

GIFTED

CATCH UP

Love is the room the gifts live in

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13 | Speaker: Rich Johnson

Watch the sermon: 31:37–1:06:44 | GIFTED, week 2

Spiritual gifts are given to be used and shared for the benefit of others. Rich began with gifts people had given him – a sword, a whistle and a remote-controlled Land Rover – to illustrate how gifts can be treasured but left unused. We can similarly leave spiritual gifts “on the shelf” or treat them as possessions for ourselves.

The Corinthians had plenty of spiritual gifts, but lacked love. Paul’s teaching in chapter 13 addresses that problem: the purpose of gifting is to help us love others.

01 Gifts without love are just noise.

Impressive speaking, spiritual insight and even sacrificial giving can miss their purpose when driven by pride, recognition or personal significance.

02 Gifts with love look like Jesus.

Patience, kindness, humility and selflessness describe how gifts should be exercised. This passage invites us to become like Jesus, rather than simply giving us another checklist to perform.

03 Gifts will pass away, but love lasts forever.

Gifts are powerful tools for the present, while we await Jesus’ return. Our knowledge remains partial, so we should exercise them humbly. Loving others already gives a glimpse of God’s promised future.

The response began by asking the Holy Spirit to fill the church with God’s love – the love that gives spiritual gifts their purpose.

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DISCUSS + RESPOND

Explore it together

Read the passage aloud. Use the questions that best serve your group.

- 01 When has someone's kindness or service helped you experience God's love?
- 02 Read verses 1-3. What strikes you about Paul's language? Why might impressive gifting be mistaken for spiritual maturity?
- 03 Are you more likely to leave a gift unused, compare yours with someone else's, or seek recognition through it? What might help you respond differently?
- 04 Read verses 4-7 slowly. Which description of love particularly challenges you? How does seeing these qualities in Jesus turn that challenge into an invitation?
- 05 How should "we know in part" shape the way we offer teaching, advice or a sense of what God might be saying?
- 06 What would it look like for our group to use its gifts more lovingly this week?

Prayer and response

Take a moment of silence and ask: "Holy Spirit, fill us with your love."

Pray for the quality of love each person wants to grow in. Choose one practical way to use a gift for someone else this week, then revisit it when you next meet.

My response this week
