

1Corinthians 18-08-12a

Good morning, this is Sunday, the 12th of August, 2018. We're going to continue together our study of the book of 1 Corinthians. We're at the beginning section of chapter 12.

We've covered 11 full chapters here, looking at Paul's history of founding the Corinthian Church, his time spent there teaching them and building them up in the faith, leaving them, having some correspondence back and forth, and then at this point, this is probably a second time that they have written, and Paul is responding. He has information from several different sources about the status of affairs in the church, both from people who have visited and come back and given him reports, and from their own letters. This most recent letter to which he is responding asks questions about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, and he's been answering those questions.

We're going to pick up this morning with the spirituals, the pneumatica, things that pertain to the spirit, and the masculine and the neuter form of that word are the same, so it can be legitimately translated now concerning spiritual things or concerning spiritual people. Which is it? We'll take a closer look as we gain clues from the context as we delve into our study this morning, but let's begin by going to the Lord in prayer, thanking Him for what He has done, and asking Him to do what He is going to do with His Word and with His Spirit this morning. Shall we pray? Father, thank You for the many ways that You've provided for us, protected us, blessed us, challenged us, given us opportunities for enjoyment of the bounty of Your grace toward us, and also the grace involved in our circumstances that gives us resistance to push against and enables us to grow and become healthier and stronger in our faith.

And in our appreciation for the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, we thank You for Him and for the ever-present example, both in Scripture and in our hearts, of His faithfulness to You, His concentration on Your plan and purpose, and the love that flows in and through that to us and through us to one another. We pray that as we look at this passage together, Your Holy Spirit will teach us and imprint these things in our souls in a way that will come to our mind at the point of pertinence and application, that we can lay hold of righteousness by faith, we can prepare ourselves for service in this life and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

Well you'll remember that this section of the letter, having talked in the beginning about the nature of their fellowship being fractured and fractious and divisive, that Paul has called them to unity, and a key to that unity is consideration for one another. The easiest way to be divided, whether it's a couple, a family, a business relationship, a friendship, any sort of social interaction, the quickest way to be divided is to lose the priority of looking out for the best interest of that other party or parties. It's almost unconscious, often unconscious and invisible, creeping in of that shift of priority that puts me and what I think and what I want and what I determine to be best first instead of looking out for the interest of that other person.

If everybody is always looking out for the interest of the other, even when the other person is in error, even when they are short-sighted or insensitive or forgetful or inconsiderate or outright rascality manifests itself and their nature gets the better of them, they're impatient, they say or do the wrong thing or fail to do the right thing, when we are looking out for the interest of others, we are much more God-like and Christ-like in our response. And it is the loss of that sensitivity that is at the heart of all of the problems in the Corinthian church. Why are they divided? I am of Paul.

I am of Apollos. Well, instead of a conversation that is designed to draw everyone together and closer to the truth and to the Lord Jesus, who is the truth, they are forming camps and parties and cliques and separating among themselves, and this manifests itself in a lot of ways. When they come together for a meal, this little group over here clumps around the best food and eats it all, and this group over here that is kind of on the outs, it doesn't get any.

It's a lack of sensitivity. It's a lack of Christ-like self-sacrificial love. Well, we learn not so much to engage the same circumstances as the Corinthian church.

We're not necessarily facing division over which teacher is the best or who's got the better theology, nor are we necessarily coming away from a post-church meal hungry, or at least I hope not. We have such gracious people providing and bringing, and that's not our specific problem. But these are examples.

This is like Israel in the wilderness. These are the words of the prophets that address idolatry or that address other issues in the Old Testament and in the New. We don't face those specific issues, but the underlying principles, the underlying applications are the same.

And so in this case, what's the big idea in 1 Corinthians? You want to be able to say, I know something about my Bible. I know the emphasis of the four Gospels. I know which ones concentrate on the deity of Christ and which ones concentrate on the humanity of Christ and which one presents him as the Lamb of God and so on.

We know specific chapters. We remember the faith chapter and the love chapter coming up here in our study and other pertinent sections. We know where the Sermon on the Mount is.

