

# Supernatural Church (1 Cor 12:1-11)

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[0:00] All right, 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

Therefore, I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, Jesus be cursed, and no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone, it is the same God at work.

Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one, there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom. To another, a message of knowledge by the means of the same Spirit.

To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by that one Spirit. To another, miraculous powers. To another, prophecy.

[1:05] To another, distinguishing between spirits. To another, speaking in different kinds of tongues. And still another, the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit.

And he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. And that is the work of God. Amen. Hi there.

Good afternoon, everyone. Can you hear me okay? Yeah. My name is William. I'm one of the pastors here at PCBC. And actually, this is my first Sunday back in the pulpit. So, thank you for your prayers.

Thank you for our growing family. Yeah, it's been very restful. But we have missed being with you and sharing God's Word with you greatly. So, yeah.

We thank you. Yeah. We praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. And, yeah. Please, if you can keep your Bibles open, if you have them. Please, whatever language you use. Keep it open to that passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

[2:16] And we'll be taking a deeper dive into this passage. Look, it seems like a lot has happened in a month. I've been away. And we've heard lots of great testimonies from youth camp.

We've had a very marathon QMM, quarterly members meeting. We've had time together. All kinds of connection, right?

There's a very special Maori word that is, pronounce it right, whakafanaungatanga, which means weaving together of people. Just like we were talking to each other before.

Building relationships. We've been doing that the past month. That is God at work among us. And we can be grateful for that. And what won't change week after week here at PCBC English is that we will hear the word of the Lord, right?

So, if it's your first time, I just want to remind us, each week we pause and we hear what God has to say from us. We don't skip the long bits of God's Word. We don't skip the hard bits from God's Word.

[3:18] And so, that's what our plan is for the next couple of weeks as we go through 1 Corinthians again. Here's a question for all of you. And this is an interactive forum.

Please do humor me by answering this question. All right. I want to just ask you, what's the first word? Don't filter your thoughts. What's the first one word that comes to mind when you hear the word church?

All right. So, church. Just call it out. Yep. Family. Church family. Okay. Someone else? Jesus Church or Church Jesus. I don't know. Good England.

Anyone else? Yeah. Our Church. Okay. Great. Okay. Our Church. Anyone else? Christ Church. Okay. All right. The city or the place. Okay. All right. Yep. Feel free to use that link if you're shy and your heart language is text.

[ 4 : 16 ] Feel free to add one. Anyone else? Come on. Surely it must be more adjectives in the world. Nothing. Sorry? Leo?

Hope. Okay. All right. A Church of Hope maybe. Yep. Okay. Home. Oh, great. I was thinking about that one just today. Yeah. Church home. Yeah. Anyone else? Big church.

Hey, Justin. This is a big church, isn't it? Yeah. Thank you, Lord. Anything else? Chinese Church. Oh. Come on, Isaac. Look around. This ain't a Chinese Church anymore.

Amen. Right? Look. I'm sure, though, that most of us will not immediately have come to... Who thought Supernatural Church? Oh. Spicy.

No one. And yet, your pastor has titled this upcoming series Supernatural Church. This is the title of our new series as we go through 1 Corinthians 12 to 14.

[ 5 : 13 ] And I don't know. What comes to mind? I think one thing that should come to mind is that this is a supernatural gathering. Only God could have brought this kind of motley crew together.

Okay? And so, as we look closely at these next few chapters, keep that in mind. That's a big theme. How does our Heavenly Father want His children to be built up in Him into a supernatural church? A Spirit-exalting church. A Jesus-centered church to the glory of our God, the Father. 1 Corinthians is a long letter. Right? You've already experienced this.

Let me remind you, though, how Paul began this letter to the church. Right? First few verses. Paul called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. And he writes to the church of God in Corinth, called to be His people, sanctified in Christ Jesus.

So this is a letter to the Corinthian church. And yet, did you see that? Together with all those everywhere. Right? And so, if we could sum it up, church is God's gathered people.

[ 6 : 19 ] Why? Verse 4. Because Christ is God's greatest gift. That's what we just sung about.

