

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

“In the Power of Signs and Wonders”

Scripture Reading: ROMANS 15:18-21

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDE 7-8.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 9.** As we begin a new year, 2023, we continue in our sermon series on Understanding Spiritual Gifts. This is week #7 in this series. I have titled today’s message *“In the Power of Signs and Wonders”* (v19).
-) **SLIDE 10.** Every believer has been given a Spiritual Gift(s) by the Holy Spirit as He has determined. And there are a variety of gifts. What are the gifts? Again, different Bible translations may use different terms.
-) **SLIDE 11.** In three previous messages we covered 12 of the 18 gifts. Read slide. And more than likely everyone in here has at least one of these gifts. Any believer today may have one or more of these gifts listed here.
-) **SLIDE 12.** The remaining six are in a category we call sign (miraculous – apostolic) gifts. These six gifts are very controversial and highly debated in today’s church. What is this controversy over? The question is do these six gifts still exist in the church today?
-) **SLIDE 13.** They are not earned. They are not learned. They cannot be bought. They cannot be taught. They are gifts! As we move forward talking about these six sign gifts, this truth will become very important to know.
-) **SLIDE 14.** The first is **CONTINUATIONIST.**
-) **SLIDE 15.** The second is **CESSATIONIST.** I am a cessationist and I am going to show you why I believe this.

-) Mike, why is this even important today? Does it really make any difference if these gifts exist today or not? There is the possibility that it can make an eternal difference.
-) **SLIDE 16**. MATTHEW 7:21-23. The danger is there are those who claim to be Christian who claim to do these things, thinking that these actions are what is going to get them a ticket to heaven because they do these things in the name of Jesus.
-) **SLIDE 17**. Why are these gifts classified as “miraculous” gifts? Here’s a very quick summary. With prophecy certain people were receiving direct revelation from God and were able to relate future events. With healing and the effecting of miracles certain people were able to perform and speak instantaneous and complete healings into the lives of others.
-) With tongues/interpretation certain people were able to speak a foreign language they did not know—being understood by people of other languages. And to be an apostle was a class all to its own. Again, more in-depth information on these six gifts starting next week.
-) So in case you may not have known, there are two sides in the church today concerning these particular gifts. In the Pentecostal/Charismatic circles, they teach that these gifts have continued. Many other churches and denominations believe they have ceased.
-) I said last time that the cessationist calls these six gifts SIGN gifts (miraculous and apostolic). Why does a person like me, a cessationist, call these gifts sign gifts? Let’s search the Scriptures. I’ll give you three examples.
-) **SLIDE 18**. Example #1. In EXODUS 3 a man named Moses had a burning-bush encounter with God. We all know the story. EXODUS 3:10. There’s the mission.
-) **SLIDE 19**. Moses was a little concerned that when he went back to Egypt, no one would believe him. EXODUS 4:1.

-) **SLIDE 20.** So in EXODUS 4:1-9 God gives Moses 3 signs to take to the Israelites. Explain all three.
-) **SLIDE 21.** And to back this up, here's what God says to Moses in EXODUS 4:8-9. He calls these three actions "*signs.*"
-) **SLIDE 22.** The purpose of the signs? EXODUS 4:5.
-) **SLIDE 23.** The signs God gave to Moses were to validate the **MESSAGE** and the **MESSENGER**.
-) **SLIDE 24.** Example #2. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He would fulfill what all the OT prophecies had said about Him. ISAIAH 35:5-6.
-) **SLIDE 25.** The purpose of these signs? Jesus says this to the Jews concerning the miracles He was working. JOHN 10:37-38. Let the miracles speak of who I am.
-) **SLIDE 26.** The signs Jesus performed were to validate His **MESSIAHSHIP** and His fulfillment of Old Testament **PROPHECY**.
-) So far we have seen two instances where signs (in the form of miracles and wonders) were used by God to validate His messengers with His message. God sent Moses to deliver His people out of slavery. God sent Jesus as the long-promised Messiah to deliver His people out of the slavery of sin.
-) **SLIDE 27.** Signs, wonders, and miracles are always the exception in the Bible and not the norm. Three major periods of time signs and wonders were performed. Moses, the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and the apostles.
-) **SLIDE 28.** Example #3. And that leads us to the miraculous spiritual gifts. There is no question these Spiritual gifts were alive and well in the first century after Jesus' ascension because we can read about them in the Book of ACTS.
-) **SLIDE 29.** Prophecy. ACTS 21:10-11. Agabus had the Spiritual gift of prophecy.

-) **SLIDE 30.** Miracles. ACTS 3:6-7. Peter the apostle could perform miracles.
-) **SLIDE 31.** Tongues. ACTS 2:3-4. Certain people were given the gift of tongues.
-) **SLIDE 32.** These gifts, these signs and wonders, were performed by those after Jesus' ascension. HEBREWS 2:3-4.
-) **SLIDE 33.** ROMANS 15:18-19.
-) **SLIDE 34.** The signs and wonders the apostles and others performed were to validate the message of **CHRIST** (gospel) through the power of the **HOLY SPIRIT**.
-) **SLIDE 35.** MATTHEW 16:18. Jesus said that He (Jesus) would build His church. But Jesus had ascended. He was no longer with them. So how was the church going to be built?
-) **SLIDE 36.** JOHN 16:7. Jesus said that He would send the comforter (helper). The miraculous powers that the Holy Spirit would give certain people at that time would validate the message (gospel), the messenger (Christ followers at that time), and firmly establish the church (which the gates of Hades would not prevail against).
-) **SLIDE 37.** This age of establishing and validating the church and the gospel is known as the **APOSTOLIC AGE** (the age of the apostles).
-) This apostolic age began after the ascension of Jesus and ended with the deaths of the apostles. Explain. These sign (miraculous/apostolic) gifts had served their purpose. The church was now established. And now it would grow.
-) **SLIDE 38.** 2 TIMOTHY 4:19-20. Even the apostle Paul's gift of healing was no longer needed. The church had been firmly established.

-) So I am a cessationist because I believe the apostolic age has ceased and therefore the sign gifts necessary to validate and establish the church have served their purpose and ceased.
-) I am a cessationist not only because I believe that is what Scripture teaches but also because of how this issue was handled by the early church fathers—those who lived in the post-apostolic age.
-) Historic church fathers such as Tertullian, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Augustine all agreed that once the apostles died, it marked the end of the apostolic age and the miraculous gifts that accompanied that era.
-) **SLIDE 39**. And this fits in perfectly with what the apostle Paul says about the church's foundation. EPHESIANS 2:19-20.
-) So why don't we need miraculous gifts today? Wouldn't they be a positive addition to Christianity today? Great question. Come back next week. There's much more to say so we'll pick up here next time.

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