



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Spiritual Gifts

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- Ephesians 4:7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
- Ephesians 4:9** (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?
- Ephesians 4:10** He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
- Ephesians 4:11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
- Ephesians 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
- Ephesians 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
- Ephesians 4:14** That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
- Ephesians 4:15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:
- Ephesians 4:16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The book of Ephesians is a great book. There is a lot of great and wonderful things in the book of Ephesians that we can read and study. As we look at the first part of this chapter, Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus. He is reminding them of everything that they have in common; one faith, one Lord, one baptism, all part of one body, every part has a job, every part when it works in unison with the whole body then the body works correctly. It does what it is supposed to. However, when you look at what is taking place here in verse 7, Paul is going to tell us some things that we all have differently.

As I looked at this today and yesterday, and thought about it; that is so very true. We have a lot of things in common. Christian people are saved by the same God. We are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit. If we are saved, we are going to the same heaven. Amen! We have the same Father. We have so many things that we have in common. However, there are some things that we have that are different.

I know that we make the statement that all men are created equal. In one sense that is true, but in another sense all men are not created equal. I want to explain that before we go off the deep end. All men in a sense that we are born in this life, we are created equal. We are humans. We have blood. We are flesh and blood. In that aspect of things, whether we are black, white or whatever color we are. In that aspect we are created equal.

However, when it comes to natural abilities, and when it comes to the spiritual gifts that God gives us then there is a tremendous difference there. We want to talk about tonight.

The first thing I want to say is that every believer tonight—if you are a born-again believer, I'm not saying just a church member, I'm saying if you have been born again tonight—then you have a gift, at least one gift that has been given to you by Almighty God. Now you have something that is specific and special to you. Now there might be somebody else that does the same thing that you do. You may preach. You may sing. You may have a tremendous ability to work in governments. You may have a tremendous ability in discernment. Or whatever your gift is—and there are other people who has the same gift. Your gift is designed especially for you. The gift that you have is the gift that God has given you when He saved you. It is a gift not only did He give you—we are going to get into this in a minute, I'm getting ahead of the lesson—God will supply you with all the grace you need to be able to carry out and to do and to work with the gift that He has given you to bring glory to Him. God will do that. That is God. Isn't it? God will never give me a gift to use that He wouldn't give me the ability to use. God wouldn't do that. That wouldn't make any sense at all. God gives us gifts. God gives everyone of us gifts. He gives us gifts and He does these things so that we can bring glory to His name.

Not only that but He gives us these gifts that these gifts can be used, not only to bring glory to Christ, but that we can be a blessing to other people. The gift that you have if you are using your gift in life—get this—then the gift that God has given you will bless other people. If you are not using your gift in life then it is not—you are using it as a weapon to fight. You don't get anywhere that way. However, if you are using your gift in love then it is something that God is using and will use not only to bring glory to His name but to be a blessing to other people.

First of all, let me say also, there is a difference between this. There is a difference between spiritual gifts, and natural ability. There is a tremendous difference there. Some people are born and have natural ability, it might be in mechanics or it might be math. It may be a natural ability that God has given them that they can, maybe they can draw, or maybe they can play basketball, or maybe they can drive a race car, or maybe they have a tremendous natural ability to be a carpenter or whatever that is. That is one thing, but the natural ability that you have—I'm not taking about that.

I'm talking about the spiritual gift that God gives you when God saves you. Amen! It doesn't matter what your natural abilities are. I'm not talking about those things. Most everybody and I don't have any. I will be quite honest with you.

I told someone the other day I have lived all my life and never could be able to do anything. Some people have natural abilities to do this, fix this and build that. I just never did have it. I don't know that I have ever been able to fix anything.

Here is the thing.

Those things are one thing. Those things are natural abilities and they all differ. However, what Paul is writing about, are Spiritual gifts. Totally two different things. Your natural ability, God may or may not be able to use that for His glory. I know a lot of people who can do a lot of great things and they do a lot of great things. But that is not used to bring glory to God. When some people gets saved, I understand that God may be able to use their natural ability and use that in their gift to be able to bring glory to His name. The thing that God usually does the majority of the time; when God saves you, He will give you something to do that has nothing to do with your natural ability. Amen! That is what God does.

The reason that God does that; do you know what He wants us to know really quick, when He saves us? He wants us to know really quick, that if we are saved; He is in control. If we are going to do anything that is going to bring glory to Him, then we are going to use the gift that He has given us, and we will forget about all the natural talents that we have.

