

1Corinthians 12:11-13 "Diversity In Unity"

1 Corinthians 12:11-13 ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. ¹² For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

We've spent the last few weeks examining the gifts of the Holy Spirit and what they entail as they are to be used in the body of Christ. And I suppose the operative word is "used". Every believer in Christ Jesus has been given a gift or gifts by the Spirit with the express purpose of "using" those gifts to serve our Lord, His church and the world.

To have a gift and to bury it is to despise the gift. Rather, out of thankful hearts we ought to be using those gifts given to us by our Almighty God and Savior as He intended them to be used to His glory.

The other thing we should consider is that the gifts of the Spirit are not like a smorgasbord where we decide which gifts we want as we walk down the length of the table and place on our plates what appeals to our eyes.

There's sometimes a tendency to think that God may have made a mistake in giving me such and such a gift. After all, the gift someone else has seems so much more pleasing and exciting. We'll see as we pursue our text that there are no mistakes with God as He places each member in the body and gifts them accordingly.

This is precisely what Paul means when he writes to these Corinthians.

1CO 12:11 "All these [gifts of the Spirit] are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

A little better translation puts it this way in the NASB.

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually, just as He wills."

It's not as though we can come to God and say, "look I've got my receipt and I want to exchange this gift, it doesn't fit." If God gave it, it fits. And more than that, if God gave it there is no more perfect gift that you or I could have. God makes no mistakes.

When the Scriptures say that the Spirit works all these things, referring to the gifts He gives, it's the Greek word *energeo*. It means to be operative, to be at work, to put forth power. It's where we get our English word energize. In other words, it is the Spirit who energizes the gifts He gives.

And so, not only is the gift we have given by the Spirit, it is actually only Him who makes it effectual. I can't, for example, take any credit because of the gifts I have nor the way in which the Spirit uses them. I'm certainly responsible for how I use my gifts, but without the Spirit's empowering or energizing it would not accomplish what He desires.

And so, there is purpose with everything that the Spirit does in gifting us, and that purpose doesn't include our own selfish desires or motives to use or not to use the gifts. The gifts are given as tools to advance the Kingdom of God through the gospel and to make disciples as well as generally bringing glory to God in everything we do.

But it should never be lost on us that the Spirit of God is personal in His approach with us. Nothing could be more personal than to receive a personal gift from God Himself, as Paul makes it clear at the end of verse 11 as he says that the Spirit, "[distributes] to each one individually, just as He wills."

1CO 12:12 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ."

When the NIV says the body is a "unit" it could literally translated "one." The body is one. In fact, that's how many translations have it.

1 Corinthians 12:12 NAU ¹² For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

But the intent is still seen in the way the NIV translates it because this one unit is comprised of many members.

When we talk about the military for example we talk about units, company's, battalions. The 100th battalion is one group made up of many members. When we talk about an automobile we don't say that Cadillac is certainly a nice combination of fuel injection technology, independent suspension, four wheel anti-lock brake system, with the perfect ergonomic interior, unless you're in a car commercial.

You simply say, it's a nice car. One unit, comprised of many members. Paul is using a metaphor here in verse 12. That metaphor is the human body. Again, Paul suggests that when we look at another human being we don't say, "let me introduce to you Mr. hands, feet, eyes, nose, ears, toes who is in the construction business."

To identify the one we don't necessarily have to identify all the parts. And yet, to suggest that the one has no parts is not to understand the one or the unit.

Look again at what Paul says in verse 12.

1CO 12:12 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts;...."

What does Paul mean to suggest that the body is a unit or one? He means it is identified as one family that God has put together. Look at the nation of Israel. It was made up of millions of people in the O.T. and yet whenever we see them identified in relation to other nations they are always addressed in the singular as Israel.

Why does God do this? It again teaches the intimacy and the privilege of being chosen to be part of a family. It teaches a belonging to something bigger than ourselves which is identified as a unit.

And yet in the midst of this unit there is diversity. Simply because I'm introduced to someone as Drew it doesn't discount the fact that I have eyes and a nose and legs and toes and so on, and every part is important.

What Paul is teaching here is that, despite the fact that this particular church in Corinth was having its problems in being divisive because of their selfish individuality, Paul is saying that you can still be individuals, but not at the expense of not showing God to be the head over the body in which He has placed you.

In fact, Paul goes so far as to say that just like your body is made up of many parts, it's still only one body. And in the same way, Paul is saying that Christ is also one head over one body, despite the fact that we all make up this body.

Now, what's the point? The point is we are all on the same team, the same unit. No one can say, "I'm part of the first Christian team, while those people are on the second Christian team which is a separate unit."

