

The Holy Spirit Is Hard at Work – In You and Through You

- My dear sis/bro Xp, who has poured out his Spirit in pwr upon you & all his Ch: on this Pent Sun, very clear to see that HS is hard at work. Look at what happens! We've got loud sound wind; tongues/fire; diff langs; timid discs boldly broadcasting Gos of God's glory & grace; prophecy fulfilled; conversions; baptisms; 3k ppl coming to faith in J! That is the Spirit at work! But Pent is not just a celebration of one special day many yrs ago. No, Pent celebrates the ongoing, tireless, continuous activity of God HS thruout wrld & in our hrts to this very day. The HS is hard at work. Just listen what Paul says in our 2nd reading, 1 Cor 12: **vs. 6, 11a**. Today I want you see that HS is hard at work, in you & thru you.
- He's hard at work in you. **Vs. 3**. Unbels can utter words, "J is Lord." But can't bel it, trust, have saving faith in J as their Lord, unless HS works that faith in their hrts. See, lot Xians don't undrstnd this, but Xianity is not smthng you can choose for self. Having faith in J is not smthng you can just go out and get or accept or decide make your own. That's bec in our sinful human nature, we are unbels to core: blind to God's truth, dead in sins, enemies/God, compltly unable reach out, take hold salvtn Xp has won for us. In fact, evthng J did for us (humble birth, sinless life, innent dth, glorious res) – none of it would benefit us at all unless HS gives us the faith to bel it's true. **Vs. 3**. Faith is his work in us. Paul says same thing earlier in 1 Cor: **"The person w/o Spirit does not accept the things that come fr Spirit/God but considrs them foolshnss, and cannot undrstnd them bec they are discerned only thru Spirit" (2:14)**. Apart fr Spirit, we: unable bel in J, or **"accept thngs that come fr Spirit/God,"** or **"say 'J is Lord.'**" That's why our Luth Cat at 3rd Art says, *"I bel...thinkng/choosing...come to him."*
- Now, that's a big prob for us! Means: by nature we: headed for hell, unless God himself intervenes & makes a major change in hrts. But that's what makes Pent so awesome: J pours out his HS on you/me & whole Ch and effects that change. He works faith in J in your hrt & converts you fr drknss/unbelf to faith/Xp. **Vs. 3b**. But you can, bec Spirit is hard at work within you.
- Likewise **vs. 3a**. If you say that, w/words or behavior, that is not Spirit/God at work w/in you. If you: gossip, spread rumors re ppl; talk bad re ppl, assume worst re ppl; curse/swear/take God's name in vain; if you hardly ever come to ch this summer to worship name/Xp, all those sins of mouth are same as saying, "J be cursed." And that is not the work/Spirit w/in you. Instead, work/Spirit is to stoke fire/faith using MoG, Gos in W&S. So when you come worship, read Scrptrs, hear GW, ponder/treasure baptsm, receive HC – this: HS at work w/in you, causing you to say/mean/bel/live like: J is Lord.
- So, HS is hard at work in you. Also hard at work thru you. He gives you sprtl gifts to serve others. **Vs. 4-6**. So the idea here: HS first makes all these Xians; works faith in our hrts – that's his work in us. Then he freely gives us all kinds of diff sprtl gifts to serve others – that's his work thru us. And all these gifts come fr same source, but they vary fr prsn/prsn. Paul's got whole list here; listen: **vs. 8-9a**. So got: wisdom, knwldg, and faith. Now, all Xians have these gifts to a certain extent. But some Xians are really smart, have lot knwldg, can share knwldg w/others. These: tchrs/GW, scholars, experts. Others have wisdom, prudence, ability to apply knwldg to special, smtms diffelt situations – have wisdom. All bels have saving faith, but some have lots of it! Can you think anyone who is steadfast Xian, faithful to Lord, who has been thru so much hrtach/pain – you think, man, strong faith! So we all have diff gifts. Next: **vs. 9b-10**. Now here we have some remrkbl gifts, like healing & mrcls. J was not only one who perfmd mrcls. Peter healed crippled man in Ac 3. In Ac 5: **"Crowds gathrd...fr the towns around Jrslm, bringing their sick and those tormntd by impure spirits, and all of them were healed" (16)** – by the apostles! Stephen & Philip, Paul & Barnabas – they all performed mrcls & healed ppl. And here it sounds like some ppl in Corinthian church had that same gift, as well. Is that gift still around today? Ever seen on TV those televnglst ministers who do laying on hands, and all sudden sick prsn healed? I can't do that. Would if could. But it seems that HS has determined that gifts of healings/mrcls'd be limited to first few decades of early Xian church. Same thing w/speaking in tongues. On Pent, discs could speak in foreign langs they'd never studied. And after Pent, some Xians had same gift. But again, some of these gifts God limited to a specific window of time in early church.

- However, vs. 11. And even if he has detrmnd that some gifts are only meant for early ch, nvrthlss he's also detrmnd to distribute certain gifts to you. And today I want you think re how God's blessed you, what abilities & sprtl gifts he's given to you. In Rom 12: **"We have diff gifts, acc to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accrdnc w/your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is tchng, then tch; if it is to encrg, then give encrgmnt; if it is giving, then give genrsly; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully"** (6-8). And this list is by no means exhaustive. If Ap Paul were to write letter to SJB, what would he write? "If your gift is: teaching SS, singing in choir, directing choir, playing organ or piano for worship; serving on usher team/stream/altar guild; visiting homebnd/hsptlzd or calling up inactive/stryng members; voluntrng in school, helping spruce up grounds or maintain facility; website developmnt, social media mangmnt, markng; outreach or leadership at Council or board level; encouraging ppl in their stewardship of TTT; letting the bright light of your Xian optimism & joy shine thru your smile & demeanor and become contagious among us in our congregational culture – if any of these things are your sprtl gifts, then use them! Put them to use in service to God/ppl. Volunteer, get involved, work tog, use the gifts HS's given you to work thru you."
- That's why Paul: vs. 7, not just for your own good, but for good of church. I heard this said once in very interesting way: when God gives you sprtl gifts, he wants you give them away.ⁱ When HS blesses you w/sprtl abilities, talents, gifts: don't keep them for yourself; give them away; put them to use – bec when you do, that is the HS hard at work thru you.
- We've got a lot of work to do as a cong. Challenges & opportunities abound. The min/Gos marches on, and God graciously lets us be a part of it. The same HS who was poured out that first Pent is still powerfully at work among us today. He's hard at work in you: creating & strengthening your faith in Xp thru MoG, Gos in W&S. And he's hard at work thru you: blessing you with sprtl gifts to be given away and put to use in service to God/ppl. So let's get to work, together, confident not in ourselves but in Xp and in the HS he sends to work in us and thru us.

1 Corinthians 12:3-11

³Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

ⁱ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhoGVfv4PdU>. Thank you, Ben Middleton, for sharing this reference with me.