

# Corinthians: Concerning the Spiritual

by Stephen Kaung

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*Paul's burden in 1 Corinthians 12 is to help the Corinthians understand the spiritual realm and the reality of the Holy Spirit, which comes to make Jesus Lord in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:13:18

**Scripture:** Acts 2:33, Acts 2:36, 1 Corinthians 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 12:27, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Corinthians 15:58

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, Peter and the eleven disciples are explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to a crowd in the temple area. Peter emphasizes that what the people see and hear is the Holy Spirit being poured out. He then declares that Jesus, whom they had crucified, is both Lord and Christ. The sermon transitions to a discussion of spiritual principles and the need for understanding in the spiritual realm. The speaker references First Corinthians chapter 12, emphasizing the importance of understanding spirituality and the potential for confusion without such understanding.

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## Transcript

This is Sunday evening, November the 4th, 1973, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother Stephen Kong. We have been fellowshiping together recently on 1 Corinthians.

So tonight we will have 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 1. But concerning spiritual, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant. Ye know that when ye were of the nation ye were led away to dumb idols, in whatever way ye might be led.

I give you therefore to know that no one speaking in the power of the Spirit of God says, And no one can say, Lord Jesus, unless in the power of the Holy Spirit. But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are distinctions of services, and the same Lord.

And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all. But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit. For to one by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit.

And to a different one place, in the power of the same Spirit. And to another gift of healing, in the power of the same Spirit. And to another operations of miracles.

And to another prophecy. And to another discernment, discerning of Spirit. And to a different one kinds of tongues.

And to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things operate in one and the same Spirit, dividing to each in particular, according as he pleases. For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body being many, of one body, so also is the Christ.

For also in the power of one Spirit, we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether Mormon or free, and have all been given to drink of one Spirit. For also the body is not one member, but many. If the foot said, because I'm not a hand, I'm not of the body, is it on account of this not indeed of the body? And if the ear said, because I'm not an eye, I'm not of the body, is it on account of this not indeed of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where the hearing? If all hearing, where the smelling? For now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, according as it has pleased him.

But if all were one member, where the body? For now the members are many, and the body one. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have not need of thee, or again the head to the feet, I have not need of you. But much rather, the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary, and those parts of the body which we esteem to be the more void of honour, these we close with more abundant honour.

And our uncommonly parts have more abundant comeliness, but our commonly parts have not need. But God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to the parts that left, that there might be no division in the body, but that the members might have the same concern one for another. And if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.

And if one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are Christ's body, and members in equity. The first letter of Paul to the Corinthians is a most practical letter.

It deals with many questions that the Corinthian believers ask Paul about. And more than that, Paul instructs them on things that he feels are of vital importance. But whatever is mentioned in 1 Corinthians, it is of very practical value.

And I believe as we have gone through some of them, we know how very practical they are. But up to chapter 12, all that Paul has dealt with are questions and problems that are concerned with things that happen on earth. In other words, in the earthly realm.

For instance, this matter of division, this matter of sin, this matter of going to court, this matter of marriage, this matter of meeting things offered to idols, this matter of social activity, whether a person can go to the heathen temple and eat with other people. In other words, you find all these things, are things that happen in the earthly realm, in that letter. But now Paul is going to turn to another realm.

And because of that, you'll find this chapter begins with, but concerning the spiritual. Now as you read your version, you will find probably in your version, after the word spiritual, there is some other description in parenthesis. And of course we know, whenever you find something in parenthesis, you know that it is the translator's interpretation.

In other words, to the translator, if it is just said concerning the spiritual, now what is it? It doesn't convey any definite meaning. So the translators try to put in what they understand as the meaning, to feel it is. But of course they know it is not in the original.

So sometimes in your version, and probably some versions, just take away the parenthesis as if they are in the original. But if they are very honest, you will find a parenthesis after the original. And different translators have different ideas.

In some versions you may find concerning the spiritual things. In other versions you may find concerning spiritual gifts. In other versions you may find concerning spiritual manifestations.

