

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - His Presence With Us

Sermon Title - What The Holy Spirit Does Through Us Part 4

Sermon Text - 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, Romans 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:11

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes

In order to wholly trust in Jesus' name we must depend on the presence of His Holy Spirit living within us to give us His strength, His wisdom and His grace! We're going to finish our series on how The Holy Spirit brings the extraordinary presence and power of God into our ordinary lives and transforms us. Let's pray and ask God to allow His Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts today and change us!! Pray!

The song we just sang says this...

My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly trust in Jesus' name"

Those words are from an old hymn written in 1837 by a Baptist Pastor named Edward Mote. Have you ever wondered what he meant when he said "I dare not trust the sweetest frame?" While no one knows for certain, I believe it certainly could mean that no matter how the world frames things when it comes to eternal salvation, no matter how sweet their philosophies may seem or sound, I've decided to wholly trust in Jesus' name! The songwriter goes on to say...

"When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil!"

And what does that mean? Sometimes storms in life are dark and seem to hide the light of His face! And back in the Old Testament times, the Holiness of God was hidden behind the veil in the temple. When the song writer says "My anchor holds within the veil" I believe it means that we trust in the righteousness of God that was once behind the veil of the temple, but now clothes those of us who have placed our trust in the work of Jesus on the Cross. Jesus' sacrifice caused the veil to be torn away granting us access to God! The writer of Hebrews puts it this way...

Hebrews 6:19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,
Hebrews 6:20 where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

And here's an amazing thing: The Holy of Holies, behind that veil, where the very presence of Almighty God dwelled, was a part of a physical tabernacle or temple. But here's what has happened: Jesus ascended into heaven but promised His Holy Spirit to come to His followers!

We know that happened initially on the Day of Pentecost, but subsequently happens whenever an individual repents of their sin and places their faith in Jesus Christ to be their Savior! The Holy Spirit takes up residence in that person and guess what? This takes place...

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

1 Corinthians 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Jesus paid the price for the veil to be torn and for us to have the awesome privilege of becoming a walking Holy of Holies! Our bodies are the temples of The Holy Spirit! How awesome is that? Very awesome indeed! And here's a beautiful thing, The Holy Spirit wants to work through us to accomplish amazing things of God in this world and He gives each of us spiritual gifts to be used for that purpose. There are two categories of spiritual gifts, speaking gifts and serving gifts. Some gifts work in both categories! We've talked about the speaking gifts in the last three weeks, tongues, prophecy, evangelism, discernment, wisdom, knowledge and teaching. Today we will talk about...

The Serving Gifts

Serving Gifts would be - Serving, giving, leading, showing mercy, displaying faith, healing and miracles. Obviously I won't have time to go into each one in depth so I will mention each of the serving gifts briefly, but will emphasize several. And we talked briefly about the gift of faith last week. We all have faith but some have a special spiritual gift of faith that allows them to take extraordinary leaps of faith in their trust in God. So let's look at the other serving gifts. Remember there are three main texts which list spiritual gifts. Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4:11. Let's begin with the list in Romans 12...

Rom 12:4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

Rom 12:5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Rom 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

Rom 12:7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

Rom 12:8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

The Gift of Serving!

Rom 12:6&7 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...If it is serving...serve;

The gift of serving is a gift in of itself and is manifest in many ways! We talked a little bit last week about the difference between God given natural gifts and the Holy Spirit given

supernatural spiritual gifts. Supernatural gifts do not depend on natural ability or talent. So God sometimes gives a spiritual gift to a person who might otherwise be untalented naturally in that area! He gives them a supernatural ability in order to accomplish some kingdom purpose. On the other hand, God sometimes gives someone a supernatural spiritual gifting to use their natural abilities in service to Him! In other words, just because a Spiritual gift does not depend on your natural ability, that doesn't mean that God won't use your natural ability in a supernatural way! You see, while everyone has some kind of talent or ability which they should use to serve God, God has given some people the spiritual gift of service! They use their natural gifts and abilities to serve God and others in extraordinary ways! People with this gift love serving and are truly blessed when they are able to use their gifts and are eager for opportunities to serve. We have people who exercise the gift of service each and every week in our children's ministry! Others exercise their gift of service greeting, running sound, playing an instrument, serving in the cafe, cooking meals, visiting or calling some of our shut-ins, or folks in the hospital. Some help when there's a special need amongst our single moms or widows. And others use their gifts and talents on mission trips to build houses!

