

1Corinthians 18-08-05b

Let's resume our study now, we're at the threshold of 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and it's so important as we have seen to keep track of what Paul is driving toward in terms of his theme and his argument and his purpose in writing, and it is to remind the Corinthians that they are a new creation in Christ. They are different people, and they are defined by different priorities. They have a different destiny, they have a different identity, they have a different way of interacting with one another, and it is all about love, not just any old altruistic love, altruistic benefit for others, this is the love of Christ, the love of Christ compels us, the love of Christ constrains us, the love of Christ defines us, and we want to be reflections and expressions of His love toward one another, and it transcends any meal, it certainly transcends any perceived ritual, it is the ongoing sensitivity toward one another that the Lord Jesus has for us.

He still does, we are so grateful that the Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and makes a case for us. He pleads for us He intercedes for us. We are told two or three places in the New Testament that what Jesus does as He sits at the Father's right hand is not receive accolades and watch the treasures of the heavenly kingdom roll in, He is busy thinking about you and thinking about me.

On the basis of His work, He pleads our case, He intervenes and intercedes. God the Holy Spirit comes and brings our prayers in a much enhanced and improved form before God the Father. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but God the Holy Spirit takes our insufficient inadequate prayers and makes them acceptable in God's sight.

The Lord Jesus Christ takes our inadequate insufficient selves and makes us acceptable in the Father's sight, and that is His constant activity as He sits at the right hand of the throne on high awaiting the day when He will come. And what is the first thing He is going to do when He returns to this earth? He is not going to return and rejuvenate and renovate the temple. He is not going to return and take charge of Jerusalem.

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes back the next time, what is He going to do? He is going to find you, and He is going to find me, and He is going to find all of the rest of the body of Christ, and He is going to assemble us in the air. The dead in Christ will rise first, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. He is thinking about us all the time.

If a man is going to examine himself, as Paul exhorts in verse 28, then look to the bread and look to the cup, but you've got to look to yourself first. Why do I do what I do? Am I really kind of wanting to be appreciated? Am I wanting to raise my status and my standing? Am I wanting to be well thought of? Am I trying to accomplish something in terms of my own goals and aspirations when I spend time with others? And that's the context here. It is Christian fellowship.

It is worship. It should be orderly, and it should be meaningful, and it should be distinctive. Distinctive in a good way, not distinctive in a weird way.

I don't think there's anything more distinctively weird, and I say this as an owner of a cowboy hat, but cowboy church, that's a weird thing. You ever been to one? Let me tell you, I've tuned some pianos in cowboy church. That's different.

And I'm not saying it's bad different, but it takes some adjustment. But if the cowboy identity is what defines your fellowship, or if a Calvinist identity is what defines your fellowship, or if a Holy Roller identity, or a... I was thinking about this the other day. I cannot tell you how many signs in northeast Oklahoma.

You pass a church, and I pass a lot of them, and I'm in a lot of them. But one that's the second closest to us here has a sign, and as soon as you read these two words, you know what kind of church it is. It says, Spirit-filled services.

Is this a Spirit-filled service? Oh Lord, I hope so. I hope we are filled with the Spirit. I hope the service, the communication, the presentation, the reception is all Spirit-filled.

But when you identify yourself as a Spirit-filled assembly, what does that connote? A lot more than just we've got a good, healthy, balanced presence and power of the Holy Spirit. What does it mean? We don't know that the sign gifts ceased, and we're going to try to make them happen as best we can. And I would have to do a lot of talking to myself to wake up on a Sunday morning and say, you know that Spirit-filled... I believe I'll go down there.

I think it would give me the weird willy-willies, because the Spirit is not in that activity anymore. He used to be, but he's not. People used to die for lying to the church.

Now they don't. People used to be weakened sickly and many slept when they did not discern the importance of sensitivity to the Lord's body. That doesn't happen now.

It was early. It was a sign. The Corinthian church itself, with their particular cultural situation, is a sign for us.

We don't always have a meal when we get together. We often do at this church. We're small enough.

We can pull it off. I think it's great. I enjoy that fellowship as much as anything else that we do.

But it's not really definitional like it was in Corinth. In Corinth, worship was, let's all get together, acknowledge the God we worship, and have a big meal. And in the secular areas, let's have a big party.

In the pagan worship, we will party and we'll do the bacchanalia thing. Paul says you've got to be different. You need to examine yourself to be sure that you are not overly camouflaged, that you don't blend so well that people can't see Christ in you and glorify the Father.

