

Sermon Title: **Gifts of the Spirit**

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Scripture Reference: **1 Corinthians 12:1-13**

Thesis: **The third article of our Church Covenant brings us to the Purpose of Christ's Church body; a life blessed with gifts of the Spirit.**

Purpose: **Today we specifically focus on what the gifts are and how we are to use them to build the Body of Christ.**

Key Word: **"Gifts of the Spirit"**

Key Points:

- #1 The Work of Christ's Church
- #2 The Worship of Christ's Church
- #3 The Witness of Christ's Church

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **1 Corinthians 12:1-13**

A) The Setting:

- 1) Four weeks ago we began a study of our Church Covenant.
- 2) **The Hebrew meaning of the Word Covenant for our purposes means**
 - (a) To be allied or in league with another.
 - (b) While our Covenant is not legally binding; it is a willing commitment we make to God and each other in this body.
 - (c) We are allied with God through the Holy Spirit when we ask Him to be our Lord.
 - (d) We are allied with each other when we join together to form this body of Christ.
- 3) **The first paragraph establishes our Church Covenant and our commitment to one another.**
 - (a) The second paragraph outlines the most important part of our Church covenant:
 - (b) It reminds us that with the aid of the Holy Spirit ***we will love one another as Christ has loved us.***
- 4) **The third paragraph addresses how we are able to love one another;**
 - (a) It is by submitting ourselves to the discipline, or perhaps the better word is training, of the Spirit of Christ.
 - (b) The evidence is seen by development of the fruit of the Spirit given to every disciple of Jesus has listed in **Galatians 5:22-23.**
- 5) **The fourth paragraph now brings us to the Work of Christ's Church.**
 - (a) This is not our church; it is the Church of Jesus Christ!
 - (b) We are not doing our work; we are doing HIS work.
- 6) **This is where it gets messy.**
 - (a) The work of Christ's church is not done in the pew.
 - (b) In fact, most of it is not even done in the church meeting house.
 - (c) We will see that the work of Christ's Church is done in our homes, schools, vocational settings and the areas where we live out our lives on a day to day basis.
- 7) **Our Church gatherings are for the purpose of encouragement, support, training, and making sure we stay connected to God's leading.**
 - (a) Our worship services are to bring praise to . . . and glorify God.
 - (b) We are acknowledging our place before our creator.
 - (c) We are praising Him for helping us in our walk.
 - (d) We come to re-energize our passion and commitment to understand and do the work we have been given to do for God.
- 8) **But we will see that God does not give us work to do without first equipping us to do that which He is calling us to do.**
 - (a) While the fruit of the Spirit is given to all who receive Christ as their Lord and King.
 - (b) The Spirit of God also gives us gifts to equip us to do the mission of our assigned work.
- 9) **So, with that introduction, let us turn in our Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12:1-13 and learn more about gifts of the Spirit.**

B) Sermon Prayer

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **Work, what do you think of when I say work?**

- 2) **Illustration: The story is told of a man who was taking a walk down a country lane, when he came across a stone quarry in which a number of men were working.**¹
- (a) He questioned several of them about what they were doing.
- (i) The first replied irritably, '*Can't you see? I'm hewing a stone.*'
 - (ii) The second answered without looking up, '*I'm earning \$1000 a week.*'
 - (iii) But when the same question was put to the third man, he stopped, put his pick down, stood up, stuck out his chest and said, '*If you want to know what I'm doing, I'm building a cathedral.*'
- (b) **So it becomes a matter of how far we can see.**
- (i) The first man could not see beyond his pick, and the second beyond his Friday pay.
 - (ii) **But the third man looked beyond his tools and his wages to the ultimate end he was serving.**
 - He was cooperating with the architect.
 - However small his particular contribution, he was helping to construct a building for the worship of God.
- (c) **When done for God our Work is a form of worship,** our contribution, no matter how small and indirect a way, becomes a part of God's overall purpose.
- (d) **The whatever we do . . . can be done for the glory of God** (1 Corinthians 10.31).
- 3) **Did you know that work was given to us by God as a gift?**
- (a) Work is not a curse, but it is a gift given to us by our Heavenly Father.
 - (b) Work was established in the garden long before SIN entered the picture.
- 4) **Work done for God is fulfilling, gives us purpose, satisfaction, and makes us an integral part of HIS plan and team.**
- (a) Work done with the right attitude helps us fulfill our part of the project.
 - (b) It meets an important part of one of our core needs which is "a deep sense of belonging."
 - (c) When we do our work as unto the Lord we are at peace with God, fulfilling a part of His plan.

