

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

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[0 : 00] I was going to make our way to the book of 1 Corinthians. I'm continuing to make our way to the book of 1 Corinthians. We're in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And we'll be in verses 1 through 11 this morning.

1 Corinthians chapter 12, starting in verse 1 and making our way down to verse 11. If you are new with us and you haven't been with us before, maybe you haven't been with us the entire time, we're just making our way to the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul's letter to the saints at Corinth.

We remind ourselves that even though this is probably the most wicked and desperate church that we find in the New Testament, because of the problems that were going on there, because of the issues that were transpiring, the things that were addressed, still they are believers, right?

Paul writes to the saints which are at Corinth. Now that is not an excuse to say, well, since they are believers in Christ, they can live however they want to. And if they can do it in Corinth, then I can do it in War Trace or Shelbyville or wherever I'm at.

That's not it at all. That's the reasoning for this letter. Paul is trying to correct and rebuke and reprove even, and to strengthen their faith. He has reminded them two times that you cannot do whatever you want to do.

[1 : 08] And he has said this in two different verses, for you are not your own. You have been bought with a price. You've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And that matters. That makes a big difference. He is addressing things which he had heard about the church, things that had come to his knowledge.

Now, Paul has a vested interest in this church. He had spent a number of months there. He had spent about a year and six months. He had invested his time. He is the founder of this church. He's the planner.

You'd call him that. He's the church planner. He raised up the elders to serve in the church. He'd equip them. And then he had to leave Corinth because he's on his missionary journeys. There are a lot of things that he's addressing, things that we said really he didn't have to address, that the church should have known about, because this follows the standards set for all the believers in the Gentile territory in Acts 15.

They should not have been worried about meat sacrifice to idols, because that was something the early church fathers in Acts 15 said, don't eat meat sacrifice to idols. But yet they were doing it. And so Paul is addressing these things with love and correction, sure. And he's encouraging them to walk in their calling. And then he begins, starting in chapter 10, actually chapter 11 would be the beginning of it, addressing matters that take place in their corporate worship.

[2 : 21] Some of these are matters that he heard about. He'd heard that there were divisions among them. There were divisions, first of all, because of personalities. They had a kindred towards one pastor or one preacher over another.

And then by the time we get to the 10th chapter, we see there are divisions in the church that are being displayed in the 11th chapter, how they take the Lord's Supper based upon their social standing, right?

Who they are in society. And Paul is addressing those matters. Now, into chapter 12, he is returning back to some questions they had for him.

Still dealing with the corporate worship. He will remind us when he refers to them as brethren. This is a church issue. This is a church matter. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together.

We read the word of God from 1 Corinthians chapter 12, starting in verse 1. We're going to read down to verse 11. I know many of you may say, well, I wish you would just go to the whole chapter. We don't have time for that.

[3 : 21] But we're going to go down to verse 11 and we'll stop right there. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. For you know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed. And no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For the one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit. And to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

And to another faith by the same Spirit. And to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit. And to another the effective miracles. And to another prophecy. And to another the distinguishing of gifts.

[4 : 23] To another various kinds of tongues. And to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things. Distributing to each one individually.

Just as he wills. So let's pray. We thank you for this day. We thank you for your word. Thank you for the opportunity we have to gather together.

And to read your word. To hear it. And to see it. Lord we pray that by the power and presence of your Spirit. You would open our minds and hearts to it. And Lord that it would speak your truth into our lives.

We pray that through our understanding of it Lord. That we would not just collect information. But that our lives would be transformed and changed. Conformed more to your image. And your likeness.

And always for your glory. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. A complete side note.

[5 : 24] This is the way my mind goes sometimes. One of the things that I'm told quite often. When I preach is. Pastor you just need to slow down. Pastor you need to slow down. You get carried away a little bit.

I was sharing with a couple of them this morning. That somewhere in this church. I wouldn't tell them where. And I'm not going to tell you where. There is a box. And in that box is all the old CDs. And the cassettes of my early sermons.

