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Gifts of the Spirit

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GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

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Given at Christian Life Fellowship:

When I look at the attendance tonight as compared with last night I've an idea I've already started a back-door revival for you – or it may be just that they're having fish for dinner. You didn't get the point of that did you? I didn't think you did. That's an old Pennsylvania joke. When you're late and you've had fish for dinner, it took you time to pick the bones.

Now, last evening we shared with you some of the insights God has given to us in relationship to what are so commonly called the “gifts” of the Spirit but, as we've pointed out from Scripture, they are really the manifestations of the Spirit and I want to go on from that point now. We left off at Verse 8: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit.” Now, not “the gifts of the Spirit”, the “manifestations of the Spirit.” This came out in the discussion this afternoon. Now, lest we misunderstand – those of us, through whom the Spirit chooses to minister, or to manifest Himself, do not have a “gift”, a specific gift that we're manipulating. We have one gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit and whatever manifestation he shows through us is our manifestation. However, the one that receives that manifestation, to them it becomes a gift, but they don't give it away. For example: healing. Those that lay on hands and pray do not have a gift of healing. When healing comes it is a manifestation of healing through them. Again, the sick person that is healed has the gift of healing – and they don't give it away – and so it is with all of these manifestations of the Spirit.

Now, let's look a little more closely at them. What is the first of these manifestations? What is it? The word of wisdom? How many of you would recognize a word of wisdom if you heard it tonight? Well, now, I don't want you to feel embarrassed. I have asked that question in groups of anywhere from a half to a dozen to a thousand and I've gotten exactly the same response, but I think the very nature of that reply makes it incumbent upon us to ask “why?” How many would recognize tongues, an interpretation, if you heard it? How many would recognize prophesy? How many of you would recognize discerning spirits? Why is it that we

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would recognize these, but would not recognize the word of wisdom? So often in Pentecostal meetings I have heard the Spirit manifest himself in the word of wisdom and it went over like the proverbial lead balloon. The question is why? Well, simply because we've never learned what the “word of wisdom” is. We've never been able to identify it, and I am going to suggest this evening that our first responsibility will be to attempt to identify what is the word of wisdom. When we do, I think we'll find our own experience enriched and blessed because we will begin to recognize that the Spirit of God is moving in ways that were unidentified before and that we were a part of it and yet never shared in it because we really couldn't identify what was happening.

The “word of wisdom” is a manifestation of the Spirit, and I am going to suggest that we approach a definition for this, or an understanding of this, through a method that our Lord used, and that's a method called “analogical reasoning”, or reasoning by “analogy”. This is the method that Jesus used in the parables. You remember what a parable is? The Kingdom of God is like unto... – and then Jesus selected something out of their daily normal experience and, by laying that down alongside of the mystery that he sought to reveal, he implicitly corresponds, illuminates the mystery of the kingdom from the thing that was known. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a seed that the farmer planted in the field; the Kingdom of God is like unto the treasure that a man hid in the field; the Kingdom of God is like unto the pearl of great price – this is analogical reasoning.

So lets begin at that human level and ask ourselves this question: What is Wisdom? Well, let me suggest to you what it is not. Wisdom is not any particular intellectual brilliance that we may or may not possess. Wisdom is not our I.Q. I tell my students that it isn't even their cumulative grade point average – that's just important for graduation. No, wisdom is not some inherent ability that we may possess but wisdom, and hear me carefully, is the right use of knowledge. Now, again, it is not knowledge, it is the right use of knowledge. There are certain books in the old Testament that are called the Wisdom Books. Proverbs is one of these and when you look at the Book of Proverbs, you'll find that it is simply a statement in very succinct phrases or statements axiomatic, aphoristic statements, about how one lives the good life before

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God, in relationship with God. In other words, it is the application of what one already knows to live within the covenant relationship with God, so wisdom is the right use of knowledge!.

