



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Local Church

“Its Spiritual Gifts”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Let's begin our Sunday school hour with a word of prayer. Father we thank Thee for the privilege of studying again. And we thank Thee for the church of Jesus Christ, for we realize Lord that since Thou hast founded it in the blood of Christ, our Lord and Messiah, that it must have a significant ministry in the day and age in which we are living. We pray that we understand it and understand our place within it. And Father, we pray that through the ministry of the Spirit and grace of our God we may be enabled in measure at least to fulfill the place within it that Thou hast for each one of us here today. We pray that you guide and direct our step so that our God may be glorified through us and through the church. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] A few of you are new for this morning and let me remind you that we are studying the local church and under these headings: the local church, its organization; the local church, its spiritual gifts; the local church, its priesthood; the local church, its ordinances; the local church, its meetings and ministry; and the local church, its discipline. And we have spent the last two times on the local church, its organization, and today we want to look at the local church, its spiritual gifts.

Now for the Scripture reading, and I think that Scripture and its reading is perhaps the most important part of our lesson, I want you today to turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 12 and will you listen as I read this entire chapter. Now you will notice that through the statements that are made in 1st Corinthians chapter 12, the apostle sets forth the fact that spiritual gifts are given by God. That as an illustration of their operation in the local church we should look at the body, the human body with its members, and finally at the conclusion of it he lists further some gifts and adds as he closes the chapter that he is going to show a more excellent way.

Now the Corinthian church was greatly occupied with gifts and so this is not only a chapter of instruction but also of correction as develops in chapter 13 and 14 even more particularly. Now when 1st Corinthians was written the apostle attempted to answer a number of questions that had been posed him by some representatives from his church. And you can tell these questions by the little words “now concerning” which appear over and over in the epistle. And so this is the beginning of an answer to a question that was given him concerning spiritual gifts, and so this is his answer,

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you 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, (in other words, the test of utterance in the local church is the confession of Jesus Christ. If you call Jesus Lord you must do that by the Spirit. If you call Jesus accursed then you are not speaking by the Holy Spirit. That will enable those who are in the audience in the local church to test the utterances that are given, as he says in 1st Thessalonians 5, a passage that we will read later, “Prove all things hold fast, that which is good.” Which, by the way, tells us that in the local church some thing were said which were not of God. And, of course, the solution to it is not to quench the Spirit so that no one can speak but someone you have

thorough confidence in, but test the utterances. Prove the, liberty is very important. Now the apostle introduces the gifts,) Now there are diversities of gifts, 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. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, (notice the expression, ‘To every man.’ And, of course, Paul means, for he says in the Greek text really, ‘To each every man and every woman.’ So even the women have a spiritual gift,) 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 divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man, (again, literally, to each,) severally as he, (that is he, God, wills or the Spirit. Now his illustration,) For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is the Christ, (the Messiah. Apparently he calls the whole body since the head is Christ. And we belong to the body which is the Messiah, or the Christ.) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? (What would you think if one great big eye walked into this room? Of course if it was one big eye it couldn’t walk. I think we would all be astonished, startled, and probably would flee out the other door. Well, so is the body of Christ when it is characterized by one big mouth, which is often the picture of the local church.) If the body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath

pleased him, (as it had pleased him.) And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked, (apparently Paul's thought here is that the uncomely parts of the body have more attention because they are the parts of the body upon which we bestow clothes but our comely parts don't need, consequently by analogy, the uncomely parts are more significant often. Verse 25,) That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are, (ye Corinthians,) the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? (The Greek text has it this way,) All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have the gifts of healing, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? (Which, of course, is one of the texts that tells us, very plainly and clearly as plainly as it could be said, that the gift of tongues even in the early church was not for every Christian, not a means of worship for worship is something that every Christian does.) All do not interpret, do they? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”

Now today we come to a subject which is perhaps one of the most important in the local church and again one of the most neglected; ignorance of the subject of spiritual

gifts results in heresy. Heresy such as apostolic succession, for example, that has proceeded from an inadequate understanding of the principle of spiritual gifts. It is responsible for a Jean Dixon who is supposed to have the gift of prophecy. If we understood spiritual gifts properly we would not be carried away with this.

