



# GPS GUIDE: MAY 23, 2021

## Grow. Pray. Study

**Pentecost Sunday**

**Sermon: Stewardship as an Act of Hope**

### **1 Corinthians 12: 1-13**

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 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. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 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. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

### **Monday: Read Romans 12: 1-8**

One particular aspect of our being is found in the God-given talents that we possess. Our natural tendency is to use these talents for our own end. We succeed in business and the professions by drawing on a pool of personal resources that are part of our nature or are acquired in our life's journey. Our gifts are also responsible for the success of the church's ministries. We all have personal resources, talents, and gifts. When we give our lives to Jesus our personal abilities can be accentuated and empowered by the Spirit. We all have spiritual resources that can be used to move the mission of the church in new directions that offer hope and life to others. We can use these gifts to exercise a particular

ministry within the congregation. Each has their gift, and each is different. Each one of us has a peculiar combination of gifts that make us special and unique. Each one of us can use these gifts to build up the people of God. When you think about your particular gifts, where do you see yourself serving the church's mission? How might you be able to move Christ's ministry forward in this next program year?

*Prayer: Gifted by the Spirit, may I use my gifts as part of the body of Christ. Amen.*

**Tuesday: Read John 2:1-11**

"You've kept the good wine until now." This is the hope of the gospel. You may have thought you had it good, but you haven't seen anything yet. In Christ God has come among us, and as history unfolds, we move closer and closer to God's promised return. The wedding feast has just begun. More, and better, is on the way. So, what's next? What will we do? The party's just beginning, so we better not sit on our hands. There is work to be done, and it is ours to do. Christ has drawn his people into his very self. He has made us his own. So, it is time to celebrate. It is time to party! But the celebration is not complete until all are gathered around Christ's table, joyously sharing a feast of bread and the best of wines that have been saved until this glorious moment. How can you be a part of sharing this celebration with others? How will you work to bring others to the party?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, help me to share the hope and the joy I have found in you.*

**Wednesday: Read Matthew 6:24-34**

Don't worry, Jesus says. Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Change your life, says Jesus. Follow me, and don't look back. Your college loans will still be there, your to-do list will still be there, and all the hunger and oppression and poverty will still be there, too. But stop worrying, says Jesus, and follow me. Real security and a future of hope will come for us only when we choose to tear down the walls that divide us, when we turn outward when every instinct tells us we should turn in, and when we take the boldest of all steps we could imagine to love those of whom we are most afraid. That's the gospel – it's only in giving ourselves away that we gain the kingdom of God, and only if we stop worrying about ourselves can we see our neighbor with compassion. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Today, let us serve the Lord. What is one concrete step you can take this week to serve Jesus -to seek the kingdom - more faithfully?

*Prayer: Holy God, help me to look beyond my fears and focus instead on your kingdom.*

**Thursday: Read Romans 8: 22-27**

We often fill our worship time—personal and corporate—to the brim with talking, singing, reading, and reflecting. There is too little prayerful waiting in

silence, when we can hear our voice connecting with the voice of the Holy Spirit in a place where our waiting connects with God's waiting. Thomas Merton asserts that prayer is not just a formula of words, or a series of desires springing up in the heart—it is the orientation of our whole body, mind, and spirit to God in silence, attention, and adoration. All good, meditative prayer is *a conversion of our entire self to God*. In meditative prayer, God brings to light our fears, spiritual apathy, envy, and pride, and through our repentance heals these wounds. Also, this kind of prayer has the power to release our hopes and dreams so that we are prepared to move more boldly into the future with the Spirit's guidance. Terry York says, "Releasing to the light our hopes and dreams carries the same risk as releasing our sins and failures, the very same risk. It is the risk of exposure, of being found out, to our embarrassment. 'You dreamed what?' and 'You did what?' are quite similar. Both expose the death of something within us. But resurrection awaits our deepest prayer." When we are silent before God, what sort of "hidden" or "buried" things come to our attention? Why is this experience something we avoid? How can we reclaim the power of prayer to guide us into new life?

*Prayer: Waiting here, in silence, God, we hear and own our deepest prayer. Until this silence we'd forgotten that these words were hidden there. Resurrect to Life and Light what we have buried in our night. Amen.*

**Friday: Read Galatians 5:22-23**

Paul believes in a very real and literal sense that those who have been baptized and share in a common table have been welcomed into Christ's life and the Holy Spirit is the means by which we enter into life in Christ—and the fruit of that Spirit is revealed in the way we choose to live in community with others. "If we live by the Spirit let us also be guided by the Spirit" (v.25) Life in the Spirit is not about learning a new set of rules but about being set free for a journey into the dangerous and rewarding task of loving God and others. The Spirit is the freedom and empowerment to live as Christ lives and to let Christ's love live through you. How have you experienced these "fruits" in your relationship with others? With God? With yourself? Which "fruit" is most difficult for you to practice in your everyday living? How might you be more mindful of it today?

*Prayer: Grant that I might live and be guided by the Spirit. Amen.*

**Saturday: Read Psalm 51:10-12**

A Reflection:

Creating Spirit, there are so many parts of me that make up the reality of "me" There is the outside layer, the person that others see, and think that they know so well—the "me" that needs Spirit's renewal every day. Then there is the next layer of "me", my mind, that great gift of creation that drives all my thoughts and actions, my mix of feelings; that power that urges me to delve into the depths of human understanding as I seek truth—the "me" that needs the Spirit's renewal

every day. The final layer is where the real “me” lives, my soul, my being, me! The “me” that needs to reach out to others to be fulfilled; the “me” that always needs to be forgiven, renewed, and blessed; the “me” that yearns for a closer and deeper relationship with my loved ones, and above all, with my God—the “me” that needs the Spirit’s renewal every day.

*Prayer: Grant me the Spirit’s renewal today and every day. Amen.*



**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH BIRMINGHAM**  
(Disciples of Christ)