

## **Sermon 59: The Church: A Unified Body with a Diversity of Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:5-21**

**Text: 1 Corinthians 12:4-21** "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular..."

**Summary:** God designed the church to be a body where people grow in community as they display Christ's glory and take the gospel to the world.

### **Part 1: God's plan for the local church:**

- **He works in and through the church.**
- **There is a unified function for the church:**
  - **Edification:** Building up from within

- **Salt and Light:** Displaying his glory
- **Evangelism:** Expanding the gospel
- **God's plan:**
  - **Diversity:** **12:4-6** “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all...”
  - **Interdependence:**
    - **12:7** “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal...”
    - **12:11-12** “All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ...”
    - **12:24-25** “God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another...”
  - **Unity:** **12:27** “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular...”

## **Part 2: The role and nature of spiritual gifts: 12:4-10**

- **Gracious enabling:** **χάρισμα 12:4** “Now there are diversities of gifts...”
- **Providential opportunity to serve:** **διακονία 12:5** “There are differences of administrations...”
- **Divine Labor:** **ἐνέργημα 12:6** “There are diversities of operations...”
- **List of different gifts:**
  - **In this passage: 12:8-10**
    - **“Word of wisdom”**
      - The ability to apply divine instruction appropriately.
    - **“Word of knowledge”**
      - The ability to reveal something that has been previously unknown.
      - This is probably referring to a form of prophetic revelation.
    - **“Faith”**
      - An unusual measure of trust in the Lord when others stumble.
    - **“Gifts of healing”**
      - The supernatural ability to heal a person to validate God's message or His messenger.
    - **“Working of miracles”**

- The supernatural ability to heal a person to validate God's message or His messenger.
- **“Prophecy”**
  - Communicating divine revelation in either written or spoken form.
  - It can have the sense of giving new revelation or expounding previously given information.
- **“Discerning of spirits:”**
  - The ability to distinguish between truth and error
- **“Divers kinds of tongues:”**
  - The ability to speak a genuine human language that has never been learned by the speaker.
  - This ability likely accompanied a prophetic revelation, and the gift was meant to provide a form of validation.
- **“Interpretation of tongues:”**
  - The ability to translate a real human language that has not been previously known to the translator.
  - This allows the church to be edified by someone speaking a message from God in another language.
- **Later in this passage: 12:28**
  - **“Apostles”**
    - An office
    - Handpicked witnesses to the resurrection
    - Formally commissioned by Christ
    - Validated with apostolic sign gifts
  - **“Prophets”**
    - Communicating divine revelation in either written or spoken form.
    - It can have the sense of giving new revelation or expounding previously given information.
  - **“Teachers”**
    - People gifted in the church to teach God's word.
    - This gift could be exercised in a small group or in a larger context.
  - **“Miracles”**
    - The supernatural ability to heal a person to validate God's message or His messenger.
  - **“Gifts of healings”**
    - The supernatural ability to heal a person to validate God's message or His messenger.
  - **“Helps”**
    - The ability to come alongside someone and assist them in their labor.

- “**Governments**”
  - The ability to effectively administrate.
- “**Diversities of tongues**”
  - The ability to speak a genuine human language that has never been learned by the speaker.
  - This ability likely accompanied a prophetic revelation, and the gift was meant to provide a form of validation.

- **In Romans 12:6-9**

- “**Prophecy**”
  - Communicating divine revelation in either written or spoken form.
  - It can have the sense of giving new revelation or expounding previously given information.
- “**Ministry**”
  - The ability to come alongside someone and assist them in their labor.
- “**Teaching**”
  - People gifted in the church to teach God’s word.
  - This gift could be exercised in a small group or in a larger context.
- “**Exhortation**”
  - Coming alongside someone and encouraging them to take the right course of action.
- “**Giving**”
  - People who have been materially prospered and can support the Lord’s work through their generosity.
- “**Ruling**”
  - The ability to effectively administrate.
- “**Mercy**”
  - People who are deeply compassionate and think deeply about other’s needs.
- “**Love**”
  - Giving of oneself genuinely from the heart for the good of another.

