

**1-16-22**

**Sermon- Giving God Our Very Best**

**Scripture- 1 Corinthians 12:1-13, CTW- Psalm 36: 5-10**

**Hymns-65, 717, 36**

**Theme- The Holy spirit is trying to encourage all of us to realize that we have been given wonderful gifts by God and He encourages us to use those gifts to do our very best and invites all of us to join together to serve Him.**

**I. Right up front we see that the core message from this passage is that we each have a special gift for ministry.** I want to encourage you that not only does every believer in Christ have a spiritual gift but Christ through the Holy Spirit equips us to use those gifts. He truly wants us to succeed in living out our faith.

**A. And so today I ask all of us the question, are we using our gifts and are we giving God our best?**

Well to be honest, statistics tell us that not every believer is using his or her gifts to serve God through the church. It is a proven fact that not every Christian is committed to service.

The statistic that has been used is the 80/20 principle: That is that 80% of the work of the church gets done by 20% of the people. I am thankful that statistic does not work in this church; however we are only doing slightly better.

Yet can you imagine what would happen if 50 percent of the people were willing to give God their best through service?

Imagine what would happen if 75% of the people were involved in giving God their best through serving in His church!

I am a firm believer that it takes all the people of God to do all the work of God. God's work is so important and so large that it

cannot be done by just 20% of the congregation. No, it takes all people giving their best to God through service in his name.

And so for the message this morning I want to encourage all of us to realize that we have been given wonderful gifts by God and he encourages us to use those gifts to do our best to serve Him.

**B. Today's passage opens up in some pretty uncomfortable territory. There is a church in Corinth who is undergoing a lot of problems.**

It seems that there are different groups in the church and they are filled with division and griping and complaining about just about anything that is going on within the church.

Chapter 12 comes up in the midst of a growing argument between two groups of people who are upset because there are some people in the church who thought they were more important than others because they had some pretty spectacular gifts.

When Paul wrote this letter to the church he specifically addressed these issues. The first thing he does is to address the need for Christians to understand Spiritual Gifts.

## **II. To Give God Our Best, We Need To Understand Spiritual Gifts**

**A. Paul wanted to make sure that the Corinthians as well as we understood what spiritual gifts were and how they were to be used.** In verse 1 Paul encourages us to not be ignorant about spiritual gifts.

In order to not be ignorant about spiritual gifts and to understand them, it's probably best that we define what a Spiritual gift is.

Here is a common definition: **"Spiritual gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good of the Body of Christ."**

These gifts are given to each Christian to help them do their best in serving God. They are given freely so that you and I can minister to the needs of the body of believers and to enable us to be able to do extraordinary work for God.

**B. These gifts are designed to help and if these gifts are not used, then we cannot fully maximize God's potential in this world.**

In this passage today we discover there are approximately 20 spiritual gifts. However this is not an exhaustive list as there are other gifts found in **Romans 12, Ephesians 4, I Peter 4**, and of course in this passage in **I Corinthians**.

I invite all of you to visit those passages as well and I pray that by doing so, you will see that God in his wisdom has made provision for all of us!

**III. The next truth is that to more fully serve the Kingdom cooperatively, the Holy Spirit gifts everyone differently.**

**A. Skip down to verses 4-6 and you will discover that each of us can have different gifts but the same God.** I love the way the Message paraphrase puts verses 4-6: "God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all."

Did you catch who is involved in the distribution of gifts? Verse 6 says that God himself is behind it all!

I love the fact in knowing that God cares so much **for each of us** and he has so much faith that you and I can do His will that he puts great effort into providing for all of us!

And if God is willing to put all of himself in the distribution of spiritual gifts to us, then shouldn't you and I be willing to put all of ourselves into giving him the very best in our service?

**B. Note that 3 times in this passage Paul tells us that we are given different types of gifts, different types of service and different kinds of working.**

First of all there is not just one gift. Rather there are **different** gifts for **different** people, and the gifts are provided for different kinds of service.

The spiritual gift that has been given to you specifically is to be used in a particular area of ministry service. There are plenty of opportunities for all of us to use our unique gifts for service. And when we do that we will see them work.

