

A Spiritual Church, Not a Perfect Church,

1 Corinthians 12, May 6, 2018: #4 in series on Holy Spirit

At least 11 times in the 12th chapter of I Corinthians, Paul reminds us that there is one God, one Spirit, one Lord, who has his hand in everything of value in a church. More than addressing anything else. Either addressing the idolatry, or, lack of appreciation of the degree to which God is working all things after the counsel of His will.

Paul's letter corrects: a serious case of immorality (5:1), Christians taking brothers to court, 6:1, questions of marriage, 7:1, virgins, 7:25, foods sacrificed to idols, 8:1, and the longest passage on use of Spiritual gifts, 12:1 – 14:40. The issues in chapter 12 are addressed in relational terms and in chapter 14, in specificities.

The question was not only how they could be spiritual, but how could they even worship together?

- I. The Lordship of Christ is the dividing line of the world; v1-3
 - A. No one by the Spirit can say Jesus is accursed;
 - B. No one can really say (confess) "Jesus is Lord," except by the Spirit;

- II. Variety in giftings, ministries and effects, but singularity of source. V4-6
 - A. Varieties of giftings, same God (**Abilities**)
 - B. Varieties of ministries, same Lord who works in all persons, (**Activities**)
 - C. Varieties of effects, same purpose – the common good; (**Achievements**)

- III. Unique, individual demonstration of the Holy Spirit – constantly, v7-11

- IV. Focus on the essence of unity, v12,13
 - A. Members of the Body by same experience: baptism, drink of Spirit;
 - B. Only those that involve accepting Christ (baptized into one body), and given the life of the Spirit (drinking of the same Spirit), bring one into the body;

- V. V14-26 illustrate individuality and interdependence, not independence; models;
 - A. The body is not grotesquely the same – not all one big ear or eye; 17ff
 - B. The body is not haphazard in its creation;
 1. Marvelous things called stem cells; do not have to come from fetus or other objectionable source; Cells that can, at a certain time, be induced to take on specific characteristics as they grow;

2. Afraid of conception in space; that the arrangement of the body might become grotesque – eyes or ears in the wrong place
- C. The body is genuinely interdependent;
1. The heart depends on the exercise of the rest of the body;
 2. The eye depends on nerves, muscles, and eyelid
 3. The **whole body depends on just the eyes for light;**
 4. You are limited in movement without feet;
- D. The less winsome are the most critical
- E. The goal
1. No division
 2. Same care
 3. Empathy
 4. Each retains her or his dignity

VI. V27-31 It is God's construct, not ours: Paul reaches into all three lists – Eph 4, Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12, First apostles, then prophets, then pastor-teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, kinds of tongues

The real point of the chapter, however, is the last verse. How can we keep everything straight, right, pleasing to God? Is spiritual growth just learning another set of rules, understanding some hierarchal structure? Not at all. 13:12, 13.