

Good morning Crossroads. Good to have you here this morning. We're going to dig deep. Are you ready for that? 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. That's where we're going so take your bibles. Turn there. If you don't have a bible there's one provided probably about knee level at the chair back in front of you. We're working through the book of 1 Corinthians, verse by verse; sometimes word by word making our way through it. We're in chapter 12 right now working on the spiritual gifts and I want to just give you a little bit of warning ahead of time. As we work through the study this morning you're going to be tempted to think what does this have to do with me? How can I really apply this? But hold tight. Hang with me. Learn the text. We're going to come to the application at the end. This does have something to do directly with you.

I was reading a study this week, an interesting study. There's a debate, I guess going on in the medical field; scientists and doctors. What is the most crucial, most important organ in the body? I was reading about this and I thought well, this probably ought to be pretty clear. Maybe the brain would be up there or the heart. I was shocked to find out that the brain nor the heart is considered by most doctors, most scientists not the most crucial organ but, rather, there are other organs that the would place before. For example, one study said that the liver is probably one of the most important organs in the body. It's the chemistry factory for the body and the study went on to say that without the liver the brain won't work; the heart won't work. Other options were the small intestines because of the immune system. Lungs were certainly important. Kidneys. One study mentioned the stomach. I would agree with that. If my stomach's not happy it seems like the rest of my body isn't happy. I continued on through the study and basically what it came down to was there's no definitive conclusion. No one can agree on what organ is the most important. They have agreed that the most important body parts are internal. So it's not our eyes or our ears, our knees, our feet. Those kind of things. It's internal.

Today what we're going to do is we're going to study the internal workings of the body of Christ in this particular passage. These are the gifts that organize, that lead, that manage, that serve, that protect, that sustain and again there are probably no definitive conclusion on what might be the most important of these gifts but we will find that they are put in order.

I want you to take your teaching notes and refer once again to the spiritual gift categories that we've been working out of. We mentioned at the beginning there were three categories: teaching, signs, leadership. We learn that about 4 weeks ago when we started our series on spiritual gifts. We worked through the teaching gifts. The wisdom and knowledge and prophecy and discernment gifts that all lead towards the edification of the body. Then the sign gifts the last couple of weeks. The sign gifts we learned were for a specific purpose, for a specific time. Gifts like faith and healing and miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues. And we're certainly not done with those by any means. We're going to learn more about the gift of tongues as we come to chapter 13 and into chapter 14. But today we're in the third category, the leadership category – apostles, prophet, teachers. I'm going to add one shepherd/teacher out of Ephesians 4:11, the gift of helps and the gift of administration. Now, we find this down at the bottom of the chapter in chapter 12, verse 27 where Paul resumes the list. He talked in the middle of the passage about the metaphor of the body; that we're all important although we might be individuals we're important

in making up the entire body of Christ. Now, he resumes that list, the list of the gifts beginning somewhere around verse 27 and 28. Follow with me as I read.

Paul says, now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed...important word...circle it, underline it. We're going to come back to it. God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing (we've already covered those), helping, administering, and various kinds of tongues. Again, we're going to cover that in the future. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? By the way, when the scriptures ask a question it's not because the bible doesn't know the answer it's being rhetorical. The answer to this would be no. We're not all apostles. We're not all prophets. We're not all teachers and so forth. Verse 31 - But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Now, let's return to that word: appointed. What does this word mean? It's a Greek word. It's actually very easy to define. It means to set or put in place. The same word is used in verse 18 of the same chapter where it says God arranged the members in the body. If you remember when we talked about that last week that it's not by chance that you have certain gifts. It's not by natural ability but, rather, they're spiritual gifts given to you by God. He's arranged the body of Christ. He's arranged the members in the body, each one of them as He chooses it tells us. This is the exact same word. Now he uses it in verse 28. We translate it a bit differently. It's now the word appointed. God has arranged, appointed, chosen in the church first, and then he goes through the list – apostles, prophets, teachers. But what does this tell us? It tells us right off the bat that God has set in place the leaders of the church. Jesus said, I will build my church. It's His responsibility. God essentially is saying in this text I will lead my church by appointing those who will be the foundation of the ministry. What we need to do and when we come to a passage like this, when we see a word like this we need to realize that what God has done for the body of Christ is He has appointed men to lead us so that we might become more like Him; might become more like Christ. So this is not a job that these leaders have but, rather, a divine appointment. That changes the perspective immediately. I'll tell you why – because many times leaders in the church are placed in very difficult circumstances. They have to call people out of unrighteousness into righteousness. And you know how much we like to hang on to our control, to do what we want to do, to be the type of people we want to be. Many times we just want to put right down to the base level we like to hold onto our sin and when someone calls us out of sin to righteousness sometimes that's very difficult to hear. It's also very difficult to do. You call someone, for example, say two people are living together, not married. We know that the scriptures talk about a commitment – a union in marriage and that this type of activity for a believer is not healthy. It's morally wrong. It will lead you to places of really sexual immaturity that Word of God teaches us. And so when a leader of a church has to go to someone and say listen, you're in the middle of something that's not healthy for you. Many times their claws will come out. Their fangs will come out and that's a difficult position to be in. But what we need to do is we need to realize that these people have been placed in our lives to lead us to be more like Christ and so as we're working through this text where we're talking about leaders in the church

