

1 Corinthians 12 (Conrad Bowman) (7-15-07)

We are going to touch on Ch. 12 for just a minute and then go on to Ch. 13. I want to finish 13 today and someone else will do Ch. 14 next week. Chapters 12 and 14 are both focused on the gifts of the Spirit. Right in the middle is this Chapter 13 that A. T. Robertson said was an absolute gem. He says that It's just a rose that sits there, and as he started to take it apart and parse the verses, he said it was a shame because it's like taking a rose and taking it apart petal by petal. It almost made him sad to do that. He said it needs very little commentary, so when we get to Chapter 13, only 13 verses, we're going to read it and let it make its own commentary, and then cover a few themes that are contained there.

I want to start at verse 13 of Chapter 12 and just mention a few things that need to be emphasized before we move to Chapter 13.

Key words:

Aorist Tense – action in a point of time, once for all.

Omnipresent – all places at all times.

Justify – to make right (righteous) in the eyes of God.

Verse 13 of Chapter 12:

For by means of one Spirit we have been all baptized.

And that means to be “identified with,” “into one Body.” That is the Body of Christ, the Church; and it's an aorist tense, which means baptized once, in a point of time. What that really means is that at some point in your life, perhaps at an early age or experience, but whenever you came to the point of realizing that Christ was your Savior and you believed and accepted that as true; at that moment the Holy Spirit took you back to the death of Christ on the Cross, and when Christ went into the grave the Spirit joined you to Christ, at that moment. I want you to understand that He can do that because He is omnipresent. He is present with you today where you are, and He is present where you made those decisions, and He is present with the Lord Jesus who went into the grave. He is also present with the Trinity at the moment of creation, so He can take that decision that you made in a point of time (aorist tense) and take you back to before the foundation of the world where the single act of creation (including all of time and all of space and all of history) was expressed as one act with God.

Now you'll think about that, you'll shake your head, and you'll understand it today, and 20 seconds later you won't understand it, and that's OK. Just forgive yourself at that point because we all do that on a constant basis. Our minds cannot wrap around the very concept of omnipresence. It's the attribute of God that is least understood. How God can be with you today, and in you today, and in every moment you're going to have right up to the judgment and eternity to come, and at the same time be all the way back to all time and space in history and in eternity past, and also be standing right this second at the moment of creation. Because of this, He can allow you to make your decisions in life as you go along and hold you accountable for those things, take them to the Cross and justify them, and then go before the foundation of the world and declare it always to have been so. Now, if you wrap yourself around that concept, think about it hard enough, and then massage it and internalize it so that it becomes objectively true to you; you won't be a Baptist on one hand and you won't be a Presbyterian on the other hand – you'll be as confused as the rest of us and you'll show up here searching for the Biblical answer. There's a paper that I love to read over and over again called *From Arminius to Calvin to Paul*, and that paper covers the subject better than any I have seen. If you haven't seen it there are some copies available, and we would be happy to make them available for those of you who would like to have it. I believe it is Ch. 12 of the study called the Tri-X series. It's a marvelous little book that deserves careful study.

Now, that concept is imbedded in verse 13 –

By one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit drink.

We took that Spirit in, and that Spirit fills us and indwells us,

For the body is not one member but is many members. But if the foot should say because I'm not a hand I'm not a part of the body it is not for this reason any less a part of the body. But if the ear should say because I'm not an eye I'm not part of the body, it's not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

So, regardless of how God has gifted us, and appointed us to service, we don't opt out of the body. We are part of the one, selfsame body though our function is different.

Now, if the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be. If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be. But now God has placed each one of the members just as He has decided.