By the way, the word **“working”** refers to the results or accomplishments that come when we use our gifts in meaningful service. **Whether or not we are able to see the results, God does.**

**Paul in Philippians 2:13** reminds us: “For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Because God is at work within us, we can accomplish His purposes.

The Corinthians had elevated the more spectacular gifts and were giving more attention to the spiritual superstars.

**Paul challenges them, and us, to understand that all of us are different and all of us have been given different gifts.**

The same God is at work in us, but He customizes His work through us for His ultimate glory and the strength of the church.

#### **IV. Giving our Best For God Requires Teamwork.**

**A. Now here is the cool thing. You and I have been given the awesome opportunity of being a part of something big.** I don't know about you, but everyday I am humbled when I think that not only does God care for me and love me but that he has enough trust in me to help him build His kingdom.

Yet it's not just something that he says: **"Okay Keith go out there and do it on your own."**

To serve Him well, we need to understand that we are part of a team known as "T.E.A.M." **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**ccomplishes **M**inistry. God loves teamwork because when more people are working together greater things can happen.

**B. Look at verse 7: Each person is given something to do that shows who God is.** Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people.

The reality is that **YOU** regardless of where you have come from, regardless of what you have done in your life, when you give your life to Christ, God will provide the gifts.

This partnership is a **two way street**. There are things that God is going to do **and there are things that you and I must do**. Let's look at what God does for us through these gifts.

**V. We must accept that God provides the gifts: we don't invent them ourselves as we go along...that could send us in the wrong direction, and against God's plan for each of us.**

Look at verse 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, **just as He determines**.

**A. The fact is that spiritual gifts are something that you can't earn and you can't request a specific gift. Rather God gives those gifts to us as He sees best in our lives.**

There are some people who think that God throws out gifts like a bride throws her bouquet at a wedding reception. You have seen those right? It's amazing to watch as all the single women gather behind the bride and then as she throws that bouquet in the air the women scramble to catch that thing like it is some WWF Royal Rumble wrestling match.

But that is not how it works here because God gave us each our gifts before we were even born. **God had thought long and hard about the gifts that he would give each of us.**

**B. This church has every gift that is needed in order for us to function as a biblical community.** Even though the Corinthian church was struggling they had all the gifts they needed to do ministry and grow together. And so it is with us.

I am excited about each person that is thinking about joining this church, has joined this church recently or has been a member of Trinity for years.

God has put together an awesome lineup of players and with this Team, not only can we accomplish Ministry, **but we can help one another down this road of life** by encouraging, equipping, enabling, and experiencing Christ's love together through the work of the church.

**I Peter 4:10 encourages us like this:** "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

The point I make is this: God has spent serious time not just in making us but in providing specific gifts for us to use and if we are not willing to use them then how can we share Christ's love with others. How can we be an example if we are not willing to live by His example?

The problem in Corinth was that they believed that some gifts were better than others.

**C. Paul wanted to encourage each person that each gift, each person was crucial to the ministry of the church.** And that is what I want to convey to you today. You are vital to this church. **All the people streaming this service today are vital to this church!**

This church can't do the things that it has been called to do without you. We need your hands to work with others in sharing about Jesus.

We need your feet for walking through the community in ministry for His Kingdom.

We need your mouths to share in fellowship with one another building each other up. We need your tithes to keep these ministries running.

All that you have is vital to this church and never let anyone tell you that your gifts are not needed.

I love **2 Timothy 1:6** which says: For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you by the laying on of hands.

How bright is your light shining for God? Is it like a fire? Do you need to allow the Spirit to fan your gift into full flame? Are you burning bright for Him, or are you just flickering or smoldering?

You might be here today saying "Oh they don't need me. I am just one person. I can't change the world through this church."

**There is an insert today in your Bulletin called "Life Giving Prayers for Your Church."** I want us all to take it home and work our way through those prayers this week. It is a new year- it is a new day for God's people. Prayers are needed now more than ever!

You're needed in this church! God has gifted you and now He wants to use you. Don't allow yourself to think you don't matter. Nobody is a nobody in the body of Christ.

No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. You are the most influential person on this team. I need you. This church needs you, God needs you. **Amen? Let's Pray!**