

INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking again this morning at the list of gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
2. We have already looked at the gift of wisdom, knowledge, faith, and healing.
3. Now we're looking at miracles.
4. Paul says in verse 10, "to another the effecting of miracles."
5. God does miracles. He always has and will continue to do so.
6. But what we need to understand is the meaning of a miracle.
7. A lot of people use that term loosely.
8. Leslie Flynn says, "The word miracle is often used quite loosely to refer to biblical wonders like raising the dead, to astronauts landing on the moon, to someone emerging from a car unhurt after crashing into a tree at seventy miles per hour, to finding a dime on the street when one is a dime short for some needed expense" (19 Gifts of the Spirit, 180).
9. John MacArthur defines what a miracle is in his book on spiritual gifts. He says, "A miracle is a supernatural intrusion into the natural law that can have no explanation other than that God is acting."
10. He says, "There are some things that have other possible explanations: circumstances could allow you to find a parking place at the store, and circumstances could allow your son to pass a course-he studied hard. Circumstances can accommodate many things. But when a miracle occurs, it is a supernatural intrusion into the natural law, and only God could be responsible."

11. For example, suppose a man builds a model city. In this huge model city, the cars, trains, and lights actually work.
12. And he runs everything from a remote control electronic board.
13. But every once in a while he will pick something up and move it to another place.
14. Now, if you were alive in that model city, you would say, "What's going on!"
15. That building used to be over here.
16. Now it's over there." God created the universe, and He usually lets it run on its own.
17. But every once in a while He picks something up and moves it.
18. In other words, He will raise somebody from the dead, or make an axhead float on water, or part the Red Sea, or do something astonishing just so people don't forget that He is the one running the show.
19. A miracle is something that has no other explanation" (158).
20. To understand the gift of miracles we need to first understand the general category of miraculous operation.
21. B.B. Warfield in his book *Counterfeit Miracles* says, "When our Lord came down to earth He drew heaven with Him. The signs which accompanied His ministry were but the trailing clouds of glory which He brought from heaven, which is His home. The number of miracles which He wrought may easily be underrated. It has been said that in effect He banished disease and death from Palestine for the three years of His ministry. If this is exaggeration it is pardonable exaggeration..." "We ordinarily greatly underestimate His beneficent activity as He went about, as Luke says, doing good. "His own divine power by which He began to found His church He continued in the Apostles whom He had chosen to complete this great work.

22. Jesus Christ was a miracle worker.
23. John 2:11 tells us why He did miracles.
24. This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.
25. Jesus did miracles to manifest His glory.
26. You might ask, “What is His glory?”
27. His glory is “The composite of His attributes as deity” (MacArthur).
28. He did miracles “to reveal Himself as God” (MacArthur).
29. “Miracles are confirming signs of the revelation of God. That is, always has been, and always will be their intent” (MacArthur).
30. Acts 2:22, “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”
31. “God wants you to know who Jesus is, so He approved of Him, established Him, and commended Him by miracles, wonders, and signs” (MacArthur).
32. John MacArthur asks, “Why does God do miracles? In order to corroborate His self-disclosure and in order to confirm His own revelation. Miracles are in Scripture for one purpose: to prove that God is speaking, whether it is in the Old Testament written Word, the New Testament living Word, or the New Testament written Word. Miracles corroborate God's revelation. When God wanted people to know He was speaking, He did miracles. God normally operates the universe according to His created natural law, but when it comes time for God to make a self-revelation, He will, contrary to natural law, make things occur that have no explanation other than that God is revealing Himself. So, the purpose of Jesus' miracles was to reveal His deity” (Spiritual Gifts, 159).