I brought them with me. When I left where I was pastoring at before. Because I didn't want anybody there listening to them. And I have them hidden in this building. So that none of you will ever find them. And listen to them. And I don't go on a scavenger hunt. None of them will tell you what that box is.

And I told them. I said you know. I wasn't wrong. But I was just a fiery young preacher boy. Who had a lot to grow. And they said like you're not now. And I said well. Back then I was really all over the place. But there's good news for you.

Those who always tell me I need to slow down. About twice a year. I have to slow down. And this is one of those. It's you know. When everything is blooming. And in the second cut in the hay season. So there you go.

[6 : 23] Sinuses cause me to do that. And that's fine. It's not a problem. You get the benefit of me slowing down a little bit. For one. Because I have a cough drop in my mouth. And if I don't slow down. I choke. So you know.

That's how it happens. And we will make our way through it. But I'm so excited to be where we're at in 1 Corinthians this morning. Now I caution you. We begin looking at spiritual gifts.

The tendency is to look and focus upon the spiritual gifts. And look at the gifts and the employ of those gifts within the body. And we will do that. But the reason we haven't read any further than this. Even though we've seen the listing of these spiritual gifts.

We know that chapters 13 and 14 are the balance to this. So even as we make our way through this. We cannot read the text in all of their entirety. We will look at it in smaller chunks.

Understanding that Paul is balancing the giftedness with even the speaking in tongues.

There are a lot of questions that will come up as we read this. Well the speaking in tongues. And interpretation of tongues. And all these magnificent manifestations of the spirit. We will address those. Not necessarily this morning.

[7 : 24] But as we work our way through it. But understand that Paul balances what was being exalted among the church at Corinth. With 1 Corinthians 13. You know it because you've attended a number of weddings. Right?

It's the love chapter. But it was originally it was a church chapter. So the chapter of love was not ordained for weddings. It was commissioned to the church. And so love kind of balances that out. And then when we get into 1 Corinthians 14. We see there are really two major things in the spiritual giftedness. That make a wondrous effect upon the church body. And it is love. And it is the word of God. So that's your balance for that. We'll see those as we make our way through. Now we understand that what we have before us is not an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts. If we take the other writings of Paul and we balance them together. We see that Paul lists about 19 spiritual gifts in totality in scripture. And even then we don't think that he is exhausting the list. [8 : 21] He is actually speaking to particular churches. So in writing this chapter and this letter and this book. We have the things that were being on display in the church at Corinth.

So we don't want to focus so much on the gifts. We want to see here your title this morning. If you needed one would be a gifted body of believers. The reality that the church is a gifted body of believers.

Right? That it is composed of individuals. We'll see that. But Paul is speaking about the corporate gathering of the church. When the church comes together to worship.

When the church comes together to proclaim the name of Christ. Through their actions. Through their communion. Through their fellowship. When the church has this wondrous thing called worship.

That you have gathered together a gifted body of believers. Now Paul has said that their fellowship took place around the Lord's table. And even in their what they refer to as love feasts.

[9 : 22] We would call them fellowship meals. We don't call them agape feasts much anymore. And that there was a way in which they had to kind of let the spirit take control.

Of their gathering around the communion table. Or even gathering around the food table. It had to be spirit led. Because as Paul had told them in the 11th chapter. That because some people were taking the Lord's Supper in the wrong manner.

Some of them were dying. Right? They were falling asleep. That didn't mean they lost their salvation. It just means they were not living out the worship. And the fellowship of the body of Christ. In a corporate setting in a right way.

Now he goes into spiritual giftedness. And evidently this is a question which they have. Because he says now concerning spiritual gifts. This is something that they had asked him.

Evidently in the letter which he had received from them. We don't have that letter. So we just have to read it into the text. That Paul is referring to a question that they have. Because if you think about it for just a moment.