So it says this. When I come to the Body of Christ and we gather as a body, now this is not the whole Body, this is just one part of it; I should, regardless of what my gift is, look to each one of you for completion. I'm not whole without you guys. I'm not able to function completely, even within the area of my gift, without you. And that same thing is true of each one of us. I'm no more, nor less, important to the Body of Christ, which is functioning to display Christ to a lost world, than any one of you. I'm not the quietest person in the world – I leave a big wake – but that doesn't make me any more essential to the life and function of the Body of Christ than the quietest among you. There are some among us that leave no wake at all. They do exactly what Paul told the Thessalonians to do – “make it your ambition to live a quiet life” – I do not do that – “tend to your own business” – I rarely do that. “Work with your own hands” – I used to do that but I'm not doing that much anymore – “so you won't be in any need and might live at peace with all men.” There's the goal, and some of you are a lot closer to that goal than Charlie Pirtle and I (Charlie said, “speak for yourself”). But that's the truth. Some of us are like liners going through the water and the wake is broad. We can leave Hong Kong and they can pick us up in New York. We just make a lot of noise when we go. And others are just as quiet as they can be – like a stealth aircraft cutting through the air. They are just as needed, just as important. They have a message that resounds. In the quiet, you can hardly detect it. We need to search those people out, because they are closer to what Paul said we ought to be, as he said in Thessalonians (we haven't covered that yet, the first of the Pauline epistles).

So here we are with these diversities of gifts and applications in the church, each independent in terms of their importance and in terms of their function and in terms of their capacity to complete the Body and the members in particular.

If they were all one member where would the body be? But now there are many members but one body and the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you, or again the head to the feet I have no need of you. On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we deem less honorable, or important, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and on

unseemly members, and our unseemly members, come to have more abundant seemliness.

So it says don't look at externals but look at internals when you attempt to see value.

Whereas our seemly members have no need of it, but God has so composed the body giving more abundant honor to that member that lacked. That [purpose clause, so that for this purpose] there should be no division or separation in the body but the members should have the same care for one another.

And that verse 25 should cause us to remember that we are called to a separated life. In the first place, we are separated to service under Christ. The word "holy" means exactly that. *Hagias* means to be set apart. It's the word that's used in the preparation of a sacrifice. When Christ was to be sacrificed for our sins, He was *hagias*; He was set apart, and He was tried; He went through the trials. You see that type presented when you go to the sin offerings of the OT. In Leviticus you see that they took the animal that they were going to use for a sacrifice – they checked it first to see that it didn't have any obvious defects – then they penned it up, separated it from the other animals, and left it separated for 3 days, and they checked it each day and tested it. That was a type of the Lord Jesus Himself, going on trial for us. He went in innocent just like the animal went in unblemished. Then they tested it for 3 days. Then having then confirmed that it had no blemish, they sacrificed the animal for sin, and God accepted that. The animal was consumed in fire, for a sweet savor to the Father. That picture is exactly what the message in Hebrews 5 said,

Though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered and thereby He became the author of our salvation, the finisher (one who perfects), of our redemption.

That's Christ. So you see it in the sacrifices that they made thousands of times, over and over again, the sacrifices they made for sin. We see it in that picture and we see it again in the communion service, the Lord's Table. Where the cup is passed, and the bread is passed; the bread represents His body which was broken for us; so the pastor, before he passes the bread, says there is a caution here--Let each man examine himself, and having found himself worthy to take it, and worthiness is assumed there, by each one saying to Christ within, I've taken my sin and committed it to the blood You spilled on the cross, to the pain You

suffered on the cross, and I accept that (payment and pain) as my own. And here's what you are doing – that examination of the sacrifice. Go back to Romans and what does it say?

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy (set apart), and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable position of service.

That's all he asks of us. He doesn't ask for us to be loud, or great, or busy. In fact, He asks us to lead a quiet life. Not a loud one. You must be careful if you're a noisy person like some of us. You have to be careful that you don't create so much noise in your own walk that you can't hear the Lord quietly doing *His* work *in you*; all you hear is you. That sounds good, and ego loves that, but which one of us wants to be nothing more than a canyon that echoes when we shout. The first time we hear our own voice coming back to us, wow, that's pretty neat. And then it gets noisy, and we can't hear the things that are naturally there because of our own racket. Well, that's the way the spiritual life is.

