



Apostle Paul's Teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit Based on 1 Corinthians 12– 14:1–25 and Its Application for Believers Today

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the Apostle Paul's teaching on the gift of the Spirit based on 1 Corinthians 12–14:1-25 and apply it to believers today. The research method used was hermeneutics with a grammatical exegesis approach, which includes the analysis of historical and logical contexts, as well as literature studies from various primary and secondary sources. The results of the research show that there are twelve gifts of the Spirit that Paul mentioned, namely: the gifts of speaking with wisdom, speaking with knowledge, faith, healing, performing miracles, prophesying, discerning spirits, speaking in tongues, interpreting in tongues, apostles, prophets, and teachers. The gift of the Spirit is given by the Holy Spirit to every believer for the common good and edification of the body of Christ, not as a measure of personal righteousness. The implementation of the gift of the Spirit for believers today includes: a correct understanding of the meaning of the gift of the Spirit, the application of biblical principles in its use, and the use of the gift to build, counsel, and comfort the congregation. This study recommends that every believer use the gift of the Spirit responsibly, in love, and in accordance with biblical principles, and be able to distinguish between the gift of the Spirit and the deviations that occur in church practice today.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of the gift of the Spirit is familiar to be discussed in churches, theology-based schools, and even this topic is often brought up as a discussion of theology in Christian seminars. However, in reality, there are still some Christians who do not understand what the gift of the Spirit really means or the purpose of giving the gift of the Spirit to believers. Several previous studies have addressed this topic from a variety of perspectives. Wagey (2012) in his research on "The Gift of the Spirit According to the Teachings of the Apostle Paul: A Theological Study of the Neo-Pentecostal View of Spectacular Gifts" highlights the differing views between the mainstream church and the Pentecostal church regarding spectacular gifts such as tongue-in-cheek and healing. Siahaan (2012) in "Biblical Reflections on the Glossolalian Phenomenon" analyzes the phenomenon of tongue language from a biblical perspective and finds that the practice of glossolalia often deviates from the principles taught by Paul. Meanwhile, Gidion (2018) examines the effectiveness of empowering leadership in church growth, which indirectly touches on the role of the gift of the Spirit in ministry. However, there is still limited research that comprehensively discusses the twelve gifts of the Spirit mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14:1-25 and their implementation for believers today in an integrated manner.

There are several things behind this writing. First, there is the assumption that there are still many Christians who do not know what the gift of the Spirit means and the benefits of

giving the gift of the Spirit. In principle, the gift of the Spirit is different from a particular talent or skill. The gift of the Spirit is divine, a gift from God Himself, whose impact is far more powerful than any particular talent or skill. Second, there is a problem or polemic between the school that has the view that the gifts of the Spirit are still bestowed by God on Christians today, and the school that has the view that the gifts of the Spirit have stopped in the time of the Apostles, that is, when the complete New Testament was written.

Third, there are certain churches that tend to emphasize the doctrine of the gift of the Spirit as the standard for the progress of a church, and there are even claims that churches that do not have the gift of the Spirit are churches that do not have the Holy Spirit. This is due to a misinterpretation of the meaning of the gifts of the Spirit found in the Bible.

Of this, John F. MacArthur, Jr. said: "Perhaps one of the greatest rifts in the church today centers on the meaning and use of the gifts of the spirit. This whole problem of the gift of the spirit and its use determines the life of the church" (MacArthur, 1988). Churches that have not instilled doctrine or that do not yet have a clear understanding of true doctrine, will one by one be deviated, perverted, and undermined by untrue faith (Tong, 1995).

Based on the above background, the formulation of the problem in this writing is: First, what is the meaning of the gifts of the Spirit based on 1 Corinthians 12-14:1-25? Second, what is the implementation of the gifts of the Spirit for believers today? The purpose of this writing is to examine and explain the meaning of the gifts of the Spirit in the perspective of the teaching of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14:1-25, as well as to answer the questions that have been presented in the background. The benefits of this research are: to provide a correct biblical understanding of the gifts of the Spirit to the congregation and church leaders, to help distinguish true gifts from falsehoods, to prevent church divisions due to misinterpretation, and to encourage the responsible use of the gifts of the Spirit in love for the building up of the body of Christ.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this writing is a hermeneutic method by applying the following principles. First, an analysis of the context of the texts or passages of the book being studied. There are two categories of context, namely historical context and logical context. The historical context includes the historical background of a book by using interpretive books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, archaeological works and atlases with the aim of understanding and understanding the topography of a book (Osborne, 2012). Second, the exegesis of biblical texts related to titles. Exegesis means "pulling out" the meaning of a text, in contrast to eisegesis, "putting into" a text that a person wants. Using a grammatical exegesis approach, the author explores and discovers the original meaning of the text so that its theological meaning can be implemented for the life of the church or believers today.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Condition of the Corinthian Church

The city of Corinth is a port city that connects Northern Greece and Southern Greece, with two ports, Kengkrea to the east and Lekhaionia to the west. As a metropolitan city, Corinth became an important center of commercial activity in Asia and Greece (Bambang Subandrijo,

2010). The city of Corinth is also known as the city of vice; there is a temple of the goddess Aphrodite which is expressed as a symbol of prostitution (Hakh, 2010).