[10 : 23] The reason there was so much concern earlier in the chapter. About the women's head coverings. And the long hair versus the shaved head. And all the freedoms. And you know we weren't talking about equal rights here.

We weren't talking about any of those things. What Paul was showing them is that in society. In the society they lived in. They were beginning to act a lot like the pagan temples. Inside the house of God.

And that just didn't look right. It gave a terrible witness. Well this display of wondrous things. Is something that the temples. The idol temples in the city of Corinth.

Would be rampant with. And evidently when the church was coming together. They began to see a manifestation of this. And the spiritual gifts. And so there were questions. So I want you to see three things. Just three things this morning.

That I want you to see about the gifted body of believers. Number one. We see that it is an undeniable influence. It is an undeniable influence. Paul says. Now concerning spiritual gifts.

[11 : 19] Brethren. Writing to the church. Right. It's not writing to countrymen. Many people will tell you. And I think rightfully so. When you open up scripture. Just because it says brethren. Don't always imply that he's talking about the church.

Because sometimes in a Jewish nation. They refer to one another as brethren. And they're the brethren. Or the brothers of the Jewish people. But this is not the case. He's writing to a Gentile church. He refers to them as brethren.

He is writing to a group of believers. Who have proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ. And we see this being listed out here. So. By the way. Spiritual gifts are a church issue. Right. It's a church issue. It is. You are not gifted.

We'll get to this in just a moment. It's not just a personal issue. It's a church matter. So he's writing to them as it pertains to the church. He says I do not want you to be unaware. So he wants them to have some wisdom about it.

He says that you know when you were pagans. Now the word pagans simply just means Gentiles. It means non-believers. So when we read the word pagans. I read from the NASB. I know some of you are reading from other translations.

[12:16] I prefer the New American Standard. And I have reasonings behind that. We can discuss that at length some other time. Not on a Sunday morning. But the NASB refers to them as pagans. And when we hear the word pagans we tend to think oh like heathen.

Like people who are doing all these rampant and crazy things. That's not what he's saying there. Just the word pagans simply can be translated Gentiles. Some of your translations have it that way. It just literally means unbelievers. Right.

People who are not believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. So he said when you were non-believers you were. Look at this. You were led astray to the mute idols however you were led. Now scripture is clear. Very clear. Jesus says you're either a child of God or you're the son of Satan. You are not the master of your own life.

You are not the captain of your own ship. The reality is that all men and all places and all women and all places of all times and all ages and all societies are being led by something.

[13:19] You say well I have free will. You're right. But your free will is also controlled by your sin nature. And your sin nature which is according to scriptures and according to my interpretation of scriptures and theology and hopefully yours as well.

Something that is inerrant to you at your birth. It is something that you have by nature. You don't have to learn to do wrong. You have to be corrected and taught to do right. And you have this natural desire to self-serve and to self-please and to be focused on that self-nature.

And that sin nature is the absolute tool of the enemy of man which is Satan to lead them astray however he wants to. And Paul says you're not all being led in the same way. He says however you were led.

You were being led to mute and dumb idols. Just as nobody is their own master. Nobody is the captain of their own ship. Everybody is being led by something that leads to everybody is worshipping something.

Worship is the most natural part of humanity. No matter where you go. No matter how isolated the people group. No matter how off the grid the individual.

[14:29] Everywhere you go. Missions has taught us this. Personal life has taught us this. Everybody you meet is worshipping something. Worship is natural.

And the reason worship is natural is because it is the God-given design and the purpose of man put into his heart. The book of Ecclesiastes said that God set eternity in the heart of all men.

And when he sets eternity there he puts this realization that this cannot be all there is. And since this cannot be all there is there has to be something greater than what I see, what I know, what I experience, what I feel.

There has to be something mightier than me. And we tend to worship. You say, well, what about those who are agnostic? Well, agnosticism simply says there could be a God. There might be a God. I don't know if there is a God.

