

For The Benefit Of All – 1Corinthians 12:4-11

Bible Study ~ 4/5/17

Grace Church of Lockeford

This passage is part of Paul's larger section dealing extensively with Spiritual gifts. We are not going to spend a ton of time explaining Spiritual gifts because that is not our focus. We are focusing on our blessings in Christ. In this passage, we are blessed by how Spiritual gifts were meant to operate. We want to first consider...

1. The Source Of Spiritual Gifts vv. 4-6

There are a variety of gifts (v. 4). Not all gifts are the same and not everyone has the same gift. Though there is variety in the gifts, it is the same Spirit that gives them. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts when He indwells the believer.

"Differences" in v. 5 is the same Greek word as "diversities" in v. 4. As the gifts differ, so does the ministry in which we are to use the gifts. Yet, it is the same Lord Jesus Christ who calls us into ministry, regardless of what gifts we have.

The gifts differ, the service differs, and the activity differs (v. 6). The practical usage of our gifts is going to manifest itself differently in different people. But it is the same God who works it all together. We plant and water, He gives the increase. Not everyone will plant and water in the same way. But it will always be God who brings the increase.

Notice the trinity in these verses. v. 4 The Spirit. v. 5 The Son. v. 6 The Father. The entire Godhead is active in the gifting and exercising of Spiritual gifts to the glory of Christ! What a blessing it is to know that regardless of our gifting, or ministry, or activity, it is the same Godhead that is active in our lives. This truth emphasizes the unity of the body. We are diverse in role and function but it is the same power energizing each one of us. So, the Godhead is the source of the gifts. Next, we examine...

2. The Purpose Of Spiritual Gifts vv. 7-10

The purpose is very clearly stated in v. 7. It is for the profit of all. We are gifted individually that we might benefit corporately. A few important points here. There is no time limit. Our Spiritual gifts are given to be used for the benefit of the body of Christ, through our local church, until God calls us home. Also, no one is excluded. Every single believer is given a spiritual gift and is expected to use it. Any time a believer is not active in using their spiritual gift, the body is weaker because of it. As when our physical body compensates for a missing limb, the body of Christ can compensate. However, there is an added strain on the body members who take up the slack.

We need to stress that a Spiritual gift is not given for personal use. I am not gifted to benefit myself. I am gifted for the profit of the body!

To properly interpret these verses we must be reminded that Paul is writing a corrective letter. He is correcting their misunderstanding and misuse of Spiritual gifts. One of their issues was everyone wanting the "better" gifts, meaning the highly visible ones. The gifts Paul lists in vv. 8-10 are all temporary "sign" gifts meant to establish the authority of the apostles and authenticate their message. There is no longer any need for that. Their message is recorded in Scripture and it is now our final authority.

Let's just quickly run through these. V. 8 word of wisdom – God's direction. Word of knowledge – God's revelation. V. 9 faith – A miraculous measure of belief in the promises of God. Gifts of healings – the supernatural ability to heal any and all diseases, even death. V. 10 miracles – the ability to do wondrous things (calm storms etc.). Prophecy – the ability to proclaim truth and foretell future events. This would mostly be the proclamation of God's truth. Discerning spirits – knowing if someone is speaking from God or from demonic influence. Tongues – the ability to speak languages one has never studied. Interpretation of tongues – the ability to interpret a language one has never learned. This is a

system of checks and balances. The person speaking in tongues knows what he is saying, but if he interprets his own speech, there is no accountability. An interpreter is given to verify what is being said.

What I want to stress here is how Paul repeatedly points out that it is the same Spirit who gives the gifts. Again, there is unity in our diversity. Each believer is given gifts to benefit the body of Christ. They are given different gifts to be used in different ministries and to be engaged in different activities. What a blessing it is that we are gifted to profit one another! The source is the Godhead. The purpose is the benefit of the body. Lastly, we consider...

3. The Selection Of Spiritual Gifts v. 11

Those in the Corinthian church all wanted the same public, recognizable, and (in their mind) glamorous gifts. Paul's point in this verse is that you do not choose your gift. The same Spirit works all these things. He distributes the gifts as He wills. God knows His place for you in the Divine plan. He knows what gifts you need to accomplish His purpose. He gifts you in accordance with His will! To reject the gift He has given, or to seek a different gift, is to accuse God of incompetency and weakness! God knows exactly the gift you need and He has uniquely placed you where your gift is needed! Failure to exercise that gift is a slap in the face to God! It is the creature telling God that He doesn't know what He is doing. We are not to seek different gifts, but to use what we have been given for the glory of God and the benefit of the saints.

What a blessing it is that God knew exactly what gift I would need to accomplish His purpose for my life. He has gifted me and placed me exactly where I need to be in order to be most effective. My greatest joy, greatest fulfillment, and greatest peace will come from submitting to Him and exercising the gift He has given.

CHALLENGE: Use our gifts to benefit the body of Christ for His glory!