

HAVE YOU OPENED YOUR GIFTS?

(1Corinthians 12:1-31)

January 29, 2017

Paul begins this chapter by turning to a new topic and:

I. The need to KNOW our spiritual gifts

He does not want them to be ignorant or untaught. They need to know about their gifts – and so do WE. The Spirit is also:

II. The SOURCE of our spiritual gifts

God never contradicts himself or his purposes, even as he gives gifts and skills to men to serve him.

The Spirit gives these gifts so that we may SERVE the Triune God.

III. The EXTENT of our spiritual gifts

EVERY believer has at least one gift. Have you OPENED your gift? Do you even know you have it?

No believer has EVERY spiritual gift. If I had every gift, I wouldn't need you. If you had every gift, you wouldn't need me.

God's desire is that every Christian be in the game, every Christian be serving and working in his Kingdom. We need each other.

IV. The DIVERSITY of our spiritual gifts

Scholars identify somewhere between 19 & 23 different gifts given to believers by the Holy Spirit. Only in the Christian church do we find such a strong picture of unity THROUGH diversity.

The diversity we have is NEVER to divide.

We continue to be FILLED by the Spirit which then shows forth from us in the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

God loves seeing unique, diverse, one of a kind Christians working TOGETHER in harmony, using their gifts to accomplish what he desires.

V. The ANALOGY of our spiritual gifts

There is a different Baptism that only God can do - baptism of the Spirit, which serves to meld all believers together in ONE unit.

Paul likens the different members of the congregation to the different parts of the human body and shows in this way both its great diversity AND its essential unity.

Paul is describing things that would never happen in a physical body but were shamefully happening in the body of Christ.

Several important truths in this analogy can be helpful to us today as we think about our individual relationships with the church:

1) While we are not the same, EACH of us is important to the whole.

Societies make judgments on a person's worth using a SCALE that is unfamiliar to the Lord.

What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?
Matthew 16:26

2) We desperately NEED each other.

What is true of our bodies is not always as APPARENT in the church. In America, many Christians see their faith as a kind of “Lone Ranger” experience, but ISOLATION in the church of Christ is not his plan. All of the biblical pictures of the church are GROUP experiences. The church is the place where each of us is needed AND each of us brings needs.

3) What affects one member is felt by ALL.

When one of us suffers, we all suffer. When one of us celebrates a time of joy, we all celebrate.

VI. The GREATEST of the spiritual gifts

Paul offers to show the church “the most excellent way.” We have to wait until chapter 13 to find the answer.