My Dad was in some ways one of the wisest men I ever knew, never went beyond the sixth grade – at about fourteen years of age he was in the breaker, the coal mines and, yet, Dad has gone now and as I've reflected on the years that have gone by I am often amazed as I recall those very simple words of wisdom that came from Dad on so many occasions – almost a sixth sense in knowing how to use what he knew. Wisdom, then, is the right use of knowledge. Wisdom, then, is knowledge as the use of it is dictated by the holy Spirit, by the mind of the Spirit. Now it is not the knowledge that is supernatural, it is the use of the knowledge by the mind of the Spirit that's supernatural. Now, keep that in mind. That's just opening the subject, and I want to digress for just a moment or two, or perhaps a little longer, and then, by this digression we are going to detour back into the study of the manifestations of the Spirit.

Who is our pattern of the Spirit-filled life? What pattern do we have of the Spirit-filled life? Well, let me hasten to anticipate and simply to say that the pattern without peer of the Spirit-filled life is Jesus. “Oh”, you say, “but he was God” and that's true, but he's also man. The God-man. Now, many years before I became involved with these Holy Rollers that mussed my hair and bruised my dignity and outraged my theology, the Spirit spoke to me through Luke 4:1. Now, you remember that in that context, Jesus had just been baptized in the river Jordan by John and the Spirit had come upon Him – and then Luke 4:1 begins with these words: “And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit” – “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit.” Now, let me hasten to affirm, or to say that I affirm, the great creedal statements of the Church, that Jesus is very God of very God; that Jesus is wholly and totally and completely human, and therein is the mystery. The mystery of two natures in one person. I accept it as an article of faith. But human language is such that we can only speak of one aspect, one nature at a time. I want to affirm my faith in the deity of Jesus, but to point out when I read the gospels, what I read there is the record of Jesus, of his incarnation.

Now, certainly, one cannot fill his deity with the Holy Spirit, but Luke refers to his human nature, his humanity and he is filled with the Holy Spirit, full of the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't know whether you are, as I used to be, very, I think, uncritically, I used to assume as I read

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the gospels that Jesus performed his miracles by the power and by virtue of his Deity, but that poses a problem because if Jesus performed his miracles by the power and virtue of his Deity, then he is no example for me because there is an infinite gulf between his deity and my humanity. If he performed deeds by virtue of his Deity, I am not God, I cannot perform those deeds but, if by virtue of his Spirit-filled humanity, he performed his works, then his works, “and greater works than these do I, because I go the Father”, have meaning because what he is saying is that the same source of power by which he performed his works is available to me through the Holy Spirit. Jesus, then, being full of the Holy Spirit, performed his miracles by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Turn with me to the gospel according to Luke and let’s just look at some of the evidence for what we’ve been saying. We’ve quoted Luke, Chapter 4:1. Let’s begin with that. Right after the baptism we read, “and Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan.” Now, what follows is the temptation of Jesus, for Jesus is taken by the Holy Spirit and he is led out into the wilderness, according to Luke. I think it is Mark, or Matthew, who says: “and he was driven out by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil. The first test of his Spirit-filled humanity is his confrontation of the adversary. In other words, he begins where our first father, Adam, lost out. He meets Satan on his own ground by virtue of his humanity. Remember, Adam fell as a man made in the image of God and that’s where the battle was lost – and that’s where Jesus, in his incarnation, took up the battle. Now, you know the scene – he defeated Satan and then we read in Luke, Chapter 4:14: “and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit”. It doesn’t say he returned in the power of his Deity, it says he returned in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let’s jump ahead a little bit in the context. Beginning in Verse 31 we have the story of the casting out of the unclean spirit, of all places, in the Synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath Day, and notice what it says in Chapter 4:36, the end of that day – “they marveled at the miracle and they said, what is this word for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out.” Now, contextually, I submit to you that the only power that’s referred to here is the power – that same power of the Spirit by which he defeated the adversary and returned from the wilderness. Clear? Following me?