It also results in heresy of fanaticism such as in the Pentecostal sects, many of which have gone overboard on tongues and miracles, failing to understand what the New Testament teaches about tongues and about miracles. And so it is a very important subject and at the same time one of the most neglected because most of our churches are organized in such a way that the exercise of this spiritual gifts is quenched and therefore these chapters do not have any real relevancy to most local churches and they are infected for that reason.

Now we have said as we studied organization the last two Sundays that the church is composed of head, Christ, officers who are elders and deacons, the members, you and I. Now let me make some further distinctions. Offices are spiritual positions in the local church. They are not positions in the sense that a man who is an officer may feel that he has some rank, but they are primarily positions in the sense that they represent functions of service. It's rather startling that there is actually, though the English word office occurs in the New Testament, there is actually no word for office in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, in all of the places where we read, for example, the office of apostle or all the members have not the same office, we have words that mean and emphasize primarily function, or practice. And we saw last time that the elders were to be highly regarded for their work's sake, not their position.

The New Testament had gone out of its way to avoid the use of terms that were very common in Greek literature for men who held public office connoting rank. And one of the offices, deacon, is built upon a word which really meant a menial server. It often referred to a table servant, like a butler, and that's the word that is used for a deacon. Some even think that the word diakono which means to serve as a deacon, or

diakonos, the word for deacon, from the word konos which means dust. In other words, a deacon might be a man characterized by raising a lot of dust because of his activity. So that the offices of the New Testament are primarily functions but I will use the term office because I think it is justified providing we understand the sense in which it is used.

Then thirdly, there are graces. Now I want to distinguish these words, offices refer to spiritual positions. Gifts -- I neglected that -- gifts refer to spiritual abilities in the local church. Graces refer to spiritual virtues produced by the spirit in the body. Just for a moment remember the three words: offices, spiritual positions, elders, deacons, priests; gifts, spiritual abilities in the church local; graces, spiritual virtues produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of every Christian. Now let's keep these things in mind; offices, gifts, and then graces. Grace, the grace of love, kindness, etcetera, is produced by the Spirit in the life of each one of us. Certain people in the church are offices. Everybody has a spiritual gift which is designed for service. So offices, gifts for services, grace for manifestation of spiritual life, these three things.

Now let's turn to 1st Corinthians 12 and I want to, for a few moments, define spiritual gifts. Now Paul's expression is verse 1, “Now concerning spiritual things.” Notice “gifts” is in italics, “Now concerning the spiritual things.” But in verse 4 he says, “Now there are diversities of gifts,” so we do not have any question but that he is referring to spiritual gifts when he says, “Now concerning the spirituals,” in verse 1. And the Authorized Version is correct in supplying the word gifts.

Now the word for gift is a word that means a grace gift, charisma. It is a word that refers to something bestowed by God on the principle of grace. So a spiritual gift is something that is bestowed by grace. Now in defining it let's look at the giver, notice verse 11, “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” In other words, the spirit gives spiritual gifts.

Now if we had time I think we could see as we looked at Ephesians 4, we will read this passage in a moment, Ephesians 4 and other passages, that the spiritual gifts are

given by the entire trinity. God is responsible for spiritual gifts, Jesus Christ gives the gifts, the Holy Spirit gives the gifts. And the reason why the Bible can speak of the whole trinity being involved is because it is the Father who is responsible for initiating this. It is Jesus Christ who executes the Father’s will and he carries it out through the administration of the Holy Spirit, just as our salvation is offered by God, executed by Christ, administered by the Holy Spirit.

So spiritual gifts are given ultimately by God, Jesus Christ grants them at God’s behest, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore they may be traced to all of the trinity. So the giver of spiritual gifts is the spirit according to the text here. But let’s bear in mind it’s the whole trinity.

