

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 22 August 2021  
**Services:** Across the diocese  
**Series:** **God's church** - 1 Corinthians  
**Title:** **To each is given**  
**Passage:** 1 Corinthians 12  
**Outline:**

*I do not want you to be uninformed*

1. **The Spirit**
  - a. **One Spirit**
  - b. **Many gifts**
  
2. **The Body**
  - a. **One body**
  - b. **Many parts**

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In the keynote address in our “Ministry is for Everyone” conference, Kevin Simington taught very simply from Ephesians 4, that the work of ministry is not for ‘paid professionals’ but for **everyone**.

How that did with **you**? /

Kevin pointed out that that passage clearly teaches that evangelists, pastors and teachers have a particular role – namely – to **equip** God’s people for **THEIR ministry!** /

**Who** are the **ministers** in the **room**? /

**Everyone!** /

Who is the **visiting team**? **Everyone!**

Whose job is it provide a **welcoming presence** whenever God’s people meet? **Everyone!**

Whose job it is to give a **reason** when asked why we are people of hope and joy especially during this lockdown ? **Everyone!**

And so we could go on.

And in this passage today – we see **brilliantly** – I think **thrillingly** – is that word? – we see in a way which is thrilling – how this actually **works** on the ground – or in the **church**.

Have a look with me at 1 Cor 12 v1 – *Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.*

And brothers and sisters – I don’t want **YOU** to be uninformed – but right on **top** of this – and **excited** and **inspired** by the way God has set things up in his church to work so **well**.

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So here is where we're **headed** today – quite simply – we're going to a quick look at

- 1. The Spirit**
- 2. The Body**

First then:

**1. THE SPIRIT**

And two things we're going to look at

- a. One Spirit**
- b. Many gifts**

In the city of Corinth as we've heard already in this series, there were many small 'g' **gods** – **idols** – and corresponding **temples** which really dominated the **life** and **culture** of the **city**.

And in v2 God reminds the Corinthians that they were once **captivated** by these non-existent **entities** – have a look with me - *You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.*

So how were they to know then, that they had well and truly left these small 'g' gods behind for the **one true God**?

Well in some ways it was **simple** – have a look at v3 - *Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit*

A **true** Christian in whom the Spirit of God has taken up residence, will **never** call down curses on **Jesus**...

And **ONLY** the true Christian in whom the Spirit of God has taken up residence, is able to proclaim "**Jesus is Lord**".

And God wants to make it clear to the **Corinthians** and to **us** that when it comes to authentic Christian faith, there is only **one Spirit**.

We have to understand that this is on the back of there being so many **gods** in **Corinth**.

The one true God is making clear that in the church of God there are **many** gifts, but it not that one god has **this** gift and one god has **that** gift, but that the **one** and the same **Spirit** gives them **all**.

You'll see this clearly if you'll look at the passage with me:

*V4 – there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

So in the body of Christ – there are many **gifted** and **talented** people – all using their **God-given** gifts in **different** kinds of **service** – different ways of **working** – but **marvellously** – it is the **same God** at work in and through **all** of them!

And in case you think you've missed out on the gifts God gives for ministry – have a look at v7 – to **each one** *the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the **common good***

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Everyone is given a gift of God's Spirit – **no one misses out** – and did you **notice** – the gift is not for **YOU** – it is for the **common good**... that was a real issue in Corinth as we'll see – that people were becoming conceited about the gifts they were given and arguing about which were the **higher** or **better** gifts.... "I've got a **better** gift – I'm more **important**" – **crazy!!**

Now God further explains this concept by giving examples of gifts that are given – it's not an **exhaustive** list by any means... but he mentions **specifically**

- Those who are given a message of **wisdom**
- Those who are given a message of **knowledge**
- Those who have particular **faith**
- Those who have gifts of **healing**
- Or miraculous **powers**
- Or **prophecy**
- Or **distinguishing** between **spirits**
- Or **speaking** in **tongues**
- Or **Interpretation** of **tongues**

And the point he's making is not so much the nature of the gifts themselves – but to reemphasise the point that there is only **ONE** spirit giving the gifts... v11 have a look – *All these are the work of **one and the same Spirit**, and he distributes to each one, **just as he determines.***

Not **many** gods as you see around you in **Corinth!**

**One** God. **One** Spirit. Many **gifts**... – but no matter the **gift** – it's the same **Spirit** who gives them **all**.

And you might be saying to me – yes – Mark – I get that – one God, one Spirit. For **sure**...!!

But Mark – what about that list of **gifts** – are we talking about the same **church** or the same **God**? - I haven't seen **ANY** of those gifts around **here**!! No one has popped up in our church lately with a message of **wisdom** or a message of **knowledge**... We haven't seen any one with gifts of **healing** or miraculous **powers**... no one speaking in **tongues** or **interpreting** them...!! What's going **on** here **Mark?** //

Interesting isn't it... I do think all of these gifts of God – and many others - are **available** to us right now – but notice again the last phrase of **v11** – *and he distributed them to each one, **just as he determines.*** /

So it may well be that some of those gifts are not **needed** right now in your church at this point in time.

But it may **also** be that we don't readily **see** some of those gifts as **readily**... but when someone preached at your church last **Sunday** – could it not be that there was a **message** of **wisdom**, a message of **knowledge**, and the gift of **prophecy** in that **message**...?? //

And do you know someone who has come through an **operation** or survived **cancer** recently – surely – someone prayed for **healing** for them – and God has granted that desire...!!

