

Jan 6, 2019
Sermon: The Gift Giving Lord
1 Cor 12:1-3

1. Don't be Uninformed (vs 1)
2. All people are Led Spiritually (vs 2)
3. The purpose of the gift is to establish the Lordship of Christ (vs 3)

Introduction:

Opening to chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians we see right away that the topic of the next section of Paul's letter - a section that spans three chapters- is "spiritual gifts."

Before we begin to study this section I would like to share with you how I have been and will continue to approach this section of scripture. It has been my sincere effort to approach this topic without prejudice, or preconception. I have listened to argumentation from many different angles and traditions but I have tried to check my traditions and arguments at the door. My hope is that you will do the same.

If you have run in Christians circles long you know that the the topic of spiritual gifts is a favorite one to discuss and a disagree on. Deep lines have been drawn in the sand between large groups of Christians who would have sweet fellowship if the topic of spiritual gifts and their place in the church was never mentioned. The problem is that according to verses 6 and 7 every Christian has them and they are intended for the common good everyone else. So spiritual Gifts are common. When things are common they get talked about. When things are talked about opinions begin to be asserted and as opinions are asserted parties form because our tendency is to identify with people who share our opinion on things. Knowing this we have another tendency which is to avoid the subjects that we might disagree on.

Don't be uninformed

1. In his introduction Paul introduces a new topic in a way he has done several times in 1 Cor. we translate it "Now Concerning" "Now about" and then he introduces the topic which almost all of our translations render s "spiritual gifts"
 - a. "Spiritual Gifts" is OK given overall context however the word for "gift" is used only a handful of times in the section
 - i. In verse 1 Paul used a phrase that in any other context would be translated "spiritual things" or "spiritual matters."
 - ii. It is helpful for us to keep this in mind as we study that we are actual y dealing with the broader category of of Christians spirituality and giftings and manifestations are a subcategory or a result of being spirit led

2. In many ways we treat our understanding of and discussion about spiritual gifts the way we treat our understanding of and discussion on our children. Children are common. Everyone is one and most people have them. If you don't have any yourself you are constantly around people who are and who do. So *everyone* has an opinion on children and how they should be raised, how they should act and who gets to have an opinion about them because they are common. And we are happy to talk about our children and to have our children talked about so long as it's not too personal or you don't in any way question someone's child rearing practices- "Johnny is playing this sport; Suzie is playing that one; She's such a sweet girl, sure she's catty at home and disrespectful toward her teachers, but . . . That boy's a hard worker, sure he's drinking on the weekend and meddling with that girl friend of his, but . . ."-
3. Parent's, how much more biblical would our parenting be if we eliminated the word "my" from our vocabulary toward our children. Children are not our possession, they have been given to us to steward. Stop thinking that you have the exclusive understanding on your child. God has the exclusive understand on all his creation, saved and unsaved, and we must think about the kids he has given us the same way that he thinks about them, the same way he thinks about us. And the only way you gain God's perspective on the kids he has given you is by interacting with his word in such a way that you invite God to change you by it, not by seeking to be validated by it. *IF* you are doing it God's way than you *will* be validated by his word. But you cannot suspend the truth of God's word to validate your children and your interaction with them.
4. We must come to the word of God with a heart that says, "this topic is common and familiar, but I don't want the common and familiar understanding of it if it is different from what *you* say, O Lord. Inform my mind and make it new by your word through the power of Your Spirit."
5. Paul addresses the topic of Spiritual Gifts head on and his desire is that his audience would have a proper understanding of this common topic. And he will spend the first 6 verses establishing God as the gift giver

All People are led Spiritually (vs 2).

1. Paul reminds his readers that spirituality is common to all people.
 - a. Harkening back to their days in pagan worship, Paul reminds them that even though they worshiped idols that couldn't speak or interact, there was a spiritual element behind the idol which led them
 - i. This idea is communicated clearly in the more literal translations, such as the KJV, NASB, and the ESV which use the words "even" and "however"
 - ii. The paraphrase translations, like the NIV and the New Living, use word like "somehow or other" or "swept along"
 - iii. What is being communicated is that there are forces at work whether outside of us (10:2) or inside of us we are spiritual people and we are led spiritually

The Purpose of the Gifts is to Establish the Lordship of Christ vs 3

1. These “spiritual matters” have one purpose and that is to establish the Lordship of Christ in the life of the believer and the Church
 - a. Christ is the head of His Church and the Spirit’s purpose is to promote Christ therefore all the manifestations of the Spirit within the body of Christ are intended to solidify the authority and Lordship of Christ
 - b. We would do well to eliminate the word “my” when talking about spiritual gifts as well.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you ever feel “uninformed” about spiritual matters? Is it encouraging to know that your not the first follower of Jesus to feel this way? Are you looking forward to growing in your knowledge of spiritual matters? What is the best way to become spiritually informed?
2. How does the understanding that Spiritual gifts serve to establish the Lordship of Christ affect your understanding of them?