

ONE BODY WITH MANY PARTS

A couple weeks ago Pastor Bill specifically asked the question-

- Who is the Church? Notice it was not the question “WHAT is the Church”?
 - Because if we phrase it that way, we tend to immediately think of Institution, a Building or a denomination.
 - But the church is the people of God, his new covenant family
 - The Church exists for the glory of God and the salvation of those who do not yet belong to this new Family.

And just last week

- We learned the difference between a healthy bible study and when you actually call a gathering of believers a Church.
 - Pastor Bill also addressed that the point of Church planting is primarily evangelical,
 - Not built upon any convenience
 - But it is a biblical result of disciples making disciples

And so what we are going to be looking at today is 1 Corinthians: Where it talks about we as believers are ONE BODY but with many parts.

- And we are going to be diving deeper into scripture
 - But one of the things that Paul mentions is that the Body of Christ is filled with Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free.
 - But we have all been baptized into one body by ONE Spirit.

And so we as believers are created for Community. NOT isolation.

- And we see this in the beginning of Genesis when God speaks things into creation and sets it all in motion he always ends by saying “It’s good”.
 - God creates the heavens- and says It’s good
 - God creates light- it’s good
 - God creates plants and animals- it’s all good
 - And then He creates Adam. And it’s the first time in Genesis 2:18 where God says “It is not good for man to be alone”
 - And so what does he do, He gives Adam a helper. Eve

We see such a beautiful example of how a healthy church functions in Acts 2-

- Where it says that believers devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking bread together, prayer, sharing possessions with one another, met in each other's homes and the Temple DAILY. Not just once a week.

And so the point is this: Believers in Christ, this new covenant people, are called to Community

- I think if we are honest with ourselves-
 - The bigger the Church gets, the easier it is for people to slip through the cracks.
 - And not feel as loved or valued.
 - And if we are not careful some can fall into isolation which was not God's intended plan for His Church

And so before we look at the text in 1 Corinthians verse 12:

- It's important to explain the previous verses where it talks about God has gifted every single believer to help combat this.
 - In the form of at least one spiritual gift.
 - And what we know is that the Spiritual gifts are not about us, but it's about others. Paul says it's for the "common good".
- So my gifts are not about me, it's about edifying the Body.
 - And so the problem with these Corinthian believers that were living in the 1st Century, is that they had it all wrong.
 - Either they thought "Well my gifts are not all that important; therefore i'm not that important, so I don't really count".
 - Then you had those who would think "My gift is really important, and i'm kind of superior to others".
 - And they were using the good things that God had given them, and they were fragmenting the congregation.

And so what does Paul do: he writes to correct their behavior and basically says

- "It is absurd and ridiculous for you to take the good things that God has given you and use them to promote disunity".
- To use a platform God has given you for your own selfish gain

- To feed your pride. To feed your ego

I love how in Philippians 2 it says:

- That even though Jesus was God, he did not think of equality with God.
- Instead he gave up his divine privileges and took the humble position as a slave.
- And died a criminal's death-
 - Even though, a sinless man. Not guilty. Jesus humbled himself.
 - Or think about when Jesus says in **Matthew 20:28** **“even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**
 - What should that teach us about ourselves and the way we serve in the Local Church?

So going into the text, in order to emphasize or highlight this point:

- It’s important to know that Paul uses an analogy between the Church and the physical body.
But before we dive into the scripture, let’s pray together.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

12 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. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- So here’s what Paul is saying, the Body of Christ is one. WHY?
 - Because we were all baptized into the same spirit. We weren’t baptized into different spirits.
 - It’s as if Christians all over the world are wearing one Jersey. And that jersey simply reads “TEAM JESUS”.
 - And so Paul is about to launch into this conversation and help them understand whatever dividing lines you’ve created- they are artificial and unnecessary.

The sad reality for many churches today all over the world- they have many dividing lines.

- Dividing lines over denominations, the way we do Ministry, skin color, economics, politics.
 - Paul says “ridiculous. You all have been identified in the same Spirit.
 - **There is one Spirit. And that Spirit breathes UNITY. Not disunity!”**

But this is nothing new. Think about the Church in Jerusalem.