We know where the letters to the seven churches are. And as a part of your spiritual knowledge and your spiritual wisdom, you want to know, especially the books that we've studied at some length and in some detail, to remember their big idea. It seems like there's a lot of seats on the carousel here as you go through the chapters of 1 Corinthians.

And this one's blue and this one's green and this one's orange and this one's purple. But the center spoke, the axis about which all of these various issues, whether it's women prophesying and praying with what state of their head covering, whether it is the divisions earlier in the book, whether it is the example of the Israelites in the wilderness, it may be, they all drive back toward Paul's emphasis on the importance of love for one another, sensitivity to one another,

being selfless in that second of the two great commands that define all of scripture, love the Lord your God, love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets and indeed the law of Christ is summed up in those.

So as he brings us now to this portion of his argument in chapter 12, we just saw the Lord's table and this is not a prescription for ritual. However you may view the bread and the cup, whether it is an ordinance, whether it is a ritual, whether it is to be observed frequently, infrequently, at all, in what sense, everyone is free to make up their minds about that. But nobody is free to miss Paul's point, and his point in the latter part of chapter 11 is not be sure you do a ritual correctly.

His point is when you come together, and whether it's in a formal worship group or whether it's in a small context or where two or three or more are gathered in the Lord's name, there needs to be the presence of the Holy Spirit shedding abroad in our hearts the love of God toward one another. Romans 5.5, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We don't necessarily have the ability in and of ourselves to make ourselves considerate and sensitive and loving toward one another.

This is a product of the Holy Spirit. Well, now that he's on the subject of the Holy Spirit and what the Holy Spirit does for us and the necessity that we be defined by love, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you've got the rituals exactly right. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you've got a fish under your car and a cross around your neck.

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, what? You love one another. It is the defining, identifying stamp and mark of a believer. It is our love.

The old one in the spirit camp song, they will know we are Christians by our love. That's a totally solidly biblical claim. So as he comes now into chapter 12 and he says now concerning spirituals, and this is spiritual things, it includes anything that you identify as of the spirit.

This is not just, oh, I'm spiritual because I listen to the birds sing, and I'm spiritual because I see shapes in the clouds, or I'm spiritual because I have a sense of otherness and wonder when I look up and around. This is Holy Spirit spiritual. This pneumatika has to do with the spirit.

So we have Paul talking about these spiritual things and he says, I do not want you to be ignorant. I do not want you to be ignorant. As I mentioned last time, Paul has said this several times in not only this letter but many others.

Most recently he has begun in chapter 10, I do not want you to be unaware, I do not want you to be ignorant, and talking about Israel. So his exhortation here in chapter 10 was therefore flee from idolatry. Flee from idolatry.

Remember that chapter 10 verse 14? Flee from idolatry. That is going to occur again in this context. Look at verse 2, I do not want you to be ignorant.

You know that when you were Gentiles, you were carried away to these dumb idols however you were led. The dumbness of idols is something that's mentioned in the Old Testament. You remember the famous little tongue in cheek story about the guy that cuts a log in half and makes a god out of one and cooks his supper over the other, and that they neither hear nor speak.

This is frequently repeated in the prophets. But here there's a purpose, I've seen people saying, well it's just Paul talking about repeating this Hebraism. It's his Hebrew background calling them dumb idols.

Not at all. It is key to what he's about to say. Circle the word dumb.

They're not just any old idols. He's talked about idolatry earlier in the letter, but here when he brings up the idols, he is specifically calling attention to their dumbness, their dumbosity, their lack of communication. What is this going to be about here? What is this section going to be about? We know we're getting into the tongues part, right? The communication aspect.

So dumb idols is significant, carried away to these dumb idols by whatever manner. One way or another, somehow, someway, you as ethnoi, as pagans, this isn't so much their ethnicity in terms of heredity as their practice. And it's a funny thing, people, in different parts of a commentary, when you go back to chapter 10 and he says, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that our fathers, all our fathers were under the cloud.

