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# The Manifestations of the Spirit

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# ERVIN, DR. HOWARD M. – MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

## MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT

HOWARD M. ERVIN

### INTRODUCTION OF DR.ERVIN:

*Eliminate everything out of your mind except what the Lord desires to do in you tonight and he does desire to do in you something very special an unusual.*

*We are so delighted that this night we have with us Dr. Howard Ervin. We will introduce him now as our custom is, so that as the Holy Spirit flows, he can begin as he desires, or as the Holy Spirit directs. Dr. Ervin is a graduate Professor of Theology at Oral Roberts University, specializing in the Old Testament and a man I have known for many years. The last time I had Dr. Ervin down here we really worked him hard. Do you want him to minister to you? Then, shall we stand and join our hearts together and I want us to do something that I think is most important. All of us take time to pray and prepare our hearts to receive from God what God has prepared for each one of you this night.*

*I don't want us to rush into a worship service or into a preaching service without our hearts being prepared to receive, and many of us come from different avenues of life with all kinds of thoughts and things going on in our lives and our minds, and I want us to take just a few moments to center your thoughts upon the Lord, and if you do this best by praying, pray; if you do it best by meditating and getting a picture of Jesus in your mind, do that – do whatever it takes to prepare your heart, but we'll take just a few moments for you to prepared your hearts as we enter into the presence of the Lord.*

### SERMON:

I've looked forward to being with you and for a few minutes this evening but I wasn't quite sure how I was going to be when I got here. We found, after the plane had landed, that they had burned out a couple of relays and so we sat on the ground in Houston while they worked on it. Then they transferred us to another plane and, you know, I learned patience. When I looked out the window of the plane we were on, I saw those fellows up on the other plane that we had been on. They were working on it and I decided I wasn't too much worried

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about having waited for two hours there. After all, we'd made it safely and that was more than the time to me at that time.

I have looked forward to being with you and I really have something to say. I'm not stalling, but I've learned this with the Malaleys, whenever I come to Baton Rouge, they never give me dinner until midnight anyway. In fact, the first time I came here they worked me so hard I got sick and they put me on a plane and Doc here shot me with a needle and I was having trouble keeping my stomach where my belt is so he shot me with a needle and poured me onto a plane and sent me off to Beaumont so, you see, I haven't eaten dinner yet and I know I'm not going to get it before midnight so if you're not in a hurry, I'm not.

Now, as a Baptist, this would have disturbed me greatly a number of years ago, but I got mixed up with some Holy Rollers and they mussed my hair and bruised my dignity and they thoroughly outraged my theology. I've been trying to get them straightened out ever since, and I emerged from the ordeal as a Bapticostal. Now I, however, am not – I don't think I'm the stereotype of the usual Pentecostal preacher. I always feel a little bit diffident every time I face a new group and many of you are new to me, because I know that you come with certain expectations and I don't dance in the Spirit – there have been times when I prayed that I might, but I never have and I suspect the reason why I haven't is that I've always added a P.S. to my prayer: "But Lord, not in public." And I don't fizz and I don't roll, and to be perfectly frank about it, I am rather a reserved person. I say that because I have found that, on occasion, I have had to assure people that my Pentecostal experience is authentic, even though I don't act the way they do, and that it is current, it's up to date. I have a colleague on the faculty who, someone asked him one time if he knew me and said "yes" and they said: "What kind of a fellow is he? What kind of a preacher is he?" Well, he said, he can go down deeper and he can stay down longer and come up dryer than anyone else I've known. Of course, with friends like that, you really don't need enemies!

I am going to share with you in the sessions that we have before us some of the reflections that I've worked through over the years as I've walked in the Spirit with our Lord and I'm well aware that so often when I share this with new groups that it comes as something as a

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surprise to them, but please remember that when I got involved in the Pentecostal Renewal many years ago, that I was a Baptist and I guess I still am. I don't know whether they're willing to own me or not, but when I came into the experience I had no theology to prepare me, I had no Pentecostal or – well, we didn't use the word "Charismatic" in those days, that came later and so we've had to work through the scriptures and work through our own experience in the light of the scriptures and I think that God has given us some insights that have certainly proven helpful to others. I trust they'll prove helpful to you and the one thing that I am going to ask you is that you hear me out before you sit in judgment on me.

Now, I always tell my students that I expect them to disagree with me. In fact, I invite them to disagree with me, because as a teacher, I've learned that there are several ways of listening. Now, if we listen passively, we're retaining very little. I find that it always takes more of a cerebral cortex to disagree than it does to agree and so I invite my students to disagree because, if they disagree, then I know they're hearing me, they're listening to me, and I invite you to disagree, and I'm getting old enough now that disagreement doesn't make me disagreeable. I might add though, that you'll save yourselves a lot of time and a lot of stress if you agree with me in the beginning because, when we get to glory, you'll find out I was right anyway!