So – **some** – we may just label them differently – but are in fact among us in different ways to way seen in Corinth... //

What are some **other** gifts we see among us?

**Welcoming**

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**Music**

**Administration**

Mowing the **lawns**

The gift of taking out the **garbage** and setting up the **tables**...

The gift of **prayer** for others – **encouragement** – **hospitality**... we could go **on and on**... //

**One Spirit – many gifts**.... ///

Now let's see how this works in the **body**

## **2. THE BODY**

And again two things we're going to look at

- a. One body**
- b. Many parts**

Now would you have a look with me at 1 Corinthians 12:12 - *Just as a **body**, though **one**, has many **parts**, but all its many parts form one **body**, so it is with **Christ**.*

"We are the **body of Christ**" we often declare - a **wonderful** declaration which reminds us who we **are**...

you personally are **one** of the **many** parts of the **body of Christ**...

What does the **body of Christ** do?

It does what Jesus Christ **himself** did – **reveals God** to the **world**...!!

And when a Christian says – "well I don't **want** to go to **church**" – or "I no longer want to be **part** of the **church**..." – this is the same as your **foot** saying – "look – I'll be fine without the rest of your **body** – and **you'll** be **fine** without **me**..." // it is an obvious **nonsense**...

I love the **ridiculous** nature of the way Paul is **putting** this to **us**...!

Saying you're not **needed** in the **church** – not needed in **THIS** church – is like your ear saying 'look, I do not **belong** here... I'm going it **alone**'...

...or your **eye** saying to your **hand** – thanks but I don't **need** you... // can you imagine!

There is **one body**... but there are **many parts**... //

And if you're **part** of our **church** – God has given **you** to **us**...

...you're **unique**... and you play a **unique part** in the **body of Christ** here – which **no one else** can **play**... / just as your thumb cannot suddenly fill in for your **eye** if it wants to take a **break**...

Only **you** can do what you **do** in the life of your church... God has given **you** to **your church**... I don't care **who** you are – or how long you've **been** there – you're a **precious** and **important** part of the **body of Christ**... //

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Now you may say to me ‘well – Mark – that’s very **nice** of you – but **really** – I don’t do a **thing**’.

And if that’s what you’re thinking, you’ve **missed** the **point** // because this is not about the **jobs** you **do**...  
This is not about fulfilling **tasks**...

...no; this is about **YOU** being **YOU**...!

No one else can be **YOU** here... no one else can **care** in the way you **care**, **love** in the way you **love**, **pray** in the way you **pray**... //

In the **body** – every single **part** plays a **vital** and unique **role**... and we are all **magnificently different**... the part an **eye** plays is very different to the part a **foot** plays – or a **toe** plays for that matter – but both are **vital** for a **normal life**...

And the part **YOU** play in your church is **vital**... !

...just by **you**, being **you**...! /

God has gifted **you**, **uniquely** for **THIS body**... /

And again you might say – well – Mark – I’m **old** – I can’t even **get** to church these days – and I want to assure you – that’s ok... as you are at **home** and in **prayer** and on the **phone** to **others** – you are **still** playing a **unique** and vital role in your **church**! – **Thank you!**

Look with me at v18, *But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be....* That includes, **YOU!**

...but here is the thing... (unless of course you **CAN’T** leave home).... if you **rob** us of **YOU**... we **LOSE**...!! // we’re not **complete**... something is seriously **wrong**... and our life together will be **hampered** by your absence... like we’ve undergone an **amputation**...

if you’re **not** here and **not** playing your part in church life... not only do you rob us of **YOU**... you **ROB YOURSELF** of **US**!! – how are you going to **survive** on your **own**....?... without the rest of the **body**...? //

Try chopping your **leg** off and see how it does on its **own**... or taking your **eye** out and seeing if **it** survives on **its own**! //

We seriously **need each other**... and to think you only come when you **feel** like it... and **miss** when something else crops **up** – actually misses the **whole glorious vision** of what the church is **for**!! //

Friends – God has given you unique gifts to serve our church - you are a **much needed and highly valued member** of the **body** of Christ...

What does v27 say?...*You are the body of Christ – and each one of you is a part of it....* //

So let me bring things to a close:

1. The Spirit
  - a. One Spirit
  - b. Many gifts

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**2. The Body**

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What a **brilliant** picture of the church of God – of **your** church – **our** church – our **Diocese**.

How do you know what gifts God has given you for the church?

I don't think it's that **complicated**.

What do you **love** doing and what are you **good** at?

That's how God has **wired** you. **Those** are the gifts he has given you for the **common good**.

There was a lady at one church I served who was teaching Sunday school because I had put out a plea from the front.

But I discovered that she was physically **sick** every Saturday night in anticipation – she hated it.

I rang her and told her she had just taught for the last time.

I asked her what she was good and what she liked doing

She loved hospitality and loved cooking.

So she headed up our hospitality team at church and loved every minute of it.

The work of ministry is not for **paid professionals** – but for **everyone!**

What are you **good** at and what do you **love doing**?

God has given you **those** gifts and those **delights!**

**Use** them to **serve** him and serve **US** in the life of his **church!** – for the **common good** and for **his glory!**