

God Works

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[0 : 0 0] Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. We were in 11 earlier today. Communion chapter 12. Over the last few weeks we have talked about the fact that God speaks to us.

We've talked about His Word and how all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Paul charged Timothy to preach the Word. Be instant in season, not a season.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. He said, God speaks to us in different ways. Now He's going to talk to us about, or we're going to look at how God works.

God works. And all of the things we do with the Word, preaching and teaching and things, where does that usually take place? Inside the church. And so we're going to be looking at the fact that God gave us a local church.

And first of all, you can see on your sheet there, the church is God's idea. It is not man's idea. It's not man's way of coming up with things for people to do and things like that.

[1 : 1 4] It was God's idea. It is not a human institution. It is not a human institution. On your sheet there, I gave you a number of scriptures and stuff, so you can look things up later if you want to.

God started the church. God put it into place. But what some people consider church is not necessarily what God designed it for.

Some people make church a club. You know, they want it to, it's just another social club, another place where we gather together. And I'm not against people getting together and having fellowship together.

It's one of the things I like about our church is people talk. They get together. They talk. They enjoy having time together. Nobody's running out the door as soon as the service is over.

Well, maybe a few, but most people are not running out the door as soon as it's over. You know, you're getting up. You're talking with your friends. Yes. But there's people who just, they come in, they sit down for their hour, and then they're not really interested in anything that goes on in church.

[2 : 2 3] They're not really interested in working in church or anything, unless they have made friends and the social aspect keeps on coming back. But I want you to see something about this. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, it may be interesting verses for us to use, but look at the beginning of verse 4.

He says, Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all. What does that have to do with having a church? God has given us all different gifts.

God has given us all different things that we are able to do. All of us have different personalities. We have different gifts. We have different things that we're good at. Different aptitudes for different things.

And God says, He says, He says, He says, He says, He says, And let your gift be used so that you can help this person to use their gift to help this person, to use their gift to help this person.

[3 : 28] He says, You've all been given different things, but you're all serving the same God. So the message that he's trying to give to us is, The Holy Spirit gave us spiritual gifts.

Use those gifts to help one another. Use those gifts to take the message of the gospel. Somebody who's good at business, Use that gift to help the church, to be run efficiently.

Somebody has the gift of preaching. Use that gift to give out the word of God. Somebody has the gift of being, There's a guy we used to have in Heartland many years ago, had the gift of gab.

You know the gift of gab? They can just talk to anybody. Yeah, your dad. Oh, I forgot to read that this morning, didn't I? She gave me a thank you card, and I forgot to read it this morning.

I will do that. This guy, he and his wife went with us to Virginia one year. I can't think how old I was.

[4 : 35] Probably was in the late 60s, early 70s. I wasn't all that old yet, so, late 60s. We went to a car wash. Okay, we're talking Danville, Virginia, right on the North Carolina border.

We're there, and we're getting the car washed and stuff, and there's a black guy over here. Bill? Hey, how you doing? He went over, he started talking to him, learned all kinds of things about him.

Down there at that time, that probably wasn't something most people did. But here's this old white guy, going up, Hey, how you doing? He had the gift of gab. He could talk. He could talk with anybody.

About anything. He just had that gift. God can use people like that. They have that ability to just go in and talk to people. Others, sometimes, they see church as a social outlet.

Others sometimes, I like the way, people have been looking at it, they put it, they look at it as a runway. A runway. A runway. And you say, we don't land planes in church.

[5 : 37] No, that's not what kind of runway I'm talking about. You remember when they, fashion models and stuff, they call that a runway? There are some people who come to church just to show off.

Look at me. I'm here. I did this. I got these new clothes. I got this new thing. I got this new car. I got this, you know, and they just, huh?

You'll do that next week? You're going to have, you probably would too. You hear, yeah. You probably would too. You know, they come and they brag about their new, you know, vacation they've been on and things.

They just want people to see them. And Paul says, you know what? The church of Corinth, they had the same idea. Back up to chapter 11, where we were earlier this morning.

Look at verse 18. Verse 18 says, for first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you and I partly believe it.

[6 : 38] For there must be also heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

For in eating, everyone taketh before his own supper and one is hungry and another is drunken. What was going on? They were coming together to the church and making a big meals out of it before they would have the Lord's supper.

And some people were bringing in these lavish meals and things and eating it in front of everybody and saying, look what we got. And then there were others who had hardly anything and they were sitting there just kind of, you know, waiting for the Lord's supper to start because they didn't have anything.

He says, no, no, no, no. That's not what this is all about. He said, you coming in and doing that is dividing the church. It's not helping the church. When we think of the Lord's table, we think of a unifying time and they had turned it into something totally different.

They had, they had been bragging and stuff and they, you know, they kind of thought lightly of other people. Look at verse 22. He says, what?

[7 : 46] Have you not houses to eat and to drink in or despise ye the church of God and shame them that have not? What shall I say unto you? Shall I praise you for this?

