

LII. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

“Are the Extraordinary and Revelatory Spiritual Gifts for Today?”

I Corinthians 12

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This is our concluding sermon on this matter of the work of the Holy Spirit and so in this study I want to deal with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit or the revelatory gifts of the Spirit and whether they continue today. By in large most of what we are dealing with in this study is called an intermural discussion. This is a discussion among believers and area where they can agree to disagree and work their way through it. It doesn't mean that both are right but there are some reasons to work our way through it for the well-being of the church. Perhaps your family is like my family being that when we get together for Thanksgiving all the same stories are told again and particularly in my family if a story isn't being told quite right my three sisters are quick to jump in and say 'that's not right!' So we want to get this right and understand it. I will give you my best shot at it and then I want you to very pointedly work your way through it. A book that has been very helpful for me dealing with this subject is an exposition of some sermons that were put together by a friend of mine, named Walter Chantry and his book is titled *The Signs of the Apostles*, the true signs of the true Apostles.

First of all there is not anything called baptism of the Spirit but it is baptism with the Spirit for the Holy Spirit doesn't baptize anybody. It is Jesus who baptizes all of His people with the Holy Spirit and seals them and leads them to Him by that Spirit and to follow Him.

The second thing is the outworking or the evidence of the Holy Spirit and there are five things you would be looking for if someone is a Spirit-filled Christian. One, is they live in the power of the Spirit and not the power of the flesh. Put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life. Two, is they make much of Jesus. These first two come from what Jesus has said in Acts 1 where He gives the promise of the Father from Him and as the Spirit comes to you He will give you power to be My witnesses. Thirdly, is they start witnessing. We certainly have our fears but when you have His Spirit you want to be a witness to and for Christ in word and deed. Fourthly, is they are filled with the Spirit. They are walking and being led by the Spirit. Fifthly, they produce the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Some other churches feel that the real evidence of someone being filled with the Spirit is that they will speak in tongues which is this ecstatic language that one begins to speak. Some will even show others how to do it. I'm one of those people that tend to be on the intense side of things so if there is something there that I'm supposed to have I want to have it and I will do my best to find out about this. If it is of the Lord I want it from the Lord. So I try to work my way through it and I'm going to share with you what I have discovered and where I am but it's in a broader context of trying to understand the gifts of the Spirit, how they function today and the ministries that God has set for us in our church.

Are there any gifts that have ceased and are there any offices that have ceased and what is it that continues? There are four key texts of Scripture that I want to cover on this matter of spiritual gifts so let's start by looking at the first one in I Peter 4. I Peter 4:7–11 says [7] *The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. [8] Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*

[9] Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. [10] As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: [11] whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This deserves so much more time that I don't have but I want to give you a couple of thoughts. We each have a gift that is there for the common good, to be employed in the body of Christ, is unique and to be faithful with that gift and then two interesting comments are made. One is he said 'those who speak, speak the Word of God' and two 'those who serve, serve by the strength God supplies.' So the speaking gifts are to make sure that they are ultimately framed by the Word of God. Serving gifts are to be done by the strength of God or the Spirit of God. I would suggest to you that all the spiritual gifts of God can fall into two categories – speaking gifts or serving gifts.

I am not saying that those with speaking gifts should not serve. I am not saying that those with serving gifts should not speak but your gift has a point of the spear to it. Some have speaking gifts and some have serving gifts. Servants need to speak and speakers need to serve so please hear that. I think that is reflected in the offices of the church – elder and deacon. Those who oversee in the teaching and mentoring ministry speaking the Word of God and then there is the deaconate which are servants. So I think the two basic categories of spiritual gifts are speaking and serving. Speakers better speak the Word of God and servants need the strength of the Spirit of God. Speakers still need the Spirit of God and servants serving in God's strength need to speak the Word of God so things overlap here but there are categories that we need to begin to look at.

Remember you don't go into the ministry of your gift but you grow into the ministry of your gift. Spiritual gifts in ministry are very much like a ship in the water for it's a whole lot easier to get it to the right place when you start moving. It's like a car for a car is easier to turn when it's moving. By the way, your gifts are not static but dynamic. They will continue developing your whole life as you stir up the gift God has given to you. Peter is not the only one that has something to say about gifts but Paul has something to say about this to the Roman church. Let's look at Romans 12. Here Paul appeals to us that we are to present our lives as a living sacrifice having given us the Gospel in the first eleven chapters he now tells us of the Gospel life beginning in Romans 12.