It was back in 1961 at the Full Gospel Business Men's International Convention in Miami Beach that I came to a kind of focus in my pilgrimage in the Spirit. I had been using good Pentecostal terminology, had been seeking the Spirit for about a year and nine months. I didn't realize then that He was seeking me. I thought that I'd found Him, but He finally caught up with me and, as a result of that experience, I began to move in what were to me completely unfamiliar and new circles. In fact, in those days the FGBM used to invite me to their conventions and put me on the platform as "Exhibit A" – that a Baptist could get the Holy Spirit and still be a Baptist. But as a consequence of that experience, a great deal that I had learned theologically, I had to dispense with, I had to unlearn and, as I began to work through the experience, I discovered that passages of the scripture that had before been so familiar to me now became completely new and I began to find depths of meaning I had never seen before and one of those passages is in I Corin. 12 in that passage but, you know, the fact that it's there has had a

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profound influence, first upon our understanding of Scripture and, secondly, upon our life and walk in the Spirit.

I've done a little research on that translation on the Tyndale Bible: "In spiritual things brethren I would not have you ignorant." Now the translators of the Tyndale Bible, recognizing that the word "gifts" wasn't there, interpreted the word "spirituals" as a neuter and they inserted the word "things."

The great Bible of 1539 translates it much the same way "Concerning spiritual things brethren I would not have you ignorant".

The Geneva Bible of 1560 translates it this way "Now concerning spiritual "gifts" , brethren I would not have you ignorant" and the translators of the Geneva Bible indicated by the parentheses that they were supplying the word that was not in the text that they were translating.

The Bishop's Bible of 1568 follows the translation of the Geneva Bible for we read this translation: "Concerning spiritual gifts brethren I would not have you ignorant", but in the Bishop Bible the word "gifts" is in italics and the translators are simply telling us that the word "gifts" is not there – they are supplying it. That's what they think the text means.

The Reims version of 1582 reverts to the translation of the Tyndale and the Great Bible, for the Reims version of 1582 reads: "And concerning spiritual "things" I will not have you ignorant brethren."

The King James Bible of 1611 translates it, "Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren, I would not have you ignorant" and it italicizes the word "gifts" once again, indicating to us that the word "gifts" is not in the text and that the translators are supplying it.

The revised version of 1881, the counterpart of the American Standard version of 1901, translates it, "Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren I would not have you ignorant" and the

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revised version also prints it in italic script, showing us that they recognize that the word is not in the original text and that the translators are supplying it.

The revised standard version of 1946 translates it this way: “Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren I do not want you to be uninformed” and it does not italicize the word.

So now it has become part of the inspired text, not because Paul put it there, but because the translators decided that it belonged there – are you following me?

All right, then, the Living Bible of 1967 translates it this way:

“And now brothers, I want to write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you.”

And let me just say, by way of anticipation, that that’s precisely what Paul did not say.

Now, I’ve read all of this to show you the evolution through the various English translations going back to 1525 to show you how we get the translation that we have in our text. When we look at the Greek text we find that what the apostle Paul wrote was this:

“Now concerning spirituals brethren I would not have you to be ignorant.”

I suggest that the translations that we have read have actually misled us. The very fact that the translators have inserted the word “gifts” into the text – and I’m looking at the revised Standard Version in front of me, and the Revised Standard Version prints the word “gifts” without italics, as though it were part of the original text, but the very fact that that word has been inserted has given us tunnel vision.

Now I want you to mark this because I’m going to demonstrate this from scripture – fair enough? All right. The rest of you haven’t made up your minds, but give me time and you will. All right, when we look at the text as Paul apparently wrote it, the question that we need to ask

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ourselves is this: What are the spirituals? If Paul was not talking about the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit in verse one, what was he talking about? Well, now, in an endeavor to answer that, let me share with you an experience that I had back about 1964 or 1965 I guess it was. I had been invited by Demos Shakarian to the Los Angeles area to spend a week there speaking to the various Full Gospel Business Men’s chapters and as I was packing my bag to go to the airport that day I was pressed for time. I had everything packed and just as I was walking through my study I saw my little Greek Testament lying on my desk and rather than open my bag and put it inside, I picked it up and dropped it into my pocket and promptly forgot about it as I rushed for the plane.

I was somewhere over the middle of America and they had served the meal as they usually do and I was trying to find a comfortable position to sleep, but the more I squirmed in the seat, the more this little Testament kept rubbing against the arm of the seat and, finally, I think, more out of exasperation than anything else, I pulled it out of my pocket and quite by happenstance it fell open to this passage and I began to read: “Now concerning spirituals brethren, I would not have you ignorant, you know that when you were Gentiles” and immediately my attention was arrested because, you see, up to this point I had been influenced by the English translations. Paul was talking about “spiritual gifts” that is, the gifts of the Holy Spirit in verse one – then suddenly in Verse 2 he is not talking about authentic Gifts of the Holy Spirit, but he is talking about the experience of Corinthian Christians when they were pagans. Well, that peaked my curiosity. The best that I could say about the text was that Paul had perhaps introduced a parenthesis, but it sharpened in my own mind the question before us. What are the spirituals?