TS: **So, just what is . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The Work of Christ's Church?**

- 1) **The first line of the fourth paragraph of our Church covenant says, "*We commit ourselves to the work of Christ's Church;*"**
- (a) What does that mean? . . . the former's of this covenant did not leave us guessing;
 - (b) For it is clearly listed out for us here:
- 2) **First, we are to be searchers of the scriptures, searching out the truth of God's Word.**
- (a) If we take this seriously we will read it, study it, apply it, and teach it to our own children.
 - (b) And second, use it to disciple those born anew in the Spirit.
- 3) **The truths of God's Word make inescapable demands upon us:**
- (a) In the way that we are to conduct our lives as Christ's representatives.
 - (b) We are ambassadors for our Lord.
 - (c) We cannot just talk the talk, we must walk the walk.
- 4) **The good news is that we do not have to do it in our own strength.**
- (a) We have been given the Holy Spirit as a comforter who will guide us.
 - (b) Our part is learning to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- 5) **For the most part the Holy Spirit does not shout at us; but is more of a whisperer nudging us to do what is right.**
- (a) Helping us to understand and see truth.

¹ Found in 'Issues facing Christians Today', John Stott, Marshalls Paperbacks, 1984.

- (b) But we must humble ourselves and stop thinking we know everything and learn to act in obedience when God's Spirit calls.
- 6) **It takes work to sustain and build the Church which is the body of Christ.**
- (a) I am not talking about this beautiful building in which we are privileged to meet.
- (b) This is NOT the Church.
- (c) If this building were destroyed by fire, earthquake, tornado or termites would we cease to be a church?
- (d) NO! We are the Church; you and I are the Church.
- (e) **And if we had no building at all the Church will survive!**
- 7) **For we are temples of the Holy Spirit because God resides here.**
- (a) God does NOT reside in buildings . . .
- (b) We do not leave God here when we leave the building; God goes with us.
- 8) **While it takes a lot of work to sustain this meeting house; I thank God that He has equipped and given us those who do that as part of their ministry;**
- (a) But what good is a beautiful house if it does not serve to build God's larger church?
- (b) We are to work as to bring Glory to God.
- 9) **We are to "proclaim God's truths which make inescapable demands upon us and embody them in the conduct of our lives."**
- (a) This means that the truths we learn from studying God's word . . . we put into practice as we live out our lives.
- (b) This is why we commit verses to memory so that it is embodied; it becomes part of our being.
- (c) This plays a very important part in the next part of our covenant.

TS: **For the next thing I see in this paragraph of our Church covenant is . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **The Worship of Christ's Church**

- (a) **We are to "Sustain without fail the worship of God and the ordinances of Christ, acknowledging our time, talent and resources to be trusts from God."**
- (b) This tells us that we are committed to worship. Hebrews 10:23-25, **"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering. 24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching"** (NASV)
- (c) We need each other; I need your encouragement and you need my encouragement.
- 2) **Don't buy into the lie that you don't need church to worship God!**
- (a) This is only a half truth; the kind that Satan uses to lead you astray.
- (b) When people say that I like to ask them **"tell me more how you are growing in Christ without the church."**
- (c) The truth is that your relationship with God will grow cold and non-existent.
- (d) We need each other for accountability, sustainability, and encouragement and support.
- 3) **We are a body made up of many parts.**
- (a) If some of the parts of your car stop working; the drive is not so pleasant.
- (b) If it is a critical part, then you may be walking.
- (c) It is no different with the church; in order for the church to flourish we need all the parts of the body doing their part.
- 4) **In fact, I believe that the Worship experience is magnified exponentially by a greater number of worshipers.**
- (a) Just imagine what it will be like with billions worshipping together in heaven . . .
- (b) Oh, that will be Glory for me!
- 5) **This is why our Covenant reminds us to use our time, talents, and resources (which is another way of saying using our spiritual gifts) for God.**
- (a) We are not just asked to give God our money; **but we are also to give a portion of our time and other resources which God has blessed you with to be used for God.**
- (b) It doesn't belong to us anyway.

- (c) If you think it is yours; where will it be a 100 years from now?
- (d) Someone else will be holding it for God . . . will they hoard it or use it to Glorify God?
- 6) **How much should you give?**
 - (a) That is between you and God;
 - (b) but we all need to give generously out of our blessings which God has divinely provided to us.
 - (c) We are to give to God a portion of our Time, Talents, (*which are our Spiritual Gifts*) and Treasures.
 - (d) God wants all of you.

