

In the Spirit's Power

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit to do the Work of Jesus Christ

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Dunamis Course 2

In the Spirit's Power

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This first chapter includes Jesus Christ establishing the Kingdom of God and making a way for us to enter into this new reality. We will review the Gateways teaching on the inward and outward working of the Holy Spirit and discuss how the Spirit builds the Church and advances the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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This section deals with the topic of **discerning the direction of the Holy Spirit’s** leading. This is essential for being able to cooperate with the Spirit in the Kingdom work of Jesus Christ. A fundamental conviction of our Christian faith is that God speaks to us and that we may actually hear His words. In this section we must deal with some conditions for being able to hear from God. We will also explore some of the different ways that we receive guidance from the Holy Spirit.

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In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Paul emphasizes the diversity of the expressions of the Holy Spirit's power and presence, stressing that they all come from the SAME Holy Spirit. These are not only gifts. More importantly, they are "manifestations" or expressions of the Holy Spirit's presence in the midst of the "eschatological" people of God. All of these "manifestations" make the presence of the living God visible and audible.

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In this last chapter we pull together the role of the Holy Spirit in building the church. We give some practical ways of welcoming the Holy Spirit which will bring blessing to the church. In the Church the end time is beginning to become real in the midst of a fallen world. The Holy Spirit is working to bring into reality Jesus Christ as prophet, priest and king.

Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God

Lesson # 1



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Lesson # 1 Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God

Our 1st Dunamis Course “Gateways to Empowered Ministry” Course went over the basics of who is the Holy Spirit. Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work throughout the bible, in the Old Testament, in the life of Jesus, in the early church. We went through the inward and outward work of the Holy Spirit, ending with a guide on how to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. This 2nd course, “In the Spirit’s Power”, addresses how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and be gifted by the Holy Spirit to work with Jesus to build the Kingdom of God on earth. Our first lesson is Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God was the main theme of Jesus’ life and ministry

At the beginning of His ministry on earth Jesus declared: *“The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the goods news!”* Mark 1:15. The kingdom of God has come. Jesus referred to the kingdom of God throughout his ministry. He taught about it in his teachings, his parables. On Palm Sunday, he was received as the King of Israel. He was crucified as the King of the Jews. Finally, Jesus spoke of his returning as the King of kings and the Lord of Lords, to bring the Kingdom of God in fullness.

Jesus came to re-establish God’s kingdom by being God’s prophet priest and king. Jesus continues to build the kingdom of God through us today as his Spirit empowered prophets, priests and kings. In short, this means that as prophets we are to speak Spirit inspired words, as priests we are to minister God’s grace and as kings, we are to exercise Jesus’ authority, all to bring His rule to every area of life, in other words, to advance the Kingdom of God.



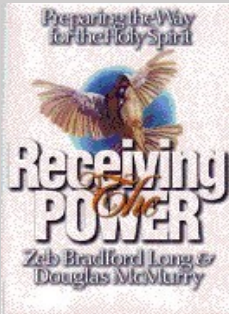
But what is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God is ...

- the growing reality of God’s presence, life and rule on earth as it is in heaven.
- the transformation of the fallen creation into God’s new creation.
- the government or the reign of God coming to all areas of life.

Going Deeper

For a more complete discussion on these terms, “the Holy Spirit fell upon,” “Baptism with the Holy Spirit,” “Filled with the Holy Spirit,” “Receiving the Holy Spirit,” see the following: The Dunamis Course—# 1 Gateways to Empowered Ministry. Also, Brad Long and Doug McMurry, *Receiving the Power: Preparing the Way for the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1996).



For those who may not have taken the first Dunamis Course, this book is a good introduction to what we believe the Bible teaches on the Holy Spirit.

According to scripture, all these terms speak of the “outward” empowering work of the Holy Spirit. The purpose is to equip us to take part in witnessing to Jesus Christ for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit brings the Kingdom of God.

1. The Holy Spirit **embodies and advances** the reality and presence of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 12:22-28) *28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*
2. The Holy Spirit enables the elect to be **born** into the Kingdom of God, to become children of God. “*No one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.*” John 3:5
3. The Holy Spirit **transforms** the children of God into the image of Jesus Christ, making them more and more proper subjects of the Kingdom. “*for we are being transformed into his image with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*” 2 Cor 3:18
4. The Holy Spirit **leads** the people of God in the daily life of the Kingdom. “*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.*” Romans 8:14
5. The Holy Spirit **empowers** the people of God to do the works of Jesus and to witness to Jesus for the advancement of the Kingdom. “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” Acts 1:8.
6. The Holy Spirit **builds** the body of Christ as the quintessential expression of the Kingdom of God on earth. Our churches become little outposts of the Kingdom of God. “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*” 1 Cor 12:7
7. The Holy Spirit is given as **seal and guarantee** of our inheritance in the Kingdom of God. “*You were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*” Ephesians 1:13.
8. In the future, the Holy Spirit will **bring** the Kingdom of God in fullness. So that every aspect of life will reflect the glory of God, that the glory of God will fill the earth as the waters fill the oceans. “*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*” Galatians 6:7-8.



Painting by Grunewald

The Kingdom of God transforms all dimensions of fallen reality

The kingdom of God not only transforms us, but it is also at work transforming all dimensions of fallen reality. But a lot of us have been taught in Sunday School that the Kingdom of God is all about me and Jesus. It's about me getting a ticket to heaven. A get out jail free card. But it's much bigger than that.

What does the Kingdom look like? What does it look like to turn everything back into God's good creation?

A good place to start is Isaiah 61. Here Isaiah talks about a man upon whom, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him in order to set the captive free, to release the prisoner. Then these free people can be transformed, so they can receive beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might become oaks of righteousness. Then they will rebuild the ruined cities, restore the places long devastated. Isaiah was speaking immediately to exiles returning to Israel in order to rebuild their country.

But Jesus expanded this work of the Spirit as the pattern for his building God's kingdom. How with Jesus the Holy Spirit frees us and equips us to rebuild a world ruined by sin, devastated by countless years of being under the rule of the evil one. Through us, God wishes to extend his rule, his reign over every aspect of life—our work, our schools, our governments, our shops, our art, our sports, our entertainment. Every aspect of life. This doesn't mean you have to say Jesus every other word, it means as a subject in God's kingdom, you have the opportunity to bring his rule, his ways, his goodness, through everything you do, through everything you say. We bring his kingdom wherever we go, where we work, where we eat, where we play. We can bring the Kingdom to our art, our entertainment, our government, to every aspect of life.

This doesn't mean that we walk around saying "Jesus" with every other word. That would be weird. It does mean that every day we have opportunities to go places only we can go to and we can do things God's way. We can say words that are God inspired, so His goodness His ways are influencing everything around us. That's how it advances God's Kingdom.

"We are his workmanship, created for good works in Christ, which he has prepared in advance for us to walk in." Eph. 2:10. Jesus has stuff for us to do, stuff that will advance the Kingdom of God, stuff he has prepared in advance for us to do, to walk in. and **Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to empower us to accomplish this kingdom mission.**

This Dunamis course will teach you how to hear from the Holy Spirit and receive and exercise gifts from the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish this mission.

The Spiritual Gifts in Perspective

This course will teach us how to hear from the Holy Spirit and then how to receive and exercise gifts from the Holy Spirit, so we can accomplish this mission.

While this course will deal with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, gifts are not the focus of the course. The focus is on cooperating with the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are like the tools that builders must learn to use in order to build a house. They are merely tools; the diverse ways the Holy Spirit chooses to express His power to get the job done—the important thing is building the house.



By taking the focus off the gifts and putting it on to the project of building the Kingdom of God, as directed by the Holy Spirit for the glory of Jesus Christ, the gifts take their proper place.

The Results of Life “in the Spirit”

- In the Spirit’s power we will join with Jesus to work in the church and the world as prophet, priest and king to advance the kingdom of God.
- In the Spirit’s power we will learn how to hear from and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to advance the Kingdom of God.
- In the Spirit’s power we will learn about the gifts of the Spirit, the talents manifestations and vocations given to us by the Holy Spirit to build the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God

Small Group Exercise

Before going further in this course, it is important to establish where we are with God’s Kingdom. In your small groups, have a prayer of rededication to Jesus Christ. Paul says in Romans 10:9-10, *“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”*

Each person, as led by the Holy Spirit and from the heart, should be encouraged to make this profession to one another. If someone has not ever prayed this before, arrangements should be made for his/her baptism, as this is the biblical sign for having been born again.

In small groups you may do the following:

1. Share testimonies of how members of the group may have had experiences into the power dimension of the Holy Spirit.
 - a How did this happen? With laying on of hands, with emotions? With no emotions? With or without manifestations? What was the result of this experience in your life?
 - b How have you experienced the Holy Spirit continuing to fall upon you in power and gifts?
2. Describe in your own words your understanding of the Kingdom of God. What does this personally mean to you?
3. What mission or vision has God given you? To put this another way, for what purpose has God called you into salvation? What vision have you been given of how you will be a disciple of Jesus Christ?
4. What mission has God given your church?
5. In prayer groups, pray for each member of the group to grow in a knowledge and experience of each person of the Trinity. Pray for each other to be filled with the Holy Spirit to do the work of Jesus Christ.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit For Life in the “Between the Times”

Lesson # 2



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In the Spirit's Power

Going Deeper

“Between the Times” is a phrase used by Gordon Fee to describe the reality in which we must presently live. We are between the time of Jesus having come and the time of His second coming.

We are “between the times.” We are also living in two realities: 1. The fallen world with sin and death. 2. The Kingdom of God with eternal life, righteousness and peace. According to the Bible what is life like in the “between the times?”

These conflicting realities are just not out in the world, but experienced in our own hearts. Paul describes our condition:

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”

Romans 7:15-25.

Overview

To gain a biblical view and experience of the work of the Holy Spirit we must have three essential things from scripture:

1. A map of where we are in the Kingdom of God.
2. A certain knowledge of who we are in the Kingdom of God.
3. A practical knowledge of the spiritual tools given to us by the Holy Spirit for Kingdom work.

Knowing where we are and who we are will provide a framework for understanding the work of the Holy Spirit, including the purpose and use of the spiritual gifts.

Where are we?

We are between two points in history.

1. The First point is when the Father sent the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to earth. When he lived, died, was resurrected and then ascended into heaven thus inaugurating the Kingdom of God.
2. The other point is when Jesus will return to completely vanquish all evil and when the Father will create the new heavens and a new earth. When God will fully establish his kingdom.
3. In between these two points the old order continues in opposition to the new reality of the Kingdom. This is where we are. We are living “**between the times**” between the time that Jesus came and the time that Jesus will return. As Christians we are living in the reality of the Kingdom, but the old order still remains. The old order opposes the new order. So, we are in conflict in these “between the times.”
4. This is the time of the Holy Spirit. God sent the Holy Spirit to help us. Because at Pentecost, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to bring God’s presence into the believers and to enable them and us, God’s subjects, to not only be a part of this new Kingdom but also to invite others into this kingdom as well.

The focus of all six Dunamis courses is to introduce us to the fullness of how the Holy Spirit wishes to work in us and

through us to advance God’s kingdom “in between the times”.

Who are we?

What is eschatology?

Eschatology has to do with the time of the end of the world, and refers, first of all, to Jewish expectations that God, through his Messiah, would bring a dramatic end to the present age. This in turn would be followed by the “coming age” which is signaled by the resurrection of the dead and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (This Jewish view is mostly found in texts beyond the Bible, but we do find some references in the Old and New Testaments that support this vision of the end times: In Joel 2:29-32 the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is connected to the end of the world. In Acts 1:6-7 the disciples reflect their expectation that Jesus the Messiah was going to bring the end by restoring the kingdom of Israel. God, however, did not follow this human expectation.)

1. We, who are born again, are God’s eschatological or “last days” people. We are those who are already living the future reality of the Kingdom of God. Right Now! In these last days.
2. As God’s people, the Holy Spirit calls, commissions and anoints us to work with Jesus as prophet, priest, and king. We are his hands and feet, his presence during this “in between” time.
3. We are called to extend the new reality of the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth—starting in our own hearts.

Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit has given us spiritual tools to help us. We need a practical knowledge of these tools given to us for Kingdom work.

1 Corinthians 12:1 *“With regard to spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.”*

If we are to live in the in-between time, or the time of the Holy Spirit, we must know about these spiritual gifts.

After all, we are just human beings and we need spiritual tools to build God’s spiritual kingdom. Each of us has specific tools or gifts that the Father wishes to give us so we can do our part.

Spiritual gifts are common ways the Holy Spirit expresses His power and presence through born again people, tools that we, as human beings, need to work on God’s spiritual and supernatural building project—the Kingdom of God.

We need all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for building the Body of Jesus Christ. God has spiritual gifts for every Christian, gifts that give glory to Jesus Christ and advance His Kingdom on earth.

The Early Church and End Times

The first Christians believed they were in the end times. They believed that Jesus would return soon and that would be the end of the age. Peter said as much on Pentecost. He explained that the energy to witness to Jesus and the gift of speaking in other languages came from God pouring out his Holy Spirit on them. These signs fulfilled what the prophet Joel predicted, that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. Peter along with the early church believed that these last days wouldn’t last very long. However, we now know these days are lasting a lot longer than the first Christians thought

Four Lists of Spiritual Gifts Found in the Bible

There are four different lists of spiritual gifts given in the letters of Paul. We will briefly go over each of these lists. Later in this series, we will go through them in more depth.

1. The Functional or Motivational Gifts

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If one’s gift is prophesying, use it in proportion to their faith. If it is servicing, serve; if it is teaching, teach; if it is encouraging, encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, give generously; if it is leadership, govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, do it cheerfully.” Romans 12:6-8

In like manner, Christ enriches his people with all things necessary for the eternal salvation of souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unconquerable against all the assaults of spiritual enemies. From this we infer that he rules— inwardly and outwardly— more for our own sake than his. Hence, we are furnished, as far as God knows to be expedient for us, with the gifts of the Spirit, which we lack by nature. By these first fruits we may perceive that we are truly joined to God in perfect blessedness. We can call these Expressions of God’s Grace Functional Gifts.

These “gifts” are each qualified, by the phrase, “In accordance with the grace that is given you.” These are concrete expressions of God’s grace given to each of us for the good of others.

In these verses Paul suggests that we have been created with certain natural talents and traits that, when used according to the grace given us by God, and directed by the Holy Spirit, contribute to the building of the body of Christ. The good news here is that you already have these gifts, you were given them when God created you. If you are unsure of your functional gifts, it’s just a matter of discovering what you already have. This happens best in relationship with other believers who can help you discern these gifts.

2. The Manifestational Gifts

By “manifestational gifts of the Spirit.” I mean that they are the various ways that the Holy Spirit has chosen to “manifest” to “show forth” to express His power through human beings.