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All right, let's go on. let's look over at Chapter 4. We've looked at 14, we've looked at 36, let's look at Chapter 5:17. Now, this is the context of the paralytic that was healed and forgiven. Remember, these four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. There was such a crowd around the door they couldn't get in so they climbed up on that flat roofed building and, in those days, and even to this day in Jerusalem, the old city was roofed with stone tiles. So they took up the stone tiles and made a hole in the roof, and they could do it because they are arched and you could make a hole through that arch without the ceiling collapsing. In fact, in 1970-71 when I was there I visited the Crusader Church at St. Anne's Church in the old city of Jerusalem and during the war, some of the Jordanian artillery shells went through the roof of that church and all it did was leave a hole about so big. If it had hit one of our buildings it would have collapsed the whole building but, you see, the arch supports the structure so it was no great feat for them to lift up a few tiles, make a hole and let their friend down. You remember what happened: "Son, your sins be forgiven you but that ye might know that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins I say to you, rise and walk." Now, they were amazed again when they heard this. Notice Verse 17 in that context: "And the power of the lord was with him to heal." What power? Now, in the context, contextually, in the Gospel of Luke, it can only mean the power of the Holy Spirit that came upon him at his baptism.

You look perplexed. Good! You're thinking. I submit, then, that it is the Spirit-filled humanity of Jesus that provides the only example of the Spirit-filled life that we can safely follow for, remember this, every one of us has feet of clay, and he's the only one that never stumbled. If you want to know what the Spirit-filled life is, and how to live it, let me suggest that you read through and pry through the gospels on your knees, for there is the pattern of the Spirit-filled life, and that power that worked in Jesus was the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, flip over quickly to Luke 24:49. Now, Jesus is preparing to leave them and he said to them: "Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the City," that is, Jerusalem, "until you be clothed upon with...." What? What power? The same power that he received in his baptism and it is in this life that we read then in Acts 1:8: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high for ye shall receive power after that the holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses," etc. What I think Luke is saying to us very

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plainly is this: That Jesus, in the days of his flesh, lived his incarnate life in the power of the holy Spirit and that is the power promised to us.

Now, we're coming full circle to the passage that we've been discussing in I Corin.12. If Jesus, then, is the pattern of the Spirit-filled life, and the life that he lived in the flesh was a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, then does it not follow that we should expect to see the same manifestations of the Spirit in his life that he promises will be in ours? I submit that's true, and I also submit that we find evidences of the manifestations of the Spirit in the life of Jesus.

Now, the one we're discussing is the Word of Wisdom. Do we find evidences of the Word of Wisdom in the life of Jesus? I submit that we do. Let me select one for you and I've just selected it at random. This is in the gospel according to Matthew 22:15. Now the context, the story, is a very familiar one. It's the story of taxes to be paid to the Roman Empire, to the Roman Overlords. In Verse 15 we read, "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel on how they might entangle him in his talk and they sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians." Let's pause and identify the actors in the drama – who were the Pharisees? Well, they were a lay group of ultra-conservative Jews. The Synagogue is their particular province. Now, they began during the days of their exile out of a need in Judaism, for with the collapse of the Kingdom of Judea, the destruction of the Kingdom and of the Temple and their deportation into exile, it became necessary to find a new center around which to organize their corporate life as Jews and the Synagogue became one of these centers and it was apparently established by a group called the Hasidim, or the pious ones. You see, with the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the priests. They did not have the teaching priests of the old Testament and so these laymen took over the job of teaching Torah to the Jews in exile and they organized their identity as a people, and their whole life around Torah. They emphasized those things that were distinctive in their religion, to build a hedge around them, to keep out that sea of paganism lest they be totally absorbed into it. The Sabbath, circumcision, the feasts, all of these were to emphasize the uniqueness of the Jewish people and to keep the Gentiles fenced out, and the Synagogue then became the center of worship for the Jews in exile. It became the particular province of these Hasidim and out of the Hasidim came the Pharisees. So they began in an effort to meet a felt need, but in the days of our Lord, as we read the gospels, we realize that, as so often happens with a good thing, it had gone to seed and they had become legalists who used the law to bind

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burdens upon people that even they, themselves, would not bear, and they are the ones who received some of the strongest and most exhortatory criticisms from our Lord: “Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.”

