

*Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts...*

## **1 Corinthians 14:1**

“The Holy Spirit empowers believers for Christian witness and service. The promise of the Father is freely available to all who believe in Jesus Christ, thereby enabling them to exercise the powers of the age to come in ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with power to witness, and imparts His supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and the work of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today and are to be earnestly desired and practiced. They are essential in the mission of the church in the world today.”<sup>1</sup>

*Charismata* - gift

Charismatic is an English version of the Greek *charismata* which basically means “grace gift.” The gifts which are typically associated with such are those which are viewed as being more supernatural in nature, i.e. prophecy, healing, and tongues. Modern day churches find themselves in one of two broad camps, cessationists or continuationists. While there are certainly degrees to which these underlying beliefs are lived out within the body, we all find ourselves either believing that these particular gifts have ceased (known as cessationism) or that they continue (continuationism).

Unfortunately, the word charismatic, which simply affirmed a belief in the validity and continuance of spiritual gifts, has been somewhat recently hijacked by extreme theology which states that all believers are required to speak in tongues<sup>2</sup> and/or that a second baptism is necessary.<sup>3</sup> Such an extreme view is not only unfortunate, but is a gross perversion of biblical revelation on the matter. When someone therefore asks whether The Village is charismatic, we must discern the meaning of the question. Are they asking if we believe that the gifts are available today? If so we say yes. If however they are asking if we support such doctrines as the necessity of tongues and a second baptism or the disorderly display of gifts, then we are assuredly not.

Scripture nowhere explicitly states that the gifts have ceased. In fact, we have implicit evidence that they will continue until such time as the return of Christ.

*Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.*

## **1 Corinthians 13:8-12**

When will the gifts cease? “When the perfect comes” and when we see “face to face” and when we “will know fully.” While some would claim that this refers to the giving of the Scriptures, such just does not seem to be a necessary or even good interpretation. Having the Scriptures, can we now say that we know fully? Surely not. It seems to be a much more convincing argument that the coming of the perfect refers to the return of the Son of God. As He has not yet returned, the gifts have not ceased.

How therefore are we to live? The Scriptures say to pursue the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, 39), to exercise them in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:40), and to subject them to the Word (1 Corinthians 14:37). As long as gifts are exercised in an orderly and humble manner, subject to the Scriptures, environment and a spirit of love, we certainly encourage all members to pursue and practice them.

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<sup>1</sup> The Village Church Statement of Faith

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:30 clearly refutes this idea, “All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?”

<sup>3</sup> There are a number of other biblically indefensible and, at times, very dangerous interpretations upon this extreme side of the spectrum of interpretation on spiritual gifts.