Lord, what did you mean here by “spirituals?” Well, I kept on reading and then, suddenly, I became mildly excited. My enthusiasms are always muted. I began to read verse four. Now, “there are diversities of gifts”. The word “gifts “ is authentically there, but the same Spirit - but there’s much more. Verse five says “there are diversities of workings, but the same Lord, but there are diversities of ministries” Our English word “Deacons” and the same God which worketh all things into all. Now, I inverted the order – let me read the order as it is in the text. First of all, diversities of gifts, diversities of ministries and diversities of workings. Now

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there is a law in Greek, and some of our graduates of the University who are here will, I trust, remember their Greek grammar. Do you think we ought to give them an exam tonight and see if they do – hmm, fair enough?

There's a law in the Greek language that says an adjective must agree with its noun, in gender, that is masculine, feminine, neuter, in number, singular, plural, dual, and in case, nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, and the word "spirituals" is an adjective and suddenly what I saw before me was three nouns that met the criterion for that principal of Greek grammar – they agreed in number and they agreed in case. Now let me try to make a little bit more intelligible to you. The word "spirituals" in Greek is "pneumatikon", and I want you to listen carefully to the ending of that "on" do you hear it? It's important, mark it. The word for "gifts" is "charismaton" – do you hear the same ending: 'pneumatikon' ; 'charismaton'. Now, let's go on. The word for "ministries" 'deaconon', and the word for "workings" 'inergamaton'. Now you can hear just by the very sound of the words the agreement, "neumaticon", "charismaton", "deaconon", "inergamaton", and as I said, I became mildly excited because I realized then that the spirituals that Paul was talking about were "gifts", "ministries" and "workings." Gifts, ministries and workings.

Now, are you ready for the next question? How many of you have heard of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit? Oh, come now, I'm not going to pull the rug out from under you, it's nailed down! And the rest of you haven't. Oh, come, now! Why are they called nine gifts of the Spirit? Well, may I suggest because the translators supplied the word "gifts" in Verse 1, and they gave us tunnel vision.

Notice that the spirituals are gifts, ministries and workings. Ready for the next question? Some of you don't look as though you are enjoying this and that's all right. I am! Of the so-called nine gifts of the Spirit, how many does Paul specifically, categorically call "gifts?" Six? Anybody else have another answer? One? What is it? "Healings" – plural! Why do we talk about nine gifts of the Spirit and Paul only calls one them "gifts?" Well, the translators gave us tunnel vision. They supplied a word in Verse 1 that completely preconditions everything that we expect of the text, but is it not interesting that Paul calls healings "gifts"?



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Now, we've said that in the text there are two other words that agree with Spirituals and one of these is workings. Workings. How many of the nine gifts of the Spirit does Paul call "workings?" Have any of you ever asked yourselves these questions? Why not? Well, let me tell you why not. The translators gave us "tunnel vision". That one little word "gifts" you see, prepares us to seek gifts and yet as we've pointed out in the history of the translation of the text, in 1525 the Tyndale Bible said "spiritual things"; The Great Bible of 1539 says: "spiritual things" and the Reims Bible of 1582 says "spiritual things", and when in the earlier versions the word "gifts" was supplied, it was always italicized or put in parentheses and the translators were telling the readers: "We're putting the word in, we're supplying it."

All right, if workings are one of the spirituals, how many of the spirituals are called workings ? One. What is it? Working of miracles. Well, why don't we call them nine workings? Or why don't we call them – what's the next one – ministries. Why don't we call them nine ministries? Incidentally, if healings are gifts, and miracles are workings, what are the other seven? Now don't answer that. I've asked it for one reason and one reason only and that's to sharpen the way you look at the text. You see, I tell my Baptist brethren that we Baptists say we are the people of the Book. We believe it from Genesis to Revelation but, as I tell my Baptist brethren, what we really believe is what we think is there, or what we want to be there, but when we begin to see what's really there, we become very uncomfortable.

In fact, I have a very good friend who, a number of years ago was a Pastor of a very influential Southern Baptist Church back in the early Sixties when I got involved in the Pentecostal Renewal – and so did he. He was on five denominational boards and within two weeks he was off of all five and within a month they had called a business meeting and tried to vote him out of his church. Now, see, we believe what's in the Book. Well, they made one mistake that night. Everyone was set to vote him out of the Church, but they gave him the opportunity to speak, so for one hour he simply exposed them to what the scriptures had to say about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and finally one of the Deacons got so confused and so exasperated that he jumped up, interrupted the Pastor and said: "Pastor, it may be Bible, but it

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ain't Baptist." Now, some of you are thinking: Now, it may be Bible, but it ain't Pentecostal. Well, take your choice. Good, you finally broke down – it's taken a long time.

