

Bible Study

Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Insight

We continue our study of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 1 Corinthians 12:1-12). Last week we considered the gift of healing and the week before the gift of testimony. This week we try to understand the gift of insight and its role in building up the people of God. Prophecy and tongues are gifts of insight and have special purposes in the glorifying of God and the building of the church of Jesus Christ.

Monday Numbers 11:24-29 (NRSV)

... But Moses said to [Joshua], "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!"

Moses is fed up with carrying the whole burden of the people of Israel on their trek in the wilderness. So God instructs him to assemble seventy elders and puts on them some of the same spirit of prophecy that he has previously granted Moses. God shares the gift of prophecy, then as now, particularly when the job is big and the burdens are heavy.

What does God hope to accomplish among the people of Israel by sharing the gift of prophecy among the elders of Israel?

Have you ever been jealous or resentful of someone who has received a gift you have also received (and who might take yours away or make it less special)?

Tuesday Jeremiah 33:1-3 (NRSV)

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still confined in the court of the guard: Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it--the LORD is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Jeremiah prophesied the greatest of things - the coming of a Messiah, something hidden by the hopelessness of the people of Israel in their captivity (33:14-16). God says to us, as he said to Jeremiah, "just call, and I will send the Holy Spirit right over." In this way, God prepares and assists us as we help others understand and act on God's plans.

Has God told you a great thing (or maybe more than one) that you did not know, that was hidden from you, maybe for many years?

Wednesday John 16:12-13 (NRSV)

[Jesus said,] "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

Calling on the Holy Spirit is a first and necessary step of prophecy. We call on the Holy Spirit to help us understand what God wants us to reveal. Whenever we feel confused or uncertain or "cannot

bear” God’s words or intentions, the Holy Spirit continues to be with us until the truth becomes clear and we are ready to speak and act on God’s behalf.

Have you ever been confused or uncertain or could not bear God’s word (maybe in a Bible study)?

How did you resolve the dilemma?

Thursday 1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (NRSV)

Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy. For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

Speaking and interpreting tongues are important gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here, Paul helps us understand that each spiritual gift has its own time and place. Sometimes we speak with God and God speaks with us in ways (and in a language) that cannot be understood by others. This is a private matter, and when necessary God gives us (or someone to interpret for us) the gift necessary for this special kind of conversation.

How do you speak with God? And would others understand the manner and the language of conversation?

Do you ever need help interpreting ways God speaks to you?

Friday 1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (NRSV)

Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

While not denying the gift of tongues and its place in individuals’ relationship with God, Paul considers the gift of prophecy particularly important in forming a community of believers in Jesus Christ. In Corinth, the church gave the speaking of tongues, and those who practiced it, special status. In this letter, Paul emphasizes that spiritual gifts are given to glorify God and not those on whom God bestows particular gifts.

Can you think of an example where you (or someone you have known well) have understood God’s will, have spoken it to others, and have seen this prophecy fulfilled?

Saturday 1 Corinthians 14:26-31 (NRSV)

What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ... Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.

Paul offers a practical plan for employing the gifts of prophecy. First, call on as many gifts of insight as possible – singing, teaching, wisdom and knowledge, prophesying, and even tongues (if someone can interpret). And, when it comes to prophecy, listen to more than one person given this gift and weigh different insights. Let each speak (and then be silent) in turn, so that each person in attendance might learn and be encouraged, and so that the group and the larger community of faith might be prepared to act on the prophecy.

How do you most enjoy learning God's plans?

How are you most encouraged to be part of God's plans?

God, thank you for the gifts of insight into your plans. Amen

For more great Bible Studies, go to <http://www.LajollaLutheranChurch.com>. The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV), copyright 1988, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.