Our second list comes from 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 *“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another {various} kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.”*

These gifts, unlike the functional gifts, do not come from our natural gifts and talents. They are supernatural expressions of the Holy Spirit’s power.

Going Deeper

We understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the biblical framework of the Kingdom of God.

“Therefore, withdrawing from the Kingdom of God, he is at the same time deprived of spiritual gifts, with which he had been furnished for the hope of eternal salvation. From this it follows that he is so banished from the Kingdom of God that all qualities belonging to the blessed life of the soul have been extinguished in him, until he recovers them through the grace of regeneration. Among these are faith, love of God, charity toward neighbor, zeal for holiness and for righteousness. All these, since Christ restores them in us, are considered adventitious, and beyond nature: and for this reason we infer that they were taken away.” John

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Faith*, Book II Chapter 2 Section 12.

We will give these supernatural gifts extra focus in this course because:

1. They have caused the most difficulty for the contemporary church in the West.
2. They are clearly the most “supernatural” of all the gifts and most clearly connected to the dynamic of cooperation with the Holy Spirit in the work of Jesus.

We are not born with these gifts. We must ask for God to give them to us.

3. The Vocational Gifts

Our third list of “gifts” are five different offices, callings, vocations that Jesus Christ has established in the church for the maturing of the saints.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,”

Their purpose is “. . . to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:11-12.

People who fulfill these offices are called and chosen by the Holy Spirit. Those in these offices employ functional, as well as manifestational gifts to fulfill their offices. Of these five vocations, the church in the west has focused almost exclusively on the gift of pastor and teacher, and to a lesser extent, evangelists. As a result, many of our churches are missing the crucial leadership of apostles and prophets. However there has recently been a resurgence of interest in these gifts and a rediscovery of their value.

4. A Combination of gifts

Our fourth list is a gift “mix” of vocational, functional and manifestational gifts. This the actual reality for most of us. This list comes from 1 Corinthians 12:27-31.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all

Going Deeper

To learn about the spiritual gifts, we must step out of the classroom of study into the laboratory of obedience to Jesus Christ.

"Any vital information concerning the gifts of the Spirit, the pneumatic charismata, presupposes a participation in them. Without such participation, whatever is said about the gifts may only result in confusion and error." J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal*

Theology (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 1992), Vol. 2, p. 326.

"Through the pneumatic charismata the Holy Spirit shines forth and openly shows Himself. The Spirit who is invisible now manifests Himself visibly and audibly. "When the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, thousands of people were drawn to the place where they beheld and heard the Spirit-filled disciples speaking in 'other tongues.' Peter in his explanation of the event said, 'being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he [Jesus] has poured out this which you see and hear.'" Williams, *Renewal Theology*, p. 330.

Their purpose listed in **Hebrews 2:1-5**. *“This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”*

Does the office of Apostle continue in the church today?

“Now we observe that the word “apostles” in the New Testament has a twofold usage. It refers, first, and primarily, to the original twelve apostles plus Paul, and second, to a larger group of apostles, both named and unnamed.” Williams, *Renewal Theology*, p. 165.

“In regard to the Twelve, [with Judas’ replacement, Matthias] two things stand out. First, they were all specially chosen by Jesus... (Luke 6:13, Acts 1:24-26) Second, they had all been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry and had seen Him in His resurrection. (Acts 1:22) Paul meets the apostolic qualifications because he was likewise chosen by Jesus and by special revelation had seen Jesus and was given the gospel to write down.”

“Thus, the Twelve plus Paul are apostles who occupy a unique and authoritative place in the life and history of the church.” (Acts 9:15, 1 Cor. 9:1, 15:8, Gal. 1:11-12, 16) Williams, *Renewal Theology*, p 166.

There are a number of New Testament references to apostles other than the twelve” (Acts 14:14, Gal. 1:18-19, Rom. 16:7, 1 Corinthians 15:58). “From the broadest perspective, apostles in the New Testament are those sent by God for whatever mission is required of them. *Apostolos* is derived from the word *apostello*, which means to “send” or—send out.” Williams, *Renewal Theology*, p. 168. In this second meaning, Jesus continues to call and send apostles for the extension of the Gospel and the building of the Church.

have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.”

The whole point of 1 Corinthians 12 is to teach us the huge diversity of expressions of the Holy Spirit’s power that God has given to the church. This list combines them all, and then some, to emphasize this.

In conclusion

1. We are living between the times, in between the time of Jesus’ first coming and the time of Jesus’ return. The time of the Holy Spirit.
2. We are subjects of God’s kingdom, his eschatological people, his future people, living in this future reality now.
3. God has granted us spiritual gifts for the building up of the church and the fulfillment of the Great Commission on earth. Through these diverse manifestations, talents and vocations, Jesus continues to work in the church and the world as prophet, priest and king.

Through faith we share in Christ and thus in his anointing. And as we learn to work with the Holy Spirit in receiving the power and the gifts, the church will be built up, and the gospel will be extended to the world, so that Jesus Christ will be glorified!

Small Group Questions

1. What do you do with this biblical concept that we are living in the “between the times?” Does this make sense?
2. Is this consistent with your actual experience of evil in the world and struggle to be a Christian?
3. If I am a new creation, why do I sometimes feel like scum? How does between the times help us to explain this common experience of Christians?
4. What gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit have you experienced in your own life?

5. How have the manifestational gifts helped you be a disciple of Jesus Christ in difficult circumstances?

Prayer Exercise

Living in the “between the times” is difficult and a time of struggle. Many of us have been wounded by living in a fallen world. Many of us are unable to grow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit until we are first healed of those hurts within us that block our growth in Jesus Christ. Pray for one another for healing and restoration from living in this situation.

After praying for healing for one another, ask the Holy Spirit to confirm for each person his/her place in the Kingdom of God. Pray for clarity of vision as to how one may be called to witness to Jesus.

The Dynamics of Cooperating with the Holy Spirit

Lesson # 3



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Dynamic of Cooperating with the Holy Spirit in Ministry

The dynamic of cooperating with the Holy Spirit moves us into the interactions between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, interactions which include us human beings. If you are a Christian, you have been baptized into the body and Christ. You have been drawn into fellowship with the Trinity. This cooperation is all about learning how to move within the Trinity.

This dynamic interaction is like a **dance**, with each party having its own inter-related steps. Our participation in this dance of cooperation is made possible by both the inward work of the Holy Spirit, as well as the outward work. Meaning we need both the fruit and gifts in balance to move smoothly as we move with this dance of cooperation within the Trinity.

Jesus is our model

Going Deeper

We will focus on Jesus as the best example of this dance of cooperation with God. Much of the Bible however is the story of people who move in this same cooperation and demonstrate some of the same dance steps.

Old Testament Examples:

Moses in the contest with the king of Egypt. Exodus 1-11

Elijah in the context with the prophets of Baal and praying for rain. 1 Kings 18

Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel 37

New Testament Examples:

Mary receiving word from the angel. Luke 1:24-56

Martha at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11

Peter being sent to the house of Cornelius. Acts 10

Philip witnessing to the Ethiopian. Luke 8

The context for this dynamic of cooperation is the “between the times”.

Jesus is our model for this dance of cooperating with the Holy Spirit. He worked in cooperation with the Holy Spirit as prophet, priest and king. We talked about this in Dunamis 1 when we spoke of Jesus and the Trinity. Dunamis is the Greek word for power. In brief, Jesus was in continual, intimate communion with the Father. He would then sense the moving of the Holy Spirit in a situation and would cooperate with what he heard the Father saying, with what he saw the Father doing.

This same dynamic of cooperation will be true for us as we live the new reality of the Kingdom of God in the in-between times. The same Spirit who anointed, led and empowered Jesus is also anointing, leading and empowering us!

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

To illustrate this dynamic, let’s study the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, found in John 11. In this extraordinary event we may see the following “dance steps” of cooperation between Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit and human beings.

1. God works within the context of love.

John described how Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. Lazarus was the one whom Jesus loved. How Mary had poured perfume on Jesus’ feet in an act of extravagant love. How Jesus wept at the gravesite of Lazarus.

“Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. This Mary, whose

brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When he

heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”” John 11:1-5.

This love creates the context and comes from the inward work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and in the Christian community. It is important that love leads us into ministry.

2. Chronos Time and Kairos Time

Jesus didn’t go to Lazarus when he was told that he was sick. He waited several days. When questioned by his disciples, Jesus said that any time for them was right. However, He was waiting for the right time, the Kairos time. Jesus moved in power ministry when the time was right.

“Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.” John 11:6

Chronos Time

Chronos is regular time, measured time, like 2 o’clock, or Thursday the 11th. Chronos expresses duration, an interval of time—minutes, hours, days, etc. Doing things on our schedule.

Kairos Time

Kairos is a special time, a time of fulfillment, the time when things are brought to a decision point, the right time.

Jesus Gets on God’s Time

No doubt, Jesus’ love for the family urged Him to hurry. But he waited in order to get on God’s time, the time when the Holy Spirit was ready to work.

A Kairos moment is the special time when the Holy Spirit is moving in a particular situation, or a person is ready to act to accomplish God’s purposes.

Jesus said this at the beginning of his ministry. *He said, “The time [Kairos] has come. The Kingdom is near. Repent and believe the good news.”* Mark 1:15.

3. Faith opens the door for the work of God.

“When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said

Going Deeper

In the PRMI Dunamis Course we emphasize the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. However, according to scripture, this can only take place in the context of love.

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing...”

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”
Corinthians 13:1-3, 13

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” **John 4:8-10**

This means that the love of God provides the context for expressing the power of God. For us it means that the inward and outward work of the Holy Spirit must be in balance.

to Jesus, **“If you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”** John 11:20-24.

Martha was upset with Jesus’ delay. She said that Lazarus would not have died, if Jesus had come sooner, however, Martha declared by faith that even now she believed that Jesus could do something wonderful.

Martha’s Faith Opened the Door for the Work of God. In the same way, our faith opens the door for God to work.

Why is our faith so important to God? I don’t know. However, God in His sovereignty and omniscience has chosen to work much of the time through us. This requires faith.

Faith connects the spiritual world of the Father and this physical world of ours, the world that is unseen and the world that is seen. Our faith doesn’t need to be big or powerful. We just need enough faith to act. To take a risk. We don’t need to feel confident; we just need to move in obedience.

3b. (not in video) An Act of Human obedience that Expresses Faith

*“Take away the stone,” he said. ‘But Lord,’ said Martha, the sister of the dead man, ‘by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.’ Then Jesus said, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ **So they took away the stone** ...”* John 11:39-41.

Jesus connects believing in Him with obedience and then they would see the glory of God.

Two contradictory realities are expressed here—the man is dead, and yet, Jesus promises that he is the resurrection and the life.

To remove the stone is a first step of faith and thus the first step into the reality of Jesus as the resurrection and the life.

Likewise, our obedience, based on Jesus’ commands, will put us in the way of faith, which in turn leads to the work of God.

Going Deeper

A “Kairos moment” in this dynamic of power ministry is defined as the time when the Holy Spirit is moving in intentionality over something or someone and is ready to act.

In Genesis 1:1 the Spirit of God is **moving over** the face of the waters. There is some debate over exactly how the Hebrew word "marahepet" or “moving” should be translated. The word means to "vibrate," "tremble," "move," or "stir." Old Testament scholar, Gerhard Von Rad, cites Deuteronomy 32:11 as an instance in which the term is used to implies hovering and brooding. *“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that **flutters** over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions...”* Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 49.

The Spirit was present, moving over the chaos of waters, and preparing for creation. At this point, however, no creation takes place. The reason is that the Spirit alone is not the sole agent of creation. Creation begins when God speaks: *“Let there be light.”*

It is at this point that the Spirit of God, with the Word of God, begins the creative process.

In this dance of cooperation, we may be called to speak or act God’s word into the Kairos moment of the Holy Spirit’s moving. The result is that God acts in our midst.

3c. (not in video) Love Leads One into the Gap as Intercessor

*“When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. **Jesus wept.** Then the Jews said, “**See how he loved him!**””* John 11:32-36.

4. Communion with God enables getting guidance.

*“So, they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.**””* John 11:41-42

When they opened up the tomb before the miracle Jesus thanked the Father for hearing him.

On earth, Jesus was in constant communion and communication with God the Father. It is out of intimacy with the Father that he is able to make requests, as well as to get guidance on what the Father wanted to do.

We can imagine that Jesus is asking the Father to raise Lazarus from the dead and the Father is telling Jesus that is exactly what He is going to do.

5. Obeying the guidance and acting into the Kairos moment.

“Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus come out!” John 11:43
Jesus obeyed the guidance he received and spoke out in faith at the time and in the way he was directed. The obedience was the link connecting the Holy Spirit moving in the Kairos moment and God’s specific intentions of what He wanted to accomplish in that moment. There is a connection between the Word of God, acted by Jesus, and the Spirit of God moving in the moment.

6. God acts.

The result of this dynamic is God acts!

“The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his front. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”” John 11:44

Going Deeper

Let us move from the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead to our own experience of the supernatural work of God.

The Holy Spirit working in this dynamic is found in the fact that nearly all of us have been brought into faith in Jesus Christ and nurtured as disciples through hearing the preaching of the Word of God.

Preaching has many purposes; it may simply be human talk about God, it may be instructive, entertaining, or persuasive. But it is intended as the expression of God’s love, when, at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the preacher (prophet), in obedience, speaks God’s words into a Kairos moment, in which the Holy Spirit then uses the “word” to change a person’s heart.

But how does this happen? Paul answers, *“But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? ... **So, faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.**”* Romans 10:14-17

Aspects of this dynamic of cooperation will be found in all expressions of the Holy Spirit’s power and presence. They will fulfill Acts 1:8 and are the practical ways that Jesus will work among us as prophet, priest and king.

The Result—Jesus Christ is Glorified!

“Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. John 11:45

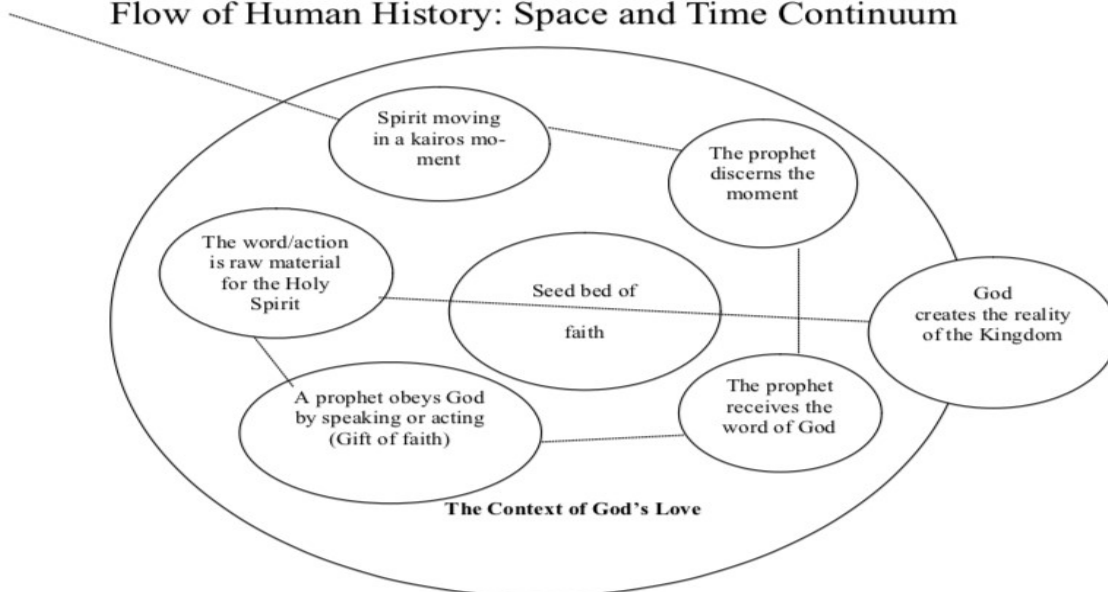
Jesus had the Holy Spirit both Within and Upon Him

Both spiritual **fruit** of changed character and expressions of power in the **gifts** enable us to take part in the dance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that makes real the reality of the Kingdom.

We must learn the dance steps, not just through study of the Bible, but by walking by the Spirit as disciples of Jesus Christ. These dance steps are not mechanical or magical, but the living dynamic of our relationship with God.

The Dynamic of Cooperating with the Holy Spirit

Flow of Human History: Space and Time Continuum



Kairos Moments in Chronos Time

Explaining the diagram

- Building the supernatural kingdom of God requires God moving supernaturally through us. The Father wishes something to happen.
- In the midst of the flow of human history, God moves in the context of love.
- There is the seed bed of faith, the faithful person through whom God can work. If we are a part of God's kingdom, if we are paying attention to the Father, walking by the Spirit, this person is us.

- Then Holy Spirit begins to move in a Kairos moment, the right time.
- Following Jesus' example, we discern the moment—a special time, a Kairos moment.
- In intimate connection with the Father, we ask for direction.
- When we receive direction, the word of God, we obey that word, that direction by acting or speaking. We do this in faith.
- The Holy Spirit is released through this word or action and God creates the reality of the Kingdom.

Some Practical Guidelines

Abide in Christ. Remember that Jesus in the vine and we are the branches.

Cultivate awareness of Kairos Moments. .

Keep your physical and spiritual eyes open. Sharpen your gift of discerning when God is moving.

Then follow the guidance you receive.

Forms of Obedience that God may call us to in a Kairos moment

1. Reading a verse of scripture.
2. Putting a hand on someone who is sick and praying for healing.
3. Saying to a meeting “I think maybe the Lord is saying...”
4. Asking “May we pray.”
5. Changing the order of worship in the midst of a service.
6. Giving your testimony.
7. Commanding an evil spirit to leave.
8. Speaking out a word of knowledge that you have received.
9. Accepting a call to a church, a new ministry.

Start small. Don't begin with raising the dead, begin with praying with someone or asking the Lord what to say when you sense God might want you to say something about your faith. Experiment with the moments with obedience. Consult with other mature Christians and debrief these moments and your response.

Risk and Vulnerability

All of this can be incredibly exciting and incredibly scary. These moments almost always feel risky, we feel vulnerable. What if we hear incorrectly? What if we say the wrong thing?

Be encouraged, these feelings can actually be signs that the prompting is God and not from us.

Dealing with silence

Remember that at times God will seem silent, absent. These times of God seeming to be distant are experienced by every saint, from a few moments to years. These times require patience. These times require faith.

Be willing to stop and wait.

Let these times of silence, whether short or prolonged, exercise your faith muscles, expose areas of sin or disobedience.

God grants us these tough times for specific purposes.

In conclusion

You may feel way out of your depth with all this, but that's true for all of us whom God calls and works through. Be assured that God has shaped, gifted and positioned each of us to further his kingdom in specific ways.

Remember how much your heavenly Father loves you. Like a good father, he will be your biggest cheerleader as you take your first wobbly steps of faith. Do not worry. You were designed to walk this way. Pretty soon you'll be walking, then even running. Then you'll say with the Psalmist, "*I run in the path of your commands, for you have freed my heart.*" Ps 119:32.

Questions and Discussion

1. What aspects of this dance of the Holy Spirit have you personally experienced?
2. How have you found yourself working together with others in this process of cooperating with the Holy Spirit?
3. What spiritual gifts does the Holy Spirit most often choose to express through you? (List out and share in detail a specific occasion when you saw one of these gifts in operation.)

Prayer Exercise

Move into prayer for one another. One person will ask for prayer. Specify the request.

For the others praying: Invite Jesus to come and minister to that person—as prophet, priest and king.

Each one praying will simply ask Jesus to work and speak through them by the Holy Spirit. Ask for the gifts that may be needed.

Obey whatever the Holy Spirit seems to be telling you to do.

Later “debrief” the experience. Try to identify the various dance steps of cooperating with God.

Receiving Guidance from the Holy Spirit to do the Work of Jesus

Lesson # 4



In the Spirit's Power
Dunamis Course 2

Introduction

In our last lesson, we talked about how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, how to join in the dance, so we are moving with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every phase of our cooperation with the Holy Spirit to do the work of Jesus depends on receiving guidance. Without guidance, we do not know what steps to take. Today, we will review

- **Conditions for receiving guidance**

- 1. We Must be Born Again**

If we are to be in ongoing conversation with God, we must be a part of His family—not just a creation of God, but a son or a daughter.

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

- 2. We need to set our will to do God’s Will**

A will surrendered to Jesus Christ and willingness to walk in obedience is essential for hearing God’s voice. After all, why would God give us instructions, if we are not willing to follow those instructions.

Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.” John 7:16-17.

- 3. We need a Foundation in Scripture**

Often the Holy Spirit speaks to us through God’s word. The Word is the standard by which we can measure the truth of what guidance we are hearing. God will not contradict his Word.

“Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

- 4. We are to be an Active Member of the Body of Christ**

We need to be an active part of a congregation where the word of God is proclaimed through preaching, teaching and the sacraments, and where there is the on-going shared life of prayer, worship, fellowship and service.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...” Hebrews 10:24-25.

- 5. We maintain a Life of Prayer**

Prayer is the primary context for hearing God’s voice. Prayer is dialogue with God. In prayer we don’t just talk to God, God speaks to us as well.

When do we receive the Holy Spirit?

We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again. From our baptism, the Holy Spirit dwells in us as God’s children.

Remember, Dunamis is not about us getting more of the Holy Spirit, but about the Holy Spirit getting more of us.

However, we need to give ourselves over to the Holy Spirit within us so He can make us “spiritual people,” people who can receive guidance and exercise discernment through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

“pray continually,” 1 Thess. 5:17.

Ways the Holy Spirit can speak to us.

1. God speaks to us through Scripture.

God has spoken fully and completely to us in scripture as interpreted by Jesus and passed down to us by the church. Through the bible, God has revealed to us His character, his will and his intentions for us.

Scripture is the standard by which all other revelation is to be measured. When the Holy Spirit speaks to us today, it will be consistent with scripture.

2. The Holy Spirit continues to speak to us today in many ways.

Mental Images

*“The word of the LORD came to me: **“What do you see, Jeremiah?”** “I see the branch of an almond tree,” I replied. The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.”* Jeremiah 1:11-12

Words of knowledge and guidance from the Holy Spirit may come in the same way as a mental image or a picture.

Thoughts and Nudges

***“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip,** “Go south to the road—the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”* Acts 8:26-29

This could have been a nudge, a thought that came to him, or just an awareness of what he needed to do. Once Philip obeyed, the Spirit gave further instructions.

***“The Spirit told Philip,** “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”* Acts 8:29.

“Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, ‘unless someone explains it to me?’” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.”

God’s speaking to Philip has nothing to do with revealing true doctrine. The Holy Spirit is directing Philip to go place himself in the context where he can cooperate with him to bring a man to faith in Jesus Christ. For you see, the Holy Spirit was also working in the heart of the Ethiopian. He was ready to believe in Jesus.

Through Philip’s obedience to these promptings, he leads the man to become the first baptized convert in the continent of Africa.

Words of Scripture

A common way for the Holy Spirit to speak is to bring to mind a scripture. This happened to the apostle Peter as he explained why he had broken Jewish prohibition against entering the home of a Gentile. Why he had not only entered Cornelius’ home, but also had preached to the Gentiles gathered there.

*“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then **I remembered what the Lord had said**: “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”” Acts 11:15-16.*

In the moment of describing what had happened at Cornelius’ house, the Holy Spirit brought to Peter’s mind the word from Jesus that explained what God was doing.

God will often speak to us today in this way. A verse of scripture, or a concept, or a word will just “pop into your head” at the right time and place.

Visions

A vision is a glimpse of reality as seen by God. It may also be a glimpse into what God is doing or intends to do. These may be pictures or just a knowing of what God wants to do. It can appear as a movie running in your head. Sometimes you are still aware of your surroundings, but the eyes of your heart are seeing this vision.

*“During the night **Paul had a vision** of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Acts 16:9-10*

It’s at night but it’s a vision, it’s not a dream. It was instruction from God. Then Paul immediately got up and obeyed. Visions are a common way God gives us guidance.

Dreams

The stillness of sleep is an opportune time for God to speak to us. Perhaps it is the stillness of sleep that gives God an opportunity to speak without our being distracted. We see this with Joseph, after he had learned that Mary was pregnant, and not by him. Also, guidance that saved the Holy Family from King Herod.

*“But after he had considered this, an **angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream** and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ...And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”” Matthew 1:20, 2:12-13.*

Joseph received direct guidance in these dreams. But more often God speaks to us indirectly in dreams. Pay attention to your dreams and know that what your dreams can be full of metaphors and symbols. God loves puzzles.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us through others

Through the Spiritual gifts of Prophecy, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, tongues with interpretation of tongues, the Holy Spirit speaks to us through other believers.

God delights to give to others the answer to our questions. This is one of the ways the Holy Spirit binds us together as the Body of Christ.

This will happen as you and your church begin to seek, receive and exercise these spiritual gifts. We will spend time on each of these gifts later on in this course. Of course, when we receive a message by ourselves or from others, we need to discern the truth of these messages. That will be the subject of our next lesson.

The Holy Spirit also speaks to us through our pastors, or our teachers. We hope this every time we hear a sermon, or attend a class, or meet with one of our pastoral leaders for counsel. This happens through the other vocational offices of apostle, prophet and evangelist, as the church recognizes and installs people with these callings.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us through Groups.

This same dynamic may take place as a church board, Session, Consistory, or Board of Directors of a ministry, seek to be led by the Holy Spirit in decision making processes. This is a complex process involving both human and divine factors, revelation and reason, observation and opinions, a listening to God and to one another.

It's important at these times to stop the discussion and spend some time listening, as a group together, to the Holy Spirit. Through all this the Holy Spirit can lead a group to decisions that will be consistent with the will of God. This is a particularly safe way of determining how the Spirit is speaking, since every word received can be discerned by two or more witnesses.

Dreams & Visions

The number of times that God leads through visions and dreams in the book of Acts demonstrates that this is a very common way that He has chosen to work.

Acts 9:10-12, Acts 10:3, Acts 10:17-19, 11:5, Acts 16:9, 18:9, Acts 26:19

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy."

Acts 2:17-18

Dreams and visions were the common way that God spoke to the prophets in the Old Testament.

This passage in Acts represents a restoration of the gift of prophecy with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In a more general way, this is just one way that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct the church in its witnessing to Jesus Christ.

Notice that in all the cases in Acts the purpose of a vision is to guide people in working with the Holy Spirit in advancing the gospel.

The Council of Jerusalem Discerns

Consider the council of Jerusalem working to decide God's will whether or not Gentile believers should keep the entire Jewish Laws and customs.

*"The apostles and elders met to consider this question. **After much discussion**, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe..."*

'No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.' *The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up: **'Brothers, listen to me.** Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. **The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:***

"After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things that have been known for ages."

*"**It is my judgment, therefore**, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. **For Moses has been preached** in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."*

Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. **They chose Judas** (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers...

So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul--men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing." *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:..."* Acts 15:6-7, 11-22, 25-28

When the church council met in Jerusalem to discuss what parts of the Law should the Gentile converts follow, we find a remarkable glimpse into the dynamic of a group getting guidance so that they could say with confidence, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" Notice how they are reasoning both from the witness of scripture, as well as from their own experiences and observations. There is also a good bit of give and take and discussion. When the Holy spirit gives guidance to a group, a process of listening both to God and to one another and referring to scripture must take place.

The Importance of Prayer

With groups as well as by ourselves, prayer is the primary way that we receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. Spending time talking with our Heavenly Father. Next time you are vexed with a problem, you as an individual or as a group, set aside five minutes to be still and listen to the Holy Spirit. Write down what you hear. Then share what you have heard.

Before Jesus chose his 12 Apostles, he spent all night in prayer. Especially when you are busy, try slowing down to talk and listen to God. You'll be amazed what guidance you will receive.

Conclusion

To conclude, remember the conditions for receiving guidance.

- You must be born again.

- Submit your will to God's.
- Be founded in scripture.
- Be part of a local congregation.
- Maintain a life of prayer.

The Holy Spirit has spoken authoritatively to us through scripture and continues to speak to us directly and to us through fellow Christians. The Spirit wishes to speak to all God's people, not just the great saints and prophets. He speaks through words, pictures, dreams, visions, nudges. He speaks through the gifts of the Spirit, through words of knowledge, word of wisdom, a message of prophecy, even a message in tongues when interpreted. The Holy Spirit speaks through our pastors and teachers, and other called leaders of the church. And yes, the Holy Spirit can speak through our church councils, boards and sessions. God wishes to talk to us.

Imagine his frustration if we don't listen, either because we don't believe he can speak to us or we do not take the time to listen. To quote the Psalmist, *does the one who created the ear not hear, does the one who created the eye not see?* Psalm 94:9. (The video reference to Isaiah is wrong. ☺) To this I would add, *does the one who created the tongue not speak?* Exodus 4:11.

Questions and Discussion

1. Why are there conditions to being able to receive guidance?
2. In your own life, what preparation do you need to undertake to better hear from God?
3. Share an experience you have had of receiving guidance from the Holy Spirit. What happened when you followed that guidance?

