

1. The "spirituals" (*pneumatikôn*) are the things from the Spirit of God which are of grace.

- a. The word, "spiritual gifts," is actually simply the word "spirituals".
 - i. It is a difficult word to interpret because it is an adjective, not a noun.
 1. Therefore, it could be translated "spiritual things" or "things pertaining to the Spirit".
 - ii. In fact, as Rich pointed out last week, these "spirituals" are considered "spirituals" because they have the same power and purpose which the Spirit of God has: to glorify Christ Jesus as Lord.
 1. This is how you know the Spirit has empowered: Jesus is magnified and embraced as Lord.
 - iii. So, while much is made regarding spiritual gifts and "tests" and "discoveries" of them (which are unnecessary), the real substance of these things is not in some particularities of their exercise but in their result: the glory of Christ.
- b. Much has been made of these "gifts" as powers, capabilities, means of exhibition and exuberance which are somewhat mysterious and powerful as evidence by some kind of feeling or "experience."
- c. However, Paul's point seems to be the opposite of this type of interpretation
 - i. That is, it appears that the Corinthians were exercising these "spiritual things" in a manner that expressed and valued their power, but not their purpose.
 1. They were glorying in the gifts, in the experience of the gifts, in the power of the Spirit, in the exercise of the gifts and the impressions that they made.
 - a. Remember how the Corinthians loved power of wisdom, strength of words and knowledge from chapters 1-3, which the apostle had to confront with the gospel of Christ crucified (powerless)?
 2. There often is a functional elevation of certain works within the Church that are erroneously correlated with "deep spiritual life" and it was the speaking gifts and the healing gifts that were being so elevated here.
 - ii. Yet, Paul does not command people to exercise their gifts here, for they are being exercised, but rather he corrects the erroneous assumptions of their source (ourselves, idols, or God's Spirit) and their purpose.
 - iii. That is, they come from one Spirit, thereby unifying all these "various" workings as equally necessary and incomparable because they are "gifts given by the same Spirit" for "services" from "the same Lord" and "effective works" "empowered by the same God who makes all things effective in all" of them, together being used for one purpose: the glory of Christ Jesus as Lord.
 1. Note the repetition of "varieties" and "same" in vv4-6
 - a. Differing works of service from the Spirit
 - b. One source: the Triune God (Spirit, Lord, God)
- d. Therefore, whatever these "spirituals" are, these things "pertaining to the Spirit of God" as the "down payment of our inheritance" and the "working" of His Spirit, they are not about our experience of them, but they are about God's grace for God's purpose.
 - i. That is, they are not attained or achieved or even discovered, but given and obtained by God's sovereign choice.
 1. "He distributes them as He desires"
 - ii. They are not to be compared or contrasted, gloried in or despised, and their power is not in their experience but in their source, and by the result of bringing all things under the lordship of Jesus, and as such they are all delivered by the same Spirit of God.

2. There is Given a Diversity of Gifts for One Purpose: to Display and Declare the Lordship of Jesus Christ

- a. Each person is given the "announcement" (manifestation) of the Spirit for the purpose of "bringing together".
 - i. This word, translated "manifestation" in the ESV, means "to disclose" or "to make public".