TS: **The final part of this paragraph speaks to . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **The Witness of Christ's Church**

- 1) **The last part of this paragraph of our Church covenant tells us the purpose for all our work.**
 - (a) We are using our time, talent, and resources to build the church, "**to make known His gospel in this place and around the world.**"
 - (b) We are seeking through the use of God's Word and witness to lead others to Christ.
 - (c) Oh, that Christ would give us a passion for those who need Jesus in their life.
- 2) **And we are to minister to those that Christ has called us to serve.**
 - (a) Who are we called to serve?
 - (b) We are to share the message of God's love and grace as led by the Holy Spirit with this body and with those in our community.
 - (c) And with those that God has put in our circle of family, friends and acquaintances.
- 3) **I know some of you are thinking; "but that is just not my thing, I can't talk to people about God, Faith, Salvation; that is not my gift."**
 - (a) But the truth of the matter is that when others know that you are a Christian, you are being watched.
 - (b) The world is watching to see how you react to crisis's in your life.
 - (c) The world is watching how you treat others or how you react when things are not going your way.
- 4) **Spurgeon once said, that "we are to witness to all and when necessary use words."**
 - (a) We are all called to be witnesses; but we are not ALL called to be preachers and teachers.
 - (b) A witness just explains what they saw.
 - (c) We can all share a story about things we have seen or experienced.
 - (d) And what is better than experiencing the Love of God and the life changing power of the Holy Spirit working in your life?
- 5) **This doesn't have to be forced.**
 - (a) Oh, it doesn't hurt any of us to write down our experience of our rebirth and to read it and practice saying it.
 - (b) But when it comes time to share remember that it is the Holy Spirit that convicts people of their need.
- 6) **We are only tools in the box that God may use.**
 - (a) When you feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit all you have to do is act on it.
 - (b) God will take care of the rest and it will be as natural as breathing.
- 7) **I worked for a very short time in a call center selling family products.**
 - (a) I thought I can do this because people need this stuff.
 - (b) The problem is that I was not good at it because I did not want to be pushy.
 - (c) I was expected to sell a certain amount or could be fired.
- 8) **Well it is never like this with the Holy Spirit.**
 - (a) We are not the ones who close the deal; that is up to the God's Spirit.
 - (b) We only have to be witnesses to our experience and if people want to know how to do it you can lead them or you can lead them to your pastor.
 - (c) Even then it is the Holy Spirit; and we cannot take the credit.

(d) That is what personal evangelism is really all about.

9) **However, we are called to carry the gospel beyond these walls.**

(a) We are expected to take it around the world.

(b) **That is what you do with your mission offerings.**

(i) That is what you do when you give to the Go-Global offering.

(ii) You are supporting our missions around the world; so, that others can share the Love of God with the people there . . . with the Holy Spirit helping them.

10) **We all like to receive gifts.**

(a) And we would probably agree that gifts from God are mighty special.

(b) **James 1:17**, tells us that, "**Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,**"

11) **Spiritual Gifts are different from the Fruit of the Spirit.**

(a) The fruit we saw in **Galatians 5:22 & 23** is "**Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.**"

(b) These are all the Fruit of the Spirit, NOT FRUITS, but Fruit.

(c) These are ALL areas of our lives that begin to change as a result of the Holy Spirit coming in at your invitation and taking up residence.

(d) These changes begin to occur at your spiritual birth.

(e) They are evidence that the Holy Spirit is transforming you into a new creation.

12) **In our scripture text today, the Apostle Paul tells us that he does not want us to be ignorant or uninformed about the gifts of the Spirit.**

(a) **Paul says:**

(i) Some of these gifts listed here for us are: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miraculous Powers, Prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, the gift of tongues, the ability to interpret tongues.

(ii) **Romans, Chapter 12:7-8** lists some other gifts not given in the list such as: serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, and mercy.

(iii) This is not an exhaustive list; but serves to give us an idea of the types of gifts which we can receive.

(b) Second, **1 Corinthians 12:11** tell us that it is the Holy Spirit that decides what gifts each us receives, "**All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.**"

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **The more I study and read our Church Covenant the more impressed I am with the depth of the person or persons who wrote it.**

1) There is a strong biblical base here for all that is written.

2) In this fourth paragraph, we come to the purpose of Christ's Church body; a life blessed with gifts of the Spirit to be use to carry out the work of Christ's Church.

3) Now that we understand a little about what the gifts are, we also need to understand how we are to use them in building up the Body of Christ.

B) **What I find in this paragraph of our Church covenant brings us to the Work, Worship and Witness of Christ's Church.**

1) The bottom line is that we covenant together to use our gifts to build the church.

2) We have a responsibility to work and care for the church and grow the church.

3) But it is a privileged and not a burden; for when you are "**doing it as unto the Lord**" it seems more like pleasure than pressure.

4) "**Christianity is not devotion to work, or to a cause, or a doctrine, but devotion to a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.**"²

C) **Invitation:**

1) However, we can only be effective if we are letting the Holy Spirit work through us.

2) That means getting out of the way and submitting to the Holy Spirit's leading.

3) If you haven't experience that in your life, then I pray you will before we leave today.

4) **Let us Pray!**