

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Theme: Many Parts, One Body

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Epistle lesson from Saint Paul's first Letter to the church at Corinth, chapter twelve verses twelve through thirty-one.

Boys and girls, how are you doing today? I pray that you are doing well and that your bodies are healthy. Speaking of your bodies, how many bodies do you have? Yep, you have one body. How many parts does your body have? You have your fingers, eyes, toes, kidneys, stomachs, ears, and many more. Many parts, yet only one body. Saint Paul uses this to show how we are many parts, yet one body in Christ. How many body parts does Christ have? How can we use our gifts to help those around us? Ponder these questions as we hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

**Who we are: We are individual parts who form one Body**

Just take a look at your body. You have hands, fingers, eyes, ears, spleen, kidneys, glands, brain, heart, and many more. The Human Body consists of many parts. So it is with Christ. The Body of Christ consists of unique and diverse individuals. It includes Jews and Greeks, people of diverse ethnic and family backgrounds, rich and poor. It includes slaves and free, people of diverse political and socioeconomic backgrounds. Yet, as diverse as the individuals are, all of these have been united in one Baptism, one Spirit, and one Body.

**Who I am: I am a critical part of this Body according to the design and intent of God.**

Being a part of the body of Christ means that God created each of us with His intention and fits us together according to His good and gracious Will. This begs the question, as a part of the body of Christ, which part are you?

Our sinful nature may have us doubt and ponder, if we even belong to the body of Christ at all. We may often times feel small and insignificant in comparison to those around us. We may not always be so sure that we are even in the body in the first place! Satan loves to attack us with this doubt, “Do you even belong?” You are not the most talented singer, speaker, leader, or organizer within in the congregation, do you even belong and matter? I cannot do that particular skill so therefore everything can operate just fine without me and would be better off that way, if you were not even here. Maybe Satan is right, the congregation can operate just fine without you and maybe you are not the best singer, speaker, or leader.

**Yet, you do indeed still have value!**

You do indeed have value. The congregation cannot operate without you! Just because you may not be able to do one thing really well, does not mean that you are not better at something else. Can the foot and ear cannot separate themselves from the body because they are not a hand and an eye, respectively? Can they say, “Well I cannot hear so I do not belong. I cannot think like the brain or move blood like the heart, so therefore I do not matter.” No, the individual diversity blesses the Body as a whole. The eyes and hands, head and feet need each other. Without the eyes we could not see, without the hands, we could not interact with the world around us. Without the feet, we could not move. If the parts that we can see are this important, how much more are the parts that we cannot see! The small little glands in our throats, the pancreas, our white blood

cells, and many more. The weaker parts are indispensable; less honorable parts have special honor; unpresentable parts have greater modesty. For example, there is someone who has been blessed with an eye for detail when it comes to cleaning, how vital are they? They enjoy cleaning the floors, windows, and the removal of trash. Sure, it may not seem like much, but would you notice if the trash was not taken out for a week? Two weeks? A month? I am sure you would. Even small little things can have a large impact upon the body as a whole. Just look at how your body reacts when you stub your small toe. The whole body reacts to the pain. The hands reach down towards it, the face grimaces in pain. The opposite is true as well, when you tell a girl that you like the bow in her hair, does only her hair light up? No, her whole face lights up with joy, her smile becomes broader and beaming, there is a skip in her step. The same is true of the member of the body of Christ, when someone is hurting, we all hurt, when someone is joyful, we all are joyful.

**Who you are: You are all a part of the Body of Christ, according to God's grace (v 27).**

God has showered and blessed you with innumerable value in His sight. He loves you so much, to the point that He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived a perfect life in your place. He takes your sins upon Himself, becoming sin for you. Taking them to the cross, He suffers, bleeds, and dies for you. Jesus dies for you and you say you have no value and are worthless. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Jesus loves you with a boundless love and rises again from the dead that you will indeed live with Him forever and ever.

Through His Holy Spirit, given to us in the waters of Holy Baptism. We have all been appointed to a unique role in the Body by God. As Saint Paul writes, God has appointed in the

church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? We have been blessed by God with a variety of gifts, united together into His Body. Thus why, you will see in the bulletin an extra insert for today, one that asks what your gifts are. If you can, fill it out and drop it off in the church office, that way, when we are wondering who would be good for this or that project or event, we can draw on your unique gifts, for the building up of His Church.

**Who we are: We are the Church.**

After all that is why we are gathered together. We are people, blessed by God, and united by Christ to use our gifts for the betterment of those around us. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, He bestow new life and identity on us by grace through faith. He gives us of His Word and Sacraments that make us one. Unite us as individuals together into the communion of saints. We rejoice in this Lord who has saved us and appointed us to serve in His Kingdom. In gratitude for what He has done for us, we willingly die to ourselves, thus serving Christ, glorifying God, using the gifts and talents that He has given to us, and winning souls who will subsequently bless and serve the Body of Christ.

Conclusion: In and through the Church, Christ's Body, our gracious heavenly Father has gathered each of us—a hodgepodge of forgiven sinners from all walks of life, blessed us with a variety of gifts, and united us together into the Body of Christ.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.