And you think, well, he's talking to the Jewish, largely Jewish congregation. And now he says, you were Gentiles, you were ethnoi, carried away. Well, which is it? Is he switching around and addressing the Jews over here and the Gentiles over here? In Paul's view, once you come to faith in Christ, the Old Testament figures are your fathers in the way that he is their father.

You have many teachers, not many fathers in Christ. And I'm in pain for you. He talks about being in labor pains.

I'm also your mother, and I'm in labor pains for you until Christ be formed in you. And it's all sort of a tongue-in-cheek, backward statement that Paul makes. He says, I'm your father, but I have pains like a mother.

And it's not that you be formed in me, but that Christ be formed in you. It's a very striking figure. But he's speaking in spiritual terms.

Spiritually, the Old Testament patriarchs and Israelites are our fathers, spiritually, the way Paul is our New Testament apostolic father. There's a sense in which John and Peter and the other writers of the New Testament are our fathers in the church. The people that come in the generation after them, we call them the church fathers, not because we're descended from them, but because of their position as our mentors, as our communicators and interpreters and encouragers in the faith.

So in that sense, Paul says, you used to be Gentiles. You used to be pagans. You used to be idol-worshipping and disconnected from God.

You were alienated from the life of God, strangers to the covenants and so on, he says in other places. This is in spiritual terms. Now that they are believers, their fathers are the Israelites who passed through the sea in chapter 10.

Now that they are in Christ, they are no longer Gentiles. They are in Christ. They are defined by, not their ethnicity per se or their heredity, but by their choice and their practice and their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when you were defined by those things, you were carried away to idols, idolatry from which I've already encouraged you to flee, stay away from those celebrations in the temples of Venus or Ashtar or whoever it might be, Aphrodite and so on, the Greek goddesses right up the hill on the Acro-Corinthians. But you were carried away to these dumb idols and that was your experience. That was your worship practice and what you've come to expect from spiritual practice was defined by your experience with idolatry.

And in that past, in that context, in that history, the idols never talked to you. You don't go up there and you get a flash from Diana or you get a flash from Aphrodite or you get a flash from Zeus or Venus or whichever Greek or Roman god you might be. They don't have living communication.

They're defined by myth and the religion itself is all ritual. It is all priest-driven and practice-driven and it has come to be characterized by orgy or by enthusiasmos. We get our word enthusiasm but this was religious practice in the ancient day and it was hilarity.

It was a chaotic frenzy that they would fall into as they would numb themselves with drink and with pleasures and with music and such and drive themselves into ecstasia which doesn't occur oddly enough in the New Testament but it is a frequent Greek word in this time, ecstasia. You remember ec is out from and stasis is to stand. So you leave your senses in ecstasy.

It's not quite an out-of-body experience but there's many features where you're no longer yourself. And of course I can't think of ecstasy without thinking of apostasy, apostasia which comes across as apostasy to stand away from the truth in some context. When we talk about apostasy in the modern day we say, well, they've apostasized.

They've left the orthodoxy and the true faith. Orthodoxy is leaving the straight path and they're apostate. They stand outside of that.

But in the scripture of course when it says the day of the antichrist will not come except there comes first the apostasia, the standing away, this is standing away from the earth for believers. This is the rapture. Well, ecstasy, enthusiasmos was characteristic of these dumb idols.

You didn't go up there to get truth, to get communication. You went up there to party and get

wild. That's what it was for.

That's what it was about. That was the draw. There was no doctrinal content.

You didn't philosophize at the temple. You partied at the temple. You got high at the temple.

You got happy at the temple. You got involved with licentiousness of all different descriptions at the temple. That's what it was about.

They didn't talk. They didn't have a sermon. Look at the ancient world at all of the idolatrous temples and find anybody standing up giving a lecture.

He would have been booed off of the platform in a matter of seconds and, you know, bring out the wine. It's a bacchanalia. It's a Saturnalia.

It's any kind of an inter alia where you've got, you know, break out the booze, roll out the barrel, bring on the girls. Let's have a good time. So when he says dumb idols here, he says that's your experience of spirituality, quote, unquote, in the past was your spirit leaving your body and you having this ecstatic, enthusiastic time.

