

JIM MURPHY
Session 3

It's so exciting for me; you all begin to nod and fall asleep. So many times people come up to me and say, "Listen, I know you saw me fall asleep; I'm so sorry." You know, honestly, it happens all the time. And I often fall asleep during talks, even the ones I'm giving. It's just part of life, and scripture says the Lord gives to His beloved in sleep. Maybe you'd be better off sleeping than listening to me, really, I'm serious. It's okay; it happens; it happens more than I care to admit that it happens. So, you know, we're all family here. It's okay. Hey, I just gotta say... We were talking earlier about charisms and gifts and anointing. Man, you guys know how to put on a spread of food around here. Wow! That's great! The Body of Christ is growing. St. Paul says that we're the temple of the Holy Spirit, I mean, upgrade that to a basilica. It's great! If you guys do this every week, man, I'm so here. Tell us, Mr. Murphy, how are things in Colorado? Well, those guys can eat. Praise the Lord! All kinds of gifts.

Just by way of a very quick recap so we can continue into the afternoon... We were saying that there absolutely is a place to be empowered but there's also the need to be equipped. And in our English language, when we hear the word "equip", we think of somebody giving us things so that we can do tasks. And the Greek word is actually much richer than that; it means bringing to completion, bringing to fulfillment. It's like having a sailboat with no sails and then God shows up and brings the canvass. It's like having a rowboat with no oars. It's there and it's beautiful but it can't fulfill its destiny. And this Greek word that we're using to complete, to perfect, to fill up what is lacking is in no way a slam or a knock against you. But it means that you're a good thing but God is making you even greater. So you really need to hear this as a word of encouragement and in no way is it like, well, what's your problem. It's not that at all. Paul has already said, under the function of the Holy Spirit... Paul has already called you holy. So you've already crossed to what's important. Now we're just coming to that sense of fulfillment. And we said that this sense of equipped... There are two primary ways that God equips us. He does it, I would say most importantly, by changing our character. And He does that through the Isaiah gifts of the Spirit and then Galatians 5:20, through the fruit of the Spirit. He's actually changing our nature. We are different people who are better people than we were, not because we finally got our act together but because the Spirit of God is dwelling in us.

In Romans 5:5, it says, "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts." This is done by the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus. So God is acting wisely. I don't know about you, but sometimes, you know, I kind of feel like, man, what a mess my life is. And here's, I think at times, one of the tricks of the devil. The trick of the devil is to take one thing that's wrong and

like put a magnifying glass on it. There could be a hundred things in your life that are right and good, but we never seem to focus on those. It's the one thing. And what happens is that we take that and it magnifies. When you take a penny, and if you hold it up close enough to your eye, it will completely block out the sun. A penny can block out the sun if you hold it close enough to your eye. And I think a lot of times the devil, who in scripture is called the accuser of the brethren, likes to find one thing wrong in your life and distract you from looking at all the good things that are going on in your life. And so I think we can't just keep a big picture here and a long reach perspective.

Here's a question: Are you closer to God today than you were five years ago? I sure hope so. What I really hope is five years from today, you'll be closer to God than you are now. And if you can be patient with the process, God can certainly be patient with the process. So don't give up. And a lot of times, the closer we walk to the Lord, the more we come into His light and in the clarity of His light. We see things that five years ago we weren't even aware were flaws in our life. So sometimes it's like, man, I thought I was making progress on this spiritual journey but all I see are more sins and more failures and more shortcomings. That's not necessarily an ahead thing. What it means is that as you're walking deeper into Christ, His light is shining brighter and things that were no big deal five years ago, well...

