite on the line of the new birth. He cannot be. Another thing, you will never find a Russellite baptized in the Holy Ghost; nor a member of any other cult that does not put the Lord Jesus Christ pre-eminent above all.

The all important thing is to make Jesus Lord. Men can grow lopsided by emphasizing the truth of divine healing. Man can get wrong by all the time preaching on water baptism. But we never go wrong in exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, giving Him the preeminent place and magnifying Him as both Lord and Christ, yes, as very God of very God. As we are filled with the Holy Ghost our one desire is to magnify Him. We need to be filled with the Spirit to get the full revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's command is for us to be filled with the Spirit. We are no good if we have only a full cup; we need to have an overflowing cup all the time. It is a tragedy not to live in the fullness of overflowing. See that you never live below the overflowing tide.

"Now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit." Every manifestation of the Spirit is given that we might "profit withal." When the Holy Spirit is moving in an assembly and His gifts are in operation, everyone will receive profit. I have seen some who have been terribly switched. They believe in gifts, in prophecy, and they use these gifts apart from the power of the Holy Ghost. We must look to the Holy Spirit to show us the use of the gifts, what they are for, and when to use them, so that we may never use them without the power of the Holy Ghost. I do not know of anything which is so awful today as people using a gift without the power. Never do it God save us from doing it.

A man who is filled with the Holy Ghost, while he may not be conscious of having any gift of the Spirit, can have the gifts made manifest through him. I have gone to many places to help and have found that under the unction of the Holy Spirit many wonderful things have happened in the midst when the glory of the Lord was upon the people. Any man who is filled with God and filled with His Spirit might at any mo- have any of the nine gifts made manifest through him without knowing that he has a gift. Sometimes I have wondered whether it was better to be always full of the Holy Ghost and to see signs and wonders and miracles without any consciousness of possessing a gifts or whether it was better to know one has a gift. If you have received the gifts of the Spirit and they have been blessed, you should never under any circumstances use them without the power of God upon you pressing the gift through. Some have used the prophetic gift without the holy touch, and they have come into the realm of the natural, and it has brought ruin, caused dissatisfaction, broken hearts, upset assemblies. Do not seek the gifts unless you are purposed to abide in the Holy Spirit. They should be manifested only in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord will allow you to be very drunk in His presence, but sober among people. I like to see people so filled with the Spirit that they are drunk like the 120 on the Day of Pentecost, but I don't like to see people drunk in the wrong place. That is what troubles us, somebody being drunk in a place of worship where a lot of people come in that know nothing about the Word. If you allow yourself to be drunk there you send people away; they look at you instead of seeing God. They condemn the whole thing because you have not been sober at the right time. Paul writes, "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause" (2 Cor. 5:13). You can be beside yourself. You can go a bit further than being drunk. You can dance, if you will do it at the right time. So many things are commendable when all the people are in the Spirit. Many things are very foolish if the people round about you are not in the Spirit. We must be careful not to have a good time at the expense of somebody else. When you have a good time you must see that the spiritual conditions in the place lend themselves to help you and that the people are falling in line with you. Then you will find it always a blessing.

While it is right to covet earnestly the best gifts, you must recognize that the all important thing is to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost Himself. You will never have trouble with people who are filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, but you will have a lot of trouble with people who have the gifts and have no power. The Lord wants us to come behind in no gift, but at the same time He wants us to be so filled with the Holy Ghost that it will be the Holy Spirit manifesting Himself through the gifts. Where the glory of God alone is desired you can look for every needed gift to be made manifest. To glorify God is better than to idolize gifts. We prefer the Spirit of God to any gift; but we can look for the Trinity in manifestation, different gifts by the same Spirit, different administrations but the same Lord, diversities of operation but the same God working all in all. Can you conceive of what it will mean for our Triune God to be manifesting Himself in His fullness in our assemblies?

Watch that great locomotive boiler as it is filled with steam. You can see the engine letting off some of the steam as it remains stationary. It looks as though the whole thing might burst. You can see saints like that. They start to scream, but that is not to edification. But when the locomotive moves on, it serves the purpose for which it was built, and pulls along much traffic with it. It is wonderful to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, and for Him to serve His own purposes through us. Through our lips divine utterances flow, our hearts rejoice and our tongue is glad. It is an inward power within which is manifested in outward expression. Jesus Christ is glorified. As your faith in Him is quickened, from within you there will flow rivers of living water. The Holy Spirit will pour through you like a great river of life and thousands will be blessed because you are a yielded channel through whom the Spirit may flow.