- **In Ephesians 4:11**

- “**Apostles**”
  - An office
  - Handpicked witnesses to the resurrection
  - Formally commissioned by Christ
  - Validated with apostolic sign gifts
- “**Prophets**”
  - Communicating divine revelation in either written or spoken form.

- It can have the sense of giving new revelation or expounding previously given information.
- **“Evangelists”**
  - Those who are gifted in preaching the gospel in large groups or in one-on-one settings.
- **“Pastors”**
  - Those who feel the weight of shepherding souls and are motivated to do it effectively.
- **“Teachers”**
  - People gifted in the church to teach God’s word.
  - This gift could be exercised in a small group or in a larger context.
- **In 1 Peter 4:10-11**
  - **“Speaking”**
    - This is probably primarily focused on the ability to expound the scriptures.
  - **“Ministering”**
    - This is probably primarily focused on the ability to assist others in their work.
- **Categories of gifts:**
  - **Sign Gifts:** Gifts that were given to verify and Divine revelation
    - **Prophets:** OT and NT
    - **Apostles:** Commissioned witness to the resurrection
      - “Word of wisdom”
      - “Word of knowledge”
      - “Faith”
      - “Gifts of healing”
      - “Working of miracles”
      - “Prophecy”
      - “Discerning of spirits”
      - “Divers kinds of tongues”
      - “Interpretation of tongues”
    - **Scripture:** The recorded and preserved word of God
  - **Ordinary Gifts:** Gifts that were given to build up the body through service
    - “Faith”
    - “Helps”
    - “Governments”
    - “Ministry”
    - “Teaching”
    - “Exhortation”
    - “Giving”
    - “Ruling”
    - “Mercy”

- “Love”
  - “Speaking”
- **Gifts of church office:** Each of these offices come with qualification
  - **“Apostles”**
    - **Acts 1:21-22** “Of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection...”
    - **Revelation 2:2** “Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars...”
    - **2 Corinthians 12:12** “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds...”
  - **“Pastors/Elders/Overseers”**
    - **1 Timothy 3:1-7** “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be...”
    - **Titus 1:7** “A bishop must be...”
  - **“Deacons”** **1 Timothy 3:8** “Likewise must the deacons be...”

**Part 3: The body analogy: 12:12-20** “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body...”

- **The church functions like a human body: 12:12** “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ...”
  - **One body**
  - **Many members**
- **The nature of this body is a testimony to the power of the gospel: 12:13** “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,

whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit..."

- **Diversity:** Jew and Gentile
- **Diversity:** Bond and free
- **Unity:** One body
- **Unity:** One Spirit that unites us to that body

- **Each member of the body serves an important function: 12:15-17** "The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"
- **God assembles the body according to His wisdom: 12:18-20**  
"Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body..."
  - "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body..."
  - "As it hath pleased him..."

**Part 4: Addressing potential pitfalls: 12:21-25** "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another..."

- **Pride:** Looking down on others who appear to have less important gifts.
- **Insecurity:** Feeling like our gifts are unnecessary.
- **Exclusion:** Establishing unhealthy divisions in the body.

**Part 5: Summarizing God's plan for the body: 12:25-27** "The members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular..."

- **Look out for one another: 12:25** "The members should have the same care one for another..."

- **Take a genuine interest in others' burdens: 12:26** “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it...”
- **Take a personal interest others' blessings: 12:26** “or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it...”
- **Look at one another as brothers and sisters in Christ: 12:27**  
“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular...”

### **Final Applications:**

- **Application 1: We need to be fully engaged in the local church:**
  - This is the place where we can grow together.
  - This is the place we can effectively display God's glory.
  - This is the place from where we will take the gospel into the world.
- **Application 2: The diversity of backgrounds, personalities, and strengths can frustrate us, but they are designed for our good:**
  - Don't allow pride to take root in your heart.
  - Don't allow yourself to swallow the lie that your presence and contribution to the body is insignificant.
  - Don't allow yourself to become exclusive within the body.
- **Application 3: We need to get past a consumer's mentality:**
  - Come to the church with a desire to bless, strengthen, and serve others.
  - Take a genuine interest in their lives.
  - Love others enough to weep with them.
  - Love them enough to rejoice with them.
  - See others in the body as your family and love them as family.