

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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In the Christian world we've kind of divided people up into the clergy, that's those who are in full-time ministry, and the laity, these are the ones in the pew. A little girl was asked to define, describe, the clergy and the laity, and she said, "Well, the clergy are paid for being good; the laity are good for nothing." What I want to do is to help you not to be good for nothing, but to be good for something. And you may not realize it, but if you're saved, you have been called into the ministry. God has a ministry for each of us.

Take your Bibles and find First Corinthians chapter 12, where we were last Sunday. It's a wonderful chapter, and I want you to stay in that chapter with us as we help you to unwrap your spiritual gift, for you are a gifted child. There're many people who say, "Well, I'm frustrated. I don't seem to be making any progress in my Christian life. I don't see any victory, and I don't have any joy." And I say, "Well, what are you doing for Jesus?" "Well, I'm coming to church on Sunday morning. I'm sitting there. I'm listening to music. I'm singing songs and listening to my pastor preach." Your problem is, very frankly, that you need to find a ministry. You need to discover your spiritual gift and put it to work for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There're three kinds of people in every church. There are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who don't even know anything is happening. Now, I think probably most of those in this auditorium this morning are in the middle group. You are the watchers. You are the observers, but, you have never really gone to work. Now let me tell you why you need to do it.

Number one, the need is desperate. The gates of Hell, the sluice-gates of Hell have been opened and there is a floodtide of filth and debauchery and demonism. And militant atheism is on the march. And humanism is pervading our schools and is the order of the day, and we need a revival, don't we? A revival that cannot be explained by propaganda and personality and, and ah, philosophy. Moral standards have fallen. In all of my ministry all of my life, I've never seen the moral standards as low as they are, not only in America, but around the world. In America we have liquorized society and glamorized adultery, in our so-called God-blessed America.

And the sad thing is there's so much unconcern on the part of many who name the name of Christ. And we sit in our services and we listen to messages and we go out and we never, ever really get involved. A wise man some years ago said that, "The average church is like those people at a football game. Down there on the field are 22 men desperately in need of rest, and up there in the stands are fifty thousand people desperately in need of exercise." And that's the way we have in our church. We have our church staffs, a few people who are doing so much, and then the rest who are just sitting around.

I'm telling you, friend, that the need is great and the hour is late. Oh, if we could only understand that! The sands of time are running out for this generation. We only have so many years, so many months, so many days, so many hours, perhaps only, only so many minutes before the end of all things is at hand. And the hour, I want to tell you, is ripe.

Listen, in spite of the sin and the debauchery, there is a greater hunger for spiritual things today than in any time since I have been in the ministry, according to my humble but

accurate opinion. I see people who are so hungry for the things of God. There is a move toward spirituality. The sad thing is that people are turning to humanism and New Age-ism and false cults because we have failed to declare the truth. But it's like a game. The people are looking one more time and they're asking this question, "Is Jesus really the answer?" "Is the Bible true?" "Is what these people are saying, is it really true?"

Now, with all of that in mind let's think some about helping you to put some impetus in your life. I want my life to count for Jesus. I'm tired of just sitting around, drawing my breath, drawing my salary, fighting to live while I live to fight. I want my life to count for Jesus. Do you want your life to count? Are you just content to sit around, endure until you die? One of these days, and soon, we're going to give an account.

Now God has called you to serve Him, and God has equipped you to serve Him, and the way that God has equipped you to serve Him is this; God has given to you a spiritual gift, and at least one. And you're to take that gift, discover it, develop it, and deploy it for Jesus.

Now look if you will, First Corinthians chapter 12 verse 1, "*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*" First point: **the description of the gifts**, the description of the gifts. These gifts are spiritual gifts. In verse 4 they're called *charismata*. That's the word that's translated gifts in verse 4. And what that means is they are charismatic gifts. *Charis* is the word for grace. They are grace gifts.

Now Paul says that you have a grace gift, and he says, "I don't want you to be ignorant." Education may cost, but ignorance will cost you far more. And as I said earlier, the average Christian in the average church is saturated with ignorance when it comes to spiritual gifts.