Right? If this is your first time hearing about Jesus Christ, the Bible says church is God's gathered people who trust Jesus Christ as God's greatest gift.

That is the most important thing. If you have grown up in a Christian home, the Bible says church is God's gathered people. Because Christ is God's greatest gift.

If you're here and you're a weary parent, myself included, reminder, church is God's gathered people. Because Christ is God's greatest gift.

That is so, by far, the most important thing that we want to remember. And yet, for many of us, the vision of being holy and blameless, like what we see here, united in Christ, might seem far from reality.

Some of you, you've all given very nice, positive answers. But actually, I pose the same question. What comes to mind when you think the word church, right? On threads, there's this new thing.

[ 7 : 25 ] I've got some different answers as I ask other people outside the church. Have a look. Have a look. Messy church. Church. I was thinking about the persecuted church this week.

Google seems to think there's something wrong with church. There are church scandals. Church too, right? Or maybe for you, church is a place full of grief and pain.

Some of you are probably still in shock and grief. How could our church do something like that at a quarterly members meeting? And others of you, maybe you're listening in, but you can't bear to walk in.

You have unresolved hurts. And it is too hard to be in this space. Or maybe for you, church is just a place where the hard questions just don't get answered.

I have questions about gifts of the Holy Spirit. And yet, you guys seem to never talk about it. If PCBC was a Disney soundtrack, maybe this is the casita where we don't talk about dot, dot, dot.

[ 8 : 27 ] I don't know. But whatever your situation, here is God's gift for us. Three chapters, all right? We don't skip the hard bits. Three chapters all about helpful, necessary topics for us.

This is a very practical, very necessary sermon series. Because I think we can take Paul's words here. We can apply them straight to us. You know this because he writes to everyone, all right? All those who call on his name together.

There's a direct line to Paul's instructions and to PCBC English in 2023, all right? Not just a church in 55 AD that struggled with division over their favorite preacher.

We can have that same struggle. Not just a church in ancient Greece somewhere that tolerated unrepentant sin or took each other to court or disagreed about things like marriage and singleness and sex or struggled with issues like food offered to idols.

These are all our issues too, are they not? These are good words for us. So first 11 chapters of this letter, some of you, maybe this is new to you, is division in Corinth, right?

[ 9 : 31 ] And it seems to be centered around who can speak well, all right? Or who's connected to who can speak well. There were arguments about who was the best preacher. Brothers and sisters were puffed up.

That's a very special word in the book of Corinthians. We'll see it again in chapter 13. And all the while, even with all these gifts, this was a worldly church, all right?

Getting drunk at love feasts. Gifted but worldly. Not confessing their sins and repenting. And to this church, the Apostle Paul has wonderful words to them.

And so here from chapter 12 onwards, he starts talking about spiritual gifts, all right? Look again in verse 1 in your Bibles, it says, now about spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant.

We've seen this kind of phrasing before. Paul has addressed the Corinthian church's questions about sex and marriage, right? About married children, about idol food. He uses that phrase, concerning dot, dot, dot.

[ 10 : 32 ] And now he tackles one of the questions the Corinthian church had, and that we might have. Concerning spiritual things, or people, actually the original language, it could be translated either way.

And so we've actually added in a lot of our modern translations the word gifts, but obviously gifts are in view. And Paul wants them not to be uninformed. Have you ever heard of the expression, a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing?

Okay. Maybe some of these Christians in Corinth, they knew a little bit about being spiritual, but it was a dangerous thing because they weren't using it well, right? And Paul wants to remind them, right?

Wants to remind them, okay, that being spiritual, okay, is something that we all need, not just a little knowledge, but not to be uninformed about it. And then he reminds them, verse 2, when you guys were pagans or unbelievers, you were led astray under the influence of idols, unable to hear or speak or love God back.

Here, Paul sets the scene and says, we are all once far from God. We have all been led astray in the past. One author, he's a Puritan, he put it this way, I was blinded by my sin.