You've got to be different, consciously different. Examine yourself and be sure that a part of that difference is your spiritually motivated sensitivity to others. There's lots of people that are just naturally sensitive, naturally givers, you know, shirt off your back, good guys.

It's not what he's talking about. The shirt off your back, good guy, his good dies with him, dies in the moment. You can help somebody today and they're needy again tomorrow.

Remember Jesus talking to the woman at the well in John? And she comes out to draw water and he says, if you're going to draw water, you know, somebody that draws this water, you could draw a bucket of water for that woman and give it to her, but she's going to thirst again. He says, I've got water that transcends that. The water I've got, when you drink that water, something special is going to happen.

You are going to be restored and renewed and you will be a source. Out of your innermost parts will flow rivers of living water. You can't get that out of a hole in the ground in Samaria.

It only comes from the Lord Jesus and there is a noticeable, discernible difference in that water. That's what ought to be in evidence when we get together. When we get together, it ought to be like nuclear fusion.

You know, you put enough nuclear material together and the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts and you reach, you reach the point where you can't get it out. And the amount of energy that's released when you get that critical mass, that's what it ought to be like, where two or three are gathered in the Lord's name and every additional one, there ought to be an increasingly manifest presence and identity of the Lord Jesus there. That's what he's talking about.

So now, chapter 12, he says now, concerning spiritual gifts, how many times have we seen this? I do not want you to be ignorant. And in parentheses you can put because you are. I do not want you to remain ignorant.

I do not want you to be ignorant. Let's start with what you do know. You've got an ignorance in this area of spiritual gifts.

So what do you do when you're trying to teach somebody a new thing? You're trying to teach a multiplication. Well, you know how addition works, right? If I'm going to teach you what two times four is, let's start, you know when you add two plus two, you get four plus two is six plus two is eight, right? You know how addition works. Well, now let me tell you about multiplication.

It's just, it's an enhanced form of addition. I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that you were, and what's interesting here is you can tell that the text has been amended in later days because verse two is actually a sentence fragment, and they've taken out a word.

You see that if you've got a New King James, it says you know that, and then you've got a little text note there. There's supposed to be the word when right there, and that's in the same good,

early, best texts that gave us the proper reading up above in chapter eleven. You know that when you were Gentiles, and the way to fix the fence, and it's implied in Greek, fix the fence, the way to fix the sentence, too long on the farm.

You know that when you were Gentiles, in parentheses, you were. What they should have done is put you were in italics here. You know that when you were Gentiles.

Now, he's talking to Gentiles, right? How can he say when you were Gentiles? When they got saved, did they quit being Gentiles? Are they no longer goyim? What have we just been talking about? What have I spent the last hour and change talking about? You should look different. You should be palpably, perceptibly different than the world. So, this is almost tongue in cheek.

Paul says, you know that when you were Gentiles, i.e., when you looked and acted and thought and partied like Gentiles? Identity-wise, we are no longer of the world. Identity-wise, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither Jew nor Gentile. You are Christ.

You are Christ. Christ is your identity. Are you still Jewish when you come to faith? Yes.

Are you still a Gentile when you come to faith? Yes. But neither Jew nor Greek, neither Jew nor Gentile, what does it really mean? Your definitional attributes are Christ, not I'm definitionally a Jew, I'm definitionally a Gentile, I'm definitionally a Native American, I'm definitionally Irish, I'm definitionally, you know, I'm proud that I've got a heritage that involves some Native American ancestry. I'm proud of that, especially the Cherokee tribe with its strong identity as Christian, going all the way back to the first missionaries, the Cherokees responded in droves to the gospel.

And it pleases me to sort of accidentally, by no fault of my own, be a part of that, but to consciously identify with, join the tribe and say, you know, I appreciate the Cherokee nation. I appreciate the Cherokee heritage, especially of Christianity. But it doesn't define me.

I don't grow my hair long and stick a feather in it. I don't say my piano tuning is a Cherokee owned business. I'm proud to be a member of the nation and I support and encourage everything that the nation does.

They've got great values. They're well organized. They're smart.

I appreciate all of that. Most of all, as I say, I appreciate the history and persevering through hardship with a trail of tears, but it's not definitional for me. I don't stand up here in a buckskin jacket.

I've got a coat and a tie and I've got a Bible in my hand because that's my identity. This is who I am. Happy to have a heritage.

You can be French. You can be Irish. You can be from a foreign country.

