

# THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS

Extracts from

“Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church”

by

David Pytches © 1985

## 13. THE GIFT OF FAITH

### Definition

This gift is a supernatural surge of confidence from the Spirit of God which arises within a person faced with a specific situation or need whereby that person receives a transrational certainty and assurance that God is about to act through a word or action. This miracle utterance covers creation or destruction, blessing or cursing, removal or alteration.

'It is both the irresistible knowledge of God's intervention at a certain point and the authority to effect his intervention through the power of the Holy Spirit' (Grossman)

### General comments

There are four kinds of faith in the New Testament.

1. There is faith which is a *creed* - the doctrine we profess to believe (Ephesians 4: 13; 1 Timothy 6: 20-21; Jude 3).
2. There is faith which is the basic *trust* which one has in God for salvation (John 3: 16; Ephesians 2: 8; Hebrews 11: 1-4,6).
3. There is faith which is a *fruit* of the Spirit - a loyalty which is produced by the Holy Spirit and cultivated by the believer, i.e. faithfulness (Galatians 5: 22).
4. There is a faith which is a *gift* of the Spirit - a mountain-moving surge to which both Jesus and Paul refer (Matthew 17: 20; Matthew 21: 21 and 1 Corinthians 13: 2).

This last category is the one which Paul has in mind when he speaks of the gift of faith. James also implies this kind of faith - 'the prayer of faith' which will heal the sick. This kind of faith (like saving faith) is given sovereignly by God. Scripture sometimes appears to merge the two, for example in Hebrews 11.

We may have the gift of faith (4) without the fruit of faith (3), or the fruit of faith (3) without the gift of faith (4). We can have neither (3) nor (4) without saving faith (2), which should never be separated from sound doctrine, 'the faith that was once entrusted to the saints' (1).

**The area of operation as observed in scripture** (selecting from and adding to Harold Horton in *The Gifts of the Spirit* Assemblies of God Publishing House 1954 p. 141, etc.)

1. The gift of faith was used for direct supernatural blessing in fulfilment of human utterance. Thus Isaac blessed Jacob, 'May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness - an abundance of corn and new wine' (Genesis 27: 28). The writer to the Hebrews lists a number of similar instances, including the one above: 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons. . . : (Hebrews 11: 20,21).

2. The gift of faith was employed for personal protection in perilous circumstances. Thus we see Daniel in the lions' den. 'When Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God' (Daniel 6:23). Again, Jesus, whilst tempted in the desert, 'was with the wild animals, and angels attended him' (Mark 1: 13). Also in the case of Paul's snake-bitten hand 'Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects' (Acts 28: 5, cf. also, Mark 16: 18).
3. The gift of faith was employed for supernatural sustenance in famine or fasting. Thus we see Elijah being told by the Lord to hide by the brook of Kerith, with the assurance of adequate food since 'I have ordered the ravens to feed you there', and we learn that 'The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening' (1 Kings 17: 4,6). Secondly we see Elijah raising to life the son of the woman of Zarephath 'O Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him. . . The Lord heard. . . and he lived' (1 Kings 17: 21,22). Again in the desert, we see Jesus sustained by faith in the word of God. Jesus replied to the devil's temptation to make bread from stones 'It is written "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"' (Matthew 4: 4).
4. The gift of faith operated in bringing about some of the astounding promises of God. Thus we read of Sarah, who was old and past the age of child-bearing, becoming pregnant and bearing a son at the very time God promised (Genesis 21: 2). Paul drew attention to Abraham's part in this 'Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised' (Romans 4: 20,21).
5. The gift of faith operated in the administration of spiritual discipline to grossly moral offenders. Paul speaks about how the Corinthian Christians were to discipline a particular individual acting immorally. 'When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord' (1 Corinthians 4: 4,5).
6. The gift of faith was exercised in the victory of the Israelites over the Amalekites at Rephidim. 'As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning' (Exodus 17: 11).
7. The gift of faith was seen to operate in solving domestic and economic problems. Elisha told the woman in debt to 'Go round and ask all your neighbours for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door. . . Pour oil (from the little she had remaining) into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side' (2 Kings 4:3,4)
8. The gift of faith operated in raising the dead. Bound in grave-clothes, the four-days-decomposed dead body of Lazarus was resuscitated when Jesus called in a loud voice 'Lazarus, come out' (John 11: 43).
9. The gift of faith operated in curses. We see this in the case of the fig-tree, following Jesus' words 'May you never bear fruit again!' - the tree withered immediately (Matthew 21: 19).