we need to view them as men appointed in ministry, ultimately to mature us. It changes our view. It changes our understanding of their roles in our lives.

Now, when you start with that perspective it changes the way you learn about them. So let's get into the text. Let's learn about these leaders. Let's start first with the gift or the office of apostle. We're then going to look at prophet and then teacher. Why? Because Paul enumerates it in order. He starts with apostle and some of the things that you need to be thinking when you're studying the text, you need to be thinking do these gifts still exist today? Are these offices still active? Might I have these gifts, right? Because what we're trying to do is determine what gifts we might have to build the body of Christ. The word apostle is a simple word, *apóstolos* means ambassador, messenger, one sent on a mission. Now, when you hear the word apostle what do you think of? Don't you think about the twelve chosen by Christ? Technically that is an apostle; those chosen by Christ. Paul was an apostle. He was chosen by Christ. The word apostle can also be used in a broad context in the Word of God – people like Barnabas and Silas and Timothy were called apostles. Usually they're defined *apóstoloi* which means messenger rather than *apóstolos* which is more the technical aspect of those chosen by Christ. But throughout the Word of God we have both a very specific meaning and a very general meaning. Let's talk about the specific meaning, the office of apostle or what we're going to see here in a moment in the book of Acts apostleship. We're talking about twelve men, chosen by Christ to follow after Him and to continue the ministry on earth. These are twelve men that were chosen and picked out.

Does the gift, does the office of apostleship continue beyond those twelve men? Well, interestingly enough, if you turn with me over to the book of Acts, Acts, chapter 1 we have an interesting historical record of an event that took place shortly after Judas essentially put the knife in Christ's back and then he, himself feeling so guilty went out and committed suicide. There was a vacancy in the office of apostleship. There was a vacancy in the group. Peter, now being the leader of the group, Jesus has ascended so Peter is now leading the church. He calls the disciples together, verse 15, chapter 1 says there were about one-hundred, twenty of them and he says to them we need to replace Judas. This is where it becomes interesting because we learn the qualification for those who could be chosen to replace him. It starts in verse 21. He's essentially saying this is what we need to do. We need to choose one of the men who accompanied us during all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. Ok, we're starting to see a qualification here. He had to be a part of them; had to be with the life of Christ. Beginning from the baptism of John, which was the beginning of His earthly ministry until the day when He was taken from us one of these men must become with us a, what's it say? Church? A – witness. Right? A witness to what? His resurrection. So, right away we're starting to see some things about an apostle. They've had to have witnessed the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ. They had to be an insider.

Now, continue reading. This was narrowed down out of that group of about one-hundred and twenty down to two which tells us there probably weren't many among them that were qualified for this office. And they put forth two, Joseph called Barsabbas, or also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, (they gave it over to the Lord) you Lord who know the hearts of all show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry an

apostleship, which tells us that it's a small group, a confined group of people, an apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place. And then they cast lots. You're saying – serious? They played a game of craps for the next apostle? Is that's what's going on in the text? No. We don't really know that. We don't know what it means to cast lots. We don't know if that was some kind of dice or some kind of other form. Archeologists has unearthed some things they thought might be something that was used in the early century to cast lots but it's uncertain. In other words, we just don't know. But we do know that the sovereign hand of God was in this and the lots fell to Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Again, I'm emphasizing some of these because this gives you the idea that this was a small group. This was a group of men that fit a very clear qualification.

Now, what happened after these twelve men died and went to be with the Lord? Were they replaced again? We do not see that in history nor do we see that in any other place in the scriptures. We see this as a confined group of people, for a specific purpose, for a specific time and that after that time had passed they were not replaced. Now, I'm telling you this because some of you come from a Catholic background and if you come from a Catholic background then you probably know that the Cardinals of the Catholic church are considered modern day apostles and that actually one of the apostles out of the Cardinals are chosen to be the Vicar of Christ or the Pope. But when we study the scriptures we find that we really don't have evidence for the continuation of this office but, rather, this gift passed away with the original twelve who were what? Witnesses of Christ.

