

The Faithful are All the Same **The Faithful are All Different**

- Gifts are a responsibility
 - Matthew 25:14 – 30 Parable of the Talent
 - The context is the Kingdom of Heaven
 - One who receives even a small responsibility and does not use it will be condemned.
 - Luke 19:11 – 27 Parable of the Minas
 - The context is the Kingdom of Heaven
 - One who receives even a small responsibility and does not use it will be condemned.
 - 1 Corinthians 9:16 – 18 Paul's apostleship was a responsibility
 - Paul's gifts were not something about which to boast
 - Paul was pressed into service, not a volunteer
 - Apostleship was a stewardship
 - Paul's reward was to execute his stewardship without authorized personal gain
- In some ways, faithful people are all different
 - Romans 12:3 – 8 As God has dealt to each a measure of faith
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4 – 31 There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit
 - Given to each one for the profit of all
 - Distributing to each one individually as He wills
 - We...have all been made to drink one Spirit
 - God has set the members...in the body just as He pleased.
 - Desire the greater gifts: 13:13 – 14:1
 - Ephesians 4:4 – 16 These leaders caused growth of the body for the edifying of itself.
 - The examples in the New Testament all incorporate something "miraculous" (a clear violation of natural law). Have these differences "passed away?"
- In some ways, faithful people are all the same
 - Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:27 – 28, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Regardless of heritage or situation.
 - Romans 12:9 – 21 Loving, affectionate, honoring others, diligent, fervent, serving, rejoicing, patient, prayerful, generous, hospitable...
 - 2 Peter 1:2 – 7 Partakers of the divine nature: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love...
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 – 5:11 Transformed, light, treasure bearers, overcoming, speaking, confident, persuasive...
- What gifts are described as being for all the faithful? (Who decides in which list it goes?)
 - James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights."
 - Gifts in the context are (v2) various trials that produce patience and perfection, (v5) wisdom, (v9) low status, (v12) enduring temptation places one above the cares of life, (v12) the crown of life.
 - How do we determine if something is a "good and perfect gift," or just something we like? Some invoke God's blessing on "gifts" God did not promise, likely would never endorse, or perhaps would describe as sin.

- Hebrews 6:4 – 5 The heavenly gift is parallel to enlightenment, partaking of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the powers of the age to come.
- Ephesians 2:8 The faith economy is a gift
- Romans 5:15 – 18 Gift of righteousness by grace results in justification
- Romans 6:23 Gift of eternal life
- 2 Corinthians 9:15 The grace of God in us is a gift
- 1 Peter 4:10 – 11 Gift of service with the ability which God supplies
- 2 Corinthians 1:11 Gift of answered prayer
- What gifts are described as being given differently to different people?
 - 1 Corinthians 7:7 Being unmarried and content
 - Romans 12:3 – 8: As God has dealt to each a measure of faith: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, sharing, leading, mercy.
 - Ephesians 4:7 – 16, Ephesians 3:7 Gift of church leadership with an expiration clause
 - Acts 8:20, 10:45, 11:17, 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4, 9, 28, 30, 31, 13:2, 14:1, 12, Romans 1:11 – 12 Spiritual gifts which, in their contexts, were for only certain people.
- How does one know what specific gift(s) God has given to me?
 - How do we know if we are making claims without evidence or “desiring the greater gifts”? (*cf.* Luke 11:13)
 - Certainly, “He...sends rain on the just and the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). But the things called “gifts” appear to be specific to the faithful.
 - Unbelievers should be able to see that something greater than you did it (2 Corinthians 4:7, 1 Peter 3:9 – 11). If we have to tell them God did it, something went wrong.
 - What are my specific gifts?
 - If you could do it before you believed, it’s not a “gift” in the New Testament sense.
 - Did you ask for it? Is that a necessary step?
 - Does the proposed gift have an expiration clause? (*e.g.*, “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers” and “wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, interpretation”)
 - Does it give you authority or responsibility? Just use it, don’t talk about it.
 - Do you need to know? Just use what you have.