

Class No. 8 Outline
Lent III
I Corinthians 9:15–12:11 (MP2)
Week of March 24, 2019

- I. Opening Prayer
 - a. BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*
(Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent. BCP, p. 92.)
- II. Ordination Odds and Ends
- III. Flash Card (Memory Item) of the Week: **Name the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit**
 - a. Derived from Isaiah 11:1-2: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might*, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD**
 - b. Thomas Aquinas wrote extensively about these Gifts in his *Summa Theologiae*.
 - c. **Wisdom** is considered the first and the greatest of the gifts. It acts upon both the intellect and the will. According to St. Bernard, it both illumines the mind and instills an attraction to the divine. Adolphe Tanquerey explained the difference between the gift of wisdom and that of understanding: "The latter is a view taken by the mind, while the former is an experience undergone by the heart; one is light, the other love, and so they unite and complete one another." A wise and loving heart is the perfection of the theological virtue of charity.
 - d. **Understanding** helps one relate all truths to one's supernatural purpose; it further illuminates one's understanding of Sacred Scripture; and it assists us to understand the significance of religious ritual. This all gives us a profound appreciation for God's providence.
 - e. **Counsel** functions as a sort of supernatural intuition, to enable a person to judge promptly and rightly, especially in difficult situations. It perfects the cardinal virtue of prudence. While prudence operates in accord with reason as enlightened by faith, the gift of counsel operates under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the will of God.
 - f. ***Ghostly Strength** (Fortitude) is often identified with courage, but Thomas Aquinas takes its meaning to also encompass endurance. Joseph J. Rickaby describes it as a willingness to stand up for what is right in the sight of God, even if it means accepting rejection, verbal abuse, or physical harm. The gift of fortitude allows people the firmness of mind that is required both in doing good and in enduring evil. It is the perfection of the cardinal virtue of the same name.
 - g. **Knowledge** allows one, as far as is humanly possible, to see things from God's perspective. It "allows us to perceive the greatness of God and his love for his creatures" through creation.
 - h. ****True Godliness/Piety** – The Hebrew Masoretic text listed "fear of the Lord" twice. The Septuagint (Greek) text read "piety" for the first occurrence. It accords with reverence. A person with reverence recognizes his total reliance on God and comes before God with humility, trust, and love. Aquinas says that piety perfects the virtue of religion, which is an aspect of the virtue of justice, in that it accords to God that which is due to God.

- i. **Holy Fear** is akin to wonder (or awe). With the gift of fear of the Lord, one is made aware of the glory and majesty of God. A person with wonder and awe knows that God is the perfection of all one desires. This gift is described by Aquinas as a fear of separating oneself from God. He describes the gift as a "filial fear," like a child's fear of offending his father, rather than a "servile fear," that is, a fear of punishment. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is the perfection of the theological virtue of hope.
- j. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_gifts_of_the_Holy_Spirit
- IV. Recommended Reading/Listening – See below
- V. Paul – Prayer Warrior – *See* Appendix, p. 10
- VI. Overview of this Week's Readings – I Corinthians 9:15-12:11 (MP2)
 - a. Monday (9:15-27) – The Rights and Duties of an Apostle (continuing from last week)
 - b. Tuesday (10:1-13) – Idolatry and the Negative Example of the Israelites (and the Rock)
 - c. Wednesday (10:14-22) – Flee Idolatry; The Cup of Blessing
 - d. Thursday (10:23-11:1) – Scruples About Meat, and Consideration of Others
 - e. Friday (11:17-34) – Chaos During the Eucharist; The Words of Institution
 - f. Saturday (12:1-11) – Spiritual Gifts (continued next week)
- VII. Discussion of Previous Weeks' Readings
 - a. Class 5: Galatians 6 – Ash Wednesday – I Corinthians 1-2
 - b. Class 6: I Corinthians 3-4 – Ember Days
 - c. Class 7: I Corinthians 5-9:14
- VIII. Closing Prayer
 - a. O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (Collect for the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. BCP, p. 229.)