Now, what did the Apostles do? Well, let me help you understand that by going to the prophets because if we say that the Apostles or the office of the Apostles or the gift of the Apostles no longer exists, what do we need to do? We need to go to the next gift. We need to look at the prophets and say, alright. Does the gift of prophet exist today? Well, let's look at what the prophets and the apostles had in common because both of them did some very similar things. There were three things that the prophets and apostles had in common. Number one – they both were the foundation of the church. Ephesians 2:20 tells us. You don't have to turn there but it says we are members of the household of God built on the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets. So, what is the church built on? The church is built on the foundation of these men.

Well, what did they do? Number two – they received and proclaimed the revelation of God. Again, out of the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 3:5. Scriptures were revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. So, apostles and prophets were part of the foundation of the church. They received and proclaimed the revelation. They did that by confirming God's revelation through signs and wonders. They were the ones who were able to heal. They were the ones who were able to perform miracles and why was that? It was because they were sign gifts confirming the revelation that was given to them. So, what are apostles and prophets? They build the foundation of the church. They received, they proclaimed. In other words, they declared the revelation of God. They confirmed the revelation of God through signs and wonders.

But is the office of prophet active today? Well, when you think about the word prophet it sounds very similar to the word prophecy because they're connected. What did we learn about

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prophecy? There are two aspects to prophecy, isn't there? There's a predictive aspect and a declarative aspect. When you think of the word prophesy you think of someone who is able to tell the future. That's not the only thing a prophet does. They also declared the revelation of God. And actually, when you study scripture that's what you find – that wherever the Apostles were the prophets were with them declaring the revelation of God; teaching the revelation of God. You see, the Apostles and prophets together, Acts 13:1, Acts 15:32. They were together. But is the gift active today?

Now, there are some churches, more Pentecostal leaning and charismatic churches that will use the title of prophet for certain leaders of the church but we have to go back to what was the foundation for the apostles and prophets; what was the purpose; what was the reason they existed. Well, one of the reasons they existed was for the revelation of God. Proclaiming the revelation, certainly a part of a prophet but also receiving revelation. Now, what have we learned? Very important – that this book, the revelation of God, given to us by apostles and prophets has been completed. We looked at a verse in the book of Revelation at the end that says we're not to add or take away anything from this book. Jude tells us that it was once and for all delivered to the saints. Where and how was it delivered? It was delivered through the apostles and prophets. So what do we say? That once the revelation was complete, once the Word of God was complete then not only did the signs and wonders pass away because they were confirming the revelation but so did the office and the gift of apostle and prophet. They two passed away.

Interesting if you follow church history. In about the second century of the church it was considered by most that the gifts of apostles and prophets and ceased. The reason why we say that is because there were those who were coming up who were heretical; who were claiming to be apostles; claiming to be prophets and the church was actually was condemning them. One of these men was a man by the name of Montanus and Montanus has an interesting history. He actually had two women that joined him: Pricilla and Maximilla and the way it goes is that Montanus used these two women because they could speak in ecstatic utterances and languages, unknown. And Montanus said that he could translate them. So, here are these women. They're speaking this ecstatic speech. Pricilla and Masimilla. By the way, sometimes I call my two twin girls Pricilla and Maximilla because they speak in ecstatic speech. I can't understand what they say half the time. But, Montanus said that he could understand and he said I'm going to interpret what they say and I'm going to write this down. In fact, what I'm learning is this is new revelation about Jesus Christ. And we ought to put this in the bible. And the early church said, no. You are a heretic and they condemned Montanus for his activities which tells us what? That by the second century the church had already considered the gifts of apostleship and prophet to have ceased; to gone out of existence.

By the way, if you ever hear the term montanus it's often used as a new-montanus or neo-montanus and it's a reference to those involved in the Pentecostal and charismatic movement because many times those in the charismatic movement will look to ecstatic speech as a point of new revelation to them from God which is actually an ancient heresy of the church that as early as the 2nd Century the church was condemning. So, we can say, with a fair amount of certainty that the Apostles and the prophets and those gifts have ceased which leaves us what?

What's next in the list? Teachers. And so what do we see teachers doing? Teachers are not receiving new revelation. They're doing what? They're declaring the revelation that has already been given to us. And really, when you look at it practically throughout the Word of God what do you see? It's the first thing in the New Testament. You see that the office of teacher is very active. In fact, it's used, this word – *dáskalos*, which means one who provides instruction. It's used fifty-eight times throughout the New Testament. Teachers were highly respected. They were highly respected in Christ's day; highly respected in Paul's day.

