

## TRINITY 10

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 12. 1, LUKE 19:41

“THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF GIFTS, BUT THE SAME SPIRIT. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SERVICE, BUT THE SAME LORD. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKING, BUT THE SAME GOD WORKS ALL OF THEM IN ALL MEN.”

This morning I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has blessed each of us, saved us, and blessed us, and asks us what have we done with our gifts in His service. Amen.

I am often amazed by the talent that I see in the people who come to God's church. It is the type of talent that I often admire and think to myself that God has truly blessed this person. These talents are very diverse, be it the wonderful playing of the organ which such wonderful music into our worship, or the singing of our choir, the work of the Ladies Guild in preparing a reception or holding a fair, the weekly efforts to keep the gardens up handle the routine maintenance around the church. Many folks offer the best they have to serve God's church, their time, their talents, their resources-all are expressions of their faith and their expression of thanksgiving for the blessings God has given them. They recognize that works do not earn salvation but that salvation is a free gift from God, given by His grace and accepted by our faith. That faith moves in us and through the power of the Holy Spirit, opens our heart to do God's work.

St. Paul tells us this morning in the Epistle that the Holy Spirit is in us and we now it because “no man who has the spirit can curse Jesus, and that no man may say Jesus is Lord except through the power of the Holy Spirit.” He also tells us that it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we are given the many diverse gifts that we see so often expressed in the work of the church. To some the word of wisdom, others knowledge, others faith, to some the gifts of healing, or working of miracles, or the ability to prophesize, or the discerning of spirits, or to speak in tongues, or to interpret what has been said-all gifts of the spirit.

As we look at the talented brothers and sisters in Christ around us we realize that the church has in it many wonderful people, with many wonderful gifts and who are dedicated to putting those gifts to work in God's work here on Earth, Yet we struggle, and so much needs to be done and still is not being addressed. So many have yet to hear the Gospel, so many have no hope, so many have still not been touched by the Word of God.

Our church is a beacon of hope in our community. Churches all around have closed. Yet we still fight the good fight and keep our doors open to those who are seeking solace in their life and try to understand the hope that we have been given through the salvation of Jesus Christ. In that struggle we have survived both battles from outside of the church and also battles within. God has stayed with us because we are here to do His work-a small few left to do so much.

But we are given a warning in the Gospel this morning.

“AND WHEN HE CAME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT,  
...BECAUSE YOU DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE TIME OF GOD'S COMING TO YOU.”

As our Lord approached Jerusalem, he was coming to the center of God's church on Earth in that time. This was the spiritual center of the universe, the temple of God's glory, the religious monument to the worship of God by the Jews. Yet the Lord saw it for what it was. It was not

God's house but man's. It had become corrupt, moneychangers occupied the grounds of the temple, the leaders of the church had drifted far from God's intent. Jesus knew that all that had been built up by man in the name of God, would soon be destroyed and that the nation would be scattered and cast to the winds.

Man took God's church and made it his own, with all of man's weaknesses, evil and ego. He corrupted what had been given him through the gifts of the spirit. Eventually, the Jewish nation would fall and its people separated for the next 2 centuries. Several centuries later, the same would happen to Rome. Christianity had become the official religion and although it was growing throughout the empire, that empire soon collapsed because of its ungodliness.

Is there a warning here for us today? As we look around us, we see some parts of the church gone mad. God has been replaced by man, and everything that is pleasurable to man has become the center of worship and practice. God's church has been corrupted and the end result is that those churches are being abandoned by God and they are closing.

You know the type. Churches that have become social clubs. Churches where there is little attendance at Bible study if there is Bible study at all. Churches where new members feel unwelcome. Churches where its members come and go more out of habit than desire. Churches where only a dedicated few keep the activities alive in the church while others make little effort. Churches where no effort is being made to reach out to the poor in spirit with the hope that comes in Jesus Christ. There is a name for these folks-we call them the frozen chosen.

Why did God weep over Jerusalem? For the same reason that He is weeping over us today. Because in His love for us, He stretched out His arms on the cross so that we may have hope, so that we may have His salvation, so that we may feel His love for us-yet in our expression of our faith, we show very little appreciation.

The work of the church does not belong to the legacy of any parish or denomination, it belongs to each and every one of us. This is God's church, not man's. This is His sanctuary, not ours. There is so much that needs to be done and all of us, if our faith is real, we to express it. We have been blessed in our lives with His gifts and with many wonderful blessings. How many struggle? How many need to hear the Gospel who have no hope? How many are suffering and have no faith? How many are poor in spirit and have no support? How many are hungry, and have no food? How many are naked and have no clothes?

Each of us must, as our Lord tells us, "take up our cross" and hold the light of Christ up as a reflection of His love and blessings in our lives. It is not only what we say in His name, but also what we do through faith. Spread the Gospel, lift up your hands in His service, open your heart in His name to all, and may the words of our mouth, and the works of our hands, be acceptable in His sight, our Lord and our Redeemer. AMEN