I know that there are those who might argue with me on this point, and I understand what they're saying, but when it comes right down to it, those true believers in the Presbyterian church, or the Pentecostal church, or the Baptist church are all on the exact same team we're on.

We're not competitors. How can a team compete against itself? Now, I'm not so naive as to believe that simply belonging to any particular denomination makes you a true believer and therefore part of the same unit, but to suggest that there are special places in heaven for Baptists, or any other group within the church is not to understand the body of Christ.

This is where Theologians over the years have come to understand that there are two aspects of this teaching of the body of Christ. There is what is referred to as the visible and also the invisible church.

The visible church instituted by Christ is the outward expression of those who claim to be Christian. It's visible all over the world. Search any street corner and look for the steeple. Now, I don't mean to suggest that the building makes the church the church. Rather, the people inside who claim to have placed their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, makes it the church.

But does that mean that every person who happens to be inside that church building on any given Sunday morning is a true believer? No. From purely a visible stand-point they may appear to be part of the body of Christ, but from God's perspective, who alone knows the heart, they may not be part of the body and therefore not members of that body from a spiritual standpoint.

Those who have truly placed their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, no matter what Christian denomination they belong to, are all on the same team we're on. This is referred to as the invisible

church, the true church which has as its members those whose hearts only Christ can see.

In other words, from the time Christ rose from the dead to the present and even into the future, this invisible church would include all of those who truly believed. And only God truly knows them. We're not talking about two different churches, only two different groups who both claim to be part of this visible church.

It just so happens that this invisible church, which is made up of truly born again Christians, is commanded to be part of the church in a visible way; thus, the local body of believers, where each local body is part of the larger body of Christ.

And so, when we talk about the visible and invisible church, we're simply making the distinction that there are true believers within the visible church, and also unbelievers who are "seen" in the church who are also identified with the body of Christ.

Only true believers ultimately make up the body of Christ. Unbelievers, though part of a visible manifestation of the church, are not truly part of the body from God's perspective.

And of course, only God will make this manifest on the last day.

Matthew 25:32-34 ³² "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25:41 ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

This is God's work to perform even though we may know that there are those in the body who do not truly believe, even though they profess Christ.

This is why it is so important to lift up Christ among those in the church as we continually glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ both in word and in deed with each other. We don't quit speaking about the gospel in church simply because everyone claims Christ as theirs.

Being religious does not automatically qualify anyone as a believer. In fact, there are and will continue to be many religious people in the church to the very end and yet we know the truth about “religious” people.

Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

So, should we try and make an attempt to get rid of these religious people who are not true believers?

The Lord also has something to say about this.

Matthew 13:25-30 ²⁵ "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷ "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Again, this is a picture of the final judgment of which only God can ultimately make. This doesn't mean we tolerate false teaching and false teachers by allowing them to be planted in the field of the church. In those cases the Lord makes it clear that they are to be confronted and given the choice to repent or be turned out if they move from simply being religious to rebellious.

Matthew 18:15-17 ¹⁵ "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED**. ¹⁷ "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

This is a broad statement regarding those who claim to be brothers who sin and will not repent of their sin, which must necessarily include sins against the doctrines of Christ that one then promotes as truth.

The outward manifestation of Christ's body is the church and the Lord takes it personally when we don't represent Him faithfully. In fact, this is why our Lord Jesus devotes the early chapters of Revelation rebuking and exhorting the church to stay true to represent His body in truth and holiness.

And John records for us that the Lord Jesus Himself personally walks among His church and holds His church accountable for representing Him faithfully in this world.

Revelation 1:11-20 ¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. ¹⁹ "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. ²⁰ "As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Each of the seven churches, which represent the church worldwide in all ages, as well as the churches of that time, are being scrutinized by their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we need to live each day as though the Lord was in our midst because in fact He is.

He has placed us into His body and we must follow where He leads.

1 Corinthians 12:13 ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Now, you might remember that in past teachings we have examined the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We're also aware that Christians are watered baptized in the church. And now we come to a passage that speaks of being baptized by one Spirit into one body. Is this a third and separate baptism?

Not at all. This is the same baptism Paul speaks of to the Galatians and the Ephesians.

GAL 3:26-27 "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

EPH 4:4-6 "There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

Is this "one baptism" in Ephesians water baptism or the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Actually it's neither. So, how can the Scriptures say there is only one baptism when there appears to be multiple baptisms? The answer is quite simple. The context says it all.

The context of 1Cor. 12:13 is speaking of a baptism where we are baptized into one body. Do we become part of the body of Christ at water baptism? Absolutely not. Well, then if Paul isn't talking about water baptism he must be talking about being baptized in the Spirit.