Again there is the case of Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, who lied to the Holy Spirit. 'Peter said to her, "The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died' (Acts 5: 9,10).

## **Examples from latter days**

1. George Müller operated his Bristol orphanage with the gift of faith. With hundreds of hungry children, he prayed God's blessing on their empty cups and plates and as he prayed churns of milk came in at one door and baskets of bread at another.
2. The Rev. Eric Townson (formerly with the Church Missionary Society) tells of an experience which he had as a fairly new missionary. He attended an open-air meeting in East Africa when the rain began to fall. This was going to ruin plans for an open-air conference. Eric felt an urge to rebuke the rain, which he did loudly in Christ's name. The rain stopped instantly!
3. A dramatic example of the use of the gift of faith comes from Bud Sickler, an Elim missionary in Tanzania. An enraged lioness dashed out of the jungle killing domestic animals, a woman and a child, and headed directly towards a congregation gathered to celebrate Easter. Seeing the danger, the native pastor shouted to the crowd 'Don't be afraid - the God who saved Daniel from the lions is here - the Risen Christ of Easter is here.' He turned to the lioness and cried 'You lion. I curse you in the name of Jesus Christ.' Then the most amazing thing happened - a bolt of lightning from the sky struck the lioness dead.

## **The response to this gift**

1. Glory to God.
2. Amazement from the disciples (Matthew 21: 20).
3. New faith. 'Many of the Jews who had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him' (John 11: 45).
4. The church is affirmed in the value of this gift.

## **Conclusion**

1. The operation is often less spectacular than other power gifts because it frequently achieves the objective secretly or silently over a long period. It is usually a process, whereas the gift of miracles is a crisis.
2. There is often considerable overlapping in the use of the power gifts of the Spirit. For example, in the raising of Lazarus it might be said that the gift of faith operated with the gift of healing, since not only was the man raised, but he was healed - he had been sick before he died and his body was decomposed after his death, but he came back to life whole. But no one could doubt that the gift of miracles had been called into operation too!

## **14. THE GIFT OF MIRACULOUS POWERS**

### **Definition**

The gift of miraculous powers operates through individual persons by the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit in the natural order.

### **Introductory comments**

1. A miracle is a supernatural act; a temporary suspension of the accustomed order; an intervention into the course of nature as it is normally understood.
2. Jesus' own miracles were performed primarily out of his compassion, both to meet human needs and for practical purposes.
  - a) He walked on water to comfort his disciples.
  - b) He fed the multitude because food was otherwise unavailable.
  - c) He turned water into wine to solve a crisis at a wedding.
3. It is difficult to draw any clear line between the gift of miracles and the gifts of healings.
  - a) Healing includes those acts of power which produce an abatement of the symptoms or a cure in a living body.
  - b) Other events which show miraculous manifestations of power beyond healings are plain miracles.
4. Signs and wonders are included in God's programme for extending the kingdom of God. The preaching of the kingdom was affirmed by manifestations of God's power which would serve as signs and wonders to the world. Miracles vindicate the name of God and the gospel, and cause all those who witness them to reflect.
5. Christians suffering persecution and Christians pioneering the gospel have always been more aware of this gift than their contemporary believers in other situations.

### **The purpose of miracles in scripture**

1. The gift was used for the miraculous deliverance of God's people (Psalm 136: 10-22).
2. To provide for those in want (Exodus 17 and Mark 6:13,30-44).
3. To carry out divine judgments and disciplines (the plagues in Exodus 7-11; Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5).
4. To confirm the word preached (Acts 13: 11(12)).
5. To deliver out of unavoidable danger (Matthew 8:24-26; Acts 12: 4-11).
6. To raise the dead (John 11: 38-44).
7. To display God's power and magnificence (Psalm 145:3-7).

## **How the gift operates**

It is of course impossible to know how God works miracles but it is possible to know something about how the gift operates.

1. Whilst we can never demand a miracle, we may be authorised to command a miracle wrought by the power of God.
2. There are signs which accompany the working of miracles:
  - a) Deep compassion or anger (John 11: 33,38).
  - b) An accompanying gift of faith - an absolute conviction that this is God's will now (Mark 10: 46-52).
3. The miracle worker then says the word or performs the act (or does both) which effects the miracle (Mark 7:33-35).

## **Response to the exercise of this gift**

1. Glory to God.
2. Amazement from the disciples (Matthew 21: 20).
3. New faith (John 11: 45).
4. Each exercise of the gift affirms the Church in the further use of it.

