

Conduct in the House of God: Spiritual Gifts

Preacher: Joe R.

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References: 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Timothy 3:14-15; Matthew 16:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 1 Corinthians 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:8-9; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Corinthians 12:18; 1 Timothy 4:14; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:3

Introduction: Conducting Ourselves in the House of God

Each one of you this morning, those of you that are in the building and looks like 22 of you are online, so good to be here with you this morning from Golden Lake, Ontario. Actually, from my home, mostly in my office here, and it's a delight and a joy and a privilege.

If you have your Bibles, let's turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3, please. 1 Timothy chapter 3. You know, if you have children—and most of us have had children and may have children—whenever you take a trip, or you're going to a special event or to someone's house, always instruct the children. You say, "Now, when we get there, this is what I expect of you. This is how I want you to behave."

Paul, in that sense, writing to Timothy in verse 14 of 1 Timothy chapter 3, says:

[1 Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV]

¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

So a few months ago now, as I look back, we started an ongoing series, or at least some thoughts about how we ought to behave ourselves, how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God. We looked at the house of God. We looked at the church of the living God. We looked at the pillar and ground of the truth. These are profound descriptions of that which we know to be the body of Christ, the building that God is building. The Lord Jesus said, "I

will build My church," and He's still building it. It started, as we know, in Acts chapter 2 with the coming of the Holy Spirit, forming and adding to the church, the body of Christ.

And it will be in its completion, we believe, when we hear the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. And the bride, the body, the building, the people will be snatched away and be with the Lord forever. So that hadn't happened. That's why you're breaking bread this morning, because it hadn't happened yet. And you're declaring and proclaiming His life and His death and His resurrection and His suffering and all of that in the remembrance of Him till He comes. And He just hasn't come just yet—perhaps today. And so we still have opportunity to behave ourselves. We still have opportunity to know how to conduct ourselves as believers in the house of God.

So we went through a few things and talked about who we are, our new position in Christ, how we got there through the work on the cross, the resurrection, and then the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And it's been a long time, and I didn't take any good enough notes to remember exactly where I left off, so I hope you don't mind if I repeat myself a little bit here. But we talked about spiritual gifts. I don't think we talked specifically about them, but I want us to go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 this morning.

And under this big umbrella of how to behave ourselves in the house of God, 1 Corinthians chapter 12 gives us some insight about spiritual gifts. I want to pause on that for the few minutes that we have here this morning and hope to encourage you.

Ignorance vs. Understanding of Spiritual Gifts

Let me just jump in in verse 1, and I'd like to highlight just a few verses, thinking about believers, thinking about our privilege and responsibility, how we live, how we act, how we conduct ourselves in the body of Christ, the house of God.

Verse 1, 1 Corinthians chapter 12:

[1 Corinthians 12:1 NKJV]

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

I'm going to put my neck out on the chopping block here, and I know there's some sharp axes around. Don't be ignorant, brethren, please, about spiritual gifts. God has a wonderful plan for your life, and one small petal of that beautiful flower is spiritual gifts. And as a

believer, you have at least one. You may have multiple spiritual gifts. But what a shame not to know, not to develop it, not to use it for the body, for the Lord, for the glory of God.

Spiritual gifts. Look at verse 4:

[1 Corinthians 12:4 NKJV]

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

If my study is correct, there are six passages in the New Testament—we won't take time this morning, I'll perhaps give you some outlines at some point—six passages that list spiritual gifts in the New Testament. If they are written down, and some of these passages overlap, I think there are about 18 mentioned, maybe as much as up to 20, depending on how you would count spiritual gifts. You've got at least one.

These are special endowments from God to you. Notice "diversities" in verse 4, "same Spirit." Look at just the reference to the Spirit in verse 8: "through the Spirit," "through the same Spirit." Look at verse 9, the phrase "same Spirit," again "same Spirit." Look at verse 11, "same Spirit." Okay. Verse 13, "by one Spirit." What are we saying? We're saying that these gifts are given by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God.

