

Grace and peace from God our Father and all joy to you in the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:2,9,10) Amen.

The Word of God we'll be considering in the next three weeks comes from 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 13. Paul introduces the topic: "Now concerning spiritual (or 'Spirit-given') gifts." I encourage you to study chapters 12-14 in your home devotions to get a better understanding of the situation being addressed in Corinth. We read today verses 1-11 of chapter 12.

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NKJV)** — **1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: **2** You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. **3** Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. **4** There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. **6** And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. **7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: **8** for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, **10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. This is the word of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lord, sanctify us by Your Truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen.

### **The Spirit Manifested ("made known")**

1. In one FAITH that makes "Lord Jesus" known
2. In different GIFTS that make "Lord Jesus" known

In Jesus name, who is, who was, and who is to come, our Savior in flesh and in glory, dear fellow sinners declared righteous in Him,

Have you ever noticed that compared with the Father and the Son, we often mention the Spirit very little. Scripture itself, has far more passages speaking of Jesus than it does of the Spirit. Yes, we did notice the Spirit last week in the Baptism of Jesus. He appeared in the form of a dove. But the focus was not on the dove; the focus was on the epiphany of God's beloved Son. And there is good reason for that. The work of the Spirit is not to draw attention to Himself. His work is to anoint the Son, to show that Jesus is the Christ, the beloved Son chosen to take away the sins of the world. As we

also saw this week – the Spirit's work is to reveal the One who changes water into wine, to reveal the glory of Jesus. It is the same Spirit who caused the apostles and prophets to record the Word of God so that we too would know Jesus as Lord. The manifestation of the Spirit is to make "Lord Jesus known."

## 1. In one FAITH that makes "Lord Jesus" known

Think of the manifestation of the Spirit as a spotlight. The spotlight focuses center stage. The spotlight illumines one central figure, one act that grabs our attention. The Spirit's work is just that – to reveal the ONE FAITH that makes our Lord Jesus known.

*2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*

The reference to "Gentiles" is here being used in the sense of "unbelievers." Before we were made to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, we too were "Gentiles" in this sense. In fact, this is what lies in our flesh still. Our flesh is not led by the living Spirit, but by mute idols. What are those mute idols that seem so attractive to follow?

In Paul's day these were the molded images of the pagan deities. The Greeks had countless gods – Zeus for example was said to be the king of all the gods who ruled the weather, the law, and even fate. Yet when did he speak? When did Zeus actually offer any spiritual insight into the truth of his existence and what he desires of us or will give to us?

*"What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols? Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all. (Habakkuk 2:18–19)*

Are things any different today? The world is ever busy molding God into their own liking. Polls reveal that only about 1/2 of Evangelical Christians believe the Biblical faith is the only way to heaven. Similarly, another poll reveals that about 1/2 of all Evangelical Christians have rejected the idea that you cannot earn salvation through good deeds. To so many, the Bible has become no more than a book of rules – a self help book or one of many paths to know God. Does the God of Scripture look any different that Allah or the countless gods of Hinduism? Where Jesus is no longer in the spotlight, the Spirit has ceased to shine.

Paul says literally, "No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Anathema Jesus' (Cursed Jesus) and no one is able to say 'Kurios Jesus' (Lord Jesus) except by the Holy Spirit." This has to be more than mere words. Any one can make the sounds come out of their mouth to say "Lord Jesus. Yet Jesus says distinctly, "Not everyone who

says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21). No matter what lip service one offers, to say earthly works of righteousness are needed in addition to God's free gift of righteousness, then Jesus is left accursed, unneeded, incomplete.

To know Jesus as Lord is to know Him as the one and only source of salvation; it is to know Him as the crucified and risen fulfillment of God's righteousness. *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Acts 2:36) To say "Lord Jesus" is to confess the one who has bought you back from sin. That is His Lordship over us. If any works are left, then sin remains our lord and master. Then we remain blindly following mute idols. Instead, we confess the words of Martin Luther in his explanation to the Second Article – "I believe in Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. He did this that I should be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness and joy."

No works are left. No sin remains. ... *you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (1 Thessalonians 1:9).* Our God is not mute. He is the living and only true God. As it says in v.4 and following, there is One Spirit, One Lord, and One God. There is One Triune God who has lives and reigns eternally. The Spirit shines as a spotlight to make known the one Faith that saves – there is no other salvation. He does not shine through our feelings, He does not shine through our rational mind, He shines through the Holy Scriptures to reveal this God who saves us by grace.

The whole season of Epiphany is about making Jesus known as Christ our Savior and Lord. In contrast to all the different gifts the Spirit gives, there is only one faith that saves. This is more than mere lip service; it is your spiritual service; it is the gift of a living faith that makes "Lord Jesus" known in both words and actions. This is a repentant faith that does not boast in oneself or rely on how much of a "Christian" I have been, but shines that Spirit given light back on Jesus. Proclaim "Lord Jesus." Don't give into this notion that there are many paths to God. Paul writes in Ephesians, *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4–6)*

The Spirit is manifested in One Faith which makes known "Lord Jesus."

