

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

1 Corinthians – Building Community

Sermon Series

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THE GOSPEL: AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT **JESUS** THAT OPENS UP A NEW REALITY
 We are here!

07 Jun 2020

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Living In Unity

One of the major causes of unhappiness within any community is when there is perceived inequality; when some feel less important and others feel more important than others. This may seem inevitable, but this is not how God has ordered the church.

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. What image does Paul use in this passage for the church? (verses 12-27)

2. When we find ourselves in a role we feel is less important, even “useless,” many of us might come to the conclusion that the church would not be harmed nor would it miss us if we left. What do verses 14-20 say about this? Why?

3. How would verses 21-26 stop some Corinthian church members from feeling proud of their role and gifts within the church?

4. What do verses 23-24 say about the parts of the body that are less presentable? How is this true in our church today?

5. It seems that the Corinthian church had decided that speaking in tongues (ecstatic, non-earthly languages) was a special gift, given to special Christians.
 - a. What does the order of the gifts he mentions suggest that Paul thought of that view?

 - b. What, then, is the real sign of being a Spirit-filled church? (v26)

APPLICATION

6. How would you use what you learnt from this passage to respond to the following ideas?
 - a. “I love playing the piano for my jazz band, but I don’t have the time to play it in church as well. And anyway, I don’t like playing the type of songs our music director chooses!”

 - b. I don’t do much at church. There’s nothing for me to do, really.”

 - c. I do a lot for my church. And I wish everyone else was more like me!”

REFLECTION

Are you more prone to: envying others' gifts, instead of focusing on using your own, or being proud of your gifts and looking down on others, instead of focusing on serving them?

Are there gifts which you are not bothering to use for your church?

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

PRAY

Thank God for the gifts that He has given you, and for the gifts that He has chosen not to give you, but to give to others.

Ask God:

- to enable you to have the right attitude towards your gifts, and toward the gifts of others.
- To see how you can most use your gifts for the good of the church.

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

The Holy Spirit has given God's people different gifts to use to build up Christ's body, the church. This has 3 major implications:

- We are not to think of ourselves as useless church members, with nothing to contribute. God has arranged us into His body and given us gifts to use for the body.
- We are not to envy others' gifts, wishing we had different ones. We need to trust God in the way He has arranged the parts.
- We are not to be proud of our own gifts, thinking of ourselves as better than others. Christians need to remember that each part of the body is necessary, and no one part is more needed than the other.

14 Jun 2020

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Living In Love

Often, like the Corinthians, we are focused on what we can see and do – the gifts that we have been given. But are these the end-goal and are these good measures of our spirituality?

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. Verses 1-3 described the kind of believer the Corinthian Christians wanted to be, or saw themselves as. How would Paul's words in these verses shock them?
 - a. How would Paul's words in these verses shock them?

2. In verses 4-7, Paul describes love, positively and negatively.
 - a. Contrast how Paul describes love with what you know of the Corinthian situation in our study so far. What does this tell you about Paul's assessment of the Corinthians?

 - b. Pick out a couple of descriptions of love that strike you. What would these look like in everyday life?

3. In verses 8-11, Paul looks forward to when believers die and enter God's presence, or when Christ returns.
 - a. What contrasts does he draw between our experience as God's people now, and our experience as God's people then?

 - b. How is this exciting? How is it humbling?

APPLICATION

4. How is 1 Corinthians 13 a wonderful passage to use for:
 - a. Confession

 - b. Thanksgiving

 - c. Prayer

 - d. Reconciliation

5. Read John 13:34-35. What does a loving church do?

REFLECTION

Do these characteristics of love describe you?

Could you replace the word “love” in verses 4-7 with your own name?

Without this love, we are “nothing”. Which love-inspired quality do you need to ask the Spirit to grow in you?

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

PRAY

What can you thank God for today?

What can you ask God for today?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Love should guide the way we view our church. 1 Corinthians 13 is often used at weddings, although it is in fact a rebuke intended to guard against selfishness in how we view church. Love is a necessity, says Paul. Without love, all our spiritual gifts and everything else we may be or do are nothing.

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

PRAY

What can you thank God for today?

What can you ask God for today?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Paul says that loving use of our gifts is “the most excellent way”. So, we should “follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts”. Loving the church means edifying the church, and Paul points out that this happens through prophecy rather than speaking in uninterpreted tongues. The church is built up by Spirit-led utterances of truth in languages we can understand (v3-4).

There is some controversy over whether certain gifts mentioned in this passage still exist today. The gifts usually in question are tongues, prophecy, and healing. This passage needs to be studied alongside other related passages, such as Acts 2 and the lists of spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:1-16 and Romans 12:3-8. Regardless of your convictions on these gifts for today, we can draw out some principles on the use of these gifts.

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

PRAY

What can you thank God for today?

What can you ask God for today?

DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Paul points out that if anyone is “spiritually gifted”, they will recognize is apostolic authority and submit to it because he brings “the Lord’s command” (v37). This is the sign of real spiritual maturity, not speaking in tongues or anything else.