Paul’s Letters
to the Church at Corinth

Spiritual Gifts
and a More Excellent Way
1 Corinthians 12-13
Lesson 8

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
February 24, 2013
1 Corinthians

- 1:1-9  Greeting and commendation
- 1:10-4:21  An appeal for unity in the church
- 5:1-6:20  Reports of sexual and legal immorality
- 7:1-16:18 Six questions in a letter to Paul
  - 7:1-24  Marriage
  - 7:25-40  Virgins (the betrothed)
  - 8:1-11:34  Food offered to idols
  - 12:1-15:58  Spiritual gifts
  - 16:1-11  Collection for the saints
  - 16:12-18  Apollos
- 16:19-24  Final greetings
Now Concerning Spiritual Gifts
1 Corinthians 12-15

- Spiritual gifts in the Church (12) – Common good
- Spiritual gifts in perspective (13) – More excellent way
- Spiritual gifts in order (14)
- The resurrection (15)
“I do not want you to be ignorant.”

- God’s wisdom v. human wisdom
- A warning from past religious experience
  - Engaged enthusiastically in false religious activity
  - You were led
- Spiritual warfare
  - 2 Cor. 11:13-14; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Eph. 6:10-20
- The defining criterion for activity of the Spirit:
  - “Jesus is accursed.” – a mere man who died as an imposter
  - “Jesus is Lord” (Lord = OT translation of YHWH)
- Holy Spirit produces this confession
Spiritual Gifts in the Church

- Varieties of gifts – the same Holy Spirit
- Varieties of service – the same Lord
- Varieties of activities – the same God
- The Spirit gives, the Lord is served, God is effecting
The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- Wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues (12:8-10)

- 1 Cor. 12:28-30; Romans 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7-16

- Purpose of the gifts
  - 12:7  the common good
  - 12:11 sovereignly dispensed
The Body of Christ (12:12-31)

- One body
- So it is with Christ
  - Made members by the Holy Spirit
  - All believers – Jews, Greeks, slaves, free)
- Many members (12:14-20)
  - Unique functions – foot, hand, eye, ear
  - Essential
  - Arranged by God (12:18)
  - Mutual dependence (12:21-26)
  - Composed by God
  - No division
  - Mutual care and consequences – suffering and honor and rejoicing
Spiritual Gifts in the Church

- Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helping, administering, tongues
- Desire higher gifts – for common good
- A still more excellent way
The More Excellent Way (13)

- The necessity of love (13:1-3)
  - Tongues without love – banging on metal – absolutely no value
  - Prophecy, knowledge, faith without love – I am nothing
  - Philanthropy and self sacrifice without love – I gain nothing
  - Looking for the reward in “the Day” (3:13)
  - Judge yourself to avoid condemnation (11:32)
  - No personal blessing from gifts without love
  - Love is blessed, even without gifts
Love

- Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (13:4-7)

- Judge yourself (11:27-31)

- Love is all the duty of man – love God and one another

- Love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)
Love and the Spiritual Gifts

- Love never ends
- Gifts are temporary and imperfect
- We are in childhood
- We see indistinctly through a glass – in part
- We are anticipating maturity and clarity
- Spiritual gifts do not remain
- These remain: faith, hope, love
The Greatness of Love

▸ Faith
  • “Grateful and trustful acceptance of God as He reveals Himself”

▸ Hope
  • “perseverance in faith” (Calvin) – faith with main stress on future

▸ Love
  • An attribute of God

▸ The greatness of love
  • Partaking of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
Excellent and More Excellent

- Do not be ignorant about spiritual gifts
  - Important part of the plan of God for His people
  - Dispensed and empowered by and for the Triune God
  - Not for our personal enhancement
  - Desire the best gifts

- Pursue love – the more excellent way (14:1)
  - Exercise gifts in love
  - We love, even without gifts
  - Love the One we have not seen (1 Peter 1:8) and one another