All right, do you see what we are saying? Once we can free ourselves from the bondage of that translation we're in a position then to see what the Spirit of God really wants us to see and we're in a position to be freed by the Spirit to be the instrument of the Spirit. What has been the effect of this translation upon Pentecostal thinking and Pentecostal theology? Let me say this, I would not have flown all this distance tonight just to read these translations to you, or just to talk about matters of textual understanding and translation, nor would I have come all this distance even to talk to you about a Pentecostal theology, much as I like to talk about theology and, incidentally, that's not a bad word. I know it is among many Pentecostals, because they don't know what theology is. They confuse religious philosophizing with theology.

Now, religious philosophy begins with man and tries to reason its way to God. Theology begins with God, and one of the best definitions I've ever heard of theology is this: Thinking the thoughts of God after Him, and so I make no bones about it, I am a Theologian. I love to talk about it, but I wouldn't have come all this distance just to do that. I am concerned with the practical consequences of what the Spirit is saying to the Church in this hour. I've been in the renewal long enough – and let me just say this, though I'm a Baptist denominationally, I am a Pentecostal to the core in my experience and in my theology, and I've been in this Pentecostal walk now since the late fifties, early sixties, and I see things happening in the Pentecostal Renewal that disturb me greatly, and as I've looked at the history of theology, and as I've looked at the history of Pentecostal theology in our own day, I'm persuaded that the reason why these distressing things are happening is because there's been so much misinformation about what the scriptures are actually saying and that information inevitably influences our conduct – the way we act, the way we walk in the Spirit, so my concern is basically and fundamentally a very practical one.

Let's come back again to the text. We've suggested to you now what Paul is talking about are the spirituals, and that these spirituals are "gifts", they are the ministries and they are the workings of the Holy Spirit but, now, look with me if you will at Verse 7, and notice what it

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says: “Te each one is given the gift of the Holy Spirit. For an ego trip? Now I confess, I’m meddling, but that’s all right, I’ve been ordained for that and if you do it without ordination you are in trouble. So I’m fully aware that I’m meddling. Let the text soak in for a few minutes – just let it soak in. There are what? To each is given – what? The manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Oh, I thought the Spirit was giving us gifts to go out and lay hands on people. Ouch! It’s all right. I may be on the plane tomorrow going back, so I’ll get it all in tonight. Isn’t that the usual understanding?”

Listen to this translation of the Living Bible again: “And now brothers, I want to write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you.” I can’t find Paul talking about any special abilities – what I find him talking about are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit – not our gifts, but his manifestations. You see, dear friends, the ground is level at the foot of the cross and one of the besetting sins of Pentecostalism is that it becomes an ego trip. “My gift is bigger than your gift!”

As I’ve traveled, on occasion, I have had people who have said to me something like this: “Brother, how many gifts have you got?” And you can see it written across their foreheads – well, let’s see now, he’s been Dean of the Seminary at ORU, he’s a Professor there, he’s been Department Chairman – well, he does a great deal of traveling, speaks a lot to Pentecostal groups; well, with all of those responsibilities, he ought to have at least three of them anyway, maybe even four, and if I get close enough maybe even some will rub off on me! How many gifts have you got?

Now, I’ve learned this, that usually when we ask questions, we don’t want answers, we ask questions and what we’re asking for is the other’s person’s attention so that we can give them our answers. Now, I’m not asking you to confess it. We all know it us true don’t we? And so, since I realize that we are so often divided in our attention and because I want to be reasonably certain that I have the undivided attention if anyone asks a question like that, I will sometimes engage in a little verbal fencing with them and say: “Well, how many gifts do you think I ought to have?” Hmmm – you ought to have at least three, maybe even four. Now, they don’t say that – they become rather embarrassed and, finally, when I’m reasonably certain that I

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have their attention, my answer usually shocks them. Acts 2:38: “Repent, be baptized and you shall receive” What? “The gift of the Holy Spirit.” Not: “That’s the gift I’ve gotz”. And when I look at Corinthians everything else is His manifestation. Not my gift. It’s His manifestation. Now, listen, even the Jerusalem Bible goes astray in Acts 2:38 because it translates it in the plural: “gifts” but Acts 2:38 is the “gift” of the Holy Spirit.

Friends, when you and I have the “gift” of Holy Spirit that’s all we need.

I have mentioned to many people in Pentecostal ranks who had “gifts” and worked them in season and out of season - usually out of season - and I’ve seen more worship services spoiled by people working “gifts” rather than being open to the manifestations.

Now, listen to me, anyone who thinks that they’ve got one, two, three or four gifts of the Spirit is impoverished to the degree that they can’t claim the others, but if you have the “Gift of the Spirit” and are open to His manifestations. That’s riches, that’s spiritual wealth, because all He requires of us, then, is obedience and availability and He takes care of everything else. And I discovered this, that there’s a tremendous freedom in this, because if I don’t have any gifts to work, I can’t claim credit for the results, but I don’t have to take the blame either – hmm?

