

Remnant Life Church

July 9, 2023

The Holy Spirit

Pt 5

The Gifts of the Spirit

I Cor 12:1-11

In our time together over the last several weeks we have examined 3 characteristics of the Holy Spirit so that we can better understand who He is and how He impacts or lives every day.

- These are by no means the only ones but they are 3 that are powerful in our day to day experience
 1. He is immutable meaning never changing
 2. He is longsuffering meaning patient
 3. And He is present – IOW with us at all times and in every situation

But God also provided each of us tools in which we should live together as a body of believers

- Some of those tools are for serving one another
- Some are for serving the church
- And some are for the battles we face everyday against the plans of satan

READ - I Corinthians 12:1-11

Let's talk first about the concept of gift giving

Gift definition

- Something voluntarily given or transferred for one person to another without expectation of compensation

- If you feel obligated to do something for someone that is not a gift
- If you expect anything in return (even a thank you) that is not a gift
- **Why do we give and receive gifts?**
 - As an act of love or affection
 - Certainly birthdays, an anniversary, Christmas or a personal achievement come to mind
 - To give assistance to someone
 - When someone is in need you do for them without an expectation of return
 - Many of you have helped or offered to help me in these last couple of months
 - Mark Conrad and BJ Basom
 - Increase what is already happening
 - Starting a new business and receiving consultations from a success in that field
 - My doctoral advisor
- **The nature of a physical gift is always positive never negative**
 - The same applies to the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - This is one of the ways that you can determine if the gift is truly of God through the Holy Spirit or if it is a counterfeit
 - I believe that the first and perhaps greatest negative as it relates to the gifts is when the one who has been

blessed with a gift takes their eyes off of God and allows the attention to be on themselves

- **To accept a gift or gifts means that you understand the nature of what is being done**
 - That means I recognize not only what the gift is but why the gift has been given and what the purpose of the gift is
 - We see this in the passage we just read
 - Why did Paul write about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church in Corinth?

1. The letter to the Corinthian church

- a. Located about 3 miles NE from today's city
- b. Corinth was an ancient city (several thousand years old in Paul's day) that was completely destroyed by Rome in 146 BC
- c. Julius Caesar had it rebuilt around 44 BC and it was in that city that Paul founded the church
- d. It was in many ways the most prominent Greek metropolis in Paul's time
 - i. Because of that, like so many of the large cities in America today
 - ii. It was intellectually arrogant
 - iii. Materialistically centered
 - iv. Morally corrupt
 - v. One commentator wrote, Sin of every kind flourished in this notoriously sensual city.
- e. The city was situated about 40 miles west of Athens

- i. Its proximity to 2 ports in addition to its geographic topography gave it strategic importance to the trade and travel of the day
 - ii. The commercial and cultural wealth of Corinth and all that brought with it was the background that Paul worked in
 - iii. It also insured a tremendous diversity of people including religious practices, beliefs and customs
- f. On the hill overlooking the city was the temple to the goddess Aphrodite whose entire religion was based on the hedonistic (pleasure) lifestyle
- g. If you were looking to plant a church this would have been one of the most difficult places to do it because the people were surrounded by and immersed in the Greek culture of the pleasures of the flesh.

2. There are 3 primary focus points of I Corinthians

- a. Addressing some of the church member's reluctance to completely break with the past –
 - i. The church was comprised of some Jews but mostly of ex-pagan Greek Gentiles
 - ii. Many were still embracing behavior that was inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus and, because of that, there was division spreading within this brand-new gathering of believers
- b. The second focus of the letter is providing instruction on the life of the Christian and how to live an empowered life following Jesus (purpose of the gifts)
- c. And third, recognizing and living within the most important factor of life - love (**I Cor. 13**)

3. Why are these gifts important to us today?

- a. As the end times increase in intensity the church – meaning us the body of the church - will need to have these gifts in operation to fight and resist the evil and temptation of daily life; to have the victory in those times, and help us to maintain our focus on God
- b. There is a necessity within the church for a diversity of the gifts for the health, growth and good of the church
 - i. Unfortunately, like so many things of God, the world has stolen them and have changed their meaning when we hear them
 - ii. The greatest example of that is the rainbow – a physical sign of God’s covenant with man following the flood – but meaning something else entirely today
 - iii. But in this case, it is the word diversity
- c. This is not about unity within the church through conformity rather the importance of everyone operating in their specific gift
- d. All of the gifts (should) point a person to God, the giver of the gift
 - i. *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. - James 1:17*

4. What would keep the gifts from operating today?

- a. We do not embrace, teach, desire to understand or ask for them

- i. ...*You do not have because you do not ask God.*
James 4:2
 - ii. **I Tim 4:14** – *Do not neglect the gift that is in you...*
 - 1. The word neglect means to take lightly or have no regard for
 - 2. If something is not important we will neglect it
 - iii. **II Tim 1:6** - ...*stir up the gift of God*
 - 1. Stir up is much more than mixing
 - 2. In the NIV we read to fan into flames
 - 3. It is the picture of rekindling a fire with the present embers

- b. They are embraced and operate in the flesh rather than the spirit
 - i. There is always contention between the flesh and the spirit (**Mark:14:38; John 6:63**)
 - ii. **Rom 8:6** - *The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.*
 - iii. Things done in the flesh are counterfeit and not from God (contrary to His Word)

- c. The leadership of the church will not allow them to become active
 - i. The authority of the church must be honored (**I Thess 5:12-13**)
 - ii. The gifts will not operate where they are not welcomed

- iii. I will teach more on this in subsequent sermons in the series
- d. A present atmosphere of skepticism and unbelief in a church
 - i. In **Mark 5** we read that Jesus is about to raise a young girl from the dead
 - ii. **Mark 5:39-40** – Jesus cleared the room except for the mother and father and those who truly believed
- e. Ignorance of what they are and how they operate
 - i. **Hosea 4:6**
 - ii. Out of ignorance comes fear

Again, from **I Cor. 12:11** - *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines (wills).*

In his 2013 book, *The Code of the Holy Spirit*, Perry Stone wrote this regarding spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit

- I think it summarizes what we are saying this morning

When desiring a spiritual gift, we must keep in mind that the gift is not given to show we are superior to others or more spiritual, and certainly must not be operated with pride. The gifts are for the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the church, and to assist in ministering to the unsaved, revealing the living God.

Everything of value in our lives is because of God!