We may have to go ahead and go to work. We may have to be carpenters, mechanics, and we may do all that stuff. We have to make a living and God knows that. However, the thing that God uses for us to bring glory to His name is the gift that God placed within us when we were saved. You remember that. Amen! If we will do then God will bless our lives. If we don't do that then God won't bless our lives. That is what God wants to use.

Now, gifts are used—God gives us a gift, as I said to praise Him, to glorify Him and to be a blessing. As I said, there is nothing like coming to church and hear people sing and testify, using the gift that God has given them; it blesses. Do you know what it does? It unifies. It builds up people. That is why coming to church is so important is that when we come and people listen to the voice of God and they exercise and use the gift that God has given them then do you know what that does? That builds me up. That blesses me. That gives me strength. Do you know what that does? That brings people together in unity. Do you know what? When you do what you do and what God has blessed you to do, and the gift that God has given you to do; do you know what it does? It blesses me. It strengthens me. It brings us all together because we know that we are serving the same God.

Now, have we been in church before when people are just doing things to be doing things? Sure. That doesn't bless anybody. That doesn't bring any glory to God. It is just noise. It is just racket. That is all it is. However, when we do things that God has implanted in our hearts and we are using the gift of God. We are listening to His voice. We are faithful unto Him. Then God will use that to bless other people. That is what I am talking about tonight, is spiritual gifts that God has given us that builds up the body of Christ.

Paul wanted the people here at Ephesus to know that the gifts they have been given were given to the body to build up the body of Christ. The gifts we have, that is what they are for. Even though Paul wrote 2,000 years ago, the gift that God placed within you when you were saved is the gift that God will use to build up the body of Christ. That hasn't change any.

Again, there are spiritual gifts and there are natural abilities. Don't get them confused. A lot of natural abilities that people have doesn't bring any glory to God. Amen! I have seen people who can play all kinds of musical instruments and they can sing like songbirds but don't bring any glory to God. Truth! I have seen people that can do all kinds of things in life. They have tremendous abilities. Yet, when they do what they do, instead of praising God for the ability to do what they do, they want to curse and get in front of a microphone and they want to curse and swear and all kinds of junk.

If you watched sports any then you would know that. They might be able to hit 3-point shots from 38 feet away. They may be able to kick a football for a half mile. That is good. That is natural ability. However, that is not bringing glory to God. What I am talking about are spiritual gifts that God implanted in you when He saved you and when we do them they bring glory to His name.

Keep that in your mind because this is where I want to get to. If you are saved, you have a spiritual gift. At least one, maybe more than that. The Bible says here that I read to you...

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Every one of us has been given a gift. Every one of us has at least one gift. Again, our gifts are something that we don't play with. We don't need to be playing with them. However, there are tools that God has given us that we can build up the body of Christ. That is what we should be doing with our gifts. I want you to get something here.

Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The word *grace* here, again is a gift that God has given us for His glory, but it is to build up believers. Not only has God given us the gift but when you look at what this particular word *grace* means; it means *strength*. To be able to use the gift that God has given, you need strength. The very strength you need to be able to use the gift that God has given you; God will give you. Amen! God will supply that. God has given you,

not only the gift; but God will give you the grace to do your gift, the strength to do your gift. Not only that but also, He will give you the wisdom to use the gift that He has given you. Not only that but also, He will give you courage. It is not always easy to use the gift that God has given you. Amen! It is not always easy. You get out in the crowd sometime where people are hollering, cussing, and screaming. It is not always easy to stand up and say, hey, I love Jesus Christ. Do you know what God will do? God will give us the courage to do that. God will give us the courage that we need.

Not only that but also, but do you know what God will do? If we have a gift, and God has given us a gift, not only will He give us wisdom, not only will He give us courage, not only will He give us strength, but He will give us motivation. There is nothing any better to see a Christian that is motivated and doing something for the cause of Almighty God. That is great to see.

We don't see much of that anymore. We see people going the other way, losing motivation. However, it is great to see people who are being energized by the Holy Spirit of God. They have courage. They have strength. God has blessed them. They are motivated. They are excited about using their gift for the glory of God. That should be every one of us. We should be excited about using our gift. We should be excited about that. Why wouldn't we be excited about using something that God has given us. God saved us. He rescued us from hell. We are not going to spend eternity in a lake of fire. Do you know what He does? He implants a gift within us. He gives us the ability to use that gift for His glory. Why in the world don't we want to use it? amen! That is just something to think about. Isn't it? That is just something to think about.