People that have come from other continents, you know, you can have Indian heritage. You can

have Asian heritage, all kinds. It's great.

It's fine. But you were Gentiles. Now what are you? You are Christ.

You are Christians. That's who you are. You know that when you were Gentiles, you were, in parentheses, carried away to these dumb idols.

However, you were led. Some of you were led there because of your parents and your grandparents. Some of you came to Corinth from other places and maybe there were different gods and you had new gods here, but however you came to it, you ended up with these dumb idols.

This is dumb in the sense of not speaking, not dumb in the sense of stupid. Nobody said, let me find the stupidest religion and join that, unless you're a Rastafarian. I think they consciously choose a stupid religion.

You remember the Rastafarians? It's just, I want to listen to reggae and smoke dope. That's my religion. But who is the guy? Bob Marley, I think.

I'm going to listen to Bob Marley and smoke marijuana and that's my religion. That is a stupid one. But no, this is dumb in the sense of not speaking, having nothing to say.

They don't speak because they have nothing to say. There's no power. There's no future.

There's no hope. There's no resurrection from the dead in these pagan idol religions. You don't come back and you don't have a purpose and you don't become a part of something bigger and grander than yourself.

Dumb idols. Therefore, and notice he says, I don't want you to be ignorant. Here's what you know.

You know you were led away into these dumb idols, one way or another. Therefore, I make known to you. This is all about what do you know? People say, well, you can't know anything.

I was talking to somebody the other day and they said, well, you know, I don't think there is any life after death. I think, you know, heaven and hell are in this life. You live a good life, you'll have heaven.

If you live a bad life, you're going to have hell and there is no future. And I said, well, how do you know that? How do you know? Have you got some proof that death is final and there's no afterlife? There's people who say there is no afterlife and there's people that say there is one. Is there any evidence on one side or the other? Have you got any evidence that life ends and the soul doesn't persist? Have you got any evidence that the soul doesn't exist and that we're just a sum total of a lot of sparks flying around inside our cranium? There's no evidence whatsoever that there is no afterlife.

There's no evidence that there is no soul. Everybody who opines that there's no afterlife and no soul does it on no more physical scientific evidence than people who believe what God tells us, that there is a soul and there is an afterlife. So it is a perfectly balanced choice.

Because if you're going to say, well, I'm not going to believe anything until somebody shows me some evidence. Guess what? There's no evidence that there's not an afterlife. And it's not like flying spaghetti balls.

Most of humanity down through history has believed that there is some transcendent afterward, whether it's joining the great unconscious consciousness or whether it is coming back in karma, reembodied as something different. But there is this notion, there is this sense that there is more to life than meets the eye, that there is something invisible and transcendent and that you survive death. And what it is, nobody seems to know.

Well, the Lord has told us. And the Lord has given us an example by Himself coming back from the dead and coming back to talk about it. Anybody that went to Karmaville and came back as a cricket isn't talking about the experience.

Who comes back? The Lord Jesus comes back. He is declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. That's how we know that what God says is true.

He is the one and only man to come back and not die a second time. What was I listening to? Maybe I was listening to myself. It was either myself or my dad, I forget which, talking about the difference between resurrection and resuscitation.

I think it was my dad in Galatians talking about the difference. Lazarus, Mary and Martha's brother, was raised but he died a second time. The people that came out, the little girl that was restored to life, the guy on the beer being carried out to his own funeral, they died eventually.

They are not still around saying, you know, once Jesus raises you, you are raised forever. That was a resuscitation. That was emblematic.

That was like this temporary, we don't see people resuscitated anymore in the supernatural sense. You can have your heart stop for a few minutes. You can have your brain go quiescent for a little while.

But if they medically bring you back, they even call that resuscitation. They don't call it resurrection or they shouldn't. Jesus is resurrected.

He is the firstborn out from the dead and we are going to see that when we get to our 15th chapter. So, 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. Notice he says, therefore I make known to you.

When you were Gentiles, you were carried away one way or another to these dumb idols. I

make known to you no one speaking by the Spirit of God. What defines the assembly that meets in the name of Christ? To worship the Lord Jesus Christ, to worship God the Father through Christ.

What defines them? It is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Remember he is leading up to tongues now. Concerning spirituals, that's the topic header in chapter 12 verse 1. Now concerning gifts is in italics.

It's pneumatika. Pneuma, breath, wind, pneumatika. They talk about various things that are associated with something and they put that ICA ending on it.