We had a friend who came to the Lord and was so excited that every week at the prayer meeting, he would show up with different articles he had found. I mean, he practically delivered a book every week to everybody. You know, "Here's a great quote from the pope. Here's this great... Did you ever read Luke before?" He handed us reams of paper. I'd say, "Man, how you all of a sudden..." I saw Bob take all the paper from work. And it's like, well, this guy was taking reams of paper from work and using their photo copier on his work time to print off things, you know, about the gospels and all this sort of stuff. And he was so excited. And I didn't say too much in the beginning but I bumped into him and, "You know, a funny thing happened today. I was standing at the copier reaching for another stack of paper, and suddenly I felt the Lord say, 'I don't want you stealing from one group so that the other guy can get the gospel.' I never thought of that before." So a lot of times, God, in His wisdom, knows what to point out to us and sometimes, if I may say, God kind of doesn't try to fix us all in one day because He knows we couldn't handle it. So little by little by little, God shows us things that need to change or be surrendered or need to be corrected. So don't be discouraged because we're not complete; we're not fulfilled; it's not all together yet. We've already crossed the line; we're already in the final approach, so hang in there. Keep the faith; keep your eyes on the Lord and that beautiful encouragement from Paul: "I am convinced of one thing. He Who began a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus."

So God hasn't given up on you and we haven't given up on you. Please don't give up on yourself. Keep going forward. Don't let the enemy discourage you and have you focus on only

your shortcomings. You have come so far. You have come so far. Give thanks to God that He's brought you along this far. And we rejoice with you in the good progress, the good fruit that your life is bearing. It's all going to be okay, so don't give up. Keep going forward.

So we were talking about how important character is in terms of equipping us. And I said earlier that, really, our relationship with God is much more important than how many things you do for God. It really is. And I don't know if this is a human thing; we all tend to kind of fall back into doing things for God. And one little tip for those of you in ministry - let me offer this little bit of advice. Stop doing things for God and only do things with God. God doesn't want you to do things for Him; He wants you to do things with Him. And when you do things with God, the pressure is off. It's not up to you.

There's kind of a telling story. One time Mother Teresa had a magazine reporter visiting her in Calcutta. And he wanted to see, you know, her work. So she took him to this one little house where I think there were maybe 12 or 14 lepers living in these little dormitories and her sisters were caring for them. And after she was done showing him this place, the reporter very sarcastically said, "Well, Mother, that's all well and good for 14 people. But you're living in the middle of Calcutta. There's gotta be millions of people around here who are worse than these poor fellas. Do you really call that success?" The story goes that she kind of bit her tongue and took a breath, and she looked at him and said, "Sir, actually God never asked me to be successful. He only asked me to be faithful." Boy, does that take the pressure off. I don't know if we're ever going to be successful but everybody in this room can be faithful. And that, at the end of the day, is the only question that God is going to ask. "Have you been faithful to Me as I have been faithful to you?" So it's about relationship, not getting things done for God.

Having said that, we also recognize that a big part of equipping is God giving us these charisms, these great gifts that seem to enable us to communicate His kingdom in ways that are beyond our capacity. I think that's important. Charisms enable us to communicate His kingdom beyond our natural capacity. Now, we can say, you know, she's got a charism for making coffee, or he has a charism for this and that. Truthfully, technically speaking, everything you can do is a gift from God. I mean, your heartbeat is a gift from God. Your breath is a gift from God. If you can tie your shoes, it's a gift from God. So in one sense, everything is a gift from God. When we talk about charisms, we're talking about some kind of a supernatural intervention from God that very much finds its home in pretty frail human beings. And this crazy combination of a divine God working through imperfect humans... that's what we experience as charisms.

Let me again, please, read to you one line from the Catechism. And it says... we're talking about the Isaiah gifts here, wisdom, understanding, etc.: "They make the faithful docile and readily obeying divine inspiration." So the Catholic Catechism acknowledges that mere mortals

get divine inspirations. And the gifts of the Spirit, these character gifts I call them, give us the capacity to respond with docility to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. So again, it isn't like character and charism. The two have to be together. And if you don't have the right character, sometimes the charism by itself can be abused or misused or neglected. So there really is a role for charisms.

I shared with you before lunch three interesting charisms that, again, there are people who like to say, "Now that praying in tongues, is that praying in the Spirit?" I don't know. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. But did you notice that they were all very distinct? In the first case, the man who was praying for his friend who was considering suicide, it seemed to me to be more of a prayer of intercession. He wasn't standing up and proclaiming it; it was just part of his own prayer life. And again, in Romans 8, it says that you and I do not know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit has pity on our limitations. And so the third person of the Blessed Trinity, who is currently living in you... did you get that? ... who is currently living in you, He's willing to pray through you to the Father, because we don't know what's going on on the other side of town. We don't know what's coming next week. We don't know what our kids are up to today. We don't know; the Spirit of the Lord knows. So this praying in the Spirit can be a powerful tool of intercession.