## 15: THE GIFTS OF HEALING

### Definition

These gifts are channelled through human agents for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities to the glory of God.

### Introductory comments

1. Healing proceeds from God (Exodus 15: 26) and is available through the atoning work of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53: 4, Matthew 8: 16,17 and 1 Peter 2: 24).
2. The gifts of healings are listed among the power gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11- the others being *faith* and *miracles*.
3. Although the gifts of *faith* and *miracles* extend beyond the realm of healing, they are often integrated into the ministry of healing.
4. The gifts of healing also operate in conjunction with other gifts of the Spirit such as words of knowledge.
5. Fundamental to the gifts of healing is the principle upon which Jesus operated: 'The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing' (John 5: 19).

### Some distinctive ministries of healing

1. There is, of course, a vast ministry of healing through the medical services. All scientific knowledge comes from the sovereign Lord and we thank God and pray for those who minister to us in this way.
2. There is a sacramental ministry of healing exercised by church elders/priests (James 5: 14).
3. There are anointed Christians in the Body of Christ who exercise a legitimate itinerant healing ministry with a genuine gift from the Lord, to whom they give the glory.
4. Such individuals have often discovered that their ministry is especially blessed in certain areas, using a special methodology. One such would be Kathryn Kuhlman operating through 'words of knowledge' and 'gifts of faith and miracles.' This ministry flows out of the frequent and faithful use of the gifts of healing.
5. There are some compassionate warm-hearted Christian people who are sensitive and understanding, who have natural healing abilities which accompany their prayers for the sick and communicate a degree of healing.
6. There are those who minister with other 'spirits' and although miracles and healings occur, there is a serious danger that the person thus ministered to will take on board more subtle spirits to deceive and ultimately destroy him.
7. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, is addressing himself to the healing gifts (amongst others) which are bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon the Body of Christ - the gathering of church members - when they minister to each other and to visitors in their company in the church. This is what interests us particularly. The meeting place is the learning place for the market place.

## **The purpose of healing**

It is intended:

1. To contribute towards the process of wholeness in the individual.
2. To alleviate physical suffering through a cure or the abatement of symptoms.
3. To cleanse the soul.
4. To release the emotions.
5. To edify those believers made aware of the Holy Spirit's healing ministry.
6. To be a sign to the unbelieving world of the kingdom which has come with Christ
7. To bring glory to God.

## **Healing is spiritual warfare**

1. Sickness is clearly the domain of the devil (cf. Acts 10:38).
2. Any who become involved in the healing ministry will find themselves involved in active spiritual conflict.
3. The enemy attacks both before, during and after any healing ministry.

### **The most common kinds of attacks experienced by those involved.**

#### ***Before ministry:***

1. Sudden depression.
2. Disinterested feeling and tiredness.
3. Anger and frustration.
4. Some strife or tension with others close by.
5. Sense of blockage through some specific incident or circumstance.
6. Sense of unworthiness.

#### ***During ministry:***

1. Distractions.
2. Doubts, confused and unedifying thoughts.
3. Feelings of ebbing faith and lack of anointing.
4. Temptation to override one's faith.
5. Temptation to stop listening to God and take over 'in the flesh'.
6. Tendency to focus on the condition (especially if it is drastic).
7. Discouraging, negative thoughts - 'nothing is happening'.
8. Desire to speed up the ministry and finish quickly.

#### ***After ministry***

The commonest subsequent experiences sensed by those who have been ministering are:

1. Sudden depression.

2. Sense of failure (especially when people do not *appear* to be healed).
3. Sense of exhaustion.
4. Confused and mixed feelings. (Of course, one may have good reasons for feeling a failure if one has mismanaged the situation, but some mistakes are almost inevitable.)
5. Temptation to pride - a desire to boast following clear manifestation of the power of God.