And I would rather worship my intellect. That which I know rather than what I cannot understand. And you're worshipping intellect. Problem with that is, is I've read a lot of scholarly sounding books. And I've seen a lot of intellectual material that is just absolutely wrong.

[15:30] And you're absolutely wrong. Because anyone can sound scholarly. I have this real bad habit. Maybe you'll get on to me. And you can correct me if you want to. And that's fine.

I have this real bad habit. And that is that if I don't know the answer to something. Not in the Bible. And when it comes to the Bible, we try my best. But I'm talking about some obscure thing that really doesn't matter. Something that is just kind of off the wall.

That I call it self-confidence. Some people call it pride. Some people call it other things. That if I don't know the answer, I'm going to give an answer. And give it like I know exactly what I'm talking

about.

So that whoever hears me thinks that I know exactly. I don't do this. You say, Pastor, you're a liar. Well, yeah. I do this with my family, okay? I don't do this. But I remember just the other day, I was very tired.

We're making our way back. And Carrie asked me a question. And I looked at her and I said, honestly, I don't know. She said, wow, you don't ever say that. I said, I know. Because I always like to have an answer.

[16:31] I just don't know. That's my mannerisms, right? I just want to say it. And I have this really sinful ability to be able to say it confidently. And to put all of my eggs in that one basket.

I remember when the kids were young, I really got myself in trouble about this. So we were sitting around the table. And the boys were playing video games. And they were playing a college football game. And I've told this story, I think, before. I don't know if many of you remember it.

And they were talking about, Dad, there's all these teams on there. We don't even know about it. I said, we came across this team called Youngstown State. I said, oh, yeah, that's where I played college football. Now, some of you ought to be laughing. Because you know, I never even played middle school football. Let alone high school football.

I said, yeah, that's where I played my football in college. And they said, well, I said, yeah, Youngstown State. Now, the boys knew. And they kept the story going. And I said, yeah, I was number 44 as fullback. They said, you run the ball all the time. I said, no, they only gave me the ball when they wanted to score a touchdown.

I mean, the story went good. And it went for a long time. And the problem is I didn't realize that I had a daughter that was sitting at the table that was very young. And that daughter went to school telling all her friends that Dad played college football at Youngstown State.

[17:30] And then I got to looking up Youngstown State. And they no longer had a college football. But the irony of this is I graduated high school in 1998. In 98, 99, and 2000, they won the championship of their division.

And they were really, really good about the time, quote, unquote, I played college football there. And I told everybody, well, that's because I was the fullback. I was just scoring all the touchdowns. And it went good forever until Kylie was at the table with one of her friends and said, my dad played college football at Youngstown State.

And at that point, I'm committed. So I said, yeah, I sure did. And, you know, and then Carrie contacts Youngstown State. I didn't know this.

So for Christmas that year, opened up a gift. I still have it. And their mascot's a penguin. It's a really cool penguin. And so I have at home, straight from the athletic club of Youngstown State, some shorts that say Youngstown State alumni, a shirt, and a sticker.

And she said, put that on your truck, preacher, ma'am. So you know what I did? I cut the word alumni off and put Youngstown State on the back window of my truck. Some of you, I was your pastor, and I drove that around.

[18:37] Because I committed. But, see, the problem is I was being led astray by my own ambitions, right? It was funny. It was innocent and all. And, you know, I had to own up to her. Like, Holly, I really didn't do that. I didn't even go to Ohio.

Had to look it up where I was at. But, you know, all these things. We're being led astray. The Bible says, however you were led, you were being led astray to mutant dumb idols.

Make no mistake about it. But then he goes on to speak of this undeniable influence. Because he says, but, you know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

Therefore, I make known to you. And he said, there's a difference between, because here's the danger. What was going on in the churches? They were seeing these people being spirit led. And they're saying, oh, these people are out of control. These people are out of control. And we don't know what's going on.

And he's kind of cautioning this. He says, you know that when you were pagans, not believers, you were led in various ways and various manners. And everybody's doing his own thing. He says, but I want to make known to you how you can understand that it's the Holy Spirit doing it.