- They were made up of Jews. Who have come to embrace Jesus as the Messiah.
- And they understood the Old Testament and realized Jesus was the fulfillment of all those Old Testament prophecies.
- And then the Jews hear that God is moving among the Gentiles.
 - And some of these Jewish believers start to question it and think:
 - “Wait, isn’t God for one specific race?
 - But then they are confronted with the fact that the Spirit of God is working supernaturally among the Gentiles,
 - And they realize any division that they might throw up would isolate other people from being a part of the family of God, is completely and totally artificial and divisive.
 - It breathe’s disunity.

Because here is the bottom line:

- Every single one of us in a sinner separated from God.
 - Doesn’t matter what your politics is, your skin color.
 - Everyone is on bended knee at the foot of the cross.
 - One of my favorite verses in scripture is in **Philippians 2:10-11**.
 - **10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

There’s no room for division. There’s no room for your click. We are all baptized into the same Spirit. We are a part of the same Family.

- This is why you can walk into a room full of Christians whom you have never met before
 - And they may be from a different culture or a different country-
 - And there is an instant bond, an instant connection.

Some of you, even in this room, may have been with me in Czech Republic.

- Our team is there to serve at a week long English Camp with our Mission Partners Vlada and Milan.
 - On Sunday we have the wonderful opportunity to attend their Church service.
 - I remember my first time thinking before it started, i'm not sure how this is gonna go since I don’t speak their language, I don’t really know anybody besides our mission partners, and I won’t be able to understand what they are saying.
 - Let me just tell you, I will never forget being at those services.

- I will never forget how God shattered my own misconceptions and showed me the beauty of Unity with brothers and sisters in Christ who I didn't even know.
- How is that POSSIBLE!? We are all baptized into the same Spirit
- We are a part of the same family

Let's continue on to look at verses 14-20

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts,^[b] yet one body.

- So here's the point Paul is making-
 - Right now in this room there is a tremendous diversity of gifts, talents & skills.
 - And this diversity is absolutely necessary for us to function well.
 - And not one body part is any more important than another.

But for the Corinthians. They disagree. They may not be saying that, but their actions show otherwise.

- There was sort of this spiritual Hierarchy.
 - Some people in the Church thought they were more important than other people.
 - You know what that does? It breathes disunity. And Paul says it's just not true.
 - And if we're not careful, we can fall into that mindset also.
 - And the reason I say that is:
- **Just look at the American Church**, where we put Pastors, worship leaders on a pedestal...We do that because they are visible.
 - And the reality is, some people want to be seen, they want to feel important.
 - Some seek the attention- Where it feeds their pride and ego.
 - I feel like every month I constantly see headlines of a former famous mega church Pastor or Worship Leader being accused of sexual immorality or completely abandoning their faith.
 - Listen, if you are seeking a platform in Christianity, you are in the wrong business.
 - What IM NOT saying is that God can't use you to preach, or use a platform. But you do it for the glory of God. Not for the glory of yourself.

- God isn't impressed by how smooth we can talk, how well we can sing a song, or how elegant our prayers sound.
- He cares about our hearts.
- He cares about us walking in faithfulness and obedience.

And so just because I am standing up here holding a Microphone, does not mean that I am more useful to God.

- Listen we come here on Sundays to worship our God and for the building up of Saints.
- So Monday through Saturday we should also be using our spiritual gifts.
 - Whether you have a great gift of hospitality, and you host your DG,
 - Or you have the gift of encouragement where you come alongside a brother or sister in Christ,
 - Or the gift of evangelism and we are raising up new disciples and equipping them for the work of Ministry
 - Or maybe you are a prayer warrior, and you facilitate times where you and others a part of the body can be praying,
 - Service, prophecy, teaching. The list could go on
 - Whatever your gift is, you do it for the edification of The Church.
 - Not for our own pride and selfish gain, but for the glory of God!

Some of you might be sitting here saying "Christian, I don't know what my spiritual gifts are?"

- I'd encourage you to present your request to God. Write down the passions God has placed on your heart. And think of how you can use it for His glory.
 - There are also excellent spiritual gifting tests online that me or one of the Elders would be happy to share with you.
 - And also to put yourself out there. If there is an opportunity to love, care for, or serve someone within or outside of Revolve- try it.

What we can't do is play the comparison game. This is a game that's not fun. Most of you all here know this.

