

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

God In Us

PART

4

TITLE

Gifted By The Spirit

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 12:1-13:3



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Providence family, it is great to see you. If you're a guest with us, whether you're online or here in the room, we're really glad that you have joined us. And I pray this time is going to be encouraging to you. I hope you're ready to look into God's word and so if you have a Bible in your hand, turn with me to First Corinthians chapter 12. And if you don't there's Bibles in the chairs near you, and if you don't have one at home, let me encourage you to take that home as a gift. If you've been here before, you know oftentimes that I put the entire text on the screen and that's not the case today. Okay. And so if you're like, nah, I'm not going to hold one because I'm going to see it anyway, you may want to go ahead and grab one, it would probably be a better experience for you. But it is really good to see you and I pray this time we'll be encouraging.

Back in July, of 2011, we launched our last shuttle from Florida. And as we did so it's fascinating to read up on what they had to do. And so the actual shuttle weighs four and a half million pounds, just the fuel and the steel and the components. And so the various engineers, in order to lift this enormous, massive weight into the air and send it basically spiraling up into space, they had to generate seven million pounds of force. And it simply echoes something we all know to be true. And that is it takes a whole lot of power and force to move heavy things. And although we can't compute it in the same way as steel and fuel, what we do know is this, is that it also takes a whole lot of power to lift heavy things that plague each one of us like addiction and like resentment, unforgiveness, bitterness, fear, loneliness, sin, broken relationships, guilt and shame and even death itself.

It's fascinating that when you open up the Bible and you read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you see Jesus demonstrating power to lift these incredibly heavy objects off of humanity, off of people's homes, off of people's hearts. It's a really remarkable thing. And then the very last night before the cross, he made a promise to his disciples that very soon after he had left, the Holy Spirit who had lived in him and who had provided him as we were told, the power, who had moved through him to do these amazing things, that this same Holy Spirit would come and live within us and that he would give us a portion of his power that had proven capable to lift really heavy things off of humanity.

And this is what we're doing as a church right now. If you're brand new here with us, we're on a series that's called God in Us. It's the series on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that God sends to live in the hearts of everyone who places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the same spirit who gives us power to live a different life, but also power and gifts to be able to make a difference in the lives of people around, to be able to lift heavy things from them. And so let me pray for us as we get started.

Father, I bow before you and we bow before you and we say we want to hear from you. I pray for those who have yet to begin a relationship with you who don't even know that, that's possible, and who are going to hear these words and hear us read from your word. And I simply pray that by your spirit you would open up their heart and help them to say, Jesus' Lord, would you authenticate the truth of your word in their heart by just causing the truthfulness to echo through the regions of their heart that they would say, this is true. I believe I need a savior, and the Savior is Jesus. And for those of us who have already trusted you, I pray that

you would use this time to help us to identify how you empower us at least one way of how you gift us to be able to be a blessing and a ministry to others. And so we look to you, we need your help. Would you speak through weakness, and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

First Corinthians chapter 12, starting in verse one says, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to mute idols however you were led. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one’s speaking in the spirit of God ever says Jesus is accursed, and no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit.” And so we’re going to pause there and I want to give you a truth, and this is the truth and it’s really the canopy under which we’re supposed to live and think and operate in this world called spiritual gifts. And this is the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts and he does so out of pure grace.

There is a particular kind of attitude, there is a real condition of the heart that is supposed to govern even how we think about these things and how we even approach the Bible to be instructed on these things. And he wants us to know what it is that this has come by pure grace. Now, if you’re brand new to this or if you haven’t read the book of first Corinthians, let me just tell you that the church in Corinth was deeply confused. You would probably look at it if you were there and think, I need a new church.

