

9/1/2024

[Connection] Good morning, Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. Thank you for joining us. If this is your first time worshiping with us, welcome! We are so glad that you are here. I want to invite you to fill out our connection card. It just lets us get to know you a little more and be able to connect with you more. If Cornerstone is home for you, you can use our app to check in and let us know you are here. There you can also fill out a prayer request so we can be praying for you throughout the week.

[Title] While you're doing that we are going to dive into our sermon series 'Church in Crisis', where we have been studying the book of 1 Corinthians. We are in week 18 of our series. Where Paul has been addressing the church in Corinth, all the ways they have missed the mark of the body of Christ. He corrects them and answers their questions for their spiritual growth and their effectiveness in sharing the gospel. This week we are going to be talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Today our scripture is going to be found in **1 Corinthians 12:8-11**. If you have your bibles go ahead and turn there if you would like to follow along with us. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of **1 Corinthians 12:11**. So let us stand as you are able, out of reverence for God's word as we proclaim the truth in His Scripture.

[1] SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 12:11

"All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] Last week we talked about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a concept. Paul introduces this topic for the church to say that they are to approach these gifts with knowledge so that they cannot be deceived concerning them. Because they had been deceived to worship idols that did not perform signs and miracles, how much more so now will they need to keep their wits about them.

These signs and gifts that are of the Holy Spirit, are unique in their presentation exclusively to Christianity. In that God creates parameters and boundaries for these gifts so that one who is knowledgeable of the scripture will be able to distinguish between when God is working and when he is not. Even though there is an exclusive presentation tied to Christianity, the idea and concept of miraculous deeds, is not. There are many religions around the world that have practices where they speak in a foreign language under spiritual enlightenment or speak in some sort of other worldly language. Or claim prophecy over the future and even miraculous healing.

Because the existence of miraculous claims around the world, we cannot say that they are all God, no matter the recipients' religious affiliation, is quite dangerous. It assigns the work of something that is potentially evil or the work of the devil as God's, simply because it is something that we cannot explain. This is why Paul points out the ways specifically in which he will work, and by logical deduction also points to all the ways outside of that, where it is not God at work. So, to avoid deception as a believer we

are to equip ourselves with the understanding and knowledge of his word to truly understand the work of God in us and in our world.

[3] Which is why I issued the challenge for us to forget whatever it is that we thought we knew about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So that, we can look at the text and be able to build our lens on how we are to judge our experience and the experience of others according to what the word of God says. We want the truth to shape our beliefs and not our beliefs to shape how we understand truth.

[4] When we looked at the first 7 verses of this chapter last week, we saw Paul came up with 3 boundaries for these gifts. The first is that the Spirit is unified with God and Christ as the triune God. The Spirit is not going to lead or speak anything that would be contrary to what has been said before in his word and will not speak in a blasphemous way to contradict God in his nature.

The second boundary is that the Holy Spirit is the source of these gifts. Paul will repeat this truth again as we just read in verse 11. The ownership and authority of the gift belongs to the Holy Spirit and even if someone is used to display any of these gifts it is not owned or operated by the believer in any way shape of form. The Holy Spirit enacts it and displays it as he wills, we have nothing to do with it other than being unified with the Spirit and being the willing vessel for the will of God.

The final boundary is that the Spirit will not be the author of confusion in people. The Holy Spirit when it gives utterance will not muddy the waters and create confusion on who God is, what he is doing in the world or the proclamation of the gospel message. Creating confusion in contradiction or mystery that cannot be comprehended, would be contrary to its mission and will interfere with boundary 1 which is the unity with God.

[5] The mission of the Spirit is to convict of sin, equip with the knowledge of scripture and shape believers to reflect Christ. Anything that is done by the spirit will be bringing one or all three of those things to be true in the believer.

With those parameters and goals, we have to go into seeking understanding of these gifts with these things in mind. Without them our understanding of the gifts can be distorted and we will fall into deception. We remember the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the boundaries that have been outlined so far.

BODY

[6] There are multiple passages that will talk about 'spiritual gifts', gifts of the Holy Spirit, or gifts of grace. 1 Corinthians is a list that I believe to be different than the rest, even though it includes similar terms as the other passages. Paul in this passage addresses the gifts being done and exhibited by the will of the Holy Spirit, which may infer that these gifts are different than the other lists. Passages like Romans 12 and Ephesians 4, talk about the source of grace or roles based upon gifting but do not present them the way Paul does here in 1 Corinthians 12. Each list is also unique with only 2 things being repeated in all three lists.

