



“Gifts’r’Us – The Gifts of the Spirit”

The Aim of the Session

To achieve an understanding that God is “supernatural”, that is he is and works across both the natural realm and the spiritual realm and his Gifts and Talents are used across both too. To have an expectancy and an anticipation that he will do things in us and through us to his glory.

- **Welcome**

What was the best Christmas present you ever had as a child?

- **Worship**

Read Matthew 7:7-12 and share with each other the good things God has done for you recently. What “good gifts” has he given to us as a Church? Praise God for these things.

- **Word**

When people use the term, the “Gifts of the Spirit”...

- ❖ What do you understand by that term?
- ❖ How do you react to talking about them? Why?
- ❖ How do you see your understanding in practical terms in the life of the Church?
- ❖ Why are they such a controversial subject in the life of the Church?
- ❖ Should they be?

Consider this definition of the word “Supernatural”: “*Supernatural ... transcending the laws of nature*”

- ❖ How do you understand “God” being “supernatural”?
- ❖ What does that mean in practical terms?

If “transcending” includes both life which is bound by the laws of nature (physical laws, biological laws etc), as well as life in the spiritual realm that is beyond what we can see or experience in this life - then this means that God work “transcends” ie is “in” both realms.

- ❖ What does this say about the natural “talents” we are given eg sport, music, painting etc ?
- ❖ What does this say about the possibility of God working *outside* these talents and working in ways which science or natural law cannot explain?

Read Matthew 7:7-12 again

- How assured is Jesus of the positive response to requests? (v8)
- Why is it, then, that God sometimes says “no”? Are there conditions? (vv9,10)
- Jesus calls us “evil” (v11). What do you think he means by this?
- Verse 12 seems out of place in this passage and yet Matthew includes it here. What do you think is the reason for this and how does it relate to the rest of the passage (ie the asking for and receiving of Gifts from God)?

Read Matthew 25:14-30

- What would you say is the underlying aim of this parable?
- Does the amount we are given (of anything) matter in God's eyes?
- What does matter in his eyes? What is the master seeking?
- Why was the master *angry*, as opposed to *sad* with the wicked servant (v26)?
- Had the servant, in some way, "found his master out"?
- Do you think the other servants would have felt similarly?
- If so, why did they react differently – and why were they right to do so?
- Why is the penalty for non-use of talents so great?
- What does this say about our use of what God has given to us?

Read I Corinthians 12:4-8

- If God works "supernaturally", ie across both the natural world and in ways that are not confined to the rules of the natural world, then what is happening, if we focus on either the natural or the supernatural gifts and talents he gives to us? What are we ignoring?
- What (or who) is the common factor in all of these things? (v4)
- What is the common purpose? (v5)
- Who are they for? (v6)

These last questions may seem simple and obvious but

- ❖ If Jesus and Paul lay out these things so simply, why does the Church struggle to take them on board?

- **Works**

At the start of this series, there is a clear implication that God wants us to explore what he is doing and how he is working in all of us. He is clearly wanting to work through natural and supernatural ways. If we want to "go deeper" with God, then we will need to be open to what he is wanting to do – working to his agenda, rather than our limited and narrow agenda.

It is suggested that you take some time to have some quiet (maybe with some appropriate music playing to aid concentration) and then discuss the impact these things have had on you. You may wish to talk about how you need to be more open or what you feel God is saying to you (individually or as a group) and then pray through these things.

Next session ...

Week 2 - Beginning 1st May

"Gifts'r'Us - Gifts to Encourage"