



Persistence of Pentecost

Adapted from “50 Days for Fire” series by Wayne Murray

There is a belief in some denominations that the charismata ceased to operate in believers at the close of the apostolic era. In other words, when the apostles all died, these gifts ceased to operate in the church. This philosophy is known as cessationism. This philosophy comes from both history & scripture.

Wayne Murray in his sermon Persistence of Pentecost states the following in explanation of the **1 Corinthians 13:8–13** passage. There are 4 teachings that come from those who believe that the gifts have ceased:

1. The sign gifts are imperfect & will cease when that which is perfect comes.
2. The sign gifts were necessary for the early Christians because they did not yet have the written New Testament.
3. The sign gifts were necessary for the apostles to write the New Testament and establish the church.
4. “That which is perfect” was a prophecy fulfilled by the closing of the New Testament canon at the third council of Carthage in 397 AD.

These folks believe that there was a specific day that the signs stopped happening in the church. The day was 397 AD when the New Testament was finished. So, then, they believe these gifts have not been in operation since 397 AD. Cessationism supporting evidence:

1. The latter portions of the New Testament do not address speaking in tongues or the sign gifts (charismata).
2. The use of the gifts essentially disappeared from the church shortly after the time of the apostles.

The gifts did not appear again with much fanfare until the early 20th century – 1901. This is a historically accurate statement. But, two important questions need to be asked:

1. If the sign gifts, the charismata, are available and appropriate for believers today, why did they virtually disappear from Christian practice for roughly 1600 years.
2. What is the proper interpretation of **1 Corinthians 13.8-12**?¹

¹ Wayne Murray, *Persistence of Pentecost*, July 21, 2013. Notes given to Jimmy White.

COURAGE

C1: From your Christian worldview, what comes to your mind when you hear the word “charismatic?”

C2: Read the following verse and answer the questions.

1 Corinthians 12:4 (NLT) ...there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit is the source of them all.

- The Greek word for gift is charismata. This word is used to refer to any gift used of extraordinary power granted by the Holy Spirit.

- What can you glean from this verse regarding the Holy Spirit?

C3: Read **1 Corinthians 12 (NLT)** and make a list of every gift Paul mentions in this chapter.

C4: How often and where do you see the gifts Paul lists in **1 Corinthians 12 (NLT)** in operation? How often and where do you believe the gifts Paul lists should be in operation? Why?

C5: Why do you believe not all Christians agree in regards to the use of the gifts as Paul describes in **1 Corinthians 12 (NLT)**?

STRENGTH

S1: Read the following verses and answer the questions.

1 Corinthians 13:8–13 (NLT)

- What three things can you glean from these verses about spiritual gifts?

- What are your thoughts for spiritual gifts in operation today? Why?

S2: Why did Paul write **1 Corinthians (NLT)**? What is the context of Paul writing chapter 13?

S3: Read **1 Corinthians (NLT)** and write down every instance where Paul uses a “now and then” discussion. Example: Now I am a child. Then I will be a man.

- Look over your list. What can you glean from the contrast?

ENDURANCE

E1: If the signs and gifts of the Spirit are available and appropriate for believers today, why did the gifts virtually disappear from Christian practice for roughly 1600 years?

E2: List some of the scenarios in your life where a rule, principle, or instruction had been given to you or you gave to someone, but it was not actually put into practice. Why would this happen?

- What is the possibility of God giving a rule, principle, or instruction and it not be followed? Why would this happen?

E3: Read the following verse and answer the questions.

Exodus 12:14 (NLT)

- How long is “for all time?”
- Right before the battle of Jericho was the last time Passover was kept until **2 Kings 23 (NLT)**. This would be approximately 700 years. If Passover was important and was supposed to be kept, why do you think this practice was not conducted for approximately 700 years?

E4: Read the following verses and answer the questions.

2 Kings 22:13 (NLT)

2 Chronicles 35:17–18 (NLT)

- What caused the children of Israel to begin the observance of Passover again?

- Why was the practice of Passover restored?

- Thinking about the restoration of Passover, what can you glean from this absence and restoration as it relates to Pentecost?

- According to these verses, what do you believe would need to happen to restore Pentecost today?