

How Is the Spirit at Work in Your Life to Benefit Others?

Sunday 1/20 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 1/21 at 7 PM

Second Sunday after the Epiphany – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: For all who are in Christ, *they have the Holy Spirit!* Like a car with an 800 horsepower engine under the hood, *the powerful Holy Spirit on the inside wants to SHOW HIMSELF ON THE OUTSIDE!* Today, we are beginning a short series on Paul's first letter to the Christians living in Corinth, *which is a city in southern Greece*. On Paul's second missionary journey, around AD 50, he went to Corinth, preached God's Word, and "stayed for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11 ESV). Paul had taught them freedom from the law for salvation – *thus we are saved by Jesus' work, not ours*; however, some of the Corinthians used that freedom *to cause many divisions among the believers*. Therefore, Paul wrote his first *letter to instruct the Corinthians in important ways!* This short series in **1 Corinthians** will touch on parts of **chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15**. Today we are in **chapter 12**:

1. **The Holy Spirit Is at Work in All Believers:**

- a. **¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts** [spiritual things], **brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed** [lacking in knowledge]. **² You know that when you were pagans** [literally nations, Gentiles, thus unbelievers] **you were led astray to mute idols** [false gods that could not speak], **however you were led** [in the wrong direction]. // All unbelievers are spiritually **blind** (1 Cor. 2:14), **dead**

(Eph. 2:1), and †hostile to God (Rom. 8:7), so they have no ability to choose Jesus (Third Article Explanation).

- b. ³ **Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking [by] the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” [literally, “Lord Jesus”] except [by] the Holy Spirit.** // In the centuries after Christ, *Christianity was illegal*; when someone was accused, if he/she kept confessing Christ, *execution was ordered*. However, for one who was accused *but was not a Christian*, he/she had to prove it by †praying to the emperor, †offering a sacrifice to the emperor, and †cursing Christ – *things a Christian could not do* (Concordia Commentary, 415).

2. **Important Connections to the Holy Trinity:** ⁴ **Now there are varieties [differences] of gifts, but the same Spirit;** ⁵ **and there are varieties [differences] of service, but the same Lord;** ⁶ **and there are varieties [differences] of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.** // The Bible teaches One God, yet Three Persons, “**the Holy Spirit is... the source of the spiritual gifts...; Jesus... inspires Christian service; and... the Father**” (Concordia Commentary, 420) **empowers them all in everyone.** No matter the gift, *it is a gift that has been received*; therefore, †all credit for the gift goes to God and †its use is for the benefit others!

3. **Let’s Think About the Gifts and the Common Good:** ⁷ **To each is given the manifestation [the making public] of the Spirit for the common good.** // When we were baptized into Christ, we also received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). When He is on the inside, *the fruit of the Spirit will make itself public on the outside* – in the forms of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

Furthermore, “**God has seen fit to bestow extraordinary gifts upon particular Christians**” (Concordia Commentary, 427). The gifts are never earned, *but received according to God’s grace!* The list below is an example, *rather than a complete list*. Also, *as we go through the list*, many of these gifts seem to have been foundational – *thus to establish the NT Church*, and then to fade away.

- a. **⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance [speaking] of wisdom, and to another the utterance [speaking] of knowledge according to the same Spirit, //** So the speaking of *wisdom* and *knowledge* are given; those are somewhat general gifts, *so they are given to many*, but what do those words mean? Knowledge is *possessing information*, while wisdom is *the proper application of that information!*
- b. **⁹ to another faith [confidence, trust, reliance] by the same Spirit, //** All believers have *God-given trust in Jesus as their Savior*; but here, this is the kind of faith *that believes God’s promises will come true!* For example: Ask – *believing it will be given to you*, seek – *believing you will find*, and knock – *believing it will be opened to you* (Mt. 7:7-8).
- c. **to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, //** Healing in the Bible included healing from **▶**physical illness, **▶**demon possession, and **▶**physical death! But what was the ultimate purpose – physical health? No! “**It was to be a sign to unbelievers to convince them that the gospel was divine truth**” (Concordia Commentary, 423).
- d. **¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, //** That’s when something is humanly impossible; but then, *with God’s intervention*, the impossible happens – like **▶**the parting

of the Red Sea, ♣Mary conceiving the Son of God, and ♣water being changed to wine!

- e. **to another prophecy**, // “...prophets were given a divine vista [view] of the past, present, and future, enabling them to call God’s people to repentance of past transgressions of the covenant, to apply the divine Word to the present situation, and to speak prophetically of the future” (Concordia Commentary, 430).
- f. **to another the ability to distinguish between spirits**, // Thus between *true prophets* and *false prophets*; that is done today *by comparing what is said with the Bible!*
- g. **to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues**. // Again, foundational – *before the NT was written*, and only mentioned early in Acts and in 1 Corinthians. Today, *what we have in the Bible is fully sufficient* to ♣identify our sin, ♣give us salvation, and ♣guide us in Christ-like living!
- h. ¹¹ **All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions [distributes] to each one individually as he wills**. // With many of the gifts that Paul mentioned, it does seem that they ♣were foundational to the NT Church and ♣have now faded. However, *all believers do have the Holy Spirit on the inside who wants to shine on the outside*; therefore, *let us show forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives!*

This Week’s Sermon Challenge: Rate from 1-10 how well you are showing each fruit of the Spirit *in your life*: Love ___; joy___; peace___; patience___; kindness___; goodness___; faithfulness___; gentleness___; self-control___

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, fill us and overflow from us, so that *people see Jesus and God is glorified!* In Jesus’ name!

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