

The Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

The Body of Christ. We are the Body of Christ. We are the Family of God. To all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ just as Jesus said in **John 3:16-17**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." THEY are of the Body of Christ, the family of God. But wait there's more! Just prior to Jesus' ministry, John "came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (**Mark 1:4**) Just as it was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; and **all flesh shall see the salvation of God.**'" John the Baptist was called by God to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus the Christ. So as to say, "behold, your Savior is coming!" And just as John the Baptist preached (**Matthew 3:2**), Jesus preached also, when He began His ministry, saying, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (**Matthew 4:17**) John the Baptist also said, "I indeed baptized you with water, but **He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**" (**Mark 1:8**) When Jesus arrives on the scene, John the Baptist baptized Jesus,

"And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The experience of Jesus, the Lord God incarnate, that is God who had come in the flesh, to save all those who would believe on Him, is testified of as a leading of us, to all who will believe, in what the Apostle Peter preached to the people of Israel in **Acts 2:38-39**, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit**. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." I have heard it said that one does not need to be baptized in order to be saved. Yet it is a commandment from God for those who believe, to repent and to be baptized. I have spoken of this before, where it symbolized the process of our salvation in Christ Jesus just as the Apostle Paul explained in **Romans 6:1-4**, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The words of the Apostle Paul are deemed to be the inspired Word coming from God just as the Apostle Peter testified of in **2 Peter 3:16**, but also Jesus Himself commanded, after He had raised from the dead on the third day, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them **to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. There is a process that is spoken of in the Word then. First, it is in the hearing of the testimony of Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins, the sins that we have committed against God, that **we all** have committed against God, and that though the wages of (or penalty or cost of) those sins is eternal death, being eternally separated from God, the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord!" (**Romans 6:23**) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Saved by the blood of the Lamb, that is Jesus Christ our Lord and saved from the wrath of God! Thank You Lord! So we believe on Jesus as being the One who saves us from our sins, God calls us to repentance, to have a change of mind, to turn from our sins against God. That is, we allow ourselves to die to sin, no longer following the lusts of the flesh. The Apostle John summed it up in **1 John 2:15-16** saying, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the

Father but is of the world." So we are called to believe on Jesus, have a change of mind to stop sinning, and then to be baptized in water, as a confession of own faith. Just as it is customary with those who baptize other believers, they ask the one being baptized a few questions such as "do you believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died for your sins?", "will you from here on out, turn from your sins and follow Jesus and His commandments?" The Apostle Paul said in **Romans 10:9-10**, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one **believes unto righteousness**, and with the mouth **confession is made unto salvation**." So then, to recap, we are to believe on Jesus to be our Savior, have a mind to repent of our sins against God, and to be baptized in water. Is it necessary to be baptized in water to be saved? Is it necessary for one to confess before others that Jesus Christ is Lord? Not necessarily but I certainly would not recommend disobeying God and rebelling against His will and His command. For that then testifies of the likelihood that perhaps that person is not yet saved. Be convinced of this, that God cannot and will not be mocked. God knows who are His. If God tells us to believe on Jesus for the remission of or taking away of our sins and to repent and to turn away from sin, and then to be baptized and then to confess your faith to others, if we disobey him and rebel against Him, it may speak of not being yet saved at all. Just as Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other." (**Matthew 6:24**) The next step in the process is God placing His Spirit in us, "as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (**2 Corinthians 1:22**), to where His Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are His children (**Romans 8:16**), and that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of [or children of] God (**Romans 8:14**). This is when the Spirit begins His work in us "to will and to do according to His good pleasure." (**Phillipians 2:13**) It is where the fruit of the Spirit, that is, ALL of the fruit of the Spirit begins working in you, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." That is when you can know that you know that you are a child of God. That is when you know that as Paul said in **1 Corinthians 1:30-31**, "you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us **wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—**that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." That is when you are truly born again as Jesus had said. "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" It is a process! From the beginning of our faith in Christ Jesus to the day He takes us home, God is working in us to be conformed into the image of Christ. It is not a mystery, or a puzzle for us to solve, or some great conundrum that can't be understood. God is calling us into His