[ 11 : 46 ] I had no ears to hear your voice. I did not know your love within had no taste for heaven's joys. But then your spirit gave me life, opened up your word to me, and through the gospel of your son gave me endless hope and peace.

The first thing Paul reminds them and us is you being here as a Christian, it's not because of your Sunday school skills, right? It's not because of all the good works you've done.

If you're a Christian, it's because of the supernatural gospel, the work of grace that God has done in your life through Jesus. It is because of the Holy and just God has come to earth as a perfect and innocent man, to bear your sins upon his shoulders, to die on the cross, to be risen again three days later, to rule and reign over everything.

It's because of this good news that you've been led from your idols into life eternal. And so Paul says here, verse 3, Therefore I tell you, right?

What's the true test of whether someone is supernatural or spiritual? The true test is whether she or he declares that Jesus is Lord.

[ 13 : 07 ] Alright, listen again to verse 3. Therefore I tell you, no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, Jesus be cursed. And no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. Let's be honest, is that your go-to thought when you think of spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit?

Jesus is Lord. It's not, is it? Yeah? Some of us might be tempted to equate certain gifts, right? Miraculous ones. The ones we see on TV.

The ones that our friends talk about. As Holy Spirit stuff. But the Holy Spirit works in every believer in a very foundational way. And we must never forget that.

Verse 3 says, anyone who curses Jesus cannot be speaking by the Spirit. And whenever a person declares Jesus is Lord, right? No matter how small a voice that declaration is.

With their lips, their lives, that can only come that is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen? Amen? It is this simple. It is this basic.

[14:13] This is something that every Christian should agree on. Declare Jesus is Lord. That is the first and best mark of whether you are spiritual. Whether the Holy Spirit is in you.

And if this is the case, then PCBC can I encourage us to make this message, Jesus is Lord. What we care most about. We can care about many things in a church like ours, right?

There are many competing priorities. We've got to fix a roof. It's leaking again. Or, hey, can we get more car park space? Can we put a new building down? We need more snacks for our youth.

Sure. All important. Snacks are important. But Jesus is Lord. That is our main message. That is the thing to die on a hill about. Amen? And if you're here today and you're not a Christian, you need to know and believe that Jesus is Lord.

That's right. Can I tell you this? Cling to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you'll be saved. You will have everything you need because the Holy Spirit will rest in everyone who trusts Him.

[15:22] You can turn away from your mute idols, right? What you worship on your phones or in your hearts or in your day-to-day can't save you. Your career, your comfort, your cash.

No. Make the risen Christ your Lord today. And PCBC, even if we are a church that agree on not much, all right? Let us agree that the most important message we need to proclaim and live out as a church is Jesus is Lord.

Let us judge the worth of every ministry, every service, every brother and sister on this basis. Don't judge them on whether they believe this about this tiny thing or whether they do this or that in a very weird way or whether they speak a different language.

There are such minor issues compared to the true primary thing. Do they declare Jesus is Lord? Let that be our first test of fellowship here at PCBC.

Look, only in Christ our Lord can we build vibrant, multilingual communities and bless our communities and beyond. And as wonderful as spiritual gifts are, let's not be more spiritual than God Himself.

[16:38] The most supernatural gift the Holy Spirit grants is us becoming alive again in Christ. His greatest miracle is to turn us, we are like dry bones on the ground, dead, and raises us up to be living flesh.

His most powerful work is to draw you and me into fellowship, into a body of Christ, a living body. And that is a supernatural church.

One that clings first and foremost to the supernatural gospel. One that says by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is Lord. And it's with this in mind that Paul keeps moving.

He starts to explain the work of the supernatural Godhead. Godhead is a technical term, right? But who's heard the word Trinity before, right? Okay, just a fancy way to describe who God has revealed Himself to be in the Bible.

I've heard a different kind of Trinity. There's a bit of a stereotype, gets passed around in some circles. And it's like, oh, your church. Yeah, it seems like your church worships the Father, the Son, and the Holy Bible. Obviously throwing shade.

[17:47] You know, there's a Holy Spirit even here. Yeah, man, if you hang out in some Christian circles, that might be the kind of pushback you might hear. When are we going to talk about the Holy Spirit?

