

## “Why Be Equipped” - Equipped to Serve / Bride of Christ

*Back to the solar eclipse for a moment ... There was something about the eclipse that deeply moved us. Physically – it took fully covering the sun for our sky to get really dark like sunset. And then, when the sun barely crept around the moon – it got so bright so fast. And when that happened – man it was crazy and moving – deep in our souls. Why? Something about the majesty and wonder of something that far away fully changing our view of the sky and heaven was stunning and moving to our souls. For Christ followers – this probably caused a moment of worship. How great is our God! It reminded us there is a God – we are not Him. He is great! For others – it may have made them again wonder – there must be a God, look at this majesty. Too much! As we begin this new series: Equipped to Serve, God says He has a way for us to display His stunning majesty like the solar eclipse did – but on a constant daily basis. Here it is ...*

**When we display the fullness of the Spirit's gifts, we display the stunning fullness of God.**

*completeness, grandeur, – glory: weightiness - that overwhelms and makes us say – this is God!*

01. How do we fully display the Spirit's gifts?

02. What are we saying about God when we fully display the Spirit's gifts?

01. How do we fully display the Spirit's gifts?

**1 Corinthians 12:1 (ESV)** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

*There is a statement: I want you to fully know about the Spirit and how He has come to you and equipped you.*

*There are implications in this statement: some don't know, some are being disobedient and not using their gifts, some are deceived and using them wrong (rebuke and correction comes). So, let's ask another question first ...*

- **What keeps us from fully displaying the Spirit's gifts?** *This will help us answer how we fully display gifts.*

**1 Corinthians 12:2-3 (ESV)** 2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

□ **We are led astray by idols.** *(Idols can lead even Christ followers astray.)*

**1 Corinthians 10:14 (ESV)** Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry.

*Not gold statues – but things that take God's rightful place in our heart.*

*1) Comfort – I don't want to get messy, Spiritual gifts are scary; 2) Kids – I am too busy serving our family.*

*3) Self - I don't want to look undignified, I really don't want to get that involved in the body bc I have other interests that are more fun, make me happy.*

*Too busy to serve – you are serving something else. If something else you serve gives you more joy than the Lord – you have another Lord.*

We will talk more about idols and how they lead us astray – from walking in God's gifts in later sessions. Stop for minute and ask yourself – **What keeps you from fully displaying the Spirit's gifts?**

According to this passage, something or someone will lead us and move us to think and act. Only the Spirit can move to declare Jesus is Lord and even as we will see – serve the Lord. Ultimately, ...

- **If we don't continually submit to the Spirit, we will not we serve the Lord and display the Spirit's gifts.** *Submitting to the Spirit – is putting our full selves holely under the love, the rule, and the ways of the Spirit.*

**Walking in on Will watching Scooby Doo – in Spanish. Looks fun – looks familiar, but don't understand.**

- **How do we fully display the Spirit's gifts?**

□ **WE must continually submit to the Spirit.**

**1 Corinthians 12:3 (ESV)** Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

**Submit – to come under His rule, His ways, His love.** *(We will spend a whole session on this topic.)*

□ **WE must know the fullness of truth about the Spirit and how to use our gifts as we are called.**

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (ESV)** 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

**Who is the Holy Spirit? Why is He at work in and through us? How is He at work in and through us?**

- *varieties of gifts* - there is a plethora, an abundance of gifts – given by the Spirit.

- *varieties of service* - there are many roles in which we can serve to use these gifts – given by Jesus.

- *varieties of activities* - there are many ways in which these gifts can be shown – all empowered by God. In the NT there are 4 lists of the gifts of the Spirit and there are roughly 22 gifts. Yet there are many roles or places of service in the body. And even more ways one can use a particular gift. *In other words, the gift of encouragement can be used by a CG deacon – as she speaks courage into member in worry, as she helps teach, as she listens to and prays for another, as she walks with a friend who is new mom.*

1 Corinthians 12:6-7 (ESV) 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

□ **WE must be our part in the body - using the gifts of Spirit He has given you.**

*When we display the fullness of the Spirit's gifts, we display the stunning fullness of God.*

*US Cem. In Normandy, 9387 soldiers are buried here. 64 yrs later a flower for one man. Moving. When you leave out one thing out of a picture – it can totally change the story it tells. When you and your gifts are not a part of the picture God is painting – it changes the picture of God we paint as His body. A Bearden*

**You are needed in the body - to reveal display the stunning fullness of God.**

## 02. What are we saying about God when we fully display the Spirit's gifts?

*Ask the body ...*

**What are we saying about God? God is with us – in us! / God is grand, stunning -overwhelming!**

- **What are we saying about God – when we live in disobedience and don't fully display the Spirit's gifts?**

*What story are we telling about our God?*

□ **God is not with us – he does not care about us.**

*Deism – God created but walked away from His creation and left this world completely in our hands. He is not relational, not caring – just an instigator. When we live apart from the body – not living in the fullness of the Spirit's gifts – we are living as functional Deists. But there is more. We are saying ...*