eternal kingdom, through the risen Savior Jesus, and He leads us to believe and to repent, He works in us His Wisdom, His Righteousness, and His Sanctification, and His Redemption. And that brings us to our passage of Scripture today. When we have believed on Jesus as the Christ, when we have given our minds to repentance and walk in it, when we are baptized and confess Jesus as Lord, and when we have received the Holy Spirit in us, the Spirit of Christ that is to reign in us for His good works as Paul said in **Ephesians 2:10** that, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them," that is when we can look to the Holy Spirit that dwells in us to show us what gifts and calling that He has for us. Each and every person has a unique and planned out purpose for God in His building of His kingdom. And you can be assured that our calling goes beyond this time on this earth. God has an **eternal** plan and purpose for each and every one of us for His glory and His pleasure and His purpose. Paul said in our passage of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 12 that there are different gifts of the Spirit, different ministries, and different activities. But there is but one Lord! That is our Lord Jesus Christ! Our Lord Jesus Who is of the godhead, made up of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. (**1 John 5:7**) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That God in Hebrew is Elohim, which is a plural noun in form but is singular in meaning. (**Genesis 1:1**) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word is Jesus, who was with God in the beginning, and as John explains in verse 14 of John 1, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Yes, we are being called and led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, have a mind of repentance, be baptized, and then to start confessing Jesus before others. Then we are given the Holy Spirit so that we can have working in us His Wisdom, His Righteousness, His Sanctification, and His Redemption, just as the prophet Jonah said, "Salvation is of the Lord!" (**Jonah 2:9**) Then God begins to show us the giftings and callings He has purposed for us in Him to be of service to Him for His glory and His kingdom. "Let him who glories, glory in the Lord!" It would get a little strange and tiresome though if we were all called to be prophets, would it not? It would get somewhat confusing if everyone of us was called to be a healer or a pastor or an administrator. The church would possibly run smooth as silk if we were all administrators or it would be a complete fiasco. Probably the latter. The gifts that Paul mentions are words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, healings, workings of miracles, prophesy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Specific appointments in ministries that Paul mentions are as apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and tongues. And all of these gifts and ministries are for the **edification of the church** as Paul said in **1 Corinthians**

14:12, "Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel." No spiritual gifting is just for the person that has that gift. No ministry is just to boost up the person that is called to that position. It is all for the **edification of the church** and to the **glory of God**. In the Old Testament, each tribe of the Levites had specific things that they were responsible for and no one else was to do it. If the Israelites were packing up and moving on, the tribe that was **not** responsible for covering up the articles that were holy were not even allowed to watch them do it or face death. If the tribe who was **not** responsible for handling the holy articles would touch them they were put to death. And only the Levites were called to do the duties of the temple. What am I getting at? Not that I am trying to scare anyone into a dreadful fear. But, God has a specific calling and purpose for each of us. And it is all for the edification, the spiritually healthy growth, of the church. God Himself has the perfect plan and calling for each of us. That is not up for us to decide. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand** that we should walk in them," When Jesus was leaving His disciples, after He had shown them that He had risen from the dead, and after He had been with them for forty days, He told them to wait for the Holy Spirit. It was then that they all waited for that day of Pentecost for them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit so that they could be empowered and able to do the ministry that God was calling them to do. Peter said in **Acts 5:31-32**, "Him [being Jesus] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel [and to all who will believe] and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given **to those who obey Him**." To those who obey Him. Believe on Jesus, have a mind of repentance, be baptized, confess Jesus as Lord, and wait on the Holy Spirit to fill you and empower you to work for His glory and His kingdom. Does that mean we just sit around waiting on God doing whatever we want to do? No! As the brother of Jesus said in the book of James 2:17, "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

You can begin, just as I did, by serving where help is needed. We could always use more help in setting up and putting away. We are very appreciative and thank God for all of you who have been helping out, settings things up and putting things away and helping serve. Jesus said the greatest in the kingdom of God is servant to all. (**Mark 9:35**) The sign of a true follower of Christ is of those who have a heart to serve. Paul said in the following chapter of **1 Corinthians in chapter 13**, that the greatest gift is love. The great commandment that Jesus spoke of is to, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Without operating in love, we

are doing a whole lot of nothing. Serving one another in love. We are called to follow Christ. The only people Jesus railed at were the hypocritical leaders of the church. Apart from that Jesus was a Servant. Sharing the love and gospel of Jesus Christ! That's what we are called to. Being a servant as Jesus was. That's what we are called to. We are the body of Christ! If one part suffers, the whole body suffers with it. One of the greatest gifts of all that hasn't been mentioned is the gift of prayer. We are all called to pray for one another, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." We **all** need prayer, we **all** need to be edified by one another in the body of Christ. As David said in **Psalm 27:14**, "Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!" And that goes for the manifestation of His giftings and ministeries of His Holy Spirit. God has that perfect plan and purpose for you. Yet it is all in His perfect time. You are His precious child! He has breathed His breath of life into you to make you into His glorious child, a child of the Most High God! Do not give up, but continue to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." (**James 4:10**) But it won't be for your glory, as we will all be glorified in Christ at His appearing, but for the edification of the Body of Christ and the glory of God!