Think about Jesus for example. Jesus was called a rabbi. What does rabbi mean? It means great teacher. So, a teacher was highly esteemed. Teachers often lived with their students. We see this out of Roman tradition in history. Think about Plato and Aristotle. What did they do? They created these colleges for their students for them to come live with them and be with them. Why is that? You see Jesus taking his disciples; living with them for three years. We see Paul taking Timothy and Silas and Titus – being with them. Why is this? Well, one of the reasons, very practical is books, for example were really something that was given or received by the wealthy; the privileged class. Students couldn't afford that so teachers had to be pedagogical. They had to be repetitive with their students. They had to spend time with them. And what we see develop in the New Testament is this teaching gift actually starts to look like the pastor and we actually get this idea of a pastor/teacher starting to form in scripture to do what? To build upon the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets.

Now, hold your place in 1 Corinthians and come with me over to the book of Ephesians, chapter 4 for a minute because in Corinthians we see a list of gifts represented. In Ephesians, chapter 4 we see another list by the Apostle Paul. He continues or he adds to the list of gifts and what does he say in verse 11? He says almost identically what he's been saying in 1 Corinthians but he adds and watch this. Verse 11. He (God) gave the apostles and the prophets, the evangelists (he adds one – we're going to come back to that in a moment), the pastors and teachers. He adds that to what? To the church, why? To equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.

Now, stop right here for a moment. Parenthetically – listen to what the text just said. It has you written all over it. Look at verse 12 again. Why has God given us apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastor/teachers, why? To equip you, the saints, for what? The work of ministry. Do you realize that's your calling? See, my calling based on, and people say, well, no – you're the minister. No, I'm the administrator. I just administrate so that I can teach you to become the ministers. That's biblical and why do we do this? To build up the body of Christ.

Now, let's back up. Now that you have that understanding let's look at these two new gifts that we've just learned about – evangelist and pastor/teacher. Evangelist. Most you probably understand what an evangelist is. It comes from the word *euaggelistés* which means the Gospel or the good news. So this is one who declares the good news. We know evangelists. Evangelists are those who have a real heart for those who are unredeemed; someone who is able to present the Gospel; teach others to do so also. It's just another form, an extension of the teaching gift. Philip

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was called an evangelist in Acts 21. Timothy was told to do the work of evangelism in 2 Timothy 4:5. Here are people who present the good news and teach others to do also. That is a spiritual gift. By the way, some of you, I believe have that gift. You have a heart for the un-churched. You have a heart for the unredeemed and you have a desire to teach them the Gospel and you have an ability to do so. You likely then have the gift of the evangelist.

Now, let's look at this next gift. This is what I really want you to hone in on. It's the shepherd/teacher or the pastor/teacher that Paul tells us here in verse 11. The word pastor is the word *poimén* which is usually translated shepherd which gives us a word picture, doesn't it – of what the pastor should be. He ought to be like the shepherd; one caring for his flock; feeding his flock. Notice the word *dáskalos*, teacher – same thing. Instructor, teacher – same concept we've already looked at but it's the conjunction that is important. It's the word, the tiny word between pastor/teacher. It can be translated as “and”. It's the Greek word *καί* but it can also be translated “that is” or “in particular”. So, literally what the text could read is that the pastor or the shepherd that is the teacher. In other words, *καί*, the word “and” makes the teacher explanatory in the context. That helps us to find the gift, doesn't it? Because what is the primary of the pastor? But to teach the people. That's what the pastor should be doing. He should be teaching the flock; caring for the flock. How do you care for the flock? By telling them, teaching them the truth like the *dáskalos*, like the teacher. And so what we have in scripture is we essentially have the apostle, the prophet – they're the foundation of the church. They're the ones who equip the church with right doctrine. Then we have the teacher, the evangelist and then the shepherd/teacher that builds on this foundation and what do they do? They equip the church for effective ministry. These are the gifts.

Now. You might be sitting there and might be thinking I don't have any of these. Obviously I'm not an apostle. Can't be one of those. I'm not a prophet. That gift is gone. And I really don't feel like I have the gift of teaching. I'm not sure if I have the gift of evangelism although I care about un-churched people. I seem to stutter and stammer when it comes to giving the Gospel message. And I don't think I've been called to the office of pastor. So, we have to ask the question – a practical question, if you don't have that gift then how do you respond to the gift of teacher, evangelist, shepherd/teacher? Now it's going to get real practical for you. How do you respond to those who have this gift? Let me give you some practical things to think about.

