

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

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A Disclosure Of Faith From The Holy Spirit

by Dan Trygg

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of servings, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of in-workings, but the same God, the One in-working all things in all persons. But to each one is given the disclosure of the Spirit for the common good ('carrying together'). For, on the one hand, to one is given a word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to a different person a faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit, and to another in-workings of powerful acts, and to another a prophetic-utterance, and to another distinguishings of spirits, to a different person kinds of tongues, and to another an interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit in-works all these things, distributing to each one individually according as He intends." I Cor. 12:4-11

"Consequently, the faith is out from hearing (either the 'ability to hear' or a 'heard-thing'), but the hearing is by means of a personal-word of Christ." Rom. 10:17

One of the debates regarding spiritual gifts has to do with whether a person receives a particular gifting (or cluster of gifts) that becomes his or her *regular function* in the Body, ...or whether we can receive *any* spiritual gift at *any time* to meet a specific need. The truth seems to be a combination of these two extremes.

There *does* seem to be a tendency to function well in a predominant area of gifting(s) that characterizes how the Holy Spirit utilizes us. **There certainly are identifiable roles and functions that would require continuity for people to be *recognized* as functioning in those areas.** For example, certain gifts are described by nouns, i.e., apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherd-teachers, teachers, miracle-workers, helpers, pilot-leaders (Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28). These would seem to be people who have a habitual expression of the Spirit in these areas. Other examples may include those who "*have* gifts of healings", and possibly some with "kinds of tongues", mostly because these are listed along with some of the gift-nouns mentioned above (I Cor. 12:28).

The message is also very clear that **all of us will not experience the entire gamut of gifts.** The rhetorical questions in I Cor. 12:29,30 clearly indicate that not everyone functions in or exercises every role.

On the other hand, the language of I Cor. 12:4-11 seems to indicate that the gifts listed there are distributable to *anyone*, as the Spirit may desire. It is interesting to note which of gifts are listed here, and which are absent, as well as the language used to describe the gifts being distributed. For example, a "prophecy" or "prophetic utterance" may be given to someone, but that does not necessarily make him or her a "prophet" in the sense Paul uses it in Eph. 4:11, or in I Cor. 12:28,29. In the same way, someone may experience being directed by God to pray for someone's healing, and see it come to pass, and yet not necessarily "have" gifts of healings. It would seem that the permanent giftings become evident through the regular appearance or "outworking" of the gift, while here, in I Cor. 12:4-11, **the emphasis of the language is on a *disclosure* of the Spirit, revealing and "in-working" in the individual in a particular circumstance.**

That this debate exists at all probably indicates that there is some experiential truth on both sides.

Let us look into this listing of "distributable" gifts a bit more. After mentioning that there are varieties of gifts, and that "to each one the disclosure of the Spirit is given towards the common good", Paul mentions that to one person may be given "a message of wisdom" (revealing "*what* to do"), while to another may come "a message of knowledge" (revealing a crucial bit of information that we could not otherwise know, or directing us in a particular path of ministry that He may want to take us on). Then, Paul writes, "to a different one faith [is given] by the same Spirit". **What is the gift of faith mentioned here? How does it work?** Oftentimes when people write about the various gifts, they focus on writing up a job description. While we do need to understand what it may look like, I want to emphasize the context here, again. **This is a *disclosure*, a "making known", a "revealing" of something from the Holy Spirit** (vs. 7). In this case, **it is faith that is communicated from Him to the person receiving this gifting.** Faith? Faith in *what*? That depends on the circumstance, and the revelation being given.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "Faith is the assurance (confidence, assured conviction, under-girding, foundation) of things being hoped for, the evidence for (verification of, detection of) things not being seen." Faith can be (1.) a perspective from which to view reality (trust); (2.) an indicator or gauge of the existence (or possibility) of "unseen things"; and, (3.) a necessary foundation for bringing that unseen reality into existence. As you scan the chapter that follows, you see how **faith is based upon hope or promise.** *Because* these people *became convinced* of this hope, they *acted* upon it, ...and as a result of their action, the soundness of their hope, and the work of God's hand, their initial dreams were vindicated. **Faith begins in vision or revelation, develops as a confidence or assured conviction which results in action.** If the hope is *sound*, and the action is *appropriate*, the desired result comes to pass. For

example, if God had not called Abram, and promised him an inheritance, he never would have left Ur of the Chaldees. If Abram had not responded with enough conviction to leave Ur, he would never have received his inheritance.