I remember one occasion at FGBM breakfast, in one of the New England cities. After it was over a dear old brother came up to me and he said, “Howard, sit down!” and he said it with such a preemptory voice - and I’ve always been taught to respect my elders, so I sat. Of course, I’m getting to the point now that I tell them I deserve a little respect too, but I don’t always get it. Before I knew what he intended to do, he had both hands on my head and he prayed a beautiful little prayer and then said to me: “Now, Howard, I have given you a gift of prophesy – go prophesy!” There were only two things wrong with it, first of all, it wasn’t scriptural and, secondly, it never worked!

Now, concerning what, brethren? Spirituals? And what are the spirituals – the gifts, the ministries, the working of the Holy Spirit that are His manifestations through the worshiping witnessing community and none of us can stake our territorial claim on any of it, for

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manifestations of the Spirit are totally sovereign and totally unpredictable. Now, hear me, you and I may have prophesied once, as the Spirit manifested Himself, but that didn't make us a prophet!

Do you know where my first experience with prophecy came? Within a business meeting. It wasn't long after we'd gotten back from Miami Beach, at our annual business meeting and it was about six months later. We always had about a half hour of prayer time before our annual business meeting. We found that once the Spirit of God moved, we could conduct all of the church business at an annual meeting in less than half an hour. That's the kind of business meetings I like. You go with a motion to adjourn before you begin, but we always had a half hour of prayer beforehand, so this night we had our half hour of prayer. I walked up to the pulpit to close in prayer. I started in prayer but somewhere in that prayer things got kind of mixed up and I suddenly realized that I was prophesying. Our church clerk was sitting with her pencil poised to begin the minutes and she recognized something was happening and wrote the "prophecy" into the minutes of that business meeting. It was totally unpredictable, totally sovereign, and we've watched the Spirit of God over the years fulfilling every word of that prophesy. I've been at other meetings when they had "prophets" you know, who had the "gift of prophecy", and as I've said, I've heard the prophesy in season and out of season and I've seen the Spirit of God go in one direction and I've seen the "prophets" going in the other direction – and the result was pure chaos.

I've been in meetings where an individual had a "gift" to interpret – and this was a meeting of some 3,000 people, until finally the moderator of the meeting had to stand up and say: "Please be quiet." Every time they interpreted they skewed the meeting off at an oblique angle to where the Spirit of God was going, and they had to ask that individual to be quiet. Well, they became incensed because their "gift" wasn't respected. Well, I would much rather have the manifestations of the Spirit anyway.

Let's go back now to Verse 1, and I am going to suggest the way I like to translate that verse because I think it is consistent with what Paul is saying in the text: "Now concerning spiritual manifestations brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed" and suddenly there is no

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confusion, no conflict with Verse 2 for if Paul is introducing the subject of spiritual manifestations, what he is saying to us in Verses 2 and 3, as contrasted with Verse 4 and following, is that he is contrasting the manifestations of demonic spirits that they knew as Pagans with the authentic manifestations of the Spirit that they have come to know now as Christians and so the context is perfect unity.

Now, concerning spiritual manifestations. We're going to have more to say about these spiritual manifestations, but I don't want to get into that too deeply tonight but, rather, I want to go back and look now at our conduct in the light of this. What I have seen as I've traveled in the last 16 to 18 years, so often as I've said when I've been in Pentecostal assemblies, they have an official "tongue speaker." They have an official "interpreter." Now, no one has ever ordained them, they are that de-facto, or they've got an official "prophet" license, but as we'll point out in a subsequent lecture, I have never found anyone who has the "gift of wisdom." Strange, isn't it.

On Tongues. Well, you see, so many people have said that "tongues" is last, therefore, it's least, and I sometimes get the feeling that we get into the kind of a syndrome that, by grace, God gave us the Baptism of the Spirit and tongues and now we're going to work real hard and get sanctified and holy, and the holier we get the more he's going to give us, so if we get holy enough, some day we'll get up that ladder high enough to get to wisdom. I've heard the word of wisdom in groups of 20 to 1000, and it's gone over like a lead balloon – no one recognized it.

Now, we're going to deal more with that, but I want to come back to the whole question of manifestations. Let me share some of my own spiritual itinerary with you,. When we came back from Miami Beach in 1961 there were about a dozen people in our congregation who were chafing at the bit. For several years I had had a Bible class every second and fourth Tuesday nights of the month. I had taught everything I could find on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and then we began nights of prayer, once a month. Saturday evening before communion Sunday we would meet in the church at 10:00 o'clock after the homemakers had finished their chores, gotten their children to bed and made preparations for Sunday and the marketing was all done. So we would start at 10:00 o'clock on a Saturday night and go to about 3:00 o'clock in the morning. Those two things set the stage in the Church. Just before we went to Miami Beach I remember

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one Sunday morning as the folks were going out of Church, one of the women who had been attending the Bible class and attending the prayer meetings said to me: “Now, Pastor, you’ve been preaching the doctrine, when do you lay on hands so we can receive the Spirit ?” That’s kind of painting yourself into a corner. So when we came back from Miami Beach we shared our experience, first with the Deacons in our Church. Now, one of my Deacon friends and I, his wife and my wife, had gone to the Miami Beach Convention in 1961, and when they came back all we knew was that we had had an experience with the Holy Spirit, and we didn’t have any gifts. We knew we had the “gift “ of the Holy Spirit.

