

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

### One

### 3. One Goal

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#### 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (NIV)

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

**Introduction:** The church, as Christ's body on earth, has only one goal, to demonstrate the organic unity which Christ has already created by the power of the Holy Spirit. The demonstration of that unity might not always be the most solid or adequately expressed, nevertheless, that is who we are and the One Goal we have.

1. The city of Corinth, had more half a million people. It was an important crossing point for commerce and a port. The city had many art centers, public baths/spas, and was strongly influenced by many philosophies, traditions and religions. Most of the inhabitants were rich businessmen, ex-military personell and officers of the government. In this system, they were used to entrepreneurial thinking, competition, fighting for "my rights" and self promotion.

The church there was about 150 people, with a wide variety of members, speaking several languages, women in leadership, Roman citizens, powerful rich people as well as servants and even slaves. Ethnically, the church had few jews but mainly Greeks and Romans.

The values and lifestyles systems of the society of Corinth were infiltrating and damaging the life of the church. The church was fractured, and polarized based on leaders, and gifts, not too different from our current reality. This was breaking the harmony, peace and unity.

2. The church as the body of Christ, means the universal church. A local church is a microcosm or miniature of the whole body of Christ. We have been made one body by the work of grace of the Holy Spirit in us, guiding us to repentance, confession and faith in Christ.

Thus, our only Goal is to enact, or exercise in practical ways what we already are. Jesus called us to do it and even prayed for all of us. Demonstrating unity in and by the church is a reflection of the love of God for His son and for us. Right now there are more than 10,000 denominations of the Christian faith around the world, sadly and painfully many are not interested in demonstrating unity, but rather hate, reject, compare and criticize each other. Earlier, in verse 2, Paul wanted to remind them of the previous corrupted systems of the world where they were being controlled and manipulated. As opposed to that, Paul is

encouraging them to be humble because there is no such a thing as private or individualistic Christianity.

3. Paul names some of the gifts given by God to his people.

**Apostles**, in the strict sense, there were only 12. In an open sense, Paul, Barnabas, James, Silas and Timothy are called or recognized as Apostles. Apostle means "sent messengers", or "church planters" to new places. We now call them "missionaries".

**Prophets**. They are not mainly predicting the future, they present and proclaim the truth and message of God, in a fearless manner, "thus says the Lord". In our days we call them "preachers" as long as they present the word of God in a faithful way.

**Teachers**. They teach and expand the meaning of the word of God to many. **Gifts of miracles, healing, helping and administrative and speaking in tongues**. Paul explains that all of them are at the same level even though some are more spectacular or notorious.

4. Verses 29-30 are summarizing rhetorical questions, for which the answer is a resounding NO! There is diversity in the gifts, yes, the important thing is not to see someone gifted by the Spirit, but that the gift is being used to build other people's faith without attracting attention to themselves. To exercise our gift without love and humility is looking for self display, self edification, or self gratification.

EXAMPLE of imperfect but practical and powerful UNITY of the Church in our days.

#### The Church in Cuba

In spite of the extremely difficult financial situation and lacking many basic things like water, gas, medicine, food, etc. (salary of an MD, with specialty and more than 20 years experience is \$50 dollars/month! Recharging your phone for one month costs \$25), there are more 30 Presbyterian churches in Cuba, two presbyteries, one seminary in Matanzas and many other christian churches. For decades, there have been more than 150 PCUSA churches helping. The Cuban church has focused on kerygma, koinonia, diaconía, liturgia and marthyria. All churches have installed and maintained a purifying Water system, giving purified free gallons of water to the church and the community. The message is clear, we are ONE CHURCH

Helping with medicines, food, music, fellowship, transportation, visiting. As we heard, the Hispanic fellowship at SBPC was started by Rev. Dr. Rafael Martinez. Cuban retired pastor with the practical visión to be ONE CHURCH. In 2022, Letty and I were able to visit Cuba, the church where he and good Cuban friends of mine, Dr. Agustin & Zoila Pascual still have family members and thank them. For the last 3 years the Hispanic Fellowship has been monthly recharging the phone of 7 Cuban seminarians. Because we are One Church with one Goal UNITY.

## 1 Corinthians 12 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

<sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

<sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

<sup>15</sup> Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

## 1 Corinthians 13 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.