And even people offer to say concerning spiritual man. Now what is it that this chapter and the following chapters are really concerned with? I think an understanding of the heading is very important, because then we know exactly the scope of these chapters. But concerning the spiritual.

Now no doubt about that, the church in Corinth is very rich in spiritual gifts. Probably it is very difficult today to find a church that is so rich in spiritual gifts as in the church at Corinth. And most likely they do ask Paul about spiritual gifts.

Why? Because so abundant are the spiritual gifts that they cause lots of confusion. Not that these spiritual gifts are wrong. But something must be lacking there.

And no doubt Paul must have, no doubt the Corinthian believers must have raised this question with Paul. Now how about the spiritual? The spiritual, strictly speaking, in the original, is in Paul's number. But concerning the spiritual, now that makes it even more difficult.

What do you mean by the spiritual? I think one of the best explanations or interpretations that I have ever come in touch with probably is one given by Dr. Campbell Morgan. You know, Dr. Campbell Morgan is called the Prince of Expository. And according to Brother Morgan, he said the word in the original should be translated concerning the spiritual.

But people do not know what the spiritual means. So he feels that in English it should be put concerning the spirituality. Concerning the spirituality.

Now Paul is turning away from that realm earthly into the realm spiritual. And when you enter into the spiritual realm, there are many things that we need to know. There are certain spiritual principles in the spiritual realm that we ought to understand.

Because the lack of such understanding will result in confusion. So to Dr. Morgan, he feels that starting with chapter 12, verse 1, it goes on into chapter 15. In other words, it is not just limited to chapter 12 or from 12 to 14.

But it should embrace all the succeeding chapters up to chapter 15, including chapter 15. I tend to agree with him. I do not know how you feel, but I do hope that you will take it to the Lord and read it again and see.

As Paul begins to deal with this matter of the spiritual, he leads them back to the day when they were yet non-believers. He said, concerning spiritual, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant. There are certain understandings that are very necessary as you enter into the realm.

You know, when you were of the nation, you were led away to dumb idols in whatever way you might be led. Now these Corinthians, they were idol worshipers. And what were these idols? These idols were dumb idols.

You know, in the Bible, the Bible always describes the idols as dumb and deaf and blind, you know, and so forth. Because they are very dumb. These idols could not speak.

When the Corinthians worshipped these idols, they were led to worship these idols. The idols were very dumb. But why did they go to the idols to worship? They went there to seek for guidance.

The idols were dumb, and yet oracles coming out from the temple. That is to say, the idols were dumb, but the evil spirits were very active and articulate. Through the medium.

Through the priest or priestess. So you find people went to the temple to worship these idols. They sought for oracles, and oracles were given.

But of course, not from these idols, but from the evil spirits behind these idols. In other words, during those days, when they were idol worshippers, there wasn't that direct relationship. All the communications and relationships were indirect.

Through the media, they had no experience of direct communication. Their whole relationship was indirect. And they were blindly led into it.

They never questioned it. They accepted everything. But now something happened.

After they believed in the Lord Jesus, a direct communication began. Now their relationship with the living God is no longer an indirect one. It now has become a direct one.

They do not need to go through a medium to communicate with God. Why? Because the Spirit of God Himself dwells in them. It is a new experience.

They have now entered into the spiritual realm personally, directly. And it is very new to them. Formerly, as it were, they were outside of the spiritual realm.

But now they have been ushered into the realm of spirit. Thank God now the Spirit of God dwells in them. They don't need any intermediary.

They can have direct communication from God. And because this is so new, Paul says, there is an acid test. Whether the Spirit is of God or the Spirit is not of God, there is a test.

The Spirit that confesses that Jesus is Lord is the Spirit of God. But if the Spirit does not confess Jesus as Lord, it is not the Holy Spirit, but the evil Spirit. Now brothers and sisters, in other words, Paul says, now you have entered into the spiritual realm and God does not want you to be led blindly.

He wants you to enter into it with understanding. Do not believe every spirit, but test the Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, today God's people are afraid to test the Spirit.