It seems like that was what maybe some of the Corinthians were wondering about. And Paul waits until chapter 12, and he says, I don't want you to be uninformed. But have a look, though, at how he keeps going.

Verse 4 to 6. In your Bibles, you can read it. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. Different kinds of service, but the same Lord. Different kinds of working, but the same God who works all of them in all people.

Did you notice there are how many sentences? Help me out. Yeah, three. Yeah, three sentences. And did you notice he repeats the word same three times?

And did you notice he kind of rotates the words after that? So what do you have here? There's a pattern. There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. Different service, but the same Lord. Different kinds of working, but the same God.

[18:51] Do you see? Here is God and three persons, front and center for us. Father, Son, Spirit, working together as one. Who remembers question three of the New City Catechism?

Right? Question three. Do we know? No? That's right. Blink and you'll miss it, right? Okay. How many persons are there in God? There are three persons in the one God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Okay. Good. You can revise that later when you get home. And remember what Kevin DeYoung said in that little short video. Right? Why believe the Trinity? Right? It's just a bad math problem, right? And we don't want to have bad math problems here. We do, though, want to know what it looks like to have unity amidst diversity. Right? Unity amidst diversity and the Trinity. God shows us what that can look like. Just as there is unity and diversity in God himself, there can be unity and diversity in a church like ours. [ 19 : 59 ] Right? This is actually a theme that gets repeated in Paul's other writings. He loves talking about God in three persons. He loves to explain this. And he's going to unpack this actually a bit more in the next three chapters.

But for now, verse four to six shows us how actually it's because of God himself that we can be, I don't know, three congregations with one mission. It's because of God's triune nature that we can minister in all kinds of languages, right? English, Canto, Mandarin, other languages, yet have one message of hope. Or how we can have three pastors at the moment, five departments, a gazillion committees, lots of crazy opinions. I'm sure you've heard different ones over the years. And yet we can follow one chief shepherd. Right? Diversity, yes. And yet unity in Christ and God and the Spirit. And look, if you're kind of, you know, the person that's like still going, where's the Holy Spirit? Okay. You're passionate about him being present here. I want you to relax. [ 21 : 07 ] Because we're reminded in these verses, he already is here. He's right here. He's right here. He's right here. He's right here.

And here and here. And it's as we gathered together that we welcomed his presence in that intense, that special way. Did we not? And please note that what the Holy Spirit does will never be divorced or separated from what the Father and the Son do.

Who the Father elects, the Son redeems. The Spirit applies and revives their hearts. So of course he's welcome here, as we say. How could he not be? He's already here. When Christ in you meets Christ in you and you and in me together, our Lord Jesus promises that I am here with you.

So don't be anxious, friends. Don't be anxious about us and comparing with other churches and going, oh, am I missing out here at PCBC English? Don't get worried that if I don't play the right note on the keyboard or if I don't sing the right tune or the words, that we don't flood the atmosphere in an extra way.

[ 22 : 19 ] Don't worry about that. Don't worry that you haven't got a world-famous speaker to really move hearts and to really get people falling down and repenting and believing.

Let's just enjoy gathering together. Let's just enjoy gathering together.

Same Jesus, same Spirit, he brings into his church as well. And that's verses 7 to 11. Supernatural gifts. Supernatural gifts.

Some of you may know that this passage, yes, is one of the lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible. There are four, maybe five of them, depending on how you read them. And Paul will actually end this chapter, chapter 12, with a longer version of the list.

So we'll look at that next week. So this is a bit of a taster. And there's actually also a list in Romans 12, 6 to 8, Ephesians 4, 11. There's a bit of a brief mention in 1 Peter 4, 11.

[ 23 : 42 ] And if you are one of the engineers among us or Excel nerds, you'll be, I don't know, anyone that's like organizer, planner type personality? Show yourselves.

Does this list like this really get you excited? Yeah, I can categorize the Holy Spirit, yes. But we need to read the gifts, the list of gifts, in context.

