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Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the concept of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the context of the Body of Christ. He explains that these gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the entire body and emphasizes the importance of understanding the concept of the body of Christ to fully comprehend their purpose. Gregg lists a total of 15 gifts, with specific mentions of prophecy, service, teaching, generosity, diligence, exhortation, and mercy. He highlights that each member of the body is necessary for the full functioning of the organism, and encourages individuals to be open and available to God's use for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Transcript

We're talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I was asked if I'd speak for about three hours on the subject. Now, I have a series online called Charisma and Character, which is about the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Charisma is the Greek word for gifts, and character would be the fruit of the Spirit, and so these two together make up what we could say is the normative working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

But today, we're only going to be looking at the gifts of the Spirit, and that very rapidly. First of all, although we use the term the gifts of the Holy Spirit probably pretty frequently, that's not a term that's common in the Bible. There is one place in the Bible that uses the term gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that's in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 4, which we will look at later to get the information from that verse, but that's really the only place in the Bible that uses terms gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The largest discussion of the gifts of the Spirit is in 1 Corinthians 12, and although it doesn't use the term gifts of the Holy Spirit there, it uses a term that says, it says there are gifts, there are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit. It says in 1 Corinthians 12, 4. There are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit. So that would justify us referring to them as the gifts of the Spirit.

The word gifts of the Spirit in Hebrews 2, 4 actually uses a different word for gifts, but it doesn't matter, it's talking about the same thing. One thing that you'll find in 1

Corinthians 12, in almost all English translations, you'll find several references to what comes across in English as spiritual gifts, which obviously is a reference to the same thing we're talking about, but in the Greek, it doesn't say spiritual gifts, it just says spirituals. It's the adjective spiritual, plural.

So it means spiritual things or spiritual matters or something along those lines. But regardless what terminology is used, we're talking about phenomena that were very common in the early church and which exist in the church today, which are the working of the Holy Spirit to perform the ministry of Christ since his ascension. Now Jesus didn't end his ministry when he ascended into heaven.

In fact, the book of Acts begins right after the ascension of Christ, or begins just prior to the ascension of Christ, but it reports what happened just afterwards. The opening verses of the book of Acts, Luke tells us, Luke is the author of Acts, he tells us that in his first book, which is the book of Luke, he began to report what Jesus, he says, I reported what Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up. That is, Luke in Acts chapter 1 is telling us what Jesus is continuing to do and teach, although he's gone.

He says, in the book of Luke, which contained the whole life of Christ from birth to resurrection and ascension, he said, in that book, it only contained what Jesus began to do and teach. But now, of course, by implication, the book of Acts is going to record what Jesus continued to do and teach after he was gone, but he did so through his body. Now in order to understand the gifts of the Spirit, we have to understand Paul's concept of the body of Christ, and sometimes we probably use the term body of Christ without giving adequate consideration to what that term means.

We can talk about a scholar's body of research, or we might talk about the body politic of a place or something, and so we might be thinking of a body simply as a collection or something like that. So when we talk about the body of Christ, we might be thinking of just the collection of Christians, but actually the term body of Christ is much more explicit and much more literal, because Jesus was the embodiment of Christ on earth. He was the Christ from birth, and he alone was the Christ.

The entire body of Christ was one individual when Jesus was on earth. But when Jesus ascended into heaven, the teaching of Scripture is that he became the head of his body, and he incorporated all of his followers into his body so that we become actual organs and limbs of his actual body. Now this is a little bit figurative because we're not all one organism to look at.

We're all individual organisms, but because we share the same spirit that animated Jesus when he was on earth, we are all one body are now the embodiment of his spirit as he was when he was here. Jesus said to his disciples in the upper room just prior to him being crucified, he said to his disciples that he was going to go away, but he'd send them another comforter to be with them forever, and that this comforter would continue to be

his presence with them and would teach them and would help them in their ministries. Well, this spirit that he sent is his own spirit.

When we say that Christ dwells in us, we mean the spirit of Christ dwells in us. Jesus of Nazareth, the exalted and glorified man, is at the right hand of God in heaven, but he has sent his spirit, and in giving us his spirit, the Bible says we've been born again, we have a new life, he's put his spirit within us, and he's incorporated us into a corporate body. And Jesus continues to operate in the world through this body.

Jesus himself is the head, so all the instructions, all the plans, all the agendas come from him, but the activities on earth are us. In Ephesians 5, Paul said that we are his body, his flesh, and his bones. In one place, Paul said, don't lie to one another because you are members of each other.