Romans 12:3–8 says *[3] For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. [4] For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, [5] so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. [6] Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; [7] if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; [8] the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

I want to give you a couple of thoughts. This is not an exhaustive list of the spiritual gifts. If I had time to show you we could take all of those and fit them into the two categories of speaking and serving but I don't have the time in this study. When you look at the list in this passage you can see some are speaking and some are serving but again when you speak you serve and when you serve you speak. When you speak you speak the Word of God and when

you serve you serve in the power of the Spirit of God. There are more spiritual gifts than this and each person has a unique gift. Notice he says we are to use that gift in the Lord and for the Lord.

After he deals with the spiritual gifts what does he then go to? The spiritual gifts come from God the Father through Jesus who has gifted His people by the Spirit. If the Spirit of God has given you the gift that means the Spirit of God is within you and if the Spirit of God is within you then that means you have power. That means you are speaking for Jesus and witnessing and that means you are bearing the fruit of the Spirit. So what is the next verse? Romans 12:9–13 says [9] *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.* [10] *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* [11] *Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.* [12] *Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.* [13] *Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

When the Holy Spirit gives you that gift and you start to use it, what is your lifestyle? It is to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Let love continue Paul says and that's the first of the list of the fruit of the Spirit of which the other eight are manifestations of and when the Spirit is within you then you hate sin and love obedience. So you will abhor what is evil. That will lead to loving one another. This passage is the very same tone of Peter in the passage we just read from there. There is the emphasis on holiness and love by those who are using their spiritual gifts.

Now let's look at Ephesians 4. Here you will see this glorious statement of our unity. Ephesians 4:4–7 says [4] *There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—*[5] *one Lord, one faith, one baptism,* [6] *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* [7] *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

Here is the book of Ephesians and like Romans the first half of the book is on the Gospel. Then he calls you to a life of Gospel living like Romans, starting at Ephesians 4:1 saying to walk in a manner worthy of the calling in which the Lord has called you. Then he moves to spiritual gifts and how we're to love one another in the use of those gifts in obedience and hate sin similar to that in Romans. So Paul is doing very similar things with the Ephesians that he did with the Romans and first of all he says is to affirm your unity.

One of the big problems we have today in our country is this desire to appreciate diversity but we long for unity and our problem is we are starting with diversity as we try to get unity by minimizing somebody else's diversity. The way to get unity out of diversity is to start with unity, with what we have together – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father over all who is in and through all. So Paul starts with our unity and then we're ready to enjoy our diversity now that we understand our unity. Then he goes to diversity next as he says that grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. We each have a measure of God's grace, faith and a work of the Holy Spirit that is been designed specifically for each one of us.

The Bible never says that we have the fullness of the Spirit and you can check me on this. The fullness of the Spirit is always given to the body of Christ. The way I encounter the fullness of the Spirit is not to go into a corner and look at my navel but it is by being joined to the body of Christ. There is where the fullness of the Spirit is and I have a measure of grace, a measure of the Spirit, a measure of faith. This enables me to do something that we see in the next part of this passage.

Ephesians 4:8–14 says [8] *Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”*

[9] *(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? [10] He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) [11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ**, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

This is always a burden on my heart. I think most of us in the contemporary Evangelical church are framed much more by the culture than we are by the Word of God. We are hearing sermons that are much more framed by the culture than from the Word of God. Secondly, when a church is doing its job with prayer, Word, sacraments and discipleship now there is the opportunity for you to stand firm and not be tossed by the schemes and cunning of men. You will not be a mature Christian while cherry-picking on the download sermon audio places. I’m not opposed to that because Briarwood has its sermons on the internet and people download them to hear them. That’s great but I would say to anyone to never use what comes from this pulpit as a substitute for pastoral preaching, only a supplement. Be under consistent pastoral preaching for the stability of your Christian life to equip the saints so they are not tossed to and fro, so that you’re growing up in maturity. What does that mean? Look at the next part of this passage.

Ephesians 4:15–16 says [15] *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Now we are back to love again. It’s interesting to note that we have looked at three different passages on spiritual gifts and after each has talked about unity and diversity the next thing they talk about is love. The same Spirit who is giving the gifts is also producing the fruit. Now I’d like to look back at Ephesians 4:11 to point out a couple of things of the spiritual gifts mentioned here.