That's how we learn to read our Bibles and understand it. And so, in context, just in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 4 to 10, can I ask you, look at your Bibles again.

What is the one word that binds all these gifts that are listed out? Justin, verses 7 to 11, I guess, yeah. What is the word that keeps popping up over and over again?

Call it out when you spot it. Same. That's it. Well done, Angela. Yeah. We have different gifts, but the same spirit. Okay. How many times does the word same appear? At least three.

[ 24 : 41 ] Okay. Depends on your translation. Same. Or one. Or even the word in verse 7, common good. Right? This is all talking about the same thing. Right? Why does Paul repeat these words?

Because they're important. His point here is not to define every spiritual gift out there in the universe. Okay? If so, where's the gift? Of music.

Right? Missing. Where's the gift of, I don't know, compassion. Right? What about the other fruits of the Spirit? Surely there are gifts as well that we can develop. Or the gift of puns.

Right? Where's that? I'm missing it. The Bible doesn't give us a comprehensive list. Okay? So we shouldn't be looking at a list like this and going, I need to categorize this.

I need to turn it into a Google form or try and work it out. Nor do we need one. Paul's overall theme, remember, is that God's church should pursue unity and diversity.

[ 25 : 37 ] So scratch that list. Right? Go to what the text actually says. Right? And if you flip the next slide, Donald. He reminds us that spiritual gifts, they have diverse expressions, but the same source.

That's what we want to remember and take away. And verse 7 tells us every Christian has spiritual gifts that are brought to light. Okay? Okay? The word manifest isn't quite the right tone, especially today.

Manifest means all kinds of random things. All right? It's more like God discloses it, reveals it, brings it to light. The main point is this. We have different spiritual gifts, but we share the same spirit.

Whatever your experience, whatever your understanding of spiritual gifts, this much must be clear. God has given it to us for the common good.

And verse 11 reminds us only the spirit gets to distribute them and determine what gifts you, you, you, and I get. But I know, you're just delaying, this is a delaying tactic, right, William?

[ 26 : 42 ] I really want to know what these gifts are. Please explain. That's fine. Right? We'll make a start. Again, this is a series, so some of these gifts are repeated, so we will dig into some.

So let's have a start. Right? Here's what I think. And I think, I'm just emphasizing that, Paul means. Verse 8, I think when Paul says the message of wisdom or word of wisdom, I think that he has some kind of evangelistic gift in mind.

The reason I think this is because, remember in chapter 2, verse 6, Paul announced that there was a message of wisdom, right? And actually he defines it as the mystery of the gospel now revealed in Christ.

His message of forgiveness and grace is true wisdom to a society that is looking for wisdom in all the wrong places. And so praise God for those of us who have the gift of a message of wisdom.

Right? Wise messengers who bring the good news of Jesus to friends and family, to difficult places, unreached people groups. I think of my sister-in-law, actually.

[ 27 : 50 ] Recently she was brave enough to share the gospel at a parent's board meeting. Right? A context. They were trying to introduce sexual idolatry into their primary school curriculum.

And so she stands up and says, I'm going to share the gospel. Or I think of mission partners we pray for. They live in Central Asia, the Middle East. Praise God that they have the gift of bringing the message of wisdom.

There are many authors as well. I'm sure you've read good Christian books. They grace our church libraries. They make winsome arguments on social media. They share good reasons to trust Jesus.

And maybe they will invite people to coffee or bubble tea and just make a good case for Jesus. Praise God for those with that gift. Right? The message of wisdom.

What a spiritual gift. Second half of verse 8, when Paul says the message of knowledge or word of knowledge, this is my thoughts for what it's worth. I know in some circles, the term word of knowledge is a technical term.

[ 28 : 53 ] Right? It becomes something like supernatural prophetic insight into someone's life. I'll give you an example. Right? Someone might say, oh, I sensed that person needed to hear the word fire.

Oh, I did too. Yeah. Let's go share that word with them. And then later, oh, I just needed to hear that word. That word changed my life. Wow, what an amazing spiritual gift.

I'm just giving you an example of what a word of knowledge could be understood as. I'm personally not saying that's wrong. I think there are many words from the Lord, right?

