

We've been engaged in a topical study of Church Life. I've suggested this Life takes three directions—it looks up (in worship), within (in edification), and without (in evangelism). For the past few weeks, we've been discussing the second of these, namely, Church Life consists of looking within to edify the body. Thus far we've considered – confrontation and forgiveness and Christian forbearance.

This brings us this morning to the broad topic of spiritual gifts. The primary theme of 1Peter is a Tri-une salvation, that enables us to obey God, even in the midst of suffering. Chapter 4 fundamentally contains three sections (each of which is an incentive to Christian obedience): (1) Christ suffered for sin, thus let us no longer live in it (vv1-6), (2) Christ's return is imminent, thus let us be found diligent (vv7-11), and (3) Christ is using our present trials as a means to purge us, thus let us patient throughout them (vv12-19).

Our text (4:10-11) is found in the second of these sections wherein Christin duty is encouraged in light of Christ's return, v7—"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers."

And then in vv8-11, Peter provides three "one another passages," v8—"have fervent love for one another" v9—"be hospitable to one another" and v10—"as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another"—love one another, be hospitable to one another, and serve one another through various gifts given to you.

- I. The Source of Spiritual Gifts
- II. The Nature of Spiritual Gifts
- III. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

#### I. The Source of Spiritual Gifts

1. V10—"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."
2. Peter says, each Christian has received a gift—the Greek word is *charisma* from which we get *charismatic*.
3. The word simply refers to a "free" and "gracious" gift—we refer to them as "spiritual gifts" for two reasons.
4. First, they are given by the Holy Spirit, and secondly, they are spiritually exercised and bring spiritual good.
5. 1Cor.12:11—"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."
6. Thus, here I want to suggest three things about the source of Spiritual gifts—they are universally, purposely, and graciously given.
7. (1) They are universally given—"as each one has received a gift"—every Christian receives a gift (or gifts).
8. Let me put it this way—when a Christian receives the Spirit at conversion, the Spirit brings gifts with Him.
9. The Holy Spirit never enters the heart empty handed—every Christian has a unique set of spiritual gifts.
10. Wayne Mack—"All true believers have received spiritual gifts from the Lord. There is not one Christian in this world who does not have some ability to serve others in the body. If you are a Christian—whether you are old or young, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, strong or weak, mature or immature—you have spiritual gifts."

11. (2) They are purposely given—"minister it to one another"—gifts must be used in service to one another.
12. Gifts are not given for our own good, but for the good of others—the word "minister" means "to serve."
13. Thus, at their very core, spiritual gifts are specific abilities given to us for the service or edification of others.
14. This can be illustrated in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, who sought gifts for their own benefit and not others.
15. 1Cor.14:12—"Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel."
16. Simple put—spiritual gifts are not given for our good and honor, for the good and edification of others.
17. They are given for the specific purpose of building the church—of edifying each member within that church.
18. (3) They are graciously given—"as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"—here Peter refers to these gifts as "the manifold grace of God."
19. By "manifold" is meant "many" "diverse" and "assorted"—there are many kinds of these gracious gifts.
20. Peter describes us as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God"—or, we are to be good stewards of spiritual gifts.
21. A "steward" is someone entrusted with something—Paul referred to himself as "a steward of the gospel" (1Cor.4:1).
22. Thus, every Christian is entrusted with specific gifts that they are responsible to use as good stewards.
23. Using our spiritual gifts for the good of others is not optional, it's the very purpose for which they are given.
24. Thus, the possession of gifts, even the most prominent gifts, are never intended to bring attention to ourselves.
25. No Christian can take credit for spiritual gifts—we have no reason to be proud or puffed up because of them.
26. 1Cor.4:7—"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it."
27. Now this doesn't mean, as we will see in a few minutes, that Christians are not responsible to strengthen these gifts.
28. But it is to say—no Christian can take credit for these gifts or despise those who have less prominent gifts.
29. Thomas Schreiner—"Spiritual gifts are not fundamentally a privilege but a responsibility, a call to be faithful to what God has bestowed."
30. Thus, we can define a Spiritual gift as "a gracious ability, entrusted to us by the Spirit, for the good and edification of others."
31. Now before I come to our second main heading, I want to briefly pause, and suggest three things about spiritual gifts.
32. Observation 1—Gifts are to be discerned—if they've been entrusted to us then we must know what they are.
33. Now, there are many things that could be said about discerning your gifts—let me briefly suggest three.
34. (a) Gifts are numerous and many-sided—the lists of gifts found in the NT (Rom.12, 1Cor.12, Eph.4, 1Peter.4), are suggestive and not exhaustive.