[19:36] By the way, there are very clear, simple tests for Holy Spirit influence. Very clear. And he gives them. And he says that no one speaking by the Spirit of God can say Jesus is accursed.

Jesus is anathema is the word. It says that no one speaking by the Spirit will ever defame the name and the person and the work of Jesus Christ. So here's your first test.

This is what's so undeniable. That nothing of the Spirit of God will ever bring shame to the name of Jesus. So if you ever meet anyone that tells you they're being led by the Holy Spirit, and what they're doing is not exalting the name of Christ, then they are being led by a Spirit, lowercase s, but not the Spirit of God.

Okay? And the second thing is not only what it will not do, but what it does do. And no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Now, I know that people in mockery and people kind of in pride and all this can make this declaration. What Paul is saying is that no one can honestly, now keep it in context because if you're in the city of Corinth, this major metropolis city in the Roman Empire, to declare that Jesus is Lord is to say that he is greater than Herod.

[20 : 58] He's greater than any other political leader. He's greater than any emperor. He's greater than any patriarch or anybody that's sitting upon the Roman council. He's greater than anybody in the city.

That Jesus is the greatest of all greats. And no one can declare that but by the Holy Spirit. Here's the reality. You in your own strength will never be able to profess the lordship of Jesus Christ, but by the Holy Spirit.

So one of the tests we give ourselves is, well, pastor, am I saved? Do I know Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior? Well, I mean, can you declare that Jesus is Lord? I mean, with all of your being, with all of your soul, with all of your might, can you declare his lordship over every aspect of your life?

And if you can, then the only reason you're able to do that is because of the presence and the influence of the Holy Spirit. And it's undeniable. One of the great things that we see.

Now, Paul is balancing this. We're about to speak of spiritual gifts, right? Spiritual gifts imply the work of the Holy Spirit. We'll see that in just a moment. And I know I'm going a little long, but it's okay.

[22 : 05] Spiritual gifts imply the work of the Holy Spirit. And the reason we have to balance it like this, when you open up the book of Acts, you see what I believe is one of the greatest displays of the Holy Spirit working upon people's lives.

Every time the gospel goes into a new region, the Holy Spirit falls upon the people, and they speak in various tongues. They give their interpretation of tongues. There's this manifestation, right? Not only at Pentecost, but every time when he goes into Cornelius' house.

So you've got Pentecost, that's the Jewish. Cornelius' house is kind of the halfway point. It's half Jew, half Greek, right? It's there. And guess what happens? As soon as it goes there into Cornelius' house, and the Holy Spirit comes, people speak in tongues.

And Peter says, well, if they're speaking in tongues here, like we spoke in tongues there, then who am I not to baptize them, right? And then when he goes into Antioch, and he gets into the no-Jewish territory, it's all Gentile, non-Jewish people.

When the gospel gets there, guess what happens? The Holy Spirit comes, and people speak in tongues. And there's always this display. And we'll get to that later. And we see this. But this is what's so amazing. Every time the Holy Spirit comes in the book of Acts, he's doing one thing.

[23 : 12] Every time. We see it all throughout the book of Acts. Every time. And some of you that were here, when we preached to the book of Acts, I know that's been a couple years ago, you remember it. He's always doing the same thing.

And I say he because he is a person. We use a personal pronoun for the Holy Spirit, right? It's not an it. It's a he. So every time the Holy Spirit manifests himself, it's simply undeniable because it's always the same thing.

And it's exalting Jesus. Always. This shouldn't surprise us. Because John 13, 14, 15, 16 are one great long discourse.

John 13, Judas Iscariot leaves to betray Christ. John 14, 15, and 16, Jesus has his disciples on that last night. And he has something he wants to teach them.

John 17 is the high priestly prayer or the Lord's prayer as we refer to call it. But in John 14, 15, and 16, Jesus speaks a lot about the Holy Spirit.

