

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Spirit Filled Living in a Broken and Fallen World: 1 Corinthians 12**  
**No wait! We really are the hands and feet of Jesus!**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - March 12, 2017**

**A Call to Prayer and Fasting**

One of the great stories of the Bible is the story of Esther. It reads at once like a romance novel and a novel of political intrigue. Good reading. A quick review – you remember there is a crisis in the story as the King Ahasuerus [A HA SUR US] the pagan King who ruled over the occupied Israel had decreed the death of all Jews. That was complicated by the fact that he had taken a pretty Jewish girl for his wife. Esther was called on to beseech the King on behalf of the nation of Israel even though she could be executed for such an act. Understandably she was scared to act. Mordechai, Esther's uncle said to her in one of the great lines of the entire Bible - **“Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. <sup>14</sup> For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” <sup>15</sup> Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,**

**Esther 4:16** <sup>16</sup> “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

*Brief teaching on fasting and on our circumstances then I will continue in these verses*

**Acts 14:23** <sup>23</sup> And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Ezra 8:23** <sup>23</sup> So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

**Matthew 6:16** “And when you fast . . . “

I invite you to join me in prayer and fasting for the close of the land sale and a release from the financial obligations that have been a weight on this congregation for over ten years.

I began my fast on Friday night and will continue it until next Sunday or until the land closes. This is not a dare to God nor are we trying to tell God what to do. He has prompted me twice on this and I have finally seen fit to obey. I will be engaging in a complete food fast for this week, and I have done this before many dozens of times.

I invite you to join me tonight for prayer at 6:30 here at church or in your own home. I'd prefer you join me here for the solidarity of corporate prayer but I understand that on short notice it is not possible for many of you.

Suggestions for fasting and prayer . . .

**Suggestions for fasting and prayer**

1. **Start small.** Consider skipping one meal a day or abstaining after 7:00 pm
2. **Plan what you'll do instead of eating.** Consider praying with another for the sale.
3. **Consider how it will affect others.** Remain in fellowship!

My prayer has been for God to “expand my faith” in this time of waiting, and as I have transitioned my prayers from giving God a timetable, and changed it to expand my faith – he has answered it every time. Still I invite you to a prayer of blessing over this church, a church that Jesus loves very much, and intercede on behalf of 4Cs that we might soon close on the land sale to the Glory of the Father!

## Prayer

Let's go ahead and take a look at the passage for today

**1 Corinthians 12:3-11, 25-29 (The Message)** <sup>1-3</sup> What I want to talk about now is the various ways God's Spirit gets worked into our lives. This is complex and often misunderstood, but I want you to be informed and knowledgeable. Remember how you were when you didn't know God, led from one phony god to another, never knowing what you were doing, just doing it because everybody else did it? It's different in this life. God wants us to use our intelligence, to seek to understand as well as we can. For instance, by using your heads, you know perfectly well that the Spirit of God would never prompt anyone to say "Jesus be damned!" Nor would anyone be inclined to say "Jesus is Master!" without the insight of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4-11</sup> God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful!

<sup>25-26</sup> The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

<sup>27-29</sup> You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything.

This passage deserves a close study. There are two or three other classic references on the gifts offered by the Holy Spirit to each believer (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). When a Christ follower first discovers that they are empowered by the God of the universe with at least one unique spiritual gift for the purpose of God, it is most often life changing. It opens up a world of service and opportunity that many do not know that they have in Christ. Let's review for just a moment.

**1. You have been bought with a cost.** Your salvation was not free. It was free to you, the free gift of God - but it was not without cost! Your salvation was earned, that truth is what we reflect on in this season of Lent, the terrible price of your salvation in the passion of Jesus.

**1 Peter 1** tells us that "you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

**2.** This means **you are not your own**. **You** do not belong to **you** anymore. You are a bond-slave of Jesus Christ, obedient to His purposes and only His purposes – never your selfish purposes. You may not have heard this when someone shared the gospel to you. This is all part of the gospel as well – as it is very good news that I do not belong to me anymore. I was driving my life into the ground. Now God has complete control of all things in my life and I wouldn't have it any other way!!

**3.** You have been bought **for a reason**, for a divine Kingdom purpose. You are very important to God and His purposes!

**4.** And **you have been equipped by God** with the promise of a gift from God Himself to equip you for these purposes, and I find this all very, very encouraging and exciting.

We're going to spend two more weeks unpacking these wonderful gifts from God and how you can come to understand your own and how you can release this gift for God's purposes. As it says on the sign outdoors, God has a gift for you but He gave it to you so you too could give it away! Let focus for the rest of the time we have this morning on 1 Corinthians 12: 7 and four words or phrases in that passage:

**1 Corinthians 12:7** <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

**Focusing on four words:**

“each one”

“the Spirit”

“manifestation”

“the common good”

**"Each One"**

**Who Are the "Each Ones"?** Who are the "each ones" who are given the manifestation of the Spirit? Are you included? That's what verses 2 and 3 are talking about.

