Is It Not a Participation? - Sermon Transcript 11/08/2026

Amen. I'm Grant Hill, if I haven't met you yet. I'm a pastor here at the Garden Gathering Church. And yeah, let's go to 1 Corinthians here and let's see what the Lord is doing. We're in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, in verse 12, it says, I'm in the English Standard Version, so with yourselves, since you are eager for the manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. Strive to excel in building up the church. So what we have encountered here today is this, that there's a group of people here that are eager to understand the Spirit of God, and the manifestation of the Spirit is, in words, a prophecy.

If you keep going down a little further, it says in verse 26, What then, brothers, when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or three at most and each in turn and let someone interpret. Keep going down to verse 29. Let two or three prophets speak and let others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not a God of confusion, but a God of peace. And so what we have encountered here this morning is this, that one by one for the edifying, for the building up of the church, so that all would be encouraged, you heard multiple people gain a revelation and bring it. That's called prophecy. Prophecy is for building up the church. Prophecy is for building up the church. Tongues and interpretation of tongues are for the unbeliever. In that God surely is speaking. If someone comes and delivers a tongue and then another interprets what God has said, that is for an unbeliever of surely God is in your midst.

It says it in the same chapter. And so we're explaining this is the gospel of the kingdom. This is the gospel of the kingdom. It's not church. It is following the Spirit of the living God, who is the Spirit of Jesus, who is the Word of God. Jesus said, I am the Word who has come. I am the Word of life. And so this is not outside of Jesus because it is Him. He is this. Does this make sense? And that is what you are encountering here this morning, right? 1 Corinthians, keep going back a little bit. Can I go back a couple concerning those spiritual gifts, right?

Chapter 12. Yes? Chapter 12 says this in verse 3, therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says Jesus is accursed. And no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. We're following the Spirit. Verse 4, now there are varieties of

gifts but the same Holy Spirit. And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all and everyone. To each, say to each. Could it say to all? Yes, it could say to all. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for what?

For the common good. It's not about me. It's not about me. It's not. It's not. The book of Corinthians is a letter of a reprimand because the Corinthians had made the gifts of the Spirit about them. And because they came in that attitude, Paul had to correct them and say, it's not about you. It's about edifying your brothers and sisters in Christ. It's about glorifying God. That's why we have the gifts of the Spirit. But the tone in which the book was written made people think we need to not do the gifts of the Spirit because they're too harmful, or they can be so harmful to the edifying of the church because they're used incorrectly.

And Paul is not saying, don't do the gifts of the Spirit. He says, understand that it's not about you. It's not about what You want me to do, God. It's about what You want to do. It's for the common good. Verse 8, for to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom. Did that happen today? To another was given the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit. Did that happen today? To another faith by the same Spirit. Did that happen today? To another gifts of healings by the same Spirit. Did that happen today? To another the workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of those tongues.

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit. who apportions to each one individually as He wills for the moment, for the day. Behold, His mercies are new every morning. It's a new day. You understand? Go to Hebrews. This isn't my notes, obviously. This is what the Lord is wanting to speak on here for a little bit. Hebrews. Let me find it. I think it's Hebrews 5. Verse 11. You with me? Hebrews 5, verse 11. After this we have much to say and it is hard to explain since you have become dull of hearing. Never become dull of hearing the words of the Lord.

If this is common to you, then the Spirit is not holy. Because what is common is not holy. What is commonplace is not holy. Whenever Jesus says that you have been set apart, you are separated. That's holiness, unique, not of the common, not of the mundane, not of the dull. And so if we have gotten dull of hearing the Spirit of God, then the Spirit is not holy to you anymore. The beginning of all wisdom is the fear of the Lord. That I would have the spirit of the fear of the Lord. Do you understand? Verse 13, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is like a child.

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have the powers of their discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. We're here to practice the faith. We're here to practice the faith. This isn't just to be, this isn't supposed to be the battleground. This is to practice for the real world. When you're really tested, when you're in front of an unbeliever who challenges the faith that you have. The challenge is the yes that you have. The challenge is that I know the Spirit of God. I know that in me. Was Jesus ever challenged? Yes. Was it in the synagogue? Actually it was.