Because of that, they are ignorant of how communication from the object of your worship works. Paul came and preached and they learned from him, but now that he's gone, well, is that like the corporate mythology that defined a pagan deity and now we just, you know, we can do what we want within that and we can go back to this is just another God. It's just another worship.

He says they're dumb idols. They are different. And therefore I make known to you and he's going to talk about speaking.

He says in the realm of spiritual things here, your past worship practices with idolatry didn't involve communication, communication gifts, discerning what is right and what is wrong and what's being said. People didn't talk about, well, you know, Diana and Venus and all of that. She really does have hands and don't look at the statue and think her arms are gone, you know, and go on like that.

No thought of the truth. It was all social. Here he says, I make known to you.

I do not want you to be ignorant. I want you to know. I want you to have content of truth.

This is central to the Christian faith. You don't go way down a road of wisdom in false religions. They give you a background and a justification pretty much to kind of do what you want to do.

But outside of a few areas such as Orthodox Judaism, you've got people that will go to Sabbath school and move on and maybe become Orthodox Jews and pour over the scriptures, but they pretty much end up pouring over the Talmud and the Mishnah and the Gemara and what everybody has said, second and third and fourth and fifth level removed from what scripture

actually says. But there is this desire to have sort of a gnostic wisdom-based faith. But you look around the world today.

Most people, if they say, I'm a Buddhist, I'm a Hindu, I'm a this, that or the other, and you ask them, well, what are the details of your faith? And sadly, a lot of Christians, you can say, what are the details of your faith? And after, well, you know, Jesus died on the cross and I'm going to heaven and there's angels with wings, they're done. But Christianity is unique in that it is heavily doctrinal. That's what the Old Testament and New Testament is.

And it's not a book to be locked up and dispensed in small droplets by a priest. It is in everyone's possession. It is to be meditated upon.

It is to be thought about. It is to be something that we dwell in and that defines our thoughts and gives us power to be something that we weren't before. And the general practice in other religions is not transformative.

It is more of an affiliation than an identity. So that's why he says dumb idols. You have no experience with communication.

So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus a curse and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. In an enthusiasm mode, in an ecstatic mode, people could say anything. And they say, well, you know, look how far out of the body he is.

Look, he's just saying wild things. He's babbling. He's frenzied.

He's incoherent. And, you know, you've got your dervishes and your people who are just completely under the control of something other than their reason. But Paul says there is not that kind of activity from the Holy Spirit.

And if someone says getting out of the body is the main idea, I want to leave the normal and go into the abnormal, the paranormal, the supernormal, supernatural, that's my striving. And this is the early incipient Gnosticism that says the material world is hopelessly messed up, eschew that and pursue spiritual things, spirituals. Get into the Spirit.

It's what I do with my mind that counts. My body can do anything. It's all corrupt and insignificant.

And therefore, Jesus, who was incarnate and was a man in the flesh, he's cursed. You might hear this from a Jewish guy. The curse is any man who hangs on a tree, from the Old Testament.

He was executed. He was criminal. See this whole fleshly thing? That's a curse.

Get away from that. Move in the direction of the immaterial and the ecstatic and the ethereal and the otherly. Well, anybody who says that, anybody who says that the life and the death and the burial and the resurrection physically of the Lord Jesus Christ is not important, is not

speaking from the Holy Spirit, because it is central.

Keep your finger here and turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Do you want to see where Paul is going with this and how I know he's talking about Gnosticism? Look at where we're going in chapter 15. Brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you received and in which you stand, stasis, stasia, by which you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you unless your belief was in vain, unless it was empty.

I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures and He was seen. He was bodily. He was material.

He was viewed. And you've got the whole list of people who saw Him, all the way to a crowd of more than 500. Last of all, He was seen by me, verse 8. Verse 12, if Christ is preached that He's been raised from the dead, how does some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? Now why would somebody say that in Corinth? The whole material side, the Jesus side of Christ.