[24 : 20] He makes these declarations. It says that when he comes, he's the paraclete or the helper. He will come, and he will remind you of what I've said. He's remind you of what I've taught,

and he will empower you and enable you to do the things I've commanded you to do.

So what we see here is the Holy Spirit's whole job, his whole occupation, his whole motivation, his whole manifestation is to exalt the name of Christ through the individual believers, which again, here's the test.

If you find anyone declaring that they're being led by the Holy Spirit and they are not doing that, then you have every right to test the Spirit and to tell them they are wrong.

It's consistent throughout Scripture, my friend. It's undeniable because the Holy Spirit is evident and present in the world today to promote and exalt the name of Christ among the people of God.

That's why he's here. And that's why the book of Job says that if God was to call his spirit back to himself, that all men would die, that none will live.

[25 : 30] No, not one. And anything other than that, the work of the Holy Spirit is simply undeniable. It's undeniable. So we understand here the undeniable influence of the Holy Spirit.

Number two, we see the unifying manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the spiritual gifts do not divide the church, rather they unite the church.

It's a unifying manifestation. It says in verse 4. Now look at verse 4, 5, and 6. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are varieties of ministries and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. You see what Paul did there.

Paul took the greatest example that man will ever find. of individuality and oneness combined. That is, the fullness of the Trinity.

[26 : 37] These are spiritual gifts or a work of the Holy Spirit, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of God the Father. We profess that he is three in one, that they are unique in their identity, but they are one in their likeness.

You say, Pastor, explain to me the Trinity. And this is one of those times where I'm not going to come with all boldness and all ambition, and I'll say I simply can't. Because by faith, we acknowledge it.

By faith, we accept it. And I promise you, when we stand in his presence and glory, there will no longer be any questions about it. I'm not going to try to define it. I'm not going to try to explain it. I'm not going to go any further than the reality that Scripture testifies to it. He gives us the picture of the Trinity. All three involved. All three unique. All three, but one, the fullness of the Trinity.

There's nothing more united than the Trinity. There's nothing more unique than the Trinity. There's nothing more singular in its work, in its occupation, in its occupation than the Trinity of God.

[27 : 40] And when we see the Trinity of God in its work, all the fullness of God is working. Wherever the Father is working, the fullness of God is there. Wherever the Son is working, the fullness of God is there. Wherever the Holy Spirit his work and the fullness of God is there. We don't need to define it. We don't even need to understand it because greater are his ways than our ways and greater his thoughts than our thoughts.

And if you have a God, you can understand. And if you have a God, you can figure out my friend, I tell you, your God's not big enough. And I mean that in all reality. I don't want a God that I can figure out in my finite mind. If I can understand him and I can wrap my mind around him and I can even define him, then I have made myself equal to him. And scripture says that it's simply not the case. Yet we see the fullness of the Trinity is involved in the giftedness of the body.

Verse seven shows us this unifying manifestation, but to each one, oh, you say, well, how many are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit? My Bible says each one, you're a part of each one, right? For whoever professes the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved. If you've claimed the name of Jesus Christ, you've accepted him as your Lord and savior. You are united together with his body. And the Bible is very clear. It says each and every one of us have given a gift, but to each one, you say, well, I don't know what my gift is. Well, that doesn't mean you don't have it. Right? Well, pastor, I don't like my gift. We'll get to that in just a minute. All right. Let me say what it says, but to each one, it says, is given. So if you know Jesus Christ is your Lord and savior, put yourself here.

You have been given a gift. You say, well, that's wonderful. Oh, what good news it is. I've been given a gift. Oh, my gift is unique. And it is. We'll get to that in just a minute. As a matter of fact, our third word is unique. We'll get to that. You know, I've been given a gift. It's so amazing.