In 1 Corinthians 12, we have the first discussion in Paul's writings of the body of Christ, and that's also the first discussion of Paul on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And the gifts of the Holy Spirit can only be understood in connection with this idea that we are the body of Christ. Let me turn to 1 Corinthians 12.

Actually, I don't know what nationality you students are, I should have asked. Some of you are from Europe, aren't you? Are you Europeans? There's only a few of you. Where are you from? I'm from Germany.

Germany, got you. Okay. I'm from Switzerland.

Switzerland, okay. I'm from Washington. You're from Washington.

You're a Yank. Okay. And how about you? Sweden.

Okay. Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, and Washington State. Okay.

So you're from all over the place. So you all have English Bibles in front of you, I assume. Maybe not.

Maybe you're going to translate from your own versions. But I'm using the New King James, which is one of many choices that you can make in the English Bible. And I just wanted you to know what I'm reading from in case it reads differently in yours.

Let me just start with the very beginning of chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians. Paul said, Now concerning spiritual gifts, and in this particular place, really the word gifts is not part of the Greek. It's just containing spirituals, but he is referring to the gifts.

Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away by these dumb idols. Now dumb idols mean mute.

They don't talk. The gods that the Corinthians worshipped when they were Greek

pagans, they didn't speak. They weren't speaking gods.

Now that's in contrast to now. They have a living God they serve now, and he does communicate. He's a communicating God.

And therefore, they're going to need to know when he is communicating and when he's not. The gods they worshipped before were dumb idols, but now they have a vocal God who speaks, and he speaks through various gifts of the Holy Spirit. So he's saying, You formerly were carried away by these dumb idols, however you were led.

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Now that's just a summary statement of what he's going to go into about the gifts of the Spirit, but he's saying, you know, there are people who will profess to be speaking from God. There are false gifts.

There are false prophets. There are false tongues. There are false dreams and visions.

There are counterfeits that appear in the church which profess to be from God. It's not everybody who says, Thus says the Lord, is really speaking from God. And so Paul wants them to know right at the outset, now that you have a God who speaks, you need to know when it's him and when it's not.

And anyone who's speaking by the Holy Spirit will never say anything derogatory about Christ, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. If someone says, Jesus is accursed, and of course that's a very extreme example, but it stands for, I think, the whole category. Anyone who speaks against Christ in any way, they're not speaking by the Spirit of God.

But whoever confesses that Jesus is Lord is. Now, again, we need to not take Paul quite so woodenly and literally as to say, well, everybody who says the words, Jesus is Lord, is speaking by the power of the Spirit. I've actually heard demon-possessed people forced to confess that Jesus is Lord.

The ability to utter those words doesn't prove you're inspired. But what he's saying is, no one says Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit of God. He's talking about when it would appear, or when it is claimed that God is speaking.

If the one speaking is establishing the fact that Jesus is Lord, if that person is exalting the Lordship of Jesus, then that is exactly the kind of thing the Holy Spirit will be saying. But if they're saying something negative about Jesus, that's not going to be the Holy Spirit. So that's the first thing he wants them to know.

And of course, the reason he had to say that is because in the pagan world there were these false prophets, and there would be people who were not real Christians who would

come to the church, they'd speak by demons or just from their own minds, and they would say things that were not true about Jesus. They would say things negative about Jesus. And he wanted to make sure that his readers, who were fairly young Christians when he wrote to them, that they would not be led astray into thinking those were genuine prophecies that spoke that way.

So he starts out just giving this general principle. You now have a God who speaks. He speaks through the Spirit of God.

His Spirit speaks through people to the church. And you need to know when it's Him and when it's not. If the word is exalting Christ, then you're on the right track.

This is a credible word from the Lord. If it's contrary or derogatory to Christ, then it has to be excluded and disqualified immediately. Then he goes on in verse 4, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

I mentioned that we don't have the expression gifts of the Holy Spirit in the chapter, but this is close enough. There are diversities of gifts, but they are of the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. Now he's just mentioned the Spirit and the Lord Jesus and God, the Father. So he's mentioned the Trinity here.

And so all of these activities involve God in His entirety. These gifts, ministries, activities that he's talking about here, they all come from the, we'd say the triune God. And he says in verse 7, but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Now he used the expression the manifestation of the Spirit. Manifestation means revealing. He's referring to gifts of the Holy Spirit and he's going to list some of the gifts of the Spirit, but the gifts that he lists, he says, these are manifestations of the Spirit.