33. Further in his book, John MacArthur talks about *the limited period* in which God does miracles.
34. He says, "Jesus lived thirty-three years, yet for thirty of those years He did not do one single miracle. Now, there are some apocryphal writings that say, when He was little, He became angry with an evil child and killed him with a word. It has also been said in apocryphal writings that when He was little He made clay pigeons, then blew on them, and they flew away. Others have said that He made things instantly for His father to help him in his business. That isn't so. Jesus never did a single miracle for the first thirty years of His life.
35. You say, "How do you know that?" When Jesus turned water into wine, John 2:11 says, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana, of Galilee." You say, "What does that prove?" It proves that not all ages, times, and periods are intended by God for miracles, only those times when God wants to reveal Himself. And Jesus never revealed Himself until He began His ministry after His baptism. These miracles lasted for the duration of His three-year ministry. Jesus never did a single miracle before the hour of His revelation as God.
36. Not all ages are miracle ages. If you study the Old Testament, there really are only two periods of miracles: one, the revealing of the law to Moses; and two, the lives of Elijah and Elisha when God was laying down the platform of prophetic revelation through His prophets. The rest of the Old Testament contains very few references to the use of miracles and none at the end of the Old Testament. Miracles have not been occurring all the time since the first one. And the reason is that God had a specific word to reveal, with limits and boundaries. When God was revealing either His written Word or Christ, His living Word, it was then and only then that He used miracles as a corroborating and confirming sign.
37. We must still allow for God to do a miracle, never confining Him, but that is not the norm or pattern. Some Christians today think miracles are the norm. There is no end to their appearance on some of the television programs. In fact, there are so many efforts at healing that none of them mean anything. There just is no evidence that those healings are legitimate.

38. God has designed miracles for a single purpose-to confirm His revelation. Once God has revealed Himself, then the miracles have no continuing purpose. For example, when God finished revealing Himself in the Old Testament, that period was closed. In the four-hundred-year period of history between the Old and New Testaments, God gave no revelation and certainly nothing miraculous. Then, in the New Testament, miracles occurred again. Now the New Testament is finished, the Book is closed, and there are no more miracles” (160-1).
39. As you study the New Testament, you even see this limited to only certain persons.
40. Those persons being Jesus. Matthew 13:54 says that He did mighty works.
41. The apostles and prophets also did miracles.
42. Acts 14:1-10 says, “ Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. 3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, 6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7 And they were preaching the gospel there. 8 And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. 9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.”
43. Acts 19:11 says, "God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul."
44. 2 Corinthians 12:12 says, “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

45. “So miracles had a limited time, only for the early era; limited persons, only the apostles and prophets and early New Testament preachers; and a limited purpose, only for the confirmation of revelation.
46. They were signposts pointing to God's revelation, first in the living Word and then in the written Word. Now that the reality is here, we don't need the sign anymore” (John MacArthur, Spiritual Gifts, 164).
47. Richard Baxter says, “Since the primary purpose for which miracles were performed in biblical times is no longer operative, it is reasonable to believe that miracles performed through the agency of man, as in Bible times, no longer are to be seen on earth today.”
48. In other words, "the age of miracles continues, but the age of miracle workers has ceased" (Robert L. Thomas, Understanding Spiritual Gifts, p.185).
49. With that being said, “What is the gift of miracles?”

LESSON

I. This is the Gift of Power

1. The Greek Word for Miracles is Dunamis

1. Kittel says the root word means, “being able to do something” referring to “an ability, a power, an energy.”
2. This word is translated in various ways in the NT: “miracles,” “power,” “mighty deeds,” “strength”
3. “This temporary sign gift was for the working of divine acts contrary to nature, so that there was no explanation for the action except that it was by the power of God” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

