

W418_Gifts.mp3

[00:00:02] This is the recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book. The subject is headed the form of sound words. And this present study is the question of supernatural miraculous gifts as given for in particular in one Corinthians Chapter 12. Before we deal with these peculiar gifts, these wonderful, miraculous powers exercised by the early church, let us not forget that there is one miracle that remains unaltered with regard to ourselves and we sitting in this chapel, or you, dear friends in the uttermost parts of the earth who are listening to this tape recording, if you are a believer in Christ, you have been the subject of a miracle. Romans The first chapter, verse 16, says, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth and those of you who have access to the original, you will see the word power is the word that is translated in some passages by the word miracle. So although we may not have evidential miracles, I mean, I haven't visited Mrs. Buxton in hospital today and put my hands upon her and expected the miracle that she should rise and walk out of the hospital. I haven't done it. Whether I am lacking in faith or whether I should not be able to do it, it's a matter for us to consider for the moment. But here's one miracle that we should never forget that when we are preaching the gospel to the unsaved, all our persuasion and all the words we bring to it, all the efforts we make, all the tracks we print and give away, I've got to be subservient to the fact that unless God uses them, unless he works the miracle, well, nothing will happen.

[00:01:57] But God does, doesn't he? And we are subjects of that wondrous miracle of regeneration, conversion, salvation, quickening, whatever else you might like to give to that mighty change that we bless God that we've experienced. Well, then. There are other features. Before we deal with this, will you just look for a moment at two passages to compare them together? First of all, Ephesians Chapter one. Ephesians chapter one, just where the Apostle is referring to the seal of the Spirit. He speaks, speaks at the end of verse 13. Ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. The seal and the earnest. And somebody said to me, Well, there you are. That's exactly the same as we get in two Corinthians chapter two. But chapter one. But as we ought to be very suspicious of. There you are. It's exactly the same. We ought to open our Bibles and have a look for ourselves. So we will, shall we? Verse 22 Corinthians chapter one For all the promises of God in him and in Him, Amen unto the glory of God by us.

[00:03:31] Now He which establishes You us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God who hath also sealed us. And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Is it exactly the same, friends? Because don't you see there are two other words to establish and to anoint, as well as to give seal and earnest. The sealed and earnest are mentioned in both passages. Now, if you'll look at one Corinthians chapter one, you'll see if you're reading the original again that the word establish is used there with regard to Supernatural or with regard to gifts. Anyhow, this First Corinthians chapter one, he says verse. Verse five. That did everything. You are enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. That is the word to establish so that ye come behind with no gift waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. So it isn't exactly true. Ephesians says Seal in earnest. Corinthians says Seal and earnest and confirm and anoint. And you see it says in one Corinthians. In all utterance and in all knowledge. Now, if you will look at one, John, the first epistle of John and the excuse me. First epistle of John and the second chapter. Verse 27. Now the anointing. The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you. And he need. Not that any man teach you.

[00:05:45] Now, is that true of us? Us in this congregation? You have received from the Lord a supernatural anointing which remains with you so that you need never come to the Chapel of the Open Book to learn anything. In fact, I ought to sit down there and you ought to come up here, didn't you? Have you got this anointing? If you say yes, say, well, let's have a specimen of it. So it says here you have an anointing. You need that no man teach you. But as the same anointing teaches you of all things and is truth and is no lie. And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. Well, those passages you see raise a certain amount of question. Do the supernatural gifts which we find mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles starting at the day of Pentecost. Speaking with tongues. Cleansing the lepers. Laying their hands on the dead. Raising them from the dead. And so on. Should they persist to die and belong to us? If so, we are terribly lacking, aren't we? But I've never yet met one person. I don't know whether you have, who believes the glorious truth of the one body of Christ who also has possessed this anointing and knows all things, who is who is able to raise the dead or do any of these miraculous things? Well, the question is, have we lacked something? Do we? Are we slack over it? Should we have them or is there an answer? I think every one of us at least ought to say, well, I ought to know because this is an important question.

[00:07:19] And so it is. Well, now we come then to one Corinthians chapter 12, and it's the middle part of this chart that we're looking at, where it says the word gift, charisma. And you will see there are three references there. Romans 111, one Corinthians 12, verse nine two, Timothy one six, to give us the way in which this is used. Shall we look at those three passages? Romans 111 The apostle is wanting to visit the believers at Rome. And when he gets there, he says, I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift to the end. Ye may be established. He wanted to impart unto them some spiritual gift. Now, that might mean simply that they would be pleased to see him and they would help one another, as he says. But it looks as though he is still emphasizing this fact that he had the ability to impart something which he would call a spiritual gift. That is this particular word charisma. And in two Timothy chapter one, we'll come back to Corinthians because that's our destination. Two Timothy Chapter one we find Paul writing to his son Timothy. And in two. Timothy Not merely in one Timothy.

