

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - His Presence With Us

Sermon Title - What The Holy Spirit Does Through Us Part 2

Sermon Text - 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes

I love the name of Jesus. In the Old Testament, the Name of Joshua, or Yeshua! The name means "God is deliverance" or "God is Salvation!" The Greek way of saying His Name is "Yay-soos," and in English we say Jesus! God allowed the message of the Gospel to be written in the most widely used language of the day, Greek, because the Good News was going to go out into all the world! So Yeshua, Joshua, Yah-soos, Jesus, What a beautiful Name it is and when we call upon His Name for salvation, regardless of the language you speak, God knows the heart, and He will deliver you, save you and give you His precious Holy Spirit! And His Spirit works in us and through us to share the gospel, the good news that Jesus wants to do the same in the lives of all who would choose to follow Jesus! Let's pray and we'll continue to see the amazing ways in which The Holy Spirit gifts us to be used by Almighty God in this world! Let's pray.

Introduction:

Some things God has called us to do He equips us to do with spiritual gifts. Sometimes those spiritual gifts are fully supernatural, like the gift of speaking in other languages on the day of Pentecost so people could hear the gospel in their own language. The disciples were not taught to do that and had not practiced that! It was a fully supernatural gift given at a special time of need! On the other hand, sometimes spiritual gifts are gifts that can be developed and we mature in the use of those gifts! Like the call to proclaim the gospel through preaching. I'm still working on this one! First of all, I constantly want to know how I can do a better job of communicating the amazing truth of God's Holy Word! And to do that I am constantly seeking to better understand and interpret God's Holy Word! In fact, the more I learn the more I learn how much I don't know and how far I have to grow in my understanding of God's truth!

The older I get, the greater my awareness becomes of my utter dependence upon my Lord Jesus and His Holy Spirit! I wrote a country gospel song years ago, called So Far To Grow! It's on my third album. The chorus says...

"I've got so far to grow in my quest to be like Jesus, every day's a learn'n day as I seek to know how He would live and what He would do, I've got so far to grow as I onward go!"

I am grateful for the insights gained in my years of experience in Christian Ministry. What I am about to tell you is not to brag on Larry. I don't make a big deal out of these things, but I hope you will see the point I'm going to make and why I share this with you. I was saved in 1974, licensed to the gospel ministry in 1977, graduated in '83 with a B.A. in Bible from Mississippi College, graduated in '86 with a Master of Divinity Degree from N.O.B.T.S. Graduated in 2003

with a Doctor of Ministry Degree from N.O.B.T.S. Why spend all this time and money on so much school? Well, I served under a wonderful pastor years ago: Bro. Wilbur Irwin. He has now gone home to be with the Lord. When I finished college, I wanted to go straight into full time ministry. Bro. Irwin shared with me he believed strongly that I should go straight to seminary and continue my education. I respectfully disagreed and told him it was time to put my education to work. You know, I felt I had spent enough time cutting bait and it was now time to fish! I talked to my dad and he agreed with Bro. Irwin. He told me that going to school was like putting tools in a tool box. He said God could use me now, but the more tools I put in my toolbox, the more opportunities it would give God to use me down the road. God is, after all, the Master Mechanic when it comes to repairing lives and if you've got the right tools, God will use you in the process. I decided to get more tools. Having said that, I want to say this; it doesn't matter how fancy your toolbox is or how many high quality tools are in it, if the Master Mechanic is not in the garage. Without the Master Mechanic's presence, the tool box and tools, no matter how state of the art, are simply useless. It is my constant prayer that God's presence, His wisdom, His power and His will be at work on a daily basis in my life as your pastor. I pray that for our staff and for future staff and pastors of Northshore Church! Amen? Amen!

Okay, last week we kind of laid the foundation for these messages on the gifts of The Holy Spirit. We learned some basics on the topic of The Holy Spirit.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit Baptizes! The Holy Spirit empowers our witness! The Holy Spirit is a Gift! Spiritual Gifts have purpose!