Prayer Exercise

This is a practice that is a little artificial. We cannot manipulate God, but He may choose to use this as a time to teach us how to listen. Before beginning this exercise, pray for the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual ears to hear and our hearts to receive God's guidance. Pray for the Holy Spirit to move as the one who is our teacher.

1. Get into groups of three, preferably with people who you do not know well.
2. One person who has a genuine prayer need volunteers to be the subject of the prayer.
3. Do not tell the group what the prayer need is. (This is the artificial part, normally one would just speak out the need and invite people to pray. For the sake of the experiment, just tell Jesus the need, and not the people.)
4. As a group, go into prayer and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal what the need is.
5. Speak out any guidance that may come, through the various ways named in this lesson.
6. The person being prayed for then confirms whether or not the guidance is on track.
7. If it is missed altogether, that is ok. This is a learning process, also God may have chosen not to speak at this time.
8. The person may wish to state the prayer request.

9. The group then proceeds to pray as led by the Holy Spirit for that person.
10. If no guidance at all is given as to the need or how to pray, then pray in the name of Jesus for blessing that person.
11. Afterwards “debrief” the whole experience reflecting on how the guidance came and how did you know it was from God.

Discernment: Is this really from God?

Lesson # 5



In the Spirit's Power

Dunamis Course 2

Introduction

Discernment is a process of determining if what we hear is really from God. Discernment is critical if we are to trust the guidance received from God when cooperating with the Holy Spirit in ministry. Without it, the body of Christ is vulnerable to the assaults of Satan and to the poison of false teachers and false teaching.

Life between the times

We live “between the times.” The time where not only is the Holy Spirit at work, but also human sinfulness. Not even miracles should be accepted uncritically.

Jesus said, “Watch out that no one deceives you....For false Christs and false prophets will appear and performance great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.” Matthew 24:4, 24

Not every word we hear or miraculous work we see from “servants of God” is true. Paul affirmed that Satan works through humans to deceive.

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.” 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Most of these false teachers do not believe that they are serving Satan. They are sincere in their belief that they are serving God. They are deceived.

You can be deceived as well. For instance, do not believe everything you hear inside your head. For now, we see in part and know in part. We can be sincerely misguided by our best intentions. Not to mention that Satan’s minions work to imitate our voice when they whisper in our ear.

Where the Church has not learned Discernment

Because of fear of deception and abuse, many of our churches have not welcomed or have shut down the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The result has been a loss of the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance for missions and ministry. This is the case in conservative evangelical, as well as, liberal mainline churches.

On the other hand, some churches have accepted spiritual gifts, manifestations, and guidance without sufficient discernment as to what comes from the Holy Spirit, what comes from the human psyche, and what comes from the evil one. This had led to emotionalism, deception, schism, even heresy.

Discernment and Exercise of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Going Deeper

Because different sources of inspiration and religious experience operate, nothing can be taken simply as from God. Everything must be weighed carefully.

Seeking discernment is really a matter of seeking wisdom. James gives directions about how to ask for wisdom.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”

James 1:5-8

When dealing with the working of the Holy Spirit in our own lives, the church and the world, as well as the flesh and the devil, we all need to pray for wisdom.

However, we were designed to hear from God. Jesus promised that his sheep would hear his voice. He also promised that the Holy Spirit would come to guide his followers into all truth.

The Importance of Discernment

Discernment is critical when someone experiences an awakening in the Holy Spirit and an increase in power ministry for the glory of God.

Discernment is critical if we are to trust the guidance received from God when cooperating with the Holy Spirit in ministry.

The gift of discernment is a vital necessity for the Church. Without it, the body of Christ is vulnerable to the assaults of Satan and to the poison of false teachers and teaching.

Without discernment, we are unable to minister Jesus' healing and freedom to those oppressed by evil spirits.

Without discernment, Christians are unable to move forward boldly, trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit.

God has given us tools in his Word to discern what we hear and experience in the spiritual world. Paul taught how the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy, knowledge, tongues, and other such manifestations of power, function in the life of the church and how their worth is to be discerned. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul gave clear guidelines for the use of the spiritual gifts and a dynamic process of discernment. For example, weighing and evaluating the message from a prophet.

“Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.” 1 Corinthians 14:29-31

Discernment is a Process

- **Discernment is a process involving human reason and observation, in which words or behaviors may be measured against the standard of scripture.**
- **Discernment is also a supernatural sense given by the Holy Spirit as to what is true and what is false.**
- **It is also, a spiritual gift to help us detect the presence of evil spirits. We will study the gift of discerning spirits in a later lesson.**

Discernment is a Process of Reasoned Observation

In this lesson, we will go through a process of Discernment that is a skill, a human ability partnered with a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, that we may cultivate through experience, a Process of Reasoned Observation using four questions.

1. Does it give glory to Jesus Christ in the present and in the future?

The Holy Spirit will point to Jesus and bring you the words of Jesus, and not of anyone else! Jesus taught his disciples.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” John 16:13-14

The Holy Spirit has a single-minded focus on Jesus Christ as the truth.

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26.

2. Is it consistent with the intentions and character of God as revealed in scripture?

All revelation, from personal to corporate, must be tested by scripture.

This includes guidance or inspiration that one may personally receive. Words or prophecy, visions or inspirations given in a prayer or worship service. Even the official teaching or decisions made by a church and a denomination.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Scots Confessions, the charter of Church of Scotland, Affirms This Principle of Discernment

“So far then as the council confirms its decrees by the plain Word of God, so far do we reverence and embrace them. But if men, under the name of a council, pretend to forge for us new articles of faith, or to make decisions contrary to the Word of God then we must utterly deny them as the doctrine of devils, drawing our souls from the voice of the one God to follow the doctrines and teachings of men.”

3. Do other people who are filled with the Holy Spirit have a confirming witness?

“Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.” I Corinthians 14:29.

If guidance or a manifestation is from the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit will confirm it in the hearts of others. This is not the process of taking a vote and letting the majority rule. It is rather the discernment of those who are born again and are filled with the Holy Spirit, those who are walking with Jesus.

You might ask why filled with the Spirit?

Going Deeper

We have perhaps all had the experience of listening to someone teach in which something felt wrong, but we were not sure what it was. This could have been the Holy Spirit within us alerting us to some false doctrine or to the presence of evil spirits.

These four questions come from scripture and from the accumulated experience of seeking to practically discern what is from the Holy Spirit.

This is a process of reasoning that may be guided by the Holy Spirit. For this process to work, there are certain preconditions that must be met. These are basically the same as those given in Lesson 4 about receiving guidance, and may be summarized as follows:

Being born again—John 3:3, 1 Corinthians 2:14.

A will set on doing God’s will—John 7:16-17.

A foundation in scripture—2 Timothy 3:16.

Being a member of the Body of Jesus Christ, where the Word is truly preached as the context for discernment—1 Corinthians 12-14.

Also important in discernment is knowing oneself and knowing others whom you trust and who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Alone we are easily deceived. But we must be careful that those in whom we put our trust are truly in Jesus Christ.

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
1 Corinthians 2:14

Going Deeper

St. Ignatius' rules for discernment of spirits are extremely helpful at this point.

"In souls that are progressing to greater perfection, the action of the good angel [the Holy Spirit] is delicate, gentle, delightful. It may be compared to a drop of water penetrating a sponge.

"The action of the evil spirit upon such souls is violent, noisy, and disturbing. It may be compared to a drop of water falling upon a stone.

"In souls that are going from bad to worse, the action of the spirits mentioned above is just the reverse. The reason for this is to be sought in the opposition or similarity of these souls to the different kinds of spirits. When the disposition is contrary to that of the spirits, they enter with noise and commotion that are easily perceived. When the disposition is similar to that of the spirits, they enter silently, as one coming into his own house when the doors are open."

Louis J. Pulh, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951), p. 148.

These rules are written for the individual, but may be applied to the dynamic of the whole group.

A common misunderstanding is that following the Holy Spirit will always be confirmed by a sense of peace. Ignatius shows us that it is more complicated than that.

One must discern the spirit that is directing the person or overall group. If the person or group is being led by the Holy Spirit, then words of the Holy Spirit will be met with sympathy and approving witness. But if the group is, as a whole, moving with a spirit contrary to the Holy Spirit, the group might be in harmony with each other but not with the Holy Spirit.

4. Is there confirmation in objectively verifiable facts or events?

God acts in nature and in human history. God said, *“let there be light”* and there was light. This light may be objectively studied and observed. This is true for other words and actions by God.

Isaiah wrote, *“so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”* Isaiah 55:11.

These objective results provide us with the fourth discernment test.

“You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.”
Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

Examples of this:

- A word of knowledge will connect with actual facts in the person's life.
- Sometimes when praying for healing, there will be manifestations, like heat, a gradual or sudden change of feeling better.
- If there is an actual healing, the doctor will confirm it.
- As you act as if a vision or prophecy is true, objectively verifiable facts and events will fulfill the vision or prophecy thus confirming it to be true

Applying the Four Questions

Going Deeper

This concept of “objective verification” is extremely important: Many words from the Lord may receive an immediate “objective verification” that will be visible to the astute observer. There are times, however, when the word relates to things that will not immediately come to pass.

There are, for instance, prophecies in the Bible that took hundreds of years before they were fulfilled. It is then that we enter the suspenseful time of waiting until there is indeed the confirmation.

Despite this time lapse, based on the reality of God, the principle holds: If a word really is from the Lord, there will be in our circumstances some objective confirmation of its reality.

In being led by the Holy Spirit and discerning what the Holy Spirit is doing and saying, one must have faith but also an unwavering commitment to reality.

Trouble comes when in the name of faith, we try to falsify reality to suit our aims or preconceptions.

When do we use these questions?

1. Ask these questions as you hear someone teach, preach, give a word, or you see a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask these questions when you receive something from the Lord.
3. Always keep a healthy skepticism as to whether something is from the Holy Spirit or not. Do not trust the reputation of the preacher, teacher or prophet. Always discern each new word from the Lord.
4. Do not leave out one of the questions. You need a positive yes on all four.
5. Sometimes the objective evidence does not come all at once. You may need to reserve judgment on whether a word or action is from the Lord until you can see the fruit, and that may take time. Sometimes you will not know until you actually obey and step out in faith. There is always risk in hearing from the Lord. We could be wrong. God knows this and helps us, even when we miss His guidance.

Conclusion

While the Holy Spirit continues to speak to us, our hearing is imperfect. In this in between time, our fallen world, fallen spirits and our fallen natures still intrude on the new kingdom. But we have tools to help us discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Remember the 4 questions.

1. Does a word give glory to Jesus?
2. Does it agree with scripture?
3. Do other mature Spirit filled Christians confirm the word?
4. Are there verifiable signs confirming the revelation?

Be skeptical and be willing to take risks. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. Jesus promised that his sheep

would recognize his voice. John 10:3.

Questions and Discussion

1. In your group, share some experiences of what may be the work of the Holy Spirit. Then, together, work through the four discernment questions.
2. Has anyone in the group experienced the presence of an evil spirit? Discuss how you knew this to be the case.
3. Has anyone in the group heard teaching that he or she knew was false? How do you confirm that this teaching is false? Discuss the process of discernment you used to come to that conclusion.
4. Have you seen or experienced manifestations of the Holy Spirit like “resting in the Spirit,” or “holy laughter?” Discuss how you would confirm that these expressions really came from the Holy Spirit. If a person in your group has had a first hand experience, let him or her tell what the experience was like.

Prayer Exercise

It is hard to provide an exercise to practice discernment. If the Holy Spirit moves in the course of any of these lessons, stop and discern at the conclusion of His working, if it was truly from the Lord.

Debriefing

We have a regular practice at PRMI events to always do a “debriefing.” This is not the occasion to criticize, but rather to seriously ask if the behavior or the word given was from the Lord.

While the leadership team is required to attend these sessions, everyone is invited and we all reflect together on whether we were led by the Holy Spirit. If there has been a word of prophesy or some other manifestation of the Holy Spirit, we submit this to the four questions and come to a consensus as to whether it was indeed from the Holy Spirit.

We make sure that we keep an atmosphere of love and acceptance to encourage people to step out in faith and be obedient to the Holy Spirit. At the same time, all things will be discerned. An important part of this process is moving from externally observed phenomena such as holy laughter or falling on the floor, to the internal reality of how people are experiencing God. We have found that often our discernment is incomplete until we have moved to this internal dimension. We find that this process of careful discernment not only deepens our appreciation of what the Holy Spirit has been doing, but also sets us free to be led by the Holy Spirit.

For those in leadership, this process of debriefing can be frightening as one must publicly submit to the process of discernment. But without this, it is easy to be deceived. This puts the leader in the proper context of being a member of the body of Christ. This approach avoids error and also deepens both the leaders’ and participants’ abilities to be led by the Holy Spirit. We believe this process needs to be instituted in all churches to help pastors and people to be on track with the Holy Spirit. This is what took place in Corinth under Paul’s direction which made it safe for the gifts to be expressed.

The Functional Gifts for Building the Church

Lesson # 6



In the Spirit's Power:
Dunamis Course 2

Introduction

At last we begin describing the gifts of the Spirit. I've chosen the filming location for each lesson according to their content. Today we're at fisherman's terminal in Seattle because we're exploring the functional gifts listed in Romans 12, gifts for getting work done. Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Encouragement, Giving, Leadership and Mercy.

These gifts, for the most part, seem natural. However, they actually are special abilities God has hard wired into us in the womb. These have been identified as the functional gifts or motivational gifts. For simplicity we will call them the functional gifts.

The Functional Gifts

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, the prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is service, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement, if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

Romans 12:4-8

Context of the gift list in Romans 12:4-8

In order to understand the gifts listed in Romans 12, we first must study the context of the list.

In Romans chapters 1 – 11 Paul has reviewed the wonderful mercies of God.

1. We were lost in sin and in need of redemption (Rom 1:18-3:20)
2. God came to us in Jesus and in Christ we have been set free from the dominion of sin (Rom.3:21-4:25).
3. There is new life available to us in Jesus (Rom. 5:1-8:39).
4. The Jews still have a special role in God's plan (Rom. 9-11)

Paul then pivots at Chapter 12. Given the wonderful mercies of God, Paul addresses what should be our response? In view of what God has given us, we turn to God and give our bodies as a sacrifice.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.

This begins by us not conforming to this world but being transformed by the renewing of our mind. More like the image of Christ.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself

more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” Romans 12:1-3

This happens through our connection to the body of Christ. Paul writes how in the body of Christ, each of us has been given gifts with a particular function important to the whole body. Thus functional gifts. Paul taught that we have been created with certain natural talents and traits that when used “*according to the grace given us*” that is, our own diligent efforts as led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, contribute to the building of the body of Christ, transforming us all from the pattern of this world into the image of Christ. So we can offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to our good and gracious God.

Description of each of the Functional Gifts

So, let’s review each of these seven gifts.