Now a manifestation simply means someone letting, you know, something being unveiled, something being made visible that was not before. The Holy Spirit in us is an invisible reality. Of course, we can't see him with our eyes.

If you look at another Christian, you can't necessarily see the Holy Spirit there. But when a gift of the Spirit is manifest, when a gift of the Spirit comes forth from a person, this is the Spirit of God in them manifesting Himself. But in various ways, Paul's going to list several different ways that the Holy Spirit manifests His presence powerfully through various gifts.

He says, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. That's one of Paul's main points in this whole discussion, which is going to occupy chapters 12,

13, and 14. The discussion is, hey, these gifts are for everybody to be benefited.

In chapter 14, he's going to point out it's most important in the church, at least, that gifts be manifested that are going to help everybody, not that they're just going to help you or make you feel good. So these are given for the profit of everybody. Verse 8, for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. So he's listed here nine gifts of the Spirit. There are more, and he has other lists.

We're going to look at his other list, too, and we're going to talk about each of these, what they really are, and what we are told in Scripture about their use. But I just want you to see right there, he's given a partial list of gifts. And the point he's making in giving the list, he's not trying to give us a complete catalog.

That's not his purpose. His purpose is to make a point. Whatever gift they are, no matter how diverse they are, they're from the same Spirit.

That's the point he keeps making. It's the same Spirit who gives this one and the same Spirit who gives that one. Perhaps he's saying that because the Corinthian church had a tendency to be divisive.

We know that from the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, that they were dividing. I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Cephas, some of them were saying. And they were kind of carnal and kind of wanted to find their own identities and distinguish themselves from the identities of other Christians instead of seeing themselves as one body in Christ.

And what he's saying here, okay, maybe somebody in there is a prophet. Maybe somebody there is working miracles. Maybe somebody speaks in tongues.

Maybe somebody has the gift of the Word of Wisdom or the Word of Knowledge. But listen, it's all the same Spirit because it's one body that has the same Spirit. Just like your human body, your head and every member of your body are animated by the same Spirit, your human Spirit.

Your Spirit is what gives life to your entire body, head and all. And so what he's saying is we are all one body, and that's so we all have the same Spirit. But of course, the differences in these gifts do not suggest a different Spirit, but a different bodily function, we might say, of the body of Christ.

And so that's where he goes into for the first time in the very next verse that we haven't read yet. We begin Paul's very earliest discussion of the church as a body. Now, he mentions the church as a body in other epistles later, but this is actually the earliest time that Paul introduces the idea of the church as Christ's body.

And he says in verse 12, for as the body. Now, when he says the body here, he's not assuming his readers think of him as talking about the church because he's never identified the church as the body previously. He's talking about the generic human body.

He's just saying, look at any human body around you or your own, the body, the human body. And so he's making a generic statement about bodies, he's going to liken it to the church. But he says, for as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.

Now, what does he say? He said there's a human body is one organism, one unit. You have one body, but it's made up of many members. You've got arms and legs and head and, and inner organs and you know, a back and feet and all those things.

But as different as those things are from each other, they are all still you and you're one person. One body is made up of many parts and they're very different from each other. Now he says, just like a body is like that, so also is now we might expect him to say, so also is the church or so also is the body of Christ.

It's one body with many members. The way he puts it is a little different than that. He says, so also is Christ.

What he's saying is Christ himself is now a corporate body, one body made up of many members like a human body. Jesus is the head, but we are the rest and altogether the head and members form the whole. And in this case, the whole is Christ.

When Jesus was on earth, his individual body as a single, as an individual man, that was the body of Christ. But now the spirit that was in Christ has been given to every follower of his distributed to every one of millions and millions of people. Now in Paul's day, it was much fewer, but that everyone who has the spirit of Christ is now by God, by the Holy Spirit incorporated into this one body, which is Christ.

Now, before we read further in first Corinthians, definitely do not lose your place there, but I'd like to look over Ephesians chapter one. Ephesians is a much later epistle than first Corinthians. So, you know, he takes for granted this image of the body of Christ is perhaps well known among his readers throughout the empire.

And he says of Christ about his exaltation at his ascension. In Ephesians 1:22, says that God has put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Now, this last line is intriguing.

The church, Christ is the head over all things to the church. The church is his body and the church is the fullness of him who fills all in all. Just as your complete body is the extension and completeness of your head.

I mean, your head would be very incomplete without your body. Just ask anyone who's been decapitated. And so, the body is the extension of your head, and it's basically, the body is the machine that carries out the activities that your head wants.