## **The values to be accepted by those involved in healing**

1. The ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3; 16:6-10; 18:9).
  - a. He empowers to heal.
  - b. He will reveal how to minister through words of knowledge, etc.
  - c. He is invited to come upon the person to be healed.
  - d. Those ministering should watch, observe and listen to what the Holy Spirit is doing and saying. Recognise when the Spirit is on a person. Learn to interpret the afflicted person's responses.
  - e. The Holy Spirit should be honoured and blessed in the process for what he does to the person being ministered to for healing.
2. The authority of Jesus. He has commissioned us to heal.
3. The relationship between those ministering and those being ministered to must be:
  - a. Adult to adult (where the afflicted is adult) rather than parent to child.
  - b. Honesty and truth from both parties.
  - c. Devoid of manipulation by either party.
  - d. Based on compassion and respect for the individual's dignity.
  - e. There must be a willingness to take time.
  - f. We must display concern for the whole person – all aspects of his/her life.
  - g. We must also avoid emotionalism from the ministers of healing.
  - h. Care must be taken to ensure the afflicted person is not brought into bondage (some mistakenly bind people to themselves through their ministry, whereas sets us free - John 8:36).
  - i. Care must be taken to ensure the afflicted person is not put under condemnation.
  - j. Care must be taken to ensure that all personal disclosures are kept confidential.

## **The setting for healing**

1. A helpful setting could be a home group cell or the gathering of believers at church, but it could be wherever the need arises.
2. a) Worship is the ideal context for healing. This prepares both the afflicted persons, and those involved in their healing, to be open to God's Spirit.
  - b) Such a context builds faith. A negative atmosphere is counter-productive (Mark 6: 5,6).

- c) Healing (whenever there is such ministry) should go hand in hand with the preaching of the kingdom. It is a sign of God's power and approval.
3. This ministry may take place during the main part of a service of worship, and from time to time it should, so that all the church members may see and learn how it is exercised.
  4. Because time is needed to be relaxed, it may normally best to minister at the end of the service when friends and relatives may stay, but others with other commitments can leave.
  5. The person being ministered to may stand, or kneel at the communion rails, or sit in the pews or be taken to another room if more privacy is required.
  6. It is important that the person being prayed for should be as relaxed as possible and protected from all unnecessary embarrassment.
  7. An unhurried ministry at the front of the church (with friends and relatives apart praying silently) and other church members chatting at the back creates a relaxed atmosphere and also provides some privacy.
  8. Two or three will gather round the sick person to minister.

### **Preparation before ministry to others**

1. We seek to remind ourselves of who Jesus is, what he has done and what he has told us to do.
2. We also seek to empty ourselves of 'self,' remembering that of ourselves we can do nothing (John 15: 5).
3. We check that the armour of God is in place (Ephesians 6: 14-18).
4. We try to empty the mind of preconceptions and presumption. No two cases are alike in the ministry required.
5. We then ask for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.
6. We ask God what He wants to do (John 5: 19,20).
7. We frequently pray in tongues.
8. We try to envisage the affected part of the body well and functioning properly.

### **How the ministry of healing begins**

1. Through inviting and honouring the ministry of the Holy Spirit: 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you' (Romans 8: 11).
2. Through inspiration - a sudden flood of thoughts describing the situation.
3. Through a vision/picture.
4. Through an impression - a deep knowing in the Spirit.
5. Through a scripture verse coming to mind.
6. Through a word or beginning of a sentence describing a condition.

## **How the power for healing comes**

1. An anointing - a sudden infusing of power or heat (tingling) or heaviness in the hands, a feeling of compassion or a full assurance that it will be done.
2. Detachment - a standing back and sensing something beyond ourselves happening through us.
3. Words of knowledge, wisdom or faith which we had not expected to say proceed from the mouth.
4. A vision or a picture in the mind's eye of the healing miracle taking place.

## **The place of faith in healing**

There must be faith - positive expectancy. This may be:

1. In the person ministering (John 11: 22) (This is the gift of faith);
2. or in the person being ministered to (Mark 5: 34; Luke 7: 9; Luke 17: 19);
3. or in the friends or relatives who bring their afflicted (Mark 2: 5).
4. At some stage it is good to encourage some faith response in the person to whom ministry is being given. It seems important to encourage the person's faith.
5. It may be necessary to remove obstacles which may hinder faith.
  - a. Jesus did not do many mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief (Mark 6: 5,6).
  - b. Jesus put out unbelieving mourners from the room of a dead girl and took in just the parents and his disciples (Mark 5: 40).

## **The place of active faith in the person gifted with healing**

Jesus spoke, with the gift of faith, to the condition of the sick. We are also encouraged to exercise our faith: '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 11: 23). Note that he is not told to 'pray,' but 'say' - commanding the mountain to do something.

## **The place of active faith in the one being healed**

We have found it helpful sometimes to encourage the sick person to 'see' his disease on Jesus for 'He took our infirmities and carried our diseases' (Matthew 8: 17).