Why is it—God has given us the motivation. It isn't God's fault that we don't use His gift. Whatever our gift is, it is not God's fault that we don't use it. it is not my fault that you don't use it. if you are going to lay fault anywhere do you know where you need to lay it at; right at your own feet. God is the one that saved you. I did not save you. You don't belong to me. I did not save you. I did not place the gift on the inside of you. I am not going to take you to heaven. You are not going to stand before me when you leave this life. Amen!

Here is the thing. Why have we lost motivation? What is it that has caused us to lost motivation. There are a whole bunch of reasons. We listen to the wrong voice is the main thing. The wrong voice has a lot of stuff in it. The wrong voice is a voice that says a lot of things. That is what I want to talk about here tonight. The Bible says...

I don't know whether I ever understood this or not until this week. It says in the next verse...get this.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Did you read that? He led captivity captive. When you read that it brings out the idea of a king that has gone somewhere into another country, maybe their own country; but a king that has conquered his enemy. He has conquered his enemy. He has won the

battle. Now he is coming back into the city. He is riding upon a white stallion. The enemies that he has conquered; he has got them in chains. They are following him. It says here he led captivity captive and he gave gifts to men. Not only he captured the enemy, he has captured them. He has won the victory over them. But he is going to take the spoils and give them to his own people.

Get this. This is an awesome thought. When Jesus Christ arose from the dead, when you read the book of Matthew it will tell you that when Jesus arose from the dead that many, it says the graves were opened, and many—not all—but it says many of the saints that slept arose and went into the city and was seen of many. Do you remember reading that? That is in the book. Isn't it? That is in the book of Matthew. When Jesus arose from the dead—He is the first fruits of them that slept, according to the Bible. We know that He took a first fruit. We know that He took a sampling and He took them to heaven. We will talk about that sometime. That is not the message tonight.

The message is this. When Jesus died and arose from the dead, He took some things captive, some things that were destroying mankind. Things that was making men and women, boys and girls feel helpless, and to feel hopeless, and to feel useless, and to feel like no one cared; when Jesus Christ arose from the dead; He took that captive. Because when He arose from the dead, He made a way for mankind not to feel useless, hopeless, and helpless. Amen! Because when He arose from the dead, He gave mankind a way to live that we are not hopeless and helpless. Jesus Christ did that. Amen! He took that captive.

Here is the lesson. God has given us a gift. Whatever our gifts are—it may be one gift, it maybe ten gifts—I don't know what they are. I don't know how many you have. God has given us at least one gift that we need to use for His glory. When I use my gift for His glory, then I am going to bless Him, and be a blessing to other believers. We build up the church. Amen! We edify or build up people. We unify things. God blessed us.

Since that is the case, and when we use our gifts, to the glory of God, there is a force at work. It is the spirit of satan. I'm going to use it that way. It is an unclean spirit. I have scripture that I can prove that to you. However, there is a force that is at work that is trying to alienate you and to separate you from the gift that God has given you to use for His glory. There is a force working trying to separate you from that to separate you from people, to separate you from God. There is a force that is going out on you, the force that is after you, a force that out there working trying to separate us from Almighty God. He is trying to separate us from the gift that God has given us. Do you know what? It brings alienation. I don't know whether you ever thought about alienation or not, but alienation is separation.

In our world today, even among people that claims to be Christians; we have a lot of people who feel helpless. They feel hopeless. They feel like nobody loves them. They feel like nobody cares about them. They feel like that God doesn't love them anymore. They have all this alienation. They have separated themselves from people. They have

separated themselves from God. They have separated themselves from the gift that they have had to use for God. They separated themselves from that. Now they are over here all alone. You talk to them. They feel helpless. They feel hopeless. They think nobody cares. They think God doesn't care. They think the world is against them. They think the world has come crashing down on them. Instead of using their gift for the glory of God, they get farther and farther away from God. They allow the force, the evil spirit that is at work, that God has already captured, Jesus has already taken captive; do you know what we do?

We go back and take the chains off it and bring it back. Even though that God has already conquered that for me and you; He has fixed a way that I can live a victorious life, that I can have purpose, that I can feel useful, that I know that God is in my life. I know that God is using me. I know that God has given me a gift. He is blessing me to use. I can know that, and you can know that. However, we alienate ourselves. We allow the spirit of Satan to come and drive us away from people, from people that loves us, from people that cares about us. The spirit of Satan drives us away from God. That is what it does first. It drives away from God. God doesn't love me anymore. This happened. That happened. That is going on. This has happened. God doesn't love me anymore. I don't have any friends. This has happened. That has happened. Surely, God couldn't love me.

