

Continuing our verse by verse study through Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church we find ourselves in the midst of quite a detailed section regarding the gifts of the holy spirit. Paul is in fact correcting the Corinthian church for their over-emphasis on certain vocal gifts during their meetings.

Last week we went through Paul's list of the gifts and came away with the understanding that all of these gifts are GIVEN by the Spirit AS HE WILLS - not concocted or goaded into being by the worshipper.

We left off in verse 12 (READ THRU) The point is that we are all members of one Body - the Body of Christ - regardless of our gifting or our role in the Body. This is the idea that Paul is going to drive home for the remainder of chapter 12.

v.13 - One Spirit - not different spirits, one. There is a unity in being sealed by the Holy Spirit - the 3rd person of the trinity - God, the Holy Spirit.

Paul is here offering a reminder on their baptism in the Holy Spirit. In context, discussing the gifts of the Spirit and then very clearly stating, "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body."

You're something new! True baptism represents a permanent, irreversible change - Nicander, 200BC, Bapto v. Baptizo.

This is why baptism is so important and there is some confusion regarding water baptism and the baptism of the holy spirit.

One can be baptized with water but not be baptized with the holy spirit. (Acts 19 - Paul at Ephesus). The two can be concurrent but aren't necessarily so - especially if the believer has not been instructed in the holy Spirit, just like the precious saints at Ephesus.

There are several Biblical statements pointing toward the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let's review them so we have a firm understanding of the importance of Paul's statement. Especially since we who desire to exercise these spiritual gifts must be baptized, immersed, overwhelmed, changed, by the Holy Spirit in order to do so.

John the baptist teaching about Christ [Mat 3:11 NKJV] 11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

[Luk 11:13 NKJV] 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Christ instructing the disciples [Act 1:4-5 NKJV] 4 And being assembled together with [them], He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," [He said], "you have heard from Me; 5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Peter @ Jerusalem explaining Cornelius' conversion [Act 11:15-17 NKJV]
15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16 "Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 "If therefore God gave them the same gift as [He gave] us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

...all have been made to drink into one Spirit.

A beautiful picture of unity with Christ - [Jhn 7:37-39 NKJV] ... Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Holy Spirit is an essential part of the Christian life. We can have all of the head knowledge on the planet but no power, no purpose, if we deny the Holy Spirit if we withstand God.

By the Holy Spirit we each have different functions. Each and every believer a Holy Gift or gifts that have been given to them for the common good - for serving others. And no matter how diverse they are we are all part of one Body. This is bigger than the local congregations but also applies to the local congregation.

v.14-20 - One body, many members, many functions.

v.15-16 - Paul, by way of illustration, anthropomorphize's two body parts - a foot and an ear, who begin to devalue their position among the members to the point of saying they aren't even a part of the Body because they aren't like their neighbors. They are kind of having little pity parties because of their station. There's a lesson here for us.

v.17 - we would be woefully one dimensional if we were only one thing - unfortunately that is an apt description of many ministries and churches today.

v.18 - God builds the Body AS HE PLEASES. Not as we please - now hopefully our desires align with God's will, but that is not always the case.

v.19-20 - It takes all members for the Body to function properly and that is God's design and will for the church - hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc.

v.21 - Be careful being dismissive of other members, other spiritual gifts just because they aren't like our gifts and or they don't look like you, function they way you do. God has a special purpose for each member. Sometimes they may even look the same but have a different functions - do not dismiss them - they are necessary - example: dominant hand for writing but two hands to climb a rope, dominant eye for shooting but two eyes for depth perception.

v.22-25 - All parts are necessary. The analogy is that we individually show differing concern and attention to our individual members either concealing or presenting them but each part of our bodies is important and serves an important function.

v.24 - sometimes we get weird about our bodies - kinda like in middle school personal hygiene class - BUT GOD COMPOSED the BODY and has given GREATER HONOR to that part which lacks it.

If you think that your ministry is unimportant or hidden or not as flashy or glamorous as others - take heart! God has specifically placed you among Christ's Body for the work of the ministry and He is the one who rewards - He is the one who gives honor - though man may never know. God knows, for He composed the Body and knows each and every member by heart.

v. 25 - no division, no schism - it's a shame when the Body tries to tear itself apart - not medically advisable - not spiritually advisable.

Jesus praying for His disciples [Jhn 17:20-21 NKJV] 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

We should not be divided - we should care for one another so that the world might know we are Christ's disciples.

v. 26 - suffering and rejoicing together - that's the nature of being part of the Body - we are in this together for Christ's glory in suffering and in rejoicing.

One injury affects us all, one wound can affect us all, one infection can affect us all - that's when it becomes crucial to care for one another with diligence and tenderness. In like manner when one is honored we all rejoice!

[Rom 12:15 NKJV] 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (Know the appropriate response)*

v.27 - you ARE the body of Christ AND members individually - the collective and individual responsibility of us all. We have a compound faith - corporate and individual. Most people need help with the individual portion finding the collective worship easier than the individual discipline and outworking of faith. By Christ's grace we grow and learn in both of these realms.

v.28 - God's appointed in the CHURCH - First Apostles - why? They were eye witness to Christ, their testimony was certain.

[2Pe 1:16 NKJV] 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

[1Jo 1:1-3 NKJV] 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and

our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

We adhere to the Apostle's doctrine - Acts 2:42

Prophets - those called and equipped by God to speak forth God's word - this is by the empowerment and moving of the Holy Spirit and not based on a title.

Teachers - Just like we are doing now - rightly dividing the word of truth.

Miracles - ranked intentionally below Apostles, prophets, and teachers. God's word is the most important thing found in those upper tiers. Miracles - discussed last week - in working of mighty deeds - on the Spirit's initiative, not man's. If it is within our power and resources and prerogative it is not miraculous.

Healings - spiritual, mental, emotional, physical

helps - aid - what a cool office to hold, helping, what's cool about that is it is very nearly representative of the Holy Spirit in Character as Christ describes the Holy Spirit as the Helper in John 14 & 15.

Administrations - one of the thankless gifts but so needed in the Body. It's rare to find one who is equipped by the Spirit with the gift of administration - evidenced by joyful service and conducting their office with all diligence as unto the Lord.

Finally - varieties of tongues - how'd it get so magnified in our current culture when we find it at the end of the list here? How'd it get so magnified in Corinth - it seems like Paul is trying to set their worship back to a right order. Reminding them of God's appointed order within the church.

v.29-30 - The question is rhetorical and the answer is no.

v.31 - What are the best gifts - Paul doesn't say - the best gifts would depend on the needs of the Body. Whatever the Body needs is what would be most valuable at that time. We should all be seeking to fill the most important needs. Desiring the best gifts. Perhaps the Lord will use us for His sake. How glorious to be used in God's hands for His kingdom.

YET - I show you a more excellent way - LOVE. All of that aside, Love is the supreme requirement, the best gift. Why? Love God, love people - ultimately demonstrated in totality by Christ's love for us.