

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians – Part 4 (early 54)

1 Corinthians 12–14

Introduction of the Topic of Spiritual Gifts

12:1 With regard to spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

2 You know that when you were pagans you were often led astray by speechless idols, however you were led.

3 So I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

The Single Source of Spiritual Gifts

4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are different ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

7 To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all.

Gifts of the Spirit

8 For one person is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 to another performance of miracles, to another prophecy, and to another discernment of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things.

The Diversity and Interdependence of Members of the Body

12 For just as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body—though many—are one body, so too is Christ.

13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.

14 For in fact the body is not a single member, but many.

15 If the foot says, "Since I am not a hand, I am not part of the body," it does not lose its membership in the body because of that.

16 And if the ear says, "Since I am not an eye, I am not part of the body," it does not lose its membership in the body because of that.

17 If the whole body were an eye, what part would do the hearing? If the whole were an ear, what part would exercise the sense of smell?

18 But as a matter of fact, God has placed each of the members in the body just as he decided.

19 If they were all the same member, where would the body be?

20 So now there are many members, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor in turn can the head say to the foot, "I do not need you."

22 On the contrary, those members that seem to be weaker are essential,

23 and those members we consider less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our unpresentable members are clothed with dignity,

24 but our presentable members do not need this. Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member,

25 so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may have mutual concern for one another.

26 If one member suffers, everyone suffers with it. If a member is honored, all rejoice with it.

27 Now you are Christ's body, and each of you is a member of it.

28 And God has placed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps, gifts of leadership, different kinds of tongues.

29 Not all are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all perform miracles, do they?

30 Not all have gifts of healing, do they? Not all speak in tongues, do they? Not all interpret, do they?

31 But you should be eager for the greater gifts. And now I will show you a way that is beyond comparison.

Love—A More Excellent Way

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give away everything I own, and if I give over my body in order to boast, but do not have love, I receive no benefit.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up.

5 It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful.

6 It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part,

10 but when what is perfect comes, the partial will be set aside.

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became an adult, I set aside childish ways.

12 For now we see in a mirror indirectly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

The Importance of Edification—A Comparison of Tongues and Prophecy

14:1 Pursue love and be eager for the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

2 For the one speaking in a tongue does not speak to people but to God, for no one understands; he is speaking mysteries by the Spirit.

3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation.

4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

5 I wish you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be strengthened.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I help you unless I speak to you with a revelation or with knowledge or prophecy or teaching?

7 It is similar for lifeless things that make a sound, like a flute or harp. Unless they make a distinction in the notes, how can what is played on the flute or harp be understood?

8 If, for example, the trumpet makes an unclear sound, who will get ready for battle?

9 It is the same for you. If you do not speak clearly with your tongue, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air.

10 There are probably many kinds of languages in the world, and none is without meaning.

11 If then I do not know the meaning of a language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.

12 It is the same with you. Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, seek to abound in order to strengthen the church.

13 So then, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.

14 If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unproductive.

15 What should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing praises with my spirit, but I will also sing praises with my mind.

16 Otherwise, if you are praising God with your spirit, how can someone without the gift say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?

17 For you are certainly giving thanks well, but the other person is not strengthened.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you,

19 but in the church I want to speak five words with my mind to instruct others, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

The Greater Gift

20 Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking. Instead, be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

21 It is written in the law: “By people with strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, yet not even in this way will they listen to me,” says the Lord. [[Isa 28:11–12](#)]

22 So then, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers.

23 So if the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and unbelievers or uninformed people enter, will they not say that you have lost your minds?

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or uninformed person enters, he will be convicted by all, he will be called to account by all.

25 The secrets of his heart are disclosed, and in this way he will fall down with his face to the ground and worship God, declaring, “God is really among you.”

Proper Corporate Worship

26 What should you do then, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one has a song, has a lesson, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all these things be done for the strengthening of the church.

27 If someone speaks in a tongue, it should be two, or at the most three, one after the other, and someone must interpret.

28 But if there is no interpreter, he should be silent in the church. Let him speak to himself and to God.

29 Two or three prophets should speak and the others should evaluate what is said.

30 And if someone sitting down receives a revelation, the person who is speaking should conclude.

31 For you can all prophesy one after another, so all can learn and be encouraged.
32 Indeed, the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,
33 for God is not characterized by disorder but by peace. As in all the churches of the saints,
34 the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. Rather, let them be in submission, as in fact the law says. [cf. [Gen 3:16](#); [Num 12:1–15](#)]
35 If they want to find out about something, they should ask their husbands at home, because it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church.
36 Did the word of God begin with you, or did it come to you alone?
37 If anyone considers himself a prophet or spiritual person, he should acknowledge that what I write to you is the Lord's command.
38 If someone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.
39 So then, brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues.
40 And do everything in a decent and orderly manner.

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