All right, so we’ve identified some of the actors in the drama. What about the other group, the Herodians? Well, the Herodians were the partisans, the supporters of Herod the King. Now Herod, incidentally, was hated by the Jews. He was only half Jew and he was half Idumeun and he held his power by suffrage of the Roman Empire. He was roundly hated. He lived his life in mortal fear of a revolt. In fact, if you visit Israel and go to a place called the “Herodian” just outside of Bethlehem, you’ll find here a palace fortress he built as an escape route from Jerusalem down through Bethlehem and out into the Judean wilderness, Macharres, on the other side of the Dead Sea, where John was beheaded which was one of his escape fortresses, Masada, on the Dead Sea, was another one of his wilderness fortresses and he had built these to escape from potential or possible revolt and the Herodians were those Jews who supported him. They, in the eyes of every devout and patriotic Jew, were the compromisers.

Now, normally, the Pharisees and the Herodians were mortal enemies, but is it not a stringent commentary upon the fallenness of our human nature that we can make common cause more easily because of a common enemy than we can because of a common love or commitment. Isn’t that a strange commentary in human nature. It works even in our day doesn’t it. We can make bedfellows with Russia when we’re fighting the Nazi’s – hmm? Now I’m dating myself. You young people don’t know what that was all about. You weren’t around then. Ask the older folk, they’ll remember. But these who were mortal enemies could make common cause because of a common hatred for Jesus – strange commentary – on the fallenness of human nature.

All right, let’s go on with the account now. They sent their disciples, the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God.” They were lying in their beards when they said it. “You teach the way of God truthfully and care for no man.” Now, that was true, they knew that he had no respect for their opinions. He didn’t hesitate or scruple to call them parasites and even worse, hypocrites, vipers, so that much of it was true, you

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see, the adversary never tells an outright lie. Even we'd recognize a bald-face lie if the adversary told it. He doesn't hook us with an outright lie. Where the adversary gets his hook in us is that he puts enough truth on the bit to make it look plausible.

Well, let's go on: "For you do not regard the position of Antillas, then what do you think, is it awful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Now that seems like a perfectly innocent innocuous harmless question doesn't it. Anyone here who would question paying taxes? See, you're not committing yourselves. Are there any IRS people here? See, you're just not committing yourselves. Well, that understandable, of course we wouldn't, it's part of our life, we accept it. Well, what's the point then of the question? Did they go to all this trouble to cook up so obvious a question? But, wait a moment! You see, we're coming to the scriptures with our twentieth century mind-set and when we come we impose, unconsciously, our conditioning, our mental conditioning, our social conditioning, our political conditioning, we impose that on the scriptures and so, in the very doing of this, we kind of warp the meaning.

Now, when I was doing my undergraduate theological work, I remember that some of my teachers in biblical interpretation used to say to us: Whenever you come to the scriptures the first question you ask is: "What does the text say?" and it's taken me years to realize, dear friends, that if I ask that question, I may or may not get the right answer. In all probability, I'll get an answer that's skewed by the presupposition with which I come to the text. It's taken me years frankly, and I confess it to my shame and chagrin, to realize that the question I must ask when I come to the text is not what does it say to me but what did it say to that first generation, what did it say to them within their context, within their social and cultural understanding. You see, if I understand what it means to them, then I'm in a position to apply that to my own understanding.

Let me illustrate what I'm saying. For example, our Lord speaks often of the Kingdom of God. In fact, I have a message on the Kingdom of God, and point out that the Kingdom of God is the only gospel Jesus ever preached, and it's the only gospel he ever gave the Church to preach. Some of you look even more startled than ever about that, but that's the truth. How do we understand the words of our Lord when he talks about the Kingdom of God, we've never

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lived in a Kingdom. Now, I don't mean a constitutional monarchy such as they have in England. You see “Kingdom” in the days of our Lord's flesh, the only models were absolute monarchy's. When he spoke of the Kingdom of God this was a pattern they had in mind and yet we come to it, we have been raised in America, our so-called democratic culture, I said this one time and somebody corrected me and said: “America is not a democracy, it's a republic.” Well, I think we've made a democracy out of it. Do you know what democracy means? Do you? Come on, commit yourselves, I'm not going to pull the carpet out from under you. As I said last night, it's nailed down. Do you know what it means? Well, it is two Greek words Demos “people” and Credence “power or rule”, so it's the rule of the mob. Well, now, if you don't believe me, if you've got Cable TV, tune in on that channel that has our Congress on it and put on that act – and you're convinced that's what it means – it has become a government of pressure groups, a government that's dictated and dominated by expediency.

