1 Corinthians Series

**The Church in Corinth**

August 13, 2023

Time To Open Up Our Gifts

August 13, 2023

(I Corinthians 12:1-11)

Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don’t want you to misunderstand this. You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

**Introduction**:

You and I are blessed to have a Heavenly Father who loves giving gifts to His children.

(Matthew 7:11)

So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

With spiritual gifts there is a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about this wonderful teaching.

To the point of the actions of those who claimed a spiritual gift but were cursing Jesus…Paul writes…

(1 Corinthians 12:3)

So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

(1 John 4:2-3)

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

The Greek word translated “curse” is (anathema) and is the most severe condemnation (used 20x in Scripture).

(Romans 9:3)

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

(Galatians 1:8)

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

You can always be sure the sincere conviction of someone to declare that Jesus is Lord comes from God’s spirit.

**Though There Are Many Spiritual Gifts, There Is Only One Source**

*(v.4-6)…There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.*

* Spiritual gifts are given to help believers minister in the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of God.
* One of the things I want you to see and completely understand is that there is DIVERSITY in the spiritual gifts AND there is UNITY from the Holy Spirit (source) because He energizes unity within the body of Christ.

(Ephesians 4:4-6)

For there is **ONE** body and **ONE** Spirit, just as you have been called to **ONE** glorious hope for the future. There is **ONE** Lord, **ONE** faith, **ONE** baptism, **ONE** God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

(I Corinthians 12:4-6)…There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

* + IN THE WORLD, diversity feels as if it is pulling against unity: either you remain united and squash your differences or you express your differences and fragment into a thousand pieces.
  + IN THE CHURCH, it is different. Diversity serves unity, and unity celebrates diversity. The people of God are many, yet we are one body (10:17).

(I Corinthians 12:13)…Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are generally for the encouragement and support of believers

*(v.7)…A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*

* To understand how spiritual gifts work in our church, think about the way a symphony is constructed, the many instruments and players all doing their part to bring about the melody.
  + No one person can play all the parts and no instrument can make all the music. It takes all to bring about the harmony.
  + It takes seeing each member of the church as an essential individual instrument, vital to the whole body.
  + It takes an appreciation for the work of the Great Conductor—the Holy Spirit—who gifts and guides each individual and the body according to His will and according to His purpose: the building up of the body of Christ.
* These gifts are evidence of how God is at work **in** us, **around** us and **through** us to accomplish His will.

**Spiritual Gifts Are Given For The Advantage Of Everybody In The Church.**

* The Corinthians were divided by the gifts, exalting one over another, used as opportunities for comparing, boasting, and attracting a following. Paul reasons that all of the gifts are the same and are for the same end—to help the church to grow and be encouraged.
  + The word in Greek is ***sumphero*** meaning “to bring together”…
  + The gifts are designed to bring us together, not divide us.

(1 Peter 4:10-11)

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

**It Is The Work Of The Holy Spirit To Determine What Gifts One Is Given**

*(v.8-11)*

*To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

Two implications: (v 15-16)

* Nobody should dismiss their own gift
* Nobody should dismiss the gifts of other people.

Paul’s whole point here is that everyone has something and nobody has everything.

* Don’t mistake spiritual gifts for natural talents or skills.
  + An atheist/agnostic can be a great scientist, carpenter or athlete, to excel in some natural talent is not necessarily spiritual given.

**Conclusion**:

What do I want you to take away from this message?

1. You have a spiritual gift. Pray that God will help you to discover it.
2. Don’t compare gifts—they are all the same in God’s eyes and no particular gift makes you more special than another believer.
3. God is at work in you to help other people. Pray to be more sensitive to moments of divine activity.

God, I’m a sinner

I’m sorry for my sins

I believe Jesus died for my sins

I believe Jesus will forgive my sins

I choose Jesus