

# Focus on the Holy Spirit

by Thaddeus Barnum

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*The sermon calls believers to actively build each other up through the power of the Holy Spirit and the practice of prophecy.*

**Duration:** 25:27

**Scripture:** Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19, Luke 4:24, Romans 15:2, 1 Corinthians 14:12, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 4:29, 1 Peter 3:14

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of praying for and uplifting the people around us. He encourages the audience to ask God for words to build up others. The sermon is based on 1 Corinthians 14, which discusses the functioning of the body of Christ and the importance of each individual part working together for the growth and edification of the church. The speaker warns against tearing others down and emphasizes the need to build each other up in love, especially in the current culture of tearing people down in politics and media.

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## Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we come in humility to your word today. We ask by the grace and power of your Holy Spirit that you would open, open this word to us. Glorify your Son, Lord Jesus, be glorified here in our midst and strengthen us and build us up that we might bring glory to you and to our Father in heaven.

For these things we earnestly pray through Christ our Lord. Amen. Good morning to you.

I would like it if you could turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 14. We're going to take some time there this morning. I have a very simple message for us today coming out of this exposition of 1 Corinthians 14, that the Lord has got for us a simple message that we build each other up in the power of God, the Holy Spirit.

Now, these past weeks, Rob has led us in 1 Corinthians 12, looking at the person and power of the Holy Spirit and how he brings revival to his church and how he comes to empower us with gifts so that we might receive more and more as we did two Sundays ago to come to this altar, Lord, pour out your Spirit upon us. Empower us with the gifts you've given. Give each of us the uniqueness which you have created in us from the foundation of the world, all for the building up of the body of Christ, all for the common good, every gift essential, every gift needed that we might no longer sit back in our chair, but rise up to be the

people God has called us to be and serve and go into mission.

And so he has asked me coming out of that time in 1 Corinthians 12, rooted in 1 Corinthians 13 on love upon which everything is based, that we come to this text in 1 Corinthians 14. Now, I want to make my appeal to you this morning that this is a very dangerous text. Well, why? Well, because it's practical.

The apostle Paul is teaching us how to live in the body of Christ practically, how to do so in worship, how to do so in fellowship, and how to do so in mission. And so in a sense, it is a practicum. He's teaching us the basis of how we are to live one with another together in the body of Christ.

So you'll find, for example, in chapter 14, verse 1, he says, pursue love and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. Now, in this word prophecy, prophesy, you've got to look at very carefully, because what Paul is saying is a little distinct from what's been said in other places. There is, in fact, the office of the prophet.

We find that in Ephesians 4, 11, as the Lord gives gifts to his church, and some he gave to the church as apostles and some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers. There's an office of prophet. In 1 Corinthians 12, 10, you're going to find that there are gifts of prophecy.

Those of us who have got that gift as distinct from another gift. But this one, it belongs to us all. This one, this I would call basic 101 prophecy.

Why do I say that? Well, because Paul says that. Look at, for example, in verse 5, how he says, I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

I want you all to speak in tongues, but more, look how it says it, but even more to prophesy. How many? All. So today we are going to prophesy.

That's our practicum. We're going to do it together. Are you ready for this? That was a very weak yes, but here it goes.

Well, why do I say that? Well, because of this. Underneath it, undergirding it, is this called by God to build each other up. That's what he's called us to do, to edify, to encourage, to bring consolation one to another.

I want you to think very much about the people around you right now. I want you to begin to pray for them. Stop listening to this sermon.

You'll do that anyway. Multitask, multitask. That's the word of our generation, multitask.

I want you to pray for the people around you. And I want you to ask this question. Lord, Lord, give me words to up build this person.

Lord, give me words. Say it with me. Lord, give me words to build this person.

I didn't say I want you to turn to somebody and say something nice. Most of you can't do that anyway, but oh, I'm teasing. We know how to say something nice to people, don't we? That's not what I'm talking about.

What am I talking about? Lord, do you have something for the person next to me that I might build them up today? Do you have a word for... You know you've had this happen before, haven't you? Sure you have. There have been times you've been driving in your car somewhere. You've been going somewhere.