Then in that first Deacon’s meeting, just before Communion Sunday – that Saturday night as we sat in the Sunday School room of the Church, this Deacon friend of mine, Art, and I, shared our experience with the Deacons. Now, as we said, we haven’t shared this with anyone in the Church because we wanted to share it with you first. We assure you that this will never be anything but a Baptist Church – we’re not going to change the Church, the worship services will be the same, there will be nothing to embarrass you but anyone who is interested in the experience, it will be open to, who is not, it will never be forced on them but we do want you to understand and, with your permission, we want to have cottage prayer meetings where those that are interested can gather just for prayer and for study and worship in the Spirit.

Well, all this while, as we were talking about this I noticed some very interesting things happening on my Board of Deacons. One man broke down and started to cry. I had never seen him cry and, finally, through his tears he said to me: “Do you think God could heal Susie ?” Now, Susie was their daughter born in mid-life and Susie was a Mongoloid, and that night Ollie broke down and wept. I didn’t have a gift of weeping to give him, neither did Art but he said “Do you think God can heal Susie?” That was the manifestation of the Spirit.

The first Pentecostal prayer in that Church was during that Deacons meeting that night when Art and I laid hands on him in that Board of Deacons and prayed for Susie’s healing. Now, physically, to my knowledge, Susie has never been physically healed, but about a year later in one of our prayer services – in the Church healing service, I heard Susie pray in tongues. And Susie couldn’t speak normally. Then I noticed something else that was happening. While

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all this was going on, one of our other Deacons was doing this, and I thought to myself, “that’s odd, I’ve never seen Ed do a thing like that before, I wonder what’s the matter with him.” So after we get finished praying for Susie he said: “This Baptism in the Spirit that you’re talking about, is this something you can feel?” I said, “Very often people do.” He replied, “Is that what I’ve been feeling?” Well, I said, “what have you been feeling? Well, he said, “ It’s just like electricity chasing around my head and I thought it was a fly and kept trying to knock it off.” Now, Art and I were too naïve and too new to claim any gifts, and here was the Spirit of God moving mightily in the Board of Deacons. These were His manifestations, not our gifts, and then word got out in the congregation and one of the women came to me the next Sunday morning as she was going out of Church. She had been in the Bible class, been in the prayer group, and June said to me: “What happened to you in Miami Beach?” Oh, I said, “We’re going to have a prayer meeting two weeks from now in the Parsonage and it will be at 8:00 o’clock on a Friday evening and then at 10:00i o’clock we’ll all come over here for the night of prayer.” I thought you could program the Holy Spirit in those days but we soon found out you couldn’t, so about four or five days later, I got a phone call from June saying “Pastor, I won’t be here for that prayer meeting, I’m going down to Carolina to visit my mother and my stepfather and I absolutely refuse to go unless you pray for me to receive the baptism.”

Now, I’d never prayed with anyone for the baptism. Oh, we’d prayed for healing, with Ollie, we prayed for Susie – so I said, “I’ll call you back.” So I began, as the young folk would say, I began to sweat it out. I didn’t know what to do, this was a momentous decision because I knew that once this got loose in the Church I couldn’t control it and I didn’t know where it was going to go. Oh, we weren’t going to do anything ridiculous, but I didn’t know what effect it was going to have on that Church and, of course, just about that time the adversary perched on my left shoulder and whispered in my ear and said: “Wait until the congregation finds out what a psychological trick you’re working on them and you’ll be on a slow boat the China with a one-way ticket.” So this was my own state of confusion and perplexity. We had gone through most of the week and a day or two later June was to leave, and so my wife said to me: “Well, what are you going to do about June?” And just the quickly God dropped a word of wisdom in my heart and it was his manifestation, not my gift, and I heard myself saying to my wife: “What it is not mine to give it is not mine to withhold.” I reached for the telephone and called June. I said,



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”Come on down, June, and we’ll pray with you.” So we took June down to my study in the cellar in the basement of the Parsonage, explained my experience to her and we prayed with her and left her there.

My wife and I were sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee and about 15 minutes later, we heard this (clumping). June was coming up those bare cellar steps. The next thing I knew she literally exploded. She almost took the door of its hinges. I made one mistake,. I have never repeated it, but I made a mistake that day. When my wife and I sat down at the table, I sat down in the chair nearest the door. I never made that mistake again. June literally burst out of the basement, her eyes this big, and she made a beeline right for me and I tried to duck, but I got my legs tangled up in the chair and the next thing I knew, she had both arms around me, and June was only about this high, and she literally picked me up off the floor. After that, I always insisted that my wife sit by the door to run interference for me.