Now what is the gift? Notice verse 7, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each to profit withal.” Notice verse 8 through verse 10, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge,” and so on. And then notice verse 28 through 30, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,” etcetera. To sum it up a spiritual gift is a spiritual ability. And so a spiritual gift, then, is given by the spirit, it is a spiritual ability that is conferred by him, a spiritual function, a spiritual work that is given by the spirit.

Now who has spiritual gifts, notice verse 7, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” Verse 11, “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” In other words, everybody in the local church has a spiritual gift. Now isn’t that an amazing thing? Every one of us in this room if we have believed in Jesus Christ we have a spiritual gift. Do you know what your gift is? Isn’t it amazing that we can be Christians for so long and yet not even know what our gift is? And we have been given a gift by God? And this gift is to be manifested in the local church, is it possible that we have been Christians for many years and yet do not know that we have a spiritual gift given by the Holy Spirit in which the whole trinity is involved, and vitally involved? God has originated it, Christ has given it by means of

the Spirit’s administration, the whole trinity interested in this and yet we don’t even know what it is. Why this is worse than if we were to discover after fifteen or twenty years that we had inherited hundreds of thousands of dollars twenty years ago, my goodness what that would have meant to us over the past twenty years. All that struggling was unnecessary, all that traveling that we wanted to do we could have done, and spiritually we are in the same position often. We don’t realize that we have a spiritual gift.

Now I think you can see from verse 11 when we read, “Dividing to every man severally as he wills,” that spiritual gifts are not given according to our spirituality. Did you think, for example, because I happen to teach the word frequently in Believers Chapel that I probably have a gift but you do not, and my gift is probably better than yours because you think I’m more spiritual than you are? Why you’ll notice that they are sovereignly given. They are given as God wills; they’re not given according to spirituality but according to the sovereignty of God.

I want to tell you I’ve been a Christian for a long time and I’ve seen people who have spiritual gifts who were very unspiritual. I remember one man particularly, a preacher in a church in a city with which I was very well acquainted, an outstanding preacher. An evangelical, and him probably the outstanding gift in that city but as he was ministering the gift he was also going with the church secretary who was another man’s wife. Now his teaching was very, very profitable because God had given him a spiritual gift, but he was very unspiritual. Finally the truth came out.

So you see, a man’s spiritual gift is something that is given him sovereignly. This is why it is possible for a man to teach with ability and yet his life does not measure up to his teaching. Now, of course, it is true and I think we can prove this from the word, that if a man is out of fellowship with God his gift will not be exercised with the same power as it would have been exercised had he been in fellowship with God. But a spiritual gift is a sovereignly bestowed ability and frequently it is ministered to the glory of God even though the individual is out of the will of God.

Now of course this also means that if it's true that God has given us a spiritual gift as he wills then what gift we have does not bring us any merit if it's an outstanding gift. Nor does it make us feel any less important, or it should not make us feel any less important, if it is not a very significant gift. For if God has given it then he is ultimately responsible. This means, for example, that Billy Graham should not feel proud because he has an outstanding gift of evangelist, nor should it make you feel bad because your only gift is the gift of helps in the local church. If God has sovereignly decided that you should carry out this function and he has sovereignly decided that Billy Graham should carry out that function your reward is based on your faithfulness to the gift that has been given. And it's possible for a man who has a great big utterance gift which is very prominent defined at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ that the insignificant Christian with this apparently insignificant gift is the one who receives the great reward because he's been faithful in the place where God has put him.

That's why in Believers Chapel it is just as important that you, whatever your gift may be, exercise that gift as it is that I or anyone else who stands and teaches the word exercise our gifts and yours is just as important in the sight of God and at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ you will be rewarded according to faithfulness in the exercise of the gift. So, then, a spiritual gift is given by the Spirit and represents a spiritual ability conferred upon every Christian.