In the New Testament Church, there was a need for people who had the gift of serving to help with the needs of the newly formed church. We read about it in the book of Acts.

Acts 6:1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Acts 6:2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Acts 6:3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

Acts 6:4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Acts 6:6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 6:7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

There were some logistical problems with meeting the needs of the members of the church and the Twelve disciples just couldn't do everything. It was not that waiting on tables was beneath the twelve disciples, but they had to prioritize the use of their time. They had spent around 3 ½ years under the tutelage of Jesus, being discipled, and now it was their calling to make disciples by teaching the things He had taught them! We will begin a series next week on the extraordinary discipleship of Jesus in the lives of the 12 disciples. Remember what Jesus had told His disciples to do?

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Pastors, staff and leadership should all have the gift of service to some extent and we can't teach others about serving the Lord if we are not serving the Lord and teaching others by our lives! However, we must share the load with others and we must not neglect our calling. Sometimes when people won't allow others to help, it's because they are control freaks and it could be a pride thing where they don't think anyone else can do things as well as they can. If that kind of attitude gets a foothold in the church then we will not be able to build the Kingdom of God effectively. Let me remind us all again of what Paul said in Ephesians 4:11-13...

Eph 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,
Ephesians 4:12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up
Ephesians 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Serving, while some have it as an extraordinary spiritual gift, is actually a foundational component of almost every other gift and will show up especially in certain gifts. While it may seem counterintuitive, it is actually one of the most personally rewarding gifts of all. Because when you've served someone in the Name of Jesus, the rewards are amazing.

Okay, now let's look at the next gift in Paul's list in Romans...

Encouraging

Rom 12:6&8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us... if it is encouraging...encourage;

The gift of encouragement or exhortation, as I mentioned last week, is a more important gift than most people imagine. Exhortation is when you seek to encourage someone with correction and we talked about the proper ways of doing that last week, with conviction, but in love! Amen? Now for the encouraging side of this gift! You never know how your words of encouragement might even change the course of someone's life and eternity! There are times when someone desperately needs encouragement. Maybe their life has been difficult, filled with loss, sickness, loneliness, discouragement, disappointment, betrayal, and feelings that no one cares anymore! Your simple smile, word of encouragement, and genuine inquiry as to how they are doing can make a life changing impact!! And when you ask someone how they are doing, it is so vitally important that you really listen if they want to talk about their situation. You don't have to have an answer, just listen. Sometimes, that's the only answer someone needs, for someone to truly listen. Having someone attentively listening communicates to the person that someone really does care about them. Sometimes we think of Paul as a "Super Apostle!" But the truth is that even Paul needed encouragement. Listen to what he said in 2 Corinthians 7...

2 Cor 7:4 I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

2 Cor 7:5 For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn--conflicts on the outside, fears within.

2 Cor 7:6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

2 Cor 7:7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

Paul was an honest Apostle! He said that he and his ministry companions were tired, harassed, experiencing conflicts on the outside and struggling with fears on the inside! So let me just say encourage you with this thought: If Paul the Apostle, whom God used to write much of our New Testament and who wrote often about having faith, trust and being encouraged, if that guy struggled at times with discouragement, that doesn't discourage me, it encourages me. It shows me that he was human and depended upon God first and foremost and also depended on the encouragement of others! Satan likes to berate us and make us feel like second class citizens of heaven if we have a rough day, a downer day, a discouraging day, a difficult day. But we're not second class, we are flesh and bone, emotional human beings with a great need for and dependence upon the Precious Holy Spirit of Almighty God! We need His power, His presence, His provision, His peace, His promises! And we need to listen to His promptings to encourage others who may be going through a difficult trial or tribulation in their life!

