

## Sabbath School Lesson #6 – Unlimited Possibilities – 1-7 August 2020

**C**hrist would have us be led by His Spirit to reach the height of unlimited possibilities in the work of saving souls using gifts He bestows. “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Corinthians 12:11). All members have not the same office, and all have not the same gifts. “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (Romans 12:6). And there is but “one faith” (Ephesians 4:5), and that is “the faith of Jesus.” Although there are various gifts, there is but one power behind them all. “All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit.” Therefore, to prophesy or to exercise any other of the gifts “according to the proportion” or measure of faith, is to do it “as of the ability which God giveth.” “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:11, 10).

**Sunday: Differing Gifts: United in Service** – “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (1 Corinthians 12:18-22). We see from this, that although there are different offices and gifts in the church, no one member is any more necessary than another. Neither are there to be any to have no responsibility. One may be in a position to do seemingly twice as much work as another, yet he is no more necessary to the work than one who occupies a humbler place. If the one in the lowest place is doing the work which God has given him there to do, then his place is just as important as that of the one in the highest place. There is no place in God’s plan for arrogance on the one hand, nor for fawning servility or fear on the other. “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye our brethren” (Matthew 23:8). “The head of every man is Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Therefore there are no such things in the true church as superior officers. Christ is the only Superior. The command, “Let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3), applies to those who have great gifts, as well as to those of less ability. Each member sees in every other one the representative of Christ, and esteems him accordingly. This mutual esteem is not brought about, however, by vote, nor by resolution, nor by the signing of any articles, but by the same Spirit of God dwelling in each.

In the human body every member is as much concerned to protect every other member, as to protect itself. Each different member and organ has a different work to do, there is perfect order and harmony. This is because they all receive orders from one common centre. The hand is joined to the arm, yet it acts in obedience to orders from the head. The last joint of the finger is connected with the one just above it, yet it is not directed by it, but by the head. Every part has direct communication with the head. So in the church, different members have different offices, each one having a work, yet while no one controls another, all agree or should. Indeed, it is only when some begin to exercise authority over others, that disagreement begins. The Spirit of Christ in every member makes all act in unison, just as do the nerves the organs in the body. Christ may use some members to convey His will to others, yet the message is to be received only as from Christ, and not as from a mere man.

Thus there is equality, while there is the greatest diversity. No one can despise another, or look with contempt upon his inferior gifts. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). Christ is the only Head of the Church, and all the life of the church must be that which is received from Him. The church is useful only as each member “holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossians 2:19). There is perfect independence, because the members of the church are built upon Christ, and not on one another; and there is also perfect unity, and subjection one to another, because all are filled by one Spirit and one mind, – the Spirit and mind of Christ.

**Monday: God: The Giver of All Good Gifts** – “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness,

neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Not only does everything that is good come from the Lord, but every good thing comes from Him. That is, every good thing that God has He gives to men. “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). Some people think that God is especially good to certain people; but the fact is that He is just as good He can be all the time, and is equally good to everybody. “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). “The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:9).

**Tuesday: The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts** – It is for establishing the body of Christ that spiritual gifts are given. “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Corinthians 12:7). What is the profit? “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). The gifts of the Spirit must accompany the Spirit. As soon as the early disciples received the Spirit in accordance with the promise, they received the gifts. One of the gifts, speaking with new tongues, was manifested that very day. It follows, therefore, that the absence of the gifts of the Spirit in any marked degree in the church, is evidence of the absence of the Spirit, not entirely, of course, but to the extent that God has promised it. The Spirit was to abide with the disciples forever, and therefore the gifts of the Spirit must be manifest in the true church until the second coming of the Lord. The absence of any very marked manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit is evidence of the absence of the fullness of the Spirit; and that is the secret of the weakness of the church, and the great divisions that exist. Spiritual gifts establish the church; therefore the church that does not have those gifts cannot be established. Who may have the Spirit? – Whoever asks for it with earnest desire (Luke 11:13). The Spirit has already been poured out, and God has never withdrawn the gift; it only needs that Christians should ask and accept.

**Wednesday: Discovering Your Gifts** – The expression of discovering your gift tends towards a human construct of imagining having spiritual gifts without the Spirit. If you have the true Spirit of Christ then spiritual gifts must follow to a degree that you may use them to proclaim Christ. All may prophesy. In the wilderness, seventy elders were chosen to help Moses, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, so that they prophesied. But there were two young men in the camp, upon whom the Spirit of prophecy also rested; and Joshua said, “My lord, Moses, forbid them.” But Moses replied, “Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:28-29). That wish of Moses indicates something of what the true church of Christ will be when it really becomes “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:23). It is what is set forth in Ephesians 4:7-16, and 1 Corinthians 12. “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” Christ has given “to every man his work” (Mark 13:34). The work of many may be only that of helping in a very small and humble capacity, yet it is as necessary as any other. That which Moses wished is, indeed, actually promised in the Scriptures: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18). Again, the Spirit has already been poured out, and God has never withdrawn the gift.

**Thursday: Growing Our Gifts** – It is a law of nature, – that is, it is one of the laws of God, – that all our powers should grow by *exercise*. By using the little knowledge, the little talent that we have, we increase our store. You remember how clearly Jesus taught this lesson, in the parable of the talents (Luke 19:12-27). The one who used all he had, gained much more, while the foolish servant who buried his Lord’s gift in order to keep it safely, had it taken away from him. Every Christian has at least one talent or gift. Every Christian can proclaim the gospel. “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And *let him that heareth say, Come.*” (Revelation 22:17). The word was confirmed to us by them that heard it, and as we hear it we are to confirm it to others. All have not the same talents, nor the same circle of influence; but all who hear are to say, “Come,” each in his place according to his ability.