35. I think a problem many Christians have is they look through these 4 lists and think that's all there is.
36. For example, when I shop for some pants, 34s are too long and 32s are too short—but they don't make 33s.
37. So I'm usually forced to make a choice—do I wear pants that are a little long or do I wear them a little short?
38. But this isn't like spiritual gifts—they come in every size—they are gifts that perfectly fit every Christian.
39. Thus, Paul describes gifts such as "showing mercy" "encouraging" and "helping" which all can have numerous expressions (manifold grace of God).
40. (b) Gifts are given in harmony with natural abilities and personal preference—what do you enjoy doing?
41. I think ordinarily, the Lord gives a sense of satisfaction and joy when we exercise the gifts entrusted to us.
42. Thus, we have to ask ourselves—what natural abilities do I possess that have brought good to others?
43. For example, the ability to fix a car, build a wall, bake a cake are all what I'm calling natural abilities.
44. Thus, while fixing a car, building a wall, or baking a cake are not spiritual gifts they work with spiritual gifts.
45. Let me be more specific—Justice Detwiler is a car mechanic—this is nowhere listed as a spiritual gift.
46. And yet, he can use this ability to serve others, and this selfless service is a spiritual gift from the Spirit.
47. Let me give another example—let's say there's a lady in our church who loves to cook and bake cakes.
48. Cooking and baking are not spiritual gifts, but if she has the gift of service, she can use these abilities to serve others.
49. Thus, in discerning our spiritual gifts, it's not wrong to ask ourselves what are we good at and what do we enjoy doing.
50. It's common after I teach about spiritual gifts, that someone says to me—I don't know what my gifts are.
51. And I usually say to them—what do you enjoy doing, and in what ways have you been a blessing to others?
52. (c) Gifts are discerned while exercising them—a person who never gets in the game will hardly know what they're good at.
53. For example, if a person wanted to play on a football or volleyball team, how are they to know what position they're good at unless they practice!
54. But here's the problem—many Christians come to church but rarely if ever actually participate in the game.
55. You have to get into the game! You have to start serving and helping people if you're to discern what you're good at.
56. Observation 2—Gifts are to be sought after—it's not wrong to seek gifts from God providing your motives are pure.
57. 1Cor.12:31—"But earnestly desire the greater gifts" 1Cor.14:1—"Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts."
58. 1Cor.14:12—"Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel."

59. If spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the church, then to desire spiritual gifts isn't improper.
60. Observation 3—Gifts are to be strengthened—that is, Christians are to labor to perfect the gifts given them.
61. This goes back to the idea of "stewardship"—if Christians are stewards of their gifts, then they are responsible to use them.
62. 1Tim.4:13-15—"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all."
63. Notice that Timothy was not to neglect the gift that was given him, but was to show his progress to all.
64. 2Tim.1:6—"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."
65. The term rendered "stir up" refers to the stirring up of hot coals that once were a strong and robust fire.
66. The imagery is that the fire has almost gone out and thus it was necessary to stir the coals back into flame.

## II. The Nature of Spiritual Gifts

1. V11—"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies."
2. Here Peter summarizes all spiritual gifts into two broad categories—those that entail speaking and those that entail serving.
3. But before I come to examine them, I first need to first answer the question whether or not Peter only refers to officers.
4. Some suggest that Peter is referring to gifts given to elders (speaking gifts) and deacons (serving gifts).
5. And it's true, that elders are given speaking gifts and deacons serving gifts (in fact the word rendered 'ministers' is the same word for 'deacon').
6. But I don't think Peter is referring only to officers, but merely saying, the gifts that officers must have are also given in measure to every member.
7. It's for this reason he says—"If anyone speaks" or "If anyone ministers" not merely officers, but "anyone."
8. Furthermore, v10, as we've already seen is broad and universal—"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another."
9. But what we do learn is this—every spiritual gift can be reduced down to one of two categories—speaking and serving.
10. Edmond Clowney—"Peter does not list the gifts of the Spirit; he mentions only two broad categories of ministry: speaking and serving."
11. John MacArthur—"The two broad categories of spiritual gifts are speaking gifts or serving gifts. Whoever speaks will minister through categories of preaching and teaching, wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. Whoever serves will minister through areas such as administration, prayer, mercy, or helps."
12. (1) Speaking gifts—"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God (or, 'the utterances of God')."
13. The idea here "source"—speak the word that comes from God, NIV—"If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God."