Some of you have the gift of encouragement and don't realize it.

Some of you have the gift but don't use it.

Some of you have the gift and do use it with others, but forget to use it with your children or your spouse.

If you've got it, use it!!!! Even with people you don't know, because you never know when God might use your simple words, or smile to change a life or an eternity! When God puts someone on your heart, don't just ignore that! There's a reason. Reach out to them and let them know God put them on your heart. That alone, can be so encouraging! Sometimes a simple text, quick email is meaningful. But a card or handwritten note or letter could be exponentially meaningful. I got such a letter from a friend of mine in Tennessee the other day and it meant a lot to me! When I'm preaching, there are times I see the head nod in the affirmative, the smile, and I hear the occasional amen. You are using the gift of encouragement! Thank you! Okay, next gift of service...

The Gift of Contributing

Rom 12:6&8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...if it is contributing to the needs of others...give generously;

The word for contributing in Scripture carries the following meanings:

Wholeheartedly/Open Handed/Generous/Pure/Without mixed motives or desire for selfish gain

Some people have the spiritual gift of giving! They live to give and they don't worry about their own needs because they've come to understand and trust that God will take care of them. Maybe giving is one gift we should all desire! Paul gives an example of a whole church that had the spiritual gift of giving!

2 Cor 8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

2 Cor 8:2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

2 Cor 8:3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

2 Cor 8:4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

2 Cor 8:5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

These people seemed to understand the words of Jesus quoted by Paul the Apostle. Paul said...

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The truth is, when it comes to material things, stuff, worldly treasures, you can't take it with you! In fact Jesus said this...

Mat 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Mat 6:20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

And here's a promise God has given concerning acts of generosity...

2 Cor 9:9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

2 Cor 9:10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

2 Cor 9:11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

And when it comes to the spiritual gift of generosity, Jesus was the ultimate example. Paul said...

2 Cor 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Christian theologian Millard Erikson put it this way...

"The magnitude of what he gave up is beyond our power even to imagine, for we have never seen what heaven is like...Even if Christ had come to the highest splendor that earth could afford, the descent would still have been immense. The greatest of riches, the highest of honors in any potentate's court, would be as nothing in comparison with the conditions which he left. But it was not to the highest of human circumstances that he came. Rather, he took the form of a servant, a slave."

Christian Theology, Millard Erikson, pg 770.

And that same Jesus had these words to say to us about generosity...

Luke 12:48 . . . From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Mark 9:41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

One word of caution: Those who are generous and open handed must ask the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom in their generosity so that they do not inadvertently enable wickedness, laziness or addiction! In those situations, what we give is love, prayer, and the offer to get them the real help they need and that is Jesus and recovery! Another gift of service is one that we don't always associate with serving, but we should!

The Gift of Leading

Rom 12:6&8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us...if it is leadership, govern diligently

If leadership is by grace, one should assume the role with great humility and understand it as a privilege rather than a right! This is certainly a concept modern day political leaders need to come to understand and embrace! But what comes to mind when you think of a leader? Sadly, in our world today, the things that come to our minds many times are..

Powerful/Decision makers/Driven/Arrogant/Prideful/Self Serving

What are the characteristics of a person with the spiritual gift of leadership?

Humble

Mt. 23:11-12 “The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Oswald Sanders stated it this way...

“True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one’s service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them. And this is never done without cost...The true spiritual leader is concerned infinitely more with the service he can render God and his fellowmen than with the benefits and pleasures he can extract from life. He aims to put more into life than he takes out of it.” J. Oswald Sanders¹⁸¹

A person with the spiritual gift of leading will also have the following characteristics...

Servant Hearted

Peter wrote in his epistle to spiritual leaders...

1 Pet 5:2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

1 Pet 5:3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Sacrificial

Servant leaders give up personal rights to find greatness in service to others.