1. It comes from the word, torch, and has the idea of making something visible.
 - ii. So, the question is: "What is made public?"
 1. Is it the Spirit? Is it God's power?
 2. I would contend that what is being made public is the statement from verse 3: "Jesus is Lord"
 - iii. This reality, of Christ Jesus' lordship and its ensuing redemptive kingdom of God work by His death, resurrection, and ascension to reign, is what "benefits" (same word used in 6:12 and 10:23 "helpful") the church
 1. The purpose of the Spirit giving such publicity to the Lordship of Jesus is the benefit, the bringing together, of the Church, for His glory.
 - iv. Therefore, whatever form the gifts may take, the purpose is to magnify the present and future reality of the reign of Jesus Christ for the flourishing of all whom are under his rule, i.e. headship.
- b. **Word of Wisdom:** 2:2-16 - "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (v2) "We do impart a wisdom among the mature...what God has prepared for those who love him"(v9)
- i. Jesus is Lord!
 1. The implications of Christ crucified are an issue of wisdom, living in the reality and light of the cross of Christ Jesus as the potent center of God's gracious work (see Ephesians 1, "God blessed us in Him with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies").
 - ii. Wisdom has to do with the *valuation* of truth and a walk that it is consistent with it.
 1. Thus, a word of wisdom is that spoken content of the value of Christ and a rhetorical call to action *because of His value*.
- c. **Word of Knowledge:** 1:5-6 - "graced with all speech and knowledge, just as the testimony about the Christ was confirmed among you."
- i. Jesus is Lord!
 1. The mysteries revealed in Christ Jesus, the promises of God which find their "yes" in him, are an issue of knowledge.
 - a. Thus, a word of knowledge is that spoken content of the person and activities of God, particularly in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the WORD, by which ignorance (no knowledge) is corrected by truth (knowledge).
 - b. This comes through propositional statements of what is REAL by the Spirit of God revealing the Word of God.
- d. **Faith:** This is not saving faith, but rather that faith which expects God to do great and grand things, mountain-movers, faith that gets people to move because of God's promises and the Lordship of Christ empowered by His Spirit
- i. Therefore, one with this gift is a motivator, a visionary, an expecter of God's great provision when we obey Him.
 - ii. These people move us by continually reminding us of God's promises, operating upon their belief that God will do what He says He will do
 1. Many of us functionally doubt God's promises, and these faith-gifted people keep the gospel promises before us.
 2. Visionary risk-takers because they trust God's Word
- e. **Graces (gifts) of Healings:** The only time this word is used in the NT is here in chapter 12 (v9,28,30). It is used in the OT (Jer 33:6) regarding God's healing of exiled Israel and the removal of their sin and guilt, the forgiveness of offenses (Ecc 10:4), resurrection (Isa 26:19, "dew of healing" LXX), restoration of righteousness and the presence/protection of the Lord (Isa 58:8), heal wounds of being outcast (Jer 30:17).
- i. It is a derivative of the word used of Jesus' healings, and indicates the ability to make people well.
 1. Physical wholeness (Mark 5:29; Acts 9:34)
 2. Spiritual wholeness (Matt 13:15; 1 Pet 2:24)
 - ii. It is interesting to note that both "gifts" and "healings" are plural.

- iii. This seems to imply that a person (singular, hence "another") has multiple means, and variable manners (empowered by one Lord) by which they can cure different types/kinds of maladies.
 - 1. Under the Lordship of Jesus, a continuation of His ministry as indicative of the wholeness (shalom) which the Messiah both brings and will bring upon His return
 - 2. Not all are healed here and now, but one day will be, and the gifts of healing and miracles are signs that the King has come, the kingdom has broken in, but the "partial" nature of these miracles, prophecy, healings, etc. (see 13:10) indicate that there is also an important role to play for current suffering and our future hope of the restoration and wholeness of all things, soul and body, when Jesus consummates our redemption.
- f. **Prophecy:** Again a speech work of the Spirit, speaking messages from God and their interpretation of those words.
 - i. Speaking and pleading the message of God to people (Prayer: speaking and pleading the message of the people to God).
 - ii. This gift is that of knowing God's Word, given by the Spirit, and proclaiming it clearly and persuasively so that people believe it and walk according to it.
- g. **Discrimination of Spirits: (*diakrisis*)** - to discern between good and evil and judge accordingly.
 - i. This would be the gift of discernment, not merely of truth claims, but of the authorities on which these truth claims are made (spirits) as well, among the Corinthian prophets.
 - 1. Deuteronomical law regarding the judgment of prophets and prophetic words are serious.
 - a. Deut 13:1-5
 - i. Even if a person's words or foretelling comes true, that does not give value or righteousness to the gift
 - ii. The gift is righteous if it leads to the worship of God alone, i.e. Jesus is Lord, and not to other powers or means or so-called gods
 - iii. Thus, pragmatism is not a godly virtue at all: just because something "works" does not imply that it honors or is acceptable to God
 - 2. The apostle John instructs the Church to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)
 - 3. Thus, the Church needs men who can discern whether a truth claim, a "word from the Lord", is true and consistent with God.
 - a. 14:29 seems to indicate this practice in the gathered Church, done by elders who judge prophecy
 - ii. What can the Church learn? Can the Church judge appropriately whether or not a spiritual power is from God or not, particularly if it claims to be?
 - 1. There are those among us who are gifted in discernment, who can help us understand what is consistent with God's Word and worldview and what is inconsistent.
 - 2. Sometimes, because deceivers exist and we can be deceived, it is hard to tell what is consistent and what is not.
 - a. Primary test: Does the practitioner claim the lordship of Christ Jesus over and in all things?
- h. **"Kinds" of Languages:** "families" or "classes" of "tongues", usually referring to languages.
 - i. In fact, the word "kinds" is used with "language" (lip) in Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:6-7, "they are one *people* [*kind*]...let us go down and confound their *tongue* so that they cannot understand one another's speech.").
 - ii. The Holy Spirit can close the gap which the Tower of Babel split apart. In fact, this working of the Spirit is a sign of the reversal of the Curse of the Fall, particularly the rebellion of Humanity, which at Babel worked "to make a name for ourselves" (11:4).

