

1 Title Slide

2 Review

- Jesus's atonement for sin was for a purpose.
- That purpose was for believers in Jesus Christ to receive the promise of the Father and become vessels of the Holy Spirit.
- When we are filled with the Holy Spirit,
 - we are guided in our understanding of God's will,
 - we have power to live out the new life, and
 - be a witness to what God can do through those who trust him.
- So it is an imperative that we not only receive God's provision for the forgiveness of sin, but be and keep being filled with the Holy Spirit.

3 Review

- To be filled and keep being filled, we must not only,
 - ask, seek, and knock (pray), but also . . .
 - be alert (to temptation) and be wise in how we live . . . because we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God and so frustrate what God wants to do through His church.

4 The Church at Corinth

5 Corinth

- The church at Corinth was a very interesting church.
 - It fell not behind in any of the spiritual gifts. (1 Cor 1:7)
 - However, at the same time, Paul referred to this church as worldly — mere infants in Christ. (1 Cor 3:1 NIV)
 - He then described them in 1 Cor. 6:7, as completely defeated already.
 - When you think the church could go no lower, Paul told them, “your meetings do more harm than good.” (1 Cor. 11:17 NIV), and
 - Due to the mistreatment of the body of Christ and their failure to judge themselves, God was ignoring their prayers and this was why, “many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor. 11:30 NIV)

6 NOTE!

- If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Corinthians 3:12–15 NIV)
 - Backsliders will be saved in the end, but lose their reward.
 - God will judge people for the motives behind their work.

- Ineffective ministers will lose their reward, if the people they minister to aren't equipped to deal with life's trials—especially the trials of the last days.

7 NOTE!

- What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:5–9 NIV)
- One of the problems of the Corinthian church was they couldn't handle the diversity of spiritual gifts and roles within the body of Christ—especially among the Five-fold ministries.
- Instead of embracing each minister as a legitimate contributor to their faith, they tended to choose favorites to the exclusion of others.
- This misunderstanding was a major contributor that caused division, strife, and contention within the church.

8 Why?

- So then, why was the Corinthian church—a church that abounded in spiritual gifts, having so many spiritual problems?
- How is it possible to be so spiritual at one level and then have your founding apostle and pastor tell you that your Celebration Services are doing so much harm that God has stopped answering your prayers? (1 Cor 11:27–32)
- Here is the reason . . . so let us pay attention!
- Gifts are given, Fruit grows!

9 Fruit

- The first thing to know and understand about fruit is that they are the byproduct of a healthy tree, plant, or vine.
- So if you see “good fruit” that is full, rich, and delicious, you know that the tree it came from was healthy.
- So “spiritual fruit” is the byproduct of someone who is spiritually healthy.
- It represents their faith, character, knowledge of God's will, and willingness to be like Jesus.
- In fact, without spiritual fruit in our lives, the spiritual gifts can be annoying, irritating, and a distraction in what God is wanting to do.

10 Fruit

- Jesus is very clear about this, unless we abide in Him, we can't produce fruit at all. As he says, . . .

- Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4 NIV)
- So how do we remain in him?
 - As it says, in John 15:7, we remain in him if we abide in his word.
 - In other words, if we live out Jesus' words in our daily life, he by the Spirit of God will abide in us and the fruit of the Spirit will surely grow.
 - This is a process and develops over time as we; 1) apply ourselves to God's word, and 2) listen and obey our conscience—which is what it means to “walk in the Spirit.”

11 Point

- Even though the Corinthians were probably taught on the importance of spiritual fruit by the Apostle Paul, this teaching somehow got lost when other ministers arrived to help the church.
- Some of these ministers were probably good and helpful like—Apollos.
- Some were no doubt were harmful—especially a group that Paul speaks of as “Super Apostles.”
- They were men who boasted about their ministries and their many esoteric experiences (i.e., visions), to gain trust, respect, and most importantly support from the church.

12 Point

- Not only did they try to alienate the Apostle Paul from the Corinthians, but they
 - lowered Christian moral standards to the standards of the world (2 Cor. 10:2), and
 - evidently made spiritual gifts and esoteric experiences the measure of all spirituality.
- Therefore, since these men were misleading the church, the Apostle Paul referred to them as . . . false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:13 NIV)

13 Strongholds

- I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people . . . [Super Apostles] (2 Cor. 10:2 NIV)
- The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Cor. 10:4)
- And what are strongholds?
 - [A]rguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God . . . (2 Cor. 10:5)
 - Or in other words, strongholds are misguided concepts, principles, and teachings that influence us on how to live for God.
- And how does Paul demolish these strongholds?

- Taking captive every thought . . . (changing opinions and understanding)
- [by] punishing every act of disobedience. (2 Cor. 10:6)

14 OK Corral

- So how was the Apostle Paul going to punish every act of disobedience?
 - But I will come to you very soon, . . . then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. (1 Cor. 4:19–20 NIV)
 - What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit? (1 Cor. 4:21 NIV)
 - I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. (2 Cor. 13:2–3 NIV)

15 OK Corral

- This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority — the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. (2 Cor. 13:10 NIV)
- Did the Apostle Paul ever use his authority?
 - Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Tim. 1:20 NIV)
- What happens when someone is handed over to Satan?
 - Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed. (1 Cor. 5:5 NIV)
 - Or in other words, when we are handed over to Satan, we lose God’s divine protection and become tormented by evil spirits where we learn our lesson and repent.

16 The Point

- The Super Apostles in Paul’s day almost shipwrecked the faith of the Corinthian church.
- While the church abounded in spiritual gifts and perhaps seemed very spiritual, they were very immature—full of division, strife, and selfish behavior.
- Gnostic philosophical strongholds had taken such a root in the church that few were abiding in Christ any longer.
 - Not only did their services do more harm than good because they failed to discern the body of the Lord,
 - God no longer was responding to their prayers.

17 The Point

- If God is no longer responding to our prayers, what should we do?

- Remember the words of Christ, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” (John 15:7 NIV)
- So then, if we do what pleases the Lord, we receive from God anything we ask?
 - Dear friends, . . . we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. (1 John 3:21–24 NIV)
- Therefore, let us live in Him and He will live in us! We will produce much fruit and our prayers will avail much.

18  Juicy Fruit