All right, lets move on. Verse 25.

That there should be no division in the Body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

that they have for themselves, is the import of that. So, if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with that member. Boy, I have been a recipient of that kind of love and concern from you many times over the last few years.

Now you are Christ's body, and you're individually members of Christ's body.

And that's the Church. So, we're part of this great universal body that stretches geographically over the face of the earth. It stretches, in terms of time, backward to the first Pentecost. At that moment, we were joined to Christ and to every Christian who has ever been reborn into His Church. When the Church was formed and originally joined to Christ it was a single event, 120 Galileans in the upper room (Acts 2, an aorist tense event), and it says that at a given pin-point in time the Church was born, in that upper room, and the way it was born was unique in time and history. The Spirit came, and those that were there saw Him "distributed as if it were tongues of fire," and the Spirit took those 120 Galileans and joined them to Christ in the upper room. The Church was born at

that point. It was whole and it was complete. The next day there were thousands, and the day after there were thousands that were joined to that 120. Growth was explosive and the Spirit was evident. The Gospel came first to the Jew, that's the 120 Galileans, then it came to the Samaritans; then it came to the Gentiles (That's Acts 2, 8, and 10). There's a pattern there, for it is the way Christ came and presented Himself to mankind. He came first to the Jew, at the wedding in Cana in Galilee, where He turned the water into wine. Next He presented Himself to the Samaritan woman at the well; and third, He presented Himself to a Gentile. Christ came and presented Himself that way, according to prophecy. When the Spirit came, He was presented that exact same way, because that is the way that Jewish prophecy said God would act.

So we see that there is one Body, and we are all joined to that one body. Now, that's hard for us to consider because we're accustomed to practicing our faith within a Gentile context and in a Western setting. But, within this body of Christ, there are Asians, there are Aleuts, Africans, there are Micronesians, Indonesians, Chinese, and Nepalese; the Body of Christ is very multi-hewed, and we all got there the same way, and to the same extent. Some didn't just get in; they got all the way in, because we're all made to drink of the one Spirit. This is what brings us to the next point. Peter had his prejudices, and the Lord took him and enlightened through a vision? His prejudices passed away in the light of the Lord's love for others through him. Paul had his reservations about where he was going to go, and then he ended up in Macedonia and other Gentile places, because God is at work in some places that are strange to us. He does that because the Spirit is at work in the world doing the work of evangelism wherever there are hearts open to the Gospel.

Now, I am going to say something that may startle some, and it may cause trouble outside the context of this room, and that is this: The Church's job is not to evangelize the world. That's not why we're here. That's not our job. Now, that might feel like the first cut on the trunk of the tree called missionary programs; so be careful that you hear the whole principle here! Who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment? It is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). God retains that responsibility to Himself. Who was it that reached you wherever you were and drew you to His Only Begotten Son? It was the Father Himself (John 17:6), based on His love that sent the Spirit to where you were, in whatever your circumstance was, and He, the Spirit of God, opened your eyes. Phil uses the term, 'He switched you on! And, that is exactly what He did. He opened the eyes of your heart, (one of our favorite praise songs). "Open the Eyes of Our Heart, Lord, Open the Eyes of Our Heart." It's beautiful because that is

