

THE HS: GIFTS

THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 12, 13

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell believers, to reside within us and to reveal God to us. Scripture tells us that the Spirit is active in a variety of ways in our lives – comforting us, guiding us, teaching us, advocating for us, and equipping us to do God’s will.

In our last lesson we talked about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. These virtues are meant to form our characters as believers. But there’s more. We’ve also been equipped with spiritual gifts – that is, supernatural graces and abilities rooted in our relationship with God that give expression to who we are. And these gifts are to be used for the benefit of other believers and to further the mission of the Church. Some of these gifts may be similar to natural abilities that we have, but we understand them to be something beyond those natural abilities, flowing from a spiritual source and given for a spiritual purpose.

The gifts of the Spirit are referred to in several different passages of the New Testament, and each list contains some overlap and some variation – so these “gift lists” are not exhaustive but rather a sampling. And while some of the gifts lend themselves to specific roles in the Church, many of the gifts can be lived out wherever you find yourself – anywhere where you have interaction with others and with the work of the Church.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time reflecting on the gifts of the Spirit. Ask God to show you those gifts that he has given to you and ask him to help you to use them for the good of the Church. Perhaps there are gifts that you lack, but which you’d like to have so that you can bless other believers: bring that as a request to God.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth: Send thy Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

(COLLECT FOR QUINQUAGESIMA, BCP PAGE 136)

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1 CORINTHIANS 12, 13: **FOR THE BODY, WITH LOVE**

12⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit...

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²²On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honourable we bestow the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, ²⁵that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it... ³¹...And I will show you a still more excellent way...

13¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing... ¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.