

During the French Revolution, there were three Christians who were sentenced to die by the guillotine. One Christian had the gift of faith, the other had the gift of prophecy, and the other had the gift of helps.

The Christian with the gift of faith was to be executed first. He was asked if he wanted to wear a hood over his head. He declined and said he was not afraid to die. "I have faith that God will deliver me!" he shouted bravely. His head was positioned under the guillotine, with his neck on the chopping block. He looked up at the sharp blade, said a short prayer and waited confidently. The rope was pulled, but nothing happened.

His executioners were amazed and, believing that this must have been an act of God, they freed the man.

The Christian with the gift of prophecy was next. His head was positioned under the guillotine blade and he too was asked if he wanted the hood.

"No," he said, "I am not afraid to die. However, I predict that God will deliver me from this guillotine!" At that, the rope was pulled and again, nothing happened. Once, again the puzzled executioners assumed this must be a miracle of God, and they freed the man.

The third Christian, with the gift of helps, was next. He was brought to the guillotine and likewise asked if he wanted to wear a hood.

"No," he said, "I'm just as brave as those other two guys." The executioners then positioned him face up under the guillotine and were about to pull the rope when the man stopped them. "Hey wait a minute," he said. "I think I just found the problem with your guillotine."

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are an untapped resource for Christians. They enable each Christian to serve God in a way that is fulfilling and meaningful to them and God's work.

The Bible clearly describes the plethora of gifts that God wants to give to his church; his people. There has been much written and said about spiritual gifts. They have been classified in various categories: Manifestation Gifts (primarily found in 1 Corinthians 12); Motivational Gifts (primarily found in Romans 12) and the Ministry Gifts (sometimes called the 5 fold ministry gifts primarily

found in Ephesians 4). There is overlap and a couple mentioned also in Exodus 35:30ff and 1 Peter 4:8ff.

We have seen in recent years the emphasis on the 5 fold Ministry Gifts where people, men and women, are reclaiming the office of apostle and prophet and putting such titles on their business cards. The danger is always that these people take on these titles themselves rather than being recognised by the body of Christ. The danger is we can institutionalise the office in the same way that priest/pastor/minister was institutionalised. The danger is that people look for titles rather than Jesus and His ministry.

This is not to denigrate what God is doing but to suggest that with every new awakening, there is misunderstanding and abuse.

But if God is bringing in a new era of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, they need to be recognised by the fruit of their ministry and not the title on their business card.

These gifts like all other gifts need to demonstrate the divine enablement to do the work of ministry; the divine power to show that this is from God and the divine encounter where people meet God through the exercise of such ministry.

Whatever spiritual gifts that God has given you, it is important for you to see and understand the divine enablement, power and encounter that is connected with the gift and the exercise of it. This means that whatever gift you have, there is a divine aspect that moves us from just doing things out of our selves and ability into the realm of God where we eternally touch another person's life and they are never the same again.

It is important to see that through the Holy Spirit and the gifts given to you, you are ministering in the presence and through the presence of God so that people are touched and changed by that presence.

I believe that a new dimension of the Spirit will open up to us when we see the divine aspect of our ministry whether it be in the work place, in the church, in our social and community context.

God does not make a difference between the secular and the divine. He does not separate work and church.

Where ever we are, we operate in and through our gifting. The difference is that we know that and intentionally minister in and through that. The difference is that we know that we are transmitting the presence of God and hence He is making a difference. That is why we pray and seek God for everything we say and do and not just on Sundays.

The exciting thing is that God wants to add to what He has already given you, but He is looking for people who want to minister in and out of His Divine presence to make a difference to the lives of people.

The challenge for me has been to do just that. I have healing gifts but I have been reluctant to push these in various settings, especially worship as I did not want to push my barrel or put people off. I came to the realisation that I was doing a disservice to God and what He has given me. I came to the realisation that the problem is not me but others. I came to realise that I was denying who I was made to be and to minister.

So at each service, ministry is offered after church or during the service. I do it in different ways to help people to be open to God and yet I do it because that is who I am to be. It will be true that some will be offended; some will reject the offer; some will disbelieve and only a few will take the opportunity.

But that should not stop me using the gifts that I have been given. More importantly, I need to exercise my spiritual gifts so that God's presence and power is released in the lives of people. I need to embrace what God has given me through the Spirit and not hold back (Stifle).

Let me encourage you to do likewise. What are your spiritual gifts? How are you exercising them in your life (work, church and play)? Do you see God wanting to express Himself through you to another?

We are beginning to develop the small group ministry of my church and encourage people to

use their gifts. I am writing a weekly prayer sheet to encourage my people to pray together about God's plans for us.

I am starting to make contacts with other ministers about Walking Free. It is a slow process but I am encouraged to see possible doors being open. Time will tell.

The prayer ministry is slowing up as clients are getting less. We have not had any new clients book in the last couple of weeks. Yet we have people for appointments for August. These people have started their healing journey with us.

We have had our eldest daughter visit us last week and our second daughter coming up at the end of next week.

I have been blessed with a reunion of an old colleague from my training days. It has been great to catch up and see where God has taken him. He has certainly been used strategically by God in many ways in government (American and Australian), in the church in NSW and now developing a school in Dubai for the education of boys. He said that 28% of boys in Dubai go to school! He has earned the respect of the government leaders in Dubai.

One always feels a little small when you hear about what others have done compared to what you have done. However he has used his gifts while I have used mine!

I pray that your life is fulfilling and the Lord is encouraging you to walk by faith and live by His Spirit.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Prayer Points

- Thank God that He has given you His Spirit
- Thank God that He has given you many spiritual gifts
- Thank God for His divine ministry through you
- Thank God that He provides for all our needs.
- Pray for the new clients
- Pray for new people to become prayer team members. Pray for a team to be established at Coolangatta. Pray for a healing centre to be established.
- Pray for Coolangatta church to continue to be open to the healing work of Jesus.
- Pray for our prayer teams: Hal and Debbie, Barbara, Robyn, Jenny, Liz and myself.
- Pray for our management team: John, Liz, Jamie, Robyn, Rod, Jen and Craig. Pray that we receive God's leading for our ministry.
- Pray for the Toowoomba site of Walking Free. Pray for the foundations to be continued to be built. Pray for new team members and a leadership team.
- Thank God for the financial provision of this ministry. We are grateful to the many that are obedient and give to our ministry weekly, monthly and one off. We have been blessed with gifts of merchandise and money, computers and printing. We have been blessed with many talented and gifted people who give of their time, talent and treasure each week to help this ministry have a Kingdom impact.