Back in Romans 12 it said that some lead, some give, some pray, some administrate and some show hospitality. That doesn’t mean that if someone doesn’t have the gift of giving that they don’t have to tithe or give offerings. No, we all worship but some of us are gifted to lead worship. We all evangelize but some are gifted in evangelism. We all lead as it say ‘husbands lead your wife’ but some people are gifted for leadership. Parents lead their children but again some are gifted in leadership. We all give but some are gifted in their giving. We all show mercy but some are gifted in mercy. I am to pray but some have the gift of prayer. If I get sick I have a good friend who loves to pray for me but I’d rather have Frank Barker pray for me because there are just some who when they pray God is doing something right then. So it’s not saying that if you don’t have a particular gift then you don’t have responsibility in that area.

Then in Ephesians he is not giving an exhaustive list of gifts but he is giving four foundational gifts to the church. Ephesians 4:11 which says [11] *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.* He has given these gifts so that the church is mature, growing and stable. There are other gifts in the body of Christ that are not listed here.

I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 both list some. These are four foundational ones in the church and it's an interesting list, isn't it? One might be thinking that there are five listed here and I would say 'ok you and Calvin believe that.' I have the temerity to disagree with Calvin on this one and there is a reason I disagree on this one.

I don't think teacher is a separate gift because of the way this is constructed in the Greek. Instead of giving you the technical term it's basically a hyphenated term. It needs to be read pastor-teachers. I think you can see this in the pattern it is given in and some of the English Bibles show it with pastor in place of teacher. It's an interesting listing. It is clearly not chronological because if it was chronological then prophets would come first because of the Old Testament. Apostles are New Testament. The listing is not chronological in its foundational nature of the church but it is theological.

The first one listed is an Apostle. Could an Apostle be a prophet? Yes. Could an Apostle be an evangelist? Yes. Could an Apostle be a pastor-teacher? Yes. Now let's look at the next one – a prophet. Could a prophet be an evangelist? Yes just look at Jonah. Could a prophet be a pastor-teacher? Yes. Could a prophet be an Apostle? No because an Apostle had to be with Jesus from His baptism to His resurrection so a prophet could not be an Apostle.

Ephesians 2:19–22 says [19] *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

So, the first two, Apostles and prophets, give us the foundation of the church. So what do the evangelists do, like Philip and Stephen whom the Apostles sent out? They spread the Gospel for they are evangelists of the church as well as the Apostles. Then there are pastor-teachers. Do we still have Prophets? We have prophets but not Prophets. As a pastor, I'm a prophet but not a Prophet. Dr. Barker is a prophet. The word prophet means to be able to speak truth before it occurs or speak forth truth that has already been given. So small 'p' prophet is just like preaching. Vance Havner put it this way; small 'p' prophets are forth-telling and capital 'p' Prophets are fore-telling.

So if you, like me, really believe the book of Revelation that says 'do not add or subtract anything to the words of this prophecy' that God's Word is finished then we have no more fore-tellers (Prophets) but we do have a lot of forth-tellers (prophets). The office of Prophet and Apostle has been fulfilled. Putting this plainly, is that there will never come a Sunday that you come to this church and I say 'what I will preach today doesn't come from the Bible but God gave it to me to tell to you.' If I do ever say that then pack up and leave right then. Don't listen to me. We are to preach the Word and the Scripture has been given. The Word of God is inherent, infallible and sufficient for it needs nothing else added to it. We have the Prophets and the Apostles. If someone says 'I'm an Apostle' then you can ask them how the baptism went with Jesus. They will say 'I wasn't there.' Then they were not an Apostle. It is similar with one who says they are a Prophet. You want to be careful here.

So we believe Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the church and the foundation has been laid. No man can lay another foundation. Christ is the Cornerstone but evangelists are still here. Pastor-teachers are still here. So if perchance the Presbyterian Church of America ever called me and asked me how we could multiply more churches, I would tell them to get more evangelists. The evangelists are the pioneers and the pastor-teachers are the homesteaders. That's what they did in the New Testament and I think that's what we ought to do

today. Every one of us shepherd each other but again there are those who have been gifted in shepherding. My favorite title for what I do is pastor-teacher. I'm not particularly fond of the term reverend. I like the term minister but I prefer that you all are called that because all of you are supposed to minister to each other. I am to equip you to do the ministering but the one I love is pastor-teacher because you shepherd and teach, and teach and shepherd.

