

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH"

PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



1 CORINTHIANS 12

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. ² You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. ³ 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.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to

NOW CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, A FIRST CONSIDERATION

- Background
 - The Greeks (and some other pagans) would sometimes "rig" their idols with speaking tubes running up to the idols' mouths, which allowed priests to secretly speak into the tubes and make it appear that the idols could actually talk—priests regularly orchestrated magic tricks (secretly employing talented engineers and scientists) to dupe the people into worshipping their god with something "amazing".
 - The literal Greek is "anathema Jesus", possibly reflecting a formula some Gentiles used to curse others by their god.
- Two possibilities...
 - Were some of these pagan "oracles" saying, "Jesus is accursed" and causing some to be confused?
 - Or were some Christians cursing their enemies?
- What should this principle, the Spirit of God only speaks one truth, teach us today?
 - What is the word of the Spirit today?
 - Are there those who use some passages to teach things that other passages teach against?

DIFFERENT GIFTS BUT ONE SPIRIT

- Why was there so much emphasis on many gifts but one Spirit, one Lord, and one God?
 - Could the church also be divided by these gifts?
- For what reason were any of these gifts had been given to members of the Corinthian church? (v. 7)
 - Does this have application to the modern church and its members?

one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ and to another the effecting 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. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

¹² For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are 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 we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

- Some of the gifts found in the early church...
 - the word of _____ (what is this?)
 - the word of _____ (what is this?)
 - _____ (what is this?)
 - gifts of _____ (what is this?)
 - effecting of _____ (what is this?)
 - _____ (what is this?)
 - _____ of spirits (what is this?)
 - various kinds of _____ (what is this?)
 - _____ of tongues (what is this?)
- Who assigns (and distributes) these gifts?
 - What does Paul hope that this information might do for the unity of the Corinthian church?

THE CHURCH AS A BODY

- Explain Paul's illustration of the church as a body...
 - How many organs make up a body?
 - Are these organs unified in their purpose or divided?
 - So also is Christ...
- What is the "connecting tissue" of the organs (members) of the church?
 - How were we added to the one church (the one body)?
 - Does it make any difference what our background is?

THE PROPER HUMILITY OF EACH ORGAN (MEMBER)

- What is Paul's main spiritual point by saying "...the body is not one member, but many"?
 - What does v.v 15 and 16 imply was happening in the Corinthian church?
 - How might that teach the modern church and the role we might or might not be fulfilling in the congregation?
- Should we be jealous one another?

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹ If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³ and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴ whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵ so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

- Why (according to what Paul is teaching in v. 17) are there various organs (members) in a body or the church?
- Who has decided our role in the church?
 - Should we resent our role, or embrace it?
- What does Paul mean by v. 19? Can the body (or the body of Christ) survive if every organ had the same function?
- What does v. 21 imply that may have been happening in the Corinthian church?
 - Is it appropriate to belittle or disparage other gifts in the church?
 - Does size or prominence of an organ make that organ more important?
 - Does greater visibility of one member of the church make that member more important?
 - Are smaller or hidden organs sometimes critical to the health and abilities of the body?
 - What can we learn here?
- What does v. 24 mean when it says that God has given more honor to the member that lacks it and less honor to "presentable" members?
- So are there divisions in a physical body?
 - Should there be divisions in the body of Christ?
 - If one member of a physical body is honored (fast feet), is not the whole body honored?
 - If one member of Christ's body is honored shouldn't the whole be honored?

²⁷ Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹ But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

And I show you a still more excellent way.

GOD'S APPOINTMENTS

- What seems to be God's order of importance for the church?
 - first _____, (what is this?)
 - second _____, (what is this?)
 - third _____, (what is this?)
 - then _____, (what is this?)
 - then gifts of _____, (what is this?)
 - _____, (what is this?)
 - _____, (what is this?)
 - various kinds of _____ (what is this?)
- But not everyone has every _____
- Paul's inspired charge to them: " _____ desire the _____ gifts"
- And I show you a still more _____ way
 - More excellent than what?