[00:08:56] He says, verse five, When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother, Eunice. I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put to you in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands, by the putting on of my hands. And if my memory is right in one Timothy four. No, wait a minute. There's another passage where he speaks about the laying on the hands, giving him a gift by the the in the times of the acts of the apostles. What is it? Oh, in the same. Yes. Thank you. Oh one Timothy four. Yes. You see, all want a supernatural gift to be able to see through my glasses or without them. And I don't seem to have got it yet. One Corinthians 414. Oh, yes. Neglect. Not the gift that is indeed which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. So Timothy was called in Acts 16. That's in the middle of the Acts of the Apostles. He joined the Apostle, and he was there when the church, like Corinthians, had this wonderful ministry. Well, he didn't mean to say that because the dispensation had changed and they were just in the transitory period that all those gifts were dropped. Not necessarily. Paul didn't drop his gifts.

[00:10:33] Timothy didn't drop his, but they were not perpetuated. The instruction given to Timothy was not to lay his hands on anybody else and pass on supernatural gifts to them. The instruction to Timothy was that the things which he had heard of me said the

apostle. The same impart down to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Not a single word after that, that there's this continuance of this overwhelming abundance of spiritual powers. I say overwhelming abundance because you remember coming to one Corinthians, chapter 12, 13 and 14. He had to give them instruction when he said, when you're in your meetings, he said, look at chapter 14, verse six. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what should it profit? Except I shall speak to you either by revelation or by knowledge, by prophecy, or by doctrine. And he goes on to say that if you start using these gifts without concern, you'll have confusion, He says if one is standing up, using the gift of tongues will let the other one who is going to use the gift of prophecy sit down and wait. Well, we haven't got even one standing up in our meeting giving us this gift. We haven't got to say, Oh, don't let's all exercise our gifts at once this afternoon as we never get through it. Not one of us exercise one of them. So you see, it should exercise our conscience to be able to answer to ourselves.

[00:12:01] Why is it that these believers. Now you say, Oh, well, you see, they were so holy. Were they? I don't don't think there's a church in the New Testament that had to be reprimanded so much as the Corinthians. They were indulging in extraordinary loose morality because of the condition in which they lived and been brought up. He had to rebuke them because they were making divisions. I am appalled. I am of Apollos and so on. And yet they had this abundance of supernatural gifts. So that doesn't follow, you see. So shall we come to the passage itself, one Corinthians Chapter 12 and begin to see just what the Apostle has said? One Corinthians, Chapter 12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, Brethren, I would not have you ignorant. There's no doubt then that this chapter is going to deal with spiritual gifts. And the reason I say that is because you say, well, it's obvious. We all know some people tell you it's to do with the body of Christ because it happens to say, verse 30, verse 12, for as the body is one and hath many members. But he says, Look, whatever I'm teaching you in one Corinthians 12, I'm teaching you with regard to spiritual gifts. And we'd have to find out why he introduces the word body as we come to it. But before he goes into these spiritual gifts, he gives them a warning.

[00:13:27] Ye know that ye were gentiles carried away unto those dumb idols, even as you were led. Even as you were led. There's a power leading them to idolatry. Now there's a power leading you to worship God. He has some spiritual power that they were warned about. Wherefore I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit

of God calls Jesus accursed. And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Now, will you like to test that? Would you care to go out into the street and button all the first man you meet and say to him, Look, I don't know who you are, but if you're not a believer in Christ, you cannot say that Jesus is Lord. Well, he might say, I can. Are you know full well that if he wanted to say Jesus is Lord, he could say it. But you say it. Ah, but you see, he says, I'm talking about anybody who is under the power of a supernatural gift. If you are possessed by an evil power, as they were in the in the days of the Apostles, if you were possessed of that evil power, God said, I'll put this prohibition upon you. And so if you like to turn to one, John, just to see this is this is put into operation there, the first epistle of John.

[00:14:54] He says to these people, try the spirits first Epistle of John Chapter four Beloved. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. So he says hereby, you know, which is which. So these Corinthians one Corinthians 12, who are now going to be instructed in the right use of right gifts, also have to remember that when they were heathen, many of them may possibly have been moved by an evil power. So, he says, do discriminate between the two when having set that aside. He now says now then. Ukrainians are rather addicted to showing off a little bit. I said, What do you mean? Well, he says, I know there are some gifts which are a bit more spectacular than others, and it looks as though they were rather abusing these gifts, speaking with tongues and whatnot. But he said, don't forget. The body isn't merely a mouth or an eye or a tongue. The body is complete. It's got all the members working together, and any disproportion can be wrong. But we'll let him take the order in which he approaches it this way, he says now, verse four.

