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# Encounter(ing) God

Holy Spirit      Part 9

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## Review

**Week 9** — We're in week 9 of this portion of our Encountering God series where we've been discussing the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and now we're three weeks into specifically talking about Spiritual Gifts. Supernatural abilities given by God to every single believer...

If you're a believer, you have been given spiritual gifts, and because of that, every believer has a responsibility to discover, develop, and deploy those spiritual gifts. It's a matter of Stewardship. You have been entrusted with something precious, and powerful... and every one of us has not only the responsibility, but also the privilege of pressing into these gifts so that, as Steve mentioned last week, we might...

- Overcome the limitations of our flesh, what we have the ability to do in and of ourselves.
- Contribute significantly to the expansion God's good kingdom on the earth.
- And help the body of Christ fulfill her God-given potential, and reach her God-ordained destiny.

**Five categories of spiritual gifts** — some crossover exists, good lists

- a) Serving Gifts — last week
  - b) Salvation Gifts — today
  - c) Spiritual Insight Gifts
  - d) Strengthening Gifts
  - e) Shepherding Gifts
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## Salvation Gifts

If you've been gifted with one of The Salvation Gifts, you will more easily display and demonstrate God's goodness and presence to others in a clear and compelling way — bringing them closer toward trusting in Christ for Salvation.

**THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM**

**THE GIFT OF FAITH**

**THE GIFT OF MIRACLES**

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## The Gift of Evangelism

- **Ephesians 4:11**

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers

The word Evangelist literally means bringer of good tidings, proclaimer of the gospel. It's simply someone who shares the good news of the gospel with people in order to convince them of God's goodness, and help

them trust in Christ for Salvation. This might happen from a stage, and it might happen in a coffee shop. It can be public, or it can be personal, one on one.

It's been said that *"evangelism is simply one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread."*

**Someone with the gift of evangelism  
carries with them a particular burden for lost people.  
They have an extra measure of motivation to share the gospel with unbelievers.**

**EXAMPLE:** Pastor Myron Goodwin, who is our missions pastor, several years ago, while on our train in India with our friend Lamuel, a police officer walked into their cabin, and Myron led Him to Christ. In Haiti, while waiting for a bus, Myron felt the Holy Spirit prompting Him to go talk to this shirtless guy walking down the road, and led Him to Christ. Myron sent him into a town, and later gathered a bunch of people and led 23 more people to the Lord.

- If you've ever had a brief interaction with a total stranger that ended up with you leading them, and 23 of their friends to Christ... chances are you have the gift of evangelism.
- People with this gift find themselves dreaming of creative ways to reach people with the gospel.
- This is the heartbeat of many missionaries, church planters.
- There is an extra burden for people that don't yet know Christ.

**INTERESTING:** I read a fascinating article on this topic last week — the article referenced two different studies — one that in the mid-90's, around 10% of people who took spiritual gifts tests found that they had the gift of evangelism.

The other study done by Barna Research Group, said that in 2005, 4% of Christians claimed to have the gift of evangelism, and then in 2010, it had declined to 1%. We don't know what that number is today, but given that trend, it's not good!

1% of Christians, maybe less now, claim that they have a passion to tell others about the good news of the gospel.

***What this doesn't mean is that the Holy Spirit in the mid 90's decided to get stingy with the gift of evangelism. What it does reveal is something incredibly concerning about the modern church.***

- It reveals that the vast majority of Christians are somewhat complacent about the eternal destiny of those that don't yet know Christ.
- It reveals that we're so busy with our own lives, that we're unwilling to take the time to think creatively about how we might reach our neighbors with the gospel.
- It reveals that we're deeply afraid of what people might think or say about us if we share our faith with them.
- It reveals a lack of confidence in what we actually believe.
- It reveals that we're relying on the professional church people to do the work of evangelism for us regardless of whether or not we're gifted in this area, and whether or not they're gifted in this area.

Some of you hear this and you're thinking, ***"Oh God, please don't let me have that gift. Because if I don't have that gift that means I don't have to evangelize, right?"***

In Acts 8 when all the believers scattered from Jerusalem, *who was sharing the good news of the gospel? Everyone. Every single believer.* That's how the gospel spread, it's how the church expanded across the first century world... everyone was sharing the good news. ***Everyone was doing the work of evangelism.***

- **2 Timothy 4:5**

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

- Did Timothy have the gift of evangelism? We actually don't know, but we do know that whether or not he had the gift, Paul told him to do it!

