

Bells and Pomegranates part 1

We have just finished gifts of the Spirit 1 Cor 12

The very next chapter is the balance of the mighty gifts of the Holy Spirit—the fruit of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV2011)

1 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.

2 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.

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship (or to be burned) that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

But love is the great balancer—without the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts are worthless...

Bells and pomegranates

Ex 28:31-35

31 "You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. 33 And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: 34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord and when he comes out, that he may not die.

NKJV

No gifts—no bells sounding—dead church (the priest is dead)

Symbolic of the the great balance

- BELL and POMEGRANATE = GIFTS and FRUIT

Gal 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

NIV

LOVE is the crowning fruit of the Spirit

1 Cor 13:13

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

NIV

1. Why is it that you can speak with the tongues of people and angels but have not love you are a resounding gong, or a clanging cymbal?

Story of me at church in Cedar Rapids—they said I had demons—the were whispering about me—the looked like they were oppressed with demons... real serious...

2 Cor 5:17 NLT

17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

I didn't have demons in me. These leaders in this church had gotten so wrapped up in their spiritology that forgot the love motive...

Example,

A pastor disguised himself as a homeless man and sat in a tent out in front of the church's three main campuses...

He was blessed to see many of his church members reach out to him, pray with him, want help...

How would you react?

2. Why is that if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, (I.e. operate in the gifts of the word of knowledge and wisdom—to know things about people or situations or future events) or if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing?

We have to be careful, since we are a church that embraces the precious gifts of the Spirit, not to use them for selfish motives, TO LIFT OURSELVES UP BEFORE PEOPLE...

Story Lester Sumerall told about man in his small country church that prophesied Jesus was coming back—this Saturday night at midnight... ***he just wanted attention***

- *Prophecy is given for edification, exhortation and comfort... not to give a person attention—or let people see how spiritual they are*

Story of Manuela in Manellu Spain. She wanted control in that Bible study and used the gifts as a way to give her a sense of authority and control over people...

- **What would love do? —LOVE YIELDS.** You submit to the right authority, you give, you let go of ***your position*** for everyones benefit and let God lift you up...

James 4:6
"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."
NKJV

James 4:7-10

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.
NKJV

- **Or if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**

a. Sometimes great faith gives people **spiritual pride...**

Story of young man in our church that was always correcting everybody with regard to faith... *You need more faith...that's not faith...how come you aren't believing God?...*

Faith has to be balanced with the Love of God

Galatians 5:6 (NIV2011)

*6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is **faith expressing itself through love.***

You might be able to remove mountains with faith (or believe you can) but without the motive of love—YOU ARE NOTHING

b. It's all about MOTIVES...sometimes people have let their great faith get polluted by a money motive...

Money makes the world go round...

Story—Esteban Antonio in Spain, amazing flamenco and classical guitarist living in London, recording... opened my eyes. The music industry can make anyone a star they want to. It's all about the money. They create the stars as financial investments... The people don't mean anything to them. It's money...

Nothing wrong with making money in the business world—use it for the kingdom of God—give to God first—**MONEY IS A TOOL, HELP BUILD THE KINGDOM.**

But don't use the gifts of the Spirit for the purpose of financial profit...

People merchandise the anointing...

Acts 8:14-24 (NIV2011)

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria.

15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money

19 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

24 Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.”

Example,

1950s Evangelist Jack Coe...great miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Spectacular healings. Would wait to receive offerings until after a notable miracle—people were more giving...

Said to Rev Hagin—write books, that’s where the money is...

Hagin couldn’t write any books for years because he kept hearing that in his mind.

A money motive will pollute the gifts.

Our motive should be LOVE

3. Why is it that If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship (or to be burned) that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing?

- Have you been around people where they are almost bragging about what they are giving away to help the poor? I did this, I did that... but what’s the real motive? It should be love.
- Or what they give up for the Gospel...even their lives... Paul is asking your true motives?
 - Jihadist martyrs... THEY DO IT A GUARANTEE TO PARADISE... FOR 70 BEAUTIFUL VIRGINS IN PARADISE.

