

Sermon Outline

SHINING FORTH THE SPIRIT (1 CORINTHIANS 12:7)

I. Introduction

A. Our church's vision is to be:

A household for our triune God, where each member shines forth His holy, life-giving presence.

B. Two key texts behind this statement.

- Ephesians 2:19-22: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."
- 1 Corinthians 12:7: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

II. The Same God and Lord Works through All (1 Cor 12:1-6)

A. The immediate context of 1 Corinthians 12:7 is a body of instruction on spiritual gifts.

B. Spiritual gifts are unique manifestations of the Holy Spirit through each member of the church for the purpose of strengthening the larger community.

C. The Church of Corinth was prone to factionalism.

D. Paul writes to correct and teach the church at Corinth that it is the same God and Lord who works in and through them for the common good—not matter the form of the spiritual gifts.

E. Paul starts chapter 12 as follows:

- 1 Corinthians 12:1-3: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says 'Jesus is accursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit."
- 1. Paul asks the Corinthian Christians to begin on the same ground as one another.
- 2. If someone is able to confess that "Jesus is Lord," that person is to be considered a fellow believer. He or she has the Holy Spirit.
- 3. No matter our differences, we are bound by the same Holy Spirit who creates within us the same faith and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. That fact alone far exceeds all other loyalties and differences we may have with one another.

F. From there, Paul says, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone" (vv 4-6).

- *Varieties of gifts* — *same Spirit (v 4)*
- *Varieties of service* — *same Lord (v 5)*

- G. The fact that there are varieties of gifts, services, and activities shows that God works in different ways through different people.
- H. When a particular church is fully alive in the power of the Spirit, we ought to expect different kinds of works to be done by different people.
- I. Notwithstanding these differences (“varieties”), Paul does not want us to forget what unifies us. We are all under the rule of “the same Spirit...the same Lord...the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”

III. He Gives Himself to You (v 7)

- A. “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (v 7).
- B. Paul is saying at least two things in this verse.
- C. First: *The Holy Spirit has been given to each believer.*
 - 1. The Holy Spirit is God himself.
 - a. He is the eternal Life that flows from the Father and the Son to dwell in each believer.
 - b. The Holy Spirit is not a prize for those who have attained a certain level of piety. Rather, the Holy Spirit is the One who makes us children of God to begin with.
 - c. He is the One who starts, sustains, and completes the entire Christian life.
 - d. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Heaven in each believer.
 - 2. The fact that God gives each of us his Holy Spirit demonstrates that God is not a celestial Administrator who views each of his people merely as impersonal digits.
 - a. God takes an interest in each one of his own and desires to pervade every member of his people with his own presence (1 Cor 15:28).
 - b. God sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins so that there would be no more barrier between God and us.
 - 3. Do you know that, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, you have God?
 - a. In one sense, God is present in all of creation. God is omnipresent.
 - Hebrews 1:3: Christ “upholds the universe by the word of his power.”
 - b. For the child of God, the one who has entrusted his life to the Lord Jesus, we don’t just experience God in a general sense. We experience God as the kingly Abba.
 - 4. The child of God is no longer poor or powerless. He or she is wealthy. Our wealth is God himself.
 - 5. Every day, we must strive to live in the awareness of this fact—that through the Lord Jesus, God has come to dwell within us.
 - 6. In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to shun sexual sin: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own [.]”
 - a. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. God lives in each one of us.
 - c. Our job is to enjoy and honor the presence of God in us.

7. How would we live if we could just be more aware of the Holy Spirit in us?
 - a. Comfort
 - b. Purification

IV. He Wants to Show Himself through You (v 7)

- A. Second: *The Holy Spirit gives himself through each believer.*
- B. “Manifestation” (Gk: *phanerōsis*) is an exhibition, a display, a showing forth.
- C. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit is the shining out of the Holy Spirit through the believer. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is holiness, life, joy, freedom, etc.
- D. How does the Holy Spirit shine out?
 1. He shines by enabling us to confess that “Jesus is Lord” (v 3).
 2. He shines through a variety of other things he enables us to do.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:28: “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.”
 - Romans 12:6-8: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

V. Follow the Path of Delight

- A. How do I go about discerning what my spiritual gifts are?
- B. The fact that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is “for the common good” suggests that discerning our spiritual gifts is not done in isolation but in ongoing service-in-community.
- C. Our unique spiritual gifts (i.e., the unique ways by which God manifests himself through us) are discerned as we seek to strengthen our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- D. One guiding question to keep in mind as we actively engage in service: “*What activity brings me the greatest delight in building up the people of God?*”
 1. A sense of *delight* is important, because delight has to do with joy, freedom, ease, and power—traits that come with the movement of the Holy Spirit.
 2. When we delight in something, we don’t need to be scolded or obligated into doing that particular thing. We would just do it.
 3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of joy, because one of the fruit of the Spirit is joy:
 - Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness”
 4. The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of power and courage.

- 2 Timothy 1:7: “for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”
- 5. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of freedom.
 - 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”
- 6. Wouldn’t it make sense that when the Holy Spirit shines himself in a particular way through a particular believer, that believer would experience joy, freedom, courage, and power in the exercise of his spiritual gift?
 - If a person does something with only a sense of obligation, how is that different than someone who is not spiritually gifted?
- E. Caveat: We are not saying that we should only do those activities we feel ourselves to be spiritually-gifted in doing.
 1. There are services we have to do just because the immediate needs of the body require it.
 2. If a brother is in great need, we should not wait to have the gift of mercy before we rush to meet that need.
 3. God’s command for the moment trumps our sense of giftedness.
- F. But we owe it to one another to ask: “*What brings me the greatest delight in building up the people of God?*”
 - When we do what God has uniquely gifted us in doing, we will bless the church. The church will be richer, stronger, more loving, and more Christ-like for it (even though we may not be able to immediately see how that is the case).

VI. Let Him Shine through You

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has come to live in us. *Each one of us has the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit comforts us and assures us that we are loved by God. At the same time, *the Holy Spirit wants to show himself through each one of us.* Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness, joy, kindness, and freedom, his shining-forth will bring holiness, joy, kindness, and freedom to others. Discerning the unique way the Holy Spirit wants to shine through us can only be done when we ourselves are actively serving others. So we must not let fear get in the way. Serve God’s beloved people—and trust the Holy Spirit to work through you as he wishes.

Questions for Reflection

1. Based on 1 Cor 12:1-7, how does the Holy Spirit relate to us?
2. “What brings me the greatest delight in building up the people of God?” How would you answer this question? Would you also consider sharing your answer with an elder or deacon?