

Opening Prayer “Lord Jesus, You are the Head of the body. Help us see ourselves and one another as You see us—called, gifted, and needed. Make our time together a place where Your Spirit builds unity and love. Amen.”

Spiritual Gifts are not just for super-spiritual Christians or pastors. Joel tells us, *“That in the last days, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams”* (Joel 2:28).

Things to consider: Some people, when they speak or when they serve in the church, you can sense something very special about them. Through their service, the fragrance of Christ is experienced. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“**But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere**”* (2 Cor. 2:14). When that victory parade occurs, the aroma of Christ is spread; you can tell that there is more at work than mere human talent and natural gifts being manifested. Nature is being filled with something supernatural through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Last week, on the Feast of Pentecost, we learned that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not merely the result of emotional excitement. It was a new-creation story.

- In Genesis, God breathes life into the Human – Adam and Eve.
- In Ezekiel, breath enters dry bones, causing them to come together and live.
- In John’s Gospel, the risen Christ breathes upon the disciples.
- Then, in Acts, all believers are filled with the Holy Spirit

On the Day of Pentecost

- Their differences remain
- Diversity remains
- Distinct voices remain,
- But most importantly, their oneness with one another emerges

The Spirit creates communion through participation.

- The Spirit does not erase difference.
- The Spirit allows people to hear one another across their differences.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”*

This verse shows us that there are:

1. Variety of gifts
2. Variety of services
3. Variety of activities

But each variety is anchored in a **single divine source**:

- the same Spirit
- the same Lord
- the same God

This is a deliberate Trinitarian structure. Paul is showing that the unity of the church's gifts reflects the unity of the **Triune God**, for Paul assigns each aspect of ministry to a Person of the Trinity:

- **The Spirit** gives *gifts*
- **The Lord (Jesus)** directs *service*
- **God the Father** empowers *activities*

This is not rigid compartmentalization but a theological pattern: **All ministry flows from the Triune God, and therefore all ministry is unified at its source.**

Diversity Is Not a Problem—It Is God's Design

The Corinthians were dividing over which gifts were more “spiritual.” Paul corrects them by showing:

- The Spirit Himself gives different gifts.
- Jesus assigns different forms of service.
- The Father energizes different kinds of work.

So no one can boast or feel inferior. **Diversity is not a threat to unity—it is the expression of unity.**

God Empowers Every Believer

Paul says God “empowers them all **in everyone.**”

This means:

- No believer is giftless.
- No gift is self-generated.
- No ministry is insignificant.
- No Christian is unnecessary.

The power behind every gift is **God Himself**,

The Church's Unity Comes from God, Not Uniformity

Paul's point is not that everyone should have the same gift, but that the same God animates everyone's different gifts.

Unity is not:

- sameness
- conformity
- identical roles

Unity is:

- shared source
- shared purpose
- shared empowerment

How This Speaks to the Church Today

Ephesians 4:15-17 speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

1. We honor God by honoring each other's gifts.
2. We avoid jealousy and pride because all gifts come from the same God.
3. We embrace diversity because it reflects the Trinity.
4. We serve confidently because God empowers our work.

When Paul says, "**Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**" (1 Corinthians 12:27), what he means is:

- Christ is the **Head**.
- Believers together form His **Body**.
- The church is the visible expression of Christ's presence on earth.

This means the church is not a club, a building, or an event. It is a **living organism**, animated by Christ Himself.

Ephesians 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^[d] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by^[e] the Spirit.

Every Believer Has a Distinct, God-Given Role

Paul says you are “**members in particular**” (KJV) or “**individually members**” (ESV).

This means:

- You are not interchangeable.
- You are not accidental.
- You are not optional.
- You are not a spare part, for everyone carries the Spirit of God within them.

God has placed each believer in the body **on purpose**, with gifts, abilities, and callings that matter.

This means your life in Christ is not meant to be lived on the sidelines. You are not an accessory to the church—you are a **member of Christ's own body**, and the body is incomplete without you.

It also means we must learn to see one another with new eyes. The person sitting next to you, the one whose gifts differ from yours, is not a competitor or an inconvenience. They are a gift from God to you, and you are a gift from God to them.

When we embrace this truth, the church becomes a place where:

- People discover their calling,
- Gifts are celebrated rather than compared,
- Weaknesses are supported rather than judged,
- And Christ's presence becomes visible in our shared life.

And that matters deeply for the church today, for our community is becoming the container of divine life. We are not left to manage life on our own. Jesus promised, “I will not leave you orphaned” (John 14:18).

Definition: Spiritual Gifts are blessings given by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up the church. Natural talents are gifts given to us by God. They are inherited and developed, and it is hard to distinguish between the two. But you can know for sure that you are operating in the Spirit when the fruit of the Spirit is present, and especially the fruit of joy.

David (in the Old Testament) had a natural gift for using a slingshot. But in order to come up against Goliath, God had to put something super into his natural gifts. David's example shows us that Spiritual gifts operate by faith, and they empower us to believe God for great things,

Exodus 31:1-5 ***"The LORD said to Moses, "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft."***

1. God says, **"See, I have called by name Bezalel..."** This is the first time in Scripture that God explicitly **calls someone by name** for a vocational task that is not prophetic, priestly, or royal.

Implication: Sacred work is not limited to spiritual professionals who are called to preach and lead liturgical services. Craftsmanship, creativity, and skilled labor are also holy callings.

2. God Equips Those He Calls

Notice God says He has **"filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all kinds of craftsmanship."**

- It is the **first time in the Bible** that someone is said to be *filled with the Spirit*.
- And the purpose is **artistic excellence**.

Implication: The Holy Spirit is not only the source of moral transformation but also the source of creativity, artistry, and technical skills. It demonstrates that beauty matters to God. Art, design, craftsmanship, and aesthetics are not "extras" in the life of faith. They reflect the beauty of the Creator.

Romans 12:6-8 ***Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,¹⁰ with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.***

1 Peter 4:9-11 ***As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

Principles:

- The world sees Christ most clearly not when we are impressive, but when we are **interdependent**—when each member offers what God has given them, and each member receives what God has given others.
- The more you operate within the limits of your spiritual gifts, the more you will avoid burnout.
- We not only need to know our gifts but also their limits. The phrase ***“in proportion to your faith, or the measure of that gift”*** means the reach and scope of that gift. Such a sober understanding prods us to use others to help us with the blind side of our gifts. For every spiritual gift has a dark side, where a strength carries with it a weakness.

Practical Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. Belonging

- Where do I struggle to believe that I truly belong in Christ's body?
- What lies do I tell myself about my worth or usefulness?

2. Calling

- What gifts, abilities, or passions has God placed in me that I may be overlooking?
- Where might God be inviting me to step forward in service?

3. Interdependence

- Who in the body do I need to learn from, lean on, or appreciate more deeply?
- Where am I tempted to act as if I don't need others?

4. Contribution

- What is one small, faithful way I can strengthen Christ's body this week?
- Who could I encourage, support, or express gratefulness for the way others serve?

5. Unity

- What attitudes or habits help build unity in a church, where we build a culture where every member feels valued and seen?
- What attitudes or habits quietly undermine unity
- What is one practical way our group can strengthen unity in our congregation