precisely what happens. And the Father, based on His own will and by His own choice, opens the eyes of your heart so that you can see the work of Christ for what it really is – a redemptive plan that provided reconciliation between man who was lost and God who loves man, who is the crown of His creation. The work of the Son is to satisfy the Father and it provided reconciliation between man and God. We have been given the gift of reconciliation and the joy of telling others that the way to God is open to them as well (2 Corinthians 5:18). That's what He says over and over. Our job is to tell the world that the barrier between God and man has been broken down, totally replaced by the Lord Jesus Christ. There's our job. Our job is not to convince the unbeliever, by clever argument, or by shrewd words, that the work of Christ was performed on his behalf. That's the Spirit's job, to convict and convince. We are being blessed, privileged to be on site when He does that, by means of our missionary efforts. I do not intend to denigrate missionary programs and efforts. Are missionary efforts worthwhile? Absolutely! Should they be pursued? Absolutely! Why? Because we want to be there when God saves souls, and because our job is to teach Matthew 28:20; it is the growth and maturing of believers who have discovered by means of the Spirit that God loves them very much. And the whole force of the Church being drawn together is to grow believers up in the knowledge and in the faith that comes with their salvation and redemption (2 Peter 3:18). Now, if that was important for the first generation Jewish convert, isn't it incumbent on us as well? So, here's what we do; we open our lives up, and we share our walk with other people so that they can see God at work in their lives and they can grow to maturity, because when they mature, there is no telling what they will be like as believers. You don't want them to be like you, and God wants them to be like Him. We can get in the way with that process if we are not careful. I don't want to stop somebody at my level of understanding of Scripture, I want them to grow like shooting stars and continue to grow through what God is showing them. God has blessed me by allowing me to see some of the kids I have ushered into their studies, and watched them grow into their ministry and begin to really fly in their understanding. One example just happened; Byron Morgan sent me an e-mail this week from his church – he pastors in Atlanta – and he said it was from "Dr. Morgan," and he put a big smiley face after that. He was rubbing it in a little bit, but I know what he meant and so did he. There are quite a number of those guys out there, from whom I am learning so much. I am privileged to see God through their eyes, to experience the Spirit at work in their lives and eat the fruit of seeds sown so many years ago. So, you see the way this thing works. We want to be stepping stones for the people we deal with, for those that the Lord sends our way, so that they can reach higher and wider. And the fruit they pick can be sweet, and they will share with us. This just makes the whole thing work

the way it ought to work. Growing is our business as the Spirit draws others into the Body of Christ.

Now, "God has appointed," in Christ's Body, that's in individual members in the church; "first apostles, second prophets, and third teachers." That's not an order of appointment but rather is – as Robertson points out – it's *an order of preference*. "He appointed, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then come miracles" – he changes it then – the order, after he leaves teaching, he changes the structure of the Greek –

Then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, and administration, and various kinds, or diverse kinds of tongues. All are not prophets, are they, all are not apostles, are they, all are not teachers, are they, all are not workers of miracles, are they, all do not have gifts of healing, do they, all do not speak with tongues, do they, all do not interpret, do they, but earnestly desire or prefer the preferred gifts, and I show you a still more excellent way.

And when he goes to the greater or more preferred gifts, it ties right back to the beginning of his statement – the preferred gifts are *apostles, prophecy, and teachers*. Those are the preferred or greater gifts. Then he lists the gifts of healing, etc, etc.

Now we come to Chapter 13. I've got this list of the gifts in the Church that deals first with the gift of apostleship. This morning there was a professor, a Father Jonathan, of the Catholic Church, and he was on Fox this morning talking about the Pope's last statement on salvation and redemption. He said that the whole position of the Catholic Church rests on the continuation of the gift of prophecy. Well, the continuation of the gift of prophecy means that they believe in *apostolic succession*. Apostolic succession, in other words, implies that the Pope's authority derives from that authority of Peter, as the first Pope (head of the Church), and that there is a succeeding order. Interestingly, Mormonism claims the same thing, that they base their authority on the gift of *apostolic succession*. In fact, all those denominations who claim to have authority over the Body of Christ through offices of Bishops, Archbishops, envoys, and officers on a national or world-wide basis must base their authority on apostolic succession. We do not believe in apostolic succession, because there are no apostles in the Body of Christ today. There were twelve, because one of the qualifications for apostles was he had to be an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ and Paul was the last one. Christ appeared to him, in person and in blinding light, on the road to

Damascus, and spoke to him directly; "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" That was the last physical appearance of Christ. 1 Corinthians 9:1 Paul told us,

Am I not an apostle? Can it be denied that I have seen Jesus, our Lord?

