

The Gifts of Fire

1 Corinthians 12 • Romans 12:6-8 • Ephesians 4:11 • 1 Peter 4:10-11 | New Collective Church

Where This Fits in the Series

Part 1 of this series was The Gift of Fire, singular, the Holy Spirit Himself. Pastor Mark said back then that we tend to rush past the Gift and go straight to the gifts, and he deliberately waited until now to teach the plural. So this week is the payoff of a promise he made in week one. He also stated twice that the series finishes next Sunday, and he ended on 1 Corinthians 12:31 as a cliffhanger, pointing toward love in 1 Corinthians 13. Frame this session as the second-to-last, and tell your group the finale is coming.

Sermon Arc and Key Moves

LEADER NOTE

This sermon is teaching-heavy and covers a lot of ground quickly. The pastor acknowledged that himself. Your job is not to re-teach the gift lists. It is to land the three postures at the start and the two statements from the body metaphor, because those are the architecture of the whole message.

The Opening Diagnosis: Useless, Used Up, or Uppity

He named three ways church people relate to spiritual gifts. Useless is the person who believes God could not do anything with them, which he flatly called a lie. Used up is the person who believes their contributing season has passed. His line there was that they have started acting like they are dead while they still have good mileage left, and that there are no has-beens in the kingdom. Uppity is the person quietly certain they have something others do not. He included intellectual elitism in this, naming people who believe you cannot serve God without the original languages.

Three Foundational Truths

These were his own stated points. Every follower of Jesus has at least one spiritual gift. Every spiritual gift comes from the Holy Spirit, so He gets the credit. Every gift exists for the common good rather than for the person who holds it. He also distinguished a spiritual gift from natural talent, using himself as the example: he was genuinely poor at public speaking beforehand, which he says made the source unmistakable.

The Four Lists

He walked 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11, noting they are not exhaustive and that Ephesians reads more like roles or functions than gifts. Two exegetical details he drew out: in “gifts of healing” both nouns are plural in the Greek, indicating many kinds of healing for many kinds of brokenness; and prophecy is more forthtelling than foretelling, meaning an inspired word from God that calls people to obedience, not primarily prediction.

One Body, Many Parts — The Structural Payoff

The body metaphor in verses 12 through 27 is where the sermon resolves. Two statements carry it, and both are his own bolded points. First, no follower of Jesus can say “I do not belong,” which answers useless and used up. Second, no follower of Jesus can say “I don’t need you,” which answers uppity. He also observed that we cluster around people gifted like us, while Paul insists the seemingly weaker parts are indispensable and that God gives greater honor to the parts that lacked it. Underneath it all: the church is the living, breathing body of Jesus on earth now.

Are All Apostles? The Rhetorical Turn

Verses 29 and 30 are rhetorical questions with an obvious no. Not everyone has every gift, and no single gift is shared by everyone. He named this as directly relevant to the view that Spirit-filling is evidenced by one gift alone, and said he believes Paul refutes that here. He acknowledged this has cost him inclusion in circles on more than one side.

How Gifts Actually Surface

A two-part move worth keeping intact. Negatively, not through assessments or self-awareness. He was gently funny about this, comparing gift inventories to knowing your Enneagram number, and noting you can be very aware and do nothing. Positively, gifts surface when you begin desiring to serve people. When you want others to hear the gospel, understand Scripture, have needs met, or feel loved, you step into moments and discover capacities you did not know you had, because God supplies what is required for what He assigns.

The Close: Two Questions and 1 Peter 4

He landed on two questions, which are in his own sermon notes. Are you eagerly making yourself available to God? Are you faithfully using what God has already entrusted to you? Then he read 1 Peter 4:10-11 in full, ending on the point that when we use our gifts for others, God is praised and glorified through Jesus Christ.

Theological Notes for Leaders

LEADER NOTE

Read this section before your group meets. The tongues material is the most contested content in the entire series so far, and it is very likely to come up.

On Tongues

LEADER NOTE

Worth knowing before you facilitate: this is not the first time he has taught this. He covered it substantially in Part 8 (Prayer), working through 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 and Jude 1:20-21, and named both failure modes directly, churches that discarded the gift because it seemed strange and churches that made a prideful spectacle of it. He closed that section by saying he would return to it later. Part 12 is the promised follow-up. If your group was present for Part 8, connect the two rather than starting the conversation over.

Pastor Mark distinguished two things the New Testament describes. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke real human languages they had not learned, and hearers understood them. In 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 he sees something that may not follow the patterns of a known human language and that can function as prayer or praise to God. He said interpretation is required if tongues is practiced in gathered worship, and he cited Paul's own priority for intelligible speech in the assembly.