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians to correct various misconceptions, including divisions over groups (chapters 1-4), disharmony in the Lord's Supper (chapter 11), and a misunderstanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (chapters 12-14). Marxsen (2008) explains that Paul urged uniformity of belief and explained true Christian teachings to the congregation that had been influenced by their environment.

Definition of Spirit Gifts

In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul uses the word "πνευματικών" (pneumatikon) which means spiritual things. The word comes from "πνευμα" (pneuma) which indicates that the gifts belong to the Holy Spirit and are moved by the Holy Spirit (Bridge & Phypers, 1993). Further in verse 4, Paul uses the word "χάρισμα" (charisma) which means gift, a gift because of the generosity of the giver.

The gifts of the Spirit are the means that God gives to members of the church to serve God (Brill, 1997). Abraham Kuyper defines spiritual gifts as the means and powers established by God that enable His church to carry out its duties on earth (Kuyper, in (Matalu, 2017)). The Bible Guide to Living in Abundance explains that "gift" (charismata) is derived from the word charis (grace), indicating that spiritual gifts include both inner motivation and power to administer the ministry received from the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are gifts from God voluntarily and do not depend on humans who receive them (Muriwali Yanto Matalu, 2017). Everyone who believes in Christ certainly receives spiritual gifts, at least one gift. According to Wycliffe's Interpretation of the Bible, the gift of the Spirit is a variety of abilities given by God in connection with ministry in the local church, both official and informal (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 2010)

The Basis of the Gift of the Spirit: The Love of God

The apostle Paul wrote at 1 Corinthians 14:1: "Pursue love and seek the gifts of the Spirit." The Greek word "chase" is "Διώκετε" (diokete) from the root "διώκω" (dioko), which is used in the form of present, imperative, active, plural verbs, indicating actions that are ongoing continuously (Susanto, 2006).

Evans (1999) says that the thing to remember is that Paul says that what needs to be pursued is love, not this gift and that gift. The Greek word "love" "ἀγαπᾶω" (agapao) refers to God's supreme and glorious love (1 John 4:7-21). Warren W. Wiersbe (1983) asserts that the gifts of the Spirit, no matter how attractive and good, will be useless and even destructive if not used to serve in love.

Forms of Spirit Gifts

The Gift of Speaking with Wisdom and Knowledge

In 1 Corinthians 12:8, Paul explains the gift of speech with wisdom (*sophia*) and knowledge (gnosis). J. Wesley Brill (1997) explains that the gift of wisdom means investigating all things and knowing how to act in all things, full of God's mind. Muriwali Yanto Matalu (2017) explained that the Holy Spirit bestows on certain people the ability to learn and understand the word more, so that they are able to speak with knowledge. These two gifts are very closely related to other gifts such as prophesying, teaching, leading, and exhorting.

The Gift of Faith

In 1 Corinthians 12:9, Paul writes about the gift of faith (*pistis*). The gift of faith must be distinguished from the saving faith that every believer has. The NIV Study Bible explains: "Not saving faith, which all Christians have, but faith to meet a specific need within the body of Christ." Muriwali (2017) stated that this gift of faith is given to certain people for certain reasons, for example to someone who is given the responsibility to perform services that seem impossible.

The Gift of Healing

In 1 Corinthians 12:9b, Paul mentions the gift of healing (*iamaton*). C. Peter Wagner (2005) explains that the gift of healing is a special ability given by God to some members of the body of Christ to act as human intercessions. Muriwali (2017) distinguishes true divine healing from false healing based on four characteristics: true healing is permanent, instantaneous, always related to the preaching of the Gospel, and produces true worshippers of God.

The Gift of Performing Miracles

Paul mentions the gift of performing miracles in 1 Corinthians 12:10. The Greek word "miracle" "*δυναμις*" (*dunamis*) means strength, ability, power. Muriwali (2017) writes that every miracle performed by Christ states two things: First, He is the Creator and King of the kingdom of God. Second, as a proclamation of the kingdom of God. Charles C. Ryrie (1986) said that a believer in this day and age does not always need to expect to be miraculously cured, because it is not God's will to give good health to everyone.

The Gift of Prophecy

In 1 Corinthians 12:10b, Paul mentions the gift of prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 14:3, Paul explains the three purposes of the gift of prophecy: to build up (*oikodomeo*), to exhort (*paraclesis*), and to comfort (*paramuthia*). Daun (2003) argues that the gift of prophecy today is synonymous with preaching which also states, expounds, and explains the will of God.

