

“Each One Brings One”

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4, 14, 16-17, 20-21

Last month we had to get new debit cards for our bank account... the reason being that we left one of them at a restaurant in BR, but didn't realize it until the next day... in Lake Charles. Aside from all of the 'rigamarole' we had to go through, however, the 'silver lining' was that I was able to get a card that showed my true 'purple-and-gold' colors... with a big 'eye of the Tiger' on the front. ☺

Anyway, as those of you who have had to go through this process, when you get the card you must go through the mandatory requirement of **activating** that card. This is not optional of course. Before you can **access** the **resources** in your particular **account**, you must **first contact** the **institution** that **gave you** this method of accessing your money and give them your PIN #. Your 'Personal Identification Number.' That number that you have **personally, privately** established as your own **unique means** of **utilizing** what is **yours**. WITHOUT it, you are 'S.O.L.' (Short on Liquidity). No matter how much you have in your account, it is of no value to you. The only other way to get to your assets is through that '*archaic*' method of using that '**paper instrument**' known as a 'check!'

As I read the words of Paul in his words to the church in Corinth on how they were to 'access' those valuable resources at their disposal... those 'riches' known as spiritual *gifts* of God... he spoke of the means for believers to utilize those gifts. He too, in a manner of speaking, refers to a 'PIN' that is necessary... one that is personal, private, and applies to no one else but the particular individual. I would suggest that in this case, 'PIN' could stand for '**Pneumatic Inspiration Necessary**'... that means of access to our spiritual resources that is NOT human, but rather, **divine**. That, in Paul's words, "**all these (GIFTS) are activated by one and the same Spirit.**" (1 Cor. 12:11) That in order to 'activate' the gifts of God to carry out His ministry through us, it is **necessary** for us to be '**inspired**' ... to 'breathe in'... that fresh **air**, that invigorating, pneumatic '**wind**' of God's Spirit. Indeed, the word 'pneumatic' has its root in the Greek word "*pneuma*"... which means '**spirit.**' To tap into our 'account' of spiritual 'resources,'

we must make use of our own unique, personal 'PIN' number... that 'I.D. code' spelled 'H-O-L-Y S-P-I-R-I-T.'

As we of the 'frozen chosen' variety of Christian believers engage in a consideration of the Holy Spirit, it might be our reactions to get a little 'antsy.' 'Gifts of the Holy Spirit?' OH NO... I don't have any of THOSE. That's for all those OTHER 'P' believers... you know, *Pentecostals!* Well, for your 'dyed-in-the wool' Presbyterians ('d-Y-e-d', btw!), you might be surprised to know that the Holy Spirit is mentioned on numerous occasions in our official 'Book of ('decent and good') Order.' It speaks extensively about the role of the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper, and even in the context of *Healing services*... in which it reminds us that "**Healing** is NOT the result of the holiness of those enacting the prayers, or of the faith of the ones healing, but as the gift of God through the power of the **Holy Spirit.**" (W-3.5405). Words that should encourage us all as to where the results of our prayers for healing truly come from. NOT ourselves. God. Via the Holy Spirit.

I particularly like the 'BoO's' position on the role of the Holy Spirit in our worship: "*In worship the church is to seek openness to the creativity of the Holy Spirit, who guides the church toward worship which is orderly yet spontaneous, consistent with God's Word and open to the newness of God's future.*" (W-3.1002a) As we as a congregation seek to be 'open to the newness of God's future' for F.P.C.... in ways that are 'consistent with God's Word'... we must continue to be 'open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit' which guides us in the 'work and worship' of the church.

And so, on this Pentecost Sunday, I would like us to consider the ways that God's Spirit is indeed 'guiding' this church. That no matter how we may **doubt**, or **ignore**, the workings of the **Holy Spirit** in our individual (and corporate) lives, I want to challenge us all to embrace the reality that we ALL have been given spiritual gifts to use for the growth of God's Kingdom. That, believe it or not, with regards to the gifts given to **every** true believer in Christ, "**Each one brings one.**"

The fact that 'Each one' of us 'brings (at least) one' gift by God in service to Him is quite clearly communicated in Paul's words from today's reading in *Corinthians*. He declares that as the "**one body**" of Christ known as the church, "**we were ALL made to drink of one Spirit.**" And

by virtue of that common 'drink' we share, ***"to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*** (1 Corinthians 12:13, 7) And in case you think that this is just that radical Apostle Paul's crazy rantings, don't forget what our Lord Jesus said: ***"Let the one believes in me drink... (and) out of the believers heart shall flow living water... the Spirit."*** (John 7:38-39)