I praise you not. He said, no. He said, coming in and showing off that is not what this is all about. Yeah, so don't do it. He said, coming in and showing off is not what this is all about.

He said, you're coming here to worship God and to praise him and to be unified around him. We didn't read verses 27 and on this morning when I had communion, but take a look at it with me.

Verse 27 says, Wherefore, whoso eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

[8 : 51] But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

And if any man hunger, let him eat at home that ye come not together unto come the nation. And the rest I will set in order when I come. He says, you come to the Lord's table, you come for that reason alone.

You're hungry? Eat at home. Don't be taking all the stuff and so somebody doesn't have stuff over here. He says, no, no, no, that's not how it works. Then another thing they had a problem with there in Corinth was causing division, was competition for who's the holiest.

who's the most holy? Who's the most spiritual? Who, you know, see these people were making sure that everybody knows what I'm doing in the church.

Everybody knows that I'm doing this and I'm doing that and how I'm serving. And they would talk about their humble service while they're bragging about it. You ever seen people like that? You know, they brag about all the things they're doing and how humble they are about it.

[10 : 01] See, the Corinthians, go back to chapter 1, of 1 Corinthians, chapter 1. Look at verse 10. He says, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them that are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you, that every one of you say it, I am of Paul and I am of Apollos and I am of Cephas and I am of Christ.

He says, you got groups dividing up in the church. You got cliques dividing up in the church. We were followers of Paul. We're followers of Peter.

We're followers of Apollos. We're following, you know, he said, you got cliques going on in the church that are causing division. Well, I follow Paul. I'm more spiritual than you guys who follow Peter.

Peter denied the Lord, so you know, I follow, you know, Apollos, he's Gentile originally, so you know, he says, wait a minute, no.

[11 : 21] He goes to verse 13. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? And the obvious answer is no to all of those.

He says, Christ is not divided. Who did, who was crucified for you? Christ. You know, you're baptized in what name? Christ. All these other people, it doesn't matter.

Christ is the important thing. Christ is what we need to be concerned about. Christ had not chosen them because it says there in verse, if you look in verse 26, I believe it is, because they were wise or mighty or noble.

He says, no, no, no. You have no reason to glory in yourself or any other man for that matter. Look at verse 29 there in chapter 1.

It says that no flesh should glory in his presence. Everyone was to glory is supposed to be in the Lord. Verse 31, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

[12 : 33] He says, look, if you're going to glory, make sure you put it in the right place. If you're going to brag, do it in the right way, brag on the Lord and what he's done for you. Let people know what he's done.

See, church, he says, is not a club. It's not a place for fashion shows. It's not a place for competition. The Lord started the church as a heavenly institution.

It's to give us a taste of what heaven should be like. When we come together as one around Christ, it should be a taste of heaven. Now, if you've all been in different churches like I have, I haven't necessarily been in one that would give heaven a run for their money yet.

But he said, that's what the goal was. It should be like a taste of heaven. You know, God started it. So when we think about church, sometimes we get kind of flippant about things as a church.

Sometimes we get kind of do things selfishly. I always hate it when people say, well, my church is not your church. It is God's church.

[13 : 43] Even as pastors, you know, sometimes we'll talk about, well, my church. Not my church. Yeah, Osteen.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I understand why they do that because everybody recognizes his name and they know who he is.

But yeah, it's like you people going out and saying, well, I go to Steve Hersey's church. No, you don't. This is not my church. This is God's church. I can be replaced at any time.

And some of you probably thought of that. So, be careful. Letter B is a product of God's wisdom. Product of God's wisdom.

Look at Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11. God, Paul talks about God's plan with the church in Romans.

[14 : 55] He explains how God has set aside Israel. He had been, you know, Israel was his chosen people, but now he has set aside Israel. He came to them.

They rejected him. They crucified him. So now, he's going to the Gentiles, the rest of humanity. And, God's not done with Israel. They will be back in the center of everything he's doing one day.

One day when he returns, they will be back. But for now, he's dealing with the Gentiles. until then, until he comes back, the church is his main focus.

He's trying to focus everything through the church and what they do. And Paul's contemplating that plan and he says, look, we need to praise God for his wisdom and his knowledge.

Look at verse, chapter 11, verse 33. He says there about his knowledge being passed, finding out. It says, Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

[16 : 00] How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. If you wanted to explain to somebody the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge, what would you talk about?

We talk about the depth of his wisdom and knowledge. He created the earth and he created the heavens. Exactly.

Anything else? He created everything. Okay. So we look at the universe, the vastness of it, and how it's so unexplainable unless you say God did it.

I mean, we got human people, human people, that's true. They got artificial people now. You ever seen the pictures, the videos of the robot playing basketball and stuff?

Moves just like we do. It's unbelievable what they've done. But anyway, the vastness of the universe. They say that God, his wisdom, his knowledge, we cannot comprehend.

