

1 Corinthians Series #33  
"Spiritual Gifts" – Part 5 1 Cor. 12:4-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Gifts

1. Getting gifts is fun!
  - a. love watching kids on Christmas morn
  - b. birthdays
2. Yet, an event from my childhood that was disturbing
3. About 5 or 6; went to a friends birthday party
  - a. was a week or so after my birthday
  - b. my parents only threw one party for me when I was a kid
  - c. usually just spent it with my parents and sister
  - d. this kid had a huge party
  - e. and he got a lot of gifts
  - f. as he opened each one, I found myself getting very jealous and angry
  - g. For my birthday, all I got was a couple clothes and a toy
  - h. he got everything that was being advertised on TV and more
4. What should have been a time of great joy and celebration became for me a total bummer

B. Envy

1. In 1 Cor. 12, Paul writes to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts
2. There was great trouble in the church over the use of spiritual gifts
3. But the basic problem was that the gifts had led to disunity and envy in the church
  - a. those who spoke in tongues considered their gift more important than others
  - b. while those with the word of wisdom considered their gift the greatest
  - c. the result was that there were different camps, groups in the church who were jealous and divided
4. Paul writes to correct their faulty thinking about the gifts
5. It is important to not before we go on, that Paul's concern in this passage is not to lay down a complete teaching on spiritual gifts
  - a. the list of gifts he gives is not comprehensive

- b. and besides mentioning the ones he does, he does not explain them
- 6. Paul's aim in this passage is to show that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to bring about the very opposite thing from what the Corinthians were experiencing = UNITY!
- 7. Notice what he says . . .

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 4-6

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

- 1. We catch the theme of Paul's intent in this passage right here = Unity thru Diversity!
- 2. When we began our study of this ch. a few weeks ago, we took the time to do an in depth study of the Holy Spirit
  - a. we saw that He is a Person who is God
  - b. we learned that the Bible teaches that there is One God, who is revealed by three separate and distinct Persons = the Trinity
  - c. Paul very subtly reveals that truth in these three verses.
  - d. he writes of the Spirit, the Lord [~ Jesus], and God [~ Father]
- 3. These three are all instrumental in the impartation of spiritual gifts
- 4. Some commentators have developed elaborate distinctions between these different words
  - a. gifts, ministries, activities
  - b. don't think that is Paul's intent here
  - c. he is not concerned with developing a detailed theology of spiritual gifts
  - d. the whole chapter is focused on the unity of the body of Christ and how spiritual gifts are a part of that
  - e. his point in using different words here is to express the diversity there is in the unity of the body of Christ.
  - f. in vs. 12-27, he likens the body of Christ to the human body
    - each part is different
    - but each part contributes to the whole

- g. that is his point here
  - h. there may be different gifts, and ministries, and ways of doing things in the Body of Christ
  - i. but the goal is the ultimate health and unity of the body of Christ
5. God is a Being of infinite creativity
- a. look at nature
    - fingerprints
    - snowflakes
  - b. seen in us; all different
    - unique physical features
    - personalities
  - c. as the Spirit gives us different gift, they will be at work in and through us in countless different ways
  - d. consider the gift of teaching
    - just one gift
    - but it is expressed differently in different people
    - the result is that different people are blessed and built up in the faith
    - has it every happened to you?
      - // you are talking with some
      - // they love a certain teacher who leaves you cold
      - // you tell them about one you like and it is clear they are bored silly
6. God has the interests of the whole body in mind
7. So He works all in all.
8. This means that within the body of Christ is resident all that is needed for us to grow in Christ and live healthy, productive lives.
- a. we do not need to go to bankrupt systems of this world for help
  - b. at best all they can do is provide the passing wisdom of man
    - with man's wisdom, today's pet theory
    - is tomorrow's trash
  - c. in Eph. 4:11-16 we read this "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the

stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

d. in 2 Pet 1:2-4 we read this "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust."

9. All that we need to live a health, successful life is to be found within the context of the Community of God's people.

