

“Each Given Unique Gifts for One Ministry”
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
1/16/2022

Are all of us exactly the same?
Each of us is unique, right?

And each of us are good at certain things.
And the things we are good at are not the same for each of us, right

But here is the thing...
God wants our congregation to fulfil our mission
of telling more and more people about Jesus and his love
And then having all of these people,
Who are in love with Jesus
And empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit
Transform the world around us into something better

God wants us to succeed in this

And here is the surprising part...
Our congregation already has
everything thing we need to do this
every gift needed
present right now among the members of our church
The Holy Spirit has already given us what we need to succeed

The Apostle Paul wrote a couple letters
to the Christian believers in Corinth
In the first letter to them
Paul was writing to a church that was divided

As we hear Paul write near the beginning of his letter,
¹⁰ *Now I encourage you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Agree with each other and don't be divided into rival groups. Instead, be restored with the same mind and the same purpose.* ¹¹ *My brothers and sisters, Chloe's people gave me some information about you, that you're fighting with each other.*
– 1 Corinthians 1:10-11

Huh!

I wonder if Paul has a word for our world and our church today...

Corinth was a unique city
(Show Corinth on map)

As you see, Corinth is a city in Greece

But let's zoom in...
(Show Corinth zoomed in on map)

The city of Corinth is a port city on this narrow slice of land
The fancy word for this is “isthmus”

If you were sailing a boat back then,
This was a really nice shortcut saving about 200 miles
(Show Corinth route options on map)

Because of this Corinth was a very diverse city

Even though it was in Greece,
In Paul's day it was more Roman than Greek
And we see these divisions in the church that Paul started there
Roman citizens, Greek residents
Jewish and Gentile
Rich and poor
Actually, in the church a few who were rich
and a lot who were poor
Persons who were slaves and those who were free

And with these different categories of people
Came divisions

This is the congregation to whom Paul is writing
¹¹ *My brothers and sisters, Chloe's people gave me some information about you, that you're fighting with each other.*

Let's pick it up in the 11th Chapter...

¹ Brothers and sisters, I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts...

⁴ There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are different ministries and the same Lord; ⁶ and there are different activities but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. ⁷ A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good.

– 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7

Here's the thing...

Each of us have gifts given to us by God.

Yet we don't have the same gifts

But all are needed,

and need to be used together,

for the common good

for the fulfillment of the ministry of the congregation

Think back to the story "The Rabbi's Gift" from last week

Brother Abbott had the gift of leadership

Brother Thomas had the gift holiness and spiritual light

Brother Elred, even though he was crotchety,

He had the gift of insight and wisdom

Brother Phillip, even though he was quiet,

Had the gift of faith and service and helping

Did you catch last week that each of them had different gifts?

And all of these gifts were needed

As they began to work together in a new way in community

Have you ever considered the gifts that you have?

Have you even done a spiritual gifts inventory here?

I'm just going to take a couple of guesses...

It would probably be more fun, and more accurate,

To have each of you "tell on" each other

Telling one another what you think their gifts are

Sometimes Joleen sees things about me

That I don't see as well myself

In previous congregations I've served,

We've had each person who was joining the church

Take a spiritual gifts inventory

as part of the new member class

And then we used that as we matched their spiritual gifts

To the various ministries of the congregation

Instead of twisting arms to have people fill a ministry,

We had people doing what they naturally loved

And ministry for them was fun

Imagine that...

Using the gifts that God has already given us

To be in ministry, doing God's work in the world

Again,

Are all the gifts each of us have the same? (No)

Are all the gifts each of us have needed? (Yes)

The Holy Spirit has already given us what we need

to succeed as a congregation fulfilling our mission

The catch is that all of us have contribute

In sharing the unique spiritual gifts God has given you

Even though we are each different,

Much like those in the ancient Corinthian congregation

We are all one in Christ

And when we work and when we serve as one body

We can accomplish every thing that God has asked us to do

Every thing that God has designed us, as a congregation, to do

¹ *Brothers and sisters, I don't want you to be ignorant about spiritual gifts...*

⁴ *There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;* ⁵ *and there are different ministries and the same Lord;* ⁶ *and there are different activities but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.* ⁷ *A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7

We will pick this idea up next week

As we go into more detail about

How each of us is a member,

How each of us is a part

Of this thing that is the Body of Christ

¹² *Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many.*

²⁴ *...God has put the body [of Christ] together...*

²⁵ *so that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other.* ²⁶ *If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it.* ²⁷ *You are the body of Christ and parts of each other.*

– 1 Corinthians 12:12

But more on that next week.

This week, let's remember that each and every one of us

Has been given spiritual gifts from God

And each of us are to share our unique giftedness

With the whole – the complete Body of Christ

The Holy Spirit has already given us what we need

to succeed as a congregation fulfilling our mission

The catch is that all of us have contribute

In sharing the unique spiritual gifts God has given you

As the song goes,

*One heart, one Spirit,
one voice to praise you,
we are the body of Christ.*

One goal, one vision:

To see you exalted.

We are the body of Christ.

– “We Are the Body of Christ” #2227

(Joys and Concerns / Pastoral Prayer)

