

apr 16

a gift left wrapped

"He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men... for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." eph 4:8,12

oh, the preciousness of the Holy Spirit; so gentle, so tender, so loving. is it not a wonder that offending Him would be a unpardonable sin? "and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." john 14:16 without the Holy Spirit in the world there would be no conviction of sin; not even a consciousness of wrong doing. there would be no tugging at one's heart strings and seeking good over evil; right over wrong.

"the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." romans 11:29 states that. there has been no cessation of those gifts. they are distributed by the Holy Spirit as He sees fit. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." heb 13:8 just as when Jesus walked this earth, it is only faith that prevents us from unwrapping that gift so costly given. sure, we may unwrap our salvation, but anything requiring more faith than that belonged only to the disciples and not for us. there will be no walking on water around here. that seems to be the majority mindset.

that's what most of us have been taught and brought up to believe. the words written in the bible remain just

that until the Holy Spirit breathes life into them. "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." john 6:63 in these days we need to draw our strength from the Spirit lying dormant in those words; from the power straining to be released. they too are being held captive by our unbelief, waiting to be free; waiting for us to believe in an unlimited God.

let us take one of the basic elements of living in the Spirit; speaking in tongues. do i believe one has to speak in tongues to be full of the Spirit of God? no. i do believe they are missing out on an empowering, enlightening and uplifting gift our Lord wants to share with us. i believe all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to each believer as a situation dictates and their ardent spirit petitions. faith becomes substance.

i want to tell you story i heard corrie ten boom tell one time about a little boy. it seems someone told him he must pray. as he prepared for bed that night, the one thing he knew about praying was to fold one's hands and close their eyes. as he knelt beside the bed to pray, his mother was nearby listening and watching. he began to say the alphabet - a, b, c, d, etc. his mother asked what he was doing. his reply was, " i don't know how to pray so i'm just giving God all the letters of the alphabet and trusting Him to make a good prayer with it.

to me, that's how praying in the spirit is; instead of giving Him the letters to work with, we are giving Him sounds to work with. we don't conjugate the words to

manipulate meaningful understanding. we simply trust the Holy Spirit to form those utterances into meaningful, spiritual communication with our creator. there are times when even words will not suffice and our spirit resorts to groanings which emanate from our very depths. these too are spiritual sounds, understood in the spirit realm. "o Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off... such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, i cannot attain it." psa 139:1-2,6

this is our escape from the false reality of the world into true reality of the Spirit. i don't know why God chose this as a useful gift; to bypass our understanding and let us commune directly spirit to Spirit. perhaps because "out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. my brethren, these things ought not to be so." james 3:10 all i know is, it is for our edification. "for he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries." 1 cor 14:2

yes, there may be times we pray with an urgency for needs unknown halfway around the world; things that cannot be known by the natural mind; perhaps for someone, somewhere in need of pray at that moment. then there are times we are just lost in worship, our gratefulness for so great a redemption no known words would suffice to express. if you've never been lost in worship you need to try it. it's there, in the secret place of His presence, we are introduced to His worthiness. in His light we receive light. and yes, it is most often there that no known words can be

expressed.

these are the days we need all the help we can get.
"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 fullness of Christ."
eph 4:13 we are told to pursue and desire spiritual gifts; not to discourage and disparage them. all are given by God. all are precious.

i look around at the division remaining in the body of Christ; division not beneficial. some have made a ministry of mocking and condemning brethren and their practices. "and i, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. i fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. for where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" 1 cor 3:1-3

whether one is arguing about whether they are of paul or apollos or whether they are arguing about denominations and doctrines, they are all carnal. there are many mysteries remaining in the gospels and only a handful of truths among them that need defending. these must be defended to the death while the others are merely brethren viewing through the same mirror dimly. "for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. now i know in part, but then i shall know just as i also am known." 1 cor 13:12

"and because of your knowledge shall the weak brother

perish, for whom Christ died?" 1 cor 8:11 talk about being wrong in your rightness. Jesus prayed we might be one, even as He and the Father were one. now, as we are nearing the finish line and the forces of evil are ramping up to full strength, knowing their time is short - can we not even now lay asides our differences and rejoice in the fact that we all know and love the same Lord; the Lord who died for you just as surely as He died for me? the one truth the apostle paul sought to present above all other things - "for i determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 1 cor 2:2 let us embrace the bond of brotherhood. "that they may be one just as We are One." john 17:22