10. That is exactly what he says in v. 7 . . .

B. V. 7

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*:

1. It is God's intention that each and every believer be a living, active, and vital part of the Body of Christ

a. there are not useless parts

b. no vestigial organs

2. To that end, each Christian is endowed with something, some enabling that is for the express purpose of helping others

3. Paul narrows the discussion of spiritual gifts down to a specific group of gifts

4. Here in v. 7 he calls them "manifestations" of the Spirit

a. the word means, "to make visible"

b. because the Holy Spirit is Spirit, we cannot see Him

c. but certain of His gifts make it clearly evident that He is present and at work

d. Jesus once likened the Holy Spirit to the wind - cannot see the wind itself

- but can hear it when it comes up
- can see it when it blows thru leaves
- e. even so, certain gifts MANIFEST the Holy Spirit
- f. Paul gives a short list of them in vs. 8-10

### C. Vs. 8-10

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,  
 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,  
 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1. Before we get in to the specific list of manifestations, notice a couple things
  - a. the repetition of the phrases "to another" & "by the same Spirit"
  - b. Paul's whole theme here is Diversity in Unity or Unity gained thru Diversity
  - c. so we read "to another " = there's the Diversity
  - d. and we read "by the same Spirit" = there's the Unity
  
2. the first two manifestations are THE WORD OF WISDOM and THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
  - a. no doubt Paul puts these two first on the list because Corinth was a Greek city and the Greeks were preoccupied with issues of philosophy
  - b. knowledge and wisdom were their chief pursuits
  - c. Paul says that there is a wisdom and knowledge reserved for church that is the special gift of the Holy Spirit
  - d. both of them are called "the word" of knowledge and wisdom
    - the idea is that they are to be spoken out
    - they are to be shared with others
    - not held in secret as the Greeks mystics did with their knowledge and wisdom
    - no; in the body of Christ, what God gives to one is to be shared with others
    - in fact, that is why it is given = to share it
    - so the wisdom or knowledge a believer receives is to be shared
    - it is a word from God

3. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE is the impartation of knowledge which bypasses the normal means by which we learn something
  - a. normally, we learn by the use of our senses
  - b. the word of knowledge is knowledge implanted in the mind by the Holy Spirit without the use of the senses
  - c. Ex.: Mark 2 - Jesus healed the paralytic
    - scribes sitting there; reasoned in their hearts
    - "Why does this man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"
    - Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"
  - d. Ex.: Peter with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5
  - e. Ex.: my experience in counseling
4. THE WORD OF WISDOM is the ability to know how to deal with a specific situation
  - a. the word *wisdom* means to attain the best ends by use of the best means
  - b. to put it another way, wisdom is the right application of knowledge
  - c. I once heard Pastor Chuck contrast wisdom and knowledge by saying that man possesses the genius to make a nuclear bomb, but he lacks the wisdom to take it apart once it's made
  - d. Ex.: Jesus asked about paying taxes to Rome
  - e. Ex.: Darren Butler - ability to sit and listen to many sides and arrive at a succinct conclusion that kept the best of all counsel: A resolution to an apparent impasse
  - f. both knowledge and wisdom are vital gifts for the counseling ministry
  - g. very much needed today in the complex age in which we live
5. FAITH
  - a. cannot be speaking about generic faith, saving faith here
  - b. because these are manifestations of the Spirit which are given to people who are already believers
  - c. this is special faith
  - d. it is the ability to understand that God desires to perform in a specific manner at a specific

time

- e. it is mountain moving faith; if moving mountains is what God desires to do
- f. Ex.: Acts 3
  - Peter & John went to temple to pray
  - saw a lame man
  - healed him
- g. Ex.: Mexico rain trip and getting in truck to go down the hill

## 6. GIFTS OF HEALINGS

- a. pretty familiar with this one
- b. but the wording is unique: gifts of healings
- c. it isn't that a person has the office of healer
- d. it's that God uses them as a channel of giving the gift of healing to others
- e. significant difference here:
  - if a person was a healer, then they would have power to heal
  - and it would be up to them to apply that power
  - but if God grants gifts of healings through someone, then it is not dependent upon them whether a person is healed
  - it is dependent on God who gives a specific gift of healing
  - it leaves Him sovereign over healing rather than letting man determine who does and doesn't get healed
- f. I find it interesting that there are healing clinics that are being staged today
  - you can go to a seminar and learn how to pray for some to get healed
  - wait a minute;
    - // if it is God who heals, and it is
    - // and what He gives is a gift of healing
    - // and remember the word is charisma - a grace gift
    - // then how can a person LEARN how to heal?