Recommended Reading/Listening:

- How to Remember the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (a 42-second video)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBzhh-KaBXo>
- N.T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018)

Additional Resources

- St. Luke's web page (www.episcopalnet.org) – Daily Offices, Ordo Kalendar, Tracts for Our Times, archived sermons, adult education classes...*and more!*
- St. Luke's Facebook Page: – Upcoming events, daily Saints, interesting articles...*and more!* (<https://www.facebook.com/Saint-Lukes-Church-Sedona-AZ-1441369559466896/>)
- Alexander Scourby's readings of the King James Bible on YouTube.
 - I Corinthians: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLfxgoEwb1A>
 - This week's lessons: 28:03 through 40:30

(Refer to the class materials for March 3 for the Introduction to I Corinthians.)

Monday – I Corinthians 9:15-27. *So Run, That Ye May Obtain*

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. **16** For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! **17** For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. **18** What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. **20** And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; **21** To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. **22** To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. **24** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. **25** And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. **26** I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: **27** But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

v. 15: *than that any man should make my glorying void*: than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting

v. 17: *a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me*: I am entrusted with a commission

v. 18: *without charge*: free of charge

v. 27: *a castaway*: disqualified

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Exegesis: In Saturday’s lesson last week, Paul established his right to be supported by the Corinthians for his evangelistic work, but then he explained why he elected to forfeit that right. (9:1-14) Here, he extends the discussion by establishing that he is literally compelled to preach the Gospel, so he has no grounds for boasting. He does take pride, however, in the fact that he does so for free (v. 18) In fact, Paul feels so strongly about not asserting his apostolic rights that he says he would rather die first than do so! (v. 15) No one can rightly accuse him of having ulterior or improper motives.

In verses 19-22 Paul describes how he adapted his behavior to his audience. This does not mean he sold out his Christian principles to win friends and influence people. Rather, as a former, strictly observant Jew, he could easily preach in Jewish circles and honor their customs to the extent they did not conflict with his Christian principles. Similarly, as a man free of the Law, he could move easily within Gentile circles without insisting on Jewish observances which the Gentiles would have found offensive, foolish or puzzling. This was not merely a go-along to get-along approach. At all times, Paul maintained his Christian integrity while practicing cultural sensitivity.

Paul’s common use of athletic metaphors, such as in verses 23-27, was particularly apt in Corinth, which hosted the Isthmian Games every three years, second in importance only to the Olympic Games. The Corinthians would have well understood Paul’s reference to rigorous training (v. 27), which was a months-long process for the participating athletes.

Exposition: No Exposition could be more useful than a serious, contemplative meditation on today’s Questions for Reflection.

Questions for Reflection: Paul said the gospel laid necessity upon him (v. 16). What necessity of the gospel is laid upon me? How can I, like Paul did, become more closely all things to all men in my life (v. 22)? Who, specifically, might I bring into the Church in that way? Do verses 26-27 describe my life? If not, why not?

Spiritual Resolve: _____

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; **2** And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat; **4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **5** But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. **7** Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. **8** Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. **9** Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. **10** Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. **13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

v. 8: *three and twenty thousand*: See, Numbers 25:1-18

v. 9: *tempt Christ*: put the Lord (Christ) to the test; *destroyed of serpents*: See, Numbers 21:5-6

v. 10: *some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer*; See, Numbers 16:12-14, 49

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Exegesis: Today’s lesson serves as a warning to the Corinthians to learn from what happened to the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness under Moses’ leadership. Paul’s references to the “cloud” and “the sea” in verse 1, are derived from Exodus 13:21 and 14:22. His reference to the “spiritual Rock” which followed the Israelites recalls a legend that a rock literally followed the Israelites, providing water to them during their wandering. Paul – for the first time in Christian history – links that legendary Rock to a pre-existent Christ. He also clearly draws a parallel between the “spiritual meat” (*i.e.*, manna – bread from heaven) and water from the Rock to the Eucharist in verses 3-4. Paul’s connection of these Old Testament passages and events with New Testament teaching and doctrine is called “typology.” You may recall a similar use of typology when, in Galatians 4:21-31, Paul referred to Hagar and Sarah, respectively, as “the present Jerusalem” and “the Jerusalem above.”