*No one is off the hook here. Nor should you want to be off the hook... and this is most concerning... the lack of evangelism in the modern church, the lack of passion and risk-taking, of people sharing their faith with unbelievers, all the statistics around it... the dwindling percentages of Christians actively doing this. It tells us that we've forgotten about God's grace and goodness to us. **It means that His grace toward us has become familiar. That we're not in awe of it, and we're not in awe of Him.***

**The woman at the well** in John 4 has a brief interaction with Jesus at Jacob's well around noon. She's hiding from her community out of shame. Jesus has this interaction with her where He tells her the truth of her life... and offers her living water. Then He tells her that He's the Messiah. She is so overwhelmed by this truth that she abandons her water jar, runs into town and starts shouting at everyone about Jesus, who might be the Messiah...

***What happened? She had experienced that radical grace and goodness of God and couldn't help but share it with other people... it had to come out no matter what people thought about her... she didn't care.***

- has your life been impacted in any way by God's grace and goodness toward you?
- Then dwell on it. Remember it. Meditate on it.
- Think on it until it starts to affect you
- when it hits you again... no one has to tell you to evangelize. You can't help it!
- If God sees you, knows you, loves you, cares for you... who cares what people think?
- *God's extravagant grace toward you ought to propel you out of complacency and into crucial, Christ-centered conversations with an unbelieving world.*
- Yes, we have to be careful, and sensitive, but we can't let our fear of alienating people, or offending people, or fear of people's opinions of us keep us quiet.

***How in the world do I do that? Our culture is so sensitive, so easily offended, how do I effectively share my faith with strangers or unbelievers, or my neighbors? That's terrifying to me because I don't know where to start...***

- **Ephesians 4:11-12**

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry

**Our job at Grace Chapel is to equip you. To help you develop and grow in these areas.** This is why we have our STEPS classes here at the Franklin Campus.

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## The Gift of Faith

There is an important distinction that needs to be made here.

**Every single believer has a measure of faith in God, trust in God.**

***This is a faith that leads to Salvation.***

- every believer has saving faith
- every believer has a measure of faith that should be developed and exercised over time
- but not every believer has the *gift* of faith
- **1 Corinthians 12:7-9**  
To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit

**The gift of faith is an extraordinary ability given by the Holy Spirit to trust in God's promises, in His power, and His presence in a way that inspires others and expands His Kingdom.**

*The gift of faith is the ability to look at what is humanly impossible, and yet step out anyway, because with God, all things are possible. It's an extravagant trust, that leads to boldness and great risk for the glory of God.*

### The Gift of Faith

- Advances the mission.
- Believes for the impossible.
- Stands firm on God's power and promises, regardless of what opposition or obstacles you face.

**EXAMPLE:** Pastor Rob relates the story of Pastor Steve and Elder Rick Wood having extraordinary faith to work with two warring tribes in South Sudan, and God working powerfully for reconciliation.

**EXAMPLE:** Another way the gift faith may play out is when tragedy hits your life. You have the ability to say, "In the middle of my grief, or pain, or loss — that's real, that's there, I'm not ignoring it — but in the middle of it, I know that God's promises are true, and He's going to work this out for my good — somehow, I don't know how, but I know He will and I'm holding confidently to that promise."

**Faith pulls your attention off of yourself, and firmly places it on God.**

**The gift of Faith gets your eyes off of your limited strength, and on to God's infinite strength.**

**Faith doesn't focus on "what I can't do."  
Faith says, "Look at what God can do."**

*"If God created the heavens and the earth, if He formed the planets and holds them together by the word of His power, if He can do that... if He can command and calm the storms and the seas with a word, what can't God do in and through my life?"*

- every believer has saving faith
- every believer must exercise the measure of faith given to them as it says in **Romans 12:3**
- God will pour out an extraordinary gift of faith that is needed for certain challenges, times, and seasons of life.

**The disciples prayed in Luke 17, “Increase our faith.” That’s my prayer for us as well.**

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## **The Gift of Miracles**

- **1 Corinthians 12:10**  
...to another the working of miracles

**The gift of miracles  
empowers an individual to perform supernatural acts  
through the power of the Holy Spirit  
to further the Kingdom, give glory to God, and to draw people to Him.**

- this includes healing, but it’s not limited to healing
- it could be God working a relational miracle
- a miracle in regard to career or provision
- deliverance from addiction, etc.