But it was also outside of the house of God. And so we are here to glorify God, yes. We are here to gain understanding, yes. We are here to encounter the living God, yes. But we're also here to practice your faith. To practice the faith of the living God. This is a safe place. Nobody here is going to be like, I don't want to hear God. You're here because you want to hear God. You're here because you want to encounter God. You're here because you want to see the real deal. Is He real or is He not? Is the God of this Bible real or is He not?

Why would He write these things if He's not real for today? There was a little boy that asked that question and he's standing in front of you. Because you have to encounter the real God of the real Bible if He's really true. You have to really know. And He shows Himself faithful to you. Yes, Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11:6 says this, it is impossible to please Him without faith. This is why you're here. 11:6, and without faith it is impossible to please Him. Who's Him? God. For whoever would draw near to God today must believe that He exists. You first must believe there is a God and He exists.

And He doesn't just live in the ever after and He doesn't just live up there. But He's here and He's now and He's for me. Christians can be very agnostic. Agnosticism is when you say, I believe God has had His imprints and His handprints on this world, but then He has backed off and allowed us to just do the game and He watches us. And Christians can sometimes feel like God is up there and I'm down here to just get beat up by the devil. And God says, no, I named My son Emmanuel, God with you. That's who I've always wanted to be. It was God with you, Emmanuel, God with us.

Here I am. You understand? And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and, what? That He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. If you are diligently seeking God, He is a rewarder. He will meet you where you're seeking. That's why we're here. But you cannot be dull of hearing. This cannot be a common thing. It can be an expected thing. It can be an anticipated thing. You know Christmas is coming. You know Christmas is coming. You are expecting Christmas. But when Christmas becomes dull, you've lost something. When you come to the house of the Lord, what expectation?

Amen? Yes. In Hebrews it says that do not be of the habit of those who do not assemble together. Why? Do not neglect assembling together as some are in the habit of doing. Do you know that verse? Yes? And it says, seek to encourage one another. Seek to encourage one another for all's good. You cannot do that if you are apart. You can now. Technology makes it somewhat easier, but it's not the same. It's not the same. There's a term that's where we get the word church, it's called ekklesia, but next to it, says koinoia. It's A Greek term because the Bible was written in Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek.

And the Greek term koinoia means a unity, a coming together, a uniting, But it's a term that happens, it's a term that the Greeks were saying happened through experiences together. Not necessarily like you're just unified because you have the same mindset, that's a part of it, but it's more of like soldiers that were on the battlefield. And when they come back home and they meet together, there's a unity. because they saw each other's eyes when they lived through that battle. And they encountered something together that bonded them. That's what it should be like coming to the house of the Lord. That you have stood by someone and encountered God with them.

Donetta brought it up. Like, I remember, right? I remember. That's the unity of the Spirit. That's hard to do through online. That's hard. We have it, but it's just a taste of the encounter with the Lord. That's why the Bible 2,000 years ago wrote, don't get in the habit of not assembling together. 2,000 years ago, before, way before, don't get into the habit of not assembling together, but seek to encourage others and exhort others and build them up. Don't get into a habit because there's a koinoia that happens when we are together. There is an encountering with the Spirit of God that happens. We had a testimony last Sunday from Jesse Duplantis when he was preaching somewhere.

He's an evangelist, if you didn't know, so all he does is travel to save souls. And he was at a church and there was such an encounter with the glory of God that everybody fell What we call falling out means they all were under the presence of God and they couldn't stand up. This is actually biblical. It happens in the temple of Solomon and the dedication of the temple. It says the glory of the Lord filled the temple and all the priests couldn't minister so much that they fell down. And it happened as this man was preaching and there was nobody to preach to so he sat down on the stairs and just looked at him.