□ **God is small, weak – can't help us.**

*When a local body of Christ consists of 100 people and only 20 are serving and using their gifts – think about how many people in the body are not being cared for, grown, encouraged, served, healed. Think about the community and the tiny impact they are going to have bc those 20 are being run ragged serving the 100.*

**When we live in disobedience to God – we are rebelling against God. But ...**

*We are also making a claim about God in our disobedience. In truth, we are cursing His name, his character – his very being saying – “You are not with us, you don't care for us – and even worse – you can't help us.”*

1 Corinthians 12:3 (ESV) Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

*Apart from the Spirit's rule and love in our life – we can curse the Lord – even as a Christ follower. Maybe not with our words – but with our thoughts and actions that rebel against God.*

**BUT ... God has not left us in our rebellion.**

*He loves, He cares, He is near. From the beginning His intent was to be with us and for us to be with Him.*

- **What are we saying about God – when we live in obedience and fully display the Spirit's gifts?**

***The full display of the Spirit's gifts reveal the stunning fullness of our God.***

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (ESV) 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. *He is three yet one. Triune – One God who is yet three persons in one. Grand, stunning.*

*From eternity past – He was three in ONE.*

*From eternity past – Father, Son, and Spirit fully shared perfect joy and love as ONE.*

*God created us – so we could share in the fullness of His joy and love.*

*Sin – our rebellion against God's love, rule, and ways - separated us from His joy and love.*

*In our sin – we search for the joy and love we lost in everything - but God.*

*Our sin – has put us under God's judgment – because He is a fully just God.*

*Because He is a fully merciful God, He sent Jesus – God the Son – to take our place of judgment.*

*When we live in disobedience to God and fail to serve Him together using all His gifts -*

*– we display a distorted reality of who God is. WE mock, we curse His name as distant, weak, small.*

*YET - the cross shows us the reality, the power, and the fullness of God's name – His character to forgive, redeem and restore us to what we were created to be.*

*All of God's character was on display at the cross – to redeem.*

*His justice – to rightly judge sin. His mercy that sent Jesus in our place. His love and His wrath.*

*All powerful, All knowledge – was needed to plan and carry this out. His immutability – He doesn't change was on display as he did not stop being justice or mercy to rescue us. His sovereignty – This was a plan from eternity past by His own choosing before we had even sinned. He was servant and King. He was judge and sacrifice. He was truth and grace. He was power and humility. He was all of who He is to the full and had to be to fully redeem and forgive and restore us to be with Him.*

**3 ...no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.**

*The Spirit now calls us to see HIS gift of rescue. **Have you seen your need of rescue and God's gift?***

*The Spirit moves us to believe and declare that Jesus alone can make us right with God.*

**Have you believed – faith that Jesus alone makes you right with God – and declared this?**

*Baptism – Baptizing 78 lady who has since gone to be with Jesus. I asked her – do you confess that you have faith in Jesus to be right with God – she said, "Yes - Jesus is my LORD."*

*The Spirit now fills us with God ... and His gifts.*

**1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**

**When we display the fullness of the Spirit's gifts, we display the stunning fullness of God.**

Close

*Walk with Fran: How can I help you believe you are beautiful to God and me? Yes outwardly – but even more in the inward – what 1 Peter 3 says is precious to God! Her response was powerful and has been on my heart and mind and actions ever since. She said, "I feel like I am more efficient to you - than I am cherished. Cherished says beautiful – not efficient." I believe this is a profound thing for us men – your bride (even your daughter) wants to know above all that they are cherished by you. This moves their heart to fully love, to fully give, to fully serve, to fully join us as one.*

**God the Father – said of God the Son** as he came out of the waters of baptism – which by the way was at the beginning of his ministry before he had done anything, "You are my loved Son – in whom I am well pleased." Not how efficient you will be – but how loved. This love moved the Son from eternity past & all His days on this earth.

**In some ways – this also relates to us as the bride of Christ.** We will rarely if ever be moved to fully love, to fully give, to fully serve in a sacrificial way and to join together as one – because of efficiency.

"We need more workers to more efficiently serve our kids." That is true – but honestly it has not moved a ton of people to serve in the 18 years I have served here. "We need you to know, fully discover your gifts, and get after using your gifts so we can be more efficient in taking care of the needs of the body and this community." This is true – but a call to a more efficient body – just moves a few.

**However – what if together we could make this call consistently and constantly to one another:**

We can display the moving fullness, the stunning wonder, the great majesty, the overwhelming glory of our God to each other as we display the fullness of the Spirit's gifts. When we are down, when we need courage, when we need to hear truth, when we need a reminder of our identity in Christ, when we need to repent, when we need to see the big picture – we can find hope, truth, love, courage, and God's very presence as we live in and live out the fullness of the Spirit's gifts.

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