

1st Corinthians: Be A Believer

A More Excellent Way

1st Corinthians 12:28-31 & 13

1st Corinthians Refresher

- Written by Paul to the church in Corinth - Isthmus of Greece
- There was a saying “**To live like a Corinthian**” untethered lifestyle
- Corrective letters
- **I do not want you to be ignorant: Israel, Gifts, Return**
- The Holy Spirit is a *person* in the Trinity
- His work: para, en, epi (alongside in, upon/filling)

Last Week

- We looked at the body
- The members
 - Not membership, but limbs, parts
- Eye can't be a leg - shouldn't want to be
- Leg can't be an eye - shouldn't say the eye isn't needed
- God has set them each
- Where would the body be?

This Week

- Parts of the church, the body of Christ
- The “soul” of the believer - love
- Not a motto, not a creed, action & attitude toward God and one another
- Supernatural service

Next time

- Seeking certain gifts, their power, and proper usage in the church

[Pray]

12:28-31

Has appointed - same word, as for the members, has set

Just as God designed each body part, organ and limb, and put them in their proper place, ordained their function and figure

So the same with each believer, their gift, and their part and role in His body - the church

So what are the “parts” of the church?

1. **Apostles** (lowercase a) - delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders - eminent christian teachers Barnabus, Timothy, Silvanus - church planter, denomination leadership, large figures like Jack Hibbs, or Franklin Graham or John Piper, etc.
2. **Prophets** - interpreter of oracles/hidden things, speaks forth the truth of God (future and intrinsic), OT Prophets - speaking forth truth of God
3. **Teachers** - one teachings concerning the things of God and duties of man, the work of it, drew crowds
AFTER THAT
4. **Miracles** - same word for the power of the holy spirit - strength, power ability, for performing miracles (ties into #5)
Remember, even the deacons were full of the Holy Spirit
5. **Gifts of Healings** - healing, remedy, medicine. This is a gift of it. Not an office.
6. **Helps** - to aid help
Assistants don't have to be asked. They do. They see. They do. This is the best ministry to have around you or to be to others. Not always asking, but doing without being asked, being told.
Holding Moses' hands up
7. **Administrations** (governments) - governing (a board, oversight, but also organization - people who run the “business” of the church)
8. **Varieties of tongues** (and interpretation) - another dialect (heavenly or earthly), we'll look more in Ch 14.

Why are they in this order?

“The best” - more useful, more serviceable, more advantageous, more excellent

That in some way, there is more eternal service to heaven higher up on the, and more service to an individual or personal at the “bottom”

They're all necessary. They're all important.

But there's an authority of hierarchy.

An impact on eternity.

*Ch.14 shows us tongues and how it profits the individual, but doesn't build up the church
That speaking prophecy or teaching builds up the church. 5 words of understanding vs. 10,000
in another tongue.*

You can and do probably have multiple of these giftings/callings

They're all from and by and through the Holy Spirit

They cannot be exercised apart from him.

Just because someone has a natural talent for teaching doesn't mean they have the spiritual calling or gifting to expound the Bible.

There is a distinctly Spirit-led, given and intrinsic quality to each of these gifts (and by extension offices) that requires the Holy Spirit to operate. It is not apart from him. It is by Him, Through Him. For Him.

Remember, they are **GIFTINGS. CALLINGS.** Not earnings.

A more excellent way...

Denominations, their concern

Para, en, epi

En vs. epi life

After that - miracles

Seeking miracles isn't what it's about

Solid leadership, instruction, etc. is what the church is built on

Just like previously, all are one part? Where would the body be?

So here, the body can't function if all are the same part.

Church Growth and Healthy Division

Blessed subtraction

Desire the best gifts - it's ok to have desire (covet is the word) for them, even if you think you don't have them or can't or shouldn't

Let not many be teachers...

James 3:1-2 NKJV - My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he [is] a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Word is master - didaskalos - same as here

Letters to Timothy, Titus speak of qualifications of these roles. They require a life personally, familiarly, and publicly to be in order.

So it's not just about *desire*. It's about calling, desire and faithfulness.

The church will be ordered will all of these - Folks in all stages of development.

Classes can't teach it or bestow the gifts

Teaching can lead to understanding of them and their operation

But if you're not naturally graceful you're not going to learn how to become a ballerina.

They way my son moves like a ninja. I was good at hockey and other activities growing up, but I never moved like him.

I think because the scripture is brief here we'll be brief here. But there's a whole lot more to dive into how the church operates on gifts. May be something to revisit in 14 or another time.