I think these things in 1 Corinthians are things that all believers are capable of, as he says that God empowers them all in everyone (v. 6) but every believer will not be used for them. He says later in chapter 14 that not all will speak in tongues. The Potential is in every believer the opportunity comes in our closeness and unity with the Holy Spirit, and the presentation comes at the moment the Holy Spirit

wills. It is outside of the control of the believer. This is not something a believer can turn on and off, which I think there is a case for the list of the other passages. But I will save that for Wednesday night.

These things that we are about to discuss are the ones that are ruled over by the Holy Spirit. As we read the list I want to go back and discuss each one individually and practically what this looks like. The only gifts that we will probably not talk about in great detail this week is the gift of discernment, tongues, interpretation and prophecy because those will be discussed in greater detail when we get to Chapter 14.

In some of these gifts Paul is also pointing out the things that have already been addressed so far in this letter. He does this to point out the discrepancy of what the works of the Holy Spirit is supposed to look like versus what the church was doing and claiming. The things that they have claimed to have been done in the Spirit but were actually done out of the fallible human nature.

[7] 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

“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 the 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.”

[8] Wisdom

Wisdom should be understood out of the context of what Paul had already explained in chapter 1:17 through 2:16. Where he talked about the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God being so far above the wisdom of men that it appears as foolishness. Which means that the gift of wisdom from the Holy Spirit is not the possession of the wisdom but the message that is given or spoken that comes out of that wisdom.

Wisdom is understood to be an observation of the world, and the natural order of things, a cause and effect if you will. Wisdom is a full perspective of the world and the way that it works. Biblical wisdom then is discerning what God would have someone do as a result of that observation and full picture of the natural order of things¹.

True wisdom is the Holy Spirit leading to people to recognizing that the crucifixion of Christ is the demonstration that God is sovereign over the natural order. In His sovereignty, the crucifixion of Christ is also the culmination or the climax of his plan for salvation. God orchestrated heaven and earth in its natural order to perfectly place the crucifixion of Christ at the climax of his timeline and created in its byproduct salvation for all who repent and believe. Human led wisdom that Paul addressed in Chapter 2 would have seen Christ’s crucifixion as foolishness and could not recognize it for its true brilliance and wisdom.

[9] Knowledge

This is the word ‘gnosis’ which is referring to an understanding and familiarity. So knowledge of a subject like creation, would be an understanding of creation and a familiarity with it. When looking at wisdom and knowledge side by side, knowledge can exist without wisdom but wisdom cannot exist without knowledge. The best way to distinguish between knowledge and wisdom is knowledge is the information

¹ Proverbs 8:1, 20-21, 22-24; James 1:5

that is studied, wisdom is the knowledge applied in practice. Knowledge is knowing how to use a gun; wisdom is knowing when to use it and when to keep it in its holster.

Corinth tended to focus on acquiring knowledge. This was a common cultural thing in the Greco-Roman world, but they associated knowledge with spiritual maturity which Paul addressed again in Chapter 1². Paul is pointing out not just their overemphasis of knowledge but also the pride that was associated with their knowledge³. Knowledge as a gift is referring the Spirit imparting knowledge to a believer as a way of enrichment of others in light of the testimony of Christ. Through knowledge we safeguard ourselves against deception and with knowledge we are invigorated and encouraged in our belief in Christ.

[10] Faith

This is from the Greek word 'pistos' which means a reliance on and trust in God. This is not the same as the faith that brings us to salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9, says that it is by grace that we have been saved through faith. Faith being listed among the gifts would mean that it is different than that faith having to deal with salvation, unless you believe in limited atonement which would say that this is the moment when the Holy Spirit brings the elect to faith.

Paul including it among the gifts, points to the instances of faith that is required of believers during the process of sanctification. Meaning after they have been saved and are facing different trials that test their faith the Holy Spirit can gift them with a deeper ability to rely on and trust in God. This kind of faith that can accomplish extraordinary achievements in the life of the believer or witnesses of the faith exhibited by the believer. This might be the faith that Jesus talked about in Matthew 17:20 that said by faith we can have the power to move mountains. It also could be the faith that appears unshakable as they face trials or extenuating circumstances, that kind of faith demonstrates miraculous peace and reliance on and trust in God.

[11] Healing

This is the curing and restoration of an individual. This could refer to both a physical healing as well as a spiritual healing. The Holy Spirit demonstrating the gift of healing could restore someone health or well-being, but it could also be restoring their soul, reconciling them to God. We see lots of times in the New Testament of the apostles demonstrating gift of Healing by the Holy Spirit in the physical sense. Peter healing the lame man by his shadow⁴, or Paul healing the lame man by his words⁵, but by far the greatest and most miraculous healing is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus points this out when the paralytic was brought to him in front of the pharisees, and he says which is easier for me to tell him his sins are forgiven or to take up his mat and walk⁶. The forgiveness of sins is what the Messiah came to do and that is by far the greater miracle.