1. PROPHECY, “USE IT IN PROPORTION TO HIS FAITH”

The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely anointed utterance.

The three purposes of prophecy are listed in I Cor. 14:3: “*But those who prophesy speak to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort.*” Also translated as **Edification, Exhortation and Comfort.**

Strengthening/Edification: from the Greek word meaning "to build." was often associated with building a house. It means here to build up, to repair, to improve, to erect. Prophecy edifies us. Edification.

Encouragement/Exhortation: from the Greek word meaning to call alongside, means to challenge one to change. Prophecy calls us alongside the Holy Spirit, to keep in step with what God is doing. Prophecy exhorts us. Encouragement/Exhortation.

Comfort: from the Greek words "near" and "speech." means to speak closely to anyone, to give consultation and comfort with a great degree of tenderness. Comfort.

Jesus spoke continually in these ways as a prophet, edifying, exhorting and comforting his followers.

2. SERVICE: “LET HIM SERVE”

The gift of service is the special ability to identify and meet the practical needs required to accomplish God's work.

Prophecy in the Old Testament

Two general descriptions appear to have been used for prophets in the Old Testament:

1. "man of God," describes how the prophets appeared to others. This phrase was intended to express the difference of character between the prophet and other men. This is seen clearly in Kings 17:24 where a woman says of Elijah, "I know you are a man of God."
2. The prophet was a seer (one who sees clearly).

Prophecy in the New Testament

Prophecy and the prophets form a great line of continuity between the Old and New Testament. The prophetic line of the Old Testament did not end with Malachi, but with John the Baptist. This is the express teaching of our Lord: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."

A new era and a new message, that of grace, was continued from John the Baptist through Paul and others. It is a gift of God today to the body of Christ. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost the gift of prophecy continues right up to the present (Act 2). The continuation of prophecy is assumed by St. Paul (I Cor. 12-14).

For example, in the early church there arose a problem between the Greek and Hebrew converts over the distribution of food.

Seven men were appointed to meet this need and serve tables. They were called deacons after the Greek word for table waiter.

Therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint over this business;...And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Acts 6:3,7

Service is an often underrated gift. The first disciples wanted to be great. They believed that

How is teaching to be distinguished from preaching?

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ." Acts 5:42

To preach is to proclaim, to teach is to explain. It is often very difficult to separate the two because preaching can contain teaching and teaching can involve proclaiming.

However, while preaching often contains lessons, the explicit goal of preaching is to evoke faith in the hearer.

"How can believe if they have not heard, and how can they hear one is not been sent."

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

That is why typically in Protestant services of worship, a call to commitment comes directly after the preaching of the Word. This commitment is often a challenge to say yes to Jesus as Savior, but can also include baptism, marriage vows, a call to service, or joining the church.

"Great people are those who are served." Jesus taught that the great are not those *"who are served but those who serve others."* (Mark 9:35) Jesus modeled this when he washed their feet. He told his disciple to do the same.

"And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'" Mark 9:35

Service is a gift of the Holy Spirit central to Jesus' identity.

3. TEACHING: "LET HIM TEACH"

The gift of teaching is the ability to explain clearly and apply effectively the truth of the scriptures.

It's a natural talent for teaching that becomes a supernatural gift when it is Spirit-anointed and Spirit-directed thus causing others to grow spiritually.

In the great commission, Jesus said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching* them to obey everything I have commanded you."

There is a huge need today for teaching the basics of the faith. Ignorance of the bible and of the fundamentals of Christianity is wide spread throughout the church. God has gifted us with teachers who can clearly, winsomely, and persuasively instruct us in the truth of God's kingdom.

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you **teach** and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God." Colossians 3:16*

4. ENCOURAGEMENT: “LET HIM ENCOURAGE”

The gift of exhorting or encouragement is the special ability to comfort, console, and counsel other members of the body so they are helped and healed. Encouragement strengthens Christians for effective service.

The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the body in such a way that they are helped and healed. Barnabas

Barnabas was a nickname meaning son of encouragement. He was the one who encouraged the first church of non-Jewish converts at Antioch. He was the one who vouches for Saul bringing him into this work and going with him on his first missionary journey which established churches in Cyprus and Asia Minor.

Barnabas also encouraged John Mark after Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabas on that journey. Paul and Mark went on to write much of the New Testament

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation." II Corinthians 1:3-7

Note that the word comfort (*parakeleo*) is used nine times in only five verses. This gift which we see so well illustrated in the life of Barnabas is a work of the Holy Spirit and greatly needed

Going Deeper with Encouragement

Public or private exhortation that brings comfort, sympathy, compassion and edification to believers. The motive is agape love, and the objective is to strengthen Christians for the task of effective service. It is not so much a sharp admonition as a soft word of counsel.

The Greek word is *parakaleo*, which is made up of two words "*para*" (to the side) and "*kaleo*" (to call). Thus, the gift of exhortation is being called to the side of someone in their time of need.

Parakaleo is often translated "to comfort, console, entreat, beg, implore, counsel, challenge, etc."

Parakeleo is used to describe the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). The word "counselor" is another translation of *parakaleo*.

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." (NKJV) John 14:16

Parakaleo is used to describe Jesus.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous." (NKJV) John 2:1

The word advocate is also a translation of *parakaleo*. It means: To help another by motivating them to action. The gift of exhortation involves patience as well as giving instruction

Going Deeper:

Giving

The Greek word normally translated “give” is “*didomi*.” It has a wide variety of meanings based on the context where it is found. However, in Romans 12:8, the gift of giving is a translation of the Greek word “*metadidomi*” which is a compound of “*didomi*” [to give] with “*meta*” [with]. There it takes on a meaning of “to give a share of.”

Commentaries on this particular gift place a strong emphasis on the giving of money, but a study of the word places an emphasis on the “giver” rather than the gift. Paul focuses on this gift of “giving,” as the gift of “sharing of ourselves” as we give.

5. GIVING: "CONTRIBUTES, IN LIBERALITY"

Paul does add an admonition. We are to give with "liberality." Some translations use "simplicity" or "generosity." The Greek word goes back to a root word "without folds." In other words, what is my motive in giving? Do I have an ulterior motive? Am I giving in order to get something in return? Is my motive to be seen by others, or is the source a pure heart rooted and grounded in God's love. **Giving is the gift of generously sharing our money, and ourselves.** The Greek word is "to give a share of." The giver shares a portion from the resources that God has blessed them with. Paul admonishes the one with this gift to give "generously." Give from a pure heart, rooted and grounded in God's love. Give with joy. As Jesus said, “Freely you have received, therefore freely give.”

6. LEADERSHIP: “GOVERNING WITH DILIGENCE”

Leadership is God’s gift to set goals and to communicate these goals to others so they harmoniously work together to advance God’s kingdom.

The Greek word means "to stand before, manage, superintend, lead, direct".

This gift is sometimes called Administration, though administration is actually only one aspect of leadership. Most of the references in the New Testament with leadership have to do with rule or governance of others, e.g., elders ruling the church or deacons managing their children.

Jesus modeled this gift by leading as a servant, providing the structure, training and direction enabling his followers to serve.

GOING DEEPER:

Administration or Leadership

Although these words are different, often they refer to the same general function of leading, yet experience demonstrates that not all leaders are good administrators, and not all good administrators are good leaders! Administration is actually one aspect of total leadership responsibility. One suspects that the distinction between leadership and administration is more of a modern rather than biblical distinction. Most of the references where this term is used in the New Testament have to do with rule or governance for people in authority e.g.: elders who are ruling the church – 1 Timothy 5:17 or deacons who are also fathers who rule or manage their children well. 1 Timothy 3:12.

When Moses was bringing Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land he was leading them. But he wasn't a very efficient administrator. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, saw the problem. He told Moses what to do to solve the problem. (Exodus 18:17, 18, 21, 22)

7. MERCY: “LET HIM DO IT CHEERFULLY”

The gift of mercy, sometimes translated compassion, is the gift of genuine empathy for individuals (both Christian and non-Christian) who suffer.

Merciful believers show Christ’s love in cheerful deeds of compassion which alleviate suffering.

Jesus concluded his parable of the Good Samaritan by asking, “*Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?*” The expert in the law replied, “*The one who had mercy on him.*” Jesus told him, “*Go and do likewise.*” Luke 10:36-37.

Conclusion

Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, Mercy.

While these functional gifts seem natural, scripture affirms that they are gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are hardwired into our beings and therefore, we can use them in our own strength and for our own purposes.

However, when we submit them for God to use, when we use them as guided by the Holy Spirit, they achieve their potential.

Spend time asking the Lord how you are gifted. Experiment with a variety of service opportunities to see where you are most effective and fulfilled.

Remember, God uses a number of gift mixes and styles to accomplish His ministry. We, as differently gifted members of the body of Christ, need to work together in harmony for the work of Christ to be accomplished most effectively.

Questions and Discussion

1. Which of these gifts do you suspect you might already have?
2. Give an example of you exercising one of these functional gifts. Describe why it felt right, or that you were doing something you liked or were good at?
3. How would you incorporate being directed or empowered by the Holy Spirit with exercising this gift?
4. Which of these functional gifts do you see active in others in your group?

Prayer Exercise

Move into prayer for one another.

For those who know their functional gift, ask the Holy Spirit to give you specific direction on how and when to use it.

Write down your instructions and be prepared to debrief after you use your gift as directed, hopefully by next week.

For those of you unsure which of these gifts you might already have, pray for a revelation of which one you have. Again, ask for instructions of how and when to use this gift. Debrief the experience when you next meet with your small group.

Introduction to the Manifestational Gifts and The Words of Wisdom and Knowledge

Lesson # 7



*The Dunamis Course
In the Spirit's Power*

Lesson # 7: Part 1 Introduction to the Manifestational Gifts

Divine Human Cooperation

The ‘manifestations’ are clearly supernatural. They are not expressions of our natural talents and abilities—they are expressions of God’s talents and abilities.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4

The inspiration and words that the disciples spoke came from the Holy Spirit, but the disciples had to open their mouths and speak. If they had not opened their mouths nothing would have happened.

These gifts are the supernatural expressed through the natural. For example, a word of knowledge will come as we speak God’s thought that comes in the midst our thoughts. Healing will take place as we stretch out our hand and declare healing. The gift of tongues will come as we speak sounds made with our own voices.

There is nothing divine about the medium, for we are the medium. But the inspiration and what is accomplished will be divine.

The exercise of these gifts, while divine, still requires human cooperation in the form of faith and obedience. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Paul wrote that the diversity of the expressions of the Holy Spirit’s power and presence are ‘manifestations’ of the Holy Spirit. These manifestations are gifts to assist our cooperating with the Holy Spirit to advance the kingdom of God. These manifestational gifts make the presence of the living God visible and audible.

Discernment

This means that as we exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we must exercise discernment. We must be careful to distinguish what is human and what is from the Holy Spirit.

“Two or three prophets should speak and the others should weigh carefully what is said.” 1 Corinthians 14:29

Before moving into the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the disciples had to be open to and moving in the experience of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, before they were called to be witnesses (which is the context where the manifestational gifts would be experienced), they first had to *“wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high.”* Luke 24:49 We should welcome other mature Christians to assist in our discernment.

Going Deeper

When we accept Christ as Lord, because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we have in us the potential for His empowering work. But for this work to become active in our experience, we must welcome the Holy Spirit in faith and follow Him in obedience.

This experience is variously referred to in scripture as the “baptism in” or “with the Holy Spirit,” “receiving the Holy Spirit,” “sealing with the Spirit,” “the Holy Spirit fell upon,” and “being filled with the Holy Spirit.” Without this appropriation of this power working of the Holy Spirit as promised us by Jesus (Acts 1:48), we will not be able to actively and consciously move into the manifestational gifts of the Holy Spirit which are supernatural.

“It is important, then, to emphasize that the context for the gifts of the Spirit was the experience of the Spirit’s outpouring. Without this there would not have been vitality and power sufficient for the gifts to be manifested and multiplied.” - J. Rodman Williams

Purpose of the Manifestational gifts.

1. Confirming the Preaching of the Gospel

“... *this salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*” **Hebrews 2:3-4**

2. For the Common Good!

“*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*” **1 Corinthians 12:7**

There are many practical benefits from the practice of these supernatural gifts, bodies healed, relationships reconciled, problems solved, wisdom received.

3. Advancing the Kingdom of God

Signs and wonders were a dynamic part of the early church where people were being saved daily. For example, **the gift of healing** of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate joined with Peter’s preaching brought 5,000 to salvation.

Peter proclaimed that “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*” Acts 4:12.

The **gift of knowledge** given to Peter enabled him to expose the deception of Ananias and Sapphira, resulting in many more believers being added to the Lord. Acts 5:1-11.

The **gift of tongues** given to the whole household of Cornelius confirmed to the apostle Peter that they had received the Holy Spirit, thus indicating God extending the Gospel to the Gentiles.



“*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.*” **Acts 10:44-46.**

The **gifts of prophecy** provided the direction to set apart Barnabas and Saul for first missionary journey.

“*Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets ... While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the word to which I have called them.”*” **Acts 13:1-2.**

In summary

The manifestational gifts of the Holy Spirit produce signs and wonders, confirming the preaching of the gospel. They advance the common good. And advance the Kingdom of God. Paul wrote,

“I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done--by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So, from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.” Romans 15:18-19.

If we welcome the Holy Spirit’s power expressions, we may expect to experience, in ways appropriate to our own calling, the extension of the gospel.

Part 2 The Word of Wisdom and the word of Knowledge

“For one is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and to another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:8

Both gifts are expressed as something that is spoken. In the dynamic of cooperating with the Holy Spirit they are both a word spoken into a Kairos moment. The right word spoken at the right moment Both are supernaturally revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Let’s look first at the word of wisdom.

The Word of Wisdom

Wisdom is the use or application of knowledge. This gift reveals what we are to do in a certain situation. The gift of Wisdom will show us how to deal with a difficult interaction or a knotty problem, how to proceed in the midst of conflict. The word of wisdom is divine quick wittedness. It is that marvelous insight that resolves the difficulty and shows the way forward.

