

Victoria Ave/Emmanuel Baptist
Sunday, September 27, 2020
I Corinthians 13
“Spirit” Expectation

These past few weeks, we have looked at the fact that the Holy Spirit plays a role in our discipleship process. We have also realized that there is a great deal of misinformation that has developed since the first Pentecost and it has been taught and questioned since.

Biblically, all true disciples are baptized by the Holy Spirit and this baptism is what unites us with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. We are baptized into the body of Christ. When we receive the Spirit, we receive a full portion. The Spirit is not a drug that you can receive less or more of. We need to know how to act on the leading of the Spirit and be obedient. The baptism of the Spirit is a one-time occurrence.

That being said, we need to understand the difference between being baptized in the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is a blessing granted to us, sometimes during our baptism, and at times later. Some professing Christians may not be filled because they have chosen to be disobedient to the leading of the Spirit in their lives.

Now we come to our final sermon in the role of the Spirit. The proper question to ask is, “What is it that we should seek from the Spirit?” Scripture tells us that we should expect “spiritual gifts” and “spiritual fruit.” That is what we will discuss today.

First let’s go to the Bible. Our text today is very well known, and it is I Corinthians 13, the full chapter of 13 verses:

13 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans

and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!⁹ Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!¹⁰ But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.¹² Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

¹³ Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

SIRITUAL GIFTS

Let's talk about Spiritual Gifts first. What are these gifts? Biblically, they are a particular spiritual ability bestowed on each Christian disciple by the Holy Spirit for use in a given ministry according to God's grace and will to be used within the framework of the Body of Christ, the Church.

All Christians are given one or more gifts by the Holy Spirit as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12:11. The Holy Spirit knows us intimately and will give gifts as appropriate to our abilities.

WHY? Why does the Holy Spirit give gifts? Paul gives us the answer in Ephesians 4:12-13:

¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are NOT for personal advancements or edification. They are to build up and encourage the Church.

Some of the confusion comes when we mix up “spiritual gifts” (which we receive at conversion) with “abilities and talents” that we are born with. I knew an individual who was a teacher and excelled at the profession. Naturally, when we needed someone to teach Sunday School, that individual was approached thinking that they could use their “gift” of teaching. Turns out, teaching Sunday School was last thing this person wanted to do, having taught school all week long. The ability was there, I would argue it was not this person's spiritual gift.

So WHAT are the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gives? Biblically, you will find 18 listed depending on how some of the gifts are defined:

- Prophecy – not the popular notion of telling the future, but rather bringing a message from God to God's people.
- Serving – the desire to help others especially where there is need.
- Teaching – being able to explain God's word in a meaningful way.
- Encouraging – the ability to support and uplift others especially those going through depression or those who are oppressed.
- Contributing – love to give materially to the needs of the Church, ministries, and individuals in the name and spirit of Christ.

- Leadership – the ability to guide, administer, and direct the Church or church groups.
- Showing mercy – empathy with the suffering (mental, physical, emotional) and the ability to lift them up with deeds of kindness and prayer.
- Knowledge – ability to understand the world and God’s plan for it, to gather and analyze facts and data into something usable.
- Wisdom – the ability to take knowledge and apply it. Often is paired with knowledge.
- Faith – complete confidence in God to keep His word and promises.
- Healing – one who allows God to use them as an agent of physical, mental, or spiritual healing.
- Miraculous powers – the ability to perform deeds which compel people to acknowledge that divine powers must be behind the accomplishment.
- Distinguishing the spirits (discernment) – ability to distinguish what is true and what is not true. Is something from God or not.
- Tongues – the ability to speak in a language not previously learned so unsaved people may hear God’s message in their own language. Not speaking in gibberish that no one knows.
- Interpretation of Tongues – ability to give an understandable meaning to a message spoken in tongues.
- Apostle – the Greek word means “to send forth.” The Latin form “mission” is where we get the word “missionary.” In the New Testament times, apostles were delegates sent from one government to another, much like our modern ambassadors.
- Evangelism – one with special abilities (beyond the ordinary believer) to present the Gospel to a person or people in such a manner that a decision is required (acceptance or rejection).
- Pastor – people with pastoral gifts (not all will be clergy or official leaders) and exhibit special gifts for caring for others, for seeing to their well-being, for guarding them from danger, and for directing them into appropriate paths of life.

Every believer needs to take accountability for how they serve the body of Christ. It should never be a matter of “if” I serve but “how” will I serve. Seek out what your giftings are and find ways to use it. It is another act of obedience to Jesus.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

As our scripture reading today reminds us, we could have the most spectacular of gifts, but if LOVE is not within us, we might as well pack up and go home. We mentioned that when we truly repent and follow Christ, the Spirit gives us unique gifts to serve the Church. The gifts given are unique to each individual and not everybody has all the gifts. On the other hand, the fruit of the Spirit should be demonstrated in every life.

What is the “fruit of the spirit”? Let’s look at Galatians 5:22-23:

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

It is important that you notice “fruit” is singular! It isn’t “fruits” of the Spirit. In reality you either have all of them or none of them. They are a package deal. It is not a matter of asking for more fruit, as a true follower you have the ability to have all you need, but it is once again a matter of obedience and allowing the Spirit to use your life to the glory of God. As you give over ownership of your life to Jesus, this includes giving control of our temperament over to God’s Spirit. As our temperament conforms to the leading of the Spirit, then we become more like Jesus day by day.

The Fruit of the Spirit are so important to our being a disciple of Jesus, that we will finish off this series when I get back from vacation. We must understand the role that this plays in our daily lives and in the work we do on behalf of Jesus.

Let’s pray...