And what's happened? The Lord's impressed somebody on your heart. And you begin to pray for them. Has it happened to you? And you don't know exactly why quite yet, but you begin to pray for them.

And if you act on it, if you call them or if you tweet or I something to them, and they get this message, you know something, I've been praying for you. You know, the Lord has put this on my heart. You have been on my heart.

And sometimes when we actually sit to write a letter or we sit in conversation, the Lord puts a scripture on our heart, something to encourage, something to give that gift to somebody. My friend, you are a basic 101 prophet. All of us have been given this gift to encourage one another in the body of Christ, a message of thanksgiving, a message maybe of confession.

Maybe it's just simply literally giving that person encouragement, affirming who they are in the Lord, affirming what they've done, things that we've held back, that our mouths have held back. But the Lord wants to through us to build them up and to encourage. Have you got something to say to the person next to you? Because when this sermon ends, I want you to prophesy over them a word of encouragement.

It's a practicum. That's what Paul's doing. He's teaching us this.

He's teaching us how to turn to each other and not just say something nice, but to actually say, Lord, I've got something I want to say to you, to upbuild you, to encourage you. Isn't it amazing sometimes how we hold back, that there are things that there's work to do one with another, but we don't do it. And if we did do it, it would bring encouragement.

It would be upbuilding to them. Sometimes it comes straight out of, I just need to say sorry for what I've done. But there are hurts between us that have not been negotiated, that we've got to deal with.

But I've not wanted to talk about it. I've been avoiding it. Well, my friend, begin to prophesy.

The Lord wants you to open your mouth and speak words that begin the process of healing, grace, and blessing to the uplifting of one another. My friends, this is the heart of God. In 1 Corinthians 14, 3, we actually see the nature in three words.

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding, for their encouragement, and for their consolation. When we upbuild each other, then we are healthy in Christ. Our marriages are healthy in Christ.

Our families are healthy in Christ. Our small group is healthy in Christ. Our pastorates are healthy in Christ.

Our church is healthy in Christ. As we begin to practice these things of building up, of encouragement, and of comfort and consolation, the second word, the second word, encouragement. Now that one will get you.

In the original language, it's parakletos. Do you know who the parakletos is? The Lord Jesus said, I am sending the helper, the parakletos, God, the Holy Spirit among you. He is called encourager.

He is called helper. He is called builder-upperer. Yes, he is.

That's his character. That's what he does. And when he comes upon the body of Christ, what do you think the body of Christ does? We build each other up.

That's what we do. We encourage. We come alongside.

This isn't a bunch of positive thinking. This is the administration of God, the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ. We are people that build each other up.

That's the first word of the three, this building up process. And I would say to you that in the original, again, it comes with two very distinct images. The first image is one of construction, literally the building process.

Drive down the street, you find the building process, construction going on. That's the nature of it. It's building something from up.

Exactly how the New Testament language calls it. First, see Ephesians 2, for example. You'll find Paul using this kind of language.

We are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord in whom you also are being built up. That's the word built up together to be a worship of God in the spirit.

That's building up. Peter says it in 1 Peter 2, we are living stones being built up into a spiritual house. That's why you've got all the details going on in Exodus.

I know you have to read it twice during Exodus 20 to Exodus 40. Yes, it's a lot. You're watching the building process of the tabernacle.

1 Kings 8 of the temple, Ezekiel 40 of the temple, Herod's temple, and then it's us. He's building us to be a people that belong to him. Always that building up process.

Image 1, image 2 is medical. He is the head and his job is to build up the body. It's a beautiful image.

Ephesians 4, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ. Is this a simple message? Did I lose somebody? Listen to how he says it. Speaking the truth and love, we are to grow up into all aspects into him is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted and held together, being fitted and held together.

I love this. I love this point. Through what every joint supplies, every joint supplying to the growth, the ligaments and through the being fitted and held together, what happens is that every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part, every one of us working, every one of us fitted together so perfectly, every joint supplying to the joint next to us, giving life one to another.

