

# **Spiritual Gifts Series**

Key verse:  
1 Corinthians 12:9

28<sup>th</sup> May 2006

Session 3: The Gift of Faith

*Speaker: Adam Voke*

*Vs 9 'to another faith ('Pistis') by the same Spirit, to another gifts ('Charismata') of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers.....'*

Greek = '*Pistis*' = Faith, convinced, persuaded, assurance, belief.

This Greek word is the usual word for 'faith'. This or variations on it are used in 25 of the 27 New Testament Books, by every author of the N.T. and by Jesus himself. It always refers to faith in God himself and not other things.

*James Dunn 'Paul presumably has in mind that mysterious surge of confidence which sometimes arises within a man in a particular situation of need or challenge and which gives him an otherly certainty that God is about to act through a word or through an action (such as laying hands on someone sick).'*

## **1. Conversion Faith**

*Eph 2:8 'For it is by grace you have been saved, through **faith** – and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift** of God.'*

-Interestingly both 'faith' and 'gift' are linked, but a different Greek word is used for gift - not the same one used for Spiritual Gifts.

Conversion faith is given in grace as a gift and includes:

- a. Faith in God's diagnosis of us.
- b. Faith in a person – Jesus Christ.
- c. Faith in God's grace.

*Richard Sibbes (Puritan Christian) 'There is more mercy in God than there is sin in you'*

This is the common grace of faith given to those who do what this verse in Romans 10:9 tells us to do '*If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*'

## **2. Continuing Faith**

One of the fruits of the Spirit is faith – Gal 5:22. It is something that is grown and produced over time. Therefore it is an ongoing, continuing faithfulness to Christ and in him.

John's gospel uses the verb '*Pisteuein*' in talking about faith or believing and never the more common noun '*Pistis*'. This indicates John's understanding of it being an ongoing and dynamic activity. A doing word!

Heb 11 outlines people of faith who continued in faith to the very end, being sure of what they hoped for and certain of what they did not see. Written to the Hebrew Christians who were suffering trial and temptation to revert to Judaism.

Mark Stibbe helpfully highlights that according to Hebrews 11 continuing faith is:

### **1. Believing even when you can't see it**

*Heb 11:1 'Faith is being certain about what we don't yet see'*

### **2 Obeying even when you don't understand it**

Heb 11:17 - Abraham offering up Isaac as a sacrifice

### **3. Persevering even when you don't feel like it**

*Heb 11:27 'he persevered because he saw him who is invisible' – said of Moses who left the pleasures of Egypt for something better, especially relevant in the desert time.*

### **4. Trusting even when you don't receive it all**

*Heb 11:39 'yet none of them received what had been promised'*

Jesus taught: *'he who stands firm to the end will be saved' Matt 10:22, 24:13*

### **3. Charismatic Faith – The Gift of Faith**

*1 Cor 13:1-2 'If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the **gift** of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a **faith** that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing'*

Similar words used by Jesus himself:

*Mark 11:22-25 'Have faith in God, Jesus answered. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, Go throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.....'*

*Mark Stibbe 'The gift of faith is a supernatural certainty given by the Holy Spirit to some members of the Body of Christ. This certainty is an unshakeable confidence that God is about to resolve a seemingly impossible situation for the edification of the Church.'*

This is a particular kind of 'mountain moving' faith that like the other gifts is.....

-Given to some and not others – vs9

-Given as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit not human confidence, not based on logic or on knowledge known –vs 7

-Given for the common good especially in the church context–vs7

*John Piper 'the way to think is this: The reason we have spiritual gifts is so that we can strengthen other people's faith; here is someone whose faith is in jeopardy; how can I help him?.....we must not get hung up on naming our gifts. The think to get hung up on is; are we doing what we can do to strengthen the faith of the people around us?....I really believe that the problem of not knowing our spiritual gifts is not a basic problem. More basic is the problem of not desiring very much to strengthen other people's faith.'*

*John Chrysostom (350-407) once described the gift of faith as 'the mother of all miracles'*

### **Examples:**

Acts 13:6-12 – Paul and Elymas the sorcerer.

*Smith Wigglesworth 'I saw there, in the presence of that demented girl, limitations to my faith; but as I prayed there came another faith into my heart that could not be denied, a faith that grasped the promises, a faith that believed God's word. I came from the presence of the glory back to earth. I was not the same man. I confronted the same conditions I had seen before, but this time it was in the name of Jesus. With a faith that could shake hell and move anything else, I cried to the demon power that was making this young woman a maniac, 'come out of her, in the name of Jesus' She rolled over and fell asleep, and awakened in fourteen hours, perfectly sane and perfectly whole'.*

**Possibilities at M.F.C.:** Building project needs, in a prayer meeting someone starts to pray with a confident faith received from the Holy Spirit, knowing that God has heard and acted. All who are present are encouraged and later see it fulfilled.

A prophecy is brought with absolute assurance that it is the will of God, not just a thought or stepping out. It is later fulfilled as it was spoken

In prayer, someone there maybe a general call for healing and some are healed or there maybe faith that God will definitely heal someone with a particular illness today. This then takes place.

A word of scripture is read out and explained, not just as a general encouragement but with a deep assurance that this is true and means something to someone present. Someone later testifies to a breakthrough in their thinking as it was read out.

#### **4. Concerns relating to Faith**

##### **a. The excess of the faith movement**

*Mark 11:22-25 'Have faith in God, Jesus answered. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, Go throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.....'*

The faith movement utilises this verse and has created a whole theology from it. Believing power is released as we speak out to name and claim the things we need. Whereas it appears that some have a particular gift of faith which leads to healing or miracles.

God does not want us to have what we want when we want it, we are to have what he wills us to have. We are warned about asking with right motives in James 4:3.

##### **b. The lack of faith movement!**

This is not an excuse for not praying or believing! The tendency for many Christians is to lack faith which God wants them to have:

- Lack of faith in God for their salvation – doubts come (1 John 5:13 'I write these things to you who believe so that you may know that you have eternal life')
- Lack of faith in God that following him wholeheartedly is enough to satisfy – so holding back areas of their lives – Ps 16:11
- Lack of faith in God to overcome sin – lack of faith in his promises for something better
- Lack of faith in God to provide what they need – whether in plenty or in want. Phil 4:12
- Lack of faith in the basic teaching of God to love others, be generous, to pray, to feed on his word. The obedience that comes through faith.
- Lack of faith for God to breakthrough in power in situations.

God's desire is for us to live with a faith in him for these things whether they have the gift of faith or not!