Early on in the letter he says, Look man, you guys have got to stop operating under this idea that you all have a favorite pastor, and when your favorite pastor doesn’t come up to teach the word that you get up and you leave, that’s not healthy. And so he addresses this unity and then he goes and he says, Now look, there’s somebody within the church that he goes, I can’t believe that this is true. He goes, but you are not only allowing but endorsing and celebrating your own tolerance as a church family, even though one of your leaders is having an affair with his stepmother. That would cause some ripples. You move forward and he begins talking about immorality, he begins talking about how they are governed by selfishness, so much so that they’re suing one another. And then we get into what I would call the heart of the letter where he says, “Now concerning the things to which you wrote,” in other words, somebody within the church had gotten so concerned about what they were seeing and they’re like, man, we definitely need some help.

And so they go back to Paul who brought them the gospel to begin with and say, can you help iron out some of these things? We’re having these arguments and these disputes and these problems within church. And so he begins at chapter seven to start to unpack things that they have said that were struggling with. There was people who were showing up early on days when they were going to take the Lord’s supper, they use wine and they would get drunk on the wine before the rest of the church came. It was these kinds of things. And so there’s a lot of wrinkles, there’s a lot of things going on. Well, when you get to chapter 12, 13 and 14, what’s happening is there are contending and disputing over this thing called spiritual gifts, primarily the gifts of tongues. Word tongue, it means glossa or it’s from the word glossa, it means word. It’s where we get the word glossary. It’s words or languages.

Well, what the fact is, is there were some people within the church who had these expressive kinds of supernatural gifts that weren't normal to humanity. And they began saying, man, this is the real stuff. If you have this, you're superior. And so they were looking down upon other people within the church and then there were folks within the church who were feeling inferior because they didn't speak in tongues. And then you had people who were either ignorant about these things, or I just don't even know what to think about what's going on around me and what I hear, or there's some people who are just apathetic. It's like, yeah, this is going on, but what's for lunch and what time does the game start? It's like it's just out there.

And so notice what he does, he says in verse one, "Concerning spiritual gifts, I don't want you to be uninformed." Now the word uninformed here is the word, is where we get the word agnostic. An atheist is someone who believes there is not a God. An agnostic is someone who would say, I don't have enough information to believe, if I had more information then I probably would. If he came, I'm not against him necessarily, or the thought there is a God, I just don't know if... There's no way to know. There's simply not enough knowledge. And what he says is ironically in two areas within his letters he says, there's two areas. He says, I don't want you to be an agnostic. One is towards spiritual gifts and the other is the events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ. Historically, two events or two realities within the church that have caused all kinds of confusion, he says, I don't want you to be uninformed.

And so to keep us from being, and from them, from being proud if you have one gift or another or self pitting, if we don't have that gift or apathetic or ignorant, it's interesting what he does is he says, before I march you forward, let me march you backwards. Because in doing so, it's going to create the environment that is appropriate and it's the only environment appropriate to study these things and think about these things and operate in these things. And so notice what he does in verse two, he says, "You know that when you were pagans," he talks about their past, where they came from, "You were led a straight mute idols," however you were led. "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."

So what he says is this, he goes, before we talk about anything about these spiritual gifts, let me remind you of something. There was a day that you were utterly lost. You were led astray. You were guilty before God and you were pinning your hopes to idols. Idols in one sense could be a statue that you bow down to, in another it's simply anything that you would pin your hope to for peace or joy or purpose in life that's not God. Some of us, when we first heard the gospel and we first heard about Jesus, we even cursed Jesus whether it was under our lips or through our lips, we said, Jesus is accursed. And then something happened, and that is the Holy Spirit began moving in our heart. We began seeing that we have a spiritual need, and we began seeing that we had a guilt problem before God that we simply could not alleviate in our own strength or our own performance.

And he began showing us that Jesus Christ came to the earth and it began to make more sense the way that he lived, the way that he taught what he did, why he died, how he rose from the dead, the validity and the cred-

ibility, the Bible all started to crystallize because of the help of the Holy Spirit, and he helped us eventually say Jesus is Lord. Now it is this understanding, looking back and seeing where we were and knowing where we are that creates the environment by which we're supposed to think and study about spiritual gifts, because when Jesus rose from the dead, Ephesians chapter four, verse eight, he describes through a metaphor what Jesus did. He says when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men.