The most important thing, the one thing that counts, is to see that we are filled with the Holy Spirit, filled to overflowing. Anything less than this is displeasing to God. We are commanded by God to be filled with the Spirit, and in the measure you fail of this you are that far short of the plan of God. The Lord would have us moving on from faith to faith, from glory to glory, from fullness to overflowing. It is not good for us to be ever thinking in the past tense, but we should be moving on to the place where we dare believe God. He has declared that after the Holy Ghost is come upon us we shall have power. I believe there is an avalanche of power from God to be apprehended if we will but catch the vision.

Paul wrote at one time, "I will now come to visions and revelations." God has put us in a place where He expects us to have His latest revelation, the revelation of that marvelous fact, CHRIST IN US, and what this really means. We can apprehend Christ fully only as we are filled and overflowing with the Spirit of God. Our only safeguard from dropping back into our natural mind from which we can never get anything, is to be filled and yet filled again with the Spirit of God and to be taken on to visions and revelations on a new line. The reason why I emphasize the importance of the fullness of the Holy Ghost is that I want to get you beyond all human plans and thoughts into the fullness of vision, into the full revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you want rest? It is in Jesus. Do you want to be saved from everything the devil is bringing up in these last times? Receive and continue in the fullness of the Holy Ghost, and He will be ever revealing to you that all you need for all times is in Christ Jesus your Lord.

I desire to emphasize the importance of the Spirit's ministration and of the manifestation of the Spirit which is given to every man to profit withal. As you yield to the Spirit of the Lord He has power over your intellect, over your heart, and over your voice. The Holy Spirit has power to unveil Christ and to project the vision of Christ upon the canvas of your mind, and then He uses your tongue to glorify and magnify Him in a way that you could never do apart from the Spirit's power.

Never say that when you are filled with the Holy Ghost you are "obliged" to do this or that. When people say that they are "obliged" to do this or that I know it is not the Spirit of God, but their own spirit moving them on to do that which is unseemly and unprofitable. Lots of people spoil meetings because they scream. If you want to do that kind of thing you had better get into some cellar. That is not to edification. I believe that, when the Spirit of God is upon you and moving you to speak as He gives utterance, it will always be to edification. But don't spoil the prayer meeting because when you ought to stop you go on. Who spoils the prayer meeting? The man who starts in the Spirit and finishes in the flesh. Nothing is more lovely than prayer, but a prayer meeting is killed if you will go on and on in your own spirit when the Spirit of God is through with you. You say as you come from some meetings, "That was a lovely message if the preacher only had stopped half an hour before he did." Learn to cease immediately the unction of the Spirit lifts. The Holy Ghost is jealous. Your body is the temple, the office of the Holy Ghost, but He does not fill the temple for human glorification, but only for the glory of God. You have no license to continue beyond a "Thus saith the Lord."

There is another side to this. God would have the assembly as free as possible, and you must not put your hand upon the working of the Spirit or it will surely bring trouble. You must be prepared to allow a certain amount of extravagance in young and newly baptized souls. You must remember that when you were brought

into this life of the Spirit you had as many extravagances as anybody, but you have now become somewhat sobered down. It is a pity that some do get sobered down, for they are not where they were in the early days. We have to look to God for wisdom that we do not interfere or dampen the Spirit or quench the power of God when He is manifested in our meetings. If you want to have an assembly full of life you must have an assembly full of manifestation. Nobody will come if there is no manifestation. We need to look to God for special grace that we do not move back to looking at things from a natural viewpoint.

The preacher, after he loses his unction, should inwardly repent and get right with God and get the unction back. We are no good without the unction of the Spirit of God. If you are filled with the grace of God you will not be judging everybody in the assembly, you will rather be trusting everybody, you will not be frightened at what is being done, you will have a heart to believe all things, and to believe that though there may be some extravagances, the Spirit of God will take control of things and will see that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is exalted, glorified, and revealed to hungry hearts that desire to know Him. The Lord would have us wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil, free from distrust, entering into a divine likeness to Jesus, that dares believe that God Almighty will surely watch over all. Hallelujah!