And last week we talked about only one of the Spiritual gifts...

Speaking in Tongues.

Before we get started I simply want to clarify something for you that may or may not have been a question for you, but could be. I've said several times that we receive The Holy Spirit when we ask Jesus to come into our lives and we establish a personal relationship with Him by admitting we have sinned and need a Savior, believe that Jesus died on the Cross to be that Savior, and we then call upon His name for salvation. He then comes into our hearts by way of His Holy Spirit. Now we know that the disciples believed in Jesus when they followed Him, but The Holy Spirit had not yet been given on the Day of Pentecost. Things were a bit different at the very beginning of the New Testament Church and there were at least two occasions in The New Testament where individuals had believed and been baptized but had not yet received The Holy Spirit. One is in Acts 8:14-17...

Acts 8:14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria.

Acts 8:15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Why would Luke say they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus? Baptism is not what saves you. Baptism paints a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and follows a person's decision to establish a personal relationship with Him. That relationship happens when we go beyond believing about God to believing in God by placing our faith and trust in Him, repenting of our sins and inviting Him to take up residence in our hearts and lives by way of The Holy Spirit. The same thing happened in Acts 19 when Paul met some of John the Baptist's disciples and explained to them their need to believe in Jesus for salvation. They did and received The Holy Spirit! I hope that helps.

I also want to remind you of this from last week because it applies to all of the gifts. The gifts of The Holy Spirit are simply tools He uses in order to work through us to accomplish God's divine purposes for His Glory! And what could bring more glory to God than for us to use our God-given gifts to love God and to love others? In fact, every gift The Holy Spirit ever gives to anyone is in order that we might use that gift to love God, to love each other, and to even love our enemies.

Let's read the three passages where Spiritual Gifts are listed. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12...

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

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

1 Cor 12:10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

Paul tells us in Romans 12:6-8...

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.

And Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:11...

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,

The Scripture doesn't give a clear division of spiritual gifts into categories, but I believe we can safely place them into two main groups based on 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Two Divisions of Gifts

Speaking Gifts and Serving Gifts

1 Pet 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Pet 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Speaking Gifts would be - Apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist, exhorter, discerner of spirits, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

Serving Gifts would be - Serving, giving, leading, showing mercy, and displaying faith.

It's critical that we understand that all of our gifts are to be used to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace, and we are to use those gifts so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. And it is also critical that we understand that we should do what we do with the strength God provides. Now what I'm about to tell you may seem a bit strange coming from a pastor of a church, but it's so important that we understand that the most important uses of our gifts have to do with loving God and loving people and that is a 24/7 occupation and not just a Sunday thing. Far too many people and churches have become all about the gathering on Sundays, and while we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, we must never forget the reason we gather on Sunday! It is so we can worship together and fellowship together, but it is also so we can learn what we are to be doing when we are scattered throughout the week! We worship God together on Sundays so we can worship God with our lives every other day of the week! Bible scholar Ray C. Steadman put it this way...

"If you were a visitor from another planet and visited churches across this country today, you would probably draw the conclusion that the church operates to run meetings on Sunday's. Everything is aimed toward that; all the work of leadership is directed toward that, and when it is over, it starts all over again. But that is a far cry from God's concept of the church. The church consists of all those who have truly been born of the Spirit and are thereby a living body, growing and developing within the world, to touch the hurt and death of the world with the life and love of God."

