

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

BIBLE TEXT: I Corinthians 11:18-22; 12:1-31; 14:1-40

LESSON 392 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Corinthians 11:18-22

¹⁸ For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

¹⁹ For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

²⁰ When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

²¹ For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

²² What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all

Bible References:

Notes:

A Need for Unity

The Apostle Paul was a very zealous preacher. He felt a burden for all people, and was one of the greatest missionaries in foreign lands that the world has ever known. He had the Spirit of God in his life, and people who heard him were convicted of sin, and prayed to be saved. There were churches established in many places.

Satan is not content to let the churches of Jesus Christ worship God in peace. When the Spirit of God begins to work among people who have a burden to win souls for Jesus, Satan also comes to interrupt.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, he spoke of the many good things that had happened among them; but he did not overlook the things that were wrong. He said, "I hear that there be divisions among you." He said that these things should not be. The Bible tells us plainly that there must be unity in the church in order to have the Spirit of God work among us. Jesus prayed for His followers thus: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). When there is unity in a church, people will recognise that Jesus is there too.

Avoiding Offenders

Sometimes the trouble that comes into a church is so great that some people have to be put out. Paul told the Romans Christians: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). It is easy, when a person continually hears criticism about something or someone, to begin to feel the same criticism in his own heart. The best way to keep from falling into a faultfinding spirit is not to associate with those who have it.

The Good Revealed

Paul told the Corinthians that when such troubles come into the church, the children of God must take their stand for the right against wrong. He said: "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Corinthians 11:19). The good ones will show up when the bad ones are contrasted with them.

One of the divisions was caused by not everyone's believing in the deity of Jesus. It is of greatest importance that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, sent from God. Anything other than a whole-hearted belief in Jesus' deity and His authority over His Church, brings division.

Roots Deep

Opposition to our Christian walk will help us to grow stronger in the faith, if we truly love the Lord. You have heard the illustration of the tree growing near the ocean, where heavy winds and raging storms beat upon it. Its roots go deep in order to keep the tree standing. Another tree is in a sheltered spot and grows beautifully; but when the shelter is taken away, the first

made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 14:1-40

1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue

storm blows it over, because the roots have not gone deep. If a Christian is always humoured and pampered, he may never get his roots down deep. But if he truly loves the Lord, the trials that come to him will make him stronger for the Christ who purchased him. He will be able to bear them.

The Bible tells us of Jesus: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:23). He did not assert His rights. He left everything in the Father's hands, who will in time punish those who cause Christ to suffer.

We are told to be like Jesus. The Apostle Paul wanted to be like Jesus, even in the things he suffered. He said: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10). Paul spoke often on this subject. When he wrote to Timothy, he said: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Timothy 2:12).

Pride

Other trouble had come into the Corinthian church because some people had become proud of the gifts God had given them. These gifts had been given to glorify Jesus, not man. Some were wonderfully gifted as teachers — but only to teach about Jesus. Some were eloquent preachers — but only to teach people how to be saved. Some had the gift of healing — but they could do it only in the name of Jesus. They had nothing to boast of. No one can do anything for Jesus unless the Spirit of God works through him.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost is a wonderful blessing. Power from another world comes into the clean, sanctified heart. The Spirit of God speaks through the person receiving this experience, in a different language from any he knew. This is the crowning experience, which prepares a Christian for service for the Lord, and is glorious to receive. Yet a person never feels more humble than he does when he first receives it. He has nothing of which to boast.

True humility must be kept by those who want to work for Jesus. If we are to be successful witnesses for Jesus, we must let the beauty of Jesus be seen in us. Those with whom we talk about Jesus must be able to forget about us, and to think on the Saviour whom we represent.

When Peter and John healed the man at the Beautiful Gate, they said: "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts 3:12). They went on to explain that it was through faith in the name of Jesus that this miracle had been performed. "Yea the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16).

Even the Holy Ghost Himself glorifies Jesus. Jesus said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; . . . He shall glorify me" (John 16:13, 14). All that we receive from Heaven is for the purpose of glorifying Jesus.

The way to glorify Jesus is to tell others about Him, and win souls for Christ's Kingdom. Our business on earth is to build up His Kingdom. If we had nothing to do for Jesus in this world, He would take us to Heaven as soon as we had received His gift.

Speaking in Tongues

Although the speaking in another language is a witness of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, this sign has been much abused.

edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? 17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With *men of other* tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to

Some people have made the speaking supernaturally in another language of more importance than a holy life, or the gift of power for service. By so doing, they have become fanatical; and Satan has sometimes used this method to deceive people into believing a lie.

The Apostle Paul said that it was important to speak in the church in such a way that people could understand what was said. Paul said that he would rather speak five words, which others could understand than a thousand, which could not be understood. And yet he warned that we are not to forbid the speaking in tongues. But all must be done to glorify God and not the person speaking. Everything must be done in order. Confusion in the church brings a reproach upon the cause of Christ.

Work for All

God has given all His children something to do — but not all the same thing. The Apostle Paul said that the church is as a body, each different member having something different to do. The eyes see; the ears hear; we touch with our fingers; we smell with our nose; we speak with the tongue. We know these things are important. But we find that our little finger is important, too, if it is injured and we cannot use it. Our hair may not seem very important, but it has its function. It is a “covering” that helps to keep our head warm; and the Bible says that a woman’s hair is her “glory” (I Corinthians 11:15).

So if every member of our body is important, Paul tells us that every member in the body of Christ is important, too. We dare not say to anyone, “We have no need of you.” The Lord will reward each according to his faithfulness in the little or much that he has been given to do. All the gifts God has given people to use for His service are important; yet Paul says that there is something more important than gifts. That is the pure love of God in the heart, as described in I Corinthians 13, the love which “suffereth long, and is kind; . . . envieth not; . . . vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (I Corinthians 13:4-7). If everyone who says he is a Christian would live by this rule, there would never be any divisions in the Church.

QUESTIONS

1. What brings the blessing of God into a church?
2. What was one of the troubles in the Corinthian Church?
3. What are we to do about those who cause division in the Church?
4. What were some of the Corinthians proud of?
5. How did Jesus react to people who wronged Him?
6. For what purpose are we given the baptism of the Holy Ghost?
7. What is one sign given when we receive the baptism?
8. How did Paul compare the church with the human body?
9. What is the business of the Christian on earth?
10. What is of greater importance than “gifts”?

them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.