They think that if you test the Spirit, it means you doubt, you don't believe. But the Spirit of God dares us to test Him. He challenges us to test Him.

The Spirit of truth is not afraid to be tested. The more He is tested, the truer He becomes. In the spiritual realm, you cannot receive everything, because they are the Spirit of God and the confidence you need to have.

And the test is whether the Spirit confesses Jesus is Lord. I don't know too much what's happening in this country. But from the country that I came from, because the demons, the devils, the people worship demons and devils, therefore the demons and devil possessions are very common, very common.

And the one thing that really can find out whether the Spirit is of God or of the devil is this test. When a person is possessed, when a person is speaking, when a person is acting under some influence of the Spirit, you can hardly judge by what they say. You can hardly judge by what they do, because the evil spirit also heals, also prophesies, and the prophecy comes to be fulfilled.

So how do we test the Spirit? Oh, when a person is under the influence of the Spirit, a believer can challenge that spirit, not that person. Oh, the spirit, evil spirit, is very evasive, is very subtle. If you challenge that person, that person will answer you.

You have to challenge the spirit upon that person, whether they acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Who is Jesus? And you know, a hundred times, a hundred times, never fails. If it is not of the Spirit of God, that spirit will not fail.

They seem to fail. And sometimes the spirit tries to evade and say it, one word, and stop, and then say another word. In other words, it is not consented.

Just to show that the evil spirit will not recognize that Jesus is Lord. But it is the Holy Spirit. Oh, the Holy Spirit is a person consented, Lord Jesus.

Now this is the test. But of course, dear brothers and sisters, the principle can be applied in a much broader area. In other words, it is not just limited to a person when he is under the influence of a spirit.

That, he needs to be tested. You can apply the principle very broad. That is to say, wherever there is a manifestation of any kind, whether in action or in speech, if the Lord Jesus is exalted, you know it is the Spirit of God.

You can apply it to a wider area. But dear brothers and sisters, this is not quite my burden tonight. My burden tonight is very simple.

The Christian believers are very rich in spiritual gifts. Now what are spiritual gifts? Spiritual gifts are the manifestations of the Spirit. Do not separate spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Why? Because the spiritual gifts are the manifestations of the Spirit. Sometimes we take spiritual gifts as things in themselves, divorced from the Holy Spirit. But when you read 1 Corinthians 12, you find spiritual gifts are nothing but the manifestations of the Spirit in the body, in the body of Christ.

The Corinthian believers are very rich in spiritual gifts. The manifestations of the Spirit are very full and abundant. Now we will think, if there are such manifestations, if there are such spiritual gifts, surely the Church will be greatly edified and built up perfectly.

But the contrary is the truth. Normally, that should be the case. The more gifts there are, the more manifestations there are, the more a building should be the body.

Why should the Holy Spirit manifest Himself in these gifts? For the building up of the body. Normally, that should be true. But dear brothers and sisters, a strange thing happens in the Church of Corinth.

Instead of building up, it tears down. They know the what of spiritual manifestations, but they do not know the why and how of spiritual manifestations. The gifts are there.

The manifestations are there. But something is missing. And dear brothers and sisters, oftentimes we think that 1 Corinthians 12 is a chapter on spiritual gifts.

If you read it carefully, you will find He touches upon these gifts, but He is not really dealing with spiritual gifts. He is dealing with something else. What is Paul really trying to say to us in relation to spiritual manifestations, to spiritual gifts? As if Paul says, Thank God for all these spiritual gifts and manifestations, but oh, if you only know two things, if you only know two basic principles, then all these manifestations will be so profitable and of beauty.

But if you don't know these two things, you'll make yourself a mess. So Paul actually, in chapter 12, is not dealing with spiritual gifts. They know spiritual gifts.

They don't need Paul to tell them about spiritual gifts. So he just lists a few. Paul is dealing with something far greater, something that governs spiritual gifts, spiritual manifestations.

Dear brothers and sisters, what are they? Why is it that Paul begins this chapter with, Unless you are in the power of the Spirit of God, you cannot say Jesus is Lord, because spiritual manifestations are the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the members of the body of Christ. And these gifts are given for the building up of the body. But before you see the body, you need to see, you need to see the head.