Every member of your body does what your head tells it to do, unless it's involuntary functions, like some of your inner organs. But even those are obeying the head, though you're not aware of it when you're sleeping, for example. But as soon as your head stops sending messages to your stomach or your lungs or your liver, you're dead.

You know, the whole body is simply there. It's the machine that carries out the work of the head. But it is, without that machine, the head is nothing.

I shouldn't say Jesus is nothing, but let's face it. If you're decapitated, C.S. Lewis wrote a space trilogy, a science fiction trilogy, and in the last one, which was called *That Hideous Strength*, there was a disembodied head that was kept alive artificially. And I won't go into the story at all, but just the concept of having a head that is artificially kept alive is fairly absurd, I mean, in a way.

Because frankly, although the head is the whole authoritative and identifying member of any person, without a body, a head is entirely impotent. A head can do nothing. It can want to do things, but it can't do them.

On the other hand, a body that doesn't have a head is of no use either. You can have every member of your body in perfectly good health, but if your head stops functioning, for example, if you're in a coma, and it stops sending signals through the nervous system to the members of your body, the body is going to be of no use. It's going to be immobile.

It's going to be, or if it makes motions at all, they'll be erratic and useless. Obviously, the head and the body need each other to function. Now, to say that Jesus needs the church as his body is perhaps, we need to qualify that.

Jesus could have gotten along, I think, very well if he'd never come to earth at all. He came for us and for his Father, and not for his own benefit. But since he has come, he has assumed a role that he did not have before he came to earth.

For example, he's now the bridegroom of the church. That's a new role. He's also the head of the church, and he has now really placed himself in the position to depend on the church to carry out the work on the earth that he started.

When you think about it, that was pretty risky, because Jesus only spent about three

years with his apostles. The apostles were the ones who were going to run everything after he was gone. His mission was to conquer the world, really, with the gospel.

That's what the prophet said the Messiah would do. He's going to inherit the earth. He's going to bring justice to the nations.

He's going to change everything. Here, he's got these know-nothing guys that he collects early in his ministry, fishermen and tax collectors, other peasants, not religious leaders at all, probably not extremely literate. He says, okay, you guys are the ones who are going to run this whole thing.

You're going to change the whole world. I've got three years to work on you guys, and then I'm going to have to go and turn you loose. Here's the most important project in the history of humanity, and Jesus is going to leave it in the hands of these bumbling.

But they were good bumbling. They were innocent. They were sincere, and they were committed to him.

He said to them, listen, I'm leaving, but I'm going to send you my spirit, and then you'll be more than adequate for this job. So he goes away, and the spirit that was in Jesus is now poured out on the church, initially on only 120 people with the 12 as their leaders. Eventually, of course, thousands and thousands became part of it.

But everyone who truly was added to the church by God, received the Holy Spirit, became incorporated like cells. I would say like cells. Of course, Paul used the imagery of actual organs and limbs of the body, and they become part of him.

So that Paul says that the church is his body, the fullness of him. The church is the fullness of him, and that's why in 1 Corinthians 12, which we read a moment ago in verse 12, he said, for as the body, meaning the generic human body, is one and has many members, but all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. He's saying Christ is one body of many members, and he means they are the members.

They're the members. We're the members. So collectively, the church is Christ.

That's why Jesus said in Matthew 25, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me. In the parable, he tells in Matthew 25, it begins in verse 31. That's about the sheep and the goats and the judgment day, and those who are consigned to fire and judgment are the ones who did, he says, I was hungry and you didn't feed me.

I was naked, you didn't clothe me. I was sick and in prison, you didn't visit me. And they say, Lord, when did we see you in any of those conditions? We don't remember seeing you.

He said, well, when you didn't do that to my brothers, you didn't do it to me. Then, of course, he said to the others who were saved, I was hungry and you did feed me and so forth, all the same. And they say, well, when did we do that? They said, when you did it to my brothers, you did it to me.

You see, you can't do anything to a Christian without doing it to Christ because we are his body. If you step on my little toe, you've done that to me. My whole body feels it.

Paul's going to say later on, you know, if the whole, if one member of the body is exalted, all rejoice. And if one member suffers, all suffer. When, where did Paul get this idea, by the way? I mean, he, I believe he got it by revelation from the Holy Spirit, but probably the first hint he had of the idea was when he got converted on the road to Damascus, because he was going to Damascus to arrest Christians and put them in jail.

He was a persecutor of the church and Jesus apprehended him in a brilliant light and said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And Saul said, who are you? You know, and he said, I'm Jesus whom you're persecuting. It's hard for you to kick against the goads. Now that's interesting because when Saul had his first encounter with Jesus, Jesus said, Saul, you're persecuting me.