In the second case about the French speaking woman who stood up and spoke in the dialect of this particular village in China, that was more of a gift of proclamation. It was a specific message that this man needed to hear but obviously it raised the faith of everybody in that room. I mean, how possibly could this woman know that information? So it's a gift of proclamation that brings glory to the Father.

And the third example we talked about is when I was praying with a man in the streets of L.A., and I just found myself compelled to pray in the Spirit. All my nice little safe prayers didn't seem to have much effect. But that prayer that I thought would be a big turn-off, that was the thing that went like an arrow to his heart. Pope Paul VI said that the Holy Spirit is the true agent of evangelization. And Paul says that whenever we try to share our faith, the Holy Spirit has to be at work in two people, not just in one. The Holy Spirit has to go to the heart of the person to whom we're talking and prepare their heart to receive the word; and the Holy Spirit has to be in the heart of the speaker to say what the Spirit wants, not what we think they need. And Pope Paul went on to say that if the Holy Spirit is not involved in that interaction between two people, then it's simply two human beings just kind of thrashing it out. It becomes almost a contest of will. So this role of the Holy Spirit in sharing faith is very, very, very important. And in that example of the street guy in L.A., it would seem that the Holy Spirit touched his heart by the praying in the Spirit more than any, you know, rational thing that I could say.

So those are three examples of how somebody was helped or the kingdom of God was advanced or the Father was glorified by using what is considered a very humble and a very basic charism.

Let me share a few more examples. The word of knowledge...What is the word of knowledge? All these gifts the Catechism calls the inspirations of the Spirit, and I'm not sure we always have to get them in the exact right category, but a word of knowledge is when God gives you an insight into a situation for another person that you could not humanly know by yourself. And just as an example... when I was walking this cross across America, one day I was in New Mexico and I had stopped at a traffic light, and I was waiting for the light to change. And I always used to love that because people would get real nervous with this guy standing with a six-foot cross, and they all kind of back away from you, you know. I just say, "Hey, how are you doing today?" I was kind of doing it to be mean, you know. "So, what are you doing today?" And they all look at me with this big cross. I used that to have fun with people. But as I was standing there waiting for the crosswalk to turn green so I could walk, this other crosswalk was green and a woman was walking toward me. And as she approached, it wasn't audible but I clearly had this very clear message. I couldn't hear it but it was there, and it said, "She's had an abortion." Now, a little bit of practical advice. You better be darn sure this is of God and not some craziness of your own, cuz you can do a lot of damage by saying things to people that are either not true or are true. But, I mean, I really felt like I would freak this poor girl out. "Hi, my name is Jim Murphy. I understand you recently..." I mean, what would that poor girl think? So here's what happened. She walked up and says, "What are you doing with that cross?" I said, "Oh, I'm just waiting to get across." "No, no, I mean, what are you doing? Why are you waiting at the stop sign?" I said, "Well, I just wanted to remind people of how much God loves them. And I think all of us, at one time or another, make mistakes in our life and we feel really bad, and we wonder if God loves us. And I wanted to remind people through this cross that He loves all of us, and even in our mistakes, He still loves us." She goes, "Oh, that's interesting." The light turned red, the light turned green. I said, "I plan on taking this highway. How far will it take me out of town?" "Well, you get about two miles out and you take a right fork and head that way." "Okay, thanks a lot." And she says, "So what are you telling people when they ask about the cross?" I said, "Well, you know, I would guess that a lot of us, if we could go back in time and do things different, we would probably do some things different. But unfortunately, we can't go back in time. We can't pull the clock back. But the good news is that Jesus can take care of the past, the present and the future, and all those things in our life that we wish we could change. God can still make them light." And she's listening. The light turns red, the light turns green, the light turns red. And I said, "You know, I think a lot of times in life, all of us have done things and we feel distance between us and God, and we would give anything if we knew how to get back. We don't know how to get back." And then I took the cross and I said, "And here's the bridge. This cross is the way back to God. One end of the cross is in our heart and the other end of the cross is in the heart of the Father. And all you gotta do is put yourself on

that heart. If you walk on this cross with your heart, you'll end up in the heart of the Father." She looks around me; she has tears in her eyes. She says, "This is the craziest conversation I've ever had. I've never told anybody this before but seven years ago I had an abortion. And it's almost like everything you're saying is like you're talking directly to me." And I go, "Oh my gosh! Oh wow! Can you believe this?! Wow, wow, wow!"