- For example- And this is me being very candid: I see how Pastor Bill teaches and preaches. I see how well he strategizes- And if i'm not careful, that can turn into a jealousy- which in the book of James says that is demonic.
 - But we are reminded by the grace of God that we don't need to compare ourselves.
 - I love what verse 18 says: **"God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he CHOSE."**

That is a powerful statement in scripture.

- Now Paul is also driving home the point that body parts don't choose their jobs.
 - **God does that**
 - He put each body part in the best place on the body to do its work, giving each part the exact job for which it was designed.
 - Those parts are meant to work in harmony—when certain parts refuse to work, the body cannot function as it was intended.

Paul's point is that God does the same with the church.

- Paul wrote in verse 11 that the Spirit matches every believer with their personal gift or gifts, to be used to serve the other members in the church and the body of Christ as a whole.
 - **God chooses our role**, we don't decide what part in the church we would like to play.
 - As Paul describes it, we receive the role and fill the part we're given.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

The point is, is that WE all need each other.

- Rather than thinking we don't need those who are different than us, we need the other parts of the body in order to properly function.
- I say this with much grace but there's a tendency in Churches to just want to be around people just like ourselves.
 - That may have the same interests. OR
 - Younger families wanting to be around younger families.
 - Older people want to be around older people.
 - Or we don't want to associate with certain type of people because that's not the crowd you would surround yourself with outside of the Church.
 - **Newsflash-** you don't get to choose who is a part of the Body. God does.

It's time we break through our comforts.

- In the New Testament there are several references where it talks about the Older generation disciplining and pouring into the younger generation.
 - And i'm not just talking about our older generation here.
 - I'm talking to young adults here also.
 - Im talking about high schoolers that need to be pouring into middle schoolers
 - We have many kids in this room, who need to be poured into.
 - This is how the body properly functions

Let's go to verse 22:

22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require.

- Have you ever thought, well they can't contribute much.
- Their too weak, they're too young. But God's Word says that every part of the church body is indispensable.
 - We're tempted to think that some people have no use. But yet every person is necessary.
 - But again the body can not properly function without everyone doing their part.
- We need each other.
 - The body works best when the parts are working TOGETHER.

What about the parts of the body that are hidden?

- That may not be seen in the public eye
 - Maybe they are behind the scenes for a reason.
 - **They are also valuable.** You see, a liver is hidden from sight, and yet it is so important.
 - But just like a mouth, a liver needs the rest of the body.
 - Can you imagine if a liver tried to walk across the street by itself.
 - It wouldn't work!
 - The liver needs the rest of the body, just like the mouth, the hand, the feet.

Because we need each other, because each member matters, it also matters how we treat each other in the body of Christ.

- So how should we treat members in this Body?
 - Verse 25 tells us that we should have the same care for one another because VERSE 26 says:

26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

- Church regardless of our specific gifting this is a role all of us as disciples play.
 - We should be a Church that should be known for the love and care for one another, because we are a part of the same Body.
 - Non believers should look at us and see something very different.
 - They should see us and say what is it that they have, that I don't...

That's why Jesus says in John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

- We can only do this when we are unified.
 - And understanding that we all have gifts to use for the Glory of God.
 - We don't do this to puff our chest up, and build a bigger Church, and have a bigger attendance.

We do this because we as a Church have a Mission that we are all called to be a part of. (x2)

- And the only way we stay strong and focused on this mission is if we are healthy and operating the way God commanded us.
 - Think of Army soldiers that are fighting the good fight together. And they are on a mission together
 - What happens if people in your own camp start fighting with each other?
 - You lose focus on the mission
 - What happens if there are people within your own camp not doing what they are supposed to be doing?
 - There's a chance the enemy is going to take advantage
 - What happens if there is unhealth within your own camp?
 - It brings everyone else down. And it's toxic.

And so to sum all of this up

- God has brought us together by His sovereignty.
- And it is amazing that God did not make us all the same.
 - He has given us gifts for the edification of His Church.
- So what I want to do now is take about 5-10 minutes discussing and asking these questions among your table:
 - **What area is God challenging me to use my gifts?**
 - **OR How has God been using me to use my gifts?**
 - And the next question I want you to spend time on is, **Am I using these gifts within the body?** If not, what can I do to change that? How can the Elders and our Discipleship Group Leaders spur you on and encourage you?
 - And then we will pray at the end.

Let's pray that we continue to grow in unity and diversity (of gifts and calling) in the Body of Christ.