The Sovereignty of the Spirit and the Placement of Members

Now, just to balance it out a little bit, notice verse 18, same chapter:

[1 Corinthians 12:18 NKJV]

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

Let me see if I can help you with that; at least it helped me to understand this. So we've got the body of Christ. We know that these are believers. By the grace of God, we are placed into the body of Christ upon salvation. And as we enter our new position, our new role as believers in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit of God gives you a gift. That's wonderful! He gives you a mechanism, a way, an avenue into how your part helps the body.

We are not individuals. We are **corporate**. We are linked. We are the body. There are many of us; there is one Head. And the Spirit of God gives you a gift. And notice in verse 18, God puts you in the body where you can use that gift.

Sometimes I illustrate this in kind of a humorous way, but think about it like this: let's suppose the Spirit of God gave you a gift—and I'm speaking in language we can understand now—let's say you're a right elbow. God gave you that gift. That's your place to function: a right elbow. In verse 18, God puts you in the body as it pleased Him. Guess where you get put into the body? Here, where you can use it! You get put into the body as a right elbow.

Now, what if God put you in as a left elbow? What if He put you in as a knee? Well, you've got some function there. You can maybe kind of make something happen, but God correlates it. He puts you in the right place. The Spirit of God gives you a gift, you're put in the body at the right place, and when each one is exercising that gift, the whole body works. It's wonderful.

There Are No Unimportant Gifts

Now, we know there are no unimportant gifts. You know, I talk to people sometimes, and I say to them, "Do you know what your gift is, your spiritual gift?" And quite often, they say something like this: "I can't... I'm not very good at anything. I probably just have maybe the gift of helps." Right, right. As though the gift of helps is given to people who can't do anything else! You with me on that? "I can't teach. I can't preach. I don't sing. I can't show mercy. I'm not a missionary. I'm not an evangelist. I just like kind of... I just probably like helps is all I can do."

Helps is not a consolation prize for people who can't do anything else. Get that in your head, please! As a matter of fact, if you don't have the gift of helps and you try to help, you're going to be very frustrated. That's not God's gift for you. You do that under guilt or you do that under embarrassment.

And then you've got people who say, "Well, I think my gift is teaching." All you've got to do is listen to them about five minutes, and you know they don't have that gift! But they want that gift, and other people hope they don't get that gift. God makes no mistakes. You see how important this whole thing is? The Spirit of God has given you at least one gift. You need to develop it. You need to practice it. Okay.

And again, in my understanding of this, I think I know by the grace of God what my gift is. And I think I know that people try to make my gift other things, and it frustrates me because I don't think that's my gift. But they think that's my gift, or they want it to be my gift, and they encourage me to exercise that gift. Dear friends, you know, one of the things that is so satisfying is when you look at the Word of God, you exercise what you think your gift might be. You might have to work in many areas, but at some point you go, "I've got it! This is

where I'm happy. This is where I'm effective. This is what I need to hone in on. This is what I need to develop." A wonderful part of the body of Christ.

Now, please listen to me just for a moment. You can see my head and my hands and whatever you can see on Zoom. Okay. You can't see my heart. Isn't that interesting? Well, I've got one. At least at the Heart Institute, they told me I had one. They worked on it. Some of the critical, most important parts... God forbid, but it does happen: you can get an arm cut off, or a leg cut off, or a foot or something, you know. But some of the most critical, most important parts of your body, you can't even see them.

Same thing in the body of Christ, you know. We seem to spotlight a few. You know, we've got Mr. Universe Evangelist—that's our man! Or, "Did you ever hear Leroy preach? He's really got the gift!" And we spotlight our missionaries. Not wrong to give honor where honor is due; I'm not saying we shouldn't. But the things that we see, the most advertisement that we get, the most public gifts that we have, we think those are the important ones. Not necessarily. Listen to me, please: **there are no little gifts**. They're all from the Spirit and put into the body by God. These are divine endowments, special, unique abilities.

Oh, what a shame for you to go through your life and not know what your gift is, and not practice, not develop it, not enjoy it. When the Lord Jesus gave us an abundant life, this is part of it: the gifts that we have. And perhaps I'll give you a list in some time, or send you a copy or something, and Roy can put it on the screen, or you guys can print it off. But this is a wonderful thing.

How are you going to behave yourself in the body of Christ? By the grace of God, I'm going to use my gift. And Paul would say to Timothy, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you." And so I want us to think about that for a moment.