Three. Number one. What do you do? First thing you do is you're thankful for those who have this gift. You're thankful for them. You're thankful for their service because it's truly service to you; service to the body. And when you work through the New Testament, especially Paul? Always thankful for the churches and their leaders. It seems he starts every book that way. Romans 1:8. I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. 1 Corinthians 1:4 – I give thanks to my God always for you. Ephesians 1:16 – I do not cease to give thanks for you. Philippians 1:3 – I thank my God in all my remembrance...we could go on. Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians. He is thankful. And that's an aspect of our role towards those who are leaders over us – that we'll be thankful to their service.

Secondly, because we're thankful we're praying for them. We're praying for them because you already know that the calling is difficult. I was talking to our house church pastors not too long ago and we were talking and it was actually just this past Friday. We meet every other Friday. We spend time praying together, learning together, planning together and there was just a great time of intimacy and transparency among these men. They were getting ready to launch. You heard Deering talking about that. And one house church, the Lexington house church was launching on Wednesday. We have the Ontario house church launching tonight. A lot of activity. And one of our house church pastors, just very transparent said that he has felt like he's been under a great stress, a burden, a spiritual attack in the last days and I tried to encourage him. And then several others mentioned that they were feeling similar feelings and I said well, of course you're going to feel this way. God has appointed you. God has called you to this. He's sending you out. Do you remember what Jesus said to the Apostles when He was sending them out in Matthew chapter 10? He said I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Now wouldn't that make you feel good? Ok, well great. I'll go. Then He goes on and said some of you will be beaten. Some of you will be tortured. You know. He goes into this whole list. Wow...I'm really up for this. But you know what? He's appointed men to do these jobs. And will it be difficult? Yes. There's going to be times of difficulty. For one thing I think there is a spiritual dimension that men called to these positions are under a certain level of spiritual attack. And so what should we be doing as the congregation. We ought to be praying for them; blanketing them with our prayers; covering them with our prayers. That's what we should be doing because why have they been given? We've already seen this. They've been given for our own edification to build up the body, to teach us. So what do we want to do? We want to pray for them.

And the last thing – what do we do? We're submissive to them and to their leadership. We're submissive to them. Do you want to gladden the heart of a leader? Be submissive and I tell you. I know, we live in a culture that says that is one of the last priorities in my life is to be submissive to someone else. We're Americans. We like to be independent. We like to be ourselves. We don't want to have anyone tell us what to do, right? But we are believers before we are Americans. And as believers we are under the allegiance of Jesus Christ – our King and what does His Word tells us? Well, His Word tells us actually a great passage in the book of Hebrews. End of the book – chapter 13, verse 17 says this – a command. Obey your leaders and submit to them. Why? For they are keeping watch over your souls. Do you realize that's the role of the leader, the scriptural leader? They keep watch over your souls. They guide you. They direct you. They encourage you. They teach you. At times, yes they have to pull you out of unrighteousness to righteousness. Why? For this very reason because they're keeping watch over your souls.

So, what do we do? We're thankful. We're praying. We're submissive.

This week I was thinking about our house church pastors and many of these men are giving up other aspects of their life to follow a calling. Why do they do this? Well one – they feel called from God but secondly because they love you and they want to edify you; they want to shepherd you. I was thinking about our paid pastoral staff – Wendell Anderson and Ron Biddle, Deering Dyer. These men, you get to know their hearts when you know their life stories. Ron worked in the corporate world for over 20 years. He was really at the height of his career. His corporation

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offered him a position as the vice president of the corporation. About the same time he was feeling was the call from God to step out of that world and to become a pastor and so he's offered this very lucrative promotion and what does he do? He turns it down to become a pastor. Why? Because he loves you. He has a desire to shepherd you; to teach you. Deering Dyer, active in the political realm; was a lobbyist and heading toward a very lucrative career as a political lobbyist and yet God called him and what did he do? He answered the call. He became a pastor, why? Because he loves you. He wants to shepherd you. Wendell Anderson – retired early from General Motors. Actually could have retired; chose not to; chose to come to work fulltime, different career as a pastor, why? Because he loves you. He wants to shepherd you.

You see, God has given men like this to you; to us as a congregation. So what is our responsibility? We may not have these gifts. We may be looking at this and say what does this have to do with me? I'll tell you what – when you understand how the gifts operate you understand that they directly impact you because you're part of the body. You might be an individual and not have this gift but you're around those that do. You're a part of the body of Christ and so what's our responsibility? Be thankful. Be praying. Be submissive. Thank God for these men who love us and shepherd us. Let's pray together.