

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

January 17, 2010 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“To Each On Is Given The Manifestation Of The Spirit For the Common Good.”

(Text: I Corinthians 12: 1-11)

Context: If there was ever a gathering of believers in Christ that faced problems, it was the congregation located at Corinth, Greece in the first century. The Apostle Paul wrote, at least, two letters to this troubled group of Christians. The Judaizers from Jerusalem had followed Paul to Corinth and had confused the people with their criticism of Paul’s teaching and their questioning of Paul’s trustworthiness. These doubts they had put into the people’s heads and hearts. Other and many influences came into this congregation because of its location on an isthmus with two large bodies of water on either side of it. Thus, Corinth was a center of much mercantile business, bringing with the business, many different cultures, religions, and philosophies. Variety was the order of the day. Being one in Christ means that our unity is in Him and His Word, yet there is great variety in the gifts, talents and abilities, that God has given to people.

- I. Due To Sin, Unbelievers Take God’s Gifts And Use Them For Their Own Benefit.**
 - A. The Gentiles (which represented the majority of the Corinthian congregation) had once worshiped lifeless idols which led them no where and gave them nothing.
 1. Thus, the activity of other people was the focus of their lives.
 2. They were, indeed, the blind leading the blind, lost in their sins.
 - B. These unbelieving Gentiles would compare their Creator-given talents and abilities.
 - C. These pagan Gentiles would boast of gifts that they had been given freely by the Creator.
 - D. Certain gifts, talents, and abilities would be valued more than others.
 1. Thus, people who possessed certain gifts would consider themselves better than others.
 2. They would give glory to themselves for the gifts that they had been given.
 - E. Living in unbelief, these Gentiles would not know from where these gifts had come.
 - F. Believers in Christ, with so many unbelievers living around them, are tempted to treat the gifts of God just like the unbelievers do.
 1. Christians can forget from where their gifts have come.
 2. Christians can forget for what purpose (the common good) the gifts have been given to them.

- II. On The Other Hand, The One True God Gives His Spirit To People Who, By God’s Grace, Receive Him And The Christ He Proclaims.**
 - A. First, God’s Spirit gives faith in Christ to individuals.
 1. Sinners are found, where they are, and the Spirit of God brings the “Good News” of a Savior from sin to them.
 - a. “...and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:3)
 - b. And “no one speaking by the Spirit says, “Jesus be accursed” (12:3).
 2. Miracle of miracles! Sinners become believers in Jesus the Christ and are given forgiveness of sins, peace, and eternal life.
 3. Light replaces spiritual darkness. Love replaces self servitude. Peace replaces worry and fear.
 - B. Secondly, He distributes to believers His various gifts as a “manifestation of the Spirit.”
 1. As the Spirit wills.
 2. For the common good.
 3. Always with an eye on from where the gift came (from the Spirit of God).
 - a. So, God gets the credit, the glory, and the thanks for the benefit that this gift brings into people’s lives.
 - b. The Giver of the Gift is bigger and more important than the gift itself.
 - C. The same God (Spirit) works all things in all persons.
 1. He directs this “symphony” of the variety of gifts that He has given to His people.
 2. The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, the distinguishing of spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues are all given, energized, and coordinated by the same Spirit for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ, to the benefit of all, and to the glory of God.
 3. All glory be to God for the marvelous things He has done!!!