[00:16:38] There are diversities of gifts. But the same spirit. So if. One has a gift of tongues. One has the gift of healing. One has the gift of supernatural knowledge. Well, they differ, but they all come from one spirit. So you need not be envying one another, just exercise whatever gift was given to you, he says. And there are differences of administrations. But the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations or workings, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. So we say, look, could we invent a little statement that the use of these spiritual gifts is demonstrated by the word's diversity in

unity, a tremendous diversity of gifts, but all flowing from the same source and all having the same object. Well, now. He says the manifestation of the spirit is given to every one to profit withal, not merely to have an exhibition in a meeting, but to profit withal. He then gives a little enumeration of some of these gifts. 4 to 1 is given by the Spirit. The Word of wisdom. To another. The word of knowledge by the same spirit. To another faith. By the same spirit. To another. The gifts of healing by the same spirit. To another. The working of miracles. To another prophecy. To another. Discerning of spirits. To another. Diverse kinds of tongues. To another. The interpretation of tongues. Look at that diversity there. I don't think any one of us would be right if we say, Well, we've got some of there.

[00:18:30] That's true. That's true of us. Practices. All these work is that one and the selfsame spirit dividing to every man severally as he will. So we are back again to one spirit who is the author of these diverse gifts. Now, if you look at this chart for a moment, you will see under the heading of one Corinthians 12, 4 to 6 diversities of gifts, the same spirit, diversities of ministry. The same Lord. Diversities of operations. The same God. You see the stress, although it flows. Although you have diversity, it all flows from the same Lord. The same God and the same spirit. And then we have in the verses 7 to 11, which we've read. In verse seven, but the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. And in verse 11, dividing to every man severally as he will. And then in between, we have nine gifts enumerated and one and the selfsame spirit to to give them. So we have, again, the stress diversity in unity. Well, now comes the question for as the body. Now folks lift that verse out and say, there you are. There's the church of the one body. But supposing there never had been any reference to the church or the one body in Ephesians? Supposing Ephesians hadn't been written when these words were written.

[00:20:10] Supposing we read these words now just as the body. What body will your body or my body? It doesn't say the church of the body, just as the body is one and as many members. You say, Oh, no, this must be this must mean the body of Christ. All right, turn the page and look a bit further down. He says. Well. Verse 14. But if the body is not for the body is not one member but many. What body? Oh, you say the church. Well, say, what about your own body? If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body

were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? Now, God has set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him. And then you see further down the word set the in verse 28. And God hath set some in the church, apostles, prophets, so on. So the members that he's talking about here are these apostles, prophets. Miracles, healings and so on. Evident Prejjesne. Now we'll go on again in verse 19, and if they were all one member, where were the body? And now are they many members yet? One body.

[00:21:56] And the eye cannot say unto the hand. I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet. I have no need of you. Be rather awkward if we all had to walk into the chapel walking on our hands. We use our feet naturally. Much more. Those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable upon these, we bestow more abundant honor and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, for our comely parts have no need. Now you see there are members of the body which are absolutely necessary. Necessary for our life and for our health. But we don't exhibit them and we don't talk about them now. Is that true of the church? In the Church of Ephesians. Chapter four. The Church of the one body. Are there uncomely parts? We say, Yes, they are. It's rather strange. We're all a lot of uncomely parts if we look at ourselves, but we are finding ourselves in Christ. Don't you see it all the time? Using your body and my body to say with all these have to function together, all working together. And not only so, but in Ephesians, Christ is the head. Christ is. The head and the church are just the members. But here I've got the eye and the ear and the smelling.

[00:23:25] Well, they're all in the head, so it's all mixed up. And Paul's missed his way a bit. If that's the case. But he hasn't. So back we are again to the fact that his one great thought here is not ministering to the church, which is the one body that hadn't been revealed, but using the word one body to illustrate the way in which they should function if they have these spiritual gifts. Then there's another bit that needs a little correcting. He says in verse 12, Working, going back a little bit. For as the body is one and has many members and all the members of that one body being, many are one body. So also is Christ. Now you live that out and that means our saviour, doesn't it? So also is Christ. But if you will only see the word Christ is the word, the anointed one, the very self-same word gives us the anointing that we've already had in two Corinthians and one, John. So also is the anointed company is not referring to our savior at all. But

some people are very horrified at that. But that's what the apostle said. He says this anointed company is just that company where all the members working together deriving from the one spirit that gives them for by one spirit. Are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free? And have been all made to drink into that one spirit.

