



home church studies

Psalm 36:5-10

[Worship]

5 Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. 6 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O LORD. 7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. 8 They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. 9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. 10 O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Consider:

[Words]

As the early Christian community struggled to define itself, countless issues arose that challenged its identity at every turn. The community had to decide, once and again, what it meant to be Christian, in faith, action, and creed. As Paul describes, many concerns arose regarding the charismatic gifts of the spirit. The Corinthian community, apparently overwhelmed by members who spoke in tongues, was excluding other charisms. Paul thus had to reinforce the importance of every gift and contribution to the community, saying that "there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone" (1 Corinthians 12:6). Since the source of every gift is God alone, each must be respected, honored, and practiced in the community equally. His advice also cautions the Corinthians—and us—against making one gift more important or powerful in the community. Preaching is as important as administration, and

public representation is as important as counsel. Each gift should be valued and represented equally in our communities.

John, too, treats the issue of signs as a means of revealing the presence of God. For John, it is crucial that Jesus perform a sign at the beginning of his ministry to confirm—for the disciples and for us—that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Jesus is the one capable of bringing God's living Spirit directly into human history and into our lives. His first sign, the changing of water into wine, is also his first action following the calling of the disciples, and with it John conveys the transformative power of God.

Jesus' actions also confirm the words of the psalmist, who describes God's food and drink as endless, as the very source of life and light: "They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light" (Psalm 36:8-9). The one who makes water into wine also makes human flesh into sacrament, if we, like the disciples, are willing to leave everything and follow Jesus. Michaela Bruzzese

[Scripture]

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.