Now I'm thinking that case, and I've had my own conversion... When I first got involved with the Charismatic Renewal that word of knowledge would happen. I thought, "There's somebody here today wearing a blue dress." You know, you kind of always had to speak it out.

Sometimes I think that you do. But sometimes I think God gives word of knowledge to guide us on how to compassionately care for people. So my entire conversation, if you will, was a set up to allow her, when she thought it was the right time, to talk about it. Okay, I never said to her... to this day she doesn't know that I knew before she ever got to there. But it allowed me to just say the right thing and kind of open the right door so that she could then be able to say, "Look, I've never told anybody this before." We had a beautiful prayer time at the crosswalk, beautiful reconciling between her and the child who died, and I was able to direct her to some counseling, and it was a good moment. But there was a case when a word of knowledge was used in a very pastoral, practical setting. I wasn't trying to say, "Guess what I know?" Nothing like that at all. It's just information that helps you serve another person.

So, there's to me, I think, a very practical way of using the word of knowledge. And sometimes we are supposed to speak it out. But more and more, my new theory in life... Take at least five more seconds before you open your mouth. You can always say it but once you say it, you can never get it back. Take a breath, whisper a little prayer to the Holy Spirit: "Do you want me to say this or do you want me to use this information in another way?" I think it makes a big difference.

Another charism, I guess Paul puts it in this category, is the charism of miracles, and that can be things like healing. I mentioned we had kind of a pre-meeting dinner last night, and in my current work, I'm talking with people both from parts of Africa and parts of India, where there are actually documented cases of corpses, dead people, being brought back to life in the name of Jesus. And again, this isn't something I heard that somebody read out of a book. I'm talking to the people who were there when they brought this baby who had died. These people were coming to this Catholic charismatic event, and they were walking days through the jungle. The baby died on the way, and they just kept carrying the baby with them. So they finally showed up exhausted with a baby who had been dead, I think, two or three days. And they brought it to this person and said, "Our baby died. Does your Jesus... is He really who you say He is?" Let's find out. The baby was restored to life. And, I mean, I realize this doesn't happen every day but it's happening more than you would imagine, obviously with the impact that you can imagine. There are spontaneous healings that are taking place also in parts of Africa and India.

And I might mention, they are often places where there's great persecution, great suffering, or Catholic churches are being burned down. So it isn't like everybody's throwing out the red carpet but in the midst of the darkness, that's when the Light shines.

So these kind of things are happening. We're experiencing... I just returned from Mexico 72 hours ago, and we're experiencing a multiplication of food. And I'm not saying that figuratively. I mean, food is multiplying in order to feed the people. I'll just give you two quick instances. What we're currently doing now is we buy food from a wholesaler who brings it in a pickup truck up to the garbage dump. And then we have to do an inventory list, and I have to pay the bill. So I know, personally know, that we had 412 units of food. What a unit is, there's a big black garbage bag and in it is a bag of rice, a bag of beef, a bag of hot stuff, a bottle of water, things that don't need refrigeration. So we had 412 units. I can personally tell you that we had 412 units because I had to pay for the 412 units, sign the papers, count the material. I know that. Over 600 people went through the line and received one of those units. Now, it isn't like you sit there and go ba-dupe, ba-dupe, ba-dupe. It doesn't work like that. It just never runs out. And many times it's happened that the last bag of food goes to the last person in line. There's no more people and there's no more food. It happens.