Jesus and Wisdom

We see the gift of wisdom all through the teaching of Jesus. His parables, the sermon on the mount. Particularly, in his interactions with people. For example, Jesus received a word of wisdom when confronted with trick questions from his adversaries:

Going Deeper

According to Hebrews 2:3-4 the message of salvation, in addition to human witnesses, had God’s own confirmation through signs, wonders, miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is an extraordinarily important role for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But how do they confirm the message? John Calvin brings an answer that links the gifts to the word of God. “...by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which the doctrine of the Gospel has been adorned, these being the appendices. Why has God distributed the gifts of His Spirit, if not partly to be aids to proclaiming the Gospel, and partly by admiration to move the minds of men to obey? Hence Paul says that the gift of tongues was a sign to unbelievers. The phrase, “according to His will” reminds us that those powers to which he refers cannot be ascribed to anyone except God, and that they have not been made known casually, but in His definite purpose to set the seal on the credibility of the Gospel.” John Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries, Hebrews and I and II Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), p. 20. The manifestational gifts are the God-given, supernatural means to aid in the proclamation of the gospel. They also confirm the gospel by moving us to obedience. *Continued on the next page*

The Sadducees posed, “*Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?*” **Matthew 22:23-33** and the Pharisees asked, “*Should we pay taxes to Caesar?*” **Luke 20:20-26**

Going Deeper

Continued

Both of these functions of the gifts relate to their role of showing forth the power and presence of God.

Another aspect of this role in affirming the gospel of salvation is brought out by Andrew Murray.

“God also bearing witness, by distributions of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will. Not only did God bear witness to the great salvation by signs and wonders and powers, but above all by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The Holy Spirit is God come to dwell on earth, to strive and plead and testify in the hearts of men.

There is no fellowship with the Father but through the Son, and no fellowship with the Son and His salvation, but through the Holy Spirit in us... Yes, this is the greatness of the great salvation – in its offer THE THREEONE GOD comes to us. The Lord preached, the Father bore witness, the Holy God to work. What a salvation!”

Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell Company, 1894), pp. 69-70

Even though questions were designed to have only two answers, both of which would be bad, Jesus received a word of wisdom that presented a third way, which brought revelation.

Wisdom Promised for Us

Jesus promised us that we would receive wisdom when we needed it: “*I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict*”

Luke 21:15.

Paul and the Gift of Wisdom

In his letters, Paul expressed many words of wisdom as he answered the practical problems of the churches. He wrote with human wisdom gained through experience or knowledge acquired through study or observation, and divine wisdom as the Holy Spirit gave inspiration.

Characteristics of Wisdom from God

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” **James 3:17**

This supernatural word spoken into the human situation is transforming! It shapes our understanding of ourselves, the world and God. This wisdom from God helps us solve daily problems presented by the tasks he calls us to. Problems that are often far above our pay grade.

God often chooses the foolish to outwit the wise to show his ability not our own. This brings glory to God, not us.

Consider the apostles Peter and John explaining to the

Sanhedrin, the most educated Jews of their day, how they had accomplished the healing of the crippled man.

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”
Acts 4:13.

The same can be true with us.

A Word of Knowledge

A word of knowledge is receiving a specific fact about a person, place or event that could not have been obtained through natural means. People who receive words of knowledge hear or just know things that were previously hidden.

Examples of the word of Knowledge in the New Testament

An example in the life of Jesus—the woman at the well.

“The fact is you have had five husbands and the man you are living with now is not your husband.” **John 4:18**

Peter perceived supernaturally the deception and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira.

“Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the Land?” **Acts 5:3, 4, 9.**

Paul received a word of knowledge before leaving Fairhavens on a ship. *“Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our lives also.”* **Acts 27:10.**

Paul continued to receive specific guidance that brought the entire crew and passengers safely to shore.

The word of knowledge is extremely useful in ministry, especially in knowing how to intercede for people and how to pray for inner healing, because it brings hidden things to light which are necessary to advance the Kingdom.

Practical Steps in Receiving A Word of Wisdom or of Knowledge

The gifts of wisdom or knowledge are gifts that we can neither control nor work up, we can, however, do our part by preparing to receive them.

1. Live a life of faith and have a clean heart.

While the Holy Spirit may fall upon any of us giving these gifts, if we are to expect long-term growth in the gifts and power, then we must nurture a right relationship with Jesus Christ and others. It is especially important that we be in a right relationship with our husband or wife. If there is sin in this most intimate of relationships, it is going to make it hard for us to hear from the Lord.

Going Deeper

1 Corinthians 1:17-25 *“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.”

2. Step out in faith by practicing what is received.

Getting better at these gifts, like all the gifts, is best learned by doing. The best way to see if a word may be a word of knowledge or wisdom is to speak it out. If it is of the Lord, it will be true, it will unlock a difficult problem, it will reveal something hidden.

3. Learn to discern what is from God and from yourself.

The manifestational gifts are expressed through the natural fabric of our being. It will take practice to sort what is from God and what is from ourselves. Review the principles of discernment. Does the word bring glory to Jesus? Is it consistent with scripture? Do other mature Christians bear witness? And especially for wisdom and knowledge, does the word line up with actual facts and events?

Conclusion

The manifestational gifts are manifestations or expressions of the Holy Spirit. They are gifts to supernaturally assist our cooperating with the Holy Spirit. They produce signs and wonders, confirming the preaching of the gospel, contributing to the common good and advancing the kingdom.

The gifts of knowledge and wisdom are messages from God revealed by the Holy Spirit which we speak in order to solve problems, answer complicated questions, to know just what to say at just the right time so God's kingdom is advanced.

Questions and Discussion

1. How would you define the difference between these two similar gifts—wisdom and knowledge?
2. In small groups, share when you have received either the gifts of wisdom or knowledge.
3. What was the inner experience of receiving these gifts? What happened when you spoke out these words?

Prayer Exercise

Break in pairs of two. You are going to pray for each other without telling the other what you need prayer for. Lay hands on each other. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall upon each person and give whatever gifts are needed to pray effectively for the person asking for prayer. Ask specifically for the gift of wisdom and the gift of knowledge to be manifested.

Pray what you heard or sensed.

Afterwards, debrief what happened. Carefully discern what was from the Lord and what may have just been human imagination. Also, reflect on the inner experience of receiving a word of knowledge or the gift of wisdom.

Faith, Healing and Miracles

Lesson # 8



The Dunamis Course
In the Spirit's Power

Chapter #8 Faith Healing and Miracles

In this chapter we will explore the three manifestational gifts of faith, healings and miracles.

The Gift of Faith

“To Another Faith by the Same Spirit”

1 Corinthians 12:9

The gift of faith is “*a supernatural conviction that God will reveal his power or mercy in a special way in a specific instance.*”¹ Faith is key to the dynamic of cooperating with the Holy Spirit and healings and miracles are some of the results of that dynamic. Their purpose is to make real the Kingdom of God giving glory to Jesus Christ.

An Outward expression of the Holy Spirit

Mountain moving faith comes from the outward working of the Holy Spirit. This is not saving faith that enables us to believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as Lord and Savior. This saving form of faith comes from the inward working of the Holy Spirit and is a constant part of our relationship with God. The gift of faith is given to us episodically, meaning at certain times. It is the outward work of the Holy Spirit necessary for us to accomplish specific acts of kingdom advancement.

Roman centurion’s faith

We see an example of the gift of faith in the Roman Centurion.

“The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, “Go,” and he goes; and that one, “Come,” and he comes. I say to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.” When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.”

Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.”
Matthew 8:8-10, 13

Faith in the Old Testament— The Model of Abraham

In the Bible, there are two great paradigms of this type of —mountain moving faith: Abraham and Mary. Both stand at the hinge points of salvation history. Both received the gift of faith necessary to act upon the word of God spoken to them.

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going...” Hebrews 11:8—19

By leaving his family and setting out to this new land, Abraham and Sarah started salvation history.

Abraham's obedient faith in being willing to sacrifice Isaac is the high-water mark of Old Testament faith. Genesis 22, note especially verses 5 and 8.

¹ Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1994), p. 168.

This type of faith was not a matter of believing in Jesus for salvation. It was faith that Jesus could perform a long-distance miracle. It brought a sign, a wonder.

Faith in the New Testament— Mary

Mary is the greatest of all models of hearing, faith, and obedience. It is her faith that opens the door for the miracle of Jesus Christ—the Son of God to be born into the world.



“Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”

Luke 1:45

The gift of faith is for signs and wonders. These signs and wonders are foretastes of the coming kingdom. They strengthen our faith in Jesus and this entire kingdom project, deepening our trust in God’s ways so we may walk in greater holiness and obedience.

What is Faith?

Faith is that which connects the spiritual with the material. Faith enables the spiritual realm to shape the physical realm. The gift of faith is essential, if God is to work through us. Jesus taught us to pray to our Father to make his kingdom come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The father wishes us to not only pray this but also to be the answer to our prayers, to be the medium through which God brings heaven to earth.

Faith, as our ability to interface with the realm of the Spirit, is a natural human capacity, reflecting our having been made in the image of God. All people may have faith and other religions may experience miracles through faith. This is not necessarily the work of demons, but expressions of this human capacity for shaping reality.

However, today we are talking about a supernatural gift of faith, receiving the faith necessary for God to do a special sign or wonder to bring heaven to earth. The gift of faith is basic for our participation in the dynamic of power ministry including healing and miracles.

Without faith there is no way into this dynamic.

God seems to act in accord with the largeness or smallness of our trust (faith) in what He can do. To those who have great trust in

Jesus, Jesus is able to do great things. To those who do not trust Jesus, Jesus is able to do little. Jesus experienced this at Nazareth.

“Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.” **Mark 6:4-6**

Faith can be Received and Strengthened

While faith that focuses on Jesus Christ and enables our participation in His work in the world is given to us as a supernatural gift, there are some things that we can do to grow in our faith.

1. **Act in obedience to God’s calling.** This will exercise your faith
2. **Immerse yourself in scripture.** This will train your mind to think like Jesus. As well as give you lots of examples of faith in operation.

3. **Practice trust in small things.** Think of faith as a muscle. Work it out and it will get stronger.

Going Deeper

To grow in gifts of healing, let the love of Jesus Christ take you into those situations where people are broken and in need.

Ask Jesus to reach out with His love through you in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit—Jesus is the healer. The gifts, as expressions of Jesus' love and power, will be expressed as you obey.

PRMI's calling is to provide the context for Jesus Christ to continue to fulfill Acts 1:8. When Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to give His people gifts of healing and authority for dealing with demons.

For those especially called to healing and deliverance ministry, PRMI offers an Advanced Course with mentoring by those gifted in this area.

Call PRMI's office for more information 828-669-7373.

4. **Ask God for the gift of faith.** Where is your life do you need more faith? Ask God to help you believe for specific endeavors.

We are to walk by faith and not by sight. This means that every day we face challenges to our faith both big and small. Embrace today's challenges as opportunities to exercise and grow in your faith.

Gifts of Healing 1 Corinthians 12:9

The literal translation of 1 Corinthians 12:9 is "gifts of healing." There is a great diversity of ways that this gift is manifested, by spiritual, emotional as well as physical healings. Through gifts of healing, God demonstrates His love and power. He shows His concern, not only for our souls, but for our minds and bodies as well. The ultimate goal of the Kingdom of God is wholeness in Christ. Healing brings wholeness.

Wherever Jesus and the apostles went preaching and teaching, the spoken word was accompanied by healings. The Lord expects us to continue this kind of ministry. While some people have a particular calling to the healing ministry. Every Christian can be used by God to heal. Through our exercising this gift Jesus heals our bodies, our souls, our relationships, the created order. He also heals us by freeing us from the hold of the devil.

More to Come in Later Series

There is much more to say about this important gift. Therefore, we have devoted the entire Dunamis 4 to the healing ministry of

Jesus. Plus Dunamis 5 will teach how to free people from the hold of the devil. Stay tuned.

The Working of Miracles

The word for miracle is the Greek word *dunameos*. The word might be singular or plural. The working of a miracle, or miracles, means the working of power, God's supernatural power. This Power is a gift of the Holy Spirit coming on us to do a specific supernatural work.

The Purpose of Miracles

Miracles show God's power and majesty through signs and wonders, advancing his kingdom. In scripture we see many different miracles for many different purposes.

1. To deliver the people of God from danger and destruction, like parting of the red sea by Moses.
2. To provide for those in need, like Jesus feeding the 5000.
3. To administer God's judgments and discipline, like through Paul in the blinding of the magician Elymas.
4. To confirm the word preached, like when Peter healed the lame man.

Growing in the Gift of Miracles

Western Christians have trouble believing that miracles are possible because most of us have a worldview that excludes the possibility of the supernatural. We have been taught to be skeptical of any claim of the miraculous, of God intervening in the physical world. To help recover from such prejudicial skepticism, meditate on the past great miracles of God in the Bible and the history of miracles in the church in past ages. Read the stories of the great saints of the church, like St Francis or Hudson Taylor or George Mueller. Look for miracles in your own life. Take note of them and give thanks.

Miracles take place as we are obedient to Jesus Christ and are at work in His Kingdom. The point is to be obedient and to place yourself in the context of total dependence on God. In being faithful to doing Jesus' work, there comes a time when we have done all that is humanly possible, and then we fling ourselves entirely upon the mercy of God and cry out for a miracle to take place. Watch what happens.

Time Out

You might be wondering, isn't this all a little beyond me? Does God actually believe I can do signs and wonders? Listen to the words of Jesus. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."* John 14:12. The good news, the challenging news, is Yes, God wishes to do great things through you.

Conclusion

The gifts of Faith, Healing and Miracles bring signs and wonders. They strengthen our trust in Jesus. They bring greater wholeness to our world and to the body of Christ. They provide us with foretastes of the coming kingdom of God that one day will reign over all creation. They open the door to some of most challenging and exciting opportunities for every member of God's family. Not just in the world of the bible, but for our world today.

Don't Avoid the Impossible!

Christ will lead you into many situations that will seem impossible.

Stay in the middle of them, for that is where you will experience God.

The key difference between what appears to be impossible to us and what is actually possible is a call from Jesus Christ. Faith accepts His divine command and steps out in a direction that only God can complete. (For example, Peter walking on the water at the command of Jesus.)

Questions and Discussion

1. What are the two different kinds of faith found in the Bible?
2. How have you experienced “mountain moving faith”?
3. Why is faith so important in our relationship with God?
4. What is the distinction between the faith of Muslims and Christians? Or Christians and New Agers?
5. Have you ever personally had an experience of healing? Have you ever prayed for someone for healing? What happened?
6. When have you experienced an expression of God’s power in your own life?
7. Have you ever prayed for God to work in your life or in someone’s life that you loved, but were disappointed when He did not work?
8. Has anything ever happened in your life that you could call a miracle?

Prayer Exercise

#1

If someone in the group is needing God to work in his or her life or situation, then form a group and pray for that person.

First affirm one’s trust in Jesus Christ and invite Him to work in the situation.

Pray for the supernatural gift of faith, then take the risk and pray for a miracle.

Debrief on what has happened.

#2

Is God calling you into a form of obedience that you know is impossible, but which will give glory to Jesus Christ? Share this calling or vision with the group.

What miracles will be needed for this vision to be fulfilled? What forms of obedience is the Holy Spirit calling you to as first steps toward the fulfillment of this vision?

Resolve with the group to act in obedience. The whole group could make a covenant to pray for the person stepping out in obedience.