**The hope is the *vision* of faith,
the obedience is the *response* of faith,
and the provision of God is the *result* of faith.**

There is an important point to emphasize. **Faith in God must be based upon legitimate revelation from Him to you.** God is *not obligated* to act on our behalf in things He has *not* promised, ...nor can *we* promise His action to others, or ourselves, on issues He has not revealed to us. Neither can I presume to apply His promise given to one person to someone *else's* life, ...unless He has given me permission to do so. There is great misunderstanding about this. **What is it that applies to me?** Theologians debate about this. Because God delivered one person from their trial, does that mean He will deliver *me* from *mine*? Look at the end of Hebrews 11. **Godly, believing people have had vastly different experiences** in this regard. Did those who suffered and died *not* have faith? On the contrary, the writer says that their faith in God shines *all the more* because they *persisted* in their trust, even though they did *not* see their deliverance in their present experience. **The crux of the issue is: "What is God promising to me?"** If I hope in something God has *not* promised, and put confidence in *that* hope, I may act in obedience to what I believe to be from God, but the result will be empty.

The gift of faith is based upon a disclosure of the Holy Spirit. It is God saying to a person, "This is what I am willing to do, here." The one who receives this revelation will also have the *inner conviction* that it is, indeed, from God, and, if they *act* on what their part of the revelation may be, God will come through on His side. Obviously, this is very subjective and situational. But *that is exactly the point.* **This is a disclosure from the Holy Spirit concerning what He wants to do here, at this time, or in this circumstance.** An oft quoted verse from those who try to gather up promises that God may have spoken *to others*, or about *other circumstances*, in order to bolster their faith is Romans 10:17, "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." They take the "word of God" here to mean the Bible. In reality, however, the Greek word in this context is *rhēma*, which means "a personal directive, a specific word". In other words, this passage is *not* saying that faith is built up by knowing Bible verses, however valuable that may be. It is saying that *faith originates in a personal revelation from God to you.* Hearing or reading what God has done for others *can* expand your concept of what God could be *able*, and possibly *willing*, to do for you, ...but it is *not* a guarantee that He *will* do so. **You must allow Him to communicate to you what He wants to do in your situation. Please allow Him to choose His methods, His plan, His time-table.**

Following are three passages from the NT that seem to illustrate this understanding of the gift of faith:

In Acts 3, Peter and John healed a lame man at the gate of the temple. In his explanation of what happened, Peter says, "...and the faith *the [faith] through Him* gave to him this wholeness evident to you all" (vs. 16). Now, this man had been lame from birth, and was customarily placed in the temple gate to beg alms (vs. 2). The apostles had passed by him many times, as had Jesus Himself. Why had they *not* healed him *before*? Why *now*? Peter's explanation is that **the faith which came from Jesus was the effective ingredient.**

In Acts 27, the ship Paul was on was being blown before a hurricane, and the prospects for their survival looked grim. Paul himself had warned them of the danger, and possible loss of life. They had disregarded his counsel, and now things looked almost hopeless. Suddenly, after two weeks being blown helplessly before the storm, Paul informs them that he has faith that they will all survive, though the ship will be lost. He encourages them to eat, since they will need strength to swim for shore. **The basis of this faith?** An angel had visited him with *a message from God*, saying not only would he escape, but that God had granted him the lives of all who were with him.

James 5:14,15 says, "Is anyone without strength (weak, sick, powerless) among you? Let him invite the elders of the church, and let them pray upon him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of the faith will save the one being sick (discouraged, weary or ill), and the Lord will raise him up (arouse)." (Note: It is "the prayer of *the* faith", not "the prayer of faith".) The question is, "Is this just a prayer *offered in faith*, or is this the *gift of faith* at work?" We have a clue in vs. 16, "**...the in-working prayer of a righteous person is able [to do] much.**" The word rendered as "in-working" is the same as in I Cor. 12:6,10, and refers to an *inner energy*, descriptive of the working of the Holy Spirit. It would appear that James is encouraging us to wait for the Spirit to *reveal* the desire of the Father, and the accompanying *faith-gift*, in order to *effectively lay claim* to the power God desires to manifest in that scenario. The *rhēma*-word reveals the Father's desire. **This revelation inspires hope, and the assured conviction, to press in after healing. The action of calling out to God in response to this revelation and inner working of confidence releases the healing power.** We are *partners with God* in this. We *wait for* His will. We *recognize* and *respond to* His inner-working, and He manifests His desire in a miraculous healing. Thus, "the in-working prayer is able-to-do much."