I'm not all that radical, it's just that I wish there were a little more conscience, a little more ethics in it. What I'm pointing out is that we have been formed in a tradition in which the pioneer ethos is still very much part, of the self-image that we have. You see, the people who founded this country founded it with a credo in mind and their credo was this: That a man with a rifle in one hand an axe in the other, and a frontier to conquer, could establish the perimeters of his own existence and define his own identity. Now, how do you relate that to the kingdom of God? You see? Do you understand what I'm saying/ And yet we impose all of this on the scriptures, without being aware of it.

Let me just say parenthetically that I'm persuaded that one of the grave crises that Americans face is a crises we haven't recognized. You see, the pioneer ethos is viable and workable as long as we have a frontier, but once we've run out of frontiers, what happens? I think there's a crisis of identity in America. We're a pioneer culture, growing old. The covered wagons reached California long ago, in fact, they've started back. Somebody said that when the Okies left Oklahoma the I.Q. of both states was raised. I'm glad you got that one! Of course, I had to import some of us Easterners to help bolster that.

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All right, let's go on. There is a crisis in identity in this country. I became very restless in my own Spirit about all of the criticism, you know, about our Space Program. All of these billions of dollars thrown away, what could have been done if they had put it into relief, but the billions they so-called “threw away” they put into the “payroll”. It went into American payrolls – and “payroll” is better than “dole” any time, because with a payroll a man can maintain his own self respect and take care of his family. But there was a deeper issue at stake. I believe that on the subconscious level, America is struggling to find another frontier. If it doesn't, it surrenders its basic pioneer ethos, and when it does, it's no longer American in an historical sense of the word, and it's got to find a frontier, space and deep sea exploration are the two frontiers that may yet enable America to salvage its own identity. Now, that's simply my private opinion – I am throwing that in, and it isn't going to cost you one cent more on the honorarium. Did you hear that Dr. Mallily? I can only tease friends like this – I couldn't say this if we were not good friends.

All right, let's forget the foolishness now and get back to the text. I said that simply to say this, that the question on the face of it seems so innocent, so innocuous that when we read it in that context suddenly we realize that it bristles with all kinds of booby-traps. Let's try to hear that question now in the light of the context in which it was asked. That means that we've got to ask something about the political and the social events of the day. You remember that in those days, the Jews were under the iron heel of the Roman Empire, and the taxes were extorted by the Roman Empire. Now, then, suppose Jesus had said: “It's wrong to pay taxes to Caesar.” Every patriotic Jew there would have pulled out his dagger and they would have been ready for a revolution but I don't think it stretches the context by implication to suggest that the adversaries of Jesus had already arranged with the Roman soldiers and the Secret Police to be there. You see, the Jews had a reputation among the Romans as being a very rebellious people. There were numerous revolts. No crowd of Jews ever got together without the Romans being very very edgy and having their police and soldiers around to keep order, and knowing that context, I do not think it stretches the social and political context of the day to suggest that they had arranged already with the emissaries of Rome, so that if Jesus said, “It's wrong to give tribute to Caesar”, all they had to do was to beckon to the nearest Roman soldier, the nearest one of the Roman

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Secret police, and accuse him of being a traitor against Rome and he'd have vanished into a Roman dungeon as had John the Baptist, and they'd have been quit of him.

