

1 Corinthians: A Congregation in Crisis

Lesson 5B: A Crisis Over Worship (1 Corinthians 11:2-14:40)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1.) In chapters 12–14, Paul deals with the proper attitude and use of spiritual gifts in the context of public worship. List the different spiritual gifts that Paul mentions. How are we to understand these gifts?

> **1 Corinthians 12:1-11** Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. [2] You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. [3] Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
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> [4] There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. [6] There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. [7] Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. [8] To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, [10] to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

2.) As important as the gifts themselves, where do these come from? Who has such gifts? How does their proper use promote unity?

3.) In the remainder of Chapter 12 Paul uses the illustration of a body to shape our attitudes towards the gifts God has given us and others. After reading your assigned Scripture, share Paul's main idea with the group.

> **1 Corinthians 12:12-13** The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. [13] For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
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> **Notes:**
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> **1 Corinthians 12:14-20** Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. [15] If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. [16] And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? [18] But in fact

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God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. [19] If they were all one part, where would the body be? [20] As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Notes:

1 Corinthians 12:21-26 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" [22] On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, [23] and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, [24] while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, [25] so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. [26] If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Notes:

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. [28] And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30] Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? [31] But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Notes:

LOVE—THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL GIFT

4.) Based on Chapter 13, what is the central question we should ask ourselves as we explore and use our spiritual gifts? How does this focus counteract divisiveness?

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [3] If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

[4] Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5] It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. [6] Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [7] It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

[8] Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [9] For we know in part and we prophesy in part, [10] but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. [11] When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. [12] Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. [13] And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

5.) Paul closes the chapter with this statement: “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (13:13). What makes love the greatest?

WHAT DOES ORDERLY WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

6.) In 14:1-25 Paul spells out the proper use of tongues in the church. Recall the purpose of our spiritual gifts is that they be used in love for the good and spiritual edification of the whole. With that purpose in mind what are the guardrails Paul puts around tongue-speaking?

> **1 Corinthians 14:1-25** Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. [2] For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. [3] But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. [4] He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. [5] I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.
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> [6] Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? [7] Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? [8] Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? [9] So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. [10] Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. [11] If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. [12] So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.
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> [13] For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. [14] For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. [15] So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. [16] If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? [17] You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.
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> [18] I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. [19] But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. [20] Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. [21] In the Law it is written: “Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,”
> says the Lord.
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> [22] Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. [23] So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? [24] But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, [25] and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”

7.) A friend who attends the local Pentecostal church asks if you have ever spoken in tongues. When you reply no, your friend then asks you questions about your devotional life in God's Word and your prayer life. You begin to feel like you aren't a good enough Christian. Do we need to speak in tongues to be a true Christian? Why or why not? Support your answer.

8.) It appears that worship in the Corinthian congregation could be quite chaotic. Why is it important for everything to be done "in a fitting and orderly way" (14:40) in the church? What might this principle play out in our worship?

> **1 Corinthians 14:26-40** What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. [27] If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. [28] If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.
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> [29] Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. [30] And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. [31] For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. [32] The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. [33] For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.
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> As in all the congregations of the saints, [34] women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. [35] If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.
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> [36] Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? [37] If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. [38] If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. [39] Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. [40] But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

CONCLUSION

List various ways that people use their gifts and talents to enrich our worship services? How is God's love in Jesus (the gospel) woven throughout the worship service?