Report back anything God does and give Him thanks and praise. The group should also provide ongoing discernment and course adjustments as God starts to fulfill vision.

Prophecy and Discernment

Lesson # 9



Dunamis Course 2
In the Spirit's Power

Lesson #9 Prophecy and Discernment

The gifts of Prophecy and discernment go together. Prophecy is speaking something we receive from God. For the gift of prophecy to be safely expressed, we must couple it with the gift of discernment. Discernment is the gift of knowing and the process of determining, if something we hear is really from God.

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.
1 Corinthians 14:29

The Gift of Prophecy

Again, the gift of prophecy is speaking a word from God. As we learned from the Old Testament, this word can be a literal word or spoken message, or it can be a picture or even a vision. This message of prophecy can be a verse of scripture, or some word that is consistent with scripture that encourages the people of God or clarifies God's will for a particular situation.

The gift of prophecy was commonly practiced in the early Church. In the book of Acts there are many references to believers receiving and giving prophetic words in doing the work of God. The apostle Paul wrote that there was no more important gift. He urged every believer to seek to prophesy because of how effectively prophesy builds up the Church.

“Eagerly desires gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. ...the one who prophesies edified the church.” 1 Corinthians 14:1, 4.

The purpose and effects of prophecy in the New Testament Church:

Today many believe that a prophet speaks either to condemn a person or to predict the future. However according to Paul, “*the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.*” 1 Corinthians 14:3.

1. **Strengthening.** From the Greek Oikodomeo – literally means “to build or restore a house”. Metaphorically it means to repair, improve, or build up the person and church in Christ.
2. **Encouraging.** From the Greek paraklesis – literally to “call near”, means to call for help. Metaphorically it means to help, strengthen, the or refresh the person in the Lord.
3. **Comfort.** From the Greek paramuthia – simply means to comfort, to encourage, or console a person.

When you give or hear a word of prophecy consider, does this word strengthen, encourage or comfort the ones hearing this word?

Prophecy can also convict us of our sin.

“But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid

bare. So, they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" 1 Corinthians 14:24-25

Is prophecy the same as preaching or teaching?

First Paul distinguishes the "word of prophecy" which may be spoken into many different contexts and by different people. Someone while teaching, preaching, doing pastoral work, or praying for someone may receive from the Holy Spirit the "word of prophecy." That is, they will speak for God to that person or into that situation.

Paul further distinguishes the office of prophet that an individual may be anointed to fulfill. This is distinct from other roles in the church.

Ephesians 4:11

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Here a prophetic word pierces through a barrier that separates them and God, or them and others. Here it surgically strengthens, encourages and comforts a person by helping them to remove a specific barrier between them and God, or them and another person, thus restoring the relationship.

Prophecy Creating the Future

Prophecy is also God's creative word spoken into human history that invites our participation with God in creating the future. This is how God creates. It's through speaking words, and He wishes to speak these words through us in order to make stuff.

Isaiah wrote that the spoken Word of God will accomplish its purpose.

"so is my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:10-11.

When God sends a prophetic word to us, he wishes to create something new through us. The Hebrew for **word** here is **dabar**, which can also mean "**thing**". In Genesis 1, the spoken word is how God created or recreated the heavens and the earth. Throughout the bible, God continued to create or recreate stuff by speaking through his prophets.

"Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! ...I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ...So I prophesied as I was commanded.

And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone."

Ezekiel 37:4, 5, 7.

This is not magic. We do not speak this word and it must happen. The prophecy is God's revelation of his intention, what he wants to happen. The word is His invitation to engage with Him, to pray and obey that word into reality. Prophecy is a way that God creates the future through us.

"For I did not speak on my own but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken." John 12:49.

The Gift of Discernment

There are two ways of exercising the gift of discernment:

1. **Testing the spirits**, to see whether they are from God. This is the ability to discern what is truly of the Spirit of God and what comes from evil spirits or the human spirit.
“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.
2. **Evaluating the source and content of prophetic messages.**
“Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.” 1 Corinthians 14:29.

The church needs both for the full and safe expression of the spiritual gifts. We will discuss the first meaning, “testing the spirits” in Dunamis 5, Spiritual Warfare and Kingdom Advancement. Today we will focus on the second meaning. We will teach how discernment assists the entire process of giving and evaluating a prophetic message.

Discernment of When to Speak a Prophetic Word

If you believe that you have a prophetic word, how do you know what to speak and to whom to speak?

You may sense an Anointing

Anointing is when the Holy Spirit falls upon you giving the power and the guidance to speak a prophetic word. You may feel this physically; there may be a welling up, like a fountain rising up within; it may be a sense of fullness; often the heart beats faster; your lips may quiver, or your tongue may tingle.

Your mind may be observing what is happening and wonder, what is going on? Regardless of physical symptoms, there is a rising alertness and conviction that is difficult to suppress. A conviction that the Holy Spirit has something he wishes to say.

“But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”
Jeremiah 20:9.

What do you do if you believe you have received a word from God?

- **Be Ready to Speak Anywhere the Spirit Leads**

God may not only speak in a Spirit-filled service of prayer and worship, but He may speak anywhere and to anyone He chooses.

Going Deeper

A critical issue for discernment is when someone brings you a prophetic word. How do you determine if it is really from God? (This is when things can get really flakey or dangerous.) First, you’ll need to carefully apply the four discernment questions from lesson 5. In addition, there is the issue of timing and your own internal witness.

Often times, such words brought by others to us will come as confirmations of words that God has already spoken within our hearts. If there is not the internal confirming witness, then one should be very careful. For the person who speaks a word of prophesy to another, there is the grave responsibility to discern carefully whether or not one has truly received something from God. Words given as prophesy that are carelessly spoken or arising out of impure motives can cause great damage.

“As they talked and discussed these things [as they walked to Emmaus] Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

- **Control the delivery**

The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. Emotionalism or bizarre behavior detracts from the message. You can and must exercise control over your response to the inspiration that is coming from the Holy Spirit. This also means that you are to be subject to the people leading the meeting. Ask permission from the leader before speaking.

The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

1 Corinthians 14:32

- **Speak with humility**

When you receive a prophetic word, a few words may come to mind or a general sense of the whole message. The important thing is to begin to speak in faith, trusting that as you proceed, the rest will come to you or will become clear.

Words, phrases or sentences may go through the mind. For some it is word for word message, for others, for others, thoughts form in their minds and they have the freedom to express those thoughts in their own words.

**When Do You
Speak a
Prophetic
Word?**

Once you sense that you are receiving a word, you should ask, “Who is this word for? Is it for an individual or for the congregation?” Again, ask permission from the individual or from the leader of the group, before speaking.

When you speak, refrain from beginning with “Thus sayeth the Lord” or “I the Lord declare”. Moving in authoritative pronouncements may bind the person’s conscience and rob them of the opportunity to discern whether the word really is from the Lord. Rather than say, “thus says the Lord”, say, “I believe the Lord is saying...,” or “I’m sensing that the Lord would have us realize ...,”

- **Do Not Speak Beyond the Anointing**

When the anointing lifts from you, conclude. Do not add your interpretation or emotional response to what has just been spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remember what Jesus said, *“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing.”* John 5:19. Jesus didn’t embellish.

Discernment of the source and content to the message

For the person who speaks a word of prophesy, there is the grave responsibility to discern carefully whether or not one has truly received something from God. How do you determine if it is really

from God?

Remember our four rules of general discernment we went through in lesson 5.

1. Does it exalt Jesus Christ?
2. Does it agree with scripture?
3. Do others who are filled with the Holy Spirit confirm it?
4. Does it bear good fruit?

Guidelines for Congregations and Prophecy

Paul envisioned the gifts of the Holy Spirit taking place in the context of a Christ-centered, biblically grounded community in which there was the ongoing process of discernment. Paul gives these simple directions for the community of faith:

“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

The fellowship must develop the mutual trust, accountability and communication skills that allow this discernment to take place. In addition to the four guidelines for discernment, ask:

What was the spirit in which it was given?

Is the message given in a good spirit? Is the spirit one of righteousness, joy and peace as in Romans 14:17; and is it a spirit of Christ-like love as in 1 Corinthians 13?

“For the Kingdom of God is ... of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud....”

1 Corinthians 13:4 ff.

Is the Message on time?

Is the message “on-time” and consistent with the moving of the Holy Spirit in the meeting? Does the prophetic word will match the flow? Prophecy is usually confirming what God has been impressing on the hearts of the leaders of the meeting, or of individuals present. It is not a bolt from the blue; it fits the context.

Use discernment with every word given.

Going Deeper

Learning when to speak is only half of prophecy. With equal care, one must learn to stop speaking when the revelation of the Holy Spirit has ceased.

Often this is difficult, in the wake of the Holy Spirit having spoken, there is an emotional and spiritual response. It is easy to confuse our response to the actual revelation. One must learn not to speak beyond the revelation.

John Woolman, a Quaker who led a movement to abolish slavery in the colonial period, describes this discernment.

"One day, being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up and said some words in a meeting; but not keeping close to the Divine opening, I said more than was required of me."

Woolman was deeply afflicted when he realized that he had spoken beyond the leading of the Spirit. After an experience of forgiveness, he wrote of how his discernment was sharpened.

"Being thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and which taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to his flock."

Peter Smith, *The Journal of John Woolman* p. 11.

Discern each new prophecy. Never rest upon a past track record of success and assume that just because God spoke through a person in the past, He is speaking through them in the present moment.

In Conclusion.

As you develop experience in giving and receiving prophetic words, you will develop a sanctified common sense. Pay attention to your gut. If there is not the internal confirming witness, then you should be very careful.

I urge you all to eagerly seek this gift. Our heavenly Father has much he wants to say to us. Prophecy and discernment are gifts he has given to help us confidently hear from him. When the gift of prophesy is allowed to flourish, the church will flourish. Through prophesy, the living God will guide and build the Church.

A few years ago, I convened a few leaders in my church to solve a difficult problem concerning our church staff and finances. My leader said, "If we brainstorm, come up with 100 ideas, then whittle the list down to 10, and prioritize the list, that will be my idea of failure." After a moment or two of shocked silence, he continued, "What I propose is that we pray, discuss the problem, and when the Lord speaks to one of us, and we agree that he has spoken, we'll do that." It turned out that the Lord had some things to say to us concerning the issue. We received wisdom on how to proceed and the problem was solved, and the church and the staff thrived.

So, don't despise prophecy. I urge you to seek this gift. For when you do the church will be built up. God will have more room to guide and build his church.

Questions and Discussion

1. What would be a biblical definition of prophecy? How does this contrast with the popular understanding of prophecy as predicting the future?
2. How does prophecy function to invite us to join with God in creating the future?
3. Have you ever received from God what may have been a word of prophecy? How did you know that God was ready to speak through you?
4. Why does prophesy need to be carefully discerned when given in church? What are the dangers of prophesy?
5. Why does prophesy need to be welcomed in the church? What are the blessings of God speaking to us today?

Prayer Exercise

- In small prayer groups, lay hands on each other and pray for the Holy Spirit to give the gift of prophesy. Pay attention to what thoughts or images come to mind. Take the risk of speaking them out. Do so with humility and without such prefaces as, “God says.” Ask the group to discern whether or not these thoughts and images are from God.
- Describe a situation in the church or in the world. Pray for that situation as a group. As you are praying, ask God to speak through the Holy Spirit about that situation. Discern as a group whether or not this is from the Holy Spirit.

Tongues and Interpretation

Lesson # 10



Dunamis Course 2
In the Spirit's Power

Tongues and Interpretation Lesson 10

The gifts of Tongues and the companion gift of the Interpretation of tongues like all spiritual gifts, are good and are a blessing to the Church. However, these gifts have often caused trouble. The trouble comes not from the gifts but from the users of the gifts.

In this lesson, we will lay out a biblical view of these gifts. First, we will go through the biblical references to these gifts, the use of and instructions around these gifts. Then we will define the different expressions of tongues and the one expression of tongues which requires the gift of interpretation. Finally, we will go over common questions and give some suggestions on how to receive the gift of tongues and how to give and interpret a message in tongues.

A biblical view of the gifts of tongues and interpretation.

Jesus refers to tongues.

“He [Jesus] said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.... And these signs will accompany those who believe ... they will speak in new tongues;” Mark 16:15-17.

Jesus included the gift of tongues as a valid manifestation of the Kingdom. He also put it in the context of fulfilling the Great Commission.

The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on Pentecost.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:4.

This gift of speaking in other languages was important, because the disciples were speaking to an international collection of Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. This gift enabled the disciples to share the gospel in the heart languages of the hearers.

This gift also functioned as a supernatural sign confirming the truth of what they were preaching. The gift of tongues assisted in spreading the gospel.

Peter and the Roman Centurion, Cornelius.

Also, from the book of Acts, a group of Romans, Cornelius and His Household, received the gift of tongues after they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Tongues was a sign to Peter of God’s

Going Deeper

There are major textual problems with Mark 16:14-18. Many scholars do not think this is in the original text of Mark.

“Because of questions about the authenticity of these alternative endings, 16:8 is usually regarded as the last verse of the Gospel of Mark. There are three possible explanations for Mark ending at 16:8: (1) The author intentionally ended the Gospel here in an open-ended fashion; (2) the Gospel was never finished; or (3) the last leaf of the manuscript was lost prior to copying.”

NET Bible The Gospel of Mark.

However, these verses were added when eye-witnesses of Jesus still lived. It’s reasonable to conclude that these verses are the actual words of Jesus Christ, and they were added by the early Church because they were completely consistent with what the Church was experiencing of the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. The early church experienced tongues and the other gifts as necessary for being in the Church and fulfilling the Great Commission

receiving these Gentiles into the household of faith. God had broken the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles, accepting the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." Acts 10:44-47

Paul and the Disciples in Ephesus

In Acts 19:1-6, the Disciples at Ephesus speak in tongues after Paul taught them about receiving the Holy Spirit. They knew about the baptism of John, but they had not heard of the Holy Spirit.

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them,

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied." Acts 19:1-6

Power for Witness to Jesus and His Kingdom

In these last two biblical references, tongues were evidence of disciples receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. However, tongues are not the only evidence of the Holy Spirit coming upon us for power. The purpose of receiving the power of the Holy Spirit is to be witnesses to Jesus and his kingdom. The book of Acts also records instances when the Spirit falls on believers in power and they do not speak in tongues, but they are strengthened to witness. Such as chapter 4, when the church prays for strength in the face of persecution. The spirit falls, the disciples are strengthened and speak the word of God boldly.

"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." Acts 4:30-31.

Paul's Instructions on Tongues to the Church

In 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul gave Instructions about the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation to the Church. This is where we learn the most about these gifts. Including the following:

1. Paul lists the gift of tongues and of interpretation as manifestational gifts of the Holy Spirit. *"to one there is given through the Spirit ... speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."* 1 Corinthians 12:10.