1 Corinthians 14:19

But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

He also disclosed that he practices a private prayer language when alone but not in the assembly, that he has been called a closet Pentecostal, and that he has been excluded from circles on more than one side because of where he lands. His stated posture was that he is only interested in the text, in understanding it and practicing it.

LEADER NOTE

Cessationist and continuationist Christians disagree genuinely and in good faith about whether these gifts continue today. Present the pastor's view as his view. Do not let the group turn this into a debate about who is right, and do not let anyone be made to feel lesser for where they land. If the conversation stalls here, redirect to what 1 Corinthians 12 says plainly: the Spirit distributes as He determines, and no one gift is the marker of genuine faith.

LEADER NOTE

He also referenced emerging research suggesting that praying in the Spirit can quiet intrusive thoughts. Treat that as personal testimony rather than settled science, and keep the discussion anchored in 1 Corinthians 14 rather than in the neuroscience. If someone asks, it is fine to say the pastor mentioned it and that you are not in a position to evaluate the studies.

On the Trinity

He briefly noted that verses 4 through 6 name God, Lord, and Spirit, and used it to point at the triune nature of God. He kept it light and did not overreach. If someone in your group wants to go deeper here, affirm the mystery rather than trying to resolve it.

On Prophecy

His forthtelling versus foretelling distinction is a well-supported reading and is worth reinforcing. It helps people who have written off prophecy as fortune-telling see that speaking a timely word from God into someone's life is closer to what Paul has in view.

Key Cross-References

LEADER NOTE

These support the sermon and give you somewhere to go if the conversation deepens.

- 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter that follows and the pastor's stated destination for next week. Love is what makes any gift worth anything.
- Romans 12:3-8, the parallel body passage. Paul pairs the gift list with a warning against thinking of yourself more highly than you ought, which speaks directly to the uppity posture.
- Ephesians 4:11-16, the roles given so that the body builds itself up in love until it reaches maturity. Ties the gifts to growth rather than status.
- Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the talents. A servant who buries what he was given is not commended for being careful. Speaks to the used up and useless postures.
- Exodus 31:1-5, God filling Bezalel with the Spirit for craftsmanship. A useful Old Testament reminder that Spirit-given ability is not limited to speaking gifts.
- 1 Peter 4:10-11, the sermon's closing text and the simplest summary in the New Testament. Speaking and serving, both by the strength God supplies.

Discussion Questions with Leader Notes

LEADER NOTE

Five sections. You almost certainly will not get to all of them. Sections 1 and 4 carry the most weight and work together, since section 4 answers the postures named in section 1. If you only have time for three, take 1, 4, and 5.

1. Useless, Used Up, or Uppity

- a. Which of the three is closest to where you actually are right now, and what put you there?

LEADER NOTE

Most people will land somewhere. Useless and used up are easier to admit than uppity, so do not expect anyone to volunteer the third. You can name that yourself and make it safe. Watch for the person who deflects with humor; that is often the used up posture wearing a disguise.

- b. If you have ever thought God could not do much with you, where did that belief come from?

LEADER NOTE

This can go to real places quickly. Sometimes it is a failure, sometimes something someone said years ago, sometimes just a long stretch of feeling unnoticed. The pastor called that belief a lie. You can say the same thing gently and let the body metaphor in section 4 do the rest of the work.

2. Three Things That Are True of Every Believer

- a. What is the difference between something you are naturally good at and something the Spirit has gifted you with?

LEADER NOTE

There is genuine overlap and the group may struggle to separate them cleanly. That is fine. The useful distinction is the source and the aim. A natural talent can serve you. A spiritual gift is given by the Spirit and exists for others. Some people have both operating in the same area.

- b. If every gift exists for the common good, what does that change about how you think about what you have?

LEADER NOTE

This is the antidote to the uppity posture, delivered without confronting anyone directly. If a gift is not mine to enjoy but mine to spend, the whole frame shifts from status to stewardship.

3. What the Gifts Actually Are

- a. Which one or two from these lists land on you as something you might actually have?

LEADER NOTE

Give people permission to guess. Nobody has to be certain. If someone cannot name anything, ask the group instead. It is often obvious to everyone but the person themselves, and hearing it named by others can be the most meaningful moment of the night.

- b. 1 Peter simplifies everything to speaking and serving. Which is more natural for you?

LEADER NOTE

A helpful on-ramp for anyone overwhelmed by the longer lists. Almost everyone can answer this one, and it gets the reluctant talking.