1. Jesus was specific in his requests for a faith response and said 'Stretch out your hand' (Mark 3:5); 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk' (John 5: 8); 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (John 9: 7); 'Go, show yourselves to the priests' (Luke 17: 14).
2. The Hunters say: 'We tell them we are going to lay hands on their necks (or knees) and as we do we ask them to move their necks' (C and F Hunter *How to Heal the Sick*, p.124).

## **The place of forgiveness in healing**

Those ministering need to know God's forgiveness.

Those ministering need to maintain a forgiving spirit in all areas of their lives.

Those being ministered to need to experience God's forgiveness and to be forgiving in all other areas, though where the afflicted are not Christians this may follow rather than precede their healing. An unforgiving spirit may cause an affliction to return: 'Forgive us our sins, for

we also forgive everyone who sins against us' (Luke 11: 4). (This is dealt with more thoroughly in chapter 24.) Often the 'real' reason God moves people to present themselves for healing is to bring them to salvation. 'It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell' (Mark 9: 45).

## **Phenomena often experienced by those involved in healing**

A sense of heaviness or heat in the hands or power flowing out of them; a tingling feeling/goose pimples; trembling/shaking of the hands; a sense of anointing. The inward witness of the Lord's presence to heal; a sense of electrical currents through the body; a sense of knowing'; a sense of detachment - standing back to see the Lord operating. Sometimes there is no feeling at all - in which case we minister out of our authority on the basis of what we know.

This last point may be illustrated from a personal experience. I was once walking to church in a poor area in the hills above Vifia del Mar, Chile, when a woman rushed up and begged me to pray for her baby, who, she said, was dying. (The doctor at the hospital had said there was nothing more that could be done for her baby). She pushed a bundle of rags with a baby in them towards me. I remember thinking at the time how very inappropriate it seemed (to do this in the street) and felt slightly annoyed, being in a hurry to get to church! I certainly didn't sense any anointing, but, because she insisted, I prayed for the child and walked on. My companion asked me if I had noticed how the baby's breathing had changed, but I had to admit I had not. I completely forgot about the whole event until three days later when passing the same way again the mother rushed out to thank me - the baby was completely well and eating normally. We gave God the glory far what he had done.

## **Phenomena often experienced by people being ministered to**

Sense of heat or cold on the body. (The latter may indicate deliverance is taking place.) Hot flushes on certain parts of the body, e.g. neck, hands, back, etc. Ripples on the skin/movement under the skin, especially over lower chest and stomach area, or various other related phenomena; a radiance on the face; the flickering of the eyelids; a sense of electrical current; trembling and shaking; stiffness of the body or particular parts of the body; light-headedness; a sense of weariness; a sense of deep peace; deep breathing; tenderness and tears; brokenness and sobbing; moaning and groaning; laughter and joy; falling down under the power of the Spirit ('resting in the Spirit'); prostrate body 'bouncing' (sometimes like a fish on dry land); or the body being laid out looking deathly (especially after a demon is cast out spontaneously).

An observation: Any of these sensations or experiences may be manifest. Whilst they may be signs of God at work, they are never proofs of healing. To quote the Hunters again:

'We have seen people go under the power of God and be instantly healed while lying on the floor. We have seen people go under the power of God and not get healed. We have seen people who did not go under the power and were healed standing up. We have seen people who did not go under the power and did not get healed.' (C and F Hunter *How to Heal the Sick*)

## **Points to ponder**

1. We endeavour to give all the glory to God.
2. We seek to beware of the enemy's counterattacks. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4: 7).
3. We never rely on our own emotions, nor do we ignore them.

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4. We note that the more we minister healing, the more results we see.
5. We have discovered that some of us have periods of anointing for different conditions/occasions.
6. Some of us develop faith for one area of healing, which we anticipate will become a recognisable ministry.
7. Sometimes there are special anointings and whatever we do brings the desired result.
8. Even though we may feel nothing (no virtue going out), healings can take place, effected on the basis of authority and obedience to the Scriptures.
9. Sometimes someone in a ministry team may be given a word of prophecy for the person healed.
10. We have found that this ministry tends to go in waves. It's easy to get proud when God uses us. The temptation is to take the glory to ourselves. There is a constant need to humble ourselves and to be continually repenting. (This applies both to churches and individuals).

The Welshman Stephen Jeffreys had a remarkable healing ministry and thousands were blessed through it especially those suffering from rheumatoid arthritis - until one day at a huge meeting in South Africa, where hundreds were being healed, he exalted himself and declared 'The world is at my feet.' His ministry ended there. He became ill and eventually died. Rheumatoid arthritis destroyed him!