Now, when I'm talking about the gifts, the description of gifts, remember I'm not talking to you about material gifts. If I were to ask you who wants to be a millionaire, you'd all perk up. You'd say, "Yeah, I want to be a millionaire." Well, I'm talking to you about something far more valuable, but the devil has clouded your mind. I'm not talking about material gifts. I'm not talking about natural talents. Natural talents come from God. You have natural talents. But what I'm talking about now is supernatural ability that comes from God. When you get saved, you have natural talents, but you have supernatural gifts, and so you are naturally supernatural. And as a Christian you ought to be supernatural and not superficial because God has gifted you. The description of the gifts is that they are spiritual gifts. They are *charismata*. They are grace gifts. They are not earned. They are not learned. They are given! And God has given to you a gift. That's the first point.

Now here's the second point: **the distortion of the gifts**. Notice again now in verse 1 and following, "*I would not have you to be ignorant, ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*"

Now evidently there was a lot of craziness going on in Corinth. Corinth was a very carnal church. And so Paul says, "Look, let's get rid of this ignorance. There're all kinds of strange things happening here. Spiritual gifts are being distorted." And, you know what the

devil wants to do? The devil wants to give the Holy Spirit a bad name. The devil wants to take something that is good and distort it and pervert it.

And by the way, the devil is a pervert. The devil has no raw material; God made everything. So anything that is bad is a perversion of that which was once good because God made everything. And so the devil wants to take spiritual gifts and distort spiritual gifts. And we see this happening today in America. People saying, "Oh, Pastor, have you heard about the revival going on in thus and such a place, or thus and such a place?" All kinds of strange things are happening. People falling down and being, as it were, glued to the floor; some of them indecently exposed, some laughing maniacally, out of control. Some roaring like lions and barking like dogs. And somebody says, "Hallelujah, revival has come!" That's the way the people in Corinth were to begin with. He said they were, "*Carried away.*" They were led away by these dumb idols. Some would get in such a frenzy they would even curse Jesus and call Him accursed.

Listen friend. Let me tell you something about real revival. Real revival is never seen by the gifts of the Spirit; real revival is seen by the fruit of the Spirit which is love and mercy, longsuffering. Real revival doesn't put you out of control; real revival brings you under the control of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people say, "Well I was just carried away; I couldn't help it." You'd better read First Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 32. The Bible says, "*And the spirits of the prophets are subject unto the prophets.*" I've been in services sometime where somebody would disturb the service and say, "Well God just came on me." No. "*The spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*"

And again Paul says in First Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 40, "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" And so, anytime you find worship that draws away from the Lord Jesus Christ, even worship that magnifies the Holy Spirit rather than the Lordship of Jesus, that worship is false. No one can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. What is the office work of the Holy Spirit? John chapter 16, put it in your margin, verses 13 and 14. Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, says, "*Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of Himself.*" That is, He's not going to magnify Himself. He's not going to say, "Look at me." "*But whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; for He shall show you things to come. He shall glorify Me.*" That's what Jesus said. "*He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you.*"

Any movement or any teaching that has the Holy Spirit for a figurehead is distorted. I love the Holy Spirit. He lives in me. I rejoice in the dear Spirit of God, and I can say with Isaiah in Isaiah 61 verse 1, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for the Lord hath anointed me to preach.*" But when you see a parade, you'll never see the Holy Spirit leading that parade if it's a spiritual parade. You'll see Jesus leading the parade and the Holy Spirit standing on the sideline saying, "Look at Him, look at Him, look at Him." No, you don't go beyond Jesus to the Holy Spirit. Some people think that. That's foolishness.

Friend, you'll never go beyond Jesus. You may go deeper into Jesus, but you'll never go beyond Jesus. And don't let anybody come along with some phony teaching that takes away from the glory of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:18, "*And He,*" Jesus, "*is the head*

of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." You want to know whether or not this church is Spirit-filled? Whether my preaching is Spirit-filled? Whether your music is Spirit-filled? Whether your gift is operating? Does it give preeminence to Jesus Christ? That's it. Don't let your gift be distorted.

Now, the description of the gifts: they're spiritual gifts, charismata. The distortion of the gifts: the devil tries to distort it because he doesn't want you to understand it.