The Prerequisite: Being Filled with the Spirit

Now, let's go to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. If you happen to be taking notes—and I know that's kind of gone by the wayside now; nobody takes notes, a lot of people don't even have a Bible anymore, well, they kind of do, but it's on your phone or something—but if you happen to have a Bible and you make notes or underline things, in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18, you make a note of this. A mental note, a physical mark it somehow. If you don't get this one right, it doesn't matter if you have all 18 of the spiritual gifts. Okay?

And Paul writes in Ephesians 5:18:

[Ephesians 5:18 NKJV]

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

I'd like to say one thing before I try to explain this: you don't speak in tongues necessarily when you're filled with the Spirit. Some people did a long time ago, back in Acts. I've been places where the only way you know that you're filled with the Spirit is that you speak in tongues. Now, some of you probably don't even know what speaking in tongues is. That is a practice or an exercise by some Christians in charismatic circles that believe that they speak in a language that is not known.

If you have a... I don't know what it is in some more modern translations, but in the old King James, it talked about an "unknown tongue." Well, that's not a very good translation, in my opinion. The gift of tongues was being able to speak in a language that you didn't learn. Like if I got up here this morning and I spoke in Mandarin, you guys would go, "Wow, he must have had a crash course or something. Like Joe, I mean, of all people, Joe doesn't speak Chinese!" Everybody would go, "Yeah, but listen to him, it's perfect!" That would be a gift. You'd have to know that that would be a gift. Okay. But that is not the manifestation of the filling of the Spirit. And by the way, I think that gift is probably still active and still people that could do that, but not in any way that I've experienced it or seen it.

But my point is this: the filling of the Spirit has within the definition of its term what it is. The contrast in this verse is not hard: don't be drunk with wine. Could I dare say this: but be drunk with the Spirit? What's the point? The point is, when you're drunk with alcohol, you're out of control. You're under the control of alcohol. You do things you wouldn't normally do. Okay, and most of that is probably very negative, probably not worthy of even talking about. Don't be drunk with alcohol. Don't be under control of alcohol. Could I put it this way: but be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

If you go through the book of Acts and you look at the times that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, these people were led by the Spirit, lived in the Spirit, moved in the Spirit. And of course, sometimes in those early chapters of Acts, they spoke in what we call an unknown language, a language they did not know. Okay, that's all right; that's what God used in those days. Maybe I'll get into that at some point. But the point is, the filling of the Spirit is to be **controlled by the Spirit**.

Let me give you the opposite of that: to be controlled by the flesh. What's that? Well, that's just the old Joe. That's just me. That's apart from the Spirit of God enabling me to do anything for God. I may have good intentions. I may want to serve God. I may want to do

something biblical. I may want to witness. I may want to pray. I may want to preach, but I don't include... I'm not given in to the Holy Spirit. I'm not allowing Him to influence my life and take over my mind and my body and be used of God. I'm rowing my own boat, folks. That's the opposite: I'm not controlled by the Holy Spirit.

So maybe next time—I know we're out of time now—but maybe next time we'll pick up with this thought and we'll talk about how to be filled with the Spirit.

Walking in Yieldedness

But just one caveat before I close here: you must be **yielded**. Okay? You must be yielded. You can't resist the Spirit. You can't resist God. You can't knowingly disobey God and be filled with the Spirit. You can't know what is right and say, "I'm not going to do that," and be filled with the Spirit. You must give yourselves over. You must yield. You must want it. You must ask the Lord for it. But there are conditions to be met, and I'd like to share that with you.

A little exercise: there might be one or two out of the congregation that would be interested enough to search it out. See if you can find out what your spiritual gift is. Look in the Bible. There are six passages. Find them! Man, we've got so much stuff at our fingertips right now. You can get that in about 30 seconds if you know where to go on the internet. And you can find out what those passages are and what those gifts are. And maybe next time I'd like to give a little more on this.

God bless you. It's nice to be with you, and I trust you are a happy Christian today. You love the Lord, and you want to serve Him today.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for giving us everything that we need that pertains to life and godliness. Thank You that all of us as followers of Christ have at least one unique spiritual gift from You, endowed by Your Spirit, and placed into the body as it pleases You. Father, bless these dear ones today, and thank You that we ought to know, and can know, and should know how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.