That's what Greek does. Concerning pneumatika, things pertaining to spirit, spirituals, it's plural. Concerning spirituals, spiritual things.

I make known to you 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. Now what would it mean to call Jesus accursed? To call Jesus accursed. How many people would say, curse that Jesus? Like Snidely Whiplash, curse Dudley Do-Right? What does it mean to call Jesus accursed? Here's the incipient Gnosticism, and you say, incipient Gnosticism? Speak English.

This is the beginnings, this is the early roots of the notion that what you do in your physical body doesn't really matter. Everything is spiritual. As long as your spirit is right, your body can fornicate, your body can self-gratify.

What your body does, it's all part of this transient, temporal, materialistic, and physical things don't matter. It's the realm of the spirit. It's what you think and what you believe.

I believe this, and so that's what guides me. What I do is sort of disconnected from that because all of this is temporary anyway. It all goes to dust.

It's all going to fade. Gnosticism said, I am what I am in my mind. I am what I am in my spirit.

Don't pay attention to what my body is doing. That's insignificant and inconsequential. Well, the idea in Corinth was being passed around.

Well, this whole thing that Jesus introduced and this Holy Spirit, that's good. You're getting into the invisible realm of power and of ideas and of values and things, and that's all great. Where Jesus messed up is he tried to bring about good in the physical world, and that's what got him crucified.

If he had just blended in his body and just worshipped God in his mind, he would have never gotten crossways with the authorities and been crucified. So he sort of cursed himself by trying to implement these abstract spiritual values that you can believe in your mind, and I'm a good person, and I'm spiritual, and I'm doing well here. He, by trying to live that life and trying to be good in the material world, he cursed himself and got himself crucified.

So don't do that. Come up to the temple and be all things to all people and just worship God in your mind. Now that we know who the real God is and that there is salvation in Christ, that's great, but don't do what he did and live as a Christian.

That's going to end in death. Christ is accursed. And nobody who is communicating, and what was happening is people were standing up and pseudo-prophecy in the Corinthian church and saying, you know, get away from this self-denial and this self-discipline and this self-abnegation and putting others ahead of yourself.

You know, look what happened to Jesus when he did that. He was self-sacrificial and he became a sacrifice. No, just do it in your mind and then join in, have fun.

God wants you to be happy. And so this pseudo-prophecy was going on in the church and they were saying, Jesus is accursed. You know, his whole example is one not to follow.

Look what happened to him. And no one calling Jesus accursed is speaking by the Spirit of God. That's not the Spirit's message.

The Spirit doesn't say, come up here into the spiritual realm and let the physical go. And you get the idea that that might have undergirded some of what preceded, the people that were insensitive to others and just say, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. And because I believe in my mind that Jesus is Lord and God is the Creator, well, we'll all be happy over there.

So let's have it all now and have it all later. And insensitivity was guided by this emerging notion and this insidious idea that, you know, Jesus kind of showed you the way not to do it. And he got himself cursed for his trouble.

Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree is an old Jewish notion from the Old Testament, right? He must have been cursed. He must have done something wrong or God wouldn't have let him die. No one can say that by the Spirit of God.

And no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. It is one Spirit. And if you've got somebody giving a different gospel, remember in Galatians, I am amazed that so soon you are listening to those who are preaching a different gospel which isn't a different gospel.

Same thing earlier in this book. I am amazed that you are listening to these strange ideas because there is only one Spirit of God and you can't say two contrasting things operating under the same Spirit. If somebody is saying Jesus is Lord, they are talking by the Holy Spirit.

And if somebody is saying anything else, like Jesus is accursed, that's not the Spirit. And you need to discern who is teaching the truth, who is presenting the truth, who is prophesying the truth, and who isn't. And if what they say does not comport with Jesus is Lord, step back.

That's not the Holy Spirit talking. And listen, in the modern day, this happens only in a different way. Look at the Christian book aisle in a bookstore or go to a Christian bookstore and look at

the helps section on marriage and child training and so many other things.

And the implication, what they are saying is, well, yes, of course, you are a Christian and you've got the Holy Spirit and you've got prayer, but here are the medications that will help you train your child and here are the medications that will help you feel better. And if you go to a Christian psychologist and get these prescriptions and if you follow these steps and write these things on your refrigerator and follow them each and every day and repeat these mantras and get into this sort of mindless meditation thing, that is not the Spirit of God. That is not the Spirit of God, because it is a different gospel.