Now let's look at one more text in I Corinthians 12. Again we see the unity by the Spirit in the first three verses and then comes diversity starting in verse four. I Corinthians 12:4–11 says *[4] Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; [5] and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; [6] and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. [7] To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. [8] For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, [10] to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

Again this is not an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts but it lists some of the spiritual gifts and then where does this chapter end up? I Corinthians 13:1–3 says *[1] If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3] If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

As a side note to verse 1 here I don't think he is saying there is a tongue of angels, I think he is dealing with some claims at Corinth. The church at Corinth made all kinds of claims. One claim they made was a baptism for the dead. Another claim they made was that the resurrection had already occurred so in this book Paul is dealing with some of the claims from this church at Corinth. After verse 3 comes this wonderful chapter on what love is. We see that in each one of these texts the spiritual gifts are followed by the exhortation of love and the fruit of the Spirit. The two are inseparably joined together in the text.

In I Corinthians 12 unlike the other texts are the revelatory and extraordinary gifts. In the Romans passage there are no extraordinary revelatory gifts listed or that is beyond the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, which are not really ordinary because the Spirit is supernatural. Why are the gifts in Romans different than the ones in I Corinthians? I think that is because the Apostle Paul had been there and other Apostles had been there but we have no record as of yet that any Apostles had been to Rome. Therefore since no Apostles had been to Rome yet those revelatory gifts would not be there but at Corinth it would be another story plus they were claiming all kinds of gifts at Corinth as well. Also there is the performing of miracles etc.

I do not believe the Bible teaches that the revelatory gifts continue. I want to be careful on this. People ask me if I believe if God still communicates through dreams and yes I do, but I believe He communicates with illumination and inspiration and not revelation. I believe He can give you a dream to inspire and illuminate you but I don't think He is giving you new revelation. Illumination is when God through His Spirit gives us the ability to understand His Word that is already given. We who have been baptized with the Spirit which is a once and for all event have many fillings of the Spirit and part of the fillings of the Spirit can give us wonderful moments of anointing of illumination to understand God's revelation.

I would encourage you not to think in a box of revelation and a box of illumination. Think of a line. On one side is revelation; thus says the Lord! On the other side is illumination; thus teaches the Lord. As revelation is at work and as illumination is at work, sometimes it is just hard to see it. I understand that there are times with the Lord that it is like He just shouted it or whispered it to you in your hear so when someone tells me that I'm not going to jump on you or put you to the stake and burn you. I know there are times that illumination feels like revelation and what we think is revelation is actually illumination.

Think of it this way. Tomorrow is a 24 hour day. There will be a sunrise and there will be a sunset. Somewhere there is day and somewhere there is night but at dawn and dusk sometimes it is hard to know if it's day or night yet. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between revelation and illumination. So I think we just need to be a little calm here but we do need to insist that God has finally spoken in His Son. His Word is complete and it is true. Whenever God spoke He gave particular gifts to those to whom He spoke. So I'd like to look at a text in Hebrews 2 to finish.

Hebrews 2:1–4 says *[1] Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. [2] For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, [3] how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, [4] while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

So God has worked in our life through the spiritual gifts and He has brought His Word to us through Jesus, the Prophet, Priest and King and His Word was communicated to us through those who heard, i.e. Apostles, and how does one know who is a true Apostle? They had the ability to perform signs, wonders and miracles. If anybody and everybody can do signs, wonders and miracles how can they be a credential sign of an Apostle or Prophet? Which Apostle was challenged the most of whether he was an Apostle or not? It was the one who was untimely born and that was Paul. God fit him out by giving him a special tutorial out in the wilderness for three years because he wasn't there from the baptism to the resurrection but the resurrected Christ appeared to him and taught him. So his Apostleship was challenged by Corinth and how does Paul answer the charge that he was not a true Apostle? We see this in II Corinthians 12.

He first of all gives a witness to his Apostolic ministry and to all that he suffered for Christ and then we pick up at II Corinthians 12:11–13 which *says [11] I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. [12] The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. [13] For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!*

In other words, he is saying in what way did I treat you in any way less than I did other churches as an Apostle? One way was he didn't let them give to support him so he asks for their forgiveness for that for they should have given to his support. In terms of his ministry he says 'I did signs, wonders and miracles.' So if anybody and everybody can do signs, wonders and miracles then how could that be a sign of a true Apostle? So you're probably thinking that if I am saying Apostles are no longer then signs, wonders and miracles have gone away but that is not what I'm saying because I didn't say that. I said the ability of a man to do signs, wonders and miracles has gone away, not signs, wonders and miracles.