Now, the description of the spiritual gifts; you will notice, of course, that in this chapter a great number of them are mentioned and I want you in order to get a more complete picture now to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4. And while you are turning to Ephesians chapter 4 I want to put up my scintillating blackboard. And I want you to understand that I have a chart that is so magnificent that it will not even go on my blackboard today [Laughter] so you're not going to have the privilege of seeing that one but I'll show you this little one. I've had more fun this week working on charts and I'm sure you're wondering what in the world I've been doing after looking at this one.

Now let's read Ephesians chapter 4, verses 7 through 12. Now again, watch as these things are said in Ephesians 4, for the familiar truths that we have seen already in 1st Corinthians 12, verse 7, Ephesians 4,

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, (in other words, as Christ gives it to us. You can see that every one of us has a gift and it is Christ who gives the gifts here.) Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he, (Christ,) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”

Now let me stop and I think that sometimes this verse 11 is misunderstood in two ways. Number one, “And he gave some, apostles,” seems to imply that he gave over here this little group some apostles, and over here he gave some prophets, and over here he gave others some evangelists, and he gave some pastors and teachers. Now that is not what he means. This text really means, and you could eliminate the some, really, and just simply say, “And he gave apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastor-teachers. In other words, the some is not he gave this part of the church these, this part of the church these, but he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to minister as evangelists.

The second mistranslation is the translation, “Pastors and teachers.” Most Greek students in the light of the fact that this is a construction of two nouns with one article take this last gift to be one so that it is pastor-teacher. In other words, every pastor is a teacher. Now in 1st Corinthians 12 we read of the gift of teaching by itself so not is it - it's not necessarily true that every teacher also shepherds but everyone who has the gift of

shepherd also teachers. So he gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor-teachers. And this is why they were given, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Now before I talk about verse 12 I want to now say a few words about the two classes of spiritual gifts. I put on the board here the church and spiritual gifts, every member has a gift, Ephesians 4:7, you saw it, “For unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Now this, if you remember last time I put a diagram on the board with the body, and then the offices, and the gifted men, and Jesus Christ set apart from this body. Now strictly speaking that was incorrect and I tried to explain to you that the elders or deacons were really members of the body and that the gifted men were also members of the body. So if we had a lot of space I would like to just take out that little section of gifted men and have you think of this but we cannot do that and so I’m representing here the body as looked at from spiritual gifts and the body represents the church and we are looking at spiritual gifts. And you notice that I put 30 A.D over here because this is approximately the beginning of the church down to 1968 plus A.D., we don’t know how long we’re going to go before Jesus Christ comes.

Now the history of the church with reference to spiritual gifts is characterized by two periods. That is, there is a period of temporary and permanent gifts in operation. Now the temporary gifts were confirmatory and revelatory. The permanent gifts were regulatory or, I don’t even know how to pronounce that [Laughter], edificatory an Australian would say, I know. But let me stop and explain what I mean by this. In the early days of the church men had the gift of tongues, men had the gift of miracles, men had the gift of healings, men had the gift of prophecy. But those gifts died out. Some of them were confirmatory, like prophecy and tongues; they were designed to confirm the message that was given. When the apostles preached the word these gifts took place in order to confirm the fact that God the Holy Spirit was with them. Some of them were revelatory like prophecy. For, you see, the local church did not have a New Testament.

They met and all they had was the Old Testament. Now they weren't poor because they had the Old Testament but there were some things that were not in the Old Testament. Spiritual gifts, for example, you won't find that in the Old Testament. You won't find instructions regarding the offices of elder, and deacon, and many other things which the New Testament has given us. What would the church do when it did not have a Bible which contained the New Testament? Well, God gave prophets. Now prophets are men who receive a message directly from God and give it to people like Agabus in the New Testament. And Philip, the evangelist, had some daughters who also prophesied.

In other words it was their responsibility to give direct instruction to the church of Jesus Christ. There were also the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. Now the gifts of wisdom and knowledge were temporary gifts. Nobody has that gift today. They were gifts which enabled a man in the local church to give instruction from God on significant things in the local church when they did not have a New Testament. In other words, the truth of 1st Corinthians chapter 5, for example, and chapter 6, since that is not found anywhere in the Bible, so to speak, then men were given certain gifts; wisdom, knowledge, prophecy. And the Holy Spirit led them as the church met to give instruction on these points. So gifts were confirmatory like miracles and tongues. They were revelatory like prophecy, wisdom, knowledge and so on.

