

The Lord, through Paul, has provided instruction regarding a number of very practical issues that confront the believer in every age and locale. We can see that the Corinthian's underlying problem rested in the believer's selfishness, a self centered attitude and fleshly self indulgence. In chapter 11 he first set us in order regarding our created gender roles. With this basic created order established then he immediately engaged our respect for the Lord's Supper and, incidently, our respect for one another when gathered together. The local assembly is not merely a collection of saved individuals but one body, governed by one Spirit. He goes on in chapter 12 through 14 to teach us further about the unity that is ours in the assembly, to instruct us about the role of gifts in the assembly and more about order in the assembly.

First he distinguishes between spiritual manifestations that are of the Holy Spirit and those that are not. As pagans the believers in Corinth, of Gentile origin, had previously engaged in demonic religious rituals centered in idols they worshiped. Some were apparently still toying with these idols. This tendency is indicated by the warnings in chapters 8-10 about entering idol temples for a meal and eating things sacrificed to idols there. Paul now strongly demands allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and none other. They were to recognize who was speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit by what they said about Jesus. Merely speaking in a supernatural manner was not a reliable indicator that the person was being driven by the Holy Spirit. Nor was such behavior to be taken as evidence that the person was a believer. The Lord said "By their fruits ye shall know them."

**3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and [that] no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**

What believer saved by the shed blood of Jesus Christ would even think of Jesus as accursed [*anathema*] much less say so. Only an unsaved soul or a demon would initiate such a thing. (Other places the term "*anathema*" is used include: Acts 23:14, Romans 9:3, 1Corinthians 16:22, and Galatians 1:8&9. It is a very strong expression of condemnation.) Were the Corinthian believers being influenced by demons so that they even called their Lord accursed? Would they knowingly say this? Were they allowing their fascination with miraculous spiritual manifestations to lead them into a vulnerability to demonic influence? Or were they rather infiltrated by a few unbelievers who were actually channels for demons, as many of them had been before conversion to Christ? Perhaps both. Paul deals with their unhealthy attraction to the supernatural later. But first he gives us the real thing. The Holy Spirit is a real live, divine Person who is active in all believers individually.

He is also active collectively (in us together as a group) in the assembly gathered together unto the name of the Lord.

But for the Spirit to lead we must **confess** Jesus as Lord. We who are believers confess Jesus as Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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*Romans 10:9* That if thou shalt **confess** with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, [Jesus as Lord] and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation.

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*Philippians 2:9* Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; 11 And [that] every tongue should **confess** that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The demons know him as Son of God but never will voluntarily confess Him as Lord. Satan is their lord. Yet there are people who will have said "Lord, Lord" and even done wonderful miracles, but the Lord will say to them at the end "I never knew you." The Lord Jesus anticipated imposters and warned:

*Matthew 7:15* Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

*Luke 6:46* And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say.

There are many false prophets gone into the world and are come in among professing Christendom. They are forecast to even arise from among us, Acts 20. Most, if not all, of the epistles warn of them. Beware. Be cautious. But do not fear them. We should not be surprised at their existence. One test is: **do they call Jesus accursed? If so, do not receive them! Do they acknowledge Jesus as Lord? Then freely receive them if their life and works bear out their words.** I have talked to people who claim to be believers but somehow found "Jesus is Lord" extremely difficult to say with their mouth. I've wondered about them. I have met people

who acknowledge Jesus as Lord but pursue a life of sin and self interest. We are to take them at their word and seek to restore them to the Lord. If they are false brethren, they will be manifest soon enough, as was Judas. If we are godly they won't be able to stand us very long. The Spirit will see to that.

Now having established how we know who is speaking by the Spirit of God Paul tells us the intended role of the Holy Spirit in each of us and amongst us today. The hierarchy of God is revealed here. The Persons of the Godhead are each mentioned. The Trinity! He reveals that each has a different role, as God, on behalf of God, the Three in One.

***4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. (KJV)***

or

***4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are distinctions of services, and the same Lord; 6 and there are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all. (JND)***

The Spirit has to do with the transferring of the spiritual gifts from the Lord to the believer and guides and empowers their use in work and service for Him. The

Lord has to do with giving the various gifts and with the various works and services that He does through those He has gifted to do them. The Father sets out the whole divine plan and the various operations needed to carry it out. The Lord directs and coordinates the necessary operations. The Spirit moves and empowers the various spiritually gifted individuals to carry out necessary work effectively, at the proper time and in the proper way.

Through the Spirit we are actually enlisted in the blessed Team comprising the Eternal Omnipotent Omniscient, Omnipresent God in Three Persons! Blessed Trinity!. Blessed work! Blessed fellowship! Blessed results! Blessed privilege! Blessed responsibility!

We each have at least one gift. Our gifts are to be used for Him, not for our glory. We are to use them as directed by the Lord. God in Three Divine Persons is One. We, as distinct persons united in the assembly on this earth, are one also. Our gifts differ. They equip us for differing work and roles in the work. So our gift complements the gifts of others. No grandstanding! No copouts! And no envying! More on this next time.

By Ron Canner, August 27, 2003.