We believe in Christ, but the Jesus part, that was just His temporary shell and that's not important. His life, His death, and His resurrection are not important. Let's just get the Spirit.

Let's get this Holy Spirit thing going and be wowed by the miracles. Let's be wowed by the sensation. That's the kind of worship we're used to.

You go to have a sensory experience. And the rest of this is not important. And Paul is going to spend the whole 15th chapter emphasizing how important it is to believe in the materiality of Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Remember Acts 2, I think it might be 2.34, God has made Him both Lord and Christ. Jesus is Lord and Christ. Jesus is called Lord, as Paul alludes here in verse 3, over a hundred times in the New Testament.

Lord Jesus, addressed as Lord, called Lord, referred to as Lord, over a hundred times. You know how many times, interestingly, not that it's any less true, but you know how many times Jesus is called Savior? Identified as Savior? There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior? Ten. Ten times in Scripture.

A hundred times He's Lord. Ten times He's Savior. And interestingly, three of those, let me see if I can find them for you.

Three of those emphasize a tri-directionality, a three-fold directionality of Jesus' Savior-hood. First of all, He is the Savior of Israel. Acts 13.23, from the descendants of this man, talking about Abraham, from the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus.

Acts 13.23. You can get that also in Matthew 1.21, Mary's going to bear a son, you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So Jesus is the Savior of Israel, first. Secondly, He is Savior of the Church.

Ephesians 5.23, the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. That's the body of Christ, that's the Church, right? Philippians 3.20, Paul says, our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the Church, heavenly citizenship, waiting for its Savior, the Lord Jesus.

He is the Savior to Israel, He is the Savior to Church, what's the third, would you imagine? The world, all men. First Timothy 4.10, it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. That's talking about God as Savior.

But, you remember in John 4, the woman at the well, and the disciples leave, and Jesus talks to her, and she goes to the town, and this man told me all I ever did, and five husbands and all the rest, and all the people come out, and the people come out and they are saying to the woman, it is no longer because of what you said, this is John 4.42, it is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this one is indeed the Savior of the world. First John 2.2, He is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. So Jesus has a three direction Saviorhood, Savior-ship, Savior-identity, to Israel, as the nation, to the Church, as His body, and to the world, as the potential giver of eternal life to all men.

But that's only mentioned ten times, but Jesus as Lord, what Paul alludes to here, over a hundred times. Now what does it mean to be Lord? You know, people would address a figure in authority as Lord, what were they saying? You know, it's like Sir, or Mister, which is derived from Master, which is from the old feudal days of serfs and local tyrants and such, landowners. But more than a term of address, in the Bible it is generally a title of deity.

In any context other than two individuals addressing each other in a non-spiritual context, when you talk about the Lord in the Old Testament, it is a transliteration, Adonai, of Yahweh. God's personal covenant name. And again, you look in Acts where Peter says that God has made this man, Jesus, both Lord and Christ, made Him Lord, Lord God, and Christ, Messiah, anointed Savior.

He is God and He is man. He is deity and He is humanity. And so Lord generally refers to the deity of Christ.

You have it emphasized by Thomas. Remember when Jesus appears post-resurrection and Thomas has been saying, I'm not going to believe until I see the holes. And Jesus says, place your finger in these scars.

And what does Thomas say? My Lord and my God. And he's emphasizing with that. It's a very ancient Near Eastern way to think that you double a thing when you're emphasizing it.

My Lord and my God. Lordship is in terms of His divine authority. God is in terms of His identity.

Lord is the function. God is the nature. So when Paul says here that there is a way to distinguish what is being communicated, dumb idols, you didn't have any practice in figuring out what's right and wrong.

Did you go consult the book of the myth and say, wait a minute, you can't say that about this goddess or this sprite or whatever it is you're referring to. In this faith, the genuine truth of God, when it is communicated, you've got to compare what is said to a standard. And fundamentally, at the heart of Christianity, is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Truly, this man was the Son of God. That's what the centurion says at the cross. God has made Him Lord and Christ.

