

# Finding Our Place In The Christian Church

## The Body Of Jesus Christ

### [Part 2]

**God-given gifts of the Holy Spirit, are tools to enable us to fulfil the place and job that the Creator God has for us in His Church, they are not toys for entertainment.**

The Greek word used in the New Testament for God-given gifts is “*charismata*” the plural word of “*charisma*.”

In the first part of this article we studied together our calling and place in the Church, the present body of Jesus Christ on earth.

In this second part we are going to study the God-given gifts, “*charisma*” which is the base of much used but often misused word “*charismatic*.”

**The root word of “*charisma*” is “*charis*” which is translated “*grace*” in the New Testament or “*beauty*” in secular Greek.**

**This is interesting when we think that “*grace*” [“*charis*”] which God offers to us, makes us “*beautiful*.”** This is how the Creator God sees us when we, by faith, accept His “*grace*” in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and His “*love sacrifice*” on the cross.

On the parallel physical realm, have you ever considered that the “*sun*” that is the giver of light, [John 1:4-10; John 8:12] never sees a dark shadow, for the shadow is always behind the object.

This is how the Creator God sees us when we have His Son in us, [John 14:15-18] the Creator God sees only what is bright, beautiful and graceful.

**This [“*charis*”] grace is always a gift, it cannot be earned.**

Anything that can be earned is **not** grace [“*charis*”].

Many people try to earn God’s grace by their actions, attending church services, saying long prayers, [Luke 20:47], reading The Bible, but they have never tasted God’s grace [“*charis*”], because they thought they had to become good enough to receive it.

**We can never be good enough, we just have to believe, that is why it is so much easier for former deep-dyed sinners to accept this gift [“*charis*”] rather than those who have tried to earn God’s grace by becoming “*righteous*.”**

**Luke 5:31-32 [NIV]** “*Jesus answered them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’*”

**The “*good*” people find it hard to stop being “*good*” on the outside by their “*good*” religious acts, like the Pharisees of Christ’s day on earth.**

**Romans 4:4-5 [NIV]** “*Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*”

The fact is that God’s Word, the Christian Bible, tells us that to receive the gift [“*charis*”] of grace we have to stop working at being “*righteous*” and just have faith that we will receive this gift [“*charis*”] of grace and then righteousness is credited to us as a gift, [Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24].

**The wonderful thing about this gift of grace is that the Creator God is not accountable to anyone as to whom He will offer the gift of grace.**

**Job 33:12-13** [Amplified Bible] *“God is superior to man. Why do you contend against Him? For He does not give account of any of His actions. Sufficient for us it should be to know that it is He who does them.”*

**God’s justice is exact. He can never make a bad judgement.**

When we are in God’s grace [“*charis*”] there should be something about us that makes us beautiful and makes others want what we have.

Sadly this cannot be said about many “*religious*” people!!

“*Charisma*” changes the meaning from the general grace of God to something that is specific in manifestation or impartation or operation of grace.

“*Charismata*” is the plural of “*charisma*.”

“*Charismata*” can be divided into four different groups, and I will do this to help you understand the whole wide range of “*charismata*” that is mentioned in the New Testament.

## **Group One – General Basic “*Charismata*” –**

These are gifts which all true Christians have.

a) **Romans 5:17** [NIV] *“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”*

Righteousness is a “*charisma*” [gift] from God.

b) **Romans 6:23** [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Eternal life is a “*charisma*” [gift] from God.

**Note:** We receive righteousness before we receive eternal life, for the Creator God will never give eternal life to anyone who is not made righteous by accepting the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus the Christ, in their stead by faith.

**Receiving righteousness is not the end of the process –**

**Philippians 2:12-13** [NIV] *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*

Having received righteousness [“*dikaisos*”] as a “*charisma*” [gift] we have to “*outwork*” this righteousness [“*dikaioma*”] in acts of righteousness.

**The righteousness we receive as a gift is imputed righteousness [“*dikaisos*”] that is given to us as a result of faith in the Creator God, [Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24].**

**Revelation 19:7-8** [Amplified Bible] *“Let us rejoice and shout for joy, exulting and triumphant! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honour, for the marriage of the Lamb [Jesus Christ, John 1:29, 35-36], at last has come and His bride has prepared herself, [the Church, the body of Jesus Christ on earth which is preparing to be one with Him in an intimate relationship of marriage to bring*

many more sons and daughters into the Kingdom or created family of God]. *She has been permitted to dress in fine [radiant] linen, dazzling and white, for the fine linen is [signifies or represents] the righteousness, ["dikaioma" not imputed but worked out in acts of goodness] the upright, just and godly living [deeds and conduct] and right standing with God, of the saints, God's holy people."*

**Additional comments added.**

**God gives us imputed righteousness ["dikaisos"], to enable us to work out righteousness ["dikaioma"], which is the love that the Creator gives us through the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.**

**John 7:38-39** [Amplified Bible] *"He who belongs in Me, [Jesus Christ speaking] who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me, as the scripture has said [Isaiah 48:18], out from his inner host being springs and rivers of living water [Jeremiah 2:13; Jeremiah 17:13], shall flow continuously, but he was speaking here of the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed, trusted in faith in Him were afterwards to receive."*

**God's Holy Spirit in us, that is God's holy love and righteousness freely given to us by grace, prompts the loving acts within our lives for the welfare of others.**

All of the "charismata" of God are to be used in the service of others.