It's when the body breaks down that we become unhealthy. But this is when every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body to the building up of itself in love, the building up, the building up of itself in love. This is the imagery that our Lord gives us.

It's very medical. It's when the virus comes in and the body begins to war against itself. That we begin to do the opposite work, which is tearing down, tearing down.

My friends, that's the culture that we're living in. Is it not? Is it not? This political season that we're in, I think we have every right to disagree with policies, with plans and proposals. We've got no right to tear people down.

That's what's happening and the media loves it. It plays it over and over of one politician ripping somebody apart on public television, tearing down. Well, I'm going to say it, that is the kingdom of this world.

That's it right there. And our children are watching it and our teenagers are watching it. This ripping down, this tearing apart.

It ought not to be this way, but that is the kingdom of darkness. It is the kingdom of this world and of the devil who is called the accuser of the brethren. Revelation 12, 10, the accuser of the brethren.

He's come to rip us apart. He's come to tear us down. Isn't that interesting? Revelation 19, 10 tells us that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

That when we put our eyes on him, he builds us up. He doesn't tear us down. He doesn't accuse us.

But it's in this kingdom, this world, this darkness, this devil, and I'm afraid it's in us. Oh, yes, it is. In this fleshly body, in this fleshly nature of sin, we are experts.

Experts in tearing apart and tearing down. We are so good at it. Are we not? It comes so naturally.

The moment I get attacked, I'm going to rip you to pieces. And I'll either do it right in front of you straight on, or I'll do it subtly with a smile. So that four or five people can be in the room listening and not even know what I just did to you.

It can be passive just by withholding our blessing, just by withholding. And we do this so often with each other. We just turn from each other.

We've got the opportunity to build each other up and to encourage and to bring blessing from the Lord. And we hold it back passively, not knowing that in that act, we are tearing down. We do it so naturally.

We do it unintentionally. The other day, I was with a bunch of colleagues. We were having the best time.

And one of the moments I just turned and I just, I literally, I played with one. I had a moment of just humor. I poked fun at one of the guys and we all laughed.

I was brilliant. It was funny. And afterwards, he came to me and I said, I want you to know something.

I said, what's that? He said, that really hurt. That just really hurt. And I want to ask you a question.

Is there something between us I need to know? Oh, I was so glad he did it. I was so glad he didn't hide it from me. So I could look him in the eyes and say, I'm so sorry.

That was not my heart. No, there's nothing between us. But I'm so grateful you said something.

I meant it one way, but it came out another way and I didn't know it. Oh, thank God for the moment. Because we could go to Jesus and have all of it cared for.

And we could turn to build each other up. Because that's what we do. And sometimes, sometimes the hardest part is when we have those we love being torn down in the midst of others.

And in our silence, we don't say anything. And our silence tears down. Oh, dear friends, we're good at this.

The world knows that we're good at this. The world puts on behavior modification seminars everywhere. Conflict resolution seminars, marriage seminars, broken relationship seminars.

Because they know that this is the pattern we tear each other down. And all they've got to give is behavior modification. It's all they've got.

They make money on it, huge money on it. We're not talking about behavior modification. Praise be the Lord.

The Ethiopian cannot change his skin. The leopard cannot change his spots. But thanks be to God for Calvary.

Thanks be to God for our Lord Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our sins. He took upon himself all of this fleshly nature of ours. He went to the cross to pay for it.

So why? He could come and breathe his Holy Spirit of life into us and make us new. Filling us with his Holy Spirit, giving us a new nature and teaching us how to live in his character by his spirit. He doesn't tear down.

He builds up. That's him. That's him.

Every time you do it from him, you are celebrating him. He's come to give us life. And we're to pour that life out into others.

Lord, I need change in how I use my words. I need change in how I act one to another. Show me and teach me.

Do your work through me because my nature is to do the opposite. My nature is to tear down. And I need a change.

I need that revival to begin with me. So you bring to my attention when I do it and how I do it. Lord, forgive me for when I do these things.