That would be great right now, by the way. It would. Why? Because you're not here to encounter a preacher. You're here to encounter God, I hope. And He's here. He's here to encounter the living God. Yes? I want to go to a scripture here. Let's go to... Let's go to 1 Corinthians. We're going to kind of hang out here a little bit. Say thank you, Jesus. You are on the move. Yep. 1 Corinthians 10. There is a holiness. 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 16.

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? And the bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. We're just talking about a unity of the Spirit. Even any action that you do can be an encounter with God. Anything. The reason why we do worship is because one king decided, I'm going to worship God as an act to Him. In Colossians, it says that anything that you find yourself doing, do it unto the Lord. Christ Himself told us to do the taking of the bread and taking of the wine at His day or the juice. as a act of remembrance of Him. But there is a koinoia that's supposed to happen.

There is a remembrance of encounter. There is a remembrance of somebody touched His hands and touched His scars. He came before Thomas and said, touch them. And that man was one of the witnesses that says, I saw it. I saw it. I saw a man from Nazareth get crucified and then rose. I handled Him. I ate with Him. This is what we believe, that Jesus was 100% God, yes, born of the Spirit in His mama's womb, but also born 100% man. So that when we say you can do the works that He did, you have no excuse. because He did the works 100% clean and pure and whole, sinless by the Holy Spirit.

And so when He asks you to heal the sick and raise the dead and cleanse the lepers and cast out the demons, freely you have been given, now freely give, you can't turn around and say, well, you are God. He goes, no, I emptied Myself, not taking on the form of divinity, but submitting to the Holy Spirit in everything so that you can look Me in the eyes and say, you can do it in Me. You can do it in Christ. You can do it in the Spirit as I did it in the Spirit. Wow, that's a greater hope. There's no excuse to submit to the Holy Spirit.

Is it not a participation with the blood? Is it not a participation with the body? Is it not a participation Is it not a participation with the living God? Everything that we do can be a participation with His Spirit, even taking the bread and the cup. Is it not a participation to be unified in the Spirit of God? Wow, yes. Go to Psalm 68. Jesus calls the solitary and puts them into families. Did you know that? He sees you. Said He sees me. Yeah. He sees me. He saw me. And He put me in a family. Psalm 68:5. He is a father to the fatherless and a protector of widows.

This is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home. He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land. God settles. That means He sees the solitary. He sees those without a home. He finds the lonely. He finds the orphan. He finds them. He sees them. He says, I know you, and I will get you into a home. This is a house that you've been called to. There is a participation in the house. There's A

participation in the house of God. Yes? Go to Psalm 113. He does not wish that you would be alone. How do we know that?

Because in the very, very, very, very, very beginning, He saw Adam. Remember Adam? He saw Adam. And you know what God said about Adam? It is not good for you to be alone. It's not good for you to be alone. And you could be like, but God was in the garden with him. He had God. God is all that you need. But He still, He looked at us and He said, it's not good for you to be alone. You're in the image and likeness of Me and it's not good for Me to be alone and I made you because I want a family. And then He made Eve to make a family.

It's about families. He is a family. God. That's why He's called the Father. He's called the Father. Amen. Psalm 113:9 says, He gives the barren woman a home. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord. How in the world? Physical children, yes, but also many, many spiritual children. How can you be a spiritual mother or a spiritual father? You join into the house of the Lord and you are going to be a participant of the Spirit of God and raise up sons and daughters in the kingdom. You're going to be a daughter who becomes a mother.

What are those called? Elders. You're going to be a son who becomes a father. What are those called? Elders in the house of the Lord. This is what it looks like. Is it not a participation? Is it not a participation with the body of Christ? Is it not a participation with His blood? Is it not a participation with Him? Do you see? Do you see? Let's go to Colossians 1. The family of God is here. If God has called you to a house, what is your call? If He has found you and put you in a house, you have to know your calling in God.

And your calling in God is to be practiced and used in the house of God that you're in. If it is to prophesy, prophesy. If it's to encourage, encourage. If it is to be generous and giving, be generous and giving. If it is to help, then help. Practice your calling in the house of the Lord. Practice your calling in the house of the Lord. If I have been called to a house, this is the house. He had found me and He set me in a family. and I'm going to practice my calling in the house of the Lord, that I might make my calling sure and my election guaranteed in His hands.