Now, number three. Let's think about **the diversity of the gifts**. Look if you will in First Corinthians 12 verses 4 and following, "*Now there are diversities of gifts.*" What does the word diversities mean? Just different kinds, that's all that means. "*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.*" Now take your Bible. Look at it. In verse 4 you find the word gifts, in verse 5 the word administrations, and in verse 6 you find the word operations. Do you see it? Gifts, administrations, and operations. Now the gifts speak of God's provision. God has given you a gift. Administrations speak of God's purpose. God gave you a gift for a purpose. And operations, it's the word we get our word energy from, speak of God's power.

So, God makes a provision, God has a purpose for that provision, and God gives you power so that you might fulfill the purpose of that provision that God has given you. And so there is a diversity of gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit. What we have in this diversity is unity in diversity. God wants unity in diversity.

Now, when Joyce and I got married, we got all kinds of gifts. And so do many couples here in America when they get married. It's a custom and people bring gifts. And they bring waffle irons, and they bring blenders, and they bring toasters, and they bring can openers, all of these things, and coffee makers. These are all gifts. And these gifts, they have different functions. And they have different capacities. But they all have to be plugged in, the kind I'm talking about. They don't operate without the power. Now, it's the same power that operates them all, but they all have different functions and different capacities. And that's what Paul is saying about the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have different capacities, we have different functions, but it is the same Spirit. We're all plugged in to Him. And what you need to do is to plug in your spiritual gift. Your ministry is your place of service.

Now, it is unity in diversity. Diversity in a church is not bad; it is good. Division is bad. Now unity is good. And what is unity? Unity is not unison. This choir sings in unity, but not necessarily in unison. They sing different parts. And that's what makes it beautiful. God doesn't want us all to be alike. We're not a congregation of clones. God makes us different. And so, unity is not unison. Unity is not uniformity, not everybody doing the same thing. That's not unity. If you ever see the goose-stepping people following Hitler, that's uniformity. That comes from pressure from without. Unity comes from life from within. We all share the same Holy Spirit. It is not even union. You say, "Well, we're all members of the same church." That's union, but not necessarily unity. All the corpses in one graveyard's not going to cause a resurrection. No. It is the unity of the Spirit.

You see, we've talked about the description of these gifts. We've talked about the distortion of these gifts. We have talked about the diversity of these gifts. *"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."* Do you see that in verse 4? Good.

Now, let's think about **the design of the gifts**. What is God's design? What, what purpose does God have for your spiritual gift? Well look now in verse 7 of First Corinthians chapter 12, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit,"* that is, the outworking of the Spirit, *"the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man,"* that is, all of us have a gift. He's talking about mankind, *"to profit."* Now in the King James, it says, *"withal."* Now what does that mean? It means to profit the entire body. Your gift is not a selfish gift.

So many people think that their spiritual gift is something for their enjoyment. Your spiritual gift is not for your enjoyment. Your spiritual gift is for your employment. Your spiritual gift is a tool, not a toy. And God gives you a spiritual gift that you might do a job and to get that job done in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if I have a gift, it's going to bless you. If you have a gift, it's going to bless me. And we're going to bless one another.

When I was studying for this sermon I looked this text up, verse 7, in some other translations. Let me give you one. Phillips, for example, *"Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good."* That's what it means, *"to profit withal."* *"That he may use it for the common good."* It's not some introverted, self-centered gift. Conibear translates it this way, *"But the gift, whereby the Spirit becomes manifested is given to each for the profit of all."* *"Given to each for the profit of all."* That is the design of the gifts. And there's so much selfishness in the church today, and people are asking always, *"What's in it for me?"*

I've told you before about the lady who took a First Aid course. Later on, she came back. They were having testimonials. She said, *"I am so glad I took my course in First Aid."* She said, *"Out in front of my house there was a terrible automobile wreck. An old man, driving a car, went up the curb and hit an oak tree, was thrown out of the car. When I got out there his head was crushed like an eggshell, his eyes were rolling around in pools of blood. He was in a state of shock, pumping his life's blood out on the asphalt."* She said, *"It was horrible!"* But she said, *"I remembered my First Aid. I remembered if I would put my head between my knees I wouldn't faint."* That's the kind of theology that we have today, which is really *"me-ology."* People are just thinking about themselves.

Your spiritual gift is given to you to profit the entire body, to, *"Rescue the perishing and care for the dying. Weep o're the erring one and lift up the fallen one, to tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save."* That's why you have a spiritual gift. Now, the gift therefore is designed that you might be a blessing to this entire church. And God wants you to be a blessing to this church and therefore to make a church, this church, a blessing to this community, and make this community a blessing to the world.