So, there is no more apostleship because that criterion alone eliminates any others as apostles.

The word prophet, or prophecy, as used in this list, means to be a forth teller – prophets (sp) is the word – and the word prophetis means to tell forth something that is true. It doesn't mean to speak beforehand, but to speak forth regarding a subject.

The word teacher is the word we get didactic from, and it means to treat the study of a subject systemically. That's what *oida*, the data, the facts. The teacher takes the facts, and deals with the facts, and develops the study based on the facts. The process is *didactolos*, the word from which we get teacher.

The word miracles *dunamis* means the working of, or the energy of, something powerful. *Dunamis* is the word from which we get dynamite, and speaks of those things that are explosive, those things that are dynamic, things that release a lot of energy. That's what the working of miracles is, and it carries with it, not the concentration of power, you don't call power to bear on something, you release something *that's already there*. So a miracle worker in the Biblical sense of the Word is someone who comes to a situation, and they see the hand of God *already at work*, and they point to the release God's hand and power at work in that situation. That's a completely different thing than what is passing as miracle working in Christendom today. There's no credit to be claimed by the miracle worker. The miracle worker doesn't add anything to that process. The miracle worker only speaks of the release of God's power that he sees at work in that situation. We don't have that in the Church today for good reason, for it says later, when we get into Chapter 13 that those things are going to stop of their own accord. "Helps," is literally 'to lay hold of.' The gift of helps is there because you might bring yourself into a situation where a person is incapacitated and you lay hold on that situation, and you lend your assistance to it – that's what the word helps means – exactly what it says – those who facilitate getting things done through organization. That's not the elder. The elder's specific instruction is the teaching of the Word as one who labors in doctrine. The word for "getting things done" in the government of the Church Body is the word for

"Deacon" *diaconos*. The word "tongues" is *glosson*, languages. It is interesting that the gift is not tongues (languages) *per se*, but the statement is about *various kinds* of languages – the gift is the *diversity* of language. It's not language, but *diversity* of language. Now that should call your mind back to the Tower of Babel, when all the earth spoke *one* language. And because they all spoke one language they communicated with one another and pooled their ignorance, and they came up with a plan. So note that pooled ignorance led to the construction of the Tower of Babel. What was the purpose of the Tower of Babel, a ziggurat? Do you remember that? Norma –the answer; "let's build us a tower whose top will reach into heaven, one of the five "I wills" of Satan (Ezekiel 28; Numbers 18). "I will ascend to the sides of the North." I am going to get up on the high point of power and authority. "I want to be like the Most High!" He wanted to assume God's position. What about Nimrod? Nimrod was going to build this big tower, his Ziggurat. And he said; "we'll get up on top of that tower and we'll be where God is and we can see what God sees" – doesn't that tie to the tree of knowledge? When Eve got that banana off the tree and gave it to Adam, and they ate that thing, all at once, they could see good and evil. You see the same propensities over and over again. Now, you've got the Tower of Babel and their saying; "let's get on top of the mountain." That act mirrors Satan's own deceptive acts before the world was even created. There is a pattern repeating here that shows how all is tied together. There is a recurring theme throughout Scripture that keeps reinforcing lessons, and man is so dumb, we keep failing to learn the same lessons. John Young's favorite definition of Insanity is; *Repeating the same behavior but expecting different results*. So, here we see it all over again in the operation of spiritual gifts.