- iii. In the light of this rebellion, God divided Humanity into language groups to humble us. This division based on rebellion is overcome by the King's Spirit in the New Kingdom in order to "sum up all things under Christ" (Ephesians 1:10) by showing such divisions are undone and reconciled in Him.
 - i. **Interpretation of Languages:** See above regarding the speaking of the languages, it is also true that the "interpretation" (*hermeneuo*), i.e. understanding, of these tongues is also worked by the Spirit so that all might know that Jesus is Lord.
 - i. Just as the Spirit gives the grace to speak a foreigner's language, so also He gifts the grace to interpret for those non-foreign speaking believers to gain from the edification
 - ii. This is not an interpretation of an unknown language, or of ecstatic non-human speech, but that of translation of words and meaning so that all are edified together in the lordship of Jesus
3. **The Lordship of Jesus Restores Broken Humanity and the Graces of the Spirit Empower This Among Us**
- a. In the Church of Jesus Christ, united to Him by faith, sealed and secured by His Holy Spirit, empowered by God's power through His Spirit, God is unmaking the curse of Sin and the Fall
 - i. Original sin in the destructive alienation and animosity of all relationships:
 - 1. Theological: Sin as human's nature and choice has alienated us from the Holy God as we made ourselves His enemies
 - 2. Social: Sin, as human's nature and choice, has alienated us from one another as we make enemies of each other (blame-shifting to violence)
 - 3. Psychological: Sin, as human nature and choice, has alienated us from our own selves as shame and guilt rule over us (hid from others and deceive ourselves), making our own souls our enemies
 - 4. Cosmological: Sin, as human nature and choice, has alienated us from Nature as we rejected our responsibility to make it flourish and it is now our enemy.
 - ii. The Lordship of Jesus reverses the curse through His righteous life as the second Adam who passed the test, His atoning death to pay down our mutinous sin-debt against God, and His risen life to give us the Holy Spirit in abundant measure to rescue us and to transform us into His likeness
 - 1. This is what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are doing: they are unmaking the curse within the Church community.
 - 2. Theological: We are reconciled to God, hence prophecy and the words of wisdom and knowledge
 - 3. Social: We are reconciled to one another, hence tongues and wisdom
 - 4. Psychological: We are reconciled to ourselves, hence discernment of spirits, and faith which supplants fear and shame.
 - 5. Natural: We are being reconciled to Nature, hence healings.
 - b. The Spirit of God is displaying and declaring the lordship of Jesus Christ over all the brokenness and curse of sin and death through gracing His Body with these transforming and interdependent gifts to each one of His people.
 - i. All that sin undid in the Fall, should be coming undone in the Church through the reign of Christ Jesus and the effective power of His Holy Spirit
 - ii. While this is being worked among us by God, we acknowledge that it will only be fully and finally accomplished when the King returns and the Spirit abolishes this sinful "flesh" within us.

Let us strive, not for gifts, but for their result: the declaration and display of the reign of Christ Jesus. We are all equally dependent, weakened by the Fall, and the same Spirit of God empowers our works to make them effective to declare and display the glories of Christ among us and through us to the world. Let us all serve where we are and aim for such a reconciling and redemptive display of His reign by the power of God and the grace of His Spirit in all of our relationships.