And so the picture here is of a general who had returned from war victoriously and he has this enormous wagons full of the spoils of war and they walk back into the city and the city who recognizes the victory and they pay attention enough. And this is Jesus who to come and to welcome and to heap up adoration upon their conquering champion. He says, this is the picture of what Jesus did, is that he came back to those people who he had just rescued. And instead of simply riding by and receiving all the adoration from all the people, for those who paid him enough regard to put their trust in him, that he began scooping up all of these gifts and flinging them out to those sitting at the curb.

This is the picture that he wants us to understand that into these undeserving hands that were once idolatrous, who wants cursed Christ, who once were led astray, who once was guilty, he put a gift in light of how Christ found us. Just imagine how distracted the church is around the world for us to be boasting about our gifts, and arguing about the superiority of ours versus what someone else received, or the inferiority, wishing that we had what they had instead of what I got, or even contending about the validity or the goodness of the gift itself. If we go through the rest of the sermon and the prevailing characteristic over your heart is anything other than thanksgiving, then we are not off to a great start with what he would seek to teach us in verses one to three.

We deserve eternity and hell, and we were not only forgiven, we were given a gift. And therefore let's enter this arena with thanksgiving. Verse four then goes on and he says, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit, there are varieties of service but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities but is the same God who empowers them all and everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good, for to one is given through the spirit, the utterance of wisdom and to another, the utterance of knowledge according to the same spirit. To another faith, by the same spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one spirit, to another working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another, the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another, the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

So what we learn here is this, that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to every believer, and we should always remember whose hands these gifts originated, that it is God who did these things and he is infinitely good. Once we come to faith in Jesus Christ, there's literally nothing that he could give us that we should fear. And so you notice what he says in verse four. He says, now look, there's a variety of gifts. Of course, we just read a variety of gifts. There's a variety of gifts, but notice also there's a variety of service. This word service could be the word ministry.

In other words, let's just say that you have a gift of exhortation. That's one of the gifts that we read of in Romans, the gift of exhortation. Well, it can be employed in a number of services or ministries. You could use that gift of exhortation to teach a lesson. You could use that gift to greet at the front doors and express hospitality to people as they come. You could use that gift in a marriage ministry to where you're seeking to help married couples to either stay married or to thrive as a married couple. There's different ministries. So there's not only different gifts and different services or ministries, but notice also there's a variety of activities. In some translations, which it probably helps us a little bit more, it's the word effects, meaning outcomes. There's things that we see as a result of it. And so for example, someone could use the gift of exhortation when they're teaching and someone could come to faith in Christ. Others could be using their gift to the front door and someone feels welcomed. Others could use their gift in a marriage ministry and somebody's marriage could be reconciled. And so there's different gifts, different services, different activities or effects. But notice it is the same triune God, spirit, the Lord Jesus, God the Father, who is the one who is working in all of these things and we can trust him.

Verse seven tells us that there's no Christian that's left out. He says, "To each is given the manifestation or the demonstration of the spirit." So what are spiritual gifts? Okay. Spiritual gifts, as best I understand them, are the spirit's capabilities to do ministry that he's assigned to us to do. So if you think about it like this, okay, is a spiritual gift is a capability and it's his capability. If the Holy Spirit took on flesh and he wanted to teach someone, he would have the ability to teach, or exhort, or serve, or administrate. He has these remarkable abilities, capabilities as God. And what he does is he assigns each one of us as specific role in the mission of building up the church and making disciples of Jesus Christ and the clue of how you know what you're supposed to do is you look at your spiritual gift or gifts that he has given you, capabilities that can be used to carry out the ministry that he has for you.

