

## Are the Miraculous Gifts for Today?

We're going to answer the question contained in the message title by exploring three supporting questions.

### ● Question #1: WHAT ARE THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

Spiritual gift = a **supernatural ability** granted by the Holy Spirit to build up and serve the Church

*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit . . . <sup>9</sup>. . . gifts of healing . . . <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy . . . to another speaking in different kinds of tongues . . . 1 Corinthians 12:7-10 (New International Version)*

### The Miraculous Spiritual Gifts

- Gifts of healing = the ability to serve as a human instrument through which God **supernaturally cures** illnesses and restores health

“Gifts” implies that healing is not a gift permanent to an individual, but that each occurrence is a gift in its own right.

*And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. James 5:15a (NIV)*

### Observations about Healing

- God heals out of **compassion and mercy**.

*When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Matthew 14:13-14 (NIV)*

- God heals to **glorify Himself** and His Son Jesus.

*When Peter saw this, [the people's wonder and amazement over the miracle that had just taken place] he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? <sup>13</sup>The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. Acts 3:12-13a (NIV)*

*. . . they were all glorifying God for what had happened; Acts 4:21b (New American Standard Bible)*

*. . . “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? <sup>18</sup>Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?” Luke 17:17-18 (NASB)*

- God heals in response **to faith**. (See Matthew 9:28)

### How Christians Can Operate in Faith

Leper: “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Matthew 8:2 (NIV)

The faith that God requires for healing is not a **psychological certainty** that He is going to heal, but faith in His **ability** to heal and in His **good will** to heal.

- God heals in response to His own **promise**.

*Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:14-16 (NIV)*

- If God does not heal, His intention is that you **bring glory to Jesus** in your suffering.

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)*

- Miraculous powers (“the working of miracles” in ESV) = ability to serve as an instrument through which God accomplishes acts that manifest supernatural power.

*Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Galatians 3:5 (NIV)*

- Gift of prophecy = ability to receive and proclaim a message from God

*But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. 1 Corinthians 14:3 (NIV)*

*Do not put out the Spirit's fire; <sup>20</sup>do not treat prophecies with contempt. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 (NIV)*

- Gift of tongues = (Greek = *glossilalia*) = a Spirit-inspired utterance or prayer

*. . . different kinds of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:28 (NIV)*

Tongues evidenced at Pentecost in Acts 2 are different in character than the tongues described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

A careful examination of Paul's statements about tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 indicate that tongues are used most often as a private prayer language.

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup>So what should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind . . . 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 (NIV)*

*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. 1 Corinthians 14:2a (NIV)*

## ● Question #2: WHY DO SOME CHRISTIANS THINK THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS HAVE CEASED?

A cessationist's argument: The primary purpose of miracles and other miraculous gifts was to authenticate the apostles as authors of the Scriptures. After the New Testament was written, miracles would have fulfilled their purpose and would no longer be necessary because the Church had God's Word.

*Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. <sup>12</sup>Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 (NIV)*

Cessationist's view = “when perfection comes” = when the New Testament has been completely written

Plain sense of 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 = “when perfection comes” = the return of Jesus Christ

## ● Question #3: HOW CAN BELIEVERS EAGERLY DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

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

- Do the Bible study needed to arrive at the truth about spiritual gifts.

- Pray specifically for the gifts you think God wants to give you.

*You do not have, because you do not ask God. James 4:2d (NIV)*

- Use whatever gift God gives you on a regular basis.

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

- Be patient.

My thanks to the authors of the following books used as resources in this sermon series:  
*Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* by Jack Deere; *The Promise* by Tony Evans;  
*God's Empowering Presence* by Gordon Fee; *The Holy Spirit* by Billy Graham;  
*Those Controversial Gifts* by George Mallone