You don't know who I am, but you're persecuting me personally. I mean, if Saul had not been so, you know, terrified and much more inclined to speak freely, he might have said, well, I didn't know it was you. I thought it was just persecuting these Christians, your followers.

But obviously Jesus identifies his followers as himself. You persecute my followers, you're persecuting me. My followers, the body of Christ is not just a club.

It's not just the Jesus fan club. It's not just a bunch of people who say, you know, I like Jesus. My neighbor, you know, she likes Buddha and my people across the street from me, they're from Persia.

They like Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í religion. And, you know, my Mormon friends down the street, they like Joseph Smith and so forth, but I like Jesus. I'm a follower of Jesus.

It's not that Jesus is just another religious figure, another leader of a world religion. He's not just, you know, the club president and we all submit to him because we're part of the club. He is, of course, God in the flesh, but his spirit is now given to us so that we are now him in the flesh.

We are enfleshing him just as we, well, perhaps not just as, but more similar than we might realize. In first, in John chapter one, it says that Jesus was the word, but in John 114 it says, and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was incarnate.

Well, it's a little different in our case, of course, because we're not born of a virgin and all that like he was, but he is still in a sense incarnate. Jesus is still on earth in the flesh, not his original body, but his expanded body. Now that's what Paul's getting into and he's doing so not as, it's not like he's changed the subject.

In the first 11 verses of first Corinthians 12, Paul was talking about the gifts of the spirit and some people are really fascinated with these. They probably, oh, this is really interesting. I hope he gets more into this.

And then suddenly he turns a corner, starts talking about the body concept and think, oh, why'd he change the subject? He didn't. This is the subject. You can't understand the gifts of the spirit unless you understand what that means with reference to us being Christ's body.

He goes on in verse 13, for by one spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. Now he talks about where we have all who are Christians been baptized into one body by the spirit. This is not the same concept exactly as what we call the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist said, and you need to understand the word baptized in the Greek, it just means immersed, to be immersed. The English word baptized was created by the English translators who didn't believe in immersion. They believed in infant baptism and they didn't immerse infants, they sprinkled them.

So when the New Testament was translated into English, they didn't want to translate the word baptizo, which occurs every time you find the word baptized in the Bible. There was not an English word baptized, it's a Greek word, baptizo. When you say baptized, that's just an anglicized form of baptizo.

It's just a transliteration, not a translation. If they had translated it, then every time you find the word baptized, you'd find the word immerse because that's what baptizo means in Greek. It means to immerse something.

Now, King James didn't want the word immerse used there because his church didn't practice immersion. So the translators had to just make up an English word, baptized, which is just the transliteration of baptizo, instead of translating it. So into the English language there came the word baptized.

I know that some of you from other languages, and I know what it is in German, I don't know what it is in Swedish, but the fact is the English word baptized is just from the Greek, and it means to immerse. But you wouldn't know that reading the English Bible. They concealed the meaning.

But if they had done it properly, then John the Baptist would be called John the Immerser.

When it says that Jesus came to be baptized by John, it would say Jesus came to be immersed by John. When Peter said, be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, it should say be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

That's what the word means. And because of that, immersion is not always used of the same thing. We think of baptism as something we do in water because we do.

When you become a Christian, you're baptized in water. In New Testament times, I'd be immersed in water. But there's also other immersions.

Once Jesus said to his disciple, or his disciples, he said, can you be baptized with the baptism I'm about to be baptized with? He meant his sufferings. He's talking about being immersed in sufferings. They said yes, but they didn't know what he meant.

But the point is you can be immersed in things other than water. In fact, John the Baptist said, I immerse in water, but he that comes after me is greater than I am. He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit or baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is being immersed in the Holy Spirit, analogous to being immersed in water. And Jesus repeated that expression in Acts 1.5 just before he ascended. He said to his disciples, John immersed in water, but you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

So there's this thing being immersed or baptized in the Holy Spirit. But now we have a similar phrase and many people confuse it. In verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 12, he says, for by one spirit we were all immersed into one body.

Now since he mentions the spirit and he mentions being immersed, some people might think, oh here's a cross-reference about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. No, this is not being baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is being baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

This is a different thing. You can be baptized in water and should be. You can be baptized in the Holy Spirit and should be.

And the Holy Spirit himself has baptized you or immersed you into the body of Christ. Being a part of the body of Christ, you've been submerged in a new identity. You're born again.

