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November 10, 2019

"THE SPIRITUAL 'GIFTING' OF PROPHECY"

(Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 13:2)

Intro ... Two weeks ago, I introduced a new series of messages we are calling: **"SPIRITUAL GIFTINGS"** ...

It is the First Part of a Three-Part Preaching endeavor called: **"TRINITY MINISTRY."**

That more extensive series has been suggested by this incredible Scripture found in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

It's our ...

"KEY TRINITY SCRIPTURE" ... 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

There are different kinds of **GIFTS**, ('*Charismaton*')
but the same Spirit.

There are different kinds of **SERVICE**, ('*Diakonion*')
but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of **WORKING**, ('*Energamaton*')
but the same God works all of them in all men.

That Scripture depicts the partnership of Father, Son and Spirit in the life of the earthly Church of Jesus Christ.

First there are "**Giftings**" given to every believer by the Holy Spirit at the moment of spiritual birth; then there are '**Services**' or '**Ministries**' designed and directed by the Lord Jesus Himself and then there are powerful '**Workings**' (demonstrations of Divine Power) authorized by the Father in accord with His own Sovereign Will.

Finding them placed side by side in this unique Scripture allows us to distinguish between them and thus not confuse them. We pointed out two weeks ago that much of what has been called "**spiritual gifts**" over the years is actually the sovereign working of God in the lives of "**gifted people**" in the midst of divinely arranged "**ministry situations**."

This **'TRINITY MINISTRY'** Series will (hopefully) answer a lot of our questions as it identifies and clarifies the work of our Awesome Three-Person God in our midst.

Now our current series of messages: "**SPIRITUAL GIFTINGS**" (which we begin in earnest today) is the **First Part** of that larger endeavor and focuses upon the first phrase of that Trinity Scripture.

*"There are different kinds of **GIFTS** ('charismaton')
but the same Spirit."*

Last Sunday we identified and highlighted the Scriptural passage that unlocks the meaning of this 'Gifting Ministry of the Holy Spirit.' ...

LAST WEEK'S KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"We have different **GIFTINGS** ('charismaton')
according to the **GRACE** ('charis') **GIVEN** to us.
(Romans 12:6)*

From that assertion of the Apostle Paul's, we drew this ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT...

*"Every Christian has been **GIFTED** by the Spirit of God
with a **particular** spiritual **ORIENTATION** by which and
through which the Body of Christ is to be **BUILT UP.**"*

We explained it this way ... At the moment of spiritual birth every believer is fitted (as it were) with a pair of spiritual spectacles through which he/she will view the world. These spectacles will determine the "*approach*" that will be taken in spiritual ministry.

Those two messages provide the foundation and framework for our examination of Paul's discussion of Spiritual Gifts (the 'Charismaton') in Romans Chapter Twelve.

In this Romans passage, the Apostle Paul lists Seven Such Giftings.

Today we begin our investigation of the ***First*** of the ***Seven*** ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' IDENTIFIED AND DEFINED

*"If a man's gifting is **PROPHECY**, (KJV)
let him **PROPHECY** in accordance with his faith.*

PROPHECY - "Speaking Forth God's **WORD**"

That's what the prophets of old were noted for ...
The four words which began most of their declarations were:
"Thus Saith The Lord."

Prophets entered the community with a "Word From God" ...

In his second letter to the Church, the apostle Peter himself
declared that ...

*"Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from
God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." - 2 Peter 1:21*

The Prophet is never found saying ... "Well, it seems to me" or "I think ...".
The Prophet feels confident that he has received a "Word from God"
and that he is merely the conveyer of a "divinely given message" and
he feels compelled to give it.

The Prophetic Activity is seen in Samuel as he announces
to King Saul (1 Samuel 15:23) ...

*"Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord,
The Lord has rejected you as King."*

The Prophetic Activity is seen in Jonah walking the streets of Ninevah
and declaring for all to hear ...

"In 30 days, Ninevah will be overthrown."

Prophetic Activity is seen in many of the words that proceeded from Jesus' mouth. Think of his many confrontations with the Pharisees (Matthew 23:27) ...

*"Woe to you ... Pharisees, you hypocrites!
You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful
on the outside but on the inside are full of dead man's bones
and everything unclean."*

Think of his chilling words to Peter on that fateful day when Peter both confessed him as Christ and challenged him as Sacrifice ...

*"Get behind me, Satan!
You do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men."
(Mark 8:33)*

And, of course, recall Christ's direct encounter with Satan in the wilderness when time after time he confidently and powerfully countered Satan's Temptations with the words ...

"It is written" – "It is written" – "It is written."

In my opinion, the man who in our lifetime has most clearly demonstrated the Prophetic '**Gifting**' is **BILLY GRAHAM**.

In the year that I was born, Billy Graham gained national and international notoriety with his Los Angeles Evangelistic Crusade.

Untold millions have fallen under the convicting power of his messages and been brought to Christ ...

The phrase that is as familiar as his name to those who know him is the one with which he began sentence after sentence of his life-challenging messages ... "**The Bible Says.**"

That's the source of the modern-day prophetic declaration ...
The Bible is the sum total of God's revelation to man.

God does not require the services of Prophets today to add to the Scripture. He does, however, require the services of those whose '**Gifting is Prophecy**' to '**Declare the Scripture with Confidence.**'

Now the Prophetic Activity engaged in by one who embodies the Prophetic '*Gift*ing' is two-fold ... The Prophet discovered in the Scripture and the believer who has the "*Gift*ing of Prophecy" today will be found ...

"Declaring *TRUTH* and Denouncing *SIN*"

The '*Gift*ing of Prophecy' provides an absolute confidence in the Word of God and an almost undeniable compulsion to declare it.

