

Sunday Sermon: January 20, 2019

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Sermon Theme: One Spirit Joins us Together

1. Praise God that he has brought us together
2. Recognize the gifts God gives
3. Use your gifts with joy

Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

<sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

My children are good at breaking things. They bring me the pieces and expect me to fix it with some glue. They even remind me, "Dad, get some super glue because this needs to be fixed."

I don't have problems trying to fix things, but it's not always as easy as getting super glue. Contrary to what they believe, super glue doesn't always fix things. There are different types of glue for different types of jobs. Sometimes it's the cheap white glue that works the best, sometimes the wood glue, sometimes gorilla glue, other times super glue.

I am sure that there is some chemical bonding, scientific explanation that explains what makes one glue work for one thing and not for another. For me the answer is pretty simple, I just have to keep trying different glues until I find the one that works.

It would make things so much easier if there was just one glue that worked on everything. Then instead of having a whole cupboard of bottles of glue, we would just need one bottle to keep everything together.

There is something that joins us, that glues us, together as Christians and as a congregation. Some people might say the atmosphere, the people, the building, the location, or the style of worship join us together. These answers are really like different kinds of glue. They might work for some people but not for others. What we really need is a something that glues us together, something that really works to join us.

Last week, we heard about the power of the Holy Spirit who creates and strengthens faith in our heart. In the Word of God before us this morning we see that it is this Holy Spirit who joins us, who glues us together as a congregation of Christians. The Holy Spirit joins us together in something very important. He joins us in a unity of faith confession and he joins us together so that we can work together toward a goal and purpose.

The Corinthians may have been one of Paul's more challenging congregations. They had many struggles putting their faith into action. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul teaches them many lessons about putting their faith into action. He goes to great lengths trying to teach them what a Christian life really looks like.

One of the areas that they struggled with was the sin of pride. They wanted to be the best. They had arguments over who followed the better pastor, they wanted to have the better spiritual gifts, they wanted to be noticed as the best for the work they did in their church, they wanted to show how they were a better Christian than the person sitting next to them.

This sinful attitude made church all about them. In Chapter 11, Paul spoke with the Corinthians about how their sinfulness had even infected their worship. **When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anyone else.** There was no love for others, there was only a me first, I want attitude, there was a I'm too good for that attitude. Paul reminds them

that church shouldn't be about them and how great they think they are. It should be about how great our God is and the wonderful things that the Holy Spirit has done to bring to faith in Jesus.

**Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.** Paul is telling them, that before you came to faith, you were nothing. Why are you arguing about the gifts that were given to you AFTER you came to faith. You were given these for a reason. <sup>3</sup>**Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. <sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.**

Faith is a personal thing. We talk about it that way, this is my faith, I am weak in faith or I am strong in faith. Many times we see faith as something that we do. We are active people, put faith in the same category as going to work, making supper or cleaning the house. As long as I go to church I will make my faith strong.

Church should always be at the top of the list, our faith should be the most important thing in our life, we should love our Lord and his Word, just as he says we should. Yet, there is a temptation if we think about faith strictly in terms of me. It is the same type of temptation that the Corinthians had. We may begin to think that church is all about me, faith is all about me and not about what God has done for me. There is a temptation that we can take credit for building and strengthening faith, which God really does for us.

Paul says in verse 3, **"No can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit."** We did not make a choice for God, it was God who chose us. We did not do the work of saving ourselves, it was Christ who did that work and secured our salvation. It was not us who chose to believe in this God and Savior, it was the Holy Spirit who called us by the Gospel and who even now continues to strengthen us in this saving faith. We can and should give all glory to God for joining us together with him, in his family, through the Holy Spirit.

The saving faith that the Holy Spirit works inside of us joins us together in a very special way. First of all, it joins us together with the very large group of all believers who have ever walked this earth. In the Creed, we confess that we believe that we are joined together with these people who also have faith in Jesus. We confess: **I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the communion of the saints.** By faith we are joined with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Mary and Joseph, Peter and Paul because the Holy Spirit brought them to faith in the same Savior. Each of us is joined with each other because each of us has been adopted by God into his family and are heirs of eternal life through faith.

We are bound together with this body of believers that will be in heaven, but we are also bound together with a much smaller body of believers. When Paul was writing to the Corinthians he was writing first, to a small body of believers in Corinth, and then secondly, to the other churches that he has helped to start.

The Holy Spirit joins us together by faith as a group of believers that meets at Summerlin Lutheran Church. He also joins us together with a larger group of people who believe and confess the same group of teachings as you in this group we call the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

We praise God that the WELS congregations of Las Vegas, the WELS congregations of Arizona, the WELS congregations of California and all the other WELS congregations in the United States and around the world believe, confess, and worship the same Spirit and the same Lord has brought us together in this bond of a common confession and faith. We also thank that one Lord and Spirit that he has joined us together for a purpose and given us gifts to make sure that purpose is carried out.

The problem that the Corinthians had is that they were not acting as if they were joined together. They were taking sinful pride in their faith and they wanted everyone to notice who they were and what they did for God. Instead of praising God for their faith and putting that praise into action, they wanted praise from people for their acts of Christian service.

God has joined us together for a dual purpose: to work together to be built one another up in the Word through regular worship and Bible Study and to take that Word to others so that others will know and believe in Jesus. Paul says, **"To each one the gifts of the Spirit have been given for the common good."**

God has not given us gifts to inflate ourselves or our ego. He has not given us gifts so that people can praise us for our great acts of service. He hasn't given us gifts so that we can hold them over other people. He hasn't given us gifts so that we can be the best. Instead he has given us these gifts for a purpose, to build up the body of believers through acts of service and to help spread his God to many others.

Whatever gift you may have, it is not yours alone. This is a different thought from the world around us. The world around us teaches us that this is my gift and I should use it for me. However, notice the directions Paul gives for using your gifts: **To each one the gifts of the Spirit have been given for the common good.”**<sup>8</sup> **To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,**<sup>9</sup> **to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,**<sup>10</sup> **to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.**<sup>11</sup> **All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.**

This list is not exhaustive of all the gifts God gives. There are many others that God gives that are not in this list. No matter what our gifts might be, we are to put them to good use for God’s purpose. To help our brothers and sisters in Christ be built up in their own faith, while also helping to share that faith with others who have not heard.

We are joined together by the Holy Spirit in this bond of common confession and faith. This is something that we should joyful about finding. It is something that we should praise God that he has brought us too. We should also thank God that he has joined us with himself and with these others by using those gifts in the way and for the purpose he gave them. Amen