You're a new person. You're a new creation. Old things are passed away.

All things become new. You have a new identity now. That identity is Christ.

You're now an agent of Christ as surely as the hands at the ends of your arms are the agents of your head and they do the will of your head. They have no purpose but to carry

out the will of the head. That's the understanding of us being the body of Christ.

We've been immersed into a new identity in Christ and we are his body. Now verse 17, Paul goes on, If the whole body were an eye, well, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as he pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

No, much rather these members, those members of the body, which seem to be weaker, are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor. And our unpleasant parts, our unrepresentable parts, have greater modesty.

But our presentable parts have no need for that. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to the part which lacks, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.

If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members individually. I won't finish reading the chapter at this point because Paul then gives another list of gifts.

But notice this whole, this whole discussion of the body of Christ is sandwiched between actually two lists of gifts. In the first 11 verses we have nine gifts listed. He lists some of the same ones and some other ones at the end of the chapter.

And in between he's got this discussion of the body of Christ. Why? Because you will never understand what the gifts are unless you understand them as functions of a body. When Paul says the eye cannot say to the ear, I have no need of you, or the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.

Or when he said if the whole body was an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole was an ear, where would be the smelling? He's describing different parts of the body having different contributions that they make, different gifts, different contributions that they make to the overall functioning of the whole organism. And he's saying there's some very diverse ones. Hearing and seeing, although we take them both for granted, those of us who have eyesight and can hear, we hardly ever think about them.

We just use them. But when you think about it, hearing and seeing are extremely different kinds of activities. And you know this better if you lose your eyesight or if you lose your hearing.

You realize how the adjustment you have to make because you lost something that's

very different than what you've retained. The sense of feeling. Your hands certainly are different than your feet.

They have things in common. They have, you know, five appendages on each one, but they are very different and they're obviously constructed for different functions. Now interestingly, you can use your hands or your feet for things that they weren't really essentially made for.

You can scratch your leg with your toes, but normally you'd scratch with your hands. The foot can do some of the things the hands can do, but they're not constructed to do most of the things that the hands do. There is some overlap.

You know, there are things that, you know, I don't know, they're just different parts of the body can fill in in an emergency for others. But really, there are things that are designed to perfectly function in one way, and other parts are designed to perfectly function in another. And these functions are analogous to what we're calling the gifts.

God gives a different function to a different individual, and it will be different than the person sitting on either side of them. But that doesn't mean that they're not of the same body. That's the point he's making.

Apparently, he feels he has to make this statement in order to correct the sense that there was perhaps some competitiveness, maybe some showmanship, maybe someone trying to grab center stage, someone trying to feel superior to other Christians because the gift they had was more impressive. And let's face it, there are persons in the church whose contributions are more impressive than the contributions of others. Some of the contributions people make, some of the gifts they have, are not very visible at all.

They're done quite privately or behind the scenes. Others are right up in front. The prophet, the teacher, you know, the person who speaks in tongues or interprets, that person is speaking publicly and getting a lot of attention.

And I suspect that the Corinthians, being as immature as they were, had some among them who, because they had more prominent or visible gifts, they got more attention. They were thinking themselves to be superior to others. And Paul's saying, listen, every part of the body is necessary.

You know, I've heard that if you actually lose your little toe, which seems like probably one of the least important parts of the body, obviously you'll survive. You can survive if lose both arms and both legs, but you won't be very functional immediately. But you can lose, even if you lose something as insignificant as your little toe, I've heard that that really compromises your balance, your ability to walk.

I've heard people say who had to lose their toe, that they couldn't play tennis anymore, things like that. You know, there are, it's amazing how you take it for granted, certain

parts of your body that you think are of the least importance. I think that the main purpose of the little toe is to find furniture in the dark, because I've used mine that way quite a bit.

I don't know what other functions it has besides balance, but it has its own contributions that it makes to the body. And so does even the most insignificant seeming, Christian, if they are in fact operating in the gift that God has given them, they are important. Now can the body exist without them? Yes, if you don't operate in the gift that you have, you know, you're not the only person in the world that God can use.

However, I believe that God gives everyone a gift that's individualized. That is your personality, your aptitudes, even your physical abilities, all of those things, I think are custom made by God to fill a particular purpose when he gifts you. When you get filled with the Holy Spirit and you have a gift of the Spirit, that the gift he gives you is not just randomly given, like he thinks, well, I've got this extra gift laying around, who's left? Oh, I'll give you that one.

