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Section: Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q113. What is a spiritual gift?**

A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers for the good of the Church unto God’s glory.

**Hermeneutics:** how one reads and interprets Scripture.

The historic confessions say truths in Scripture are “either explicitly stated in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” or “by necessary inference contained in the Holy Scriptures.”

**1 Corinthians 12:1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

* **A Spiritual Gift**

**James 1:17a** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6**

**1 Corinthians 12:11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually **as he** wills.

**Romans 12:6a** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them

**1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace

**1 Corinthians 12:7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

* **Spiritual Gifts New Testament Scripture Speaks to That Remain Today**

* **Administration:** wisdom and prudence, ability to execute the plans of leadership by managing people, resources, and time *for ministry*.
* **Service:** take the initiative to meet the practical and physical needs of others.
* **Teaching:** understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God rightly (Scripture in our time).
* **Exhortation:** give support, admonishment, and encouragement to those who are struggling, to promote growth in another’s Christian maturity.
* **Evangelism:** communicate the good news of Jesus Christ, especially to unbelievers.
* **Faith:** trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, trust in the goodness and plan of the triune God regardless of circumstances, often done in a way that encourages others.
* **Generosity:** cheerfully and generously contribute time, material resources, and/or money.
* **Leadership:** instill vision, make decisions, motivate, discipline, and direct people to accomplish the work of ministry.
* **Acts of Mercy:** provide compassionate and cheerful support to those who need it, especially those experiencing crisis or pain.
* **Existing Revelation Prophecy:** proclaim and apply God’s truth and expose sin.

**Q114. Are all the biblical spiritual gifts given still?**

No. God used certain gifts for a particular purpose and time in human history. **God still does miracles**, but the gifts that have ceased to be given by God to individuals are the miraculous and revelatory gifts: Apostle of Christ, prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, and miracle worker.

* **Doctrine of Cessationism**

God still performs miracles today. Our best and most gracious example of God performing miracles Himself in our time is *every time* a spiritually dead sinner is brought to life, it is a miraculous work of God through His divine grace.

* **Gifts New Testament Scripture Speaks to That Do Not Remain Today**

* **New Revelation Prophecy (Hearing new, special revelation from God and/or proclaiming new or personal revelation from God):** enabled those with it to have personal insight from God, hear directly from God, and/or speak for God, all with 100% accuracy.
* **Performing Miracles:** ability to cause something supernatural (beyond scientific understanding or laws of nature) to happen.
* **Healing:** ability to heal any sickness/illness/disability in a complete, immediate, permanent, and undeniable success.
* **Speaking Tongues:** ability to speak in a **real** human language that was foreign/unknown to the speaker apart from the spiritual gift.
* **Interpreting Tongues:** ability to interpret a **real** human language that was foreign/unknown to the hearer apart from the spiritual gift.
* **Discernment of Spirits:** ability to discern the hearts of men, their thoughts, purposes, and designs to find out falsehood and hypocrisy.
* **Apostleship:** *role* of a person who was a witness of the resurrected Christ, was personally appointed to Apostleship by Christ, and was able to work miracles and other now ceased spiritual gifts such as new prophecy of special revelation.
* **Biblical Reasons for Christian Understanding of Cessationism**
* **Unique role of miracles**

There were only *three primary periods* when God gave human beings miracle working power.

1. **Moses and Joshua.** From about 1445 B.C. through the career of Joshua that ended in about 1380 B.C.; about 65 years.
2. **The ministries of Elijah and Elisha.** From about 860 B.C. until 795 B.C.; about 65 years.
3. **With Christ and His Apostles**. Began with His ministry and lasted at the very longest until the death of the Apostle John, or about 65/70 years.

The primary purpose of miracles has always been to confirm the credentials of a divinely appointed messenger (to establish the credibility of one who speaks for God); not one who teaches or explains the Word of God *as I’m doing this evening*, but one in whose mouth God has put His very words.

**John 5:36** “But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, **bear witness** about me that the Father has sent me.”

**John 6:14** “When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, ‘This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!’”

**Acts 14:3** “So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.”

**Hebrews 2:3-4**

* **End of the gift of Apostleship**

1. A witness of the resurrected Christ.
2. Personally appointed by the sovereign Christ.
3. Able to work miracles.

* **Foundational nature of New Testament Apostles and prophets**

**Ephesians 2:19-20** “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **built on the foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”

* **Nature of New Testament miraculous gifts compared to charismatic gifts claimed today**

* **Gift of tongues**

**Acts 2:7-8** “they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?’**”**

* **Gift of new revelation prophecy**

**2 Peter 1:21** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke *from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

* **Gift of healing**
* **New Testament rules for miraculous gifts**

**1 Corinthians 14:27-28** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

**1 Corinthians 14:34** “the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.”

**1 Corinthians 14:29-34**

* **Orthodox belief of church history**

**Augustine** “In the earliest times, the Holy Spirit fell upon them that believed and they spoke with tongues which they had not learned as the Spirit gave them utterance. That thing was done for a sign and it passed away.”

**Martin Luther** “This visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the establishment of the early church as were also the miracles that accompanied the gift of the Holy Ghost. Once the church had been established and properly advertised by these miracles, the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost ceased.”

**Jonathan Edwards** “Of the extraordinary gifts, they were given in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world, but since the canon of the Scriptures has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased.”

**Charles Spurgeon** “Those earlier miraculous gifts have departed from us.”

**Baptist Confession of 1689:** the “former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.”

* **Sufficiency of Scripture**.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**”**

**Reformer Martin Luther** “God wants to give you His Spirit only through the external Word.”

The historic confession says, “The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, *and obedience*." In Scripture is "everything essential for his own glory and man’s salvation, faith, and life."

The Spirit of God certainly leads us, reminds us of, presses upon us, Scripture, no doubt. But God is not speaking unique things personally to us in our heads or audibly to our ears.

**Romans 15:4** “For whatever was written in former days **was written** **for our instruction**, that through endurance and through the encouragement **of the Scriptures** we might have hope.”

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