Spiritual Gift of Faith

September 2015

The gift of Faith is the divine enablement to act on God’s promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God’s ability to fulfill his purposes. It is a special God-given ability to trust God’s will and act on it. Based on words from 1 Corinthians 12:9 this gift is usually translated as “special faith.” People with this gift trust God to answer prayer and encourage others to do so, confident in God’s help, even in difficult times or in the face of opposition.

Those with this special gift of faith keep moving forward, undaunted by obstacles, encouraged by a deeply-rooted belief in God’s unending faithfulness and constant care. When this gift is absent in the church, people can come to doubt God’s goodness and his concern for his people.

I remember clearly a time when this special gift of faith was critically needed. On Sept. 11th, the morning of the destruction of the twin towers in NYC and the plane crashing into the Pentagon, I was working at Sioux Falls Seminary when my husband called and told me to get to a television and see what was happening. Several of us who had been informed watched stunned as the second plane flew right into the tower. Shortly after these moments we were to have our usual Chapel time with faculty, staff and students. As we all arrived much emotion and shock was expressed as those who had not heard were informed. We spent the Chapel time in prayer of course. This was an act of each person’s faith and critically important, however, it was the gift of faith that I witnessed being put into action as the Chapel service concluded that taught me the greatest lesson about what the spiritual gift of faith looks like “in the flesh.”

As people were gathering in small groups to comfort and connect around the Chapel area, I moved among the groups to see where I might be helpful. I noticed that in almost every group all were expressing fear, despair, anger, wondering what it all meant and was there more to come. Yet, there seemed to be one person, who despite their own fears and concerns spoke words of faith to the rest – reminding them of God’s faithfulness, his presence, his will and our hope. I knew that many of these very people – especially students who were stepping up to encourage the rest of us to keep moving forward - to trusting God for strength, and guidance had worked with me to understand the gift of faith that had shown up as a high probability when they considered the gifts God may have given them. I do not think that they even realized that they were edifying the Body of Christ in those moments, I don’t think they remembered that they scored high on that gift – I think they were urged and willingly offered the words that were needed and those words were empowered by the Holy Spirit so that the rest of us would be fortified in our faith during those dark moments.

I notice more now when I or others feel the urge or need to speak words of faith into challenging or fearful moments. We need those in the Body of Christ who have the gift of faith to not hesitate but use this gift boldly so that we can all live confidently by remembering and reminding ourselves of the many examples of God’s faithfulness in the past, even during the bleakest times.

Check out Romans 4:18–21 and see what happened to Abraham when against all hope, he believed.