

When the Spirit Speaks – *1 Corinthians 12:1-3*

Introduction – Paul continues dealing with their inquiries about the Christian worship service. The service is to be done with men and women engaged in worship but displaying their distinct gender and roles (11:2-16). The Lord's Supper was to be a sign of union and communion with Christ and with one another; disunity was an abuse of the Supper (11:17-34). Chapters 12-14 will deal with what it means to be "spiritual" or "in the Spirit" as it relates to worship, gifts of the Spirit, and edifying the body. The flow of these chapters would be: The unity of the Spirit upon all believers manifest through diverse gifts (12), Love as the foundation of all expression of those gifts (13), Specific correctives on the misuse of tongues (14). Paul begins this longer discourse, laying down the groundwork behind the gifts of the Spirit and particularly the Word-gifts or language-gifts that God had bestowed. When the Spirit speaks, Jesus is confessed.

Ignorance (v1) – Paul wants to talk about what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit and the matter of spiritual gifts bestowed by the Spirit. He wants them to know (or be reminded) of the origin and intent of these extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. And the first thing he warns them is that it is possible to be misled. Paul knows that the church is living in a time of great transition and while there is a diversity of gifts in the body now (chapter 12) these Word-gifts are going to pass away (chapter 13). In the meantime, until the completion of the Spirit-breathed Word (2 Tim 3:16), the canon of Scripture, Paul will direct the correctives on the use of those gifts, preparing them for the time of maturity when all of God's Word will have been given to the church (chapter 14).

Easily Deceived (v2) – What they do know is not particularly flattering – and that is their past. They worshipped many dumb idols, many gods. They were "*carried away*" to these dumb idols by false gods, false spirits, false teachings. Constant processions of many gods, many festivals, many ecstatic experiences, were part and parcel of the Gentile-pagan culture and they had been a people caught up in it all in various ways, "*however you were led.*" In sum, the Corinthians had been enslaved in their former life, in ignorance of the true God and His workings, to evil powers associated with dumb idols and pagan practices.

One Spirit, One Message (v3) – The central message from the Spirit and the focal point of all the Spirit's words is this: "*Jesus is Lord.*" Jesus said that He would send a Helper who would teach all the things that Jesus had taught them (John 14:26). This phrase, "*Jesus is Lord*" is loaded with theological and political weight. To say that Jesus is Lord is to identify Him as God (i.e. 1 Cor 8:4-6 - *There are "so-called gods" and "lords" in heaven and earth* (v5), possibly referring to both the pagan gods of the temple and the Caesar-worship of Rome before whom every knee should bow. Paul agrees and even strengthens the argument, working from the Shema (Deut 6:4-5). This daily prayer of the Jew declared that the LORD God was One, which by the way is the opposite of the myth that all gods/religions are the same. Jesus taught us that we should call this one God, "Father," and that Jesus was the Son. But He is also "Lord," a title designated to the one God in the Old Testament).

Of course, we know that all who say "Jesus is accursed," are not from the Spirit, but is it really true that anyone who says "*Jesus is Lord,*" is in fact saying that in the Spirit? Paul knows that even Jesus said that some would call Him Lord and He would still condemn them in their hypocrisy (Matt 7:23). How are we to understand this then?

The Spirit and the Lord – Paul is going to be pushing back against the idea that everyone had to speak in tongues, or that one spiritual gift identified you as more spiritual than having another spiritual gift. And so, his foundational point here is that everyone who confesses "*Jesus is Lord*" has just as much "of the Spirit" as any other confessor. The statement is one of personal allegiance for it has to do with Christ's exaltation to the role of the New Adam, the better David, sitting at the right hand of God. In addition, in Joel 2:28-29, God promised to pour out His Spirit on all peoples and that at that time, "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*" (Joel 2:32). Paul applies this to Christ elsewhere (Rom 10:9-13). For Christians, "*the name of the LORD*" is Jesus, and it is only by the Spirit of God that we come to believe, confess, and understand who He is.

Foundations and Applications – Jesus is Lord and those who sincerely profess that can only do so because they have God’s Spirit in them. When the Spirit speaks, that is what He says. That profession is to be your confession of faith. “*Jesus is Lord*” and all that follows.

Foundational Allegiance – They were Gentiles (pagans) but now they are Christians, no longer Jew or Gentile. You should think of your foundational allegiance in the same way. You are citizens of the city of God. You are children of your heavenly Father. You are not foundationally an American, a Hatcher, or a Caucasian. You are a Christian. Christians own the world in Christ Jesus and have been given it to glorify His name in all of its use.

When the Spirit Speaks – He always speaks the truth in accordance with the Words of Christ (John 14:15-17). Today, the Spirit only brings to mind the words of Jesus, not some new word, not some additional revelation. The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and He speaks of Jesus and seeks to honor Jesus. That means the Spirit will not tell you to date that unbeliever, or to divorce your spouse without biblical cause, or commit adultery, or abandon your family or other biblical duties.

The Use of Dumb Idols – Icons, pictures, and statues are all silent. They are dead and those who use them become dead in their worship and lives as well. So are any dumb idols of your heart that you are tempted to be carried away by.

Where the Spirit Speaks – But our God does speak. Jesus speaks to His bride every Lord’s Day in the Word heard and in the Word eaten. He gives Himself to us by means of the Holy Spirit received by faith which is also the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9). That Spirit-wrought faith cries out, “*Jesus is Lord.*”

Dave Hatcher – March 31, 2019

Notes for Little Saints

1 Corinthians 12:3 says “*no one can say Jesus is _____ except by the
_____ Spirit.*”

The Holy Spirit is always going to point you to Jesus. He speaks of Jesus. He tells you Jesus is Lord and He calls you to follow Jesus.

One way He does this is by taking God’s Word and filling your heart with it.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in _____ and _____ and spiritual songs, singing with _____ in your heart to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16).

The Spirit does this with the Word (see Ephesians 5:18-20). This means as you read and memorize and sing the Word, the Spirit is at work in you. And that Holy Spirit will cry out from within you, “Jesus is _____”