[00:24:51] For the body is not one member, but many. Now, if you will notice again, coming back to the other side of this chart, another feature. In one Corinthians 12, four, five and six. He has the spirit. And the Lord and God. 4 or 5 and six. Now there are diversities of gifts in the same spirit. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations. But it is the same God which worketh All in all, now he gives the manifestation of the spirit, and later on he gives in verse 18 one it's God who has done it. And in verse 28, it is God has done it, but the word Lord is never used. All you say that's rather hairsplitting. Well, I don't know because. Although I've got a question mark. Easy. Four, five, six verses 7 to 11 is the one spirit verses 18 and 28 is God. But when I come to the Epistle to the Ephesians, it's the administration of the One Lord. Perhaps that was left out by purpose because the administration of the one Lord should have particular reference to that company that was yet to be formed. We'll see a little bit more about that in a moment. And then if you look at these references starting at verse 28. Just to notice again, a little peculiar feature.

[00:26:34] And God hath set some in the church first apostles, secondarily prophets. Thirdly, teachers after that, miracles, then gifts of healings helps governments diversities of tongues. Now he's given them first, second and third, hasn't he? And he gives them the same order again. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers. Then he goes on. Workers are miracles. Have all the gifts of healing. Do all speak with tongues. Do all interpret. But covet earnestly the best gifts. And yet show I unto you a more excellent way, and goes on to the great question of charity or love. But for the moment, will you come to Ephesians chapter four? There you will find that these altered the order. He goes out of his way in one Corinthians 12 to say firstly or first, second, early third. And here he says in verse 11 that the ascended Christ gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. Now, if you look at the second chapter of Ephesians, you'll read. Verse 20, and they are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief

cornerstone. The foundation of the apostles and prophets. What does that mean? Well, it means that the gifts of the apostles and prophets were a foundation ministry. Not to be continued. If a person is building, however much he may value a good, solid, strong foundation, if he's everlastingly building a foundation that goes on week after week, month after month, year after year, getting a strong foundation.

[00:28:37] Well, that's a bit aggravating, isn't it? There comes a moment when it ceases to be a foundation. It's a great mass of material that's in the way. So the apostles and the prophets were not continued. There were no further apostles, no succession to the apostle as an apostle, no prophets. They were in the church, but they ceased and in their stead have come evangelists and teachers. So if you turn to second Timothy. And that is dealing with the state of affairs in which we find ourselves. You will find that there are teachers and evangelists. First of all, find the evangelist Chapter four. Verse five. But watch thou in all things endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Although this man had supernatural gifts and was told to stir them up. Yet, he says, now your work, Timothy, is to do the work of an evangelist, and your work will be to appoint teachers. Chapter two. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that Thou hast heard of me. Among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. And there isn't a single word here of passing on supernatural gifts. Nothing like one Corinthians 12 in the whole context.

[00:30:17] So you see, we have firstly, secondly and thirdly, and then Paul breaks that order in Ephesians, goes out of his way to put the word evangelist in and he means what he says for he repeats it in two Timothy four. So we have gifts, but they are gifts of men, not gifted men. Will you look at Ephesians four for that? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things. And he gave some not apostolic gifts, but he gave some apostles and he gave some prophets and he gave some evangelists and he gave some pastors and teachers. He received these gifts and gave them. But it's a little bit different idea from flooding the church with miracles, tongues, prophecies, supernatural knowledge and whatnot that we get in one Corinthians 12. Now. This is for the work of ministry. Will you look at one Corinthians 12 and see that that is the case there? And then Ephesians, it's the case there. They're given for a purpose. They're given in order that they may serve. At the bottom of this chart, I've given you the word diakonia, which gives us our word, Deacon. Now, a

deacon is a very lowly servant. Uh, there are those who derive it when they attempt to derive the word made up of two parts. It means one who runs through the dust.

[00:32:00] A very lonely job. One who is concerned with lowly service. And our savior used it of himself. Not that the son of man came to be ministered unto, but to minister. And give his life a ransom for many. And to show you what Diaconia or Deaconship means. He took a towel and girded himself and he began to wash his disciples feet. That's the lowliest form of service that could be performed in an Eastern home. That's the word which has to do with the deacon. So he has here this. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. Now, in Ephesians it says Chapter four. They offer the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, the work of the ministry, that lowly service for the building or of the edifying or building up of the body of Christ. But I miss one out in verse 12. It says, for the perfecting of the saints. And that is not the word that means going on unto perfection. That's not the word that the Apostle uses when he says not as though I were already perfect. There are two different words thus translated, which is rather a pity unless you differentiate them. This you see, you've got in verse 13 unto a perfect man, and the English reader might think it's exactly the same word. So there's the same word. No, it isn't unto the perfect man is the one who has attained full age an adult.

