

Understanding spiritual gifts part 2...
April 29th 2018...Gen. 1:2

In the world today there is a great emphasis on eating right and being healthy.

Before we buy a product we can look at the label and see the calories, fat, sugar and other things before we consume it.

A healthy lifestyle is often taken for granted until our health declines.

Sad to say when our health declines it may be too late to do anything to turn it around.

Being healthy has its benefits...

Such as...controlling weight...improves your mood...combats disease...boosts energy...improves physical appearance...improves mental health and being healthy improves longevity.

In life we take many things for granted but at the top of the list many times it is health we take for granted.

Healthiness is not limited to just the physical body.

Health and well being applies to marriages, relationships, finances and spiritual health.

And something that is so often overlooked and needs to be healthy is the church.

The church must be seen as more than a building...the church is a body.

A body of believers.

Paul in 1st Cor. 12 speaks of the church as a body that has many members.

In verse 15 he speaks of different body parts such as the foot, hand, ear, eye, nose and feet.

As with any body it means the church must be healthy to survive.

The church must never be seen as just an organization...

The church is a living organism.

Around the world today more and more churches are closing in America.

It is estimated by church researchers that 4000 churches a year are closing compared to 1000 new ones opening.

This means in America there is a loss of 3000 churches per year.

That is a very sad thing considering the church is the most powerful institution on the face of the earth.

When the church was formed in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost it was filled with power and miraculous happenings.

The church was healthy and vibrant.

The church was invading the kingdom of satan and advancing the kingdom of God.

But through time apathy and worldliness crept in and the health of the church as a body started to decline.

More emphasis was put on the church as an organization than a living organism.

Hirelings replaced Shepherds.

Careers replaced callings.

Appearance replaced anointing.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ became a showplace for saints instead of a hospital for the spiritually sick and weak.

People sung standing on the promises but they were just sitting on the premises.

When that happens the congregation gets older and older and as they die so does that church.

One of the saddest sights is when I see a church close its doors and a sign for sale goes up in the yard.

I know times have changed, people have changed but God is still the same today as He was on the day of Pentecost.

For the church to be what God designed her to be requires it being healthy and dynamic.

A place that is different and a place that lives are not just changed but where people have a healthy relationship with the Lord and are growing in the Lord.

The church should be the place where people are set free, healed, delivered, ministered too and refreshed in the Spirit of God.

The answer for a church to be healthy and dynamic requires The Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit being present and active.

That is why I am doing this series I want Tree of Life to be and always be healthy and lively.

Life is in our name and people receiving life is our mission.

This series is called understanding the Giver and the Gifts of the Spirit.

Understanding is very important because lack of understanding and lack of proper use results in chaos and confusion.

The goal of this series is to produce spiritual fruit not spiritual nuts.

Spiritual gifts are tools to work with not toys to play with.

Proper understanding and proper use results in a healthy and growing church.

To understand the gifts of the Spirit we need to understand the Giver of the gifts.

I want to go a little deeper with the Giver before we get into the gifts.

The Giver of the gifts is The Holy Spirit.

In Gen. 1:2 we are introduced to the Holy Spirit and some of what He does.

The earth was without form, and void and darkness was on the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon or was hovering over the face of the waters.

In this verse you do not see the name The Holy Spirit...He is identified here by one of His other names...**The Spirit God.**

We see in this verse some of the ways The Holy Spirit works.

- He gave order and organization to that which was created.
- The Holy Spirit brought forth hidden beauty.
- The Holy Spirit brought form out of formlessness...
- The Holy Spirit brought things to fulfillment and to its created potential.
- The Holy Spirit brought into activity that which was dormant and slumbering.

Just as the Holy Spirit worked in creation of the heavens and earth...

To give order and organization...

To bring forth hidden beauty...

To achieve form out of formlessness...

And to bring into activity that which was dormant and slumbering....

He does the same in us because we are the creation of God.