There is a reason that happens. In the years I have done this; do you know what I have learned? When I talk to people that are like that, the first question I ask is how long has it been since you have read your Bible. I'm talking, how long has it been since you read your Bible. I read every now and then. I read when I go to church. I read my Sunday school lesson. That is not the question I am asking. How long has it been since you have had a time in your life that you had a time that you sat down and read your Bible, on a daily basis, habitually read your Bible. How long has it been?

Things get real quiet when you ask that question. When you ask people the next question, how long has it been since you have really prayed? This happened. That happened. I have prayed one time about that or two times about that. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking how long has it been since you have had a habitual prayer life, in your life. How long has it been since you have had a time in your life, your day, that you get alone with God and call upon God and talk to God? How long has it been? Do you know what you will find? When you ask those two questions is usually the core problem for people to be alienated from God, to be alienated from God's people, to be taken captive by something that Jesus Christ has already given us victory over because we don't read our Bible and we don't pray. We don't think we have time. We don't think it is useful. We don't think it is important. We don't think we need to do that.

We do. If we did not need to read our Bibles then God wouldn't have given us a Bible. I'm not talking about reading books about the Bible. I'm talking about reading books about the Bible. I'm talking about reading the Bible. I have all kinds of books about the

Bible and I read them. However, do you know what the number one book is? It is the Bible. Amen!

We must do that. If you did not eat physically today, if you had not ate a bite in the last two days; if you were here tonight, how would you be feeling? You would be hungry, wouldn't you? You would be real hungry. I don't know and I'm sure everybody has. Every now and then you must fast for a while for a certain kind of test that they are going to do at the hospital. Sometimes maybe 24 hours, sometimes maybe longer than that. You could be amazed how weak we get just because we don't eat for 24 hours. Amen! Or 48 hours. It doesn't take long for this body to start to shut down. It begins to eat itself. We start to shut down and we get very weak. Amen!

The same truth is in spiritual sense. When you don't feed from the Word of God and that is the spiritual food that you must have if you are going to have the strength to fight off the forces that are trying to separate you from God, you must read your Bible. You must read it. I encourage you to read it out loud. I say that a lot. Read it out loud. Turn your phones off. Turn your TV off. That's a big thing to do anymore. Isn't it? read your Bible. It is just me and Deb up there now and the cats. When I start reading do you know what the cats do? They usually come sit around. I'm sure they don't have any idea what I am doing but they listen anyway. Reading your Bible and getting alone with God and pouring your heart out to God and seeking the face of God will bring motivation in your life. It will energize you. It will give you spiritual energy just like eating biscuits and gravy will. Amen! It will give you and it will stick with you.

The foods you get now, if you go to some of these fast food restaurants; you can eat it now and ten minutes later you are hungry again. When we were raised back many years ago, when you went to grandma's house and at; you had biscuits and gravy, meat, usually pork, fried apples, and milk to drink. Do you know what you could do? You could eat that at daylight of the morning, and you could go out and work all morning until noon and work hard. You had enough strength to do that. Do you know what you can't do? You can't get that kind of strength from McDonalds, you can't get the strength you need in your spiritual life to fight off the evil spirits that are trying to separate you from God and God's people by eating once a month, or once every other month. You can't do it folks. I don't care how smart you think you are. I don't care how much you think you know. I don't care how many sermons you have preached. I don't care how many songs you have sung. I don't care how old you are or how young you are. If you are going to ward off and be able to capture the evil spirit that is trying to separate you from God and your gift, and God's people; you are going to have to read your Bible. You are going to have to pray. You are going to have to be obedient.

The Word of God—God gave you a gift to use. God just did not give you a gift to bury you in the ground like the parable said. We may talk about that one of these days. God did not give you a gift to take it and put it in a napkin and bury it in the ground. God gave you a gift to use to trade with, to use for His glory. When you use His gift, do you know what you need? God will give you the motivation, the help, the strength, the

wisdom, the courage to do that for Him. It takes obedience. Reading His Word, praying, listening to His voice and being obedient. You do that do you know what you will be able to do? You will be able to defend and ward off the enemy that is trying to destroy you and your family. He will do that. He will separate us from God and our gift that we have that God has given us. He will separate us from God's people. That is what the enemy tries to do. He tries to separate the weak from the rest of the herd.

If you have ever watched an animal on TV; he will sit and watch a whole herd of sheep, or a whole herd of goats, or whole herd of deer. He will watch for a long time. He picks the old, crippled but he usually picks the young. The young that doesn't have much learning. That is usually who they go after. Satan is the same way. He wants to separate you from the flock. He wants to separate you from your gift. He wants to separate you from God.

Come and pray—