Now, let's think next about **the distribution of the gifts**. We've talked about the design. Look about the, the distribution. How are they distributed? Well, they're distributed by the Holy Spirit. Look again in First Corinthians 12 beginning in verse 8, *"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, diverse kinds of tongues; and to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Who distributes the gifts? The Holy Spirit of God. You don't decide this. He sovereignly decides. He chooses the gift.

And no need for you to go around asking God for a spiritual gift. If you're saved, He's already given you the gift. Your gift was a birthday gift. It came on the day of your spiritual birthday when you were born again. My brown eyes came with me when I was born, and that's a natural characteristic. Your spiritual gift is a supernatural characteristic, and it came when you were baptized into the body of Christ. Now, all you do is to discover the gift and develop the gift that God has already given you.

Have you ever watched a little baby discover his hands? It's an amazing thing. He comes with those hands. You never go to the hospital and say, "Now, put the hands on." I mean, he comes with that. But there comes a time when a little child just discovers those little hands, and so forth. Your hand came when you were born. They're birthday presents. When the Holy Spirit came into you and put you into the body of Christ, He didn't come in empty-handed; He came in with a gift. Put this Scripture down. First Peter chapter 4 and verse 10, "*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as every man hath received the gift, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,*" charisma of God. So, every man has received that gift.

Now, let's look at some of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has distributed. For example, in verse 8 he speaks of **wisdom**. Do you see it there? What is wisdom? Now it's not just being smart and it's not even what some person would call worldly wisdom. It is not natural sense. It is not common sense. It is uncommon sense. There are certain people who just spiritually have the gift of wisdom. And these are the kind of people, and I know some people, that if I have a need or problem, and I can think of some in this congregation, I believe they have the gift of wisdom. And I speak with those people. When I want guidance or insight, I'll talk to those people. If a person has the gift of wisdom, they make wonderful, wonderful counselors. That may be one of the gifts that you have.

And then he mentions in verse 8 **the gift of knowledge**. And actually, in the Greek language, it is a word of knowledge. That doesn't mean a person who has the gift of knowledge knows everything. Nobody knows everything. Nobody knows one-tenth of one percent of anything, but we have a gift of knowledge. It's literally a word of knowledge, just like in law you might have a word of law, or a point of law. This is the ability to know things that you could not know, other than by divine intuition. It is not something that's learned from school. It's not something that you get from memory. It is God giving insight.

The devil counterfeits this gift, and by the way, the devil counterfeits all of these gifts. The counterfeit of this gift is what we call clairvoyancy. But there is a gift of knowledge that you can know things by divine revelation that you could not know any other way.

For example, how did Simon Peter know that Ananias and Sapphira were lying in Acts chapter 5? In verse 4 he said, *"You've not, you've not lied unto men, but to the Holy Ghost."* How did Peter know that? He had the word of knowledge, a word of knowledge. God just told him that.

I think God has given me sometimes a little blip into this. I was preaching one time in a town, in a revival meeting. And in the service somebody came down the aisle and took a man about the third row there and tapped him on the shoulder and led him out. The man happened to be the sheriff. I said, "There goes Sheriff so and so. Most likely there's been an automobile accident and liquor has been involved, and somebody's been killed." Well why would I say that? I had no idea about that. I didn't know why I said that. That night there's a knock on my motel door. That man came in and said, "I need to get saved." He said, "You remember what you said?" He said, "I went out there and an automobile had hit a logging truck. Somebody'd been killed. I looked in the automobile. There was a broken whiskey bottle, and the man that was killed was the man that ran against me for sheriff of this county." He said, "I need to get saved." And he did get saved. I don't think that is my gift. I think that was just a blip on the horizon. I don't have that gift, but I think I understand something about how that gift works.