4. This is what Jesus did: He turned the water to wine (Jn.2:11), made food (Jn.8:6), walked on water (Jn.6:49-50), took a coin from the mouth of a fish (Mat.17:27), disappeared from a hostile crowd (Lk.4:30; Jn.8:59), and ascended in a cloud to heaven (Acts 1:9).
5. “All those miracles were related to nature and were done only by Him. No disciple is ever reported to have done a miracle of nature” (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians).
6. Leslie Flynn disagrees when he says that “a miracle in the restricted, scriptural sense [is] an event of supernatural power, palpable (capable of being touched) to the senses, *accompanying the servant of the Lord to authenticate the divine commission*” (19 Gifts of the Spirit, 180).
7. He further states on page 181 that “the miracles of Jesus *and the apostles evidenced...power over nature (stilling storm, walking on water). Power over matter (water into wine, loaves and fishes).*”
8. Jesus was the only one who did these kinds of miracles.
9. If he was referring only to Jesus then he should not have included the apostles when he said that “the miracles of Jesus *and the apostles evidenced...*”
10. I agree with Flynn when he says that “a miracle is God stepping into His universe, setting aside the ordinary laws of nature to do something extraordinary” (181) but I do not believe the apostles were able to do this, only Jesus.
2. **The Gift of Miracles is the Ability to Cast Out Demons**
 1. The miracles or powers that we see being done in the NT seem to have reference to the casting out of demons
 1. Luke 4:33-36 (v.36 - “power” Gr.dunamis)

In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, “Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, “What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.”

2. Craig Keener said that “Exorcists had two main methods for expelling demons: (1) scaring the demon out or making it too sick to stay—for example, by putting a smelly root up the possessed person’s nose in the hope that the demon would not be able to stand it—or (2) invoking the name of a higher spirit to get rid of the lower one. The people are amazed that Jesus can be effective by simply ordering the demons to leave” (IVP Bible Background Commentary: NT).

3. Luke 6:12-19 (v.19 - “power” Gr.dunamis)

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

4. Luke 9:1 (“power” - Gr.dunamis)

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.

2. John Calvin said, "I am...inclined to think that this is the power which is exercised against demons. The gift of healing and miracles are both channels of God's goodness to us; but in His severity He uses miracles for the destruction of Satan." (Calvin's Commentaries: 1 Corinthians).

II. The People Who Had this Gift

1. Jesus (Mat.4:23-24)

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

2. The Apostles (Mat.10:1)

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

3. The Seventy (Lk.10:1, 17, 19)

4. The Apostles' Associates (Acts 6:8; 8:4-7)

1. Acts 6:8, "And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people."
2. Acts 8:4-7, "Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing."

For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed."

5. The Apostle Paul (Acts 16:16-18)

It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."

She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

III. The Purpose of this Gift

1. The Purpose of this Gift was to Confirm the Message and the Messenger

1. Leslie Flynn says, "The power of a miracle made the observer wonder, signaling something significant. It authenticated the doer of the miracle as a divinely commissioned servant of the Lord. His message was validated. He was speaking for God. He should be heard and heeded." (19 Gifts of the Spirit, 182).
2. "Apostolic miracles authenticated the apostolic message, signaling to the wondering observer that this power was of God and that the message should be heeded" (Ibid., 182).
3. Mark 16:20, "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed. And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation."
4. Acts 2:22, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God

performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know."

“Attested” means “to declare to be true or genuine” (Webster).

2. We Do Not Need this Gift Today Because We Have the Completed Word

1. We evaluate a person today with the Bible.

2. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 says to “Test all things.”

3. 1 John 4:1 says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

4. The word translated “test” in both verses is the Greek word dokimazo.

5. This is “a common New Testament word that often refers to testing something for authenticity.

6. It entails distinguishing between true and false, right and wrong, or good and bad (cf. 2 Sam. 14:17).

7. Sometimes the word denotes the process of distinguishing what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:10; cf. Rom. 12:2)” (John MacArthur, 1 & 2 Thessalonians).

IV. Do We Have the Authority to Cast Out Demons Today? No

V. How Are We Then to Respond to Satan?

1. Resist Him

1. James 4:7, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
2. 1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”
2. Call on the Lord to Rebuke Him (Jude 9)
3. Put on the Armor of God (Eph.6:10-17)
4. Know His Strategies - 2 Corinthians 2:11, “Let Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

CONCLUSION

1. The Gift of Miracles is the Spirit-Given Ability to Cast Out Demons.
2. The greatest miracle is when God opens a heart to Him and grants salvation.
3. Do you know Him today?
4. You can by repenting of your sin and believing in Jesus Christ to save you.
5. Call on Him now as we pray.