**Objection** — Now, most modern secular people are somewhat okay up until this point. *“Okay, sharing your faith, I get it, I don’t like it, some think you shouldn’t do it, but I get it. Faith, I’m okay with to an extent... but miracles? God giving someone the gift to perform miracles... there have been way too many abuses and misdeeds of ‘church leaders’ the last 50 years in the name of miracles for me to buy into this...”*

- these people are prostituting God for their own personal gain
- it is blatant, irreverent, spiritual manipulation and abuse
- it is sinful and repulsive, it taints and tars the name of Christ in the name of money
- repels believers and unbelievers from the gospel

**Don’t let someone’s misuse of a gift  
keep you from operating in yours.**

- could it be that God is exposing you to misuses of a gift so that you might learn what TO do and what NOT to do
- Don’t waste that. Use it!

### **When you pray, do miracles happen?**

Do you sense with confidence in a given scenario what miracle God wants to work in someone’s life?  
Are you burdened to pray for someone when they need healing or deliverance?

**These are all signs that this may be a gift that God has given you...**

**Another perspective** on this that I think will increase our faith as it relates to asking for miracles. We use words like miracles, and supernatural to explain God healing people or delivering people.

**In the Garden of Eden, everything was as it was originally intended to be.** No sin. No pain. No sorrow. No sickness. No death. This is the original design of God for Creation. From God's point of view, the things that are out of the ordinary in our lives, the things that are outside of God's original design *are all of the things that were absent in Eden* — sickness, physical ailments, disease, pain. From God's vantage point... when He works a miracle in someone's life... healing someone of cancer, or delivering someone from addiction, or casting a demon from someone... **it's not so much an extraordinary event — as it is a return to God's original design in a given circumstance.**

**A miracle is something that we define  
as something out of the natural order of things.  
But to God, and miracle is simply a returning the original order of things.**

*"[It is] particularly striking that all of Jesus' miracles (with the exception of the cursing of the fig tree) are miracles of restoration—restoration to health, restoration to life, restoration to freedom from demonic possession. Jesus miracles provide us with a sample of the meaning of redemption: a freeing of creation from the shackles of sin and evil and a reinstatement of creaturely living as intended by God."<sup>1</sup>*

~ Albert Wolters

***If we really believe that, shouldn't we all be asking God for those types of restorations all the time? Over every circumstance that is out of alignment with God's original design?***

**But here's what happens,** we look back at all the times that we've pleaded with God for a miracle, for healing, for deliverance in all kinds of situations. Then the enemy brings to mind the instances where **God doesn't show up in the way we think He should** as evidence that He's not involved, or He doesn't care, or He's not good, or not powerful enough...

And yet, over and over again when we lose sight of how good He is or how powerful He is, or how caring He is... when our disappointments outweigh our trust in Him... **the Holy Spirit gently reminds us that the greatest miracle is yet to come. The ultimate promise of God is yet to be fulfilled — that because of the finished work of Jesus, the moment of physical death brings the restoration of Life!**

- **2 Corinthians 5:6-9**

We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

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## **Conclusion**

**The ultimate beauty and power of all of the gifts of the Spirit operating in our midst is...**

- that every one of them point us to that day.
- they remind us of the beauty of Eden and point us toward the wonder of Heaven
- they reveal to us that we have a good God
- that will one day restore all things as they were intended to be

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<sup>1</sup> Randy C. Alcorn, *Heaven* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001) 89

**Challenge** — Discover, develop and deploy your gift, whether it's evangelism, faith, or miracles... so that through you, others might enter into the Salvation that only Jesus can bring. Operate in your gifts so the world might see the goodness of God, catch a glimpse of the beauty of heaven — and be changed forever.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Define the gift of evangelism.
2. How is the gift of evangelism different from the command that all believers do the work of evangelism?
3. What is the difference between the faith that leads to salvation and the *gift* of faith?
4. Has the misuse of someone's gift kept you from operating in yours? How did you work through it?
5. Explain miracles in relation to God returning things back to His original design.
6. Do you believe or know that you have any of the gifts of evangelism, faith, or miracles?
7. How have they been used in your life?

# NOTES