14. Now again, it's evident that this applies in the fullest sense to those who are gifted to teach and preach.
15. A preacher is to speak the word that comes from God, and he's to speak it in a manner that honors that word.
16. But what is true of preachers and teachers in the fullest sense, is also true of all Christians in a lesser sense.
17. All Christians are expected to speak the word of God to each other, and some are especially gifted at it.
18. Eph.4:15—"but speak the truth in love, that we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ."
19. Eph.4:29—"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."
20. Both of these verses refer to regular Christians speaking the word of truth to the edification of others.
21. Brethren, simply put, while we place a priority on preaching, preaching is not the only form of speaking.
22. Sending someone an encouraging email or providing them Biblical counsel fall within this category of gifts.
23. (2) Serving gifts—"If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies"—to minister is to serve.
24. Whereas the previous gift primarily was speaking, this gift is primarily doing—the first uses words, the second deeds.
25. Peter says—"let him do it as with the ability which God supplies" which correlates with the phrase "the oracles of God."
26. Those who speak must speak the word from God, and those that serve must serve with strength from God.
27. Lenski—"For both the tongue and the hand Christians are to use what God furnishes them and are thus to be good stewards of God."
28. Thus, serving gifts include showing mercy, hospitality, giving, and helping—these are all ways we serve one another.
29. And so, at this point I want to suggest three summary observations about the possession of spiritual gifts.
30. Observation 1—Gifts find expression in speaking and doing—now here I need to begin with a clarification.
31. While all Christians are commanded to speak and serve each other, some are especially gifted in these areas.
32. Thus, no Christian can say—I refuse to serve others through speech or deed, because these are not my gifts.
33. No—all Christians are commanded to exhort each other and all Christians are commanded to serve each other.
34. But—by spiritual gifts are meant—unique or heightened ability to serve others in speech and in deeds.
35. Thus, it's important to clarify, Christians can receive gifts from one or both of these two broad categories.
36. I don't believe that Christians are necessarily given a single gift, but are given a number of gifts (plural).
37. John MacArthur—"Each believer's spiritual giftedness is unique, as if each were a spiritual snowflake or fingerprint. It is as if God dips His paint brush into different colors, or categories of gifts, on His spiritual palette and paints each Christian a unique blend of colors."

38. John MacArthur—"Two believers may have the gift of teaching, but each will demonstrate it with a unique blend of grace and faith. That provides for edifying and useful spiritual diversity within the church."
39. Observation 2—Gifts are to be exercised in the body—that is, all the members together make a body.
40. The Spirit equips each person and places them in a local church, so that they together form a single body.
41. This allows us to not to despise the lowliness of gifts, as every member of the body is equally needed.
42. God sovereignly bestows gifts to each person, and He sovereignly and wisely gives them in various degrees.
43. Matt.25:15—"And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability."
44. This simply means—while all Christians are gifted, not all Christians are equally gifted—they each play a unique role.
45. Observation 3—Gifts derive their power from God—we are to speak words that come from God and serve others with ability which God supplies.
46. I think this is an obvious point that can be overlooked—spiritual gifts are means to communicate spiritual good.
47. What is needed if the church is to be edified but the word of God and service done by ability God gives.
48. Thus, we mustn't misunderstand how spiritual gifts work—spiritual gifts work because God blesses them.
49. He blesses His word as it's spoken and He supplies us with ability to serve others in a variety of ways.
50. Again, this is in part why they are called "spiritual gifts" because they are given by the Spirit and blessed by the Spirit.

### III. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

1. V11—"that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."
2. This is the ultimate purpose for spiritual gifts—they are given that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.
3. Thus, in closing my question is this—how does the use of spiritual gifts bring glory to God in Christ?
4. Or, perhaps I can put the question like this—how are spiritual gifts related to Christ and His redemptive work (let me answer this question with three final observations)?
5. Observation 1—All spiritual gifts are perfectly found in Christ—this includes speaking and serving gifts.
6. No person ever spoke the word as the oracles of God or served others with the ability which God supplies as Christ.
7. If you remember, John says He received the Spirit without measure—that means, He was perfectly gifted for ministry.
8. Observation 2—All spiritual gifts are given for the sake of Christ—that is, they are purchased by His death.
9. Eph.4:7-8—"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.'"

10. Paul then identifies these gifts as "apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers"—some of these were foundational and other continual.
11. Furthermore, to each of these offices, specific gifts were given to enable them to fulfill their callings.
12. Christ gives gifts to the church and then He equips those gifts with spiritual gifts to fit them for service.
13. But here's my point—all gifts come from the exalted and glorified Christ to equip His beloved church.
14. Observation 3—All spiritual gifts are given for the glory of Christ—the glory of Christ in His church.
15. Col.3:17—"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
16. Notice, Paul again Paul suggests two categories of gifts—"whatever you do in word (speaking) or do (serving).
17. What does it mean to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" but to speak and act for the glory of Christ!
18. Thus, spiritual gifts are given for the good of others and glory of Jesus Christ, and not for our own fame.