Now there were also permanent gifts such as teaching, pastor-teacher, government, helps, ruling, etcetera. Some of them were regulatory like the gifts an elder might have. Some were edificatory like teaching which might be an elder's gift or it might not be a teacher's gift, it might not be an elder's gift. Then after this early period of time, and by the way we do not have any historical record of, for example, anyone speaking in tongues from the early days, at least from about Tertullian's day until the 19th Century.

In other words, that gift passed out of existence because its practical use was over. Now at this time and the period that we live in I have called a period of permanent gifts. And I am classifying these permanent gifts in two ways; utterance gifts, and non-utterance

gifts. And the Bible does not say some gifts are utterance and some are non-utterance, but you can see that if you read them, for example, there's the gift of teaching, there is the gift of pastor-teacher, there is the gift of evangelist; these gifts are utterance gifts. We place a great deal of importance on utterance gifts because we haven't studied the New Testament very well.

Then there were non-utterance gifts like ruling, helps, ministry, etcetera. Did you know that over twenty gifts are specifically referred to in the New Testament? And those are not talents, they are spiritual abilities. For example, there is no such gift known as the President of the Ladies Auxiliary, that's not a spiritual gift. It may be a talent [Laughter], I doubt it, but nevertheless it's not a spiritual gift. Nor is it a spiritual gift to be able to sing like Betty Votkrenshaw [ph33:55] can sing. Beautiful singing, but that's not a spiritual gift, that's a talent that God has given that she may use to the glory of God, but that's not a spiritual gift. Spiritual gifts are spiritual functions set forth in the New Testament but there are utterance gifts and there are non-utterance gifts.

Now we've talked about elders, deacons, and members. Now our text at the beginning says every member has a gift. So that means that everybody, elder, deacon, congregation, everybody has a spiritual gift. But does everybody have an utterance gift or does everybody have a non-utterance gift or just exactly how do we fit in here. Well now the New Testament makes it very plain that elders may have utterance gifts, 1st Timothy chapter 5, and verse 17, we read that, “Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those that labor in the word and doctrine.” Do elders have non-utterance gifts, perhaps? Well our text says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those that labor in the word and doctrine.” There were two types of elders. One ruled, the other ruled and taught. One ruled and he had a gift of, we would assume, governments or ruling. So he had a non-utterance gift. The other elder may also rule and have an utterance gift. So an elder may have an utterance gift, he may have a non-utterance gift, that's up to God, you see. That's up to God either

way. Two elders may have utterance gifts, three may have non-utterance gifts. Three may have utterance gifts and there may be none who have non-utterance gifts at the moment. This is all up to God, who is sovereign in this.

What about deacons? You ever thought of deacons as having an utterance gift? It's very plain that the New Testament teaches that they did. You remember a man named Philip? Philip was one of the original deacons. And what was his gift? Well in Acts chapter 21 he's called an evangelist. As a matter of fact he had some daughters who prophesied too. Acts chapter 21, and verse 8 and 9 reads,

“And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.”

So deacons may have an utterance gift, it's possible for a deacon to be a teacher but he may not yet be qualified to be an elder because of some particular thing that he does not measure up to. Perhaps he has an unruly home, he has a child who is out of order. He's a mess, he disturbs the church constantly, but he has a spiritual gift and he may exercise that gift but he has not reached a place where, since he doesn't rule his own house well he cannot serve as an elder. So it's possible - now of course this doesn't mean, by the way, that every deacon who has a spiritual gift has a problem with his family [Laughter]. In fact, one of the best deacons I know and one of the best teaching deacons I know, doesn't have any problem so far as I know. In fact, they're a model, I speak of [name redacted] back there. Because [name redacted] I think has a teaching gift but he's a deacon. I think it's normal, too, that as someone said last time for deacons as they served well, to ultimately reach the place where God appoints them as an elder in the local church.