And that is the reason why you find Paul says, Unless you are in the power of the Holy Spirit, you cannot say Jesus is Lord. In other words, he is trying to lead his Corinthian believers to see one thing, and that is the Lordship, the headship of Christ. Unless in the power of the Holy Spirit, we see that Jesus is Lord.

Oh, brothers and sisters, this is not just saying it, repeating it as a formula, as a slogan. It is getting popular today. Thank God for that.

But remember, it is more than a slogan. It is more than a formula. You may shout a slogan, you may repeat a formula, but if it is not in the power of the Holy Spirit, it is not real.

Not because you say Jesus is Lord, therefore you are in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not at all. What Paul is dealing with is the reality.

Oh, unless, unless you are under the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is not Lord. But the Holy Spirit comes for one purpose, to make Jesus Lord in your life. Isn't that the work of the Holy Spirit? Isn't that the reason why the Holy Spirit should pour forth? Go back to Acts chapter 2, the City of Pentecost.

There you will find a hundred and twenty people who are assembled together. It was, I think, the most perfect congregation you can ever find on the earth. A hundred and twenty par excellence members, but a congregation.

While they were praying, continuing before the Lord, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down upon them. First there was a sound, a hard blow, as if a person is breathing very hard. Then a fire, like tongues, defending upon each one of them.

And they began to speak in tongues to glorify God. And because of this, rumors began to spread, and people began to come. Remember, they couldn't all come to that upper room, because no upper room

could accommodate so many people.

So evidently they must have moved to the temple area. And people just walked to them and began to marvel, wondered what had happened. And you know Peter and the eleven stood up and exclaimed, Brothers and sisters, you go back to Acts chapter 2, and then you'll find in conclusion, when Peter was concluding his speech, in verse 33, Having therefore been exhorted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which he beholds and hears.

They see, they hear, but Peter says, What you see and you hear is the Holy Spirit that is poured out. So what is it? To accomplish God's purpose. Verse 34, 35 of parenthesis.

You connect 36 with 36. Let the whole house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him, this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Oh brothers and sisters, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit came down and they were all baptized in the Spirit.

What does this mean? What does the Holy Spirit come down to prove, to make real? To prove that God has made Jesus Lord. You know when the Lord Jesus ascended up on Mount Ollie? The brethren were assembled there, we don't know whether that was the time when 500 brethren saw him going up. They saw the Lord Jesus ascending.

Then a cloud took him away. They couldn't see him, but they were still looking up. Where did Jesus go? Today we all say he went to the Father because he told us so.

Did he arrive there? How do we know that he had arrived? Nobody saw him arrive. Yes, he did ascend. But if, like the sons of the prophets, they were suggested to Elijah and said, probably the Lord took your mask and threw him somewhere else.

Let's go and find him. How do we know that our Lord Jesus, after he is raised from the dead and he has ascended, he does arrive at the right hand of the Father? How do we know? Because the Holy Spirit, Oh, as the Lord ascended to the Father, the Father anointed him with the Spirit and the ointment falls down to the beard and even to his head. Because the Lord Jesus has arrived.

He has been anointed as Lord and Christ. Therefore the Holy Spirit is poured down upon you. So here you find what you see and hear.

The Holy Spirit, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the Holy Spirit. What does it mean? He comes to accomplish wonders, to make it sure, to assure us, to make it real, that Jesus, the crucified one, is now the glorified one. He is Lord over all.

Now that is the meaning of painting. The sound and the sight are incidental. The essential is Jesus is Lord.

The Holy Spirit comes to prove to us that Jesus is now made Lord. And the Holy Spirit is to make this real in our life. Only the Holy Spirit can make Jesus Lord in our life, in a real way.

And he is doing it. The Holy Spirit comes to glorify him. Oh, brothers and sisters, you know what? The reason why the Corinthian believers, who are so gifted, and yet they are so confused, is because they fail to see each one of them is head to Jesus, even in the exercising of spiritual gifts.

