



gracefellowship

Series: Crossroads: Between Kingdom and Culture
Title: Spiritual Gifts and the Common Good

Date: June 9, 2024
Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Last year in our Summer J-Term (a 4 session class we offer twice a year, now called Multiple Month), we did a study on the Spiritual Gifts. It was a deep dive into the passage we are going to look at today as well as other places in Scripture that describe Spiritual Gifts. This morning is going to be more of an overview rather than a deep dive. If you want to go deeper exploring Spiritual Gifts after today we can help you with that.

As we have been walking through the book of 1 Corinthians we have seen things that Paul has taken the initiative to address with the church as well as times he is answering questions the church has written to him about. I'm not really sure in this passage if this is a question Paul has been asked and he is trying to give them answers to specific questions or if this is one of those places where Paul is just giving them something helpful to know as they continue to grow as disciples of Jesus. What we do know is Paul doesn't want followers of Jesus to be uninformed- or ignorant- about this topic. When we come into faith in Jesus we receive the Holy Spirit to empower us to live out the life of a Christ-follower.

Before Jesus went to the cross he spent some time telling His disciples that after His departure He would send an Advocate to help all who followed Him to know how to live for Jesus.

:: John 15:26

²⁶ "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.

:: John 16:13-15

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Paul is picking up on the things Jesus taught and is giving the Church details about what the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer and how we benefit from the gifts we gain from Him as a body.

With that in mind, let's look at the text again this morning. Remember, we are discussing what happens as we stand at the crossroads of the Kingdom and the culture. Paul is going to tell us in the opening sentences of this part of his letter that one of the issues the church is facing is that people were coming into the Kingdom who had a background in idol worship. Now they have to overcome their upbringing and past religious experience to gain a new understanding of the God they serve in Jesus, who has sent the Holy Spirit to be our source of power and our guide for the Christian journey.

:: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

1 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

3 Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?

20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,

24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

Here's the first thing I want you to get this morning:

The Holy Spirit assigns gifts to us.

This is made clear on a few occasions in this passage. We aren't talking about the things we are naturally good at or skills we acquire. These are supernatural gifts handed out to us by the Holy Spirit.

- Verse 4: There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.
- Verse 8: To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom...
- Verse 11: All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Our gifts are designed to benefit and bless everyone in the body of Christ.

:: 1 Corinthians 12:7

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

I want you to think about this: When God gives you a gift, whether that is wisdom or teaching or prophecy or miraculous powers or healing, it is not for your benefit and it's not meant to be kept to yourself. In fact, I want you to write this down:

- **You can't use your gifts outside of relationship with people!**

Last week we talked about meeting the needs of others and being generous, keeping unity in the body and not forming cliques based on wealth. But beyond blessing people financially we also have the ability to bless people through the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us. Your spiritual gifts often allow you to meet spiritual and physical needs.

Think about one of the first times Jesus is recorded in the gospels preaching in the synagogue. He pulls a passage from the scroll of Isaiah and reads these words:

:: Luke 4:18-19

**¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

Did you notice that Jesus didn't say He was operating in His own power? He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me." In the power of the Spirit Jesus prophesied, He performed healing miracles, He demonstrated mercy. And here's the cool thing- the same Spirit that was on Jesus was sent to you and me! But that brings us back to our point: you can't use your gifts outside of relationship with people.

Here's a cultural thing we have to fight against in the church: Don't attend church like it's another form of entertainment. When we go see a movie we get up and leave as the credits roll. When we go to a ball game, as soon as the clock hits zero, we head to our car. And I'll be honest, I see this a lot, as soon as the worship service ends many of us are quick to just get up and walk to our car, having checked worship attendance off our list for the week. What you don't realize is that you have more to give in service to the church than sitting in a seat and being counted among God's people on a Sunday morning.

This is what I want to challenge you to do on Sunday mornings: Worship in one service and serve in one service. You have more to give to our body than attendance. In fact, we need people to step up and serve on Sunday mornings- especially in our Kids Ministry. We have such a growing, vibrant Kids Ministry but we have so few people who give their time to serve in that area. Here's what I want to see happen this week- I want you to overwhelm Ashley with emails and texts saying you will volunteer in the Kids Ministry!

Kids Ministry isn't the only place you can use your gifts on a Sunday morning.

- Hospitality Team
- Connection Team
- Worship Team

And your spiritual gifts are not limited to being used on Sunday!

- Missions Team
- Youth Ministry
- Women's Ministry
- Men's Ministry
- Life Groups

Finally, your spiritual gift isn't limited to being used within the Church!

- The Holy Spirit empowers you to reach people using your gifts where you live, work and play.

Don't withhold your gift! The Body of Christ is dependent on each of us using our gifts for the benefit of one another.

That brings us to the last thing I want to focus on this morning from this passage.

Because the same Spirit gives the different gifts, they all work together in unison.

To illustrate this idea, Paul is going to talk about our physical bodies and make the point that the body of Christ operates much like our physical bodies.

:: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Our bodies are amazing things that point to an intelligent, purposeful Creator. And when our bodies are functioning properly and everything is working well, things tend to go pretty smoothly! But the moment you hurt one part of your body or one

of your major organs or systems stop working the way they are supposed to, you are in trouble!

A few weeks ago I hurt my lower back and that impacted every other part of my body! You realized how important those muscles are when you try to do something as simple as stand up or reach out for something in front of you.

We sometimes take for granted how our body functions until something stops working. If your liver or kidneys or bladder stop working properly it can cause a ton of problems all throughout your body. Every part of our body needs every other part to function fully and properly. Paul makes the same argument for the Body of Christ- the Church. We are all dependent on the gifts given to us to truly function fully and properly.

- We can never say to someone else, "I don't need you!"

Look at the next part of the passage- it sounds like a spiritual temper tantrum!

:: 1 Corinthians 12:15-21

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

To help me illustrate, I'm going to bring out my friend, Mr. Potato Head!

God has put the body together. Some of our gifts might be associated with hands, some of our gifts might be associated with feet or eyes or ears. But imagine you are an arm and your jealous of the mouth.

"I have the gift of healing, but I really wanted the gift of encouragement!" Having an arm where the mouth is supposed to be would look weird!

Or what if the eyes said to the ears, "We don't need you!" (Pull the ears out) And then the head said to the feet, "We don't need you!" (Pull the feet out and watch him fall over!)

We need each other! In fact, Paul says...

:: 1 Corinthians 12:24b-30

24b But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

The reason we need each other is because no one person has all the Spiritual Gifts! I believe every person has at least one spiritual gift, but we are incomplete with just one, or even a few of the gifts. But when we all come together the complete set of gifts that the Holy Spirit makes available is found in the corporate gathering of the body of Christ!

Paul finished that passage by asking a list of questions:

Do all teach?

Do all work miracles?

Do all bring healing?

Do all speak in tongues? Interpret?

And the answer is implied...NO! It's for that very reason that we need one another. It's also for that reason that we don't see one person's gift as more important or special than anyone else's gift. One gift does not make a full body.

And that is going to move us to a bit of a cliffhanger that I hope entices you to come back next week. Here's the last thing Paul says at this chapter break:

:: 1 Corinthians 12:31

31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

That's going to lead us into one of the most famous passages in the Bible when we gather together next week. Don't miss out on what Paul has to say about the use of these gifts and how to best put them into service in the body of Christ and in the world.

- Pray