A second case that I can also verify... We were in a situation where one person had cases of rice, one had cases of beans, etc., etc. These people are so poor that they say to us, "Can I have the empty covered boxes when you're done?" So we don't break the boxes down. We keep them and throw them in a pile behind us, because the minute the food's gone, they run and start grabbing up the boxes. So one of our girls, and I know her; this is real, it's not, you know, I think I know somebody maybe who... I know this girl; I can give you her phone number. And she was giving out bottles of cooking oil. And for some reason that day we had plenty of rice, plenty of beans, plenty of everything else, but the cooking oil was going. And without the cooking oil, a lot of these foods can't be cooked. So this girl... we were down to like three cases, there's 12 in a case and we're down to three cases. And, man, that line was beyond that wall back there, I mean, they were just lined up. And it's like all the other food was there but the one thing needed to cook it, we were out of. And she says, "O God, can You please help these poor people? How are they going to cook the food without this oil?" She was at the last box and she literally took the last bottle of oil out of the box; she gave it away. The line was way, you know, still going on. She turns to throw the last empty box on the pile, and she walks and trips over something. And there in all the cardboard is another box of oil. The lid was torn off but all the oil was there. So she picked it up, gave thanks to God, and started handing out the oil. Twelve more people got oil. She turns to throw the empty box away; she trips in the same spot and there's another box of oil, and then there's another box of oil. And I was there, I'm telling you, I stood and watched it happen. The last bottle of oil went to the last person in line. When the last person in line got their oil, there was no oil left. I would not say this happens every day, but it's happening quite often. And I could tell you many more stories

like that, where everybody realizes that God is in our midst. And to me, the gift of miracles... the practical side of it is people get food. But the effect that it has on the faith and the sense of God's presence is extraordinary.

So miracles have a role and I get suspicious when who's ever praying or ministering, if they put too much attention on themselves. I have a problem with that. The only reason miracles happen is because God is there, not because of the clown in front of them. It's because God is there. And every miracle, every prophecy, every word of knowledge, every prayer in tongues, should emphasize the presence of God, not how or who or witty we are. Very important.

Another example of a charism is word of wisdom. It's like knowledge but usually a word of knowledge is more specific. The woman who had the abortion, there's somebody who has a bad back, a very specific thing. A word of wisdom usually seems to be some insight into the things of the kingdom that are probably out of the capacity of the person sharing them. And when they're spoken, it just resonates. Everybody's like, "Oh, wow, yah, that's right!" It speaks to people's hearts.

Now again, this happened. I got it from a person who was there when it happened. They were doing a Life in the Spirit seminar in Minnesota. And a woman living on a farm wanted to do this Life in the Spirit seminar. Her husband didn't really want to do this, but she kind of dragged him along. He had to drive her to town so he went along for the ride. And the reason this farmer wasn't really comfortable is because it seems like he had some kind of speech problem. He was very awkward socially and could not relate to people. So he would show up at these things and would go have a coffee and sit in the corner. He would listen to everything, you know, he would nod at the right time and stuff, but he really wasn't into this thing. And so as the Life in the Spirit seminar went, they were praying over the wife and she's crying and having a great ole time. And they said, "Hey, Frank, come on over." So he gets up, takes his coffee and sits down in a chair and everybody's praying over him. He's like, "This is kind of weird." And that was it; it was done. So after the Life in the Spirit seminar, they have a prayer meeting. And the wife is there and there's Frank, kind of in the back row, drinking his coffee, kind of watching all this. Half way through the prayer meeting, Frank stands up and starts speaking poetry that they said was like the writings of John of the Cross. He was speaking of mystical things; they were recording him so they could write it down later. They say you could not believe the wisdom and the eloquence and the spiritual insight that this man had. And people were openly weeping as he talked about the heart of the Lord bursting with love for everybody. And everybody was just weeping. And then he just sat down and drank his coffee. And when the night was over, one of them went over by Frank and said, "Frank, what was that?" And he said, "Can't really say. Don't really know." And the guy could not carry on a conversation for two minutes. And then he takes his wife, gets back in the pickup truck and drives back to the farm. The next week he comes back and whew, the same John of the Cross again. Drinks his

coffee, goes home. And now they've got this guy who... I mean, people are recording his words of wisdom to take them home and reflect on them. Now how do you account for that? What is that? It's certainly not this farmer's capacity. It's something beyond a human capacity that is a gift from God through the individual for the edification, for the building up, for the equipping of the whole community, that they be strengthened for ministry.