The deliverance that we have in Christ here is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, not the presence and power of godly counsel, quote-unquote. They like to say, well, it's godly counsel. You know, fix your finances and you'll fix your happiness.

Fix your home life and you'll fix your finances. Fix your spiritual life and all of these things will follow. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness by faith.

All of these things will be added unto you. The other problems will get put into perspective, not saying they'll be solved, but you will not be tested above what you're able to bear. You'll see the outcome sooner or later.

So, he says, concerning spirituals, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led, therefore I make known to you that you can judge whether the Spirit is present or not by the message. That's the upshot.

It was a specific manifestation in Corinth, but remember, observe, interpret, apply. You can tell if the Holy Spirit is behind a message and a messenger by what you hear. If they are saying something counter to what the Word of God says, what does the Word of God say about Jesus and his Lordship? It calls him the Lord Jesus Christ, right? God's Son.

Spirit has raised him from the dead. He is the means by which you are saved. Anything else isn't from the Holy Spirit.

So, you don't look for the presence of the Spirit by activities or manifestations. What is he saying? What does he lead with here? He is going to be talking about spiritual gifts and supernatural stuff, but he says, if you want to know if the Spirit of God is present, look at the message. What is the content of the message? If the content of the message isn't the truth presented in the Word of God and by God's known spiritual messengers, remember they didn't have a New Testament yet, but Paul had come and spoken.

Paul had demonstrated that he came not with words of wisdom, you remember, at the beginning, not with eloquence. He came in weakness and trembling, but power of the Holy Spirit. He says, basically, what you heard me teach and you knew it was coming from the Holy Spirit, if you hear anything different, that's not the Holy Spirit.

That's not a second revelation. It's not a second blessing. It's not a supplement to what you've been taught because it doesn't say the same thing.

It conflicts. It contradicts. That's what he's saying here.

The idols didn't really try to tell you anything. It was rote, but you get communication and you've got to judge that communication. Is it right or true or not? Verse 4, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

They should harmonize. You know what happens when a part of your brain runs amok or a part of your nervous system runs amok and you're no longer harmonious? What happens when you get a cramp? Have you ever had a really bad muscle cramp? That muscle is out of harmony with the rest of the body. It's operating on some other guidance system.

Some misfiring somewhere causes that muscle to seize. What happens to the rest of the body? You just say, well, I can't use that muscle right now. I'll wait until it quits cramping.

What happens to the rest of your body when one muscle cramps? If you've got a good, hard baseball knot cramp in your back, you're not doing anything until that cramp goes away. Until that muscle comes back in harmony with the rest of the body and is guided by the same Spirit, your body is largely useless. You're lucky if you can stagger over and try to find pickle juice or Gatorade or whatever you're going to use to try to make the thing stop.

There are diversities of gifts. There's a lot of different parts of the body of Christ, but they have to be energized and guided and directed by the same Spirit, or there is going to be conflict and confusion. Verse 5, there are differences of ministries but the same Lord.

There are diversities of gifts. Those gifts are enabled and empowered. They are guided.

You get the sensitivity and the perception to know when, where, and how to use your gift from God the Holy Spirit. What's the difference in a gift and a ministry? What's the difference in a gift and a ministry? We talked about this in Psalm 9, Thursday night. David is praising God for two things in Psalm 9, who he is and what he does.

David says, as he praises God and appreciates Him, I'm going to do that praise and I'm going to reflect that appreciation with who I am and what I do. Here's the bad guys, who they are and what they do. Look here, gifts and ministries.

Gift, that's who you are. I'm a pastor. You could be a helper.

You could be an administrator. You could be an encourager. You can be any one of a number of things of these spiritual gifts.

That's who you are. If you're a hammer, you can be hanging on the wall endlessly or somebody can pick you up and pound nails. You're still a hammer.

You're always a hammer whether you are hammering or not. It's your shape. You're a flat blade or a Phillips screwdriver whether or not you're actually turning any screws.

It's what you are. Your gift is who you are. It's your spiritual function in the body of Christ.

The ministry is the action that takes place. The gift is being a hammer. The ministry is driving the nails.

The gift is being a screwdriver. The ministry is turning screws, applying fasteners. See it? With the gifts, that identity is brought out and enhanced and empowered and enabled and held together by God's Holy Spirit.

The gifts, your assignment in the body of Christ, that comes specifically from God the Holy Spirit. He does it. He enables it.

He empowers it. He guides it. He shuts it off when it shouldn't function.

