



## Spiritual Gifts and Order in the Church - SERMON NOTES 1 Corinthians 10 to 14

### Introduction

12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the HS is given for the common good;

I know last couple of Sunday's have been difficult for some  
All sorts of things going on strange, unusual, weird, even disturbing  
I have shared all of those emotions

We must be wary of two things

1. Excess on the one hand – which can be very damaging;
2. Quenching the Spirit on the other – which would be a disaster for everyone.

As Paul says, the HS is given to the Church to build up the Church as the Body of Christ so that we may be effective for Jesus in the World.

Paul shows us the way:

1. We must love each other;
2. Secondly we must eagerly desire the work of the HS amongst us;
3. Thirdly we must understand that the Spirit is given to strengthen the Church;
4. Order can be beautiful;

### 1. We must love each other;

Love is absolutely the essential quality of the Christian and the Christian community and we would do well today to ask ourselves 'Do we love each other?'

*God's love completely transcends all human ideas or expressions of love. 'It is a love for the utterly unworthy, a love which proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love lavished on others without a thought of whether they are worthy to receive it or not. It proceeds rather from the nature of the lover, than from any merit in the beloved'. This is the love which, according to Jesus, has to characterize and control the Christian community.*

The Church in Corinth was somewhat lacking in love & was fractioned by all sorts of 'parties':

**'Legalistic Party'** who said Christians must still comply with certain Jewish Laws, especially laws to do with food and purity;

**'Libertine' party** who said 'Jesus has set me free; the Law no longer applies; we are free and we can do what we like.'

Paul's essential answer to both of these parties is 'No. Love each other.'

To the legalist's he says 'Let love be your law'

To the libertines he says 'Let love direct your liberty'.

10:23-24 and 10:31-33

In Chapter 11 Paul continues this theme as he addresses two particular issues the Corinthian Church needed to address:

v1-16 the way they conducted themselves, and

v17-end the way they related to each other, esp in sharing communion.

Then, slap bang in the middle of Paul's teaching about the use of Spiritual gifts, as if to remind us that it is all about love, Paul writes what has become one of the most widely known and used chapters in the Bible, Chapter 13, all about Love.

(v1 to 3) We can do all sorts of amazing and spiritual things, but unless it is done with love, and in a context of love for each other then it is actually discordant and uncomfortable;

(v4 to 8) Say it together ..... Love never fails.

Literally, that which is built on love will not collapse.

## **2. Secondly we must eagerly desire the work of the HS amongst us;**

When Israel was in such a mess because they had been disobedient to God and had been carried off into captivity, God said through the prophets "I have not forgotten your desperate state, I have not forgotten you, I am going to restore you to the land from which you were taken captive and I am going to restore your fortunes". But the people asked how are you going to do this? It is impossible – look at us!

God replied through the Prophet Zechariah (ch 4) "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit!"

Today, the world is in a mess. The Church is called to bring the world out of that mess by sharing the gospel in word and deed. God is waiting to anoint his disciples with the Holy Spirit and with power, to heal the sick, to set captives free, and to do the things that only God can do in order to fix that mess.

Acts 1:8

Still Jesus waits to do that by the power of the HS in the Church.

I have had it said to me "I don't speak in tongues; I have never spoken in tongues; and I never want to speak in tongues."

Now be assured I will address any 'manifestation' of the Spirit which we consider un-biblical or un-helpful, but we must also understand that such a statement is un-biblical and heretical.

Paul says that we should be eager for the Spiritual gifts,

At end of 1 Cor 12: Eagerly desire the greater gifts!

14:1

14:12

14:39

## **3. Thirdly we must understand that the Spirit is given to strengthen the Church;**

The Holy Spirit and the gifts of the HS are given to the Church in order to build the Church up so that she can be the effective body of Christ in the world.

I sometimes think many of us would like to know that the HS is present in the Church so long as he sits

quietly in the corner and doesn't make a fuss.

Paul says that we should be eager for the Spiritual gifts, especially the gifts that build up the Church – such as Prophecy;

12v8f ..... there are different kinds of gifts ..... but .. v7.

This is the purpose of 'The Body' image in v12 to 30 that Paul uses in order to show that we are all different, we all have different gifts, but we are given to each other and we are given for each other, to build each other up! To strengthen us and equip us for the work of God in the World.

Sunday (if you like) is for Monday!

Eph 4:11-13; 16

In 1 Corinthians, Paul identifies one exception to this rule, gift of tongues, or speaking in another God given language.

The gift of tongues is often given when people are filled with the HS. At Pentecost the Apostles were filled with the HS and we're told (Acts 2) they 'spoke in tongues declaring the wonders of God'.

But .. ch14:5 & 13 the Apostle Paul, who evidently spoke in tongues a lot, says that he who speaks in tongues edifies himself (builds himself up) unless what he has proclaimed is interpreted (preferably by themselves or by someone else) so that everyone can understand, then everyone is edified, or built up.

v16 and 17

Paul never excludes tongues in personal or collective worship – indeed he states in v 39 “Do not forbid speaking in tongues – but he does say (v19) that when the church is gathered it is better for someone to speak five intelligible or understandable words than ten thousand words which cannot be understood!

Blows my theory “Why use three words when I could use a thousand!”

v31

#### **4. Order can be beautiful;**

14 v39-40

Got to be aware there can be dangers in the use of Spiritual gifts which puts a real responsibility upon us to ensure that we use them responsibly!

Remember that the manifestation of the Spirit always results in diverse reactions. Remember Pentecost? Some declared “Wow!” others laughed!

V23 .....

But equally, ... v24 - 25

Key ... ch 12: 1, ch 13 and 14:20

When it comes to the use of Sp. Gifts, we must not be ignorant, we've got to be loving, and we've got to be mature – this is not child's play.

Another reason ..... we are human and even Spirit filled people make mistakes!

Ch 13:9

Fascinated by that phrase “We know in part and we prophecy in part!”

Paul goes on to explain what he is talking about

I think what he is saying is 'Until we are perfect, until we meet Jesus face to face, we are imperfect, even in the use of Sp gifts!

For instance, when the Spirit gives us a prophetic word it will come out through an imperfect channel and it could be imperfect in it's delivery;

Should this therefore prevent us from using sp.gifts?

Not at all! But it does demand that we use them with care and humility; open to be corrected.

V29 Even what the prophet says must be weighed by others;

From V26 – 40 ..... everything must be done in order and for the strengthening of the Church.

**V26b;**

**v28**

**v32 - 33;**

**v39-40**

#### **THIS IS SO MY DESIRE AND PRAYER FOR US AT MBC**

1. that we really love each other;
2. that you are eagerly open to the work of the HS in you;
3. that we are eagerly open to the work of the HS amongst us;
4. that we understand the Spirit is given to build up the Church to make us effective in the world;
5. that everything is done in a fitting and orderly way such that God is glorified amongst us and through us;