I hope you do well with it. I think that Christ had in mind from the day you were born or before, that you, when you become a follower of his, would make a certain contribution to the overall effort of the kingdom of God, and you'd function in the body of Christ in a certain way that you can best do. Now, obviously, a lot of Christians are not very obedient.

Some of them are not very spiritual, and that would suggest that there's potential gifts of the Spirit that could and should be operating in the church, but maybe that person isn't going to step up. They're not going to actually do it. Well, then what? Well, you know, God's not totally at the mercy of those who are disobedient or recalcitrant, but he can provide a substitute, but that doesn't mean it'll be just as good, because I've often thought of it like, I'm sure all of you have seen a lizard that has lost its tail and grown another one back.

You know, a lizard, its tail is a functional unit of its body. Animals that have tails use them for things, and in the case of a lizard, it's part of its ability to run and have some drag on it, like a kite needs a tail or else it's going to twirl around in the sky. A lizard needs a tail too.

They can survive without them. In fact, they're one of the few creatures that God's made that can lose one without serious injury. They can just lose their whole tail, leave it behind.

The animal that was trying to catch them ends up only with the tail, and the lizard runs off safe, but without a tail, but he needs one, and so God has made it so that lizards will grow their tail back, and I don't know if all of you live in places where you see that often enough. I live in a warm climate where lizards are underfoot all the time, where I live in

Southern California, but it's very common to see a lizard with a new tail, and you can tell it's a new tail because it's a different color from the original one. It's usually darker.

Sometimes it grows in crooked from the stub. The point is the lizard's, he's got a functional tail, but it's not the perfect tail. The original was the one that God had in mind for it.

A new tail can grow in to serve in the emergency, but you can tell it's not the original, and I think that that's with the body of Christ. It can be that way too, that a person who's supposed to be a hand or a mouth or a nose or an ear or a foot or some part of the body, you know, if they don't step up, if they're lost to the body, if their function is lost to the body, well, the body's going to get by. God doesn't have someone serve in the emergency, but it's not necessarily the first choice, and therefore it's important for us to be available to God and to be functioning in the way that the Holy Spirit intends for us to, so that the body can function as perfectly as possible.

A body can survive with one kidney, but it's supposed to have two. I have a veterinarian friend who said that a dog is a three-legged creature with a spare, because dogs get along seemingly very well with three legs, and many dogs lose a leg, and probably down there in Chile, where you are, you probably see some three-legged dogs running around from time to time. It's a three-legged animal with a spare, the vets say, but it isn't really.

It's really a four-legged animal. They can survive without one of their legs. They can actually survive without two or three of them, if they have to, if they've got someone caring for them, but the thing is that a dog with three legs just isn't a full dog.

It's not everything it's supposed to be, and if there's members of the body of Christ that are AWOL, absent without leave, and are not functioning, the body of Christ is going to limp along. It'll work. God will provide someone to step in, but God has a perfect plan for each person to fulfill a particular role, and that role is defined by the contribution that that person makes to the overall functioning of the body of Christ.

Now, Paul lists, as I mentioned in the early part of 1 Corinthians 12, he lists nine functions. These are gifts of the Spirit. They're called gifts of the Spirit, probably for two reasons.

One is that the Holy Spirit gives them, so it's a gift from the Holy Spirit, but it's also a spiritual gift that the person contributes to the overall use in the body of Christ. It's your gift, in a sense, since God has given it to you, and you offer it to the service of Christ. You are giving this service.

It's service. We have to understand, as Paul said, that the ministry of the Spirit is given to each one, the manifestation is given to each one. He said in verse 7, for the benefit of all, and so to have a gift is not for you to build a reputation.

Now, when I was young, I played music. I was in a band, and I also had some artistic ability. I'm a cartoonist.

I was not great at either of those things, but I was good enough that I thought if I really worked at it, I could become quite good at one or both of those things. And I remember when I was 16, and this is actually before I was even baptized in the Spirit, I remember contemplating that. Why did God give me those abilities? And I remember talking to a friend, a Christian friend at the time, and saying, you know, I don't think God gave me those abilities so that I could just make money or make a name for myself or, you know, anything like that.

I think He must have given me those to serve Him. Now, all of that contemplation was before I had much experience with or even ideas about the gifts of the Spirit. These were just natural talents.

As it turned out, I use both of them in ministry, though I don't use either of them very much now. I don't draw. I drew Christian comic books for many years, and I also played in Christian bands for some years.