Well, now, what's the other side of the coin? Well, the other side of the coin we've already anticipated. We said that there were among the Jews, or that the Jews, particularly the patriotic Jews, were just seething, waiting for the opportunity to revolt. We know, for example, from the Qumran documents, the Dead Sea Scrolls, that that group of Essenes down in the Dead Sea were a quasi, paramilitary group. They were waiting for the coming o messiah and they were going to march out of that desert stronghold and, by military might, they were going to help the messiah to establish his Kingdom. There were other patriotic groups among the Jews. For example, the Zealots prepared to resort to violence, to military adventurism, at the slightest opportunity to overthrow the Roman power and set up the kingdom of messiah, to set up the theocracy.

Parenthetically, is it not interesting that one of the disciples of Jesus, Thomas Zealots, or the Zealot, was a convert from that group. Now, among the Zealots was an even more violent group called the Sikari. They were nothing more or less than brigands or bandits. The word "Sikari" means the dagger men. They used murder as a means of gain and cloaked it with patriotism. In fact, I think it is Josephus who says that during the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman Armies the Sakari in the City killed as many of their own countrymen, the Jews, as did the Roman Soldiers. They were nothing more or less than murderers for hire.

Now, within that context, let me suggest that it does not stretch at all the cultural and the social context to suggest that the adversaries of Jesus had so planned their questions that if Jesus said it is right to give tribute to Rome, every patriotic Jew there would have accused him, at least in his heart, of being traitor to the theocratic idea of the Jewish people. So it seemed that no matter what he said, i.e. 'It's right to give tribute to Caesar' his own people would turned on him or "It's wrong to give tribute to Caesar" the Romans would turn on him. It seems as though they had him trapped. Perhaps the adversaries of Jesus even hoped that on a dark night, if Jesus gave the wrong answer, that one of the Sakari would have slipped up behind him, slipped a dagger between his ribs and they'd have been quit of him. You see the dilemma he's faced with.

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Now, what is the answer? “Show me a coin – who’s inscription – Caesars”. Listen carefully: “Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s but unto God the things that are Gods.”

Verse 22: “When they heard it they marveled.” They left him and they slunk away with their tail between their legs. That’s my paraphrase. Now let me submit to you reverently that this is an example of the Word of Wisdom, from the lips of Jesus. Not one iota of new knowledge in it, was there? Wasn’t a thing that he said that they didn’t know already. What was there about it that defeated their purpose? The way in which it was said. It was the right use of knowledge dictated by the mind of the Holy Spirit.

Let me share a word of wisdom with you, out of my own experience. I shared one or two instances of this at the coffee clutch this afternoon at the hotel. Some two years ago I took part in a Seminar at the invitation of Father Francis McNutt at a Franciscan Convent up in Minnesota and was a weekend Seminar on healing to which doctors, nurses, nurses aids and hospital personnel, had been invited, people who were interested in restoring the Christian ministry of healing. There were about 400 people. They had expected 200 and 400 showed up, and during the course of that weekend Seminar I spoke on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon Francis decided that they were going to celebrate the Liturgy. Now, as a practicing Theologian, and let me just say as a “Theologian” that’s not a claim of competence. It doesn’t say that I am a good Theologian, it doesn’t say I’m a bad Theologian, it just says that’s my job description. That’s what I draw my paycheck for at the University. As a practicing Theologian I knew the rubrics on the Constitution on the Liturgy said at Vatican II. In essence, regrettably, we forbid inter-communion at this time.

Now, I wanted to be present with the team, I wanted to be present at that worship service, I wanted to share in it to the degree I could, but I did not want to compromise or embarrass Francis who was going to celebrate the Lord’s supper, so I slipped into the Chapel and I sat in the back. It was an L-shaped Chapel and I sat in the last pew. One of the Sisters in the Convent came over and we were chatting and then she left and just about five minutes before the service was to begin she came rushing in and said: “Dr. Ervin, Father wants you over in the Vestry.” So I went over to see what was happening and there were several of the priests there. They were

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donning their robes and getting ready for the liturgy and Francis said to me: “Howard, I know something of your burden for the healing of the Church – would you preach to us, would you bring the homily rather, on the healing of the Church?” Now, for you Baptists that are here, let me explain what the homily is. The homily is the introduction and the conclusion of a Liturgical sermon with the three points of a Baptist sermon squeezed out, and so that afternoon I found myself standing – can you feature this – a Baptist Theologian standing on the steps of a Franciscan altar teaching to 400 Roman Catholics about the healing of the Church.