A more excellent way

Hyperbole - a throwing beyond

metaph.

superiority, excellence, pre-eminence

beyond measure, exceedingly, preeminently

beyond all measure

^ These gifts have some measure. But they only work when powered by Agape Love

13:1-3

Many people in the world have even heard of this chapter. But even as believers, we forget the sandwich of spiritual gifts and how they operate (ch 12 and 14) that put this chapter in context.

13:2 all faith so that I could remove mountains

Matthew 17:20 NKJV - So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Bestow

Rich young ruler

Body to be burned - burned at the stake

Matthew 24:9 NKJV - "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

Even if we maxed out our personal spiritual stats

100% faith so we're chucking mountains by just our words (it is possible)

We're giving our body to be burned in a show of faith - not hiding from persecution

We're giving away billions to the poor

If we don't have love in it... WE **ARE** NOTHING.

If we give away without love... WE **PROFIT** NOTHING.

Love, God's love, is the eternal measure. The eternal currency.

Otherwise, it's vain works. Empty gestures. "Thoughts and prayers" as the world sees it.

Galatians 6:3 NKJV - For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

I profit nothing

No inheritance in the kingdom - physical loss doesn't equate to spiritual gain

Movement of poverty in Christendom

Not having things, not taking care of things, being poor doesn't earn you anything with God

Philippians 4:11-13 NKJV - Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Living as God would have us live - not seeking riches or luxury and not seeking the appearance of fasting and poverty - it's vain. It's looking for reward from man.

Many who follow God will be poor.

Many who follow God will be rich.

One may send. One may go.

Again it's comparing ourselves to each other vs. being obedient to what God has called us to do.

If it's not out of love for Jesus and service to others, then it's pointless. It profits us nothing. And we don't have the spiritual standing we think we do.

:4-8a

Love..(another list!)

1. Suffers long
2. Is Kind
3. Does not envy
4. Does not parade itself (when the world shouts love is love, see if they are doing any of these unloving things)
5. Is not puffed up
6. Does not behave rudely
7. Does not seek its own
8. Is not provoked
9. Thinks no evil
10. Does not rejoice in iniquity (gossip, others falling)
11. Rejoices in truth
12. Bears all Things
13. Believes all things (not naively)
14. Hopes all things (not blindly)

15. Endures all things

16. Love never fails.

Love never fails. It doesn't.

Divorce - moses out the hardness of your hearts Jesus said. God hates it.

English we're robbed a bit - one word for love

Greek had many - some being phileo, eros, storge, agape (invented by Christianity)

So no, LOVE IS NOT LOVE.

God's love goes above everything. Trumps everything.

Someone who just fell in love with Jesus has the same standing with God as someone who's been in love with him their entire lives.

Someone who speaks one sentence in love is better than someone with a lifetime of seminary behind them writing a book.

The church misses this.

We think education trumps calling.

Status beats truth.

Wisdom comes from the crowd.

There's a more excellent way.

Love never fails.

John 13:34-35 NKJV - "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:9-19 NKJV - "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and [that] your joy may be full. "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. "These things I command you, that you love one another. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

:8b-13

The End

- Prophecies fail
- Tongues cease
- Knowledge (relative to each other) vanish away

No need of a teacher in heaven Know just as I am known

We're going to know it all. We can see it all. We'll be living in paradise. No need for the hope of heaven when we're in heaven!

Comparison to childhood

Galatians 3:22-25 NKJV - But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor [to bring us] to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Rome had tutors, folks would have slaves to raise and educate and chaperone their children

In faith we must grow up

Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJV - For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need [someone] to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes [only] of milk [is] unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, [that is], those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Grow up into mature faith, exercising love - not selfishness

A mark of childhood is selfishness

Our society is rife with problems of delayed adulthood - first teens, then 20s, now 30's and beyond

Childish things - video games, behaviors

Growing up - even as a believer

Phone call with friend, soy - joked about drinking it in my 20s and becoming a man in my 30s

dimly

Tinted window, the van

Things of heaven kinda clear

Mom's parable of earthly and heavenly eyes

Now abide Faith, hope and love, greatest is love

They're all here - but love is one that goes into eternity

No need for faith in heaven

No need for hope in heaven

Are our lives marked by love?

Is it just vain action worth nothing?

When we seek the gifts, want to use them, are we using them out of love or out of selfish pride or motivation?

The church needs love. The church needs you and I. We need the Spirit and His gifts to be the church. The early believers called themselves Followers of the Way

Let's be the church and love one another. Not in the world's love. Not with some wishy-washy truthless, lost-sight of eternity selfish love,

but of self-giving, life-laying-down, heaven seeking, More Excellent Way, of Agape love of The Holy Spirit powering it all.