

## WE NEED EACH OTHER

### INTRODUCTION

In my Bible, the prelude commentary to 1 Corinthians states that “no epistle (letter) in the New Testament gives clearer insight into the life of the first-century church than 1 Corinthians. The Corinthian church was made up mostly of people who were previously pagan idol worshipers who were also involved in all sorts of sensuality and sacred prostitution. Paul wrote this letter to address eight separate problems: a sectarian spirit, sexual immorality, marriage and divorce, eating food offered to idols, wearing of the veil, the Lord’s Supper, spiritual gifts and the resurrection of the body.

In his apostolic role, Paul gave instruction regarding doctrine and the handling of the moral and ethical problems that this church was experiencing.

Where similar problems exist in the modern church, we can draw on Paul’s teachings and apply them because they are still valid today.

As I read 1 Corinthians 12 earlier this week, I felt there would be great value in sharing some of the instruction included in it with our congregation. We are not necessarily going to deal with problems in the church today but rather **gaining an understanding about spiritual gifts, ministries and the fact that every person in the church has a role in the church and when they are missing, a gap is left which results in the church not being as effective as it needs to be.** Therefore, I have titled this message, “We need each other”.

### MESSAGE

**1 Corinthians 12:1** (NKJV) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...

Paul begins by saying, “I don’t want you to be ignorant and not understand about spiritual gifts”. It’s important that we as God’s children understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit, knowing **what** they are, **where** they come from, **who** they are for and **when** they must be used.

### THE TRIUNE GOD AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Paul begins by indicating that the complete triune Godhead is involved when it comes to spiritual gifts.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6** (NKJV) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

**Holy Spirit** - diversities of **gifts**, but the same Spirit.

**Jesus Christ** - There are differences of **ministries**, but the same Lord.

**Father God** - And there are diversities of **activities**, but it is the same God who works all in all.

If God in His triune person is involved, then it means that **these characteristics should be found in every church**:

- Spiritual gifts.
- Spiritual ministries.
- Spiritual activities.

***If it's that important to God, it must also be important to us, do you desire spiritual gifts? Are you involved in spiritual ministries and are you doing spiritual activities?***

### **THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Manifestation gifts)**

We are a Pentecostal, Charismatic church where we pray for and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Let's take a closer look.

**1 Corinthians 12:7-10** (NKJV) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Verse 7 and 11 explain the where, the who and why of the "manifestation gifts". Verses 8-10 explain the what.

- Where do they come from? -The Holy Spirit
- Who for? They are given to each one – no believer is excluded here!
- Why? For the profit of all – These gifts benefit all of us!
- What are they?

There are nine gifts (Greek – Charismata) of the Holy Spirit:

1. The word of wisdom.
2. The word of knowledge.
3. Faith – The gift of faith to believe for specific needs.
4. Gifts of healings.
5. The working of miracles.
6. Prophecy.
7. Discerning of spirits.
8. Different kinds of tongues – prayer/praise/prophesy.
9. The interpretation of tongues – prophesy.

These gifts fall into three categories: "gifts of **knowledge**" (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, distinguishing between spirits), "gifts of **speech** or prophetic gifts" (tongues, interpretation, prophecy), and "gifts of **power**" (faith, healing, miracles).

**1 Corinthians 12:11** (NKJV) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Here's the "where" and the "how". The Holy Spirit distributes these gifts to each one individually as He wills. **Therefore not everyone operates in the same gifts.**

***We all have the gifts once we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but we don't all operate in all of these gifts all of the time. Today I challenge each of us to eagerly desire to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.***

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH PART OF THE BODY**

**1 Corinthians 12:12-26** (NKJV) For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And 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." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

One of the problems of the Corinthian church which Paul addressed was that **certain people thought they were more important than others.** He had to address the same issue in his letter to the Romans where He said, "**Do not**

think of yourself more highly than you ought". Possibly some of the Corinthians were operating strongly in the gifts and others were struggling, or maybe they had ranked one gift as more important than the other. There could also have been prejudice toward those who came out of slavery or from different nationalities. Paul went to great lengths to explain that each part of the body is important, and those which seem less important should be treated with greater esteem.

- We were all part of the body of Christ.
- Although we may be many, we are one in Christ.
- We were all baptized by One Holy Spirit regardless of our background.
- No matter how we fit into the body of Christ, each one of us has our place and we are all needed for the body to function properly.

I have seen people hold back on flowing in the gifts of the Spirit because they felt unqualified or inadequate. This is not the Bible way. We ALL have a role to play.

On the other hand, if we think only certain people are qualified to function in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and we reject it or feel uncomfortable when we see those we don't esteem highly enough flowing in the gifts, we are also missing the point in Biblical terms. If God could use a donkey to speak to Baalam, then surely, He can use any one of us to minister in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

***Today is the day to stop feeling inadequate in terms of flowing in the gifts of the Spirit. It's also time to realise that we are interdependent on each other. We all have a role to play and when we are absent, the body is not functioning at it's optimum.***

## **MINISTRIES AND ACTIVITIES**

Paul went further to address ministries and activities. We can read about these elsewhere in the New Testament too. We read of the five-fold ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11 these come from Christ - Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher. Then we find the administrative gifts (or activities) which are given by the Father in Romans 12. Here in 1 Corinthians 12 the ministries and activities are combined.

**1 Corinthians 12:27-30** (NKJV) Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?.

Here Paul says, "God has appointed THESE in the church". One can deduct from this that specific people receive specific ministries and administrations, particularly as He goes on to say, "do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" What becomes abundantly clear yet again is that because different people have different gifts and abilities, it's only when all these gifts are working together that the church is functioning effectively.

***I re-iterate my earlier statement, if we are not all active in our local congregation, that congregation will be found lacking. We MUST fulfil our role and purpose for being part of the local body of believers.***

Paul then went on to state this: **1 Corinthians 12:27-30** (NKJV) 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way

- Earnestly desire the best gifts – nowhere does it say which gift is the better gift even though he later did say he wished that they prophesied (1 Cor 14:5) – the truth is that the best gift is the one needed at the specific time.
- Then he began to balance it all out. "The gifts are great, you are all important to the body of Christ, if you get this right you will do well, but... there is something even better..." Paul then penned down the magnificent 1 Corinthians 13 on love. You may have gifts, you may give a lot, you may even become a martyr, but without love, you are nothing but a noise!

## **CONCLUSION**

Today we have not had a sermon, we have had a teaching, we have learned about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a about the ministries and activities of the church.

We have learned that no gift is better than another, the most important gift is the one needed at the time.

We have learned that no person is more important than another. We all need each other, and we all need the unique gifting combination which the Lord has allocated to us. We are interdependent on one another and only when we all work together in unison is the church truly effective. It's time we took the role we have been given seriously.

Finally, we learned that gifts, ministries and activities which come from the Triune God are all important, but there is more – these all have to take place undergirded by a foundation of love, without which we are only making a noise.

Let us eagerly desire to flow in the best gifts, those needed at the time and let us commit ourselves to working in unity together with our local church. We need each other.