## 7. WORKING OF MIRACLES

- a. many commentators tend to lump gifts of healings and working of miracles into the same category and I tend to agree
- b. a healing is a miracle
- c. but by this manifestation, Paul means us to understand that there are miracles beside healing

- d. the word for *miracles* is literally = POWER, dunamis
- e. a miracle is an act that breaks the normal laws of physics
- f. and we should not find it hard to accept that the God who created the laws of physics would at given points alter them or contravene them to suit His eternal purposes
- g. Ex.: Jesus feeding the 5000 with a few loaves and a couple fish
- h. Ex.: Jesus walking on the water
- i. Ex.: Philip being teleported from the Negev to another city miles away.
- j. there are many today who categorically reject the miraculous.
  - they are naturalists in the true sense of the word
  - they believe that there is no reality beyond the physical universe
  - they believe the laws of physics are hard and unbending
  - because they admit no reality but the physical universe, they reject the Bible's description of it.
    - // they say it is merely allegory
    - // to be understood as the writings of pre-scientific men
    - // who merely wanted to give good moral teaching
    - // and told myths and stories to get their point across
    - // so, example of Jesus feeding the multitude
    - // boy brought his meager supply
    - // Jesus blessed him, disciples told others
    - // they were moved and so reached in to their sleeves and pulled out their lunches
  - but the Bible no where gives the idea that it is myth
  - in fact, the Bible affirms the very opposite;
  - that what it is saying is to be taken as literal, historical narrative
  - Jesus took 5 loaves and two fishes and fed thousands!



- if God is real, He can do what He wants!
- k. He does, and He places some in the Body who are channels through which the miraculous occurs
- l. but we must be careful here
  - while we might like to see the miraculous
  - we must not think that God will bring it just to tickle our fancy
  - when miracles occur, they are always to effect His glory
  - and He knows our penchant for putting His gifts before Him
  - I thank God we do not see more of the miraculous
  - I know it would end up distracting us from God
- m. Ex.: of bronze serpent in wilderness.
  - a miracle cure
  - the people later worshipped it!
- 8. PROPHECY
  - a. to speak forth the mind and counsel of God
  - b. usually think of foretelling future events
  - c. really means to speak for God
  - d. today; prophecy has come to be confused in non-Charismatic circles as simple preaching
  - e. not so!
    - preaching is impassioned speech that calls people to make a decision; and I believe is directed by the Holy Spirit
    - prophecy is speaking forth the very words of God
    - the prophet's very words are ordered by the Spirit
  - f. Ex.: OT prophets = Thus saith the Lord
  - g. Ex.: NT prophets = until the Scriptures were compiled, the prophets played a vital role in the church, for they spoke the word of God to the people.
  - h. God still speaks to His people
  - i. this gift is still in operation
  - j. we'll be examining this gift in greater depth in ch. 14
- 9. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS
  - a. the ability to know what spirit is at work in a given situation
  - b. by spirits, Paul is referring to the personalities which exist in the spiritual realm
    - they all give allegiance to one of two kingdoms

- God's or the devil's
- c. this gift is a sensitivity to know what spirits are at work and what their aim is
- d. Ex.: Jesus and Peter = Get behind me satan!
- e. I believe that this gift is one which many believers have and don't realize it
- f. Ex.: being uneasy vs. being at peace
- 10. DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES & INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES
  - a. won't spend a lot of time here today; will go into a lot great depth in ch. 14
  - b. very simply = to speak in a language that is not understood by the one speaking
  - c. the purpose of this gift, as it says in Ch. 14 is for personal edification
  - d. it is prayer to God which bypasses the intellect or understanding
  - e. Ex.: Day of Pentecost
  - f. many of you have been given a language with which to commune with God
  - g. interpretation is just that; to bring over into one's mother tongue the content of what is uttered by an unknown tongue

C. V. 11

*II* But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

1. Here Paul returns to his theme
2. The problem in Corinth was that there was a battle of gifts going on
3. Paul tells them that the Spirit gives the gifts as He wills
  - a. sovereignly
  - b. for His purposes
4. And if it is the Spirit who gives the gifts, then who are we to question them?
5. Or put down others, or envy others?
6. Rather, our calling is to faithfully use the gifts given us

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Have They Passed?
  1. Some today who teach these gifts have passed away with the first century church?
  2. No Biblical evidence of that at all
  3. In fact, the Bible indicates that these gifts will remain

- in effect until Jesus comes again
4. If the early church who had such leaders as the apostles needed the gifts, how much more do we today?

B. God Intends Us To Use These Gifts

1. We must not sit on our gifts
2. We must use them
3. And that means we need to be a committed part of the fellowship of God's people
4. Our gifts cannot be used if our commitment is weak and erratic