In the ancient world, sickness was always associated with demonic or supernatural influence, that would cause the affliction. For the people in Corinth the idea of healing and especially one supernaturally done by the Holy Spirit, it would have been seen as both physical and spiritual. Where the physical ailment was healed the purpose would be seen as bringing someone into a right relationship with God. Think of

² 1 Corinthians 1:5

³ 1 Corinthians 8:1-7

⁴ Acts 5:15

⁵ Acts 14:8

⁶ Matthew 9:1-8

the healings in Jesus' ministry, he did not heal for the sake of healing, but he did it to proclaim that he is the Messiah come to bring the spiritually healing from their sins that was their greatest need.⁷

[12] Working of Miracles

In Greek the phrase is actually 'workings of power'. The term used here for power is more than likely drawing from his statements in 1:17-4:21, where he states that Christ crucified is the power of God⁸, Paul's preaching was a demonstration of the Spirit and 'power'⁹, or the kingdom of God does not exist in mere speech but in 'power'¹⁰. He uses this term the same way in Galatians 3:5 in the Spirit working in power. Which means that this power that is being demonstrated in this gift is not meant to be a catch all or left to our own imagination.

This would be referring to extraordinary activities that demonstrate the power of God that was demonstrated through the cross. Things like exercising demons, healings that happened with the apostles through the inanimate objects they touched, and even the raising of the dead. These are powerful deeds that achieve the goal of edification of the church as a whole, and the confirmation of one's faith in God because he is all powerful.

[13] Prophecy

This would be an oral divine message from God delivered and spoken through an individual. This message that is spoken would be directed to a specific person or people group and intended to elicit a specific response. It could be a declaration of the will of God, with possible references to the future, but not always. These utterances and words spoken in prophecy are inspired and spoken by the Holy Spirit through an individual under his will and direction for the edification of the church.

We have to see this with the understanding of what a prophet was. They were covenant watch dogs in the Old Testament. They had 3 jobs as prophets, they were to call out sin mainly idolatry and injustice in the nation of Israel. Second they were to remind Israel of their purpose and calling. Third, was to call Israel to repentance and to turn back to God. Where there would be evidence of the Spirit speaking and not just man would be the proclamation of a coming judgement or salvation that does come true. All prophecy that someone claims as the Holy Spirit as the source would never not be true. Deuteronomy 18:22 says that if what a prophet says does not come true then it was not God's words. The prophecy coming to fruition is a determining factor of prophecy by the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy as a Spiritual gift is for the edification of the Church, but it is not ever to be elevated to the level of Scripture. There is general revelation and specific revelation. General revelation would be the word that is spoken that is for the benefit of the global worldwide Church which would elevate it to the level of adding to scripture which is not to be added to¹¹. This gift deals with specific revelation meaning it is directed specifically to a person or group of people. We will elaborate on this more Wednesday and in the coming weeks

[14] Distinguishing Between Spirits

⁷ In the Greek Septuagint the word for healing is 'iama' in the OT the word 'iama' appears in Greek for 4 different Hebrew words most of its uses are in the context of spiritual restoration and reconciliation (

⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:18,24

⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 4:19-20

¹¹ Deuteronomy 12:32

This is a supernatural ability of an individual by the Spirit to be able to recognize if an utterance or action comes from God or an evil spirit¹². It could also be a distinguishing between good and evil spirits and their influence, deciphering spiritual activity and its source being from God or from demons¹³. This supernatural ability from the Holy Spirit to know and understand the source of activity that is spiritual in nature. 1 John 4, tells us to test the spirit to know their source, this gift would be evidence of knowing the source without the testing as the Spirit wills it in a believer.

[15] Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues

Tongues is a reference to language or speech. This is the Holy Spirit filling an individual to speak in a language that is not natural to them and is not learned by them. It is a language that is spoken that is either being understood immediately by those who hear it¹⁴, or it is a language that is capable of being interpreted¹⁵. Interpretation of tongues is the gift of the Spirit to the believer to hear what is being spoken by the Holy Spirit in a unlearned language and they will supernaturally have the ability to translate and interpret what is being spoken for the people that are hearing but do not know what is being said in the language being spoken.