Ray C. Steadman

"I don't want to be a part of a church that is not actively seeking to make a real and dynamic difference in the world. I don't want to be guilty of leading a church to settle for anything less than God's full intentions for His church: to be salt and light in an otherwise tasteless and darkened society." Itm

God manifests His Spirit within each of us so that we can be His representative in this world every single day!.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Three Important facts about Spiritual Gifts

#1 The Gifts are Manifestations of the Spirit

1 Cor 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given . . .

Sometimes spiritual gifts are called Charismatic gifts because they are Grace Gifts. Charis is the Greek word for Grace. Charizesthai is the Greek word for favor or gift. You do nothing to merit a gift. It is bestowed upon you by the Holy Spirit. It is all about grace (the undeserved favor of God). You can develop and grow in your spiritual gifts, but they are nonetheless gifts! One thing to note here. God given spiritual gifts and God given natural talents may be related but are not the same. Natural talents, like music, art, writing, engineering skills, building skills, design skills, and the list goes on and on, are certainly God-given gifts, but not in the same way as the supernatural gifts of The Holy Spirit. Talents are given and are developed and have many wonderful uses in many areas of life, including sharing the Gospel. Supernatural gifts have primary use and purpose in the realm of spiritual things. And these things certainly affect the rest of our lives, but they're just different. Spiritual gifts are not dependent on the natural abilities you were born with. The Holy Spirit gives His gifts independent of your abilities. So don't think you can't do any kind of ministry because you're not talented enough. With spiritual gifts, your availability and openness to The Holy Spirit's work in your life is what matters, not your natural abilities! Spiritual gifts are things that The Holy Spirit does through you!

#2 Gifts are Given for The Common Good!

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

We talked about this a bit last week, but we must understand that Spiritual gifts are given and are to be used not for our own personal gain, but for the good of others. Spiritual gifts certainly will bless us as we exercise them, but they are to be focused on honoring God and helping others! Paul mentions several of the gifts in Ephesians and then states why they are given.

Ephesians 4:12 ... 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.

#3 Every believer has at least one spiritual gift!

1 Cor 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Again, spiritual gifts are not primarily for our own benefit! Let me quote Mr. Steadman again

“The work of the church is to heal the broken-hearted, to bring deliverance to the poor, to open the doors to the captives, setting free those who are bound in prisons of doubt, fear, anxiety and selfishness, and leading them out into liberty, freedom and power. That is what God has called us to do, and it takes every one of us to do it. We are all in the ministry, and each is given a gift for that purpose.” Ray C. Steadman

Spiritual gifts are given to aid and empower the members of the church to work in concert with one another so they can minister effectively to the world in which they live. Ltm

And Paul says this about the purpose of the speaking gifts given to leaders...

Ephesians 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the 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.

So you can plainly see that the speaking gifts are given so that people can be equipped to live out the gifts of service. So it is the job of our staff and church leaders to equip you so you can live a life of service to God and others. And of course, if we're not living a life of service we won't be very good teachers! And let me just share this practical application with you. Remember that with speaking gifts your life must back up what you say! Someone shared with the men's Bible study that they had seen a bumper sticker that said, "At all times preach the gospel, when necessary use words." That's pretty good. I've shared that in a message before. However, at the same time you're living your life, you need to know how to speak the reasons you live the way you do! It should never be, "well they'll *just* see Jesus in my life. I don't have to say anything." There was a Christian songwriter, Michael Omartian, who sang a song that was a parody, but unfortunately a little too close to the truth for some people. The song was about a guy who was going to play music as a ministry, but rather than singing about Jesus, he just said "they'll see Jesus in my guitar." Now I know there are Christian instrumentalists who bring glory to God with their talent, but if it is for God's glory, at some point you need to say something! You have to be able and willing to give the reason that you live the way you live, if you are living for God's Glory! We should be pointing people to Jesus with our life and then sharing the love of Jesus with them with our words. Your life and words work in tandem! Peter reminds us of this...