In other words, they display their gifts for their own benefit. Their lives are not under the headship, the Lordship. That is the most important principle when you enter into the spiritual realm.

Don't touch the spiritual realm. If you do not know the Lordship of Christ, it is the most dangerous realm to enter into. But if you know the Lordship of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters, there is nothing more beautiful, edifying, than what you will see and experience in the realm.

The Lordship holding fast the head. That is the word. Then all the body will be strictly framed and rightly joined to the head.

Oh, brothers and sisters, this is what is needed today. We need to see the head. We need to bow before the Lord and say, Now, Lord, you are Lord.

You indeed are Lord. Not just say it, but by the Holy Spirit it becomes real. And when the Lordship, the headship of Christ is established, then Paul begins to tell of the body.

Verse 4, For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. Now you know this is one of the tremendous statements in the Scripture. It may sound very simple.

For even as the body is one, we all know that, and has many members, of course, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, sure. A little child knows that, but the wonder is, so also is everyone who reads this verse, reads it differently. For as the body is one, but has many members, though the members are many, yet one body, so also is the Church.

You're right. That is what it says. So also is the Church.

Because the Church is one body with many members, and though the members are many, yet one body, so also is the Church. But that's your interpretation. That is not the statement.

The statement is, so also is the Christ. Now we will say, so also is the body of Christ. But that's an interpretation, yes.

The Bible says, so also is the Christ. Some who know Greek tell that. In the Greek, you know, Greek is a very exact language.

Some people say like the French today. It is a very exact language. Now, in the Greek original, sometimes you'll find the word Christ without an article preceding it.

Sometimes you'll find the word Christ with a definite article before it. The Christ. Now, in our English translation, it is not clear, because to the translators, it doesn't make sense to modern English.

But in the Greek, you'll find some with article, some without article. So people who study Greek tell us that whenever Christ is used without an article, it always refers to personal Christ, Christ as a person. But whenever you'll find the article the preceding Christ, it always is referred to Christ and his people.

That is the corporate, or Christ being the same, is the corporateness that is emphasized there. So here you'll find, even though the body is one, it has many members. Though the members are many, yet one body, so also is the Christ.

Christ is the head. The church is the body. The corporate Christ in his corporate expression.

Why is it called the Christ? The reason is very simple. Because the body is none other but the extension or the outgrowth. The body comes out of the head and is reunited.

Just like Eve came out of Adam and was united with Adam. That is the body. What is the body of Christ? Suppose.

This is not a fact, a supposition, for the sake of convenience. Suppose on this earth there are only we few believers, no other believers. We are the only believers on earth.

Do we make up the church, the body of Christ? Yes. And no. Yes in the sense that the church is made up of those whom God has called out and gathered together unto his name.

Now that is the church. So we have been called out and we are gathering together unto him. Surely this is the church of God.

Why? Because even though we have been called out but often times like the children of Israel they come out of Egypt but Egypt has not come out of them yet. It is true we have been called out and we gather together but when we gather together there is not only that which is apprising us there is lots and lots of unity out there, out there. With all these foreign articles, with all these foreign particles, how can that body stand? The body rejects foreign particles.

Strictly speaking what is the church? What is the body of Christ? Only that which comes out of Christ can we be united with Christ. The body and the head are one. One in life.

One in substance. It is Christ in you. Christ in me.

But remember it requires and demands that you and me be on the cross. If we try to project ourselves into the body it is foreign to us. The body cannot take it.

We are rejected. So here you will find the body. The body is made of many members but remember what is emphasized here is it is Christ in you.

That makes up the real body. If we live in Christ, if we abide in Christ, if we live in the Spirit, we touch it. If we live in the flesh, if we live in Adam, we are in the world.

We touch it. So also is the Christ. But how is this body there? By what power? By what means is this body there? Here you will find you are saved, I am saved, we are all individuals getting saved.

You cannot be saved corporately. The Father cannot be saved for the children and the children cannot be saved for the parents. Even though there is the promise, believe in the Lord Jesus, you will be saved and your house.