God will **only** "work in" as much righteousness as we "work out."

## **Group Two – Personal "Charismata" –**

**1 Corinthians 7:7** [NIV] *"I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."*

The context tells us that Paul was talking about celibacy.

**Celibacy is a "charisma" from God –**

**Matthew 19:10-12** [NIV] *"The disciples said to him, 'If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.' Jesus replied, 'Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.'"*

Jesus is speaking on the same subject. **In this case celibacy was not a gift but a choice and many fine people have chosen to be celibate because of the work they were called by God to do in the serving of others.**

**Some of the greatest servants of God were celibate, Paul, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist.**

When we study for example the lifestyle of Paul, if he had married there could have been only two possible results, the inability to complete his ministry or the complete failure of his marriage because of forced neglect.

## **Group Three – Spiritual "Charismata" –**

All of these gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural, **not** the result of education, culture or natural abilities.

**1 Corinthians 12:7** [NIV] *“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

The key word is *“manifestation.”* These are gifts that can be perceived by the human senses.

**The Holy Spirit in us is invisible but these gifts of the Holy Spirit are ways in which the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is made known as these gifts flow out from us as believers.**

Note also *“to each one,”* this indicates to me that some of these gifts should be manifest in every true believing Christian.

**1 Corinthians 12:11** [NIV] *“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”*

God does **not** intend us to live as *“born again”* Christians without at least one of these spiritual gifts.

[To understand what *“born again”* means please download and study our articles under the main heading *“born again”*].

These gifts are what God desires as a reality in His Church, normal day-by-day manifestations of the Holy Spirit at work in the body of Jesus Christ on earth.

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10** [NIV] *“To one there is given through the Spirit the message of **wisdom**, to another the message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit, to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another speaking in **different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues.**”*

#### **Words of wisdom –**

Day-to-day use of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, as a practical guide to our way of living.

#### **Words of knowledge –**

An understanding of the Creator God’s commands and nature, the deeper things about the Creator God, [theology].

#### **Faith –**

A general belief and reliance on the Creator God in all aspects of life. Sufficient to be a living example to others of *“a man of faith”*, passionate for God’s way of life.

#### **Healings –**

Prayers to the Creator God that bring about His direct intervention in the lives of others to give them physical, mental and spiritual healing.

#### **Miraculous Powers –**

God manifesting His great power through us bringing success out of what seems impossible situations, including exorcisms of demons.

#### **Prophecy –**

This is forth-telling, **not** foretelling, the gift of preaching that expands on God’s Word, the Christian Bible, making it relevant to our day-to-day life.

## **Discerning of Spirits –**

To distinguish between what is real and what is merely hysterical.

Between what is genuine and what is a product of excited delusion.

Between what is from God and what is from Satan and his demons.

## **Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues –**

Paul never questioned the reality of these gifts, but he was well aware that they had their dangers. Hysteria, ecstasy and a kind of self-hypnotism are very difficult to separate what is genuine God-given and what is self or Satan induced.

**1 Corinthians 14:27-28** [New King James] *“If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”*

If there is no-one to interpret the tongues it should **only** be done at home.

**Overall this passage of scripture gives us a picture of a church which was vividly alive.**

Things happened, in fact astonishing supernatural things happened.

There was nothing flat, dull or ordinary about the early Christian Church.

Paul knew that all this powerful activity was the work of the Holy Spirit who was giving each person a gift to use for the building up of others in faith, knowledge and maturity.

## **Group Four – Servant “Charismata” –**

These are “*person*” gifts. Christ’s life in a person given to others in sacrificial service.

**Ephesians 4:7, 11-16** [NIV] *“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” ... “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

The ascending Jesus Christ gave gifts to His body, the Church.

**Notice** the first gifts He gave was the gifts of leadership, sheep without a shepherd become scattered and lost, [**1 Peter 5:1-4; Jeremiah 50:6**].

**Leaderless people are defeated people, Satan knows this and his prime target are those Jesus Christ placed as servant/leaders in His Church.**

Remember these gifts are people given by Jesus Christ to the Church.

**Jesus Christ is giving Himself in these people as a gift to the Church.**

This is vividly portrayed in the Old Testament sacrifices, the sacrifice laid down its life on the altar before God. Part of it was then given back to the people for them to eat and be nourished.

Genuine and faithful apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers have personally offered their lives as living sacrifices on God's altar, and God has then handed them back as a gift to the people to nourish and build them to maturity and service of others.

It is Jesus Christ now in these people who is really the gift and who is doing the work in and through them, [John 14:15-18].

**What qualifies a person to be a shepherd [pastor] is that Jesus Christ the Chief Shepherd has given Himself back to His people through people He has chosen and placed in His Church.**

**These gifts are totally sovereign.**

They do **not** depend on worldly qualifications of the person involved or human election.