The Gift of Discerning Spirits

In 1 Corinthians 12:10c, Paul writes of the gift of discerning spirits (*diakriseis pneumatōn*). 1 John 4:1 says: "Test the spirits, for many false prophets have arisen." Peter Wagner (2005) explains that this gift is a special ability given by God to several members of the body of Christ to know for sure whether a certain behavior is really from God, from man, or from Satan.

The Gift of Spirit Language and Interpreting Spirit Language

In 1 Corinthians 14:2, Paul explains that tongues (*glossa*) are addressed to God, not to men. Paul gives principles for its use: the gift of tongues should be delivered in an orderly manner, one by one; in one worship there are only two or three people speaking; and there must be someone who can interpret it (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). J. Wesley Brill (1997) explained that Paul mentioned four things that are beneficial for the church, namely God's revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching.

The Gifts of Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul mentions three gifts of office: *apostolous*, *prophetes*, and *teacher*. Stephen Tong (2013) explained that the apostle is a person sent by God to write the New Testament Holy Scriptures. The gift of teaching is closely related to other gifts and is still indispensable for believers today, especially for pastors, pastors, evangelists, and Christian

teachers (Graham, 1985).

The Purpose and Benefits of Spirit Gifts

In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul affirms: "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Paul also analogizes the gifts of the spirit to the members of the body that each have their own function but are useful in complementing each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Thus, the primary purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is to build, equip, and comfort the church of God.

Bridge & Phypers (1993) explains that these gifts are to equip the saints to establish the body of Christ, that is, His congregation to achieve unity of faith. Robert Calvin Wagey (2012) emphasized that the gift of the Holy Spirit is very useful in carrying out the great mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ. The concrete benefits of the gifts of the Spirit are: as a means of preaching the gospel, building up the body of Christ, equipping the saints, and serving one another (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:29-30).

Implementation of the Apostle Paul's Teaching on the Gifts of the Spirit for Believers Today

Implementation of the Meaning of Spirit Gifts

Every believer today must first understand that the Holy Spirit, who is the Person, is also a gift in itself. The gifts of the Spirit recorded in the Bible, especially in the first letter of Corinthians, are gifts of God freely so that anyone who is equipped with the gifts of the Spirit can use them to serve God. The gifts of the Spirit are not meant to be a standard of one's holiness or as a means of measuring one's degree of faith.

Implementation of the Principles of the Gifts of the Spirit

The gifts of the Spirit have a biblical principle based on 1 Corinthians 12:4-13: First, the gifts of the Spirit are given to everyone who believes in Christ (verse 7). Second, the gift of the Spirit is given according to God's will, not by the person's own will (verse 11). Third, the gift of the Spirit is given when a person is baptized in Jesus Christ (verse 13).

These principles will also help believers to be able to distinguish between true and false work of the Spirit. Christ provided a way to test the work of false prophets in Matthew 7:16-20: "By their fruits ye shall know them." What is meant by fruit in this section is not the result of work in the form of the ability to perform miracles, but the purity of teaching, the motivation of service, and the character of life in accordance with God's will.

Implementing the Purpose of Spirit Gifts

Building the Church

One of the purposes of the gift of the Spirit is to build the church, not only physically, but to build the church on a solid foundation so that it will not be easily tossed about by the times (Ephesians 4:14). Every believer, especially church leaders, has a responsibility to study God's word, preach the gospel, and teach the truth to other members of the church.

Advising the Church

Bible principles teach that the church can only be edified, exhorted, and comforted by true and responsible doctrine (1 Corinthians 14:3,5). As the Apostle Paul taught the church in Rome: "if the gift is to exhort, let us exhort... whoever leads, let him do it diligently; whoever shows mercy, let him do it with joy" (Romans 12:8).

Entertaining the Church

Through the gifts of the Spirit, God shows His mercy to believers who experience suffering, persecution, or distress in various forms. Paul said, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). As a believer in Christ and who has received the gifts of the Spirit, it should be used as a means of comforting persecuted believers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of exegesis and hermeneutics on 1 Corinthians 12-14:1-25, the following can be concluded. First, the gifts of the Spirit are special gifts given by God to complete His redeeming people as written in Ephesians 4:12: "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ." Second, the gifts of the Spirit are not the same as talents or talents; the gifts of the Spirit are to be used specifically to serve the body of Christ. Third, tongue or tongue is not a standard for judging one's degree of faith. Fourth, the gifts of the Spirit are designed by God to help and unite the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3-7). Fifth, in the context of 1 Corinthians 12-14:1-25 there are twelve gifts of the Spirit: speaking with wisdom, speaking with knowledge, faith, healing, performing miracles, prophesying, discerning spirits, tongues, interpreting tongues, apostles, prophets, and teaching. The author's suggestion: that every believer use the gifts of the Spirit responsibly and humbly, and be willing to learn and understand the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit based on biblical principles. In addition, so that every believer who has a certain gift can introspect himself and judge the motivation of his heart, because service that is not accompanied by the right motivation will be useless and displeasing before Allah.

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