Well, that, dear friends, has been a “water-shed” experience in my life. Out of that experience there came a moving of the Spirit that has completely revolutionized my life. In fact, in the ensuing years, a great deal of my ministry has been among Roman Catholics. Within the next couple of months I will speak to two Catholic Pentecostal renewal groups. A friend of mine called the day before I left to come here to Baton Rouge. She happens to be one of our Roman Catholic friends and she told me that the night before she had met with an Episcopalian layman and several other Episcopalians and Roman Catholics and they were planning a renewal day in the fall, and an ecumenical day for Roman Catholics and Episcopalians and they read the list of the priests from Catholic and Episcopalians they want to speak there and the names of the Bishops they want and then, the punch line: “And we want you to be the moderator.”

All of this goes back in my own life to that experience at the Seminar. After I had spoken I’ve often said when I’ve shared this, that I learned what that text meant “If you go to a feast take the lower seat and wait ‘til they bid you come up higher.” During the communion service something happened that was part of this whole tissue of events that’s had such a revolutionary impact on my life. One of our team members was a Sister, but not from that convent As the communicants were coming forward to receive the Host – and let me just pause here now, again, for the sake of you Baptists. Let me explain what the “Host” is. The rest of you don’t need to listen in, this is just for the Baptists. The Host is the consecrated bread wafer, and I saw Sister come up to the altar and she received the host from Francis and I saw her sort of turn and stop and she turned right back to the altar and walked across that altar space to where I was sitting and she held out her hand, fist clenched, palm down, and in a whisper she said: “Will you share my host?” and without reflecting on things I said, just like that, “No Sister, I won’t”

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and in the look on her face I realized I had hurt her deeply, and I knew that she didn't understand why I had said that. I have long since come to terms with the Roman Catholic doctrine of communion. I've no problems with it, and would have loved to receive communion with them that day – that wasn't what was in my mind, but I knew that she would think that I had some grave and serious reservations about sharing and so, when I saw that I had deeply offended her, I reached out and, sort of impulsively, grabbed her wrist and pulled her toward me until her ear was close enough to my lips for me to whisper so no one sitting around us could hear and said: “Sister, you know what the Constitution on the Liturgy says – it forbids inter-communion.” She replied: “Yes, I know, but I believe it's God's will.”

I found out several years later, when I met her and talked to her, that she had prayed for a whole day before she did that and did it only when she was convinced that it was God's will. Now, she said, “I believe it's God's will” and then I heard myself saying something without reflecting, without thinking about it, it popped right out, it didn't come from my mind, and this is what I heard myself saying: “But, Sister, obedience is better than sacrifice.” Now, I don't need to translate that, do I? Here was a woman under Canonical authority and obedience and she was breaking that obedience because she believe that God had led her to it and, yet, the words that came through me – now, not “through me” it was a manifestation. I wonder if you would recognize now the Word of Wisdom if you heard it. Do you recognize times now when you've heard it and didn't recognize it? Well, be alert to it because when the Word of Wisdom comes it will bless you as all of the manifestations of the Spirit do, but it can only bless us when we recognize it.

I don't want to belabor the point, and I am conscious of the time and, besides, since I've already eaten dinner tonight, that's all right, I'm going to hold him up for dinner tomorrow night – I said, “We eat before the service tomorrow night.” They fed me after the service last night and I had difficulty getting to sleep. I've reached the time in life where I need my beauty rest, it's not going to make me any more beautiful, but it makes me a lot easier to get along with, believe me. All right, I'm conscious of the time and I don't want to belabor that point, but I do want to move on now to the next one. Now, remember that we've said that our example was the power of the Spirit filled life in Jesus. We ought then to expect manifestations of the Word of

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Knowledge in the life of Jesus and I submit that we do, and I'm going to suggest that we find one such at random in the gospel according to Matthew. Just leaf back in your Bible to Matthew, Chapter 17:24-27 and again we have a very familiar story.