There are plenty of examples of this in scripture. At Pentecost in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came upon the 11 disciples, and they spoke about the wonders of God. Each person that witnessed this heard them in their own language and dialects. In Acts 10 in the home of Cornelius the same happens upon belief that they spoke in tongues praising God. And in Acts 19 when the disciples of John the Baptist accepted Jesus they too spoke in tongues.

Where we have a few examples of it happening in the early church, tongues being mentioned as a gift of the spirit is nowhere mentioned in any other of Paul's or Peter's letters. Now this does not mean that it was not a gift that was given to the other churches, but it does point out that it was a problem at Corinth. Paul spends the next 2 chapters set the stage for and dealing with their problem of their practice of tongues. In chapter 14, he sorts out the proper practice of this gift in worship so that it is used for the benefit of the common good and edifying to the church.

This section of the chapter ends with this reiterating of the source, presentation and will all coming out of the Holy Spirit. Where he says...

[16] 1 Corinthians 12:11

"All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

This is a reiteration of what Paul said in verse 4-6. The Spirit comes and gives a diversity of gifts. Talking about the diversity of the gifts not the diversity of access to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is unified with God, and it is the Spirit that gives the gifts as he wills for the completion of his work.

APPLICATION

In this list of the gifts, there seems to be 2 completely opposed camps when it comes to the relevance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the modern age. There is the Cessationist and there is the Continuationist.

¹² Acts 13:8-10

¹³ 1 Cor 14:29/1 John 4:1-6

¹⁴ Acts 2:4-11

¹⁵ 1 Cor 12:10, 14:5,13, 27-28

[17] The Cessationist, is the background that I grew up in. It is the interpretation that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit being worked out through man (prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles, working of power), while they are absolutely real, they have ceased sometime around the end of the 1st century. Their perspective is that the gifts were used during the age of the apostles as signs and wonders to create a validation of the message of the gospel as the church was being established. Once the New Testament had been established at the beginning of the 1st Century the gifts were no longer necessary so they ceased to exist in the church.

They believe that God is still doing great and miraculous things but they say that God is not performing this miraculous works through another believer. God will miraculously heal someone but it would not be because a person came in and prayed and through the power of the Spirit working in the one praying to heal that person.

They compare these gifts to the things that Moses did while he was in Egypt. He had a staff that turned into snakes, he walked into the Nile river it turned into blood. He walked in to the red sea and it split. He hit a rock with his staff and it brought out water. After the Israelites were brought out of Egypt and they were preparing to enter the promise land, Moses surely must have dropped his staff once or twice and it probably didn't turn into a snake or Moses walked into water and it didn't turn to blood or part and become dry ground.

They say that this is evidence that the purpose for the miraculous things being done through human beings, has been fulfilled. Since they no longer had purpose they no longer are needed. There is a good documentary out there called 'Cessationist' that will explain the view point a lot better. I've seen it and they make a pretty good logical and biblical case for the miraculous gifts like miracles, healing, prophecy and tongues have all ceased.

The opposite end of the spectrum is what is called as a 'Continueationist'. They believe the opposite of the previous view in that all of the supernatural gifts are for today. Many within this view will have records of miraculous things happening through men of God well after the 1st century. They will say that manifestations of the ministry of the Holy Spirit continue and bear witness to the continued presence of the Spirit today.

They will acknowledge that the purpose of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous signs were for the 1st century to create validity to the gospel. Since the gift still continue either that purpose continues to be necessary or that was not the only purpose of the gifts of the Spirit.

They will also sight passages like 1 Corinthians that give explicit instructions on how the gifts are to be carried out and done properly. Therefore the gifts of the Spirit are meant to be present among believer and empower them to do God's work under the guidance and provision of the Holy Spirit.

[18] Where these are 2 ends of the spectrum, there is a middle ground that I think represents the truth in God's word the best. Like we talked about last week knowledge prevents us from deception. When we know properly the purpose, the practice and the provision of these gifts then we can vigilantly distinguish God's work from that of another. I do think that the gifts of the Holy Spirit especially the miraculous ones do continue on to today. I would disagree with many in the Cessationist documentary, but I think many of my opinions are close to the Cessationist view even though I believe the gifts continue, which is why I still will highly recommend it because it was done very well.

[19] Even though the gifts continue, I don't think that they are what people make them out to be most of the time. 9 times out of 10 I would say the people that claim they are performing the work of the Holy Spirit are doing so from a place of pride, or seeking validation, either in their spiritual maturity or in their ego many times for some sort of selfish gain, either emotionally or financially.