Then there's **the gift of faith** in verse 9. Now when he talks about faith there, he's not talking about natural faith or even supernatural faith that all of us have. You know the Bible says in Romans 12 and verse 3, *"God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith."* But there is this super-abundant faith, the gift of faith. You read about it in the next chapter of First Corinthians, in chapter 13. Look in verse 2, *"Though I have faith so that I could move mountains."* If God wants you to move mountains, He'll give you mountain-moving faith. Not all of us have mountain-moving faith. I like to be around people that have mountain-moving faith, don't you? I really do. I believe we need a mountain-moving, devil-defying, earth-shaking faith in God. And thank God for some people who have that kind of faith. I know some people I think that are gifted with that faith. If you want a blessing, read about George Muller of Bristol. He lived in Bristol, England. He had incredible faith. He raised literally millions and millions of dollars, when a million dollars was something, to feed orphans, without ever asking anybody, just praying, telling God about his needs. The stories of his life is incredible.

One episode that I remember reading about: Muller was on a ship, a sailing ship; be going to Newfoundland. He's supposed to speak, and the ship stopped in the middle of the ocean. And Muller said to the captain, "Why is this ship stopped?" He said, "We can't move because of the fog." Muller said, "But I've got to be there. I've got a speaking engagement. I've not missed a speaking engagement. It's God's will for me to be there." And the captain said, "I'm not going to move this ship till the fog lifts." He said, "Very well, let's go to the chartroom and pray that God will take away the fog." The captain said he went with him just to humor him. He got down on his knees and Muller said, "God, the captain says he'll not move this ship until the fog is gone. And I've got an appointment and we need to move this ship. So, Father, in Jesus' name, take away the fog. Thank You, Lord." The captain said, "I started to pray." He said, "No, don't you pray." He said, "Why not?" Said, "Two reasons: number one, you don't believe He's going to do it; number two, He's already done it." And the captain gave the story, not Muller, but the captain said, "I got up and looked and the fog was gone." The fog was gone.

Now, that's a gift that some people have. Not everybody has that kind of faith, but thank God for those who have that kind of faith. The devil will counterfeit that kind of faith also.

And then he mentions **healing** in verse 9. Actually, it's in the plural, healings. "Now, Adrian, do you believe God heals?" Absolutely! God heals by miracle, and God heals by medicine. God heals instantaneously, and God heals in time. And God heals by doctors, and thank God for doctors, for Jesus said in Matthew 9 verse 12, "*They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*" And, yes, there is a gift of healings. The apostles had the gift of healing. I don't know anybody today who has the gift of healing. I'd like to meet him. I wouldn't put him on stage somewhere and let people come by. I'd take him to the hospital, to the little childrens' ward is where I'd take him, and just see whether or not he has this gift of healing that he prates about.

In my estimation, I believe the hottest part of Hell is reserved for people who merchandize peoples' maladies and sicknesses and pains with some charlatan act of healing. I believe in healing. I believe in healing. But oh, may God have mercy of those who make merchandise of other people in this particular area.

And let me say this, that when Jesus died, not only did He take your sins, He took your sickness. And the Bible says in Isaiah 53:5, "*With His stripes we are healed,*" but we're waiting for the redemption of the body. Read Romans chapter 8. That has not yet come, but it will come, hallelujah. And there are, nonetheless, the gifts of healing, and I thank God for that. And God does heal today in answer to prayer and in many ways.

Now, he also mentions **the gift of miracles** in verse 10. These miracles normally came in clusters in the Bible. There were miracles, obviously, around the creation, miracles around the ministry of Moses, miracles around the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, miracles with Jesus and the apostles and there may be end-time miracles. And I certainly am not opposed to miracles. I don't know anybody today that has the gift of miracles, but I would not deny God's ability in that area. I don't think it's a very good miracle so far as bringing the lost to Jesus.

As a matter of fact, Jesus had to rebuke the miracle mongers of His day who followed Him not because of who He was but because of what He did.

But I'll tell you a verse that is a wonderful verse to me, is John chapter 10 verses 41 and 42 which speaks of John the Baptist. Was John the Baptist filled with the Holy Spirit? You better believe it. The Bible says he's filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. What does that do to your theology? But now listen to this. It says concerning Jesus in John chapter 10 verse 41, "*And many resorted unto him and said, 'John did no miracle,'"* talking about John the Baptist, "*'John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true.'* And many believed on Him there." It wasn't the miracle that John did. It was Jesus that John preached that was the wonderful thing. I had rather have it said about me that many believed on Jesus through my word than that I had the power to do miracles. I mean that with all of my heart because that is the lasting miracle, that new birth, the greatest miracle of all.