- It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring order into our lives.
- It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring out the hidden beauty in our lives...
- It the work of the Holy Spirit to bring form and purpose to our lives.
- It is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings fulfillment to our lives.

But that's not all...

Psalm 104:30 says... You send forth Your Spirit, they are created and You (speaking of The Holy Spirit) renew the face of the earth.

From the time of original creation until the present *The Holy Spirit works to preserve, sustain, direct, renew and to keep healthy the physical universe.*

That's why after 1000s of years the earth has not ran out of **oxygen, water, oil and natural resources.**

The Holy Spirit is renewing...sustaining...preserving and keeping God's creation healthy.

Since man was created by God that means The Holy Spirit works to keep us spiritually healthy.

- The Holy Spirit works to direct and sustain us.
- The Holy Spirit works to awaken our spirit to God.

Where Jesus touched people outwardly the Holy Spirit touches people inwardly.

That's why we need the work and the ministry of The Holy Spirit in our life and in the life of the church.

He is what keep us in order and healthy and able to reach our full potential.

We need The Holy Spirit to direct our lives.

When you look at Jesus you will see The Holy Spirit was identified with all the crucial points of His life.

In conception: Luke 1:35 The angel of the Lord told Mary...*The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you.*

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness it was under the direction of The Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:12 says *it was The Spirit that drove Him in.*

Luke 4:14 tells us *Jesus returned in the power of The Holy Spirit.*

This means Jesus was **led into the test** by The Holy Spirit...

Jesus was **led through the test** by The Holy Spirit...

And He was **led out of the test** by The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was with Jesus from the beginning of His life on this earth to the end...

- The Holy Spirit was with Him in the womb...
- The Holy Spirit was with Jesus on the cross...
- The Holy Spirit was with Jesus in the tomb...
- And the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead.

And the same goes for us in our times of testing and trials...
He leads us in leads us through and leads us out.

Throughout Jesus' life He was dependent on The Holy Spirit...

Luke 4:18 Jesus said *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me...*

Jesus taught by The Holy Spirit's enabling...

Jesus cast out demons by The Holy Spirit's power...

If Jesus needed The Holy Spirit's presence and power in His ministry how much more do we need Him in ours?

- It is The Holy Spirit that translates Jesus' promises and provision into actual experiences.
- It is the work and ministry of The Holy Spirit that validates and implements our faith in Jesus Christ.
- It is the work of The Holy Spirit that makes Jesus real to us.
- It is by The Holy Spirit's enabling that conversions are achieved...
- It is by The Holy Spirit's enabling that unity prevails in the church...
- It is by The Holy Spirit's enabling that miracles are accomplished in the church.
- It is the The Holy Spirit that increases the church.
- It is The Holy Spirit who is to be head of the church and ***when He is it will not be a church that just survives it will be a church that thrives.***

When the church thrives and not just survives the people will be doing the same.

- It is The Holy Spirit that elevates the assembly of believers into a true living, serving, worshipping body under the headship of Jesus.
- It is The Holy Spirit that makes the church a living organism and not just an organization.
- It is The Holy Spirit that breaks down walls of racial prejudice and discrimination.
- It is The Holy Spirit that creates diversity without division.
- It is The Holy Spirit that knits believers together.

1st Cor. 2:13 says...For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

Eph. 4:3 says...There is one body and one Spirit.

- It is The Holy Spirit that confirms the Word in the heart of a person.
- It is The Holy Spirit that makes the Bible real, vivid, and understandable to the reader.

There is a vital interrelationship between the person and ministry of The Holy Spirit and the existence and function of the church.

Apart from The Holy Spirit the church could not and would not exist.

The Holy Spirit is who makes us healthy and the church healthy.

If we limit Him we limit ourselves.

If we eliminate Him we eliminate ourselves from reaching our full potential.

Apart from the person and the work of The Holy Spirit the church could not exist.