These are words in the scripture. Yes? Colossians 1:9-10. Have you heard this? Yes? Colossians 1:9-10 says this. And so From the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will. What is your calling? In all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Amen. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians. We're going to hop a little bit. Say hop. 1 Thessalonians 2:11. I could preach or I could let Jesus teach.

I like giving you the word. I like giving you these words and you seeing them and you eating them. Yes? 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 says this. Yes? For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. What am I doing? What am I doing? What am I doing? I am trying to be like a father with his children, exhorting each one of you and encouraging you and charging you and comforting you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Yes? 1 Corinthians 4 says it this way. 1 Corinthians 4 says it this way. If you come into a house, you're going to be with a father. But you can stand back 1 Corinthians 4:14 says this. I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. As what? My beloved children. Not as my disciples, not as my servants. I'm admonishing you. I'm trying to convict to bring some action. As my beloved children, what does he say? For though you have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Wow. What does it say? For though you have 10,000 instructors in Christ, You do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. What does this mean? It's even worse now. I can find any Christian to instruct me today. I can. They're in Christ. I can go on social media now and find the exact instructors that I want that will speak to me how I want to be instructed. and what I am willing to hear, and as far as I am willing to go, and as far as I'm willing to be challenged. And if I don't like it, I can pluck off, go to 9,999.

Or I can go up to 15,000. I can go as far as I want to. But yet this was written so long ago. He's not saying that they're evil. He's not saying that they're wrong. He says they are instructors in Christ. but you don't have many fathers. You don't have many fathers, but I am not one that will hold back. So you'll see a lot of fathering churches that are not flourishing because it's easy to leave a fathering church. It's not just in this city, it's not just in this state, it's in all of the Western society because technology has made it easy. But is it not a participation in the body?

Is it not a participation in the blood to practice your call in the house of the Lord? You need it. You got to do it. If you want to see your destiny in Christ, you got to do it with people. The Father is a people person. He went and did it with the people. He is a people people. He is a people person. I can't even say it. It's so hard. He's a people person and you must be connected to people. You cannot isolate, you cannot go into solidarity because then He will find you and He will put you in a house. You can go and isolate all you want, but He says, I see you and I will find you and I will put you in a house.

Psalm 68. God sees the solitary and He settles them in houses. It's whether you want to be there or not. Yes? 2 Corinthians, say we're popping. We're popping. 2 Corinthians 5:14. You with me? For the love of Christ controls us. 2 Corinthians 5:14, for the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one, Jesus, has died for all. Therefore all have died. And He died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. that we would not live for ourselves, that it's not about me. The manifestations of the Spirit are not about me, that I would be living not for myself anymore, but for Him who died for me.

Is it not a participation with the one who died for me? Even the simple act, is it not a participation, a koinoia, with the body of Christ? Yes, Ephesians 4. Are you a participant? Are you a participant? Ephesians 4:1-6. Therefore I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you, I'm urging you, to walk in a manner worthy of your calling, to which you have been called. With all humility, and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity, the koinonia, of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Amen. through all and in all. Walk worthy in the manner of your calling to which you have been called. There is a question, there is an ask. There is an endurance and there is a participation. I want us to go to Romans 5, and this is where we'll end tonight. Romans 5. We are participating with Christ and we can partake in His character through hard things. Some of the hardest things is being around others who don't think like you. That's why He calls us. Don't get into the habit of not assembling together. Don't just surround yourself with people who are like you because He's going to find people and bring them to a family.

He's going to find and bring them here. You don't get to choose the family that you were born into. At least I didn't. And so why would you get to choose the family that He calls you to in the house of God? And so wherever He calls you, be found faithful to be a participant as one body in the house of the Lord and practice The faith. Do you see it? Brandy's been talking about enhancement of the Spirit. Spiritual enhancement, that you go from faith to faith, glory to glory, hope to hope, love to love, encounter to encounter. As you grow in the Spirit, it's for the building up of the body of Christ, till we all come into the knowledge of Him.