Let me take my gift home. Let me unwrap my gift. Let me see what I have. Some of you give me gifts from time to time. I don't like to unwrap my gifts in front of people. I take them to my office. I'll

look at them there and that's fine. You know, it's personal. It's from you to me and that's okay. [29 : 55] It doesn't have to be put on display for everybody. Spiritual gifts are not that way. Not that way at all. It says, but each one has been given a gift. But the gift you've been given is to be unwrapped in the presence of the brethren or the saints when they gather together.

Because look at what it says. Read the rest of the verse. But to each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good. That means the spiritual gift you have been given is not being given for your benefit, for your good, and for your self-pleasure. You have been given a spiritual gift for the good of everybody else. There's nothing more unifying than that. I've told you before, over and over again, I need you to exercise your spiritual gifts. You need me to exercise my spiritual gifts. Why? Because the reason I've been given a gift and the reason you've been given a gift is for the common good of the saints. It is not just so that you can go home and unwrap it and look at it and go, oh, this is amazing. This is so beautiful. This is so wonderful. What am I going to do with this gift? Well, I'll tell you, if you're not using it for the church, you're not using it for its purpose. You say, well, I've been given the gift of faith. Oh, that's a wonderful thing. See, I've been given the gift of faith too. One of my spiritual gifts, I believe, is the gift of faith. The gift of faith is one of those things that at times is so scary. It scares everybody else but me. It's the gift of faith that says I can step out on things that I believe is impossible. My mentor used to say, you have to forgive my voice. I'm so sorry. My mentor used to say, we ought to have so much faith that we will cut out, set out on a limb. We'll step out on a limb. We'll cut the tree away, we'll cut the limb away from the tree and stand there expecting God to hold the limb up.

And that's the kind of faith that I believe I've been given. Faith that expects God to do the impossible. Faith that I anticipate that God is going to do a mighty work. That he does not confine himself or restrain himself to work in multitudes or even work on few, but that God can do something amazing. Well, that faith is all well and good. It helps me in my personal life, but that faith is for your benefit too. Because you need me to exercise that gift of faith. Because some of you say, well, I've been given the gift of administration, so your faith makes no sense to me. That's right. And your administration makes no sense to me. You say, well, I'm doing the numbers and it doesn't add up.

And I say, well, I don't even look at numbers. I just go, let's go. But I need the administration to kind of caution me, but you need my faith to move you for the common good. You see that?

[32 : 36] The reason spiritual gifts unite the body so much is the whole reason the Holy Spirit chose to work in each one of us was so that we would benefit everybody else. And apart from one another, our spiritual gifts are ineffective and quite honestly, useless. They're not serving their purpose.

So we see here that it is a unifying manifestation. Number three, and finally, we see that these are unique individuals. Unity does not remove individuality. We've talked about that a lot. Unity does not mean uniformity. Unity does not remove individuality. And when the Holy Spirit works and manifests himself among the people of God for the common good, it does not remove the individuals because verse seven is followed by verses eight through 11. For to the one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same spirit, and to another faith by the same spirit, and to another, the gift of healing by the one spirit, and to another, the effective of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another, the distinguishing of spirits, to another, various kinds of tongues, and to another, the interpretation of tongues. You notice to one, to another, to another, to another, to another, to another. When the Holy Spirit works, he works in individual lives. So when we come together as a corporate body, we don't say, oh God, give us a spirit. We say, Lord God, what is your spirit given to me as a part of the us? He takes all of our uniqueness. I'm so thankful for that.

And it's something that I stand in scripture on. The Bible tells us that God knit us together and formed and fashioned us, right? Before the world knew us. In our mother's womb, it made us amazing.

He knew what he was doing when he created us. He knew what he was doing when he formed and fashioned us. And as some have reminded me, God doesn't make junk, right? So however, we're made, we're made perfectly. And when he redeems us, he doesn't take his creation and completely abolish it and make it something else. He redeems that creation in the way he wired us, in the way he moves us, in the way he formed and fashioned us, the desires and the passions he put in our hearts as non-believers. The, uh, the sinful passions are removed. They're replaced with holy

passions and, and our individuality that we had as non-believers are gloriously redeemed as believers and united with others that are not like us. That's the most wonderful testimony the church will ever have. That being so different, we would all be so united. And the spirit is working in this one and this one and this one and this one and this one and this one and this one. It says in verse 11, as we, we wrap it up, look at verse 11, but one in the same spirit, one in the same spirit works all these things. Isn't it amazing?