He goes on in verse eight through 11 and he begins listing these different spiritual gifts, at least some of them. You notice the utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge. There are some people who have the spiritual gift of simply understanding the truth, but they may struggle to know how to help people apply it to their life. Other people they take maybe someone else's understanding about, okay, this is what it means, and yet they're really, really skilled to help us apply it to our life and relationships. In addition to those gifts, he goes on and he talks about the gift of faith, healing and miracles and prophecy to distinguish between spirits. That's discernment, you see something you're like, is this right or wrong? Is it true or false? Is it righteous or is it sinful? And some people have a gift in that area, tongues and interpretation of tongues.

Then verse 11 says, "And all these are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills." Now what's interesting is this was the list that he gives us in these verses. At the end of chapter 12, he's going to add a few more like administration, service and helps. But then he writes another church, a church in Rome, and all of a sudden he actually adds a few different gifts, some the same, a few different. He adds mercy, teaching, exhortation, helps, giving, generosity, leading, administration. And what that does is it proves that this is not an exhausted list. It's a representative sampling of his abilities that he

gives to his people to carry out the work that he has for us. Now, last week we looked at spiritual fruit. When we walk with the Holy Spirit, he bears these fruits, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control.

Spiritual fruit is about character. Spiritual gifts are about capability. Put together, we teach with love, we exhort with patience. It's the character by which we would go about seeking to carry out these different capabilities. Also, there's a difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents. Natural talent, we all know people who don't know the Lord and yet they're really good at math or science or art or poetry or speaking in public, all kinds of natural abilities. What's the difference between a natural ability and a spiritual gift? Well, a few things. One is natural talents, God, by his common grace he gives to literally every single human at their birth. And so if you have multiple kids and they grow up, it's interesting, one's really good at math and one's not. One has an aptitude for this and one has an aptitude for that. There's different ways that they're smart, there's different intelligence, there's different skills, they're different.

And God is putting those seeds into the ground of a child and they grow up and they're honed in natural gifts and abilities. Spiritual gifts are not given at the moment of physical birth, they're given when we have the new birth, when we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, his spirit comes lives within us. He then gives us a gift. It could be more than one, some people believe it's more than one, but we simply know it's not all, you don't get all of them. Okay. A gift or gifts he gives us and he does so at the time when we put our faith and trust in Christ. And what's interesting is some people will get him confused like, man, I'm really good at shooting free throws, or man, I'm really good at art. Well, those aren't spiritual gifts, but when spiritual gifts are combined with natural abilities and interest and aptitudes, all of a sudden you can be teaching art classes, but if you have the gift of exhortation, suddenly all kinds of amazing things happen. In particular when all of that is directed to helping people see Christ.

So these are spiritual gifts. Now because the primary dispute in First Corinthians 12, 13 and 14 was about speaking in tongues, I need to say just a few words about it. Now, if you were here two weeks ago, we looked at Acts chapter two, where God's spirit came down upon people and they began speaking in tongues, glossa, languages, words and people. It says from other areas of the world who were in Jerusalem heard words coming out of their mouths, but they heard it in their own language and the greater work happened and that 3000 people trusted Christ that day. There's a whole lot about speaking in tongues. I'll just be honest with you, okay, that I don't understand and I don't know.

And so what is involved in speaking in tongues is more than I'm going to tell you, but it's certainly not less. Okay. There's typically two extremes, and these two extremes, they're built on the back of Romans chapter eight. In Romans chapter eight verse nine, he tells us something very important. He says, whoever does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him. This means that if you do not have the Holy Spirit within your heart and you were to die in that moment, you would not go to heaven. Jesus said, unless somebody is born again and born of the spirit, water, physical birth and of the spirit, new birth, they will not go to heaven.

And as a result of that, people throughout time, including in the church in Corinth were saying, okay, well how do we know if the Holy Spirit has come into my heart? How do I know? I want to make sure. I think I've trusted in him, but how do I know?