He is our God and Savior. Remember, waiting for the glorious appearing of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ? This is another one of your Savior passages. First John 4.14, we have seen and testified that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

That's another one of your world Savior passages. But Titus 2.13, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, God and Savior, Christ Jesus. So, I make known to you, verse 3, Corinthians 12, no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed.

Notice it doesn't say Christ or the Lord Jesus Christ, it's Jesus, specifically His humanity. Nobody divorces the humanity from Christ or from Christianity and is speaking from the Spirit. And the Spirit is the one, and Paul has told them this so many times, they know it, he introduced this letter saying, I came to you not with swelling words of wisdom, but in the Spirit, in the power of the Spirit.

You knew my message was genuine because of the Spirit. The message is genuine when it is characterized by the Spirit. And nobody speaking in and from the Spirit is going to disparage or diminish or set aside or call common or accursed the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior.

It is integral. You cannot say, well he was a good man, he was a great teacher, he had a lot of wonderful truth, but I don't think he was the Son of God. I don't think that he died for sins.

I don't think that his life was anything more than any other man's life. He just had some wonderful wisdom. He's one of the Spirit Masters, that bald guy that used to be on PBS all the time.

He finally checked out and found out all of the things he was missing. Dyer, Wayne Dyer, he

would quote with great favor and approval Jesus along with Mahavira and a bunch of other things, that Jesus was just another one of the Ascended Spirit Masters. No.

And that man was not speaking by the Holy Spirit because he did not acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Now there's a thing called Lordship Salvation where unless you recognize Jesus as the Lord of your life, unless you start implementing His authority and that it's a part of your salvation. And there's a fine line here.

Acknowledging that Jesus is Lord is one thing. Making Him the Lord of your life in the sense of if there's no fruit, if you don't change your ways, if you don't see the Lordship manifested in changes in your life, you're not saved. That's Lordship Salvation.

If He's not Lord of all, He's not Lord at all. And if you're saved, the Lordship of Christ is going to make big changes. We still, almost unfortunately, have free will.

And you can acknowledge the Lord Jesus and claim Him and trust Him as your Savior and then be a complete reprobate for the rest of your life. And you're going to have a rusty old halo and a skinny white gown and you're going to be in the darkness outside. But you are saved.

It is a birth. But you can stay a baby. You can be a swaddled infant and never get anywhere or go anywhere or do anything.

Never become self-sufficient. Doesn't change your salvation status. So I want to be careful here to emphasize that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is an essential component of what you believe to be saved.

That He is the Son of God. That He died on the cross for sin and He is the propitiation and the atonement and neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other name under heaven.

There is nothing you can add. There is nothing you can put with. There is nothing you can contribute.

But a part of saving faith and therefore a part of communicating the gospel accurately is this man who came and paid for our sins. God has made Him both Lord and Christ. He is the one and only Savior.

He is the one and only unique God-man. And you can't trust Him as a really nice guy who had the golden rule and some wonderful aphorisms. That doesn't save you.

If you confess with your mouth, remember Romans 10, 9 and 10? What's the gospel? If you confess with your mouth what? The Lord Jesus. You confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart what? That He died for your sins? Remember Romans 10, 9 and 10? I think it's in our verse back. If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Salvation depends on acknowledging. A lot of people say this is why you walk the aisle because

you got to confess before men and all that. Confess with your mouth means this isn't some random thought that you had.

If anybody asks you, you acknowledge it. I go to my brother Matthew and I say, Matthew, do you think Jesus is Lord? He's either going to say yes or no. And when he says yes, he has confessed with his mouth that Jesus is Lord.

If anybody asks you, this is what you say. Be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks you a reason for your hope. What's the reason for your hope? The Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior.

God sent Him to die for me and God raised Him from the dead. The resurrection is an essential part of the gospel. If you don't believe in the resurrection, you are not saved.

Believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead. Which, of course, means you have to believe in God. And you have to believe that God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

Because He is the Lord and you confess that with your mouth. You're certainly going to have to confess it when you come up to the mythical pearly gates and St. Peter says, why should I let you in? And you better say, because Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior for me. So, it's important here.