## **2. In different GIFTS that make "Lord Jesus" known**

If the Spirit is indeed a spotlight, and if that spotlight has one purpose, one person, one act to reveal, then we should expect the results will all be the same. If the Spirit should shine from seven different directions, we can be confident they will all focus on ONE central figure, one act of Salvation. As we consider the many diverse the methods, whether healings, tongues, or wisdom, we should expect and use every gift that the Spirit gives to MAKE “LORD JESUS” KNOWN.

What was the purpose of Jesus’ miracle in our Gospel text? As John records, *This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.* We really don’t know how many people saw or heard what Jesus did. The servants who carried out the water would have known. The disciples must have known, since it says they “believed” in Him because of it. Beyond these few, there may have not been many more that were aware of this miracle.

Notice also how Jesus says, “my hour has not yet come.” Jesus was not focused on earthly miracles that solved earthly problems. He did not want to be an earthly king. His chosen “hour” to reveal His glory was the hour in which He would suffers, die, and rise in victory. On the night before His death Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven and prays, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, (John 17:1)* Yes, Jesus can solve our small problems like being embarrassed when hosting a big party and something goes wrong. But ultimately, His coming was to solve our heavenly problems – sin and death.

Think of traffic signs. They are meant to indicate what is coming, or what you should be doing. They don’t emphasize themselves, but rather these signs give draw our attention to something greater. All the signs Jesus performed, healings, casting out demons were all meant to make known that He was the One who had come to restore all things. They pointed to something greater. So also the signs that were occurring in Corinth were meant to point to something greater. These “signs” are meant to make Lord Jesus known.

The signs in our text: *the word of wisdom ... the word of knowledge... faith* (this cannot be saving faith since all believers have that; this is likely a great faith that works miracles) *... gifts of healings ... the working of miracles ... prophecy ... discerning of spirits* (that is the ability to discipher between those speaking by the Spirit and those falsifying their gifts or possessed with evil spirits) *... different kinds of tongues* (literally, different dialects of languages) *...the interpretation of tongues.*

The signs given to these 1st century Christians were given at a time when the inspired word was still being written and assembled. These appeared at a time when many false prophets were claiming their own revelations and their own truth. v.7 calls these the “manifestation of the Spirit.” The Spirit was making Himself known, so that believers and unbelievers alike could be confident that the revealed presence of God was with

them. These signs were not meant to shine the light on the individual, but to point to something greater...

As Mark concludes His Gospel ... *they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (Mark 16:15–20)*

So the Spirit made Himself known among the Corinthians in various miracles and signs for this purpose, to confirm the word and make Lord Jesus. As Paul goes emphasizes in chapter 14, *"I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (14:19).*

What about our day? We don't have a specific Scripture passage that declares it impossible that Christians today should be given such gifts of speaking in tongues or performing miracles. However we do have many that tell us the purpose of these gift has ceased. The Word doesn't need to be confirmed today by signs. We have the inspired Old and New Testament. The Spirit has been confirmed and His Word has been given to us in its complete and unerring form. So if the purpose is gone, why would God still be giving these gifts?

The only signs and revelations promised by Scripture are false signs and wonders that are designed to deceive you. The AntiChrist comes with his own "signs and lying wonders." And Jesus warned, "Many false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders."

So Isaiah writes, *And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:19–20)*

The Word remains the ultimate manifestation of the Spirit. This is where all things are confirmed. If they contradict Scripture, then they speak not by God's Spirit, but by their own spirit. We now have the recorded Scriptures handed down to us to confirm the fulfillment of all of God's revealed will. We have the Old and New Testament to search and know our Lord Jesus.

Is it any wonder that for nearly 19 centuries there was virtually no written reference to these special signs among Christians. It wasn't until the Pentecostal movement began in the early 1900's that all of the sudden speaking in tongues was again expected among Christians. And not just expected, demanded.

This is where the much of Evangelical theology has gone wrong. So many have placed their assurance of salvation not in Word and Sacrament, not in the water which washes for regeneration and the forgiveness of sins, not in the gift of Christ's body and blood given to us in bread and wine, not the gift of forgiveness and life declared; rather for so

many the hope of salvation rests in experience or feelings, something more than the simple Word that declares us not guilty. Where is the spotlight shining?

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation – Romans 1:16. Hearing the Word of God is the means by which faith comes – Romans 10:17. And as Peter writes, *[We have] been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, (1 Peter 1:23)*

We should recognize that not all gifts of the Spirit have ceased. Sometimes the highest gifts are also the humblest. A word of wisdom ... a word of knowledge ... Maybe this is your gift – to speak a wise word to a young adult that is struggling to get it together. ... to speak a word of knowledge by sharing a Scripture passage that applies to someone's struggles with depression, or addiction, or sin. Perhaps the Spirit has given you healing powers. Not in the sense of placing your hand on that person's head and causing them to be cured, but healing them with a kind ear that listens that visits them when in the hospital or brings them a cooked meal when they're homebound.

***7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all***

These gifts vary, but the purpose does not. Some are handy with numbers. Some are good at being leaders. Some are good helpers. Some are handy with a drill and level. Some are people persons. Whatever your gift might be – whether it is simply to encourage others or to support this ministry with your offerings – let us remember that these all have been given not just for the profit and praise of one, but for the profit of all. Literally, the word means: “to bring together.” Among all the diversity of gifts granted here, the Spirit has one goal: to bring us together into His single purpose. His purpose is to further the preaching of the gospel among us and make Lord Jesus known. Amen.