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

So don't just tell them, show them, and don't just show them, tell them! Some people do what is called friendship evangelism where they build a relationship so they can share the gospel. But if you build the friendship and never share the gospel, you're not being a very good friend! So the speaking gifts have a purpose! They are designed to proclaim the gospel! I need to clarify this important fact about spiritual gifts. There are certain gifts that only some people have and others do not and may never have those gifts. There are some gifts that every believer has, to an extent, while others are gifted by The Holy Spirit with an extraordinary supernatural ability in that area. Let me give you some examples. All believers in Jesus obviously have faith but some folks have the gift of faith! It's like nothing rattles them no matter what the circumstances! I truly admire people with that gift! And all of us should be willing to serve our Lord and others, but some people have the gift of service. They are servant hearted to the core! I'm thankful for them! And we all need to be sharing our faith with the way we live and with our words, but some people have the gift of evangelism! They never meet a stranger and they're gifted in the art of gospel conversations! And we all need to exercise the gift of prophecy as it relates to proclaiming the gospel, the good news of Jesus. But some people are gifted by The Holy Spirit in this area, which is closely akin to evangelism! So let's look a little deeper at the speaking gift of...

Prophecy

It's the only gift found in all three lists of gifts.

"The word prophetes means "to speak before" or "to speak for." Thus it refers to one who speaks for God or Christ.

According to the Holman Bible Dictionary "Prophets were also called Pneumatics (pneumatikos), 'spiritual ones' (1 Cor. 14:37). The prophets played a foundational role in the early church." Some believe prophecy is only the telling of future events. It is sometimes that, but mostly it is proclamation of God's Word to individuals or the church. Notice I said God's Word, not a man's words. Proclaiming God's Word to individuals or groups changes lives!! Jesus said:

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

Peter quoted Joel saying...

Acts 2:17 " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Now let's see what Paul said about this gift of prophecy...

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

Again, prophecy was at times the foretelling of future events! This was certainly a part of the message of Old and New Testament Prophets, but many times prophecy was simply proclamation of God's Word, His principles, His divine will! Prophecy was speaking God's truth in the language of the people for right then! Much of the message of the Old Testament prophets was spoken to Israel and even other nations, about their need to repent of sin and turn to God! Prophets like Amos, Jeremiah, Hosea, Jonah and others! So prophecy is not primarily some mystical statement about the future, or what is going to happen in someone's life as if you've seen into their future! And here's one of the most important things about any prophecy someone claims to have today: does it hold up under the scrutiny of God's Word? Does it line up? Is it in the proper context? Is it accurate according to the principles and truths of God's Holy, inspired, and infallible Scripture? If you allow yourself to step away from the foundation of Holy Scripture then you are at the mercy of human whim, human emotion, human desire, human error! This is a dangerous place! God has carefully protected the transmission of His Word down through the years and given us the canon of Holy Writ, we know as Scripture, The Holy Bible. I will say it again, the Bible is our standard, our baseline, our foundation, our go to! So when it comes to understanding the gift of prophecy we have to find that understanding in God's Word. There are times when I've heard someone speaking a prophecy and they begin with these words..."Thus saith The Lord!" They go on to quote things about a person's life or future. Here's the problem with that: when a person says "Thus saith The Lord," they have just put their words on the same level with The Word of God, the Bible. That's a scary thing to do. I've just not found examples of this kind of thing in The New Testament. If you are talking to someone and God has laid it on your heart to talk to them about their life, you go to them in love and you proclaim to them God's Word, from Scripture. You show them what God's Word says and let The Holy Spirit work through you to touch their hearts. They may or may not receive it, but if it is done in love you've used the gift of prophecy, proclamation of God's Word to them. Now you know why I study for many hours, get on my knees and pray for God's guidance, read the writings of godly Scholars, but most heavily rely on God's Word when I'm preparing a message. It's why I will explain Scripture with Scripture. There's safety when you are founded and grounded in the Word of God! In Bible times when a person bound by evil and wickedness heard the Word of God proclaimed, prophesied, and plainly spoken, the Holy Spirit would pierce their heart and under the weight of conviction, they would either turn and walk away from God or fall to their knees and cry out for the mercy of God. Paul stated in Ephesians 1:13-14 these words...

Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 1:14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

And we must not miss this. It's vital...

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

Follow the way of love! So priority one is love! Why desire the gift of prophecy? It is speaking the Word of God in love because of love. Do you know what happens when a person allows the Word of God to become a priority in their life, and what happens when that person proclaims the truth of God's Word to others?