LOVE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Communion—koinonia

Many churches have been hindered greatly by divisions, strife, offenses... selfish motives

Church at Corinth—Communion (the Love Feast)

1 Cor 11:17-22 Message Bible

17 Regarding this next item, I'm not at all pleased. I am getting the picture that when you meet together it brings out your worst side instead of your best! 18 First, I get this report on your divisiveness, competing with and criticizing each other. I'm reluctant to believe it, but there it is. 19 The best that can be said for it is that the testing process will bring truth into the open and confirm it.

20 And then I find that you bring your divisions to worship (if you bring your gift to the altar and have offense—make it right first) — you come together, and instead of eating the Lord's Supper, 21 you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out, and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk. I can't believe it!

Complete Biblical Library Commentary -

Paul's description reveals scandalous behavior. The problem was one of gluttonous, self-centered disregard for anyone else. The "Lord's supper" here noted was a united supper with which the meeting of the church commenced, apparently taking place as often as once a week. This church supper, later called the Agape (Love Feast) was akin to the dinners held by the guilds. It began as a kind of enlarged family meal. It accorded so well with the social custom that it was a universal Christian custom in the First Century. Each guest brought contributions to supply the table; the poor brought whatever meager amount they had, the rich brought out of their abundance. Greedily, the Corinthians consumed their own supply as soon as they arrived. The poor man with insufficient supply might arrive late, because his time was not his own, and find the table empty, the fellowship gone, and he remained hungry.

Further, hunger and drunkenness sat together. To call such the Lord's Supper would have been a travesty.

Later the Communion was separated from the meal for greater decorum, and the Agape feast faded into extinction.

22 Don't you have your own homes to eat and drink in? Why would you stoop to desecrating God's church? Why would you actually shame God's poor? I never would have believed you would stoop to this. And I'm not going to stand by and say nothing.

1 Cor 11:23-26 Message

23 Let me go over with you again exactly what goes on in the Lord's Supper and why it is so centrally important. I received my instructions from the Master himself and passed them on to you. The Master, Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread. 24 Having given thanks, he broke it and said,

This is my body, broken for you.
Do this to remember me.

25 After supper, he did the same thing with the cup:

This cup is my blood, my new covenant with you.
Each time you drink this cup, remember me.

26 What you must solemnly realize is that every time you eat this bread and every time you drink this cup, you reenact in your words and actions the death of the Master. You will be drawn back to this meal again and again until the Master returns. You must never let familiarity breed contempt.

1 Cor 11:27-34

27 Anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master irreverently is like part of the crowd that jeered and spit on him at his death. Is that the kind of "remembrance" you want to be part of? 28 Examine your motives, test your heart, come to this meal in holy awe.

29 If you give no thought (or worse, don't care) about the broken body of the Master when you eat and drink, you're running the risk of serious consequences. 30 That's why so many of you even now are listless and sick, and others have gone to an early grave. 31 If we get this straight now, we won't have to be straightened out later on. 32 Better to be confronted by the Master now than to face a fiery confrontation later.

33 So, my friends, when you come together to the Lord's Table, be reverent and courteous with one another. 34 If you're so hungry that you can't wait to be served, go home and get a sandwich. But by no means risk turning this Meal into an eating and drinking binge or a family squabble. It is a spiritual meal — a love feast.

Love is at the heart of all we do.

Love is not a soft, door mat attitude, it's a living force of the power of God.

Love is forgiveness, serving, love is putting others above yourself, love is biting your lip when you want to hurt someone with your words, love is living to lift up others above yourself...

Love is at the very core of who we are and what following Jesus is all about.

Love isn't just accepting everyone's sins and saying that's okay you are alright with God even though your lifestyle violates the purity God desires...

No—God is not contradicting Himself... You can love people, reach out to them, help them, but you don't have to accept their way of life to love them...

God loves people, but He certainly doesn't accept how people live in violation of His ways...

Love always points people to Jesus and to His word. The Holy Spirit will do the rest...