

## Sabbath School Lesson #8 – The Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit – 18-24 Feb 2017

**C**hrist who breathed on His disciples saying “receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22), wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which Spirit is Christ Himself, as “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), for Christ being “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ, as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

The memory text for this lesson reads: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And 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” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (verse 7). “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13).

We trace the working of spiritual gifts in Paul. Paul wrote to the Romans: “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established” (Romans 1:9-11).

Was there ever another man in the world who carried so great a burden for others as the apostle Paul did? To the Ephesians he wrote that he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers, that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him (Ephesians 1:15-17). To the saints at Philippi he wrote: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy” (Philippians 1:3, 4). To the Colossians he said: “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you” (Colossians 1:3). And so he did for the Thessalonians (first epistle 1:2; second 1:3, 11). These churches were the fruit of his own labor, and it is but natural that he should remember them in his prayers; but he had never seen the brethren of Rome, yet he declares that he prays for them no less than for those among whom he had labored and suffered. He could say of a truth that there was upon him daily, anxious care for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28).

How much time Paul must have spent in prayer, to mention so many churches and individuals by name in his requests and thanksgivings! Must not this have been one secret of his great success? He had but one thought, one desire, and that was to bring men to Christ, and to strengthen those who had accepted him. He had received abundantly of the grace of God, and he felt himself a debtor to all mankind. That grace was not bestowed upon him in vain, for he says that he labored more abundantly than all of the other apostles (1 Corinthians 15:10). It is probably safe to say that no minister ever lived who was more like Christ in carrying a burden for sinners, than the apostle Paul. The reason was, that he had an ever-present, overwhelming sense of what Christ had done for him. The grace of Christ will always manifest itself in this way, just to the extent that it is received and appreciated. It is not something that a man receives merely for his own enjoyment or profit, and that can be corked up in a bottle for private use, but it can be preserved only by dispensing to others.

So, Paul wrote to the Romans, whom he had never seen: “I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” His earnest desire for these brethren whose faith was spoken of in all the world, was that he might settle them in it so surely that nothing could shake them. This great burden of soul Paul expressed to the Thessalonians, when he said, “Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith” (1 Thessalonians 3:10). What a lesson there is here for all Christian ministers! But how did he expect to establish these

people? By imparting unto them some spiritual gift. The gifts of the Spirit are named by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The first text says of Christ that "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." In the other, we have already read verses 4-7 (see above), and in 8-11 he says:

"For to one 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 divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

All these gifts come by the Spirit; so it is evident that when Paul said to the Romans, whom he had never seen, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift," he did not mean that he would bestow upon them the power to work miracles or to speak with tongues. He could not have done this if he had desired to. It is not by the possession of these gifts that a person is established. They are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" but a man may possess these gifts to the edifying of others, and he himself be lost. The apostle Paul had these gifts in greater measure than any other man, yet he had to keep his body under, lest after he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27); and he says that a thorn in the flesh was given him to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations given unto him (2 Corinthians 12:7). It is evident, therefore, that Paul did not expect to establish the Romans by enabling them to exhibit the gifts of the Spirit, but rather, by the exercise of the gifts which were bestowed upon him, to build them up in the faith so that they might exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. It is the same thing that he wrote to the Corinthians, concerning the grace or gift of giving: "We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace [gift] also" (2 Corinthians 8:6).

Paul was fitted for this task. There is not one of the spiritual gifts that he did not possess. In the book of Acts we learn of his power to work miracles, to heal, and to discern spirits. His own writings give evidence of the spirit of prophecy that he possessed; and he says that he spoke with tongues more than all the rest, and that he would not speak without interpreting (1 Corinthians 14:18). He was an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, and a teacher. If any wish to know why he should be so highly favored above other men, we can only say that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," and Paul had such singleness of purpose, such whole-souled devotion, that he used to the utmost every gift bestowed upon him. God gives to every man all that he can and will use to his glory.

"To the end ye may be established." The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the body of Christ, and no gift has been used for this purpose more than the gift of prophecy. When Jehoshaphat had received from the prophet of the Lord a message for the people, he said: "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). And to the same effect Isaiah, when he had delivered a prophecy from God to the king of Judah, said to the king, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Isaiah 7:9).

Nothing can establish God's people like prophecy. Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not; miracles serve likewise, showing the power of God; but prophecy instructs and warns. "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:1-3). The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10). It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the ancient prophets (1 Peter 1:10-11), and that same Spirit is to be with His people even unto the end. Consequently we find that "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is the spirit of prophecy, is to be in the remnant church (Revelation 12:17). Paul wrote: "Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thessalonians 5:20). Peter, after relating the view that he had of "the power and coming of Christ," on the mount of transfiguration, wrote: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19).