But they have to be saved individually and personally. The promise can be claimed and applied. So here you will find all these members are being gathered, get it out, get it out, all these members.

But how do they become? This is the only explanation given in the Scripture, in the Epistles, telling us what is meant by the baptism. What does the baptism in the Holy Spirit do for us? What does it do? Verse 13, For also in the power of one's spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether barmen or free, and have all been made to drink of one. What is the meaning of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Number one, Jesus is Lord.

Set up the head. Number two, in one spirit we have all been baptized into one. Do you know what happens? The Holy Spirit does two works in your life.

One is to put the Lord Jesus in you. You're born again. The other is to put you in the body of Christ.

That's baptism. Spirit baptism. We have all been baptized into one.

Formerly we were different members, each on his own. But the Holy Spirit has taken us, and in him we were all baptized into one body. Before the Holy Spirit came, you'll find a congregation of 120 individual members.

They were together, but they were not one. But the Holy Spirit came, and they were baptized into one body. A congregation of 120 members is very different from a body with 120 members.

It's entirely different. And this is what the Holy Spirit has done. This is the meaning of it.

In the whole New Testament, only these two places explain to us the meaning of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Lordship of Christ. Oh, that we may hold fast the head, and then the body.

We are one body. Members one of another. Not knowing these two principles, not holding fast the head, and not seeing the body.

What is the result? Gift becomes problem. Instead of the more gifted, the more problem. If we are less gifted, we need one another.

But if we are very gifted, you will find very rarely gifted people can get along. Therefore, brothers and sisters, when Paul is trying to help these collegiate believers, he in no sense is pouring cold water upon them about manifestation. Not at all.

They have plenty of manifestations. But their problem is they do not hold fast the head. They do not see the body.

That's their problem. And if only they can be brought into that. Oh, brothers and sisters, you will find every member in the body will be functioning beautifully, and under the head, and in coordination.

Then the body will be better. But when you begin to notice the body, several questions. Number one, the foot will say, because I'm not a hand, I'm not of the body.

The ear will say, because I'm not the eye, therefore I'm not of the body. Now this always happens. When you begin to see the body, then you strive to be a more prominent member.

The foot is low down. The hand is high up. The ear is way behind.

The eye off at the foot. So you find always the low down and the far behind will complain. Oh, because I'm not a hand, I'm not of the body.

Unless I'm the hand, otherwise I'm not of the body. I withdraw. Because I'm not the eye, therefore I'm not of the body.

Brothers and sisters, how human we are. Even when we enter into the spiritual realm, and we begin to see the body, then immediately the temptation comes. We want to be the greater one.

We think that's the greater one. We are not contented and satisfied with what God has set us. You know the reason why? That proves we haven't seen the body.

If we have seen the body, we will not be jealous of others. We will not be dissatisfied with what God has placed us. Yes.

The hands are high up. The feet are lower down. But without the feet, how far can the hand go? Your hand can reach out, but only a few feet.

No more. But with the feet, oh, how far you can go. Brothers and sisters, oftentimes you find yourself in that.

Usually those who, who may be, humanly speaking, less gifted, humanly speaking, more hidden, then there will be murmuring, self-pity, self-love. Do not see the body. Oh, if you see the body, if the whole, all the members are eyes, where? If all the members are ears, where is the smelling? Where is the body? That's the problem with those who are lower down and further back.

But there is a problem with those who are higher up too. The head will say to the hand, I don't need it. I have no need of it.

The eye will say to the hand, I have no need of you. The head to the feet, I have no need of you. The higher members may be, humanly speaking, actually God put all the members in the body.

There is no inferior or no superior. It is the body. And yet you find, humanly speaking, those who may be a little higher.

The eye will even say to the hand, I don't need you. The head will say to the feet, I don't need you. Oh, how often people who are more gifted think that they are all around.

Their temptation is, they think they can stand by themselves, without the help of brothers and sisters. That's their temptation. Many years ago, that was in China, I was teaching at the time, and I had very bad teeth.

So the doctor decided to pull out my teeth. And first, the upper jaw. All the teeth were out.