[00:33:36] The contrast is in the Scriptures. When he wrote to the Hebrews and said, You ought to be teachers, but for the moment your babies, but those who are of full age and that's the word perfect, you see. So a perfect person was one who had grown up and reached a goal, reached an end, became 21. That's the perfect man. But earlier, when it says for the perfecting of the saints, it's for the readjusting of the saints and you'll get the meaning of it if you look at Galatians Chapter six. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault and possibly if a man be overtaken by a fault, so will have it both ways. Well, we're going to be very tender one with another. Won't we slip up, friends? You may be overtaken in the act of doing something. That's pretty awkward, isn't it? But you may be taken by a thought and caught up to you. Well, anyhow, he says, brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault or by a fault, ye which are spiritual, give him a good lecture. Oh no. If your spiritual you won't. You'll seek to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. That word restore is this word to perfect the saints. So it indicates a rupture has taken place. It's a medical term. It means to set a fractured limb. Had a fracture come at x 28.

[00:35:04] Yes, there had broken off God's contact with Israel. And while Israel were in the church, while there was a Jewish element in the church, you had signs the Jew seeks for a sign. The Greek seeks after wisdom. But when Israel went, signs of miracles went with them. Are you follow it out? Paul wrote in Philippians that he left behind a very valued fellow servant sick, and he was nigh unto death. But what's the matter with Paul? He could lay his hands on the men who've got dysentery and immediately heal him. And yet he leaves behind a valued servant sick. Then later on, he writes to Timothy. He says, Oh, Timothy. He doesn't say drink no longer water. That's not what he said. Be no longer a water drinker. Oh, water is good for your friends and good for Timothy. But he was abstemious. You can gather that from his character. He was an abstemious person, and he said, Look, Timothy, be no longer a water drinker. Take a little wine for thy stomach sake and thine oft infirmities. When he asked Timothy, who's got a stomach that worries him often. And yet he's supposed to have miraculous gifts. And Paul's supposed to have miraculous gifts. Well, he doesn't fit, does it? But he does. If you say the moment the Jew passes out into his blindness, signs wonders, miracles that belong to that people go with them. And now we walk by faith and not by sight.

[00:36:40] I know that this needs a good deal more care than we might be able to cram in the time we have, but I've opened up the chapter as far as possible to you. Now you go back to it and weigh it over and then you begin to realize, as it says, just in concluding one Corinthians 14. He says Chapter one in the Lord is written with men of other tongues and other lips. Will I speak unto these people? And yet, for all that, they will not hear me saith the Lord. And again, it says in another passage that these gifts were given to the Gentile believers in the church to provoke the Jewish element in the church to jealousy, to say of themselves, the things that belong to us are now being distributed to these these Gentiles. But when that failed, the miracles were withdrawn. So as far as I'm concerned, and I don't know how you feel, I have no feelings that I'm unfaithful because I don't exercise the power of healing or try to work miracles or any one of these things. But I do see this, that in Ephesians four, I'm a member of the Body of Christ, and whether I'm a member that's standing in a pulpit speaking or whether I'm a member who ministers to my needs, when it's all over and says, you take a cup of tea, that will do you good.

[00:38:05] And that's the thing we're doing now a very simple but a very needful ministry, and each one serving one another, remembering that we serve the Lord Christ. In so doing, I commend it to you and pray that you may also remember this, that in the second Thessalonians chapter two, it tells you when the antichristian power is dominant, there will be signs and wonders and lying miracles. The very word sign, wonder and miracle are used of the of the works of Christ. So these will be so near that if it were possible, it will deceive the very elect. So I rather think God is going to preserve you and me because we shall say no, it doesn't matter what miracles are wrought now, there are no evidence to you and to me that they come from God. They may be rather the evil deceiving miracles that we are warned against in one Corinthians 12 at the beginning in Matthew 24 and in two Thessalonians and the book of the Revelation, Chapter 13. So once more, I commend the whole witness to the Lord and pray that our eyes may be opened. We may search and see. And then, as we have been taught by the Spirit of God and led by His Word, we may walk by faith, not by sight, and rejoice ever in the one continual unbroken, outstanding miracle that by grace we are saved. And it's the power of God, the miracle of God unto salvation to every one that believe in.