The Holy Ghost is the One who magnifies the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who gives illumination of Him. If you are filled with the Holy Ghost, it is impossible to keep your tongue still. Talk about a dumb baptized soul! It is not to be found in the Scriptures or outside of the Scriptures. We are filled with the Spirit in order that we may magnify the Lord, and there should be no meeting in which the saints do not glorify, magnify, praise, and worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth.

I would like to give one word of caution, for failure often comes through our not recognizing the fact that we are always in the body. We will need our bodies as long as we live. But our body is to be used and controlled by the Spirit of God. We are to present our bodies, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. Every member of our body must be so sanctified that it works in harmony with the Spirit of God. Our very eyes must be sanctified. God hates the winking of the eye. From the day that I read in the Proverbs what God had to say about the winking of the eye (Prov. 6:13 and 10:10) I have never winked. I desire that my eyes may be so sanctified that they can always be used for the Lord. The Spirit of God will bring within us a compassion for souls that will be seen in our very eyes.

God has never changed the order of things that first, there comes the natural, and then the spiritual. For instance, when it is on your heart to pray, you begin in the natural and your second word will probably be under the power of the Spirit. You begin and God will end. It is the same in giving forth utterances under the Spirit's power. You feel the moving of the Spirit within and you begin to speak and the Spirit of God will give forth utterance. Thousands have missed wonderful blessings because they have not had faith to move out and begin in the natural, in faith that the Lord would take them into the realm of the supernatural. When you receive the Holy Ghost you receive God's Gift, in whom are all the gifts of the Spirit. Paul counsels Timothy to stir up the gift that was within. You have power to stir up God's executive within you. The way you stir up the gift within you is by beginning in faith, and then He gives forth what is needed for the occasion. You would never begin unless you were full of God. When we yield to timidity and fear we simply yield to Satan. Satan whispers, "It is all self." He is a liar. I have learned this, If the Spirit of God is stirring me up, I have no hesitation in beginning to speak in tongues, and the Spirit of God gives me utterance and gives me the interpretation. I find that every time I yield to the Lord on this line I get a divine touch, I get a leading thought from the Spirit of God and the meeting is moved up on the line of faith.

You attend a meeting in faith, believing that the Lord is going to meet you there. But perhaps the evangelist is not in harmony with God. The people in the assembly are not getting what God wants. The Lord knows it. He knows His people are hungry. What happens? He will take perhaps the smallest vessels and put His power upon them. As they yield to the Spirit they break forth in a tongue. Another yields to the Spirit and there comes forth the interpretation. The Lord's church has to be fed, and the Lord will take this means of speaking to His people. Pentecostal people cannot be satisfied with the natural message. They are in touch with heavenly things and cannot be satisfied with anything less. They feel when there is something lacking in a meeting, and they look to God and He supplies that which is lacking.

When a man is filled with the Spirit he has no conception of what he has. We are so limited in our conception of what we have received. The only way we can know the power that has been given is through the ministration and manifestation of the Spirit of God. Do you think that Peter and John knew what they had when they went up to the temple to pray? They were limited in thought, and limited in their expression. The nearer we get to God the more conscious we are of the poverty of the human and we cry with Isaiah, "I am undone, I am unclean." But the Lord will bring the precious blood and the flaming coals for cleansing and refining and send us out to labor

for Him empowered by His Spirit.

God has sent forth this outpouring that we may all be brought into a revelation of our sonship—that we are sons of God, men of power, that we are to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are to have the powers of sonship, the power to lay hold of that which is weak and to quicken it. The Baptism of the Spirit is to make us sons of God with power. We shall be conscious of our human limits, but we shall not limit the Holy One who has come to dwell within. We must believe that since the Holy Ghost has come upon us we are indeed sons of God with power. Never say that you can't. All things are possible to them that believe. Launch out into the deep and believe that God has His all for you, and that you can do all things through Him who , strengthens you.

