

Whit-Sunday – Pentecost

23rd of May 2021

St John the Evangelist, Gordon.

1st Corinthians 12:1- 13 NRSV

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts,^[a] brothers and sisters,^[b] I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the

utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Today is Pentecost or Whit Sunday. God, the Holy Spirit, is a gift from God to all the followers of Jesus. In the letter to the Ephesians, we read these words:

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (4:30)

The Church celebrates Pentecost marking the day God sent God the Holy Spirit to His people. I have chosen for this morning sermon the text set for today from 1st Corinthians chapter Twelve.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

We know that God **seals** every Christian with the Holy Spirit. According to our text this morning, God the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts as He sees fit.

The Spiritual Gifts from the Holy Spirit were given for the common good. Therefore any sense of derision or division would logically indicate that what is happening is not from God.

The Apostle Paul was writing in response to division within the Church community. The majority of the commentaries on the letters to the Corinthians agree with that line of thought. Sadly, even though God the Holy Spirit bestowed

His gifts on the Church, there became a misunderstanding of these gifts. There was a temptation to rank or value these gifts from the Holy Spirit. Human nature led to the temptation of feeling superior to other brothers and sisters in Christ. God gave spiritual gifts for the common good, and this truth was lost.

Although we are celebrating Pentecost, the reality of what the LORD God intended was to strengthen and build up His people, yet our approach to serving God, is tainted by sin.

A clergyman I knew once boasted he had all the Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit, except two. Those two spiritual gifts he claimed he didn't have were celibacy and martyrdom. Another senior clergyman whispered I think the gift of humility needs work.

Returning the Text:

Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. (12:3)

The seal of the Holy Spirit is to lead people to glorify God and not themselves. Pentecost is to remind the people of God that we are one, one Body, the Body of Christ. We are to strive to serve one another in brotherly love: our Oneness refers to our co-dependence upon each member of the Body: we work together, albeit we have different gifts and abilities.

All these (gifts) are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (Verse 11)

Paul is stating the truth and reminding an accurate and straightforward phrase: "God knows best". The LORD God through God the Spirit has blessed you and I and every other member of St Johns with the Gift of the Spirit. These gifts enable all to deepen our fellowship with each other and carry out the mission of all Christian Churches in the honouring task of making Christ known to all as Lord and Saviour.

At the recent Election Synod, there were four talented men. Each of them could have brought something different to the position of the role of Archbishop. Each had differing gifts and

abilities. Did the Synod elect the 'best man for the task'? Or under God, do we believe the man elected is whom God has placed on our hearts? I think the decision was the latter. Each man could have taken the Diocese forward through their leadership if they had been elected to the position of Archbishop. The Synod's task was to listen to the speakers, and through prayer elect the man whom they believe God was calling to this position. God, the Holy Spirit, was directing the Synod.

Turning back to the Parish, God in His wisdom has endowed St John with various Spiritual Gifts to further enhance the talents of the people of St. Johns. These gifts and talents are so the Church can further enhance our fellowship with God and each other.

One of the great joys of Pentecost is the Oneness the Spirit of God brings to the people of God.

**For in the one Spirit we were all
baptized into one Body—Jews
or Greeks, slaves or free—and**

**we were all made to drink of
one Spirit.** Verse 13.

As we continue to grow as a Church, I would encourage us all to seek what builds up the Body of Christ and not what divides. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Next week is the combined 9am Service. The Combined Service will give us all the opportunity to have fellowship with others whom we may not meet regularly.

The Spirit given at Pentecost to the Church helps us proclaim our belief in the Incarnation, crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Glorification of the Christ.

How will you allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in the way of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, in all you do and say this week?

To God be glory forever. Amen

*Commentary 1st Corinthians; *Gordon Fee*