2. He teaches that the gift of tongues is one gift among many different gifts and callings. *“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church ...different kinds of tongues. ...Do all speak in tongues?”* 1 Corinthians 12:27-28, 30.
3. Speaking in the tongues of men or angels is useless without love. *“If I speak in human or angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”* 1 Corinthians 13:1.
4. The one who speaks in tongues, speaks not to men, but to God. *“For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit”* 1 Corinthians 14:2.
5. He who speaks in tongues edifies himself. *“Those who speak in a tongue edify themselves,”* 1 Corinthians 14:4.
6. Paul wants us all to speak in tongues. *“I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,”* 1 Corinthians 14:5.
7. Paul is thankful that he speaks in tongues more than any of the rest of the Corinthians, but in church he would rather speak a language all can understand. *“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church, I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.”* 1 Corinthians 14:18-19.
8. Paul warns us to not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order. *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, ...do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”* 1 Corinthians 14:39 -40.
9. Finally, those who speak in tongues in a public setting need to pray for the gift of interpretation. *“For this reason, those who speak in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.”* 1 Corinthians 14:13.

Questions.

Why would God do this? What is the value in giving a message in tongues and then the interpretation? Why not just speak the message in a way we can all understand? Can you control the tongues or does the Spirit just sweep you away? Do you know what you are praying? What do you feel when you pray in tongues? Does speaking in tongues make you a more spiritual person than someone who does not speak in tongues? How does this gift of praying in languages that you do not understand, edify or build you up and help you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ?

3 Ways the Gift of Tongues is Expressed

1. Tongues as a form of prophecy.

When tongues are interpreted, they function very much like prophecy. that is God speaking words to the Church for the building up of the Church.

Messages delivered in Tongues can be a part of a public meeting in which various manifestations of the Holy Spirit are woven together to form corporate worship and ministry.

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. I Cor 14:26

If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. I Cor 14:27-28

I remember receiving a message in tongues at a Session meeting as pastor of a Presbyterian church. We were praying quietly over a situation where we did not know what to do.

As we were praying, I received a message in tongues. It felt like a pebble dropped into a pool of water. I sensed that I have received a word. I also sensed that I was to give the word in tongues. I had never done anything like this in a session meeting before. But the sense of urgency was strong. So, I decided to act and see what would happen.

I closed down our time of prayer. I explained that I had received a prophetic word, that I was to deliver it in tongues, so hold on to your hats. I gave the word. I opened my mouth and began speaking, trusting that the Holy Spirit would give me the words. When I sensed that the word was finished, I stopped speaking. When I did this, it felt like something snapped in the room. A tension in the spirit realm had been broken, and we all felt relieved and free.

Then I asked, if anyone had an interpretation. It turns out that every elder believed that they had received a specific word. And when they all spoke out what they had heard, we had the wisdom to respond to the situation we had been praying about.

I have also given and interpreted messages in tongues, in worship services. The effect has always been positive, uplifting, encouraging. The sign of another language emphasizes the divine origin and the mystery of God speaking directly to us.

2. Tongues as an Actual Foreign Language

On the day of Pentecost, tongues enabled a group of Galileans to preach to a gathering of Jews from all around the world in their native languages.

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ... a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.” Acts 2:4,6.

I have not witnessed this, but I have friends who have. My best friend’s wife had a grandmother who followed her husband into Zulu land as a missionary. Her husband spent two years working hard to learn the Zulu language. She didn’t. She was busy with all the practical work required in order to move their family to the mission field. But when she came to the village, God gave her the ability to speak and understand Zulu. She became known as the white Zulu, because she could speak the language without an accent. Her husband was a little put off, but he received that gift as a supernatural sign that helped their mission to bring the gospel to the village. I have several other friends who have personally experienced or witnessed this phenomenon. In each instance, the gift came as a practical help to fulfill the Great Commission.

3. Tongues as a Prayer Language

The most common gift of tongues is a private prayer language. I have found that praying in the Spirit helps me pray when I do not know how to pray.

Others testify that tongues open the door for receiving guidance. They will pray in tongues when seeking direction from God.

Some speak in tongues as they prepare for hearing God's word for preaching and ministry.

Personal Aside

Personally, I have spoken in tongues as a private prayer language for years. I received the gift on a commercial plane trip after talking with a friend sitting next to me. He encouraged me to just begin speaking. I did and my friend said, "You're doing it." Later, I continued to practice speaking in tongues in private. I didn't feel anything. However, I don't really feel any particular emotions when I pray in English either.

Since then, I continue praying in tongues. It helps me pray when I don't know how to pray. I don't know what I'm praying, but I trust that the Spirit is interceding through me according to the will of God, as Paul wrote in Romans 8.

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." Romans 8:26-27.

I prayed in tongues this morning. I wanted the teaching to go well, that it would be clear, that you all would understand what I was saying. Yes, I could have said all of the above in English. But I wanted the Spirit to intercede for you through me with this gift.

Receiving the Gift of Tongues

Some will receive this gift spontaneously—others receive as an act of the will. If don't want to speak in tongues, don't worry about it. If you do, I suggest you take a risk. Get with another person, ask for the gift, then start speaking and see what happens.

Remember, just as you cannot speak in English and Spanish at the same time, you cannot speak in your known language and tongues at the same time. Speak and then ask the person you are with to tell you what they heard. Sometimes the truths of scripture need to be put into practice before we understand them.

As with all the gifts of the Spirit, in faith ask the Holy Spirit for the gifts you need to follow Jesus and then get on with the work you are called to do. Leave it up to the Holy Spirit to give

The gift of tongues, like all imperfect things, will one day cease,

"where there are tongues, they will be stilled;" 1 Corinthians 13:8

We are to pray and sing in the spirit (i.e. in tongues). We are also to pray and sing with our minds, both modes are important. *"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding."* 1 Corinthians 14:15-17

you whatever gifts or manifestations that will enable you to give Jesus glory by building up the Church and advancing the gospel.

Conclusion

Tongues and interpretation of tongues are two among many of the gifts God's gives us after we have been filled with the Spirit. Tongues is not The sign that one is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is a useful gift for prayer and communication with God as well as for proclaiming the gospel. These gifts build us up for service, so we are equipped to build up the Church for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your experience of tongues? Have you ever spoken in tongues? What was the experience like the first time this happened to you? What about now when you speak in tongues?
2. Have you prayed for this gift but not received it? According to the teaching in the Dunamis Course, that is ok! What other gifts is the Holy Spirit manifesting in your life?
3. Which of the four types of tongues have you personally experienced or seen in operation in others?
4. How have tongues caused problems for you or for the church?
5. What guidelines does Paul give that would bring this gift to its proper and useful expression?

Prayer Exercise

We recognize that many people have been hurt because of the gift of tongues. This hurt has often come when they prayed for the gift and didn't receive it. Or they were told that they were not really filled with the Holy Spirit because they did not receive this gift of tongues. Often, before we can move forward in receiving this gift, we must pray for forgiveness and healing.

After this pray, for one another to receive the gift of tongues; then follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The Church Doing Jesus' Ministry Through the Holy Spirit

Lesson # 11



Dunamis Course 2
In the Spirit's Power

Introduction

We are living in the in-between time—the time of Jesus having established the Kingdom of God, but of the Kingdom not yet fulfilled. This is the time of the working of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus continues to work through his body the church as prophet, priest and king advancing the Kingdom of God.

In this last lesson we will give some practical ways of welcoming the Holy Spirit which will bring blessing to and through the church.

Time Out

Entering the kingdom. If you are ready to enter God’s Kingdom, consider saying yes to three things.

1. Turning your back on Satan and all of his works.
2. Asking Jesus to forgive your sins.
3. Commit to following Jesus as your Lord.

Do these three things in prayer right now, and then tell your small group. They will rejoice and they will help you in taking your next steps in God’s Kingdom.

The Role of the Church in the “Between the Times”

The church is a human community, as well as a supernatural reality that makes known to both the seen and the unseen world what God the Father has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:10-11.

Through the Holy Spirit, God the Father is doing a work far beyond our ability.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Ephesians 3:20-21.

The Church is the vanguard, the first fruits, of the new reality of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Holy Spirit Makes the Church Possible

Let’s get specific. How does that the Holy Spirit works in the Church?

1. The Holy Spirit strengthens, encourages and grows the Church.

*. Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was **strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit**, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. Acts 9:31.*

2. The Holy Spirit leads the Church through people who are called, gifted and empowered.

*“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. Acts 20:28.*

Remember the Four Basic Operations of the Holy Spirit which Creates the Church

1. **Justification**—the Holy Spirit enables to be born again, brought into the family of God which is the church. John 1:12-13, John 3:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12:3
2. **Sanctification**—the Holy Spirit transforms us to more and more reflect the character of Jesus Christ, growing the fruit of the Spirit that defines our relationship with one another. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 12:1-2
3. **Empowerment**—the Holy Spirit builds and extends the church by offering the ministry of Jesus as prophet, priest and king. Acts 1:8, Luke 24:49, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
4. **Koinonia**—the Holy Spirit creates and deepens bonds of affection between us and God and us and each other. Acts 2:41, 1 John 1:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Ephesians 4:4, Ephesians 4:15-16

The Key to Being the Church is Welcoming the Holy Spirit

The Church can simply become a human institution and no longer the vanguard of the Kingdom of God. This whole course is an invitation to return to the biblical vision of the Christian life as essentially the life of the Spirit, dynamically experienced, fully integrated in the Church and engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission.

The Results of Welcoming the Holy Spirit into the Church

1. The Holy Spirit will bring Life and Vitality

We are the church—in its present shapes and structures. As the Spirit of the living God pours out upon us afresh, we come alive, the church comes alive. Welcoming the Holy Spirit, who is the presence of God, brings a life and vitality to all dimensions of the church’s life of prayer, worship, service of life and missions.

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” Acts 4:31.

2. The Holy Spirit works in the Church to Experience the Triune God

The Holy Spirit makes the Church more Trinitarian, not only in its theology, but in its life and spirituality as well. With the Holy Spirit, we experience the power, presence and reality of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit we will know the triune God not just as a doctrine or belief, but as lived reality.

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26.

3. A Renewal of the Charismata

Recapturing the dynamic life of the Spirit as the basis for the church will also renew the charismata, the gifts, not for the sake of being charismatic, but for the building of the people of God for their life together and in the world.

Through the spiritual gifts, the ministry of Jesus as prophet, priest and king will become lived reality in our midst. We will experience healing, deliverance, miracles and effective preaching. All the things we see Jesus doing in the New Testament, He will continue doing in our churches.

“He said to them, ...these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ...they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” Mark 16:15, 16, 17, 18.

4. The Bible Will Become the Word of God

A welcoming of the Holy Spirit will bring a return to the Bible as the Word of God. By the Spirit, the Bible will become alive and will speak with authority!

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged wear, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12.

5. The Church Will Be Empowered to do Evangelism and Missions

Cultivating the dynamic life of the Holy Spirit will result in effective evangelism and missionary outreach. Through this empowered work, multitudes of people will be brought into the new reality of the Kingdom of God and will share in the life of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.” Acts 9:31.

Some Practical Suggestions of Allowing the Holy Spirit to Lead the Church

1. Remember Acts 1:8

*“But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”*

Going Deeper

J. Rodman Williams sums up the crucial role of the manifestational gifts as follows.

"Let it be firmly said that the church cannot be fully or freely the church without the presence of and operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What is depicted therefore in I Corinthians - and recurring in our day - is in no sense a peripheral matter but is crucial to the life of the church. For the recurrence of the charismata of the Holy Spirit signals the church's recovery of its spiritual roots and its emergence in the twentieth

century with fresh power and vitality."

J. Rodman Williams, Renewal Theology, Vol. 2, p. 327

(For the sake of balance, it must be stated with equal firmness that the church cannot be fully or freely the church without the presence of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The fruits are also essential in that they reveal the quality of our relationship with one another and demonstrate that we are actually being brought into newness of life in Jesus Christ.)

Jesus promised that his disciples would “receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them and then they would be his witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria to the ends of the earth.”

To receive this promise, the church should provide on-going biblical teaching on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, followed by the regular opportunity for people to be prayed for to receive the baptism with Holy Spirit

I suggest setting up a retreat where there is the time both to teach and to actively pray for each other.

2. Make room for the Holy Spirit

Make space for the Holy Spirit. Don't crowd out the Holy Spirit with rigid liturgy and lesson plans. Be interruptible, even in the midst of worship or preaching.

Keep on the lookout for Kairos moments. Times when the Holy Spirit seems to press in with a special heavy presence. Pause and ask the Father what he wants you to do.

“While Peter was still thinking about the vision the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So, get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” Acts 10:19-20.

3. The On-going Work of Prayer

Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you what Jesus is calling your Church to do. Then, pray for the Holy Spirit's power and gifts to accomplish the call. Pray for the world and for the lost. Intercessory prayer pulls the Church into engagement in the world, especially into evangelism and missions. A prayer-less church will be a powerless church.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone” 1 Timothy 2:1.

4. The Process of Discernment

To move in the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, the Church must intentionally cultivate the process of discernment. Teach on discernment and put discernment structures in the life of the church. Identify and nurture people with the gifts of discernment. Build processes of debriefing and discernment within the church structure.

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.

5. Join the Ministry of the Word with the Ministry of the Spirit

The Word of God and the Spirit of God go together. It's a kind of dance. The Word of God as our authority provides the foundations for knowing Jesus Christ and for being led by the Holy Spirit.

Whenever the Church departs from the foundations of scripture, it goes astray.

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24.

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13.

6. Say yes to the Great Commission

Make fulfilling the Great Commission your first priority. This mission is impossible without the Holy Spirit. When we set out to be disciples of Jesus Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission, then we will be led to put in place all these suggestions.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33.

Conclusion

If all this seems a little overwhelming. I suggest you take a risk. Try it and see what happens. After all, if God calls us to walk by faith and not by sight then, it makes sense that he will lead beyond what we can see or understand. The key is to evaluate the fruit. Jesus said that he was coming back for the fruit. Try this out and see the fruit that it produces, fruit that should bring glory to God and great happiness and satisfaction to your church.

Questions and Discussion

1. How do we experience the church as both human and supernatural? Give examples of both of these realities, and how they intermingle.
2. Specifically, how does the Holy Spirit make the church possible?
3. What may we expect to happen in the church when the Holy Spirit is welcomed? Which of these have you experienced, or would like to experience, in your own congregation?

Prayer Exercise

As a prayer group, seek God for a vision for your church. Ask him to show you those areas that you need growth in order to fulfill His vision. We suggest that you write this vision down, pray for it and invite the leadership and congregation to join you in that prayer for discernment and implementation.