Now, there are these gifts – miracles. healings. helps and administrations. Diversities of tongues came in with ties all the way back to the Tower of Babel, when God divided the tongues for His own purposes. Now comes the Gospel, and it's given first to 120 Galileans, and on the street are all these Jews that came "from every nation under heaven" – that's what Acts Ch. 2 tells us – "there were in those days in Jerusalem devout men from every nation under heaven," and when they were on the street the next day, after Pentecost, they heard the gospel being proclaimed and they said, "aren't all these guys Galileans – yes, they are – well why do we heard every man not only in the language in which we were born, but in the dialect in which we were born." Guys in Pasadena heard it like the guys in Pasadena talk. Guys in Amarillo heard it differently. They would have sworn that those guys were from Amarillo. Same re Biloxi, New Orleans, New Jersey, the Bronx – they all heard it in their own local *dialect*. There's the miracle. *It was a miracle of hearing*. The Galileans, in all probably, we have no

reason to believe anything else, were speaking their Galilean dialect. And every man that heard them heard as if it was his next door neighbor from the country that he had come from in his caravan to get to Jerusalem. That's Tongues as It happened right there. If the gift of tongues were existent today, I would hear every message that Tom teaches in that nice, soft, South Mississippi Southern drawl. He's not even capable of it, but I would hear it that way. For Phil, on the other hand, it would be much faster; he would hear it faster than I hear it. Marilyn wouldn't hear the same thing I heard at all. Now that's the gift of tongues the way God designed it. It all happens in the ear.

Phil Richman. Points out that our time is gone and we need to go to questions.

Lady – statement that someone said “that sermon was just for me.” [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman: In the truest sense of the word, it might very well be tongues. [More comments and statements. Inaudible.

Mary Ann Jacobsen: [Inaudible. Something about interpretation].

Conrad Bowman: I did not get to the gift of interpretation because it is covered in Chapter 14, but If one spoke, and there was no one there who understood what they were saying, then there should be an interpreter there, someone who does understand it. Now, that seems to beg the question, doesn't it? Because, what it says is that if in a large room and one is speaking and there's nobody there who understands or hears the language in which that person speaks, but God has gifted one person out there with understanding the content of the message . . . Now it's obvious that if he heard what was spoken no interpretation would be necessary, If he heard and understood. If he had the gift of hearing that language, he would have heard precisely what was said, it would simply be a matter of relating what was said. But, if he has to interpret what's being said, it means he didn't hear the very words that were being said because he just couldn't relay them, he had to interpret them. So, what he's receiving is the content of what this person is saying without understanding the words. Now, that's different than any other place, or any other way, that I have ever heard that explained. I've never heard that taught that way. I've always heard that this guy is speaking the language, and this person doesn't understand the language and he does, so he interprets what's being said to the ones who don't speak the language.

Phil Richman: He translates it. So, he translates it rather than interpretation. How many of you have heard this dialect thing? [A couple raised their hands].

Conrad Bowman: It's as important an issue today as when God confounded the languages and divided people along linguistic lines in Genesis. Now think about that. God took the whole of mankind and He separated them according to languages so they couldn't understand one another, and that was huge, so they drifted and separated. Pirtle, and now we're attempting to go back into one group of people. Conrad: and attempt put together one world and one language all over again.

Don Fruin: Question, what about healing/miracles? Conrad. I did because it, miracles, is lumped with healing? Because in Chapter 13 it says that whether there are healings or miracles or tongues they will cease *of their own accord*. That's what the Greek text says in Chapter 13. It's a middle voice passage the subject is acting on itself. They are going to cease, and they are going to cease *of their own accord*. They are not going to cease because something stopped it, but they are going to cease because the need passes, and there's no longer any need for it. And, just like this class, I've got to stop.

Phil Richman: I want to encourage you to think about it and read Ephesians 4, and look for the differences, because that is more for the Church, it acts as a moving thing, even to some extent that 1st Corinthians is a moving train – you've got to be careful where you get off. Because there's a lot of error that comes from misinterpreting what is going on in 1st Corinthians. So read Ephesians, it will tell you about your position, and it will tell you about how you are equipped with these spiritual gifts. The real goal of this class is to help you to use those gifts as part of the Body of Christ – to understand your gifts and use them. And also to have the fruit of the Spirit in there which includes these operative things. This is the way it was supposed to be. You're not naturally gentle? – think about it. You know, if you're not self-controlled? – think about it. So, look at Ephesians 4. It is very worthwhile.

Charles Pirtle closed with the prayer.