Then he mentions **prophecy** in verse 10, what is prophecy? Prophecy is the ability to speak for God. It's not merely foretelling, though some of that is included. It is forth-telling. It is

speaking the Word of God. Now, some have the gift of prophecy. And as a matter of fact in chapter 14, Paul says this is a gift greatly to be desired among the church. And there's a lot of idea, misinformation about prophecy. There're some people who today claim to have the office of a prophet. No. The office of a prophet is no longer. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. You don't keep laying the foundation every story. But there is a gift of prophecy.

What is the gift of prophecy? I hear some people say, "Well, my gift is prophecy," and they think they are anointed by God to tell other people off. "I have the gift of prophecy." No, no, that's not what the gift of prophecy is. As a matter of fact, quite to the contrary. If you'll read there in First Corinthians chapter 14 verse 3, "*He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort.*" That's not telling folks off. To edify is to build up. To exhort is to fire up. To comfort is to shore up and to hold up. That's what a prophet does, and that's what is needed so much in the church today. There's the gift of prophecy.

And then he mentions **the gift of the discerning of spirits**. We need to learn that everything, as I've said before, everything that is spiritual is not of God. There's spiritual wickedness and demons are masters of deception. This is also a greatly needed gift in the church of our Lord today because the devil has come with so much counterfeit flim-flam in the church today. We need somebody, and some bodies, with the gift of discerning. Now it's not the ability to go around and judge people and say who's saved and who's lost. That's not your, that's not your prerogative to do that and Matthew 7:1 warns against that.

Then he mentions **the gift of tongues** in verse 10. What is the gift of tongues? A gift of tongues is not primarily a prayer language where you speak in ecstatic speech and don't know what you've said, and you'll never know whether or not God has answered your prayer. That's not what the gift of tongues is in the Bible. Speaking in tongues, other languages, is not a sign that you're Spirit-filled. As a matter of fact, the Corinthian church was Paul's most carnal church, and tongues was their long suit of clothes. Tongues is not a sign that you're saved. It's not a sign that you're Spirit-filled. As a matter of fact, tongues is not a sign to God's people about anything. Tongues are a sign to the unsaved. First Corinthians 14:22, "*Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.*"

What is the gift of tongues? It is the ability to speak in a language you have never learned. Not an unknown language, but a known language. The word unknown that you have in your King James Version is in italicized print, which means it's not in the original. The translators only supplied that to make it read more smoothly, but here they covered the meaning. It is a known language. And look, turn to Acts chapter 2 verse 8, "*How hear we every man in our own language, wherein we were born?*" It is the ability to praise God in a language that you've never, ever learned, as a sign to unbelievers. That's what the gift of tongues is. And, what is the sign that you're filled with the Holy Spirit? Not that you have the gift to speak in languages you don't know, but you control the one tongue you do have. I'm serious. That's what he's saying in the next chapter, in First Corinthians 13:1, "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, it profits me nothing.*" The fruit of the Spirit is love. And if you want to know if a man is filled with the Holy Spirit, see if his heart is filled with love. But

there was in that day, in New Testament times, the ability to speak in unknown languages. Not unknown to others, but unknown to you, and that is a charismatic gift of the Spirit.

And then he mentions in verse 10 **the interpretation of tongues**. Why is that? Well, remember what a spiritual gift is for? That everybody be profited, right? Now if someone stands up here and begins to speak in Russian, what good is that going to do me? I don't know Russian. I know a few Russian words, but I don't know Russian. But suppose a bus pulls up there this morning filled with Russian Jews, and they're visiting America. And somebody says, "You want to go to an evangelical church?" "Yes, we do, we want to see how they worship in America." And they come in here and they don't understand English. I don't understand Russian. But suppose I had the gift of tongues, and I began to praise God in fluent Russian! Fine, wonderful, glorious! They say, "Look at that!" They're amazed. But you don't know Russian. So if I have that gift, then God's got to give somebody else the gift of interpretation to say, "Here's what the Pastor's saying." Why? So that everybody is edified. Everybody understands because every gift is what? Given to profit the entire body; nobody is sitting around in the dark while somebody's doing something that somebody else can't understand. It's a sign gift to unbelievers. It is a supernatural gift.

