

You are SO Gifted!

On Sunday, we completed our sermon series about the Holy Spirit by exploring the concept of “gifts of the Spirit.”

1. Warm up question: Tell us about something you’re really good at that we may not know – even if it seems trivial.
2. The New Testament teaches that each of us has been received certain “gifts of the Spirit” that God gave us to build up the church. But before we tackle that concept, we first need to wrestle with the state of the church in the world today. We live in an age of individualism where institutional structures are discredited and distrusted. We look around us and see lots of churches that just seem to be in it for themselves.
 - a. Have you ever been part of a church that seemed to be more interested in building its own empire than doing the work of God? What was it about that church that gave you that impression?
 - b. Jeff reminded us of several prominent spiritual leaders who’ve become astoundingly rich while in ministry. Some of them say their wealth is just a sign of God’s blessing. How do you feel about that?
 - c. Eric Lutzer grew up in Germany during the Holocaust. He tells how the church his family attended was located railroad tracks. As trains would pass with cattle cars filled with Jews, the congregation would sing songs to drown out the cries of the Jews passing by. When you hear that story, what are your thoughts? What does it tell us about the state of the “Jesus Movement” 2000 years after it started?
 - d. In your view, what’s the biggest problem with churches today?
3. On Sunday, we contrasted church the way many of us have experienced it with church the way it was in the first century. Jeff reminded us of a scene from the movie *Quo Vadis*, where Christians about to be fed to lions began to sing hymns, leaving Emperor Nero stunned and confused. Clearly these early Christians were deeply invested in the Jesus Movement. They believed, to the core of their being, that they were privileged of being part of something great – something epic – something so important, it meant more than life itself.
 - a. Read Galatians 3:27-28. Note the three points of contrast mentioned in verse 28. What does that tell us about what was happening in the early churches?
 - b. Read Luke 13:10-17. What does this story teach us about the attitudes and values that characterized the ministry of Jesus – and should characterize followers of Jesus in every generation?

- c. Of course, no church (or group of people) will ever be perfect. But have you ever experienced a church that seemed to be authentically striving to live the values we see in Jesus and his earliest followers? How close do you feel our church is coming to authentically living those values? (Where do we excel? Where do we need to do better?)
4. Although many modern churches may be a far cry from what Jesus envisioned, the world still needs – desperately needs – an authentic Jesus Movement now more than ever. We as individuals, and as a congregation, however imperfect, are striving to be an authentic part of that Movement – which means, the work we’re trying to do together is some of the most important work in the world – which brings us back to the question of how we, as individuals, can each be a meaningful part of our church.
- a. Read I Corinthians 12:12-13. What does it mean to say that our church is a “body of Christ”?
 - b. Read I Corinthians 12:14-26. What insights can we draw from these verses about how healthy churches are supposed to work?
5. Read I Corinthians 12:1 and 4-11.
- a. What does verse 7 mean?
 - b. What does verse 11 mean?
 - c. Suppose someone asked you about the concept of “gifts of the Spirit.” How would you explain it?
 - d. Do you buy the idea that you have certain special abilities given to you by God just waiting to be activated by the Holy Spirit to bless the work of the church?
 - e. A partial list of “gifts of the Spirit” appears below. Do you have a sense of what one or two of your leading spiritual gifts might be? Tell us why you pick the ones you do. (If you’re not sure what your gifts might be, pick up a *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* booklet at the Welcome Desk next Sunday, or register for the Discipleship 101/102 class that begins this Saturday by emailing PastorDavid@lifejourney.church.)
 - f. Do you feel you are actively using your leading spiritual gift or gifts? Why or why not?

Examples of “Gifts of the Spirit”

Administration	Giving	Knowledge	Teaching
Discernment	Healing	Leadership	Music/Arts
Evangelism	Hospitality	Mercy	Writing
Exhortation	Intercession	Serving	Technology