No. As we've seen in the past, being baptized in the Spirit is a baptism where we are identified with the power and ministry of the Spirit as it relates to service in the body of Christ. The baptism in the Spirit is synonymous with being filled with the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit one must already be indwelt with the Spirit and part of the one body.

So, what is this baptism Paul speaks of in our text? It's a baptism not identifying us with the power of the Spirit, but a baptism identifying us with our position in Christ. What is that position? It's a position of belonging to one body.

1CO 12:13 "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...."

Here's the beauty of the work of Christ's salvation in our lives. Once you have been brought into the Kingdom of God, you are identified with that kingdom for eternity. Nothing can change that position. That's why Paul says there is only one baptism in Ephesians. He means that our entrance into, and our identification with the Kingdom of Christ, is a one-time event.

There's only one time in which this can happen, (regeneration and conversion), thus one baptism. The reason this cannot refer to water baptism is that the moment we put our faith in Christ we are identified with Christ's blood put to our account, thus we are baptized into the one body at that moment the Spirit brings us into the Kingdom.

Water baptism is simply an outward expression of the true spiritual baptism we received when we came to faith in Christ and were placed into an eternal kingdom from which we cannot be cut off. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ and He will never leave us or forsake us.

And so, Paul is reminding these Corinthian believers that though they may see themselves as being divided up into these many little groups: I am of Apollos, I am of Paul and so on, the fact of the matter is that they all belong to the same Christ and the same kingdom and there's no excuse for such unbiblical division within their local body.

We see this at the end of verse 13.

...."whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

These people in the Corinthian church were making these unbiblical distinctions. They were judging based on one being a Jew or a Greek, or one being a slave or free, or one who had one particular gift over another.

Paul is saying that it doesn't matter about all of those things. You are all part of the one body because it is the same Spirit who gave you gifts who has also placed you into this kingdom of God through faith in Christ.

And so, all the glory goes to God as it pertains to our salvation. We can't claim to be part of a special group through anything

we've pursued, because it is the Spirit of God who has pursued us and wooed us, came along side of us, pointed us to Christ and even gave us the gift of faith that we might believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation.

We were all given the one Spirit to drink. This is a reference to how the Spirit immerses our life. In fact, the word for drink can also refer to irrigating plants or fields with the express purpose of producing a crop.

The Spirit not only baptizes us into the one body the moment we believe, His ministry also involves empowering us in the body, which we know as the baptism "of the Holy Spirit." To drink of one Spirit is to be irrigated or watered by the Spirit so that the fruit of the Spirit is evident in our lives so that we might bring glory to our Lord and Savior. That's the crop our Lord wants to produce in our lives.

He wants the wells of living water to be so abundant in our lives that the fruit of the Spirit also becomes abundant. The Lord alludes to this work of the Spirit in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

ISA 44:3-4 "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. 4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams."

EZE 36:25-26 "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

This is talking about a new relationship with the living God. All of us had that heart of stone, which was cold toward the things of God. He has removed that heart and given us a new heart and a new life in Christ.

This is a work entirely of the Spirit of God who brings us into new life and gives us eyes to see and ears to hear and the ability to take the gift of faith and believe on the only who is Life.

Jesus spoke of this to the Jews of His day.

John 7:38-39 ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were

to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The question is, what are we doing with it? Do we see ourselves as being identified with the greatest thing this world has ever known, as we now have a living relationship with God through Christ, or do we see our salvation as simply fire insurance, and thus an excuse to follow our own desires and wills as it relates to this one body, the church?

Do we see ourselves as having been personally placed in this body by the Lord and now part of a kingdom where we work together, or do we see the body of Christ as simply a safe haven where we can sit on the sidelines until we meet Christ in the air?

Paul answers that questions in the next few verses.

1CO 12:14 "Now the body is not made up of one part but of many."

You mean that every part is important and vital? Absolutely. There is no one part that can be sacrificed, and there is no one part that is deemed as more important than another. Every part is vital to the proper working of the body.

1CO 12:15-19 "If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be?"

What is Paul saying here? He's saying that none of us can opt out of participating in the body of Christ for any of the reasons we may come up with as it relates to our ability to be effective within the body.

Next week we are going to delve into the different aspects of what it means to be a working body with all of the parts doing their part. And how when that happens it is a vibrant, living organism which can be used by God to bring glory to His name. Whether you're an ear, an eye or a big toe, you are vital and necessary to this body

which Christ has brought together, and which the Spirit of God is forming.

We're all on the same team and we have Christ as our head. May the body follow the desires of the Head who knows best and only desires our best to His honor and glory.

EPH 4:15-16 "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."