Well, Acts chapter two, Acts chapter 10, and Acts chapter 19, three occasions in the book of Acts out of 22 occasions where it says that when they heard the gospel, they believe they're filled the Holy Spirit, three times people begin speaking in tongues. And as a result there was some people would say, Mel, okay, well that's the sign. If that happens to you, then you know that you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll be going to heaven. Now, just because it's really important, let me say that the Bible gives us several different aspects, areas that we're supposed to test. One is the conviction of sin. If you sin there is simply no register within your heart of discomfort, then you should be really concerned, because when the Holy Spirit comes, he convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment.

He tells us that he helps give us understanding to the scriptures. And so when we open up the Bible before Christ, we're like, what is that about? And all of a sudden he begins to help us understand, we're like, okay, I'm starting to see this. He says in the book of Romans, he says that God's spirit confirms in our spirit that we're his children, which means that if you ever ask God, am I really saved? When that thought comes to your mind, that says yes, and the reason is because you've placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. That's the Holy Spirit in that moment confirming with your spirit that you are saved, that these are all evidences, some of them, but there's some, because it did happen, in Acts three different times they thought, well, you must be able to speak in tongues. And as a result of that, some then in Corinth and even today, hold that speaking in tongues is the proof of salvation, because three times in Acts it happened. But let me remind you of a few things. First of all, 19 times it didn't.

19 times people were filled with the Holy Spirit and they didn't speak in tongues. In addition to that, when we get to the end of first Corinthians 12, I'm going to read a series of questions that all have a presupposed answer of the word no. He says, do all get prophecy and do all get this gift and do all get this gift? And you're supposed to read and say no, not all get, this is why we're a family, we need each other. And he says, and do all get tongues? And the answer is no. And so some people, even today would say, man, I don't think anyone's even saved. We believe here at Providence that, that's an extreme that we don't hold to. I've never spoken in tongues and I am absolutely certain that I'm born again.

A second extreme would say that these gifts that we see, in particular the ones that are more extreme, or I say more extreme, that's not the right word. It's the ones that feel more supernatural, like encouragement doesn't feel supernatural, even though it is. Teaching doesn't feel, but if I heal somebody, if miracles, healings, and speaking in tongues were like, okay, God is clearly here. It feels that way. And there's people who believe that these gifts have ceased with the apostles. And so how do we think through that, or why do they think that? Well, they think that because in First Corinthians chapter eight, I'm sorry, chapter 13, verse eight says this, "As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away."



When are they going to pass away? It says, “When the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.”

So notice what he does, he picks three spiritual gifts, prophesying, speaking in tongues and knowledge. And he says, and all of these will one day pass away, they will all cease. And so there's a theological category called cessationism, and it's simply somebody who believes that they were for the book of Acts and they were for that time, but not for our time. I don't believe that's true. I've never spoken in tongues. And I'm going to tell you how we think through things from First Corinthians chapter 14 in a moment. But the reason is not because I think tongues are more than the Bible actually even gives affirmation to them. I just look at it and go, okay, it's there, but this is why. It's because we have to understand what perfect is.

For some people who believe they've ceased, they would define the word perfect by a completed can in scripture, that we're not getting more books, that we have the entire New Testament. And so they would say, man, all we have to do for people in other languages for them to hear is translate the Bible into their language and then they have the complete revelation of God. But other people, including myself, believe that the word perfect here, it means when Jesus comes back and we go to heaven, and primarily I believe that is because we still need prophecy, which in First Corinthians chapter 14 verse three, he defines his speaking words that edify, build up, console and encourage the church and knowledge. We still need those. And so there has to be a category in my own heart to say, it seems like that these have not ceased.

And so let me give you just a little off ramp from this little highway on speaking in tongues, okay, that I think could be helpful. I think the first thing we need to remember is the Bible comes to us with progressive revelation. What that means is this, is that the Bible didn't come in completed form, it didn't just drop out of heaven and we found it under a rock. We're like, okay, this is everything. It came with time. And what came after certain events, explained certain events. In other words, there are things within the Bible that are descriptive and there are things that are prescriptive. And this is true of sinful things and righteous things. For example, you can read stories in the Bible because it's the story of redemption, of people doing really bad things.