I mean, these things... I'm not making them up. I actually know these people, and this is real stuff. So you can say what you want about this stuff but what are you going to do with this kind of information? And here's just one more. On the council some years ago, we have representatives from different parts of the world, and we had a representative from the French-speaking Africa. You know, there's Africans who speak English and Africans who speak French. And from Franco-Africa, we had a doctor, Dr. Paul (sp?) I think his name is. I'm not pronouncing that right so Dr. Paul. Great guy. He was from Congo and you may remember some years ago there was a terrible civil war in that area. And he would come to our meetings in Rome and we would ask how it was going. "Well, the militia came through and killed so many people" and all that. All of a sudden, all of our communication with him went dark. We called him - no response. We write him - no response. We sent people to go find him - his building was burned out. He was gone. And for two years he was gone. We presumed him to be dead. Two years later, we finally get a call from the doctor. "I'm fine; my family's fine. We made it to such-and-such a city." And to my great delight, at the next meeting he returned, and he told us this amazing story. He's married. I think he has three kids, and his youngest one, his daughter, is maybe five or six years old. And he said they were all at home, I think at night, saying their prayers, and this little girl suddenly says, "I call you now to pack up what you have and leave. Your time here is over." This is a five-year-old. Really? What are you talking about? And the wife said, "I don't know what she's saying but I think we better follow her." They grabbed their possessions and left the house. Twenty minutes later the militia came looking for him, completely torched his house and burned down the neighborhood. So for the next two years, this five-year-old kid was getting prophetic words. And he said, "We came to see that that was God's providence, so whatever prophecy she gave, we paid attention to it. And you would not believe it. We're getting ready to walk down a road and all of a sudden the girl would just kind of stop and say, 'My children, do not go this way for this is the path of destruction. I tell you to walk this way which would be to life.'" Okay! They would go there and it turns out there was an ambush waiting for them on the other road.

Now if this sounds a bit odd, remember Agabus in the Book of Acts? Agabus was a prophet and he stood up in the church and predicted, a prophetic prediction, that there would be a famine in one of the churches, and Paul and Barnabas were there to bring famine relief. So I think sometimes we have to expand our understanding of prophecy. Technically speaking, prophecy, in its most basic form, means speaking on behalf of another. We would understand that to mean that we are speaking on behalf of the Lord. And people say, "Who do you think

you are, thinking you're hearing from God?" But those of you who have experienced that charism, you know that you're not God. You know that, and yet there's a word that just burns in your heart and you're compelled to speak it. So in the case of our friends in Africa, or in the case of Agabus in the Book of Acts, it was very practical; it was very directed. Most of the time prophecy doesn't work that way. Most of the time prophecy is a word of encouragement or a word of correction or some... God telling us, you know, "I call you to repent; I call you to get out of your ivory tower and come and live with your people." Just words that are encouraging or challenging or something like that. But prophecy really does have a role in the Church. And again, we're not so much thinking like, yah, Elvis is going to be our next president, you know, those kind of things. It's not silly predictions or futuristic guessing. Again, remember that God is among us. God is among us. And if God wants to speak a word to us, He'll often do it through prophecy.

So these are some of the more common charisms that are used on a regular basis. There are lists and Pope John Paul said that in every age, God will give new charisms to meet the moment and the situation. But this is a very short list of the more common ones that we find. But I wanted to share that with you because I do think at times that even we in the Charismatic Renewal don't appreciate what's happening with a charism. I think we take them for granted. I always wonder what's going on. I'll see people at a conference; somebody's giving a prophetic word, and people are talking and looking through their programs or rifling through their purse or something. Either this is God's word and we need to pay attention or the guy up there's a nut job and we should pull him off the stage. I mean, it can't be both. Is this God; are we gonna listen? Or isn't it God and should we move that person off?

So I really believe... I really believe that charisms have a key role in the equipping of the saints. And in the examples I gave, I hope you see that my orientation is towards the practical use of them. It's not about trying to look good; it's not trying to out-charism the other leaders in your prayer group. It's about service; it's about guiding and helping and encouraging people to do the things that God has wanted them to do.