Paul further explains that, despite the gift of spiritual meat and drink (analogizing them to the sacraments), the Israelites brought condemnation and death upon themselves through their fornication, their sitting down and rising up to play, and their murmuring (*i.e.*, grumbling). Paul goes so far as to say that “these things happened unto them for examples” for – among others – the Corinthians! (v. 11) Paul will further address the consequences of unworthy reception of the sacraments in Friday’s lesson.

The word “temptation” in verse 13 encompasses more than just the urge to do wrong. It also includes trials of every kind. All temptations and trials are “common to man,” and while Paul promises that God will provide a way of escape from temptations and trials, he does not promise we will not encounter them.

Exposition: Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians was written to a largely Gentile audience, but today’s lesson is replete with references to Old Testament scriptures that would have been relatively new to them. Paul’s claim that “all scripture...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, [and] instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16-17) is vividly illustrated by this lesson. Unquestionably, the Corinthians needed to immerse themselves in scripture, as do we.

Questions for Reflection: Have I learned anything from those who have come before me, or do I make the same dumb mistakes? How am I doing, regarding lusting after evil things (v. 6)? Do I believe verse 13?

Spiritual Resolve: _____

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. **15** I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. **16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? **17** For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? **19** What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? **20** But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. **21** Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. **22** Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

v. 18: *Behold Israel after the flesh*: Consider the people of Israel

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Exegesis: Earlier, Paul admonished the Corinthians to “flee fornication” (6:18). Similarly, he now admonishes them to “flee idolatry” (v. 14). The admonition to “flee” implies a conscious, ongoing, decisive running away from serious sin, not just a lackadaisical, almost apathetic avoidance when easy or convenient. Paul uses the term “fornication” seven times in this epistle, and he warns against idolaters and/or idolatry five times, so he leaves no doubt about how he feels about these sins.

If, as most scholars believe, this epistle was written before any of the Gospels, then verses 16-17, along with 11:23-25 in Friday’s lesson, represent the first written descriptions of the Eucharist. Without question, the Eucharist played a central and critical role in early Christian worship. The “cup of blessing” (v. 16) is a reference to the third cup of wine drunk during the Passover meal. Many scholars believe that is the point at which Jesus distributed the cup of wine to his disciples during the Last Supper. These verses have been parsed and debated by theologians for centuries, but there is no question that Paul, here, clearly intends to convey that those who partake of the Lord’s Supper partake of the body and blood of Christ.

Paul earlier made the point that idols are actually “nothing,” so eating meat offered to “nothing” does not present a problem to the mature Christian. However, in verses 19-22, Paul strictly prohibits participation in pagan idol feasts. Although the idols are not real, the underlying worship is influenced by devils (demons) (v.20), so a Christian’s participation in the Eucharist absolutely excludes any participation in pagan rituals and feasts.

Exposition: We don’t worship idols, *per se*, but idolatry in other forms is still common. A blogger who goes by the name, Fewox (<https://fewox.wordpress.com/2015/10/16/what-are-some-modern-forms-of-idolatry/>), correctly notes that idolatry today manifests itself in a variety of ways such as materialism, covetousness, pride, ego, self-aggrandizement, and religious devotion to science, politics or social causes. The list goes on. Essentially, any undue devotion that stands between self and God is idolatry. Fewox concludes:

All idolatry of self has at its core the three lusts found in 1 John 2:16: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” If we are to escape modern idolatry, we have to admit that it is rampant and reject it in all its forms. It is not of God, but of Satan, and in it we will never find fulfillment. This is the great lie and the same one Satan has been telling since he first lied to Adam and Eve. Sadly, we are still falling for it. Even more sadly, many churches are propagating it in the preaching of the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel built on the idol of self-esteem. But we will never find happiness focusing on ourselves. Our hearts and minds must be centered on God and on others. This is why when asked what is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). When we love the Lord and others with everything that is in us, there will be no room in our hearts for idolatry.

