

Prayer Points

Give thanks for those who have served here in the church in the past, including Ed Jones and others.

Pray for ongoing healing for those who have recently received surgery.

Continue to remember those who have caring responsibilities for others at home.

As the war in Ukraine continues, please pray for the Ukrainian Baptist Union. They are courageously providing shelter, food and care to tens of thousands across the country, supported by the European Baptist Federation and its partners.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

June 2nd 2024

**Called, Gathered
and Sent. Part 3.
The foundation for using our
gifts.
1 Corinthians 13**

Every now and then it is good to do a 're-set', a mental 'turn off, count to ten and restart'. This is a good thing to do because it can reconnect us to the fundamentals of our life and faith, hopefully to enable us to re-examine the basics and refresh what we thought we understood about what we think we know.

Even when not on a sabbatical, ministers are advised to go on a retreat now and again so as to unclutter their minds and make them better, with God's help, at what they do.

Likewise, it is good for everyone to have that 'Spring Clean' of the mind to enable us all to be better Christians, not only for our own benefit but so that we can serve others better as Christians.

This series is not exhaustive, but will help us refresh our mindset.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001

Today's reading starts to open up the way that Spiritual Gifts are to be used. Interestingly, we also get a 'heads up' on when such gifts are misused or, even, not really present at all.

The whole key to Spiritual Gifts is, according to Paul, LOVE.

If we think about that for a moment we can see that what may come across as being a bit twee or trite is, actually, a 'trueism', a statement that is fundamentally true however strange it may sound.

As we continue with our reading we will note that Spiritual Gifts are not to be thought of as permanent [v. 10]. They are granted for a purpose and also for a time – for a season as Solomon would have said.

I particularly like verse 12 where it describes our understanding as being like a reflection in a mirror. [Some translations have; 'as seen in a (looking) glass darkly'].

As an aside it should be noted that mirrors of the time were simply polished, hammered metal, not silvered glass, and they were handmade, not machine finished therefore reflections would be less than perfect.

You may also be aware that in some early translations verse 13 spoke of 'faith, hope and charity' rather than faith, hope and love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13

I think it is fair to say that we all like getting presents, or something for nothing. Perhaps we wouldn't be so keen on accepting a gift with both 'strings attached' and a time limit to boot.

1. What other motivation might there be for the giving of a gift, other than love? Does the motivation of the giver actually matter to the recipient? What would it feel like to be called a 'resounding gong' or a 'clanging cymbal' or to be thought of as 'nothing' if you were the donor?

2. In 1 Corinthians 14:12 Paul says that we should 'try to excel' in the spiritual gifts. Are we? Should we? Why, or why not?
3. Paul writes as if it is possible to use some of the gifts without love (v1-3). What other motivations might there be for using the spiritual gifts? In v3 he implies that if we give gifts with love, we gain something. What could that be?
4. Verse 4ff is often chosen as a reading at weddings. Sadly, over 70% of marriages fail ending in divorce. If love is 'patient, kind etc.' what, then, is/are the cause(s) of so many failed marriages?
5. Look again at verse 9. If the prophecies we may be given are only 'partial', how are we meant to understand or apply their information/instruction?
6. As the Holy Spirit is the giver of these gifts why is it, do you think, that some seem blessed with many gifts and others, seemingly, get none? Or is it that some do not share/demonstrate their gifting? Why might that be?
7. Paul said [v. 11] that he 'thought and acted as a child', yet he is seen as a great intellect. What makes us childish? Isn't it good to be childlike sometimes? [See Matt 18:3].
8. Apart from the gift of prophecy, what do you think is the 'greatest gift' and why?