



Week 26 – The Power Gifts ... Within the Church

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore 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.

When the early believers were Born Again, they came out of lives that were steeped in idol worship. The difference between their lives dedicated to “mute” (or powerless) wooden and stone idols and the Spirit of the Living God was ... power!

Paul is reminding these believers that they received power from the Holy Spirit when they were filled. And that this power came in the form of “Gifts”.

Where Does the Power Come From?

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

It is God who gave the Spirit, it is God who gave the gifts, it is God who gave the power, it is not of themselves.

God gave the gifts of the Spirit to the Church and He is in control of how, when, and why they should be used ... He is Lord of the Gifts.

The Corinthian Church was not lacking in the “use” of the power God had given them, they were lacking in the “proper use” of those gifts.

For the Common Good

1 Corinthians 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 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. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

The Father gave gifts (power) to the church so that the church could be properly equipped to be a witness of the gospel throughout the world.

These gifts were different from what they were used to because they had supernatural power from the One True God backing them up.

Adherents of Baal would prophecy but their prophecies lacked the eternal, omniscient power of the Holy Spirit backing up their words.

The sorcerers of Pharaoh's court could perform miracles of their staffs becoming snakes by their gods, but when Moses led by the Holy Spirit to throw down his staff, did so with the effect of his snake swallowing their snakes, it showed that God's power was preeminent.

The Father has given true supernatural power, not to individuals for their own benefit, but to the Church so that the Gospel can be preached throughout the World.

We cannot spend much time talking about the power God has given us through the Spirit until we understand the importance of the context He has placed that power in.

The Church Is Made Of Individuals

1 Corinthians 12:12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

Paul understands that the problem the Church in Corinth is experiencing is a problem of context.

The Corinthians were using the Gifts of the Spirit as an outward show of their spirituality rather than as a witnessing platform.

They were acting as individuals rather than "The Body of Christ".

We are individuals ... but we have been brought into a relationship with Jesus Christ that is so binding that it is as if we have become one person. And in so doing have become one with all others who have bound themselves to Christ.

When we join ourselves to Christ, by default we bind ourselves to all of the other individuals who have joined themselves to Him. We don't get a choice as to whether this will happen or not, or to whom we want to be joined or not.

This bond is called ... "the Church."

Original Word: ἐκκλησία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: ekklésia

Phonetic Spelling: (ek-klay-see'-ah)

Short Definition: an assembly, congregation, church

Definition: an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.

<http://biblehub.com/greek/1577.htm>

The Corinthian Church was not considering the Whole Body as it went about its spiritual activities. And because of this Paul needed to bring change through his letters.

Even Though We Have the Power of God ... We Still Need Each Other

1 Corinthians 12:15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 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." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 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, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

No one part of the body is more important than the other. An eye all by itself is useless. A finger not attached to the hand has no function.

Only when all parts are attached and functioning will the body accomplish its purpose.

We also cannot exclude any one part because we think it is inferior to our part. It may be “less honorable”, but this does not make it less important.

God has put this “Body” together, there should not be any division in it!

ALL of the members should hold ALL of the members of the body in HIGH regard!

If One Suffers

1 Corinthians 12:26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Here is where the Body of Christ shines!!!

If the big toe gets smashed into a piece of furniture not put back to its originally expected place! (*Hypothetically*)

The thigh, knee, and calf immediately recoil to remove the big toe from danger.

The hands in a sign of concern and mercy reach forth and cradle the damaged foot and toe to show it love.

The mouth utters an audible yelp to encourage the toe from afar that it understands the toe’s pain, followed by a series of other guttural messages vowing to hunt down the one who left the piece of furniture in an unexpected place and giving orders to the hands to deal swiftly with the culprit!

The brain starts running through its diagnostics on the extent of the damage, best plan for treatment, and most effective way to deal with the above mentioned culprit.

When one member is in need the body is to respond.

We Are Part Of A Body Like That

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

This is how the body should think of each other. (*Minus the revenge part*)

And in this context the Father has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us to be His witnesses to the utmost degree and effectiveness.

It is only within the Body that we can safely deal with that kind of responsibility and authority.

And within the Body God has also placed an authority structure to lead and guide the process of evangelism, discipleship, equipping, and deployment of the individuals of the Body into the harvest field.

Church Leadership

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

Many people want to be in charge, most people have an opinion on how things should be done. But God has appointed leaders within the church, and these leaders have specific responsibilities and tasks.

Not everyone is called to be a leader, but, everyone is called to work together. This is how a church is supposed to function.

In the weeks to come we will look at Biblical Church leadership, functions of the Five Fold ministry, and then the purpose and function of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And Even More Importantly ... Love

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Things to Mull

1. What part of the “Body” would you consider yourself to be? Why?
2. What part of the “Body” would others consider you to be? Why?
3. Has the Holy Spirit used you to manifest any of the Gifts through? Which ones?
4. Share a testimony of how the Holy Spirit did this!
5. Do you actually feel as though you are a part of the “Body of Christ”?
6. What is your responsibility to assure your membership in the “Body”?
7. How can others help you to feel a part of the “Body”?
8. If you could choose to operate in one of the Gifts of the Spirit, which one would you choose? Why?

Suggested Readings For Continued Study

Gifts And Ministries Of The Holy Spirit Paperback – by Sumrall Lester

Gifts Of The Holy Spirit - by Kenneth E Hagin

Taking Action: Receiving and Operating in the Gifts and Power of the Holy Spirit - by Reinhard Bonnke