Questions for Reflection: Am I frequent in visiting the table of the Lord and receiving the Blessed Sacrament? If not, why not? In the last year, how often do I receive each month? Why? Whose table am I found at, more often: the Lord's or the devil's?

Spiritual Resolve: _____

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: 26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: 29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? 30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

v. 24: *his own*: his own good; *wealth*: good of his neighbor

v. 25: *shambles*: meat market

v. 28-29: But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience’ sake – I mean his conscience, not yours – do not eat it. For why should my liberty be determined by another man’s scruples? (RS)

v. 33: *profit*: advantage

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Exegesis: Verse 23 strongly echoes 6:12 from last Wednesday’s lesson: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Paul’s repetition of this concept illustrates the deep concern he had for not causing weaker brothers and sisters to stumble by exercising his “rights” as a more mature Christian. In chapter 8 (last Friday), Paul instructed “stronger” Christians not to cause “weaker” Christians to sin by eating meat offered to idols against their consciences. Here, Paul elaborates on the issue by advising the Corinthians not to ask whether meat offered in the market has been offered to idols (v. 25) and not to ask a non-believing dinner host whether meat served at that meal has been offered to idols (v. 27) However, underscoring his advice in chapter 8, he also instructs mature Christians not to eat such meat if doing so will offend the conscience of a weaker believer (vv. 28-29) Absent that caveat, a mature believer may eat meat, even if he knows it has been offered to idols, provided he has given appropriate thanks to God (v. 30).

Verses 32-33 merely reflect the practical application of the Summary of the Law to a specific situation: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind [‘do all to the Glory of God’ (v. 31)]. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself [‘Give none offense...seeking the profit of many’ (vv. 32-33)]. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (BCP, p. 69)

Exposition: How many of us are so confident in our Christianity as to be able to say, as Paul did, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”? (11:1) Speaking for myself, I often feel so deficient in holiness, knowledge, worship, works of mercy, prayer, etc., that it would seem to be the epitome of pride and self-delusion to think that I could boldly claim that others should follow my example. Yet, without question, God expects and desires that we should be just the type of person Paul proclaims himself to be. “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Peter 1:16). We certainly have Paul’s example, as set forth in his epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles, but who are the “living Pauls” today? Why shouldn’t I be one? Why shouldn’t I start resolutely down that road? As Mother Angelica said: “Where most men work for degrees after their names, we work for one before our names: ‘St.’ It’s a much more difficult degree to attain. It takes a lifetime, and you don’t get your diploma until you’re dead.”

Question for Reflection: Should my liberty be judged of another man's conscience (v. 29)? Is verse 31 a day-to-day occurrence in my life? If not, why not? Write out verse 31 and put it in a conspicuous place in your home, leaving it there until Easter Sunday.

Spiritual Resolve: _____

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. **18** For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. **19** For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. **20** When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. **21** For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. **22** What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: **24** And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. **25** After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. **27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. **29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. **30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. **31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. **34** And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

v. 19: *heresies*: factions; *approved*: genuine

v. 27: *guilty of*: guilty of profaning

v. 29: *damnation to*: judgment upon

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Exegesis: Paul had received disappointing news about the Corinthians from Chloe's people (1:3), and the chaos Paul describes in verse 21 must have been at the top of the bad-news list. Paul was so disappointed by this report that he could only say "I partly believe it" (v. 18). The "divisions" he mentions in verse 18 may have been along social lines, rather than along the personality lines that he decried in the first four chapters of the epistle. Some groups had turned the Eucharist into essentially a gluttonous, drunken party, while others went hungry! (v. 20) Paul contrasts this description of shameful, selfish, piggish behavior with the beautiful, solemn, holy and simple words of Institution which have been faithfully recited at Masses throughout the centuries (vv. 23-25). It is particularly noteworthy that Paul claims to have received these words from the Lord (v. 23). And, Paul points out that the Corinthians should recall this previous teaching (v. 23).