I don't do either of those things now, but the point I'm making is that I just knew intuitively as a Christian that those abilities that I had were something that not everybody had, and therefore I had a special stewardship. I had a special responsibility before God for them, and that those were not given just so I could become famous or rich or anything else that some people might become if they used their abilities that way. But they had to be used for the kingdom of God.

They had to be used for the glory of God. Now, these are not even what we call spiritual gifts. I don't believe that playing music, that is the ability to play an instrument, or the ability to draw pictures.

I don't think either of those are what we call spiritual gifts. Those are natural abilities, but that doesn't mean that the anointing of the Holy Spirit can't be upon them and that they can't be used as spiritual things. We don't find any lists of the gifts that include the gift of music, but certainly there's a lot of humans and Christians who have musical ability, and that music may be used for worship.

It may be used for evangelism. It may be used for something that actually is maybe a gift of the Spirit, but it's just a tool. The point is, though, whatever you've been given, and you may think you haven't been given very much of anything, but you have something.

You've been good at something all your life, probably, or you've become good at something in recent years, and God gave you the capacity and the motivation to do so. And it's very possible that he wants you to use that in his kingdom. I say possible

because sometimes when God calls people to serve him, he doesn't use them in the predictable ways.

A person can be a musician, a great musician, and then when they get saved, God just calls them to give it up because he's got something else for them to do. A lot of people have said, oh, wouldn't it be great if a rabbi got saved because then he could reach the Jewish people, or if a Muslim mufti would get saved and he could reach the Muslims. Well, you'd think so.

You'd think the man's natural position, if pressed into service for Christ, would give him some real advantages, and that would maybe define his ministry. But Paul was a rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, and when he got saved, God didn't send him to the Jews. He didn't use him as a rabbi.

He said all those things that were given to me, I had to count them as dung. I had to give those things up, and he went to the Gentiles largely, where his being a rabbi didn't count for much because God had something for him to do that wasn't related to his natural qualifications. So God may take what are natural qualifications and put his anointing on them and vitalize them so that they have a spiritual impact, or surprisingly, he might just take a natural position or natural ability and say, all right, that's something I'm going to ask you to put aside because I have something else for you to do for me.

It's hard to predict. Now, I'm going to give you a break in a moment, but I want to turn your attention first to one other passage, and that's over in Romans 12. We looked at 1 Corinthians 12, I want to look at Romans 12.

Now, this chapter covers a lot of ground, and we're not going to look at very many verses because a lot of the verses in Romans 12 are on subjects unrelated to our focus here, but some of it is the same. If you start at Romans 12, verse 4, Paul said, for as we have many members in one body, that should sound familiar, but all members do not have the same function. So we being many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.

Having then gifts, now notice he says, having then gifts, meaning the word then there means this is following on naturally from what I've just said. Because of that, let's make some application. So what has he said? He said, just like a body is one body and has many members, so also are we members of Christ and members of each other.

Okay, so he's got that same teaching that was in 1 Corinthians 12, and then he goes the same direction with it that he went in 1 Corinthians 12. He says, verse 6, having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith or ministry, more commonly translation would say service, which is probably a more modern translation of this Greek word.

Service, let us use it in our serving. He who teaches in teaching, he who exhorts in exhortation, he who gives with generosity or liberality, he who leads with diligence, and he who shows mercy with cheerfulness, and then he changes the subject. But notice this is like a, these few verses are like an abbreviated discussion of 1 Corinthians 12.

Romans was written later, and you know, Paul doesn't lay it out and spell it out as much. Perhaps it was more familiar ideas by the time he wrote this, but he still brings it up. We're one body, many members, and therefore we have different gifts.

Now he lists seven gifts here. Of the seven he lists, only one of them is in his other list in 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12, we found nine gifts listed, one of which was prophecy.

Now prophecy is the first gift he lists in this passage, but then there's six more. And when we add the total number of gifts from both passages, we have therefore 15 gifts, nine in 1 Corinthians 12, and six original ones, not including prophecy, which overlaps in Romans 12. Now it's going to be my desire to talk about all 15 of these gifts in our talk today.

Now I have to just say by way of anticipation, I probably won't. That's my desire. It's all in my notes.

So if Nathan will give you the notes to the lectures, you'll have whatever material I don't actually get covered in the lectures. But I do, I have made notes and do have some teaching to give on each of these gifts. But we're going to take a break at this point so you can stretch and we'll come back.

And Nathan, how long do you take a break at this point? Yeah, we could go for like a five, ten minute break, something like that. Okay, let's take a five minute break and come back. Yeah, five minutes will be good.

Okay, sounds good. Okay, great. Thank you.

Sure.