We have seen some of these recently of some people we have been praying for. I believe God still heals I just don't believe in healers. I believe that God can give the gift of tongues. What do I mean by that? The Bible speaks of tongues four times and in those four times it expects it to be a coherent language unknown to the speaker but an interpreter has to be there. Someone needs to know that language and that is why it says in Acts 2 that some of those present heard others speaking in their own language. It was not an incoherent babbling but a language that the speaker did not know. What is God doing? He is reversing Babel. When man rises up against God, God comes down and confuses them and they can't understand each other and they spread out. Now redemption comes and He reverses Babel. He uses the Holy Spirit to communicate in all those languages to bring us to be one in Christ from all the nations. By the way, at the same time He is bringing divine judgment against Israel and now He is repeating Babel in the midst of Israel as He is reversing Babel to bring all the world to Christ from all the nations.

I can't tell you how many times when I was at Westminster Seminary I prayed for the gift of tongues in Hebrew and Greek but God did not give it to me. I don't believe the gift of tongues has ceased. I do believe the ability for a man to lay hands on you and give you the gift of tongues has ceased but I believe that God can give someone an unknown language to them for His glory and there will be someone there who can interpret it. He doesn't give it for personal fulfillment. He gives it as a sign to unbelievers as I Corinthians 12 says. It is a sign of the Gospel and the power of the Gospel.

I do not believe in the cessation of the supernatural. I believe the supernatural comes. When we pray for people to be healed I can promise you that none of the men who are anointed as elders are healers but we can pray for healing and we never know if it will be a perfect healing where God gives us a new body or a temporary healing when He restores the body we currently have. I believe in the supernatural and I believe it because the Bible teaches it and because I've seen it. I do believe the office of Apostle has ceased, the office of Prophet has ceased and the credential gifts of the Apostles and Prophets have ceased, because I believe the Word of God is complete. I do believe the supernatural continues to this day.

What about a prayer language? I will leave that between you and Jesus. Here is what Paul would say to you; the most important thing is not your prayer language but the most important thing is your love of Christ, your love of one another and your love of the Gospel. That is where the joy of our salvation is to be seen and heard. So, Apostles and Prophets are no more and those credential gifts given to those who occupied those offices have ceased. Their ability to do signs, wonders and miracles by the laying on of hands which was not dependent on faith for sometimes they would do it because of the lack of faith or sometimes to create faith or sometimes to strengthen faith but when they had the ability even Peter's shadow (Acts 5) like Jesus could heal.

Do you remember the man who asked Peter for money in Acts 3? The man was asking for money and Peter said 'I don't have any money, but I'll tell you what I have, get up and walk!' He didn't tell that man that if he had enough faith then he could get up and walk. There is no evidence the man had any faith but Peter just said 'get up and walk.' My guess is the man became a believer pretty quickly thereafter. So sometimes the Apostles did these signs, wonders and miracles when there was a lack of faith, no faith, to create faith or strengthen faith but the point is they had the gift. That gift affirmed that when they spoke it wasn't 'thus saith man about God' but when they spoke it was 'thus saith the Lord.' That is why they were given those gifts.

I do not believe the supernatural has ceased. I know because I got saved. I can't think of anything more supernatural than that. Praying for someone to get healed is a piece of cake compared to what He did for me for He took me out of a cemetery and brought me to Jesus. Praise His Name forever! In II Thessalonians 2 it says there will be false teachers and preachers and the way they will draw people away from the truth is through false signs, wonders, and miracles done with power but it says the elect of God will not be deceived. Why? It is because they don't love the miracle show, they love the truth. It is the truth that keeps them. I believe as we move toward the last days there will be many false prophets and teachers and Jesus already said that in Matthew 24 and II Thessalonians 2. One way they will draw people away from the truth is they will tickle ears with halfway preaching while they entertain with false signs, wonders and miracles done with power.

Having said that, I love my charismatic brothers and sisters because they are on to something we are not on to. Here is what they are on to. We are not going to get this thing done without the supernatural presence of God. We tend to know what's right but we're not casting ourselves on the only One who can help us do what's right and that's the Spirit of God. That is why we have had this study on Him this entire year. Surrender to Him. Be led by Him. I think I would rather talk more to someone when my intramural discussion about what is true theology who is seeking the power and presence of the Holy Spirit than someone who has got the theology and thinks they can do it on their own. So let us seek Him who gives us the power to lift up Him who alone can save sinners, Jesus Christ. Let love of the brethren continue. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. This was a lot of material in this study and I thank You for the patience of all those reading this. Please bless them as they work their way through these things. Help us to be faithful to Your Word, hold to Your Word with love, speak Your Word as truth in love and may the world hear the truth in those who speak, speak the Word of God and may they see the love of the brethren and marvel how they love one another for I pray this in Jesus Name, Amen.