Paul warns that unworthy participation in the Holy Eucharist has resulted in the sickness and even death of some of the Corinthians (v. 30), echoing his description of the death of the "unworthy" Israelites in Tuesday's lesson. Thoughtful and sincere self-examination is a critical precedent to receiving the body and the blood of Christ (v. 28). Anyone who is hungry should eat before coming to the Eucharist (v. 34). The purpose of the Lord's Supper was not to satisfy physical hunger but to receive spiritual food and drink. Moreover, the Eucharist was to be celebrated as a unified gathering of believers, not in selfish, social cliques (v. 33).

We have no record of what other things Paul intended to "set in order" when he returned to Corinth at some indeterminate time (v. 34).

Exposition: In one sense, no one ever "worthily" receives Holy Communion, for "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) As the Centurion lamented, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof..." (Matthew 8:8) However, Christ also implores: "Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." (Matt. 11:28) "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalm 51:17)

Fortunately, our Bishop has posted an excellent form of self-examination on the parish's web site. It is titled "Penance" under the "Tracts for Our Times" link:

<http://www.episcopalnet.org/TRACTS/PenanceFormsAndPrayers.html>

Printed copies are also available in the literature rack at the back of the Nave. Self-examination requires discipline, and it is easily brushed aside in the rush to get to church, but it is a spiritual exercise demanded of us by Paul's teaching.

Questions for Reflection: When I go to Church, do I contribute unity or dissension (v. 18)? Do I always examine myself before receiving the Sacrament, or do I sometimes not take the time to do so (vv. 28-29)? How and why is verse 31 true? When was the last time I fully and truly judged myself? What changed in my life because of that examination?

Spiritual Resolve: _____

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. **2** Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. **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.

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. **7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. **8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; **9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; **10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

v. 5: *differences of administrations*: varieties of service

v. 6: *operations*: working

v. 7: *to profit withal*: for the common good

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Exegesis: Having previously answered specific questions the Corinthians posed about marriage (chapter 7) and eating meat offered to idols (chapter 8), Paul now turns to their questions about “spiritual gifts.” Given how unruly and disobedient the Corinthians seemed to be, this strikes one as a somewhat unusual concern, but it is to their credit that they desired to know more about this topic.

It is not clear why any so-called believer would call Jesus “accursed” (*anathema*) (v. 3), although it is possible that someone might have taken Paul’s teaching that Christ, being crucified, was “made a curse *for us*” (*see*, Galatians 3:13) too literally. Anyone who wrongly inferred that Jesus was truly cursed *himself* could not claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, no one could *sincerely* say that Christ is Lord, unless moved by the Holy Spirit. Of course, anyone can say these words insincerely or mockingly, but Paul is speaking about sincere speech in both examples. Thus, the mere ability to confess Jesus’ Lordship is, in itself, a gift of the Holy Spirit given to all believers.

The Corinthians were particularly concerned about speaking in tongues (glossolalia), and we will read about that in greater detail next week, but in today’s lesson, Paul makes it clear that no particular gift stands above the other; each is necessary for the common good (v. 7). Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation of tongues, and any variety of additional gifts are all necessary for the health and edification of the Church. Paul echoes this concept in his epistle to the Ephesians: “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12; *see also*, I Corinthians 12:27-28); Romans 12:4-8) These gifts are freely given “to every man” (v. 7), in proportion to the Spirit’s will (v. 11). Being unmerited, they are not a source of pride (a particularly besetting sin for the Corinthians, apparently.)

Note the serial references to Spirit, Lord (Christ) and God in verses 4-5, all within the same context of “gifts.” Scholars have widely noted the Trinitarian character of these verses. Moreover, verse 11 reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a person, and is thus referred to as “He,” not “It.”

Exposition: If you do not know what your spiritual gift is, you’re not alone. The internet is replete with articles on how to discover your spiritual gift(s). There are some good articles out there, so check them out if you’re struggling with that question. Often, other people can discern your gift more readily than you can, so be open to input from others. Remember, though: one gift that is given to every Christian is to confess that Jesus is Lord (v. 3). Also, next week we will be reading chapter 13, Paul’s gloriously inspired meditation on love. That chapter falls right in the middle of his lengthy discussion of spiritual gifts, and the very first sentence that follows is: “Make love your aim.” (14:1) Love is the supreme spiritual gift. Moreover, anyone, at any time, can work on nurturing the traditional Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are available to all: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Ghostly Strength, Knowledge, True Godliness/Piety, and Holy Fear.