Well, that's not prescriptive of how we should live our life, it's descriptive of how people lived and that's why Jesus had to come and save us. It's also true things that are really good like speaking in tongues. Friends don't forget speaking in tongues, the first time it happened, 3000 people got saved because God allowed it to happen. We should smile about that. That's a really good thing. And so what do we know? How do we know if what happened in the book of Acts when we have those three encounters, is that descriptive of what just happened there, or if it's prescriptive? Well, the way we know is because we have the rest of the New Testament where the apostles are writing churches and pastors of churches explaining to them how to apply the gospel to everyday life. And out of all of those letters, there is only one that gives any mention whatsoever to speaking in tongues. And it's what we're reading right now in First Corinthians where they're fighting about their gifts and he gives three chapters to it.

When you get to chapter 14, which we won't get to today in depth, you're going to find among other things,

three primary principles. The first is that prophecy is prioritized above tongues. He says, look, I speak in tongues, I wish everyone, but even more pursue the gift of prophecy. Edifying, consoling, encouraging the church. The second big rock you find in first Corinthians 14 is that when we gather as a church family, we are to speak an understandable language. He says, I would rather speak, he goes, I speak in tongues, but even me, I would rather speak five words that are intelligible to everyone than 10,000 words in a tongue that people don't understand. And so when we come and we gather as the church family here at Providence, we speak English.

And third is at the end of chapter 14 and he says, do not forbid speaking in tongues and yet pursue order. And so I don't forbid it, if it happened, I'd say, well, the next thing it tells me to do is to ask, is there somebody who can interpret it? And we take all that, I'd probably need to stand up and say, now this needs to be confirmed somewhere within the scripture, so let's turn in the Bible too, otherwise I'd say, let's not do that, because what he speaks in the scriptures is ultimately the standard of anything that he would speak in a tongue. That said, if you know Christ, you have a gift. And if you have a gift, it's really important for you to discern that gift and to activate it. So how do you do that?

Somebody would say, well, you take a spiritual gift inventory test. Let me encourage you not to do that first. Okay. Not that it's necessarily harmful, I just don't think it's best. Well, what is best? Try this, walk with the spirit and begin serving in a variety of capacities within a local church, and then start listening for two things. An internal witness, the Holy Spirit convicts us of righteousness. He confirms his pleasure in our heart when we're doing what is right. When you exercise your spiritual gift in the context of a local church, what happens is this, is you may get tired physically by the end of the day, but your heart is really full at the end of the day. Otherwise, you'll find that whatever it is that you're doing makes you really tired physically and spiritually. The other thing you should listen for is the testimony of other believers, people that you trust, people who are godly to say, that was really encouraging, man, I really appreciate it. I see that God has given you that gift. It was really a blessing to me and to others. I encourage you to merge toward your gift in life. And yet when the need calls for it on a particular day, when the church simply has a need, don't say, well, that's not my gift, so I won't do it. In particular, when babies need care for, it doesn't matter who has the spiritual gift, they simply need care. He goes on, we'll finish here, you go, finish here. You're going to go all the way to 31. But that's what we're going to do.

“For just as the body is one and as many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one spirit we're all baptized into one body. Jews or Greeks, slaves are free, and all were made to drink of the one spirit. For the body that does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not get any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be, and if the whole body were in ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God has arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there

are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker, are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable, we bestow the greater honor. And our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require, but God has composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you're the body of Christ and individually members of it, God has appointed the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administering in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers. Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret but earnestly desire the higher gifts?"