Jesus said: “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Jesus: The ultimate example of a servant leader. . .

Mark 10:42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.

Mark 10:43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

Mark 10:44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

A word to remember

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers (masters KJV), my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Leadership has its privileges but it also has its responsibilities! As a leader, your decisions can have far reaching implications for many people. This should drive every leader to their knees in search of the wisdom and will of God. And now we come to...

The Gift of Mercy

Rom 12:6&8 states we have different gifts, according to the grace given us...if it is showing mercy, do it cheerfully.

God wants all of us to show mercy!

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Jesus describes mercy

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Some have a special measure of mercy and it is a spiritual gift! People with the gift of mercy bring balance to our decisions and temper actions of judgment. Jesus is the ultimate example of mercy...

Luke 23:33 When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

A word of caution...

If you have the gift of mercy, you must understand that Satan will try to confuse you in the exercise of your gift. You must ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in the use of this gift. Let me explain. Loving a person and showing mercy does not mean you agree with their behavior. In fact sometimes the most merciful thing you can do is to state the truth in love. Sometimes this is what a person really needs, and if your heart shines through your actions and words, you may save a life! Too many times people with the gift of mercy overlook things in someone's life thinking they are being merciful. Sometimes they are simply being unwise. Many Christian young people have overlooked terrible issues in the person they are dating thinking they were

being merciful and ended up in a tragic relationship. Dating is not a good venue for evangelism. Once your heart is in a relationship, objectivity is out the door. Okay, that was just a bit of practical advice for you! Now I'm going to close with a very brief word on two gifts that really kind of go together and could be a series in and of themselves: Healing and Miracles. First...

Gifts of Healing

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

1 Corinthians 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

1 Corinthians 12:10 to another miraculous powers...

First of all Paul uses the plural and says "gifts" - I believe he is alluding to the fact that healing is needed in more than just a physical sense, but social, emotional, and spiritual! Thus God has given us doctors, counselors, ministers and sometimes a good friend or family member whom God uses to bring a sense of spiritual peace and healing to our souls! Sickness was not a part of God's original design. However, due to the sin of mankind in the Garden of Eden, sickness and death are now a reality of life. However, this does not mean if you are sick it's because of something you did wrong. Sickness is a part of the curse of sin in the big picture! We pray for healing but it is not always God's will to heal physically in this life. Some have preached that if you have enough faith you will always be healed. Just claim it. I do believe that God still heals miraculously, however, we must always pray as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, that God's will be done. Sometimes God has a greater kingdom agenda to accomplish and He may be using the trial and tribulation you are going through to accomplish His goal! I know, it's hard when you're the one suffering, but that's where faith and trust of God's heart and purpose come in! God will sometimes grant a miraculous healing and sometimes He will grant a miraculous grace to endure and show the world how our faith in God carries us through the good and the bad times! And lastly...

Gifts of Miraculous Powers

I believe that this gift is kin to the faith gift and the healing gift, and that God will sometimes use someone as a vessel of His mighty power to work a miracle! He does this when it is needed to achieve His purpose for a given situation. This is not something you can turn on or off at will. God decides when this kind of gift is needed for His eternal purposes and He will lead you when it's His will to work a miracle in and through your life!

Conclusion: Unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we cannot effectively utilize our spiritual gifts! The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom to know when and how to use our gifts. The Holy Spirit gives us supernatural strength to exercise our gifts! Strength that we do not have on our own. And Jesus should be our example in the use of spiritual gifts. He gave the greatest gift ever

given. He was a leader who held no office, lived the life of a servant and yet changed the world with His words and His deeds. He has shown each of us personally the gift of mercy and He encourages us with His promise to be with us even until the end of the ages! He heals us of our sin debt and works miracles in our lives daily even if we can't see them! And here's the deal: right after Paul's listing of Spiritual Gifts in Romans 12:4-8 he says this...

Rom 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Rom 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Rom 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Let's Pray!