Now, you may ask, 'And just HOW is that 'living water of the Spirit' flowing out of ME? 'I'VE never spoken in 'tongues.' I've never 'interpreted' for someone else who was. I've never 'discerned a spirit.' I've never worked a 'miracle,' or performed a 'healing.' Well, maybe you haven't. ...Or... maybe you HAVE! As we discussed last week, when you were searching your mind and heart for what to pray for, but just didn't know what to say, perhaps you DID speak in unintelligible 'tongues'; as Paul said to the Romans: ***"...the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."*** (Romans 8:26)

Or, when you have met someone for the first time, and had either a very *good* feeling about them, or a very **bad** one... were you not 'discerning a spirit?' A 'miracle' is an occurrence that is inexplicable by natural laws or reason... have you ever been involved in a situation that could only be explained 'supernatural' phenomenon? And as for 'healing'... have you ever prayed with, or for, someone who is suffering from serious illness... of body, mind, or spirit... and they eventually overcame that obstacle to survive, and indeed, thrive?

And these are not to mention those 'manifestations of the Spirit' that Paul first mentions: 'wisdom'... 'knowledge'... 'faith.' As I look around this room, I see countless examples of how these gifts have been shared ***"for the common good."*** My point is that with regards to gifts of the Spirit, whether you believe it or not, **EACH ONE OF YOU BRINGS ONE... AND MORE!** You ALL have a 'wealth' of 'resources' that can be tapped into to benefit others. The question is, how often are you utilizing your 'PIN'... your 'Pneumatic Inspiration Necessary' to access your 'assets.' In Paul's words, ***"all these are activated by one and the same Spirit."*** ARE YOU PRAYING THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT 'ACTIVATE' YOUR GIFTS?

I would interject here that the impetus to pray for 'activation' doesn't always come from within. Sometimes it is another person that will spur you to pray for God's Spirit to 'fire you up' to serve in a way you didn't think possible.

Barrie has participated in BSF since our seminary days in the late 90's. It was only when she got here to LC that one of her leaders asked her to consider leading a group. A skill set that she thought to be WAY out of her 'wheelhouse.' But after prayerful consideration...only after having said 'no' on three previous occasions... the Spirit 'nudged' her to say 'yes.' And it has been some of the most rewarding spiritual experiences of her life. Scary at first? YES. Something that came easy? NO. But an 'investment' of her 'resources' that paid great dividends. It bears witness to some words said by Francis Chan (no relation... ☺):

"We are each given different gifts and talents by our Master. The thing that matters most is how we use what we've been given. Not how much we make or do compared to someone else. What matters is that we spend ourselves."

The importance of 'spending ourselves' in ways that honor God is expressed quite well in this prayer of the Apostle Peter... the same prayer that we too should ask of God: **"Father, show us the gifts and talents you have given us. Let us learn to use them for your glory."** (1 Peter 4:10)

It is to this end of 'learning to use our gifts and talents for God's glory' that I would leave you with this closing thought. I believe that I have shared with you before how I came to be a part of the body of Christ... both as the corporate body, and most importantly, as a follower of Christ...through the simple invitation of a young 9th grade student at BRHS by the name of Kenny Armstrong, only weeks after I had begun attending there as a 'ripe old' 10th grader. By simply asking me to come to church with him, my not-so-simple answer of 'yes' was the most important decision of my life. Without his 'nudging' by the Spirit, I would not have met my future wife, had my children and grandchildren, gained countless close friends, and most importantly, come to know Jesus as my Lord and Savior. All because of Spirit-led actions of **wisdom and faith.**

It was Kenny's simple act that has helped shape my foundational philosophy of evangelism: **"Each one Brings one."** And it is that challenge that I leave with you. As you strive to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you those gifts to be used for His glory, may that same Spirit give you the boldness to exercise another gift: that of **invitation.** Whether to a worship service, a small group, a concert, or even something as simple as a lunch or a cup of coffee, may each one of you 'let your light so shine before others' that they see in you what we strive for in

worship: a life that is *“consistent with God’s Word and open to the newness of God’s future.”*
As together we seek God’s will for His church, let the church respond: AMEN! ‘Let it be!’

CHARGE

In considering just how we are to use God’s gifts to us all, I came across this anonymous quote:
“If you’re breathing, God has a purpose for you. As long as you have breath, somebody needs what you have. Your gifts, your talents, your love, your smile.”

May this be a reminder to us all of the impact that we are to have on others by the power of God’s Spirit... that ‘As long as you have breath, someone needs what you have: your gifts, your love, your smile.’ So, as you go forth to give of yourself to others, know that you do NOT do so by your own strength... but that the Spirit of the living God is...