The third and last truth I want you to see is the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to empower the church. You see, Providence, Jesus name is attached to our church, and the spirit's aim is to glorify Jesus, and therefore he gives us spiritual gifts to magnify Christ and to build up his church. He says that we're members of one body, verse four to 12, he says, just as the body is one and many members, all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. We all know that if we took our finger and we cut it off, if we didn't quickly reattach it so it back on, is that that finger would die and we would lose its function and effectiveness. And so it is with the body, which is why he spends just a little bit of time at the end trying to undercut two big problems that we have. The first big problem is self pity. He says, if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body. You see what he's saying? Some of us are like, man, I didn't get the right gift. I like that gift over there better than what I got. You got a gift. Say thank you, use it. And the other problem is self-sufficiency. Verse 21, the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

As the body of Christ to all of us coming together, we all have our gifts put together, we're a really capable, powerful, functional body able by his power to lift the darkness and the brokenness that weighs so heavy upon people, but we need each other. In the end, he concludes by giving us this understanding of how the body treats and thinks about each other. He says the body is to respect one another. That's why he says that God so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And the body together. We as a church are supposed to feel for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. You stub your toe, everything hurts.

And finally the body is dependent upon one another. At the very end, he lists a series of questions, all of which say, we do not get all the spiritual gifts. And if you don't get all the spiritual gifts, then you need people

and people need you. So let me close with this application. Let me encourage us to resist the drift towards selfishness and run together. Christ did not save us to run alone, he did not save us to live into ourself. In Hebrews chapter 12, you find a verse that makes all kinds of coffee mugs, "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." And most of us, we think of that and we think that's right. I like that. That's encouraging. I got a marriage, I got a family, I got a job, I got a Bible, and I'm running my race. But everything here is plural. You can't win the Christian life unless you help other people finish. And that's what he says. "Make level paths for your feet so that the lame may not be disabled but rather healed." That's why you need to engage your gift in a local church. Pick a church and serve that church with your gift. There's so many things that stand in our way of community. One of them is simply staying away, just not participating. That obviously affects the body. Another is when you come, you don't serve. You come, you receive. You eat a meal and you quickly leave before having to say hello to anyone. That affects you, it affects the body adversely. There's one last thing that affects the body adversely, and that is a selfish vision for community. I love the question, but it makes me nervous every time I hear it or not the question, but the statement. I'm really looking for community. That's a really noble thing, we should all look for community in the sense that we should all long for it. But here's the problem. Community is never found, it's always built.

And every one of us are either a builder of community, or we're an architect of it. Architects are the ones who have a vision for it and they fall in love with their vision. They say, this is what it's got to look like. And if it doesn't look like it, then they're not following my plans. But the problem is people never behave like wood and steel. And so architects of community are always frustrated Christians, but builders of community are those who say, I'm going to take this, people who are in front of me, and I'm going to love them with the strengths and the gifts that God has given to me. And in loving them, I'm going to help build community. Of course, in chapter 13, he says, look, I'm going to show you a more excellent way. And he begins to talk about love.

And in that context of love, he says, look, even if I can speak angel language, but I have not love. He says, I'm an irritating gong or a symbol. It's really an interesting thing for him to say, if I have not love. You see, you can't be loving until you have love. He starts not by are you loving? He said, Do you have it? Do you have love? Well, how do you get love? You are loved and you recognize that you are loved. That's why First John, what does he tell us? He says, look, we love because we were first loved. And some of us, we don't feel the love of God. And the reason is because we've never placed our faith in Jesus Christ. But in Romans chapter five, verse five, he says that when we do place our faith in Jesus Christ, he says that God's love is poured into our hearts to the Holy Spirit. And this becomes the authenticating mark of all the spiritual gifts that we love. And so let me encourage you, whether this is the first day you've heard this, to look to Jesus Christ, or whether you've walked with Jesus for a very long time, lean into Christ and understand the love that he has for you. Be motivated by that love so that you can have that love and give that love as you seek to employ your spiritual gifts. So let's pray together. Father in heaven, we bow before you. And as we prepare to sing in response to the truth that we have, we thank you first and foremost, that you found us when we were led us stray to mute

idols and you saved us. And we thank you that not only you saved us, but you've gifted us in order to glorify Jesus and build up the church. And so as we consider these things and we consider our life and we consider our desire to follow you, we want to sing about that now. So we bow, we love you and we sing to you with a full heart. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Would you stand? Let's sing together.



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