Question for Reflection: What gift do I give to the Body of Christ, the Church?

Spiritual Resolve: _____

Paul – Prayer Warrior

As you will see from the extensive list that follows, Paul was immersed in prayer. It seems that if he was not preaching, studying or dictating letters, he was likely praying. This list excludes the numerous prayers “built in” to Paul’s epistles, such as in Romans 15:13 (“May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”); and in I Corinthians 16:23 (“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”)

Paul prayed when he was blinded by his vision of Jesus; he fasted and prayed before ordaining elders; he prayed by the river; he prayed in the temple; he prayed in prison; he prayed before undertaking journeys; he prayed for the salvation of Israel; he prayed for those who had forsaken him; he prayed for kings and emperors. He offered petitions and thanksgivings constantly for the churches, his companions and his friends. He implored them to pray for him. He prayed to be relieved of his thorn in the flesh. He prayed without ceasing, and he instructed those in his churches to do the same. He prayed everywhere and always.

What is our prayer life like? Based on Paul’s example, what should it be like?

From the Acts of the Apostles

- And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: **for, behold, he prayeth**, (9:11)
- And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had **prayed with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (14:23)
- And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, **where prayer was wont to be made**; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. (16:13)
- And it came to pass, **as we went to prayer**, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: (16:16)
- And at midnight **Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God**: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. (16:25-26)
- And when [Paul] had thus spoken, **he kneeled down, and prayed** with them all. (20:36)
- And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: **and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed**. (21:5)
- And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, **even while I prayed in the temple**, I was in a trance; (21:17)
- And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, **and prayed**, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. (28:8)

From Paul’s Epistles

- For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that **without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers**. (Romans 1:9)
- Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: **for we know not what we should pray for as we ought**: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)
- Brethren, **my heart’s desire and prayer to God** for Israel is, that they might be saved. (Romans 10:1)
- Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; **continuing instant in prayer**. (Romans 12:12)
- Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye **strive together with me in your prayers to God for me**. (Romans 15:30)
- **I thank my God always on your behalf**, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 1:4)
- **For this thing I besought the Lord thrice**, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (II Corinthians 12:8-9)
- **Now I pray to God** that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. (II Corinthians 13:7)
- **[I] cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers**. (Ephesians 1:16)

- And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:18)
- **And [pray] for me**, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. (Ephesians 6:19)
- **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine** for you all making request with joy. (Philippians 1:3-4)
- **And this I pray**, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (Philippians 1:9)
- Be careful for nothing; **but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God. (Philippians 4:6)
- We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **praying always for you**. (Colossians 1:3)
- For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, **do not cease to pray for you**, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Colossians 1:9)
- **Continue in prayer**, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. (Colossians 4:3)
- We give thanks to God always for you all, **making mention of you in our prayers**. (I Thessalonians 1:2)
- **For this cause also thank we God without ceasing**, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. (I Thessalonians 2:13)
- **Night and day praying exceedingly** that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? (I Thessalonians 3:10)
- **Pray without ceasing**. (I Thessalonians 5:17)
- And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; **and I pray God** your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thessalonians 5:23)
- **Brethren, pray for us**. (I Thessalonians 5:25)
- **Wherefore also we pray always for you**, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. (II Thessalonians 1:11)
- **But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you**, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (II Thessalonians 2:13)
- Finally, brethren, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you. (II Thessalonians 3:1)
- **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord**, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. (I Timothy 1:12)
- I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, **prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men**; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (I Timothy 2:1)
- **I will therefore that men pray every where**, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (I Timothy 2:8)
- For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: **For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer**. (I Timothy 4:5)
- Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and **prayers night and day**. (I Timothy 5:5)
- I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that **without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day**. (II Timothy 1:3)
- At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: **I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge**. (II Timothy 4:16)
- I thank my God, **making mention of thee always in my prayers**. (Philemon 4)
- But withal prepare me also a lodging: for **I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you**. (Philemon 22)