But I still had to go to school and teach. And my students were very, very good. You know? They did not laugh at me, you know, when I was teaching there.

But I had found my problem. You know, I often think that teeth are for eating, tongue for speaking. That's right.

But then, at that time, I discovered one thing. Even though tongue is for speaking, yet if you are void of teeth, you cannot pronounce correctly. However gifted one member may be, he cannot fully fulfill his gift without the help.

Now about eating. You say you eat with your teeth, right? But suppose you have no tongue. What will happen? You have to use your finger and move the things around.

It's your tongue that moves the food around. When it needs to be ground, it will move to the back. When it needs to be cut, it will move a little forward.

Who is doing that? Your tongue is doing that. I don't know if you notice that. It works so well.

So you find even the teeth in choosing food needs the help of the tongue. Otherwise the teeth cannot fulfill this function. It is true.

God has put, set everyone in the body and each member has a particular function. Members in particular. And yet in the function you find there needs to be a coordination, a cooperation.

No one can say I don't eat. No one can say that. Why? The Lord is interested in the body.

Then of course, in the body you may have what seem to be weaker members. Now I have to confess before your brothers and sisters, I have read this many, many, many, many times. I have consulted many authorities.

But I still don't know what these verses really apply to. Whether these weaker vessels are really weaker vessels, I don't know. Because if you read it, you'll find, but much rather, the members of the body which seem to be weaker.

You say which seem. It may not be weaker. Just seem to be weaker.

Or now I wonder if these vessels which seem to be weaker refer to the internal organs. You know? Your outward members seem to have some kind of strength there. But your internal organs seem to be very weak.

It needs to be protected. You cannot touch it. But are these internal organs very necessary? Take away your stillness and yet it's touching you.

The weaker members which seem to be weaker are necessary. Very necessary. Let me try to confess some of the history.

You know, the Bible may say, well, women are weaker vessels. Now, maybe your ministries are more hidden. But here, the Word says women are necessary.

Suppose there is none. Then you see what will happen. And I really don't know what is meant here.

The less honorable, the less comely, God will give them more honor, clothed with more honor and more comeliness. I really don't know. I wonder if it means God give more of those this plain gift.

I don't know. But anyway, I know one thing. The law says that there may be no division in the body.

No division. God knows how to balance up everything. And finally, it says, if one member suffers, all the members suffer.

If one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it. Now, your Christ body and members in Christ. Oh, there is such unity in the body that when one member suffers, the whole body suffers.

Before I have my teeth pulled out, I know so much of toothache. Just a tooth is aching and you don't know how your whole body suffers. People who have never had any toothache can never sympathize with you.

But you don't know how uncomfortable you are. It is just miserable. The whole body.

God, if one member is glorified, the whole body rejoices. If your eyes see a beautiful picture, your whole body is up in heaven. Now, that is the relationship of the members of the body.

Isn't it? The very basic in the spiritual realm. Why gifts? Why manifestations? To whom are the gifts given? The gifts are given to the members of the body of Christ. A living head with a living body.

All the members are living and functioning according to the gift that God has given to each through the building up of the body in love. Now, this is what God. So, brothers and sisters, I wonder if we need to, as by the grace of God, God's people are entering into the spirituality.

I wonder if it is very, very necessary that we need to see the head and see the body. If you see these two things, brothers and sisters, the Spirit of God can work mighty works to the accomplishment of God's eternal blessing. Our Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank you with the coming of thy Spirit.

Thou has not only regenerate us, but thou has led us into the realm of spirit, that we may touch that which is spirit. Oh Lord, it is a new world to us and we do need enlightenment. We do need understanding.

Oh Lord, we pray that thou would give thy people a vision of the head, the Lordship of Christ. Oh, by thy Holy Spirit, make this very real to us, that we may truly be under the head, hold fast the head, and Lord, give us a vision of the body, that we may not be independent, we may be rightly related one to another, in love and in function. Oh Lord, may thy body grow into maturity, into the head.

Lord, bless thy people. We ask in thy precious name, Amen.

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