Do deacons have non-utterance gifts? Yes, they may have non-utterance gift. It isn't necessary for a deacon to be a teacher, he may have simply the gift of ministry which I would presume that most deacons should have if they're going to minister, for that's what the word deacon means. So an elder may have this kind of gift, he may have this kind, a deacon may have this kind, or that kind.

Now what about a member? Just a plain old member, every one of you is a member of course. Congregation, I guess I should put. Oh, I forgot something, very important. What about the women? Oh I think I can put it this way, I'm going to put congregation...and congregation here, you'll understand about that. Is it possible for a woman to have an utterance gift? Well all women have utterance gifts, we know that [Laughter]. But that's in the home. Is it possible for her to have a spiritual gift of teaching? Why yes, of course it is. Wouldn't you say Ms. Montgomery [ph39:14] has a gift of teaching? I would. She has a gift of teaching. Is it possible for a woman to have the gift of evangelist? Yes, possible to have the gift of evangelist. Pastor-teacher? Teach as well as shepherd? Absolutely. Not a thing in the Bible says she cannot have gift of pastor-teacher. Nothing except custom and tradition, so she may have these gifts. As a matter of fact we have proof in the New Testament. What about Philip's daughter? Four daughters, virgins, which did what? Prophecy; they had the gifts of prophecy, utterance gifts. Amazing, think of it. They had the ability to give the mind of God directly from him.

Well then why don't we let the women speak in church? Well the only reason we don't let the women speak in church is because God says don't let them, that's why, that's the only reason. Now there's some other biblical reasons which he gives to support his prohibition, but that's what he says. That the women keep silence in the churches, that means in the meetings.

Now then, when did they exercise their gifts then if they were silent when the whole church met together? Well the exercised them in private gatherings. Now would

you look at Acts chapter 21, it's very instructive because here is Paul and he is at Caesarea and he's come to abide in the house of Philip the evangelist, and this man has four old - I shouldn't have said that [laughter]. It really just says four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy, they may well have been young maids at this time. But they were not married and they were prophets.

Now God wanted to tell Paul something and notice how it's carried out, verse 10, “And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus, (There's another one. This one, however, is a man.) And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, (he's giving him some new revelation not found in the Bible anywhere, that's what prophets did.) Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.”

You can almost see, and I cannot prove this of course, it's almost as if God went out of his way to have a prophet who was a male come down from Jerusalem in order that in the meeting he might officially prophesy and tell Paul what lies before him in Jerusalem. Even though there were four women prophets in the meeting. He waits for the man to come down so that in the official meeting we may have instruction which comes from God.

So, it is possible for women to have gifts of utterance and, of course, gifts - that should be women. Whenever I talk about women I get a little flustered. Now, is that plain? We are living in this period; there are two types of gifts. Elders may have either type, deacons may have either type, you may have either type, women may have either type.

Now finally, just a minute, this is a big subject and here I've got all these notes and I haven't been able to cover just a part of them but, after all, we can at least introduce them. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? Now when we looked at Ephesians 4, and I'll just introduce this and we'll have to stop because I want to have some questions. Ephesians 4, verse 11 and 12, says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, (or pastor-teachers as we now know,) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Spiritual gifts are given for the salvation of the lost, for the attestation of the truth. They are given for the building up of the church, and ultimately for, as Peter says, they are given to the glory of God. And of course, that's proper.

But will you notice particularly verse 12? I dare say that most people have read this text as if this means he gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers, in order that they might perfect the saints, that they might do the work of ministry, that the result might be the edifying or building up of the body of Christ. But that isn't what this text means. This does not mean that the gifted men do the work of ministry. As a matter of fact the Greek text makes it very plain that what this means is he gave these spiritual gifts or gifted men for the equipping of the saints that they might do the work of ministry; that they might do the work of ministry.