Let your cross cleanse me. Let the power of the spirit change me. I just love it when Errolyn, well, I don't always love it.

But I love it when Errolyn, no, she does. She's just in her discipleship work. She's just been very clear on this point.

Before you open your mouth and you're about to say it. Stop. Breathe.

Think. And put it to the test. Is it going to up build them? No.

It's gonna build me. I can't wait to let it go. See you and wait upon the Lord and pray to the Lord and let him do his work inside of you.

Until it left when you do out of the words. Even sometimes when it comes in correction, when it's spoken in love, it up builds. It edifies.

It's encouraged. Isn't that right? See, I bring this to your attention because obviously what happens so often. And I need to say this because it is difficult.

You see it in Jesus in our gospel teaching this morning. When our Lord is in Nazareth, he's come to bring a word of encouragement. The prophet Isaiah said there's coming a day.

The spirit of the Lord will rest on Messiah and he will come to bring good news. He will come to bring the Lord's favor. He will come to bring encouragement.

And Jesus stands up in the synagogue and says today is the day. This scripture is fulfilled. I've come to proclaim the day of the Lord's favor.

Eyes open for the blind. The year of liberty for the oppressed. And how did they receive it? And he had to teach them a basic truth that no prophet is welcome in his hometown.

How many of you know, sometimes the hardest people to encourage are the ones we love the best. How many of you know that? It's so hard sometimes you can do this with others and bring life to them. But you come into a home environment and the ones that you want to bless cannot receive.

Or maybe the blocks in us. He teaches us this. Don't stop.

Though you might be rejected in these things. Don't stop. Keep on going.

This is the character of our Lord. Even if you suffer for it, keep on going. Upbuild.

Encourage. Are you thinking about the people around you and what you're going to say? Was the Lord given you something? There's something to encourage the person next to you. Is there something that you've got to encourage the person next to you? Because we're about to do it.

I'm going to ask you. Oh, yes, we are. Yes.

Why? Because this is the nature of the text. Listen to 14:12. Since you are eager for manifestation to the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Again, let me read in 26. What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

You get to build somebody up next to you. Oh, this is the joy of being in the church. This is the joy of being in the church.

The joy of being among Christians as we learn to do this together. This is why Celebrate Recovery is on the front line right this moment. For those who have hurts, or those who have habits that are negative, or those who have hang-ups, there's a place that we can actually celebrate recovery.

There's a place to go where the Lord's not going to teach us behavior modification. He's going to move in our hearts. He's going to recover us, and He's going to set us free.

That's the nature of it. And as you begin to pray, you begin to pray of what the Lord's called you to do to edify at home, to edify at the church, to edify in your workplace, to edify anywhere you go. There are some of you who are going to go to the grocery store this afternoon and see somebody you don't like.

You can prophesy over them and bring them a word of encouragement. Why? I do know why. This is our God.

This is who He is. This is why Jesus our Lord came. He came that His image, His character might be in us.

And when He sees His enemy, He washes their feet. When He sees somebody He doesn't like, He loves. We probably like, that's probably not true.

He probably likes us all. For He died for us all. And He wants to encourage us all.

And He wants our prejudices and our hatreds and our hurts to go to the cross so that the Holy Spirit through us can bless and bless and bless and bless and edify and encourage. This is our God. Do you know how to edify? Do you know how to ask the Lord? Lord, give me a word to bless, to edify, to build up the person next to me.

Do you think it's hard? Can I tell you something? Our children need to see it modeled in you. Our teenagers need to see something different than what's in the world modeled in us. We're a people that uplift.

We're a people that encourage. We're a people that bless. And it's time to learn to prophesy.

Basic 101 prophecy. I want you to turn to somebody around you that you've been praying for. I want you to encourage them.

If you're scared, hug them. But begin to practice it. Begin to do it.

Begin to say, Lord, I want to be a 101 prophet. I want to learn to encourage by the power of God, the Holy Spirit, to the strengthening of the body of Christ and to the mission out there that needs to know your love passionately through your people in Jesus' name. Turn to each other and prophesy.

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