Hear these words from the prophet **Jeremiah** (Jeremiah 20:9):

*"His Word is in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones.
I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot."*

Indeed ... Those with the 'Gifting of Prophecy Prophesy!"

The Prophetic 'Gifting' also provides one with a heightened sensitivity towards sin – almost a **revulsion**.

One with the '**Prophetic Gift**ing' knows what it is like to have righteous anger stir within him even as it stirred in Jesus that day in the temple when he thundered (Matthew 21:13) ...

*"It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer
But you have turned it into a den of thieves."*

The key phrase that we could associate with the prophet is ...

"LET ME TELL YOU."

So, the person today with the "**Prophetic Gift**ing" is primarily a "**Teller**" ... a conveyer of God's Truth – an announcer and a denouncer ... Nothing and no one slips by unexamined.

I would imagine that some of you in this room have the "*Gift*ing of Prophecy." I have been impressed this week that that was the '*Gift*ing' that my mother possessed.

Now, having noted at least somewhat this '**Gift**ing of Prophecy' **Defined**, note now ...

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' REFINED ...

"LET HIM PROPHECY ... "In Proportion to his FAITH"

Note the subtle change in spelling from Prophecy (with a "c") to Prophecy (with an "s") as we change from the Noun form of the word to the Verb form ...

Those with the 'Gifting of Prophecy' Prophecy ...

And in this passage, Paul lists a condition or a direction for the exercise of this '*gifting*' in the Church ...

Paul says that the one with the '*Gifting of Prophecy*' should Prophecy "***In proportion to his faith.***"

Now that's an interesting guideline – perhaps even a type of '*limitation*' or '*constraint*.' ***In other words***, do not exercise this gift in an unthoughtful or uncontrolled way ...

Exercise it "*in proportion to your faith.*"

I would suggest the following two ***implications*** of that phrase. I suggest to you first of all that Paul is saying that a believer with the '*Gifting of Prophecy*' should Prophecy ...

* In proportion to the **EXTENT** of '*His Faith*'
(The faith he **POSSESSES**.)

Only declare that which you can declare confidently – with passion and conviction. If you have not come to a place where you believe it yourself, then don't stand up and declare it to others.

When push comes to shove, God does not want you to be backed into a corner where you find yourself saying ...

*"Well, maybe it's not true ...
I'm not sure that I'm entirely convinced myself."*

The power of the Prophetic Gifting is the power of **Confident Conviction**. "Thus says the Lord" is to be the heart cry of those who are so gifted. They should only declare as much as they know to be true.

However, John 3:16 alone (The Bible's most familiar and complete verse) can be dynamite in the hands of one who possesses the 'Prophetic Gifting.'

Secondly, I would suggest that Paul is saying that a 'Prophetically Gifted Believer' should prophesy ...

* In proportion to the **DICTATES** of 'The Faith'
(The faith he **PROFESSES**.)

Does the "faith" itself give some direction or guidance in the matter of exercising the Prophetic Gift?

Well, how about the guidance given in Ephesians 4:15-16 ...

"Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ.

"Speaking the truth in love" – wanting the outcome of your speaking to be good for those who hear.

That's the desire the Spirit of God would want to find in the heart of every believer but especially the "prophetically gifted" ones.

To buttress that thought, here's the inspired confession Paul shared with the Corinthians believers (1 Corinthians 13:2) ...

Mikels' amplified version:

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, (that is, if I know the faith inside and out and have mastered every nuance and can declare it confidently and passionately) but have not love, I am nothing."

A heart of love combines **compassion** with the prophetically gifted believer's **conviction** and the two together become a potent weapon in the Lord's hand.

So now, having noted the '**Gift of Prophecy Defined**' and the '**Gift of Prophecy somewhat Refined** ...

Note **Thirdly** and **Finally**,

TODAY'S 'GIFTING' ALIGNED

The '**Gift of Prophecy**' can only be fully understood and fully appreciated as we see it as part of a much larger package.

We need to place it "**In Alignment**" ...

*** With the REST of the GIFTINGS**

That we will be doing over the next several weeks as we continue through this amazing list in Romans 12 ... As of today, we have nothing yet to align the gift of prophecy with ...

However, as we work our way through the list, our "**alignment tool or mechanism**" will be the various "**Key Phrases**" that will be suggested for each gifting.

The Key '**Alignment Phrase**' for the Prophetic Gift (that I mentioned earlier in this message) is ...

"Let Me TELL You."

Each gifting in turn will be given its own "**Let me ... phrase**" and when we get done, we will have a compilation of seven such phrases, each owned by one of the "**gifted**" members of the body.

We will be able to "**line up**" those seven phrases and in that simple way be able to "**Align these 'giftings' one to the other**" and keep them distinct in our minds. Sound good?

Now also we need to place this 'gifting of prophecy' "***In Alignment***" ...

*** With the REST of the BODY**

The '*prophetically gifted believer*' is but one member of the Body of Christ - one member of local fellowship to which he/she belongs.

The '*gifting of prophecy*' is to be exercised in conjunction with (in alignment with) the larger body.

Here's the rest of that passage from Ephesians that we read a few moments ago ... Ephesians 4:15-16

*"Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, **as each part** (gifted person) **does its** (his or her) **work."***

This morning we have focused upon the part (the vital role) that the believer with the '*Gifting of Prophecy*' plays in building up the Body of Christ.

Our ***Final Thot*** provides a hopefully helpful summary ...

Final Thot ...

The '*Gifting of PROPHECY*' brings **CONTENT**
and **CONVICTION** to the Body of Christ.

Without the prophetic voice, the Body can
become **COMPROMISED** and **CASUAL**
or even **COMPLACENT**.