1 Corinthians 14:3b... everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

If you love others you will want to strengthen them. You will want to encourage them. You will want to comfort them. These are God's priorities. I've got a question for you. Are you doing anything to strengthen others, to encourage others, to comfort others? If not, why not? It is clear from Scripture that we are to put others ahead of ourselves. The Corinthian church was in confusion because they were all about themselves instead of God and others. They were so heavenly minded they were no earthly good! Did you know this kind of attitude is always the source of confusion. It never brings glory to God. It never builds up, it always tears down. This flies in the face of God's stated priority of building up His church. Paul gave this instruction...

1 Corinthians 4:12...Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

This was a word of caution for individuals of us and for the church. Excel in gifts that build up the church. Listen, I love mountain top spiritual experiences as much as anyone, but I've learned not to allow my desire for supernatural experience and emotion become my priority in my walk with God! When we allow ourselves to go from one emotional high to the next, we run the grave risk of missing God's divine priorities and may miss the real mountaintop experience God has in store for us. Some folks live for big public moves of God which appeal to their feelings. If God doesn't show up in a spectacular way, they are disappointed. At some point they get tired of chasing the illusive spiritual high and give up on God. We must realize the majority of life is lived in the valley. This is where we fight the battles. This is where we care for the hurting. This is where we win the victories by His strength, His power, His Word, His Spirit! This is where we speak God's truth! This is where people come to know Christ as their Savior. Shouldn't this be a priority for all Christians? Please hear this from my heart...I'm not against emotions. I'm a very emotional person. But I don't depend on my emotions. Emotional highs are empty and meaningless if they are devoid of the revealed truth of God, the knowledge of God, the proclamation of the Word of God and the word of instruction that comes through the Word of God. If our foundation is not based on God's truth, the mountain we stand on will crumble and fall when shaken! Not long after the Holy Spirit was given to the followers of Christ, Peter and John were arrested and told to no longer speak or teach in the Name of Jesus. To which they replied...

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Peter and John went back to the church and told them what had happened. The people of the church began quoting Scripture and praying. And Luke tells us in Acts 4:31 what happened...

Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

So while we may not all have the spiritual gift of prophecy in that we are a literal prophet of God, I do believe every believer has been called by God to proclaim His truth! So while you may not be a prophet to the nations, or a pastor or teacher of large groups, you do have influence and opportunity in someone's life and most likely more than one someone! Remember I told you the gift of prophecy is closely akin to the speaking gift of...

Evangelism

The meaning of the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (transliterated as euangelion) is to announce, declare, bring, or preach good news. It is only found three times in the Bible, but we see the principle all over the Old and New Testament! Paul listed it as a spiritual gift in Ephesians 4:11. Philip is called an evangelist in Acts 21:8, and Paul mentions it in his instructions to young Timothy, his apprentice. And in these instructions Paul reveals why evangelism is so important and why some people are given a supernatural gift to evangelize. Listen to his words...

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Did Paul write this in 2022? No, but it sure does apply to 2022! People today desperately need to hear the truth! The truth is the only thing that will set them free. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and the gospel, the good news, is this...

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

So while we may not all have the supernatural gift to be an evangelist and speak to the multitudes, is there anyone who has received the gift of eternal life through Jesus that couldn't share the good news with at least someone, that God so loved them and gave His one and only Son that if they would believe they could have eternal life? One theologian put it this way, and I'll close with these words...

"Every believer, the feeblest as much as the strongest, has the calling to live and work for the kingdom of his Lord. Every believer has equally a claim on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, according to his gifts, to fit him for his work. And every believer has a right to be taught and helped by the Church for the service our Lord expects of him. It is when this truth, every believer the feeblest, to be trained as a worker for God, gets its true place, that there can be any thought of the Church fulfilling its mission. Not one can be missed, because the Master gave to every one his work."

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Let's pray!