

PAUL'S CORRECTION OF INCONSISTENCIES AT CORINTH

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

LESSON 392 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Corinthians 14:26).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

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 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*

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Observance of the Lord's Supper

Disorder and improper conduct in the partaking of the Lord's Supper was to be stopped

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.

II Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ

1. There are diversities of gifts, yet all are given through the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 12:1-11;

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Romans 12:3-8

³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
⁴ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
⁵ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;
⁷ Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
⁸ Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

2. There are many members in the Body of Christ, each having its own particular importance and duty, I Corinthians 12:12-31.

III Tongues and Prophecies in the Church

1. Paul instructed the Church in the use of the gift of tongues, I Corinthians 14:1-28.
2. Prophecy is better than speaking in tongues, I Corinthians 14:24, 25.
3. Those who prophesy were to do it in order, and not cause confusion, I Corinthians 14:26-33, 36-40.
4. Women were not to be allowed to disturb the meeting, I Corinthians 14:34, 35.

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 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

NOTES:

The Lord's Supper

In Corinth the practice had arisen of holding a dinner before the observance of the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread as Jesus had done with His disciples. This led to improper conduct and people were becoming gluttonous at these dinners. Obviously, such things could not be carried on in the house of God. It was even more sacrilegious when done just prior to the partaking of an ordinance in memory of the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of such sins.

Paul commanded that eating was to be done at home so that when they came together to observe the Lord's Supper they could keep their minds on the sacredness of the occasion. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26). It is a time in which to consider the tremendous sacrifice the Lord made for us, the all-importance of the Blood He shed for the remission of sins. At the same time we are to look for His return, and have our hearts prepared for that event. Paul warned that if people partook of the cup of the Lord unworthily — with sin in their heart — they were eating and drinking damnation to themselves. Many people in the church were weak in faith and sick in body because they were guilty of partaking unworthily.

When we partake of the emblems of the Lord's Supper and discern the Body and Blood of Jesus through them, we gain both spiritual and physical strength. Many people have been healed of bodily afflictions while partaking of the Lord's Supper, as they considered what the Blood of Jesus meant to them. The Blood of Jesus bought our redemption, purified our hearts, and gave us healing. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). All these blessings may be ours if we come to the Lord His way.

Members of the Body of Christ

There had been contention in the church at Corinth over the importance of various positions, but Paul tried to show them that each had his own work to do; and if he was faithful in that, he would gain the crown of life. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:8, 9). Other gifts and ministrations were named also, but the conclusion was that all should work through the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man as the Spirit wills.

Paul used the functions of the different members of the human body as an illustration of the various duties of the members of the body of Christ. Whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are educated or illiterate, whether we are weak or strong physically, no matter what our disposition or natural characteristics, when we are born into the family of God, baptised by one Spirit into one body, we can be used for the glory of God in one way or another. God has a work for everyone to do; and if one is faithful in that work he will get his reward.

God has not chosen people to do His work as man might choose. He looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; . . . that no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Corinthians 1:27, 29).

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

If everyone who claims to be working for the Lord would work only for the glory of God, there would be no divisions in the church. No one would try to gain a higher position than his fellow man. With a real burden on his heart for the salvation of others he would not even think of himself, let alone try to exalt himself. "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." May God help us to do all that we do for the purpose of building up Christ's Kingdom!

Speaking in Other Tongues

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church was the gift of speaking in tongues. This manifestation of the Spirit of God was the ability of the person who had received it to speak a language or languages, which he did not know, when the Spirit inspired him to do so. It would be a definite language, known and understood by others, not an unintelligible gibberish. Paul was quoting from Isaiah when he said: "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" (I Corinthians 14:21). People who do not want the truth of God's Word will not be moved to conversion by supernatural manifestations.

A Witness to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

The gift of tongues is separate and distinct from the witness the Spirit gives to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. When a sanctified person is endued with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit witnesses by speaking through him in another tongue, as on the Day of Pentecost when the 120 in the Upper Room were baptised with the Holy Ghost, "and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). That it was not to be limited to the 120 was manifest when the believers at the house of Cornelius eight years later were baptised with the Holy Ghost. The disciples knew they too had received the baptism, "for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:46). Again, 23 years later when Paul was at Ephesus, the Holy Ghost came upon a group of people, "and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). This was not the gift of tongues, but the witness to the infilling of the Holy Ghost. They may never have spoken in tongues again, or only at such times as God especially blessed in prayer.

Speaking for the Glory of God

The people in the church at Corinth had been overdoing the gift of tongues that God had given them, and Paul rebuked them for their lack of wisdom and understanding in the matter. Paul stated that if the unlearned came into their meeting and could not understand what was being said, they would think the congregation all mad. How much better, it would be to speak the things that God had done for them in such a manner that all could understand. The sinner would be convicted if he could comprehend the love of Christ for him and the power in the Blood of Jesus to redeem him from sin. If the personal testimony is given to glorify God, it convinces the sinner of the truth of God's Word. A song sung with the anointing of the Spirit upon the singer will also bring conviction to the sinner. But whatever is done in a public worship service must be done decently and in order if it is to redound to the glory of God. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

False Tongues

Much unnecessary reproach has been brought upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ because of the desire of some people to prove their spirituality by speaking in other tongues. A holy life,

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 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.

dedicated to the service of God, is of first importance; and the Spirit of God will not speak through any other. If one is not living a holy life, and is depending on supernatural manifestations as a measure of his spiritual stature, he is deceiving himself. “. . . because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thes-salonians 2:10-12).

The Spirit of God and His Word agree. The Apostle John said: “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (I John 4:1). The Bible is God’s final word to man, and he is not giving any new revelations which contradict that Word. God will not make any allowances for sin, and without holiness no man shall see God (Hebrews 12:14).

Women Preachers

In the text of our lesson we read: “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. 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.” Many people have taken from this that it is contrary to God’s Word for women to testify, teach, preach, or to hold office in the church. However, other texts of Scripture do not bear out this idea. Paul was admonishing the Corinthians against disorder and confusion in the church, and he no doubt had reference to the same thing in commanding the women to keep silent who obviously were causing confusion by talking and asking questions.

When he spoke on this subject in I Timothy 2:12, he was not speaking of women who had been called of God, but of those who had “usurped authority” and assumed their office without a divine call. Of course, Paul would not let such teach; but none would have been quicker than Paul to recognise and accept one who was called of God to the ministry, whether man or woman.

Paul said of those who had been baptised into Christ, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither **male** nor **female**: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”. (Galatians 3:28). Priscilla was associated with her husband Aquila in the work of the Gospel, and Paul took no exception to her ministry, for in Romans he writes, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:3).

On the Day of Pentecost the women were included among the 120 in the Upper Room (Acts 1:14), and “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Peter said: “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . . and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:1-18). It is evident from these texts that God makes no distinction between men and women. His gifts and callings are bestowed upon those He can trust, whether they be men or women.

Whenever the Spirit of God is given leadership in a human heart or in a church, there are no divisions or contentions. When the Spirit leads, there is harmony and unity of the faith, and God can work for the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of His Kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the Corinthians doing wrong while participating in

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

⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

the Lord's Supper?

2. What was Paul's admonition to them regarding their sinful practices at the Lord's Supper?
3. Name some of the gifts of the Spirit.
4. How did Paul illustrate the different positions each person has in the body of Christ?
5. What is the gift of speaking in tongues?
6. How does the gift of tongues differ from the witness to the baptism of the Holy Ghost?
7. What did Paul say regarding speaking in tongues in the church?
8. Why did Paul forbid the women to speak in the church?
9. Quote texts proving that God does anoint women for work in the church.