4. One Body, Many Parts

LEADER NOTE

This is the heart of the session. Both statements must land, and they map directly onto section 1. “I do not belong” answers useless and used up. “I don’t need you” answers uppity. If you make that connection explicit for the group, the whole sermon clicks into place.

a. Which of the two statements do you need to hear more this week, and why?

LEADER NOTE

The answer reveals which posture someone is actually in, more honestly than asking directly in section 1. Some will realize mid-sentence that they need the second one, which is a good moment to let sit.

b. Who in this church or group is genuinely unlike you? What might God have put in them that you need?

LEADER NOTE

Push for actual names, said out loud if the group is comfortable. The pastor observed that we cluster with people gifted like us. This question is the practical correction. Consider closing the session by having people thank one specific person for something they bring.

5. How You Actually Find Your Gift

LEADER NOTE

Keep both halves of this. The negative half (not through assessments and self-awareness) is what makes the positive half land. Without it, people leave planning to take a quiz instead of planning to serve.

LEADER NOTE

This section rests on something he taught back in Part 4 (Fire Forms), and naming it gives the practical advice its theological weight. His claim there was that formation by the Spirit requires our cooperation and participation, and that God will not change anything within us that we do not cooperate in. That is exactly why gifts do not surface through self-assessment. Awareness without participation changes nothing. The Enneagram comment in this sermon is the same argument he made months ago in a different key.

a. Think of a time you stepped up to help without planning to. What surprised you about how it went?

LEADER NOTE

Almost everyone has one of these. The point is to show that gifts are usually discovered in motion rather than in reflection. Collect two or three stories and let the group notice the pattern themselves.

b. Where is God stirring a desire in you to serve someone? What is the smallest real step?

LEADER NOTE

Push hard for small and specific. “Serve more” is not an answer. “Volunteer in kids ministry one Sunday next month” is. Write down what people say and follow up next week.

The Two Closing Questions

LEADER NOTE

These are the pastor's own closing points, taken directly from his sermon notes. They work well as the final thing you leave with the group. Consider reading them slowly, pausing between, and letting the room sit in silence before you pray.

“Are you eagerly making yourself available to God? Are you faithfully using what God has already entrusted to you?”

— Pastor Mark • Closing of the sermon

Application Options

LEADER NOTE

Present all four and have each person pick one out loud. Option one tends to be the most powerful in a group that knows each other.

- Name it out loud. Tell one person in this group which gift you think God may have placed in you.
- Memorize 1 Peter 4:10.
- Serve before you are certain. Find one need this week and meet it without waiting to identify your gift first.
- Receive from someone unlike you. Ask a believer whose gifts differ from yours what God has been teaching them.

Closing Prayer

- Thank God that He gave gifts to every believer with no exceptions.
- Ask forgiveness for seasons of believing we had nothing to offer, or that we did not need anyone else.
- Pray for courage to serve before feeling qualified.
- Ask that God be praised through whatever He does in and through us this week.

Series Tracker

Part	Title / Focus	Core Scripture
Part 1	The Gift of Fire	Acts 2:1-41; John 14-16
Part 2	Fire Falls	Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:1-4
Part 3	Fire Fills	Acts 2:1-4; Eph 5:18-20
Part 4	Fire Forms	1 Cor 6:7-20; Gal 5:13-26
Part 5	Fire Flows	Acts 2-28 (eight examples)

Part 6	Fan the Flame: The Gospel	2 Tim 1:5-14; Acts 2:42
Part 7	Fan the Flame: Fellowship and Breaking of Bread	Acts 2:42; Luke 24:13-35
Part 8	Fan the Flame: Prayer	Acts 2:42; Matt 6:9-13
Part 9	Fan the Flame: Generosity	Acts 2:42-45; 2 Cor 9:6-15
Part 10	The Heart of Fire	Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 145:1-3
Part 11	The Spread of Fire	Acts 2:38-47; Eph 3:20-21
Part 12 ← HERE	The Gifts of Fire	1 Corinthians 12
Part 13	Series Finale (next Sunday)	1 Corinthians 13 expected

LEADER NOTE

Worth noticing once the references are laid out side by side: from Part 6 onward the series is a clause-by-clause walk through Acts 2:42-47. Teaching (Part 6), fellowship and breaking of bread (Part 7), prayer (Part 8), generosity and having everything in common (Part 9), everyone filled with awe (Part 10), meeting daily and the Lord adding to their number (Part 11). He re-reads that passage nearly every week and adds one more clause. Most people in your group will not have caught this. Pointing it out is a good way to help twelve weeks feel like one message.

“No follower of Jesus can say, “I do not belong.” No follower of Jesus can say, “I don’t need you.””

— Pastor Mark • The Gifts of Fire