[17 : 24] We cannot comprehend how big this universe is. We cannot comprehend how big the smallest cell is and all the things that happen within that cell.

We need to back down.

his point was an Adam that makes up part of that pew right there over there does he have any idea there's more of them down there?

no he says God made it so vast so huge we just cannot comprehend everything and people try to explain things and try to come up with theories and do all these different things and then there's always the exception to the rule that they can't explain they say the big bang happened so the big bang happened and everything is shot out okay so everything just shot out there like that that means everything is going to go out that way and it's going to be spinning like this except they know that there's at least three planets or stars that are going the opposite direction and they're like they don't have an explanation for that why it happened why it's going that way God is just so amazing look at verse 34 for who hath known the mind of the Lord or who hath been his counselor what's Paul trying to ask by those two questions who has known the mind of the Lord or who's been his counselor what is it Paul's trying to get us to think about believe it or not ladies

I know you're going to find this hard to believe but God did not ask advice before he created the world you know that's why he created the world before he created Adam and Eve and I can see some of you now like wait a minute what is he saying God did it all on his own he didn't ask advice from us no human not just ladies no men either he didn't ask for anybody God did it he is wise he's intelligent sure probably not okay ask me later okay so because the church is God's program for this age there should be nothing more important to us now we know there are you know people you know give all kinds of reasons for not going to church you know people who go to church on Sunday morning who give all kinds of reasons why not be here now or be here on Wednesday night or whatever there's lots of but God but God doing what he has done this should be the most important thing because this is where we hear God's word this is where we learn what God's word has for us we need to devote our lives to serving him in the context of what he has for us and right now that context is the church we should also know what's our part in God's program

[21 : 23] God's program is the church what's your part in it what are you supposed to do what are you supposed to be a part of see we've kind of got things reversed these days I want to find a church that's going to meet my needs I want to find a church that has my style of doing things I want to find a church that has my interest that's not what the church is for the church is for a place for us to use the gifts and talents and things that God gave us to do the work for him see so many people go looking for a church well do they have this and do they have this because I want this and do they have that because I want that no our job is to go find a church that we can get into where we can do the work that God has called us to do where we can go out and do things that he has asked us to do number two let's go there

Christ is active in the church Christ is active in the church God's the founder of the church part of God's plan but Christ is the founder foundation builder instructor everything about the church should be centered on Jesus Christ everything we do should be centered on him and what he has for us we need to learn his role in what we're doing see if we do that learn what Christ is doing through the church what Christ wants the church to do hopefully then the church will not be a oh um time to go to church again okay it's Sunday it's Wednesday it's time for us to go no we'll see how vital it is because Christ is using it Christ is working through it Christ gave his life for the church the investment he put into the church should tell us just how important it is sometimes I think

I should be doing these messages on Sunday morning instead of Sunday afternoon but God you know it's important to him letter A he is his foundation and founder his foundation and founder most organizations have a founder you know somebody gets an idea and they say this would be a good idea we should have other people involved in this and they'll find a founder and organization try to get people to join it but very few of those founders would say they are the foundation for the organization we're going to gather together to do this project or do this promote this idea or do this thing it's they're founding an organization to do something Jesus Christ founded the church to be built on him and who he is that's different than most Paul was talking about the fact that they had divisions and things there in Corinth and he points out that it's Christ who is the foundation of what's taking place go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 11 for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is

Jesus Christ he says there's only one foundation why can the church have no other foundation than Jesus how the church has tried to build on other things besides Jesus oh yeah there's churches out there so why is Jesus so important who else gave their life for it Jesus gave his life he made the investment in the church that nobody else would when he gave his life for the church he gave his life for us as individuals but we've got to remember us as individuals make up the church and so Jesus is the foundation of that if we try to build on something else it's meaningless it's worthless you know and like I said there's churches out there who are trying to build on something other than Jesus 1 Corinthians 15 17 and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain yet in your sins church is absolutely no good if Christ be not raised because there's no forgiveness of sins we have nothing to teach everything we're doing is in vain because there's no hope so we have to remember it's built on Jesus

Christ he started the church he talked about the church he's the very first one to talk about the church where did the church well let me put it this way the church got its beginning with Jesus and it actually started before he went to the cross kind of remember the day Jesus was with all the disciples and he said who do men say that I am and Peter said thou art the Christ the son of the living God now Rome says oh yeah the church is built on Peter Peter was the first pope because Christ said upon this I will build my church but he wasn't talking about Peter he was talking about Peter's statement thou art the Christ the son of the living God so Jesus became the foundation of the church he became his founder he started building and he is the builder and head of the church and I'll save that for next week we'll talk about that some more next week the church we think of it as a place we come we can come if we want to don't come if we don't want to whatever drop in once in a while come for

[28 : 04] Christmas and Easter you know those people the C&E; crowd Christmas and Easter no he says I died for the church the church is important because he died for everyone in it okay Thank you.