



WEEK 9: THE HARD PLACES OF HONOR

JEFF HOOVER - NOVEMBER 29, 2015 - EVANGEL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

- THE LENS WE LOOK THROUGH

- **What do we see** through our current “church lens”?
 - The **most important person** in the church is the pastor.
 - The **goal of the pastor** is to get everyone to see and appreciate things through HIS lens.
 - If that’s not possible, there are **plenty other churches** in town to be a part of.
- The kingdom of God is always advancing. Much of that advancement comes through normal people, like you and I, who are given the ability to do amazing things (like trust, faith, the ability to forgive, etc.). Christ has given gifts to the church that enable us to be who he created us to be. These gifts are specific **abilities** Jesus gives specific **people** for specific **assignments**.
 - **Ephesian 4...The “five-fold ministry”**
 - ¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. ⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.
 - ⁷ However, **he has given each one of us a special gift** through the generosity of Christ. ⁸ That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.”
 - ⁹ Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. ¹⁰ And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.
 - ¹¹ Now **these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers**. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. (Eph 4:1–13 NLT-SE)
 - **1 Corinthians 12...Another “gift” list.**
 - ¹ Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about **the special abilities the Spirit gives us**. I don’t want you to misunderstand this. ² You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.
 - ⁴ There are **different kinds of spiritual gifts**, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are **different kinds of service**, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

- **7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.** ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to **give wise advice**; to another the same Spirit gives a message of **special knowledge**. ⁹ The same Spirit gives **great faith** to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the **gift of healing**. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to **perform miracles**, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the **ability to discern** whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the **ability to speak in unknown languages**, while another is given the ability to **interpret what is being said**. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.
- ¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.
- **Looking through different lenses:** ¹⁴ Yes, the body has **many different parts**, not just one part. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?
- **18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it.** ¹⁹ How strange a body would be if it had only one part! ²⁰ Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. ²¹ The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."
- ²² In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. ²³ And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, ²⁴ while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. ²⁵ This makes for **harmony** among the members, so that **all the members care for each other**. ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.
- **27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.** ²⁸ Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are **apostles**, second are **prophets**, third are **teachers**, then those who do **miracles**, those who have the gift of **healing**, those who can **help** others, those who have the gift of **leadership**, those who **speak in unknown languages**.
- ²⁹ Are we all **apostles**? Are we all **prophets**? Are we all **teachers**? Do we all have the power to do miracles? ³⁰ Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! ³¹ So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all. (1 Cor 12:1–31 NLT-SE)

- WHY CAN'T PEOPLE BE MORE LIKE ME?

- The **problem with "lenses"** is that everyone has one. What color zebra do you see?
- The church has made a doctrine out of agreement. It's often the hill they will live and die on. Our expectation and goal is to **all** see the same thing, the same way... **the way the pastor sees it!** The truth is, we need **lots of lenses**, not just one we all agree on.
- In 1 Cor 12:22-26, Paul writes that God sees the different parts of his body as **necessary**, worth **protecting**, and deserving **honor**. All this adds up to "**harmony among the members, so that all the members care** (have "equal concern," NIV) **for each other**."

- WHEN IT'S HARD TO HONOR

- **Everyone gets hurt.** Everyone gets wounded. It's really difficult to give honor when you are...
 - Being **wounded**. He **heals** the brokenhearted and **binds up** their wounds. (Psa 147:3 ESV)
 - Being **lied to**. ³ And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. ⁴ If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person **is a liar and is not living in the truth**. ⁵ But

those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. (1 John 2:3–5 NLT-SE)

- Being **betrayed**. ⁹ “You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. ¹⁰ **And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other.** ¹¹ And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. ¹² Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come. (Matt 24:9–14 NLT-SE)
- The **downward spiral** that comes as a result of a **lack of honor** can perpetuate...
 - **Disagreement**. ¹⁰ So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For the Scriptures say, “‘As surely as I live,’ says the LORD, ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will confess and give praise to God.’” ¹² Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³ So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to **live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.** (Rom 14:10–13 NLT-SE)
 - **Disappointment**. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to **give them a rich and satisfying life.** (John 10:10 NLT-SE)
 - **Discouragement**. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because **I have overcome the world.**” (John 16:33 NLT-SE)
 - **Despair**. ¹⁷ The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. ¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; **he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.** ¹⁹ The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time. ²⁰ For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken! (Psa 34:17–20 NLT-SE)
- **Family forever!**
 - “How many of you have family members?”
 - “How many of you have family members who have **disagreed** with you, **hurt** you, **disappointed** you, or even **betrayed** you?”
 - “How many of those people are **still** family members?”

– OVERCOMING WITH HONOR

- **Seeing what Heaven sees...** I heard of someone who would memorize the prophetic words that were given to people. When asked why, they said, “Then I know how to treat them according to how Heaven sees them.”
 - “You only have as much influence in someone's life as they have value for you. It's about invitation, not invasion!” Chris Vallotton
- The reason 1 Cor. says, “first are **apostles**, second are **prophets**, third are **teachers**, then...” is because of what's most important to these people because of the lens they see through:
 - **Apostles**...Heaven coming to Earth
 - **Prophets**...The activity of the Spirit
 - **Teachers**...The truth in the Word
- These engifted individuals serve as **containers and conduits for revelation**. They are most willing to see things the way Heaven sees and reveal it to the rest of us.
- **The need for fathers...** One of the greatest needs in our city is to address the issue of “fatherlessness.” To take a serious look at fatherlessness, we need to look at the world through a lens of “honor.” For this to happen, the body of Christ needs **apostles**:
 - Apostles are those who **live to bring Heaven to earth.**
 - Apostles **reveal the Father**...

- So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. (John 5:19 NLT-SE)
- Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do. (John 14:11 NLT-SE)
- Jesus replied, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?” (John 14:9 NLT-SE)
- Apostles are on the scene to **confront the “orphan spirit.”**
- **When you kill off the apostles, the church becomes an orphanage!**
- The role of the apostle is to **re-establish and release a “spirit of adoption.”**
 - For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but **you have received the Spirit of adoption** as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Rom 8:15 ESV)
 - They are the people of Israel, **chosen to be God’s adopted children.** God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. (Rom 9:4 NLT-SE)
 - God **decided in advance to adopt us into his own family** by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and **it gave him great pleasure.** (Eph 1:5 NLT-SE)