A church does **not** elect a pastor, a church does **not** hire a pastor.

**If you have a hired pastor you have a hireling, not a shepherd.**

**John 10:11-15** [NIV] *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep."*

**The Christian Church is not ours, the Church is governed from above, it is not a democracy.**

The Head over all things is Jesus Christ, and He operates downwards and the first level of operation is these five gifts, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.

**Without this system of authority the Church would not function as the Creator God intended it to operate.**

**A person only becomes a shepherd [pastor] when Jesus Christ begins to shepherd His flock through that person, they cannot make themselves a shepherd [pastor] by taking on that name.**

There are very definite standards in God's Word, the Christian Bible, to judge the claim to being a shepherd [pastor].

I prefer to use the word shepherd [or elder] because pastor is such a "*religious*" word.

Our image of a "*pastor*" is a man in a dark suit behind a speaking stand, while our image of a "*shepherd*" is that of a man in working clothes in open fields with living creatures.

**The "*shepherd*" image fits that of Jesus Christ's life here on earth more closely.** Jesus Christ was a working man most often in the fields or on the highway.

Our thinking has been distorted by tradition and a misuse of words.

We need to get back to the use of the words we read in God's Word, the Christian Bible, as they were used in the days when it was written.

**A pastor [shepherd] was a servant, an apostle was one who was sent by the Church to do a task of work in a certain place at a certain time, or with a certain message to give.**

**Romans 12:4-8** [NIV] *“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.** If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”*

**Note all gifts are linked with God’s grace.**

If we don’t understand “*grace*” we **cannot** understand the distribution of these gifts.

**God is very practical, He does not give us a job to perform without the tools to accomplish that job.**

One major problem in the Christian Church is that many dedicated Christians are trying to do a job for God that God has not given them the measure of faith [*“grace”*] or gifts [*“charismata”*] to accomplish that job.

**Have you ever noticed that God seems to give these gifts to the people we, from a human level, think least deserve them?**

Very often it is the “*religious unqualified*” who receive these gifts from God, being “*qualified*” in God’s sight.

**Romans 12:6-8** [Amplified Bible] *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us let us use them. He whose gift is **prophecy**, let him prophecy according to the proportion of his faith. He whose gift is **practical service**, let him give himself to serving. He who teaches, to his **teaching**. He who exhorts, **encourages**, to his exhortation. He who **contributes**, let him do it with simplicity and liability. He who **gives aid and superintends**, with zeal and **singleness of mind**. He who does **acts of mercy**, with genuine cheerfulness and joyful eagerness.”*

Paul lists here gifts [*“charismata”*]

**Prophecy** – Greek word “*prōphētēia*” **from a root word meaning an inspired speaker**, speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers.

In measure the teacher has taken the place of the Old Testament prophet [2 Peter 2:1].

The difference is that the message of the Old Testament prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the specific occasion, the message of the teacher [New Testament prophet] is gathered from the completed revelation [through Jesus Christ] contained in the scriptures both Old and New Testament.

**Practical Service** – personal abilities or crafts that can be used to help those in need.

**Teaching** – the Greek word “*didaskō*” meaning to call near for consolation and comfort, to encourage others, by having belief in their abilities and a positive approach to life in general.

**Acts 4:36** [NIV] *“Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called **Barnabas** (**which means Son of Encouragement**),”*

**Barnabas was given his name because of the gift he had, obviously been given by God to encourage other people.**

The Greek expresses the ability to “*cheer up*” if depressed or to “*stir up*” if lazy.

**Contribute** – God blesses some in His Church with the ability to acquire wealth and expects them to share this with others in need in the Church or for supporting the work of the Church in general.

**Gives Aid and Superintends** – Leadership that is a direct help to others in a form of serving them with their welfare the only thought in mind. The Greek word translated “*superintends*” is “*prōistēmi*” meaning to “*stand before*” to protect and lead.

**Acts of Mercy** – The Greek words used embraces the feeling of sympathy with the misery of another. This is a reflection of the mercy that God extends to us that results in our peace of mind.

It also includes hospitality, that is making strangers welcome, and to “*feel at home.*”

This is emphasised as a needful quality by God in both the Old and New Testaments.

**1 Peter 4:9-11** [NIV] “*Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*”

Again and again we are reminded that any gift that we receive from the Creator God is to be used to serve others **not** ourselves.

**1 Corinthians 12:28** [NIV] “*And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with **gifts of administration**, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*”

Paul adds to the list of gifts the gift of administration. All leaders need those they can depend on to help by administrating in some particular way, in every church fellowship.

People who have and use such a gift are essential to the smooth day-to-day running of the fellowship.

Most times this is work done behind the scene which is only noticed when it is **not** performed.

**God has given each of us in the Church a specific part to play, and has prepared us to fulfil that part.**

Therefore out of humble gratitude for all that the Creator God has done for us, let us seek that place and use the gifts we have received to build up the body of Jesus Christ on earth, His Church.

In the third part of this article we will examine how the Creator God trains and equips us for the job we individually have been given to perform in His Church.

The “*religious*” word used in the Christian Bible is disciple.