Part of how we do that is you get in uncomfortable situations. Do not become dull of hearing. Do not become comfortable. Be uncomfortable. Do not just expect that this is what we're going to do. Don't expect that even when we're doing it, that's not what God might just want to do at the end of this. We have to be expectant, but yet curious of what the Holy Spirit is going to do because He's very unique. He's very different. There's no one

like Him. There's no one that sounds like Him. There's no one that moves like Him. There's no one that thinks like the Holy Spirit.

He's very unique and sometimes He doesn't say anything and yet you just, you know how He feels. Can you know God this way? Yes. How? By practicing distinguishing between good and evil in the house of the Lord and knowing your own soul in front of Him. Do you know what I'm saying? Are we there? We're in Romans 5. I'm going to start in verse 3. You with me? Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings. Some translations say tribulations. We rejoice in tribulation. We rejoice in sufferings. You can partake in the sufferings of Christ. You can partake in the sufferings of Christ. He's not talking necessarily about those, but there is a place where God says, I want you to partake in My sufferings.

And the reason why we would be worthy to partake in God's sufferings is because of our attitude when we go through just our fleshly tribulations. When we have a good attitude going through hard things in our own lives, God says, I want you to walk through My sufferings with Me because you won't grumble and complain. You won't whine and moan through them. You can walk with Me through this and take on the sufferings of Christ because you've practiced going through your own tribulations, your own hard time, your own afflictions with such Christ-like character. How did we get that character in this verse? Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing That suffering produces endurance.

Endurance produces character. And character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint us. And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Everything that you endure is for Christ likenessing. Everything that we go through is to produce a Christ-like character in us. And God will let you keep doing the same tribulation, the same sufferings, the same afflictions until we receive the attitude and character of Christ-likeness. That's what we do. And so we rejoice in hard things and we don't shun away from them because we know that it will produce Christ likeness in me.

It will produce a character that Jesus loves because it'll be Him and it'll be His spirit in me. I die to self so that Christ would live in me. Those afflictions are not you bearing through it. Those afflictions are you dying to self so that Christ can live. Because the life I live, I no longer live for myself, but for Him who gave His life for me. Amen. Before we stand and pray, I want to remind you that we have some dates coming up. So if you're in the Garden family, our December 16th Garden Christmas banquet, you must RSVP with Amber for that. It is our annual banquet feast celebration together as one family to celebrate the season.

And we also use it as an opportunity to bless and raise funds for our Kingdom Mastery Academy, our school here. And so it's so joyous and it's so awesome. Please RSVP. So we

know how many seats we will have and how many that we need. Second is that during Christmas, we will not be meeting on December 27th to spend time with your family. So December 27th is no service. But we will have our Garden Family Vision Conference in January, January 8th, 9th, and 10th. So several dates, December 16th, December 27th, and January 8th through 10th. Please have those on your calendar. And the vision conferences for all of our garden family.

Obviously we have many that come from out of state, and it's obviously open for them as well. Amen? Let's stand and let's pray. And remember, Jesus has to be Lord. He has to be master, but He also has to be friend. And He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it. So Lord Jesus, we honor Your word and we say yes, You've asked the question. Are you a participant? Are you a participant? Are you a participant? And I thank You, Father, for the ask. I thank You for the question. I thank You, God. And we seek to know You. We seek to hear Your voice.

We seek to be a people of Your body. We seek to be a people that walk worthy of Your calling, that walk worthy of what You've asked us to do, to be a house of prayer, to be a house of worship, to be a house of yes and amen, to be a house of prophecy, to be a house of the psalmist prophetic, to be a house of priests that minister to the Lord our God with our gifts. And Lord, we thank You, Father, for this. And we ask that Your mercies would be extended to us and we would receive them today. In Jesus' mighty name we pray, amen. We would love to pray for you. If you want to know the Lord Jesus, we are right here. If you have any other prayer needs, be right here. Amen.