Some people say that tongues have ceased. Well, perhaps, but I think there're two heresies concerning tongues. One is to say you must, and the other's to say you mustn't. God is God. God can do whatever He wants to do, whenever He wants to do it.

I know many of you are saying, "Pastor, you never got to my gift." And I have a passage we were going to go to, Romans chapter 12 verses 6 through 8, and I was going to give some other gifts; **ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and mercy**. Describe those gifts. Very frankly, I'll have to do that in another message. But you do have a spiritual gift.

Maybe your gift is the gift of ruling, and you serve on a church staff, committees, or coach a team. The gift of mercies, to visit in the hospital. Maybe it's the gift of giving. Maybe it's the gift of exhortation. Perhaps you have the gift of teaching. You teach this morning in Sunday School. Perhaps you as a mother are teaching your children. You have the gift of ministry, acts of service, church work, activities program, typing, ushering, working in the nursery. These also are charismatic spiritual gifts.

Now, think of **the deployment of the gifts**. And look if you will now in verse First Corinthians 12:12, "*For the body is one, and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*" You see, God brings us together as a body. Some are eyes, some are ears, some are feet, some are this, some are that. We all have different gifts, and yet those gifts are to be put to work in the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now do you want to know what your spiritual gift is? You will discover your spiritual gift in the context of the body of Christ. I had no idea that God would want me to preach; by the way I think my gift is prophecy. That's what I think my gift is. How did I know that? I was a dumb football player. Not all football players are dumb, just this one. God called me into the ministry. Upon a time as a young person in my church they said, "Adrian, we want you to be

the Youth Week pastor." I was scared, petrified. But I got up and mumbled out a few words, and people said, "Hey, we were blessed by that, we were blessed by that. Thank you. Do it again." You know. it's sad to see somebody who thinks he has the gift of preaching and nobody else has the gift of listening. You're going to find out that you're going to find your gift operating in the body.

Bill Gothard has a classic illustration. With this I must close. He imagines a party, and they're getting ready to serve the dessert. And the person bringing the beautiful dessert to the table makes a miscue and the dessert falls on the floor. There is the episode. Now here's how the different gifts may come into practice. A person who has the gift of prophecy said, "That's what happens when you're not careful." A person who has the gift of mercy said, "Hey, don't feel bad. Anybody could do that." A person who has the gift of service says, "Hey, let me help you to clean it up." A person who has the gift of teaching says, "The reason it fell, it was too heavy on one side. Next time put it in the middle." The person who has the gift of exhortation says, "From now on, let's just serve the dessert first, and put it in the middle of the table so it won't fall." The person who has the gift of giving says, "Wait a minute. I'll buy a new dessert." And the person who has the gift of administration says, "Jim, get the mop. Sue, please help pick it up. Mary, you go fix some more dessert." Now, hey folks, that's a great illustration. You see how all of these different gifts are necessary and how they all work together?

Well, let me say this. You are a gifted child. God doesn't want you just to sit in church. Your life is going to be meaningless, to a degree, until you discover your spiritual gift.

It is said that Napoleon one time looked at China on a map. And this angel of war, Napoleon, took his pointer and pointed toward China, that vast area with its hordes of people. And Napoleon said, "Gentlemen, there lies a sleeping giant. Let him sleep; for if he awakens, he will disturb the world. Let him sleep."

I believe that the devil looks at the church, and he says to his demons, "There's a sleeping giant. Let it sleep because if it ever really stirs, it's going to turn this world upside down."

God has given you a spiritual gift, and the only way that you can discover your spiritual gift is to have it, and the only way you can have it is to be saved, and the only way you can be saved is to put your faith in Jesus Christ. Would you bow your heads in prayer?

Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. And while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, I want to lead you in a prayer. And today, if you've never done it, you can receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. And I promise you, on the authority of the Word of God, if you will trust Him with sincere faith, He will forgive your sins. He will come into your heart and give you a new nature, protect you and guide you through this life, and when you die, He'll take you to Heaven.

Would you pray, "Dear God, I need You and I want You. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You, right now. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And by faith I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sins, cleanse me,

save me, Jesus." Pray it from your heart. Did you? Thank Him by faith now. "Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith and that settles it. You're my Lord and my Savior. And because You died for me, I will live for You. And because You've saved me by Your grace, I will serve You with my love, and I will never be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."