You see, I had nothing to give June. I could share an experience, I could be the instrument, but what she received was the gift of the Spirit, through his manifestation, and within two years after that the entire congregation had entered into the experience. It wasn’t a large congregation, but with the exception of about six or eight people, that entire congregation moved into the experience. Now, up to this time, all of the ministry had been either in my Study or in the Cottage Prayer Groups, but then suddenly, and very, very definitely, through a series of events, God made it clear that we were to take that experience out of the closet and translate it into the life of the Church. Well, how do you do it? We had never had an altar service in a Pentecostal sense and we never did have one, but what God led us to do was what we called a “ministry” service and I’ll explain that in a moment.

On Sunday evening, at the close of the Sermon we would clear the two front pews on each side and invite folk to come and take their seat in the front pew, keeping the second row free so people could move in and out. My Deacons always came and ministered with me and as each person would share their need with us, anyone in the congregation that could empathize with that need was free to come and lay on hands and we would pray with them. We would have anywhere from 6 to 40 people praying for any given need and then the congregation would go

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and sit down. It never became a market place. We'd move to the next person and repeat it, and we would go through that until midnight. In fact, if I got out of Church before midnight for months I thought we were beginning to backslide.

Well, that was what we developed, but this was the way it came about. We felt that this was the pattern God was giving us for that Church and so I made the announcement: "Next Sunday evening at the close of the evening service, we are going to have a ministry service with laying on of hands." Now, I didn't call it a healing service and I'll tell you why. I was afraid somebody would come in a wheel chair, come down on crutches, and we would pray and nothing would happen and everybody would say: "Ha, ha, ha, you failed!" And so the next Sunday morning after I made the announcement that following week was literally a Gethsemane for me. I second guessed that every day of the week a dozen times a day and finally had come to the conclusion that we ought to postpone it, but how to get out of it gracefully, and I was fully determined the next Sunday morning that I would simply say from the Pulpit: "Due to circumstances beyond our anticipation and control, we're going to postpone the beginning of the ministry service.

Somehow I got through the morning service without ever saying it. Well, Sunday afternoon was horrible, so I was absolutely determined that Sunday night I would say during the service: "Now, due to circumstances beyond our anticipation and beyond our control, the ministry service will be postponed indefinitely." And again, somehow I never made the announcement, and it came up to the final moment – you see, we'd even sing a hymn, and I knew I had to make the announcement before we sang the hymn and I picked up the hymn book and I flipped over to the page and I lifted my eyes and I was just going to make the announcement when once again I heard the Lord speaking within me, in that quiet inner voice, and I heard him say something like this: "Howard, what are you afraid of?" and I said, "Lord, to be perfectly honest, you know what I'm afraid of, I'm afraid of failure" and then so very, very clearly his words came back: "But, Howard, you can't fail, because you (capital you) cannot succeed." I never made the announcement.

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And no one in our group ever professed to have any gifts. We had one gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and regardless of what people came for in prayer, we would pray for them. You see, the fallacy of professing that we have gifts – suppose, as so many people have said to me: “Brother, pray that God will give me a gift.” “Which one do you want?” “The gift of healing.” “Why, are you sick?” “Well, no, I’m not sick.” “Well, now you confuse me, why do you want a gift of healing if you are not sick?” “Well, you know why.” “No, I don’t know why. I’m not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet and I won’t know unless you tell me, why do you want a gift of healing?” “Well, I want to go out and lay hands on people and get them healed.” “Oh, now I understand, but you don’t want a gift of healing, you want a gift to be a healer, and that’s not in the Book.” Who is the healer?

Who is the healer? Jesus. Why did we lose sight of that. Well, the translators put that word “gifts” up there in Verse 1 and gave us tunnel vision. Now, you see, if someone claimed to have a gift to be a healer – suppose somebody came and sat down and said, “Oh, I’m in terrible trouble, (and this has happened) my business is falling apart, my wife’s going to leave me, our family’s breaking up.” Well, you see, if we were honest, what we would say is, “Well now, brother, you don’t need a gift of healing, but you sure need a word of wisdom, and does anybody here have the gift of wisdom to give our brother. If we were honest, but we never did, you see, we never professed that, so regardless what they came for, we would pray for them and we would pray all night if need be, and we saw God do remarkable things, and let me just say this: Never because any one of us had a gift to lay on anyone, but because the Spirit of God in sovereign unpredictable love and mercy chose to move.

I remember so clearly one Sunday night – A Presbyterian couple that had received the baptism in the Spirit in my study – received spontaneously, singing in tongues together, sang a duet together and then they told us, months later, they became to come to our evening service and they lived some 490 miles away from the Church, but they would drive in frequently for the evening service just to be part of that ministry service and I remember they came to me sometime after they had had the experience and they explained the situation of their daughter. They had a teenage daughter that had never had a normal menstrual cycle. They had given her the best medical attention they could afford but her organs had never formed normally and, you