In other words, the reason I am a pastor-teacher in Believers Chapel is not that I might do the work of ministry. I heard someone describe a football game as seventy-five thousand people desperately in need of exercise, cheering on twenty-two men who are longing for a little rest [Laughter]. Now that's the picture of the local church. It is composed of people who sit in the congregation who cheer on the pastor, the pastor-teacher, and if he does fine, fine. If he doesn't do fine, let's remove him. He's the team and you're the coach. And the picture, of course, is entirely contrary to the New

Testament. The New Testament is that gifted men have been given in order to equip you so that you get out in the stadium and do the work.

As a matter of fact, the gifted men are like coaches and trainers and it is our responsibility to train you to do the work of ministry, that's what Paul means; in order that the whole body might be built up. Jesus Christ said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” And how does he do it? By gifted men who train the church in order that they might do the work of ministry to reach the world and themselves carry on their ministry inwardly and outwardly so that, as Paul says, the body may be built.

Now questions for just a few minutes. We have to stop here. Come on. Yes, Don [ph47:02]?

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] No I do not think so. The question -- by the way I'm going to repeat the question because of people listening on tape who don't hear too well -- the question is, in women's teaching, may she teach at home or teach outside the church? Is this in essence what you mean?

I think that the answer to that is simply this, the women may teach at home. She is not going contrary to the word if she teaches at home. Paul says, “Let the women keep silent in the churches.” As a matter of fact, in Titus chapter 2 instruction is given to the intent that the older women should instruct the younger women in basic Christian truths of Christian life. And so the idea of a woman teaching at home is perfectly alright.

However I would like to say this, Don [ph48:38], I do not think it is the woman's responsibility to teach the children. Now I think it's alright for the woman to teach the children. It is the man's responsibility to teach his family. He's to be the head of his family and as Howard Prier loves to say, “The best Bible teacher that any child shall ever have is its father.” That's the best Bible teacher. So I think the men should do the

teaching at home, but it is possible for a woman to teach in a woman’s meeting such as Ms. Montgomery’s [ph49:11] meeting. I think she’s carrying on a very fine ministry. It’s possible for women to teach in small groups. It’s possible for them to gather in the neighborhood and teach them and so on. But it’s in the meeting of the church.

[Comment from the same audience member]

[Johnson] No, I see this is an issue speaking in the church, then. No, she is not. The church meeting in which the elders have designated that - which the elders have designated as a church meeting in which the officers and the members gather to observe their ordinances and to worship Jesus Christ. Any other meeting was not a church meeting.

Question over here? Somewhere?

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, that would be part of a responsibility of a teacher too. Someone - yes Chuck

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] That’s the passage I was thinking of, 1st Corinthians 12 and 13, particularly 13, because they are linked with tongues.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] You know, I just said - I was getting ready to say, “Now here it is, I’ve talked to you about spiritual gifts that nobody has asked, “How can we discover our spiritual gift?” Thank you very much Mel [ph51:06] because that happened to be the conclusion of my message which reads one last question, how may I know my gift? And I didn’t - he’s not planted in the audience [Laughter].

Let me give you three clues. Three clues as to how we can know our gift and then we have to stop. First, we should have a desire along that line. For example, if your gift is governments you should naturally have a desire along that line. If your gift is teaching you should have a desire along that line. Secondly, others should feel your gift is along that line too. If, for example, you think that you’re a teacher and you are the only one who does [Laughter] I think that you should normally question whether that really is your gift. So others should also feel that your gift is along that line. And finally, there should be definite evidence of spiritual blessing when your gift is exercised. For example, if you have the gift of helps you are exercised along this line, you want to help. Others seem to think that you have a gift of helps and when you exercise your gift people are definitely helped and blessed through it, you can be sure, probably that you have that gift. By the way, it’s possible to have more than one gift. But if you’ll just remember: I should have a desire, others should feel I have this gift, and there should be definite evidence of results from the exercise of it. I believe that will help you to discover your gift. It’s very important that you do. Not only does your blessing depend upon it but the blessing of Believers Chapel, the local church of which you remember. Let’s close in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the spiritual gifts which Thou hast given to us, enable us Lord to know...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]