That have changed my life, I'm sure. And maybe will change your life. But here from Andrew Wilson, I think he has it right when he says, Paul, I think here, is simply referring here to a God-given ability to just read a situation and speak wisely and knowledgeably into it.

Okay? So rather than some sort of super spiritual, what? You thought that? I think that a word of knowledge is a gift that maybe some of the wise counselors among us might have.

[ 30 : 03 ] I think of someone, some of us who maybe sit alongside people who have suffered trauma and abuse or hurt. And they just seem to have a knack, right?

They know exactly when to listen and when to speak. They've got the gift of the word of knowledge. They just seem to know when and how to share a perfect insight. As Proverbs 15, 23 says, how good is it?

A timely word. What a spiritual gift words of knowledge can be for God's church. And I take that faith by the same spirit, verse 9, speaks not of saving faith.

It can't be because Paul has already laid out saving faith is when you believe Jesus is Lord, right? I think this is a kind of extraordinary faith gift that some Christians just seem to have.

They just believe and trust God will provide something. Actually, I was chatting this on before the service. I just believed and tried and prayed for a job in a week and God answered that prayer. Something like that.

[ 31 : 05 ] Another example, Polly Carey. Who's heard of Polly Carey? That's okay. I hadn't before this week. She was so ill, okay, that for 52 years she lived unable to eat, sleep, without help.

Someone had to get her out of bed and get her in bed. All she could do was just write with help and pray. And so what does she do? She practices her spiritual gift of faith.

Do you know how? She prayed daily for her brother, William Carey, first missionary into India, and his gospel partners. She prays 52 years, right?

And partners with him that way so that they will faithfully bring the good news of Jesus into that entire continent. You may have that gift of extraordinary faith.

If you do, pray. Have faith that there will be missionary breakthrough. There will be miraculous provision. There will be physical healing. Praise God for the gift of supernatural faith for all these kinds of things.

[ 32 : 10 ] And yes, I do think, I could be wrong, but I do think that some, like Paul himself, can work miraculous powers. We'll define that later on. Others, I think, can distinguish between spirits, right?

See whether something is the Holy Spirit's work or maybe not the Holy Spirit's work. And yes, I do believe some can prophesy and speak in different tongues or languages. But Paul will explain specifically what he means in the next few chapters, right?

And some can interpret them as well. We need to spend more time exploring that, so we will do those in future. But in case we forget, what does verse 11 say? It says the main point.

All these are the work of the one and the same Spirit. And it's he who gives them to each one, just as he determines, right? It's his job, not ours, to define who gets what gift.

And can I end by just making an observation, right? Paul writes about spiritual gifts in the hopes that there will be unity among diversity. So how could it be that even in a church like ours, this topic can be so divisive?

[ 33 : 24 ] I hear the whispers and rumors from time to time. Sometimes you might have noticed politics and power plays. I do wonder, what if our church could be united and diverse?

What if instead of practicing all kinds of secondary things, we practice keeping the main thing the main thing. Jesus is Lord. Trusting God for the provision of different gifts that will bless his church. Practicing our own spiritual gifts. Can I plead with each one of us, from my heart? We won't agree on every secondary point as we go through this series.

But let us keep the main thing the main thing. Jesus is Lord. He loves this church. And he gives gifts to this church. I think he wants us not to be a messy church.

Or a church full of politics. I think he wants us to be a generous church. A gracious church.

[ 34 : 28 ] A church that is ultimately loved by Christ. So let us, in these next few weeks, clarify our understanding of spiritual gifts. But let us also, most importantly, cherish, cling to that supernatural gospel that brings together this supernatural church.

Will you pray with me? Gracious Jesus, you are such a gift. And so we thank you.

And Father in heaven, you have loved us from before we were even born. And so we praise you.

And Holy Spirit, you are so welcome here as you minister grace gifts for the good of our church.

Lord, do help us now as we continue to worship and respond with thanksgiving for the many gifts of grace you have offered us. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, for your glory we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 35 : 43 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Amen. Amen.