That in our uniqueness and our individuality, the same spirits work in each and every one of us. Some of you, I know at times, this guy says, Lord, uh, brother, I don't know the spirit that's in you. It can't be the spirit working in me. You're just a little different than me.

[36 : 05] But we're reminded even in our uniqueness, right? One in the same spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually. That's good. I don't know about you, but I cry out with the psalmist when I read those individual words. I cry out and I say, when I consider the heavens and I look up to the sky and I see the stars, then I have to say, what is man that you think of him?

What am I, oh God, did you think of me? Have you ever thought about that? You've been given a spiritual gift and God thought about you when he gave it to you.

He didn't just throw a bunch of things out there and see what stuck. As an individual, the God of all creation. Remember what I said last week, we're just one in eight billion.

Eight million people on the face of the earth. But the God of all creation thought about me. And he thought about you individually.

Individually. And then he did this. Distributing to each one individually just as he wills.

[37 : 27] So think about this. When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are redeemed. I mean completely forgiven.

You have a sanctification process you need to walk through. The Bible says that we are sealed until the day of redemption with the Holy Spirit. And then God thinks about you.

You notice that? As an individual. And he alone determines what spiritual gift he's going to give you. You ever got a number of gifts? You get a gift from someone who gave you a generic gift. And then you get a gift from someone who took time to know you. And to think about you. And to really consider what you would use or need.

There's a difference, right? But when God considered you as an individual. Me as an individual. He determined which gift to give us individually. We don't get to decide.

[38 : 35] Oh, if it was me. I'd have said, Lord, I don't want to preach. I don't want to pastor. Just being honest with you. Lord, I probably wouldn't have picked the gift of faith.

Because sometimes it leads me to do things that scare me to wit's end. Probably because most of the time the administrators come beside me and tell me how crazy I am. So I just said, Lord, give me the gift of faith in isolation.

That would have been okay. But anyway. We don't get to make that decision, right? We don't. But the Holy Spirit gives to each one as he wills.

Which means the gift you've been given. The spiritual gift you've been given. Was chosen for you by the one who created you according to his will. Which now, by the way, my friend, puts responsibility on you and me.

Because if God willed that I have this gift, then it is very becoming of me and even required of me to exercise that. Adrian Rogers said it like this.

[39 : 37] Adrian said, it is your duty and joy to discover, develop, and deploy your special God-given talents and spiritual gifts. It is your duty and joy to discover, develop, and deploy your God-given talents and your spiritual gifts.

That's our duty and our joy. Why? Because God gave it to us according to his will. And if we don't use it, we say, well, I don't like my gift.

Well, that's okay. This is one thing I've noticed in Scripture. It's not about what we like and what we don't like, right? It's what God determines. And God says, this is the gift I'm giving you.

And I'm putting you in that body. Now, therefore, use it. And if you don't, friend, you're not just offending me.

You're in rebellion against the God who gifted you. That's just the simplest way that I know how to say it. Do you ever wonder why Paul could say, woe is me if I preach not the gospel of Christ?

Because woe is me if I do not do what God has called me to do.

[40 : 48] And also, woe are you if you do not do what God has called and gifted you to do. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day.

God, so thankful for being a part of the body of Christ. Thankful that you put us into a body of believers called the church. Thank you for this church.

I thank you that according to your word, Lord, you've gifted us as individuals. And Lord, now I pray we would respond to that gifting with obedience, with excitement, and with desire.

Lord, to serve you according to the way you've gifted us. For we know then, Lord, it brings you the greatest glory. Be glorified in these closing moments.

Be honored in all that takes place. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[42 : 00] Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.