This introduction is key. And it is all about the content of what is believed and what is spoken in the church and in the fellowship of believers. It counts.

It matters. You can't be ecumenical. You can't be worldwide.

You can't everybody to their own Christ and everybody to their own faith. There are non-essentials and there are essentials. Part of the essential is that the Lord Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the prophecies, according to the scriptures.

I pass on to you that which I also received. I make known to you, no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus common, accursed, just of the earth. And no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

And it almost seems out of place until you understand why he's making this point, what the issue is. This isn't your religion up the hill. This is not let's get together and party and everybody eats the food that tastes the best and drinks the wine that gets in the highest.

This is a content-driven, truth-based faith. That's first. And when you want to talk about spiritual things, next thing in your questions in the letter, let's just get on a solid footing here.

We're talking about truth communicated by the Holy Spirit, just like I told you at the beginning of this letter. And if anybody is giving you another gospel, if anybody is saying anything else about Jesus than what you heard from me, demonstrated by the Spirit, turn over to the end of

this letter. Chapter 16, final greetings.

You get down to verse 19. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord with the church that is in their house.

Churches meet in houses. I think it's a great thing. All the brethren greet you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. Sounds so wonderful and positive and ending on an up note. This salutation with my own hand, Paul.

Paul is writing with an Emanuensis, but here he's going to put his John Hancock on there. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, what? Let him be accursed. Anyone says Jesus is accursed? Sorry, the curse is running the other direction.

But what does he say? If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. It's no accident that all three of those words are there. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

You've got a very strong emphasis here on the identity of Jesus as Lord and Christ. And it matters. And if anybody doesn't acknowledge that, not only is he not speaking from the Spirit, let him be accursed, Paul says.

He says Jesus is accursed. Sorry, he's accursed. That's the pot talking about itself.

So this matters. It's important. People come to these and get all wrapped up in Pentecostalism and holiness and charismatics.

And what about tongues? You know what the subject is here? You cannot love one another. You cannot be sensitive to one another if you don't first love the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the last big statement Paul makes in this letter.

You've got to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Recognize him for who he is and what he is. And love him for that.

Or you're the cursed one. But that love is the vertical post on which this horizontal cross piece of love for one another, consideration for one another, rests. And the Holy Spirit is not present unless the Lord Jesus Christ is central.

That is the heart and soul and foundation of spiritual things. Spiritual things don't center in the Holy Spirit. Spiritual things center in Christ.

What did Jesus say in the upper room? When the Holy Spirit comes, he's not going to speak of himself or from himself. He's going to take of the things of me and impart them to you. Our faith is not Holy Spirit-centered.

And if I was going to be forced to put something on a church sign, I wouldn't say Spirit-filled services. I would say Christ-centered worship. And I would actually have to expand that and say, Through the Holy Spirit and through the Lord Jesus Christ, we worship our Heavenly Father.

We come to the Father through Christ. We come to Christ through the Holy Spirit. But it is a path, and you don't stop short at the Holy Spirit, nor do you stop short at the Lord Jesus.

As wonderful as he is, he is the first one to tell you, when you look at me, you're looking at the Father. I'm doing the Father's business. I am the way to the Father.

I am the truth about the Father. I am the life from the Father. It is the Father who sent Jesus into the world to save it.

It is the Father who sent Jesus to Israel to be its Savior. It is the Father who made Christ head of all things to the church. But we have the Father to thank for all of those things.

And if you stop short at the Spirit, you're two steps away from the throne. If you stop at the Lord Jesus, you're still one step from the throne. It is God the Father who we love and worship and praise for all three.

But they themselves have established that order and that subordination, and the design is to get us to the Father. You don't find too many, you know, you've got a lot of Church of Christ, and a lot of talk about the Spirit and about the Lord Jesus, and nothing inherently wrong with that. But how many First Church of the Father do you find? I'm not going to change our name, but grace and truth lead us to the Father, don't they? Look, let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to dive in here to the diversities of gifts that pick up in verse 4.