Now, this is the story of the coin in the fish's mouth, and it begins like this: "That when they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher pay the tax?" Now let me pause a moment – this is not the Roman tax. It was the Roman tax in Matthew 22 – this was the "Temple" tax. Half-shekel per head to pay for the Temple and its services. "Does your teacher pay the Temple tax?" Well, oh innocent, I almost said "bumptious". Peter said "Yes!" And then he realized that he had hoof-and-mouth disease. He's answered quickly without thinking, so he went to find Jesus and when he came in Jesus anticipated him and said: "Simon, from whom do the Kings of the earth take toll or tribute, from their sons or from others?" And when he said "From others", Jesus said, "Then the Son's are free." What did he mean by that. This was the Temple tax and sons of the King, they should be free of that tax. Taxes are collected from outsiders, not from the family. We belong to the family, we shouldn't have to pay the tax. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea, cast a hook, take the first fish that comes up and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that shekel and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Now, let's examine this passage in the light of what we've been saying about Jesus, "Filled with the Holy Spirit." How did Jesus know that there was one fish out of the millions in the sea of Galilee that had a shekel in its mouth? You say "He was God." I agree. But we've already pointed out that, according to Luke, he was filled with the holy Spirit. His humanity is a Spirit-filled humanity. Well, how did he know that fish was the one that was going to hit Peter's hook? Now, it gets "gooder" than that! You didn't expect a professor to say it that way did you? You see, there were two kinds of coinage; one, for the market place, the other for the Temple, and when you went to the Temple you had to change the market-place coinage for Temple coinage.

Now I suggest that it does not at all strain what we know of the nature of our God to say that our God who does all things well, had a Temple shekel in that fish's mouth. How did Jesus

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know these things? May I suggest that we have here a manifestation of the Word of Knowledge on the part of Jesus? He was revealing something known to the Mind of God, but made known by the revelation of the Spirit to him, and the Word of knowledge is just that; It is something that is known to the mind of God that we could not know. There are no human resources, no means of research, no resources at our disposal by which we could find it out except God chooses to reveal it.

As you reflect, can you remember experiences or occasions when the Word of Knowledge was shared and it went by you because you didn't realize at that time that it was the Word of Knowledge? Now, if you're looking for gifts, of course, these are the last two that we expect aren't they? But if we're looking for what the scriptures teach, and that's manifestations, it can happen at any time through any one. They've nothing to do with our native intelligence, they've nothing to do with the breadth of our knowledge, or the breadth of our experience, they are sovereign, unpremeditated manifestations of the mind of the Holy Spirit himself, and they are given to bring the body into wholeness, that there be no division in the Body, according to I Cor. 12.

Our time is just about up, but let me anticipate what we're going to be saying in our next lecture tomorrow night and I warn you, this is really a controversial one. What is the next manifestation of the Spirit? Faith. Whose faith? How do you know that? Because it's a manifestation of the Spirit, right? All right, are you ready now for the sixty-four dollar question? If it is a manifestation of the faith of the Spirit, ponder that, whose wisdom is the Word of Wisdom? Whose? Come, come – God's wisdom? If it is God's wisdom can I add to it or subtract from it? Faith - if it is a manifestation of the Spirit, whose is it. Can I add to it or subtract from it? Do you realize what you've just done? You have just dispensed with a whole library full of books on building faith for miracles.

Now you know what to anticipate tomorrow night. What's that? Touche! As I've sometimes said, we have no trouble with what we think the Bible says, or what we want it to say but, oh, boy, when we hear what it does say, then we've got all kinds of trouble! We're like that

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old Deacon that said to that Pastor friend of mine: “Pastor, it may be Bible, but it ain’t Baptist.”
And it may be Bible, but it ain’t Pentecostal. We’ll go on with the tomorrow night.