“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.” Who then are the "each ones" in verse 7? They are those who once were pagans led away from Christ by idols—idols that have nothing to say. Dumb idols. Idols with no message, no good news.

But all that has changed because of the work of the Spirit. The "each ones" of verse 7 are people who have ceased treating Jesus as a curse to be rejected and now follow him as Lord. The key sentence is at the end of verse 3: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." The "each ones" in verse 7 are people who live under the Lordship of Jesus—

**Those *Living Under the Lordship of Jesus***

This is manifest by those who aim to *think the way he says to think*, and who aim to *feel the way he says to feel*, and who aim to *do what he says to do*. These are the people who each have a manifestation of the Spirit, because they cannot live like this "except by the Holy Spirit."

The reason I say that LIVING under the lordship of Jesus is the mark of "each one" rather than just saying "Jesus is Lord" is that Scripture and experience teach us that people can indeed say that Jesus is Lord without the special work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. For example in Matthew 7:22–23 Jesus says, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

So you can see from those words that living the bondservant life is the key to experiencing these gifts. It is not that God is holding out on you, this person who refuses to give his allegiance to Jesus is holding out on God. The more I yield my heart and mind the more I am able to access the wonders and power of God He longs to manifest in me for His name's sake. So the "each ones" of verse 7 **are those who are so changed by the Holy Spirit that they say it and mean it and live it: Jesus is Lord.** He runs my life. I consult with him. I don't do what he forbids and I do what he commands. And when I fall short, I feel bad and I repent and seek his forgiveness and press on to trust him and obey him more and more fully. This is the heart that will seek and find the gifts of God set aside for him or her. Then there is the word "the Spirit"...

**"The Spirit"**

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11** <sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the **same Spirit**; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the **same Lord**; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the **same God** who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation **of the Spirit** for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through **the Spirit** the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the **same Spirit**, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the **same Spirit**, to another gifts of healing by the **one Spirit**, <sup>10</sup> to

another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the **same Spirit**, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

This passage emphasizes two things:

1. One is that there is one and the same Spirit behind all the varieties of gifts. "One and the same Spirit works all these things." Look at verse 4. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit." Verse 5: "And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord." Verse 6: "And there are varieties of effects, but the same God." Verses 8 and 9: "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit." Paul clearly wants us to get the message: we are different in our gifts and ministries and effectiveness, yes, no doubt about it; but those differences are not owing to many Spirits, or to bad faith, or to poor obedience. They are owing to "one and the same Spirit." There is great diversity in the church but we all are called by the same Spirit to the same purpose.

2. The second point of this is that the Spirit is the one who decides who will have what gift and ministry and effectiveness. "One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." The Spirit who is in us and around us is also over us. He fills us and embraces us and rules us. The Spirit is sovereign. He does what he wills. The diversity of gifts, the diversity of ministries, the diversity of effectiveness is his doing. He is God. He is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son, and their one divine will comes to expression perfectly in his. They are one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And they build and rule and guide the church. Now the word "Manifestation" . . .

### "Manifestation"

"To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit . . ." – this is the connection between you and God. God, the Spirit, becomes visible through you. Your job is to show the Spirit. Professor Don Carson of Trinity Seminary wrote a whole book on just these three chapters (12–14) and he titled the whole book on the basis of this one verse: *Showing the Spirit*. To him that is what the whole section is about. I would say that is what the whole Bible and all of life is about—showing God, making God as an invisible God seen. Manifest. What that means is the work of the church – you and me – is supremely and uniquely supernatural!

### **The work of the church is supremely and uniquely supernatural!**

Finally there is the idea of "the Common Good" . . .

### "The Common Good"

The whole point of this gifting isn't to bless us, though of course it is a blessing. The point is to manifest these gifts from the Spirit for **the common good**. The Spirit does not give gifts and ministries so that we can boast in our spiritual prowess. He gives gifts and ministries for two reasons: to give glory to Himself and to help us do good to each other in the church. Gifts are for the glory of God and the good of the church.

**Ephesians 4:11-12** <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Here is my fear; as you are reading this passage and getting all excited about the gifts and wondering what yours is and hoping especially that you get one of the really cool gifts like healing or leading or maybe speaking in tongues and somehow you have forgotten that this is really about the body of Christ – then you have missed the point. This passage and these **gifts are all about us being the hands and**

***feet of God, doing His bidding with His power for His purposes.*** It doesn't matter how young you are or how modest the task, you can do it for the glory of God.

[Wolle testimony]

**All to the Glory to God and for the love for the Church!**