He turns it on when it should function. It's all about the Spirit and that gift. Your identity, which part of the body of Christ are you? Are you a finger? Are you a toe? Are you an earlobe? Are you a lymph node? What are you? Differences of ministries but the same Lord.

What you do in terms of mission is the work, the work of the Lord. I must be about my Father's business. I must preach beyond this village.

This is what you do and that's guided by the authority of the Lord Jesus, His mission assignment. The Holy Spirit makes us what we are spiritually in terms of function. The Lord Jesus determines how that is used.

Take that screwdriver and that box of screws and put that piece of paneling on that wall. That's the authority of the Lord Jesus. These things make sense.

They're not accidental. Look at verse 6. There are diversities of activities but it is the same God who works all in all. Gifts and ministries are specifically and definitionally in the church.

Gifts and ministries, that's within the body. Everything else you do in your free time, there's a lot of other activities that are above and beyond and outside your formal affiliation with the fellowship, right? There are diversities of activities but it is the same God who works all in all. God the Father Notice the ascension here.

You start with the Spirit. He's the most present and immediate. You go to the Lord Jesus Christ and you ultimately go to the God and Father who, the big picture, everything else, all of your circumstances are under His purview.

Well, then in verse 7, the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for profit. For profit. The Holy Spirit gifts us, guides us, energizes us, turns us off and on, makes us who we are for profit, for benefit, for edification.

What did Paul argue in the preceding chapters about let everything be done for edification? Knowledge puffs up, love edifies, love builds up. God the Holy Spirit makes us what we are so that we can express love, so that we can be a benefit. You don't even have to give your spiritual gift a name.

If the things that you do benefit fellow believers, any area of benefit to family, friends, community, because it is an expression of divine love, because you are what you are and do what you do because of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, that reflects the glory of the Father who is over all and in all. And it is always a true benefit. It's not a human insufficient, inadequate, short-sighted solution.

It is a divinely inspired partaking of eternity and eternal life solution that is transcendent. It builds souls. It doesn't just try to fix circumstances.

It builds into the invisible and the eternal, not just the temporal and the immediate and the material. Well, we're going to begin at verse 8 next time with the specific examples he's going to give of what some of these identities are that are assigned and created and energized by the Holy Spirit. What are some of these gifts? Gifts, ministries, circumstances.

Gift who you are. Ministry what you do. Circumstances, the context in which everything else fits.

All to the glory of God. All to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. All in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

There's a beautiful symmetry and a reminder of our identity. It is organized. It is orderly.

And you know that you're on the right track when it reflects the truth that Jesus is Lord. That the Christian life has meaning and purpose and definition. That it isn't a mistake to be an overt Christian.

Jesus is not accursed. And it ultimately reflects what he's been talking about for these last three or four chapters. And that is sensitivity to others.

Building up others. You are here to be a benefit to others. The Lord Jesus Christ didn't come to establish a kingdom and have the royal gifts start pouring in.

Why did he come? We talked about this. We had a special week ago Thursday. Why did Jesus come? Remember those 24 different statements in Scripture? 12 and 12? And look how many of those are for our benefit.

He was looking to our good. To bring us to the Father. To bring the Father to us.

To show us the way of life and the path of peace and the opportunity to be a part of something so much bigger and better than ourselves. That's why he came. And to reflect that and to continue to communicate that is why we are here.

To be a benefit. When you come together to eat and drink, examine yourself. Make sure you're being a benefit.

When you exercise whatever your spiritual gift is, who you are as a gift, what you do as a ministry, and how you are perceived in all of the circumstances of life, it needs to be with sensitivity toward others. Remember he's going to talk. You know this passage coming up.

He says if somebody wanders in while you're in the middle of exercising your gift and if they're confused and not built up, how is that a good thing? They may say you're accursed. You've got epilepsy. Go see the doctor.

We've got good doctors here in Corinth. You need to get that fixed. That's dangerous.

You could hurt yourself and others. No. People who come in contact with us ought to find it beneficial, upbuilding, drawing them toward Christ and through Christ to God the Father.

Well, we'll pick up here next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the wonderful truths of your Word that help us order our thinking and define our goals and our priorities, establish our values on a spiritual foundation that is eternal, that reflects the Lord Jesus and His purpose, and ultimately reflects both His glory and yours.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enliven these things in our souls, help us to understand them and see their pertinence in our particular circumstance, in our particular set of opportunities and challenges so that we can fulfill the destiny that you have assigned us as members of the body of Christ in this life. Looking forward to being present with Him and before your throne in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.