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know, you can't build new organs and so they said: "We're going to bring her here for prayer." I said "fine" so this Sunday evening I looked out and there in the fourth pew on the right sitting about the fourth pew down were the Presbyterian couple with their daughter, and that night, when we gave the invitation, she was the first one to come up – she got right up and walked over and sat in the corner of the pew at my left hand and those pews filled very quickly. I walked over to her and my Deacons came up and I simply said to the congregation – we never went into the details – we never allowed people to give long anatomical requests for prayer – you can talk prayer to death if you do this ,and so we simply said to the congregation, "our young sister wants healing and about 30 or 40 of our people came forward and we prayed with her that night and as we were praying – we had not prayed a full minute – when she began to sing in tongues, one of the most beautiful things I've ever heard, a beautiful lilting voice, in a language I'd never heard before and when I looked at her the glory of God had enkindled on her face. We just stood back very quietly and worshipped with her and when I looked at her face I realized, intuitively, that she was seeing something, she was having a vision, and so I spoke to her very softly and called her by name. I said, "What are you seeing? She never opened her eyes and she replied: "I'm in heaven" and went right back to singing tongues. Well, I walked over got her parents in the other side of the Church, brought the over, sat them in the pew behind her and left them there, and we went on and ministered to all the other folks sitting in the pews. By the time the pews had emptied and filled again, they had gone and so we went on until midnight that night. I don't know what time they left.

About six months later her mother was in the Church one night for the evening service. She had come alone, her husband had to work that night and as she was leaving – she was leaving before the service was over - I think it was around ten or ten-thirty that night, and as he was going out she leaned over to my wife who was sitting in the last pew and she said: "By the way, do you remember when you prayed for our daughter some months ago" and my wife said: "Yes, and we've often wondered what the results were." She said: "well, we took her back to our physician the next week and she is perfectly normal.

Now, whose gift was it. Now, listen to me carefully. It was her gift. All that we had was a manifestation of the Spirit's healing power. She was the one who received the gift because she

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was the one that was sick, and that wasn't a gift that she was going out and lay on somebody else, that was her gift, her gift of healing.

Now, we learned, and learned very early on, not to measure spirituality by decibels – thank you, Sister, I'm glad you got that!

Now, that leads me to say this, and I'm conscious of the time there, of course, as I said, I don't expect Jerry's going to feed me before midnight so, that leads me to say this: None of us ever claimed that we had a gift. We were open to what the Spirit of God would do and we always stood on tiptoes of expectation, just waiting for the Holy spirit to move. Now, he moved in that case. We rarely saw it happen at that moment. Usually it was months later, sometimes years later, that we discovered what the Spirit of God had done in one of those ministry services, but none of us ever claimed that we had a "gift" that we were "working." The only thing we said was, we had the gift of the Spirit and we are His instruments and the only thing He requires is availability and obedience, and we tried to be available and obedient.

I hope I've made the point tonight because I want to go on from there and examine with you now the Spirit's manifestations, asking ourselves some hard questions about these manifestations. Asking ourselves, can we be used in this way, or is there someone more "worthy." Let me just say that the ground is level at the foot of the cross and that every one of us can be the instrument for the Spirit's manifestations, but there's one word I want to close with. Notice that Verse 7 closes with these words: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit" for what reason? "To profit all". Another translation is: "For the common good." What does that mean? To me it means this: That when the Spirit of God manifests Himself in the worshipping witnessing assembly, it is for the good of everyone there; that when the Spirit of God manifests Himself in a word of wisdom it may have specific application to an individual or small group, but it's for the building up of the whole group. When the Spirit works a miracle of healing, it may be one individual that's involved, but it's for the whole group, it is for the "common" good. The baptism in the Spirit is not an ego trip, the baptism in the Spirit is given that the Spirit might bring the body into maturity.

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I have found some insights in this passage over the years, as I have lived with them, that have revolutionized my own walk in the Spirit. I am going to ask you to turn to that passage and we are going to begin with I Corin. 12. Now, if you do not have a Bible with you and there happens to be a Baptist sitting around you, he will share his Bible with you, and I'm going to ask someone who has a King James Version if they will share just that first verse of I Corin. 12 with us. Just stand up and read it, but read it so everyone can hear it – do I have a volunteer? All right, if you will, now, if you will turn and face the group so everyone can hear you, just the first verse, I Corin. 12:1: “Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren I would not have you ignorant.” Did all of you hear that? Would you read it for us again?

In your text is the word “gifts” in Italics? How many of you have a version in which the word “gifts” is in Italics? What does it mean when a word is Italicized? It is not a part of the original text. You know, of course that our Old Testament was written in Hebrew and in Aramaic, portions of it, and the New Testament in Greek, and that our English translations have been made from the Hebrew and in Aramaic, portions of it, and the New Testament in Greek and that our English translations have been made from the Hebrew, the Aramaic and Greek and so, when we find a word that is Italicized in the text, what the translators are telling us is that it was not part of the original text. Where, then, did it come from? Where did it come from? Well, the translators supplied it and I can assure you, having done some Bible translation, that there's far more “perspiration” than there is “inspiration” in translation.

What we're saying is this – are you listening? Paul never wrote the word “gifts”.

All right, in our next lecture we are going to look at the manifestations of the Spirit and if any of you come back, bring your Bible with you. Amen

Jerry, do you have a word of prayer?