Not only do they present them from a place of pride but they often do not represent the gifts according to how they are outlined in scripture. For instance the difference of the office of Apostle and the gifting of Apostle which we talked about in chapter 9. Or prophecy and tongues being a gift that a believer can command and use anytime that the believer wishes, that not what scripture says. Which is why knowledge is important as Paul said.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is absolutely at work and absolutely is using the gifts to fulfill his work. There is nothing that I have found in scripture that says that they have ceased with the exception of the mention that tongues and prophecy will cease on the day of Judgement at the second coming of Christ¹⁶. The demonstration of these gifts that Paul has listed here in 1 Corinthians 12 are 100% dependent on the grace of God and the will of the Father. They are not enacted like a believer's super-power whenever they wish. We are not Tony Stark activating the suit and the Holy Spirit is just Jarvis.

We as believers are trying to stay in the boat that is unity with God. When we are unified with him, he uses us to demonstrate his power through us according to his will we are just along for the ride. The gifts derive from power and control. Power that can only come from God and the control that is dependent on the will of the Father. If it is his power then the gifts are under his control.

GOSPEL

[20] This list of Gifts are representative of all of the gifts. It is not and exhaustive list of every gift that the Holy Spirit is capable of. The big picture that we are to see about this is that these gifts were given to believers by the Holy Spirit in order for him to achieve his work in the world. That is why Paul says that they are to be used for the common good, that is they are being demonstrated by the Spirit for the benefit of the church not individuals.

The work of Christ in our salvation is a great and an amazing thing. It is through the work of Christ that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. And it is through those that have been indwelt with the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ is continued. We are the ones that are given and equipped for the ministry to build up the church, in our sacrifice of dying to self but also in the way that we participate in the ministry of the Holy Spirit by being unified with him.

The Cross is the power of God on full display. It is by that power that we are saved. It is by that power that we have been made righteous. It is by that power that Christ draws men to himself and will continue to save others and it is by that same power that you are being used and called to spread his gospel. This dependance that we are supposed to feel on Christ and his work should be immense. It should be the life support knowing that we cannot make any utterance without him that we cannot take our next breath without a complete and total dependance on the grace of God.

Where all of this is true the thing that I want all of us to take from this is that gifts of the Holy Spirit are miraculous and I believe that they are a reality, however ministry still happens when miracles are not present. You do not have to have the gift of prophecy show up for you to be used by God and speak the

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:8-10

truth found in his word. You do not have to speak in tongues to share the gospel, scripture even says that not all will speak in tongues¹⁷. The gifts are a reality but they do not create the essential nature of your position of being in unity with God or your ability to be a witness to the power of God that was displayed on the Cross.

[21] 1 Peter 3:14-15

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”

This is your ability through engagement in your Sanctification, the process by which you act in obedience and the Holy Spirit molds you to be like Christ. In this process, you are a display for the power of the gospel. We always must be prepared to give a response for the hope that we have in Christ. It's not about gifts, it's about the testimony of what God has done. When we talk about the miraculous, I do not want us to be distracted away from the ordinary or mundane interactions. The ways that God is going to use you every single day in normal and uninteresting interactions to win souls for the kingdom of God. When the gospel is involved no interaction is without power, no matter what your perception is.

When you pray even if you say nothing there is just as much power present with you, than if you were speaking to a crowd. When you read scripture with your family there is just as much power with you as there was on the day of Pentecost and tongues of fire floated above their heads. When you share the hope you have in Jesus with the cashier at the grocery store, there is just as much power there as when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, because God is working, the Holy Spirit is within you, and the power of God was on full display in the power of the cross.

[22] We never hear on the news about all the planes that land safely every single day. We only ever hear about the tragic or the miraculous encounters with planes that makes headlines. The miraculous does not make the ordinary unimportant. Every soul that landed on a plane where nothing exciting happen, all of them have value. All of them need Jesus. We cannot believe that miraculous means more important because that is simply not true.

Paul says we should desire the gifts, but our desire should not be met with disappointment when the desire is not fulfilled. I would argue that every one of these false teachers that claims the miraculous gifts all the time, started out with a frustration that their desire to be like someone else who claims miraculous things. Their desire turned to envy, envy turned to deceit in order to feel validation, and they promoted the lie that the Holy Spirit was using them in the same way. They have told themselves that so many times that now even they believe the lies that they created.

Focus on Christ, and everything else will fall into place. Depend on the Holy Spirit as you grow closer to God and remain in union with him. Know, study and memorize his word so that you can know God in deeper way and you will not be deceived into false teachings. Depend on him in the miraculous and the ordinary. Stay in the boat that is unity with him and be used by him in whatever way he chooses in obedience, in profession and in love.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:30

COMMUNION