Peter and John knew that they had been in the upper room, they had felt the glory, they had been given divine utterances. They had seen conviction on the people. They knew that they had come into a wonderful thing. They know that what they had would be ever increasing and that it would be ever needful to cry, "Enlarge the vessel that the Holy Ghost may have more room within." They knew that all the old things were moved away and they had entered into an increasing and ever increasing knowledge of God, and that it was their Master's wish that they should be filled with the Spirit of God and with power every day and every hour. The secret of power is the unveiling of Christ, the all-powerful One within, the revelation of God who comes to abide within us. As they looked upon the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate they were filled with compassion. They were prompted by the Spirit to stop and speak with him. They said to the lame man, "Look on us." It was God's plan that the man should open his eyes with expectation. Peter said, "Of silver and gold we have none. But we have something and we will give it to you. We don't know what it is, but we give it to you. It is all in the name of Jesus." And then began the ministry of God. You begin in faith and you see what will happen. It is bidden from us at the beginning, but as we have faith in God He will come forth. The coming forth of the power is not of us but of God. There is no limit to what He will do. It is all in a nutshell as you believe God. And so Peter said, "Such as I have I give to thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." And the man who had been in that way for forty years stood up, and began to leap, and entered into the temple walking and leaping and praising God.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom." I want you to keep in mind the importance of never expecting the gifts of the Spirit apart from the power of the Spirit. In coveting the best gifts, covet to be so full of God and His glory that the gifts in manifestation will always glorify Him. We do not know all and we cannot know all that can be brought forth in the manifestation of the word of wisdom. One word of wisdom from God, one flash of light on the Word of God, is sufficient to save us from a thousand pitfalls. People have built without a word from God, they have bought things without a word from God, and they have been ensnared. They have lacked that word of wisdom which will bring them into God's plan for their lives. I have been in many places where I have needed a word of wisdom from God and this has been vouchsafed.

I will give you one instance. There is one thing I am very grateful to the Lord for, and that is that He has given me grace not to have a desire for money. The love of money is a great hindrance to many; and many a man is crippled in his ministry because he lets his heart run after financial matters. I was walking out one day when I met a godly man who lived opposite me and he said, "My wife and I have been talking together about selling our house and we feel constrained to sell it to you." As we talked together he persuaded me to buy his place, and before we said good-bye I told him that I would take it. We always make big mistakes when we are in a hurry. I told my wife what I had promised, and she said, "How will you manage it?" I told her that I had managed things so far, but I did not know how I was going to get through this. I somehow knew that I was out of divine order. But when a fellow gets out of divine order it seems that the last person he goes to is God. I was relying on an architect to help me, but that scheme fell through. I turned to my relations and I certainly had a wet shirt as one after another turned me down. I tried my friends and managed no better. My wife said to me, "Thou hast never been to God Yet." What could I do?

I have a certain place in our house where I go to pray. I Have been there very often. As I went I said, "Lord, IÂ£ You will get me out of this scrape, I will never trouble Thee on this line again." As I waited on the Lord He just gave me one word. It seemed a ridiculous thing, but it was the wisest counsel. There is divine wisdom in every word He speaks. I came down to my wife, saying, "What do you think? The Lord has told me to go to Brother Webster." I said, "It seems very ridiculous, for he is one of the poorest men I know." He was the poorest man I knew, but he was also the richest man I knew, for he knew God. My wife said, "Do What God says, and it will be right."

I went off at once to see him, and he said as he greeted me, "Smith, what brings you so early?" I answered, "The word of God." I said to him, "About three weeks ago I promised to buy a house of a man, and I am short 100 pounds (\$500). I have tried to get this money, but somehow I seem to have missed God." "How is it," he

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asked, "that you have come to me only now?" I answered, "Because I went to the Lord about it only last night." "Well," he said, "it is a strange thing; three weeks ago I had 100 pounds. For years I have been putting money into a co-operative system and three weeks ago I had to go and draw 100 pounds out. I hid it under the mattress. Come with me and you shall have it. Take it. I hope it will bring as great a blessing to you as it has been a trouble to me." I had had a word from God, and all my troubles were ended. This has been multiplied in a hundred ways since that time. If I had been walking along filled with the Holy Ghost, I would not have bought that house and would not have had all that strain. I believe the Lord wants to loose us from things of earth. But I am ever grateful for that word from God. There have been times in my life when I have been in great crises and under great weight of intercession. I have gone to the meeting without the knowledge of what I would say, but somehow or other God would vouchsafe the coming forth under the power of the Spirit of some word of wisdom, just what some souls in that meeting needed. As we look to God His mind will be made known, and His revelation and His word of wisdom will be forth coming.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth JESUS AS LORD, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

"For TO THIS END Christ died and lived again, THAT. HE MIGHT BE LORD of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9).