

We Are One (Part 1) – 1 Cor 12:12-26

1 Cor 12:12-26 (p.959); We're going to take this a few verses at a time

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.

Once again, just like his repeated mention of the HS in v8-11, Paul uses the word “one” 5 times in 2 verses here; Making the point that *we* are one
That's the thrust of this entire passage in ch12 (**Intro**)

But the flow of *thought* in these first two verses, and how they fit within the context, is a bit harder to understand; Until, you go back to v7
It seems as though that's the point he's referring to when he starts v12 with the word “For” – otherwise it doesn't make any sense

So in v7 he says – *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good . . . 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.*

V12 supports what he said in v7

Making the point that our gifts are given for the common good, b/c we're connected in *common* community

Many members, belonging together in mutual partnership, as one body

And we're connected as one body according to v13, for 2 reasons:

1. We've been baptized in *one* Spirit – brought under his influence . . .
And two, which we'll talk about next week . . .
2. We're *made to drink of the one Spirit* – or we're *indwelt* by the same Spirit

Therefore, all distinctions of race and socioeconomic differences, no longer matter
Jew, Greek, slave, or free – we are one in the body of Christ
Differences no longer make any difference; That's the flow of thought

But Paul's main point, starting in v12, is that . . .

In Christ, we're connected to one another (v12,14,20)

He says it in v12; He reiterates it in v14 – *For the body does not consist of one member but of many – implying* that though we're many, we're connected . . .

And then says it explicitly again in v20 – *As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

In Christ, we're connected to one another

And in between those verses, he elaborates on that thought, making *you* the object lesson
Your body is the illustration here

So if you're having a hard time understanding this, look at yourself

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.

IOW in Christ, we're connected to one another . . .

• **Whether we think so or not (v15-16)**

If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you're a part of the body of Christ – the church; both globally *and* locally

Hand, foot, ear, eye, or anything else – you're an integral part whether u think so or not

• **Even though we're different (v15-16)**

Even though *you're* different; It makes no difference that you're not like everybody else
Just b/c you're good at helping as opposed to teaching, doesn't make you any less a part of the body

Nor does how you *feel* make any difference

In Christ, we belong; Period; Even though we're different

In fact, that's *intentional* on God's part; We're connected . . .

• **With a necessary diversity (v17,19)**

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? [It wouldn't be anywhere; It wouldn't exist] If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? [Once again, it wouldn't exist]

And then in v19 he summarizes it, saying – *If all were a single member* [if we were all alike], *where would the body be?* Nowhere

The point being, that our diversity of gifts and personalities and character traits – are *necessary*, in order to be a fully functioning, effective body of believers

Just like the human body consists of a necessary diversity in order to be fully functional

Even more important, is that we're arranged by God; We're connected to one another . . .

• **As arranged by God (v18)**

In v18, after pointing out our necessary diversity, Paul says – *But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.*

Which should eliminate all discontent, and all envy toward other churches

Wishing we were like *them*; Or had the money *they* have; Or the *land* they have; Or the *leaders* they have; Or the people *they* have

Not good; B/c in doing so you're essentially saying you don't approve of God's arrangement *here*; Or, that he didn't quite get it right

We are connected to one another, as arranged by a perfect, infallible, all-knowing God

In which case, contentment should reign among us

And so should confidence; Confidence that we have everything we need as a church, to accomplish everything God wants

• Then, after reiterating his main point in v20, he says in v21-24 . . .

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.” 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.

Now, I don't know what body part Paul has in mind in the first part of v23 – the parts we think less honorable . . .

But his *main* point is obvious – we're connected . . .

• **And equally needed (v21-24a)**

We need those who are up-front people, *and* those who are behind-the-scenes people

We need those who are weaker, maybe b/c they're predisposed toward showing mercy ..

And we need those who are stronger
All of which should prevent pride, *and* remove feelings of inferiority
B/c we're connected, and *equally* needed

And all the more so, b/c we're connected . . .

- **In uncommon community (v24b-25)**

Paul has just finished saying we're different; Really different in some cases

*24b But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,
25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same
care for one another.*

Once again, he's arranged us as he chose – for the purpose of honor, unity, and mutual
care; All of which are the marks of uncommon fellowship; Uncommon community
Community that you just don't *find* any ole place

But that you *should* find it in the *church*

Of all places honor, unity, and mutual care should *mark* the church; *Our* church
B/c they're a natural by-product of God's arrangement, and our connection
Which means uncommon community is at our disposal

- The question is, do we act like it? And are we *really* unified, or just faking it?
Do you practice the mutual exchange of ministry as we say in Small Groups, the “one-
another” of Scripture, or just pay lip service to it?
Do you speak well of one another, especially your pastors and the ministries they're
responsible for? Or do you stir the pot at times?
And do you serve one another, whether there's a dire need or not?

If so, and to the extent you do, we're connected in uncommon community
To the extent you don't, we're not; It depends on you; And me; And all of us together

And we just as well make the most of it, b/c we're connected to one another . . .

- **For better or for worse (v26)**

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

For better or for worse, we are one; For better, like in times of rejoicing, and plenty . . .
Or for worse, like in times of suffering, or sacrifice

We are connected to one another for better or for worse . . .

Whether we think so or not; Even though we're different
Connected, as arranged by God with a necessary diversity . . .
And equally needed in uncommon community (**Summary**)

- I don't know about you, but sometimes I feel like we're hittin' it out of the park in this
respect, and other times not so much
And right now, this is one of those “other times”

There's so much good going on, but I don't feel like we're totally unified

I feel like there's a little bit of negativism; Disgruntlement; Dwelling on petty offenses
In some cases, outright grumbling and complaining
Like about our theme – as if it's all about money; which it's not; but if it were, would
that be wrong?

I don't know for sure, I just feel it; And hear a few comments every now and then
And it's disheartening; Even in the midst of so much good
So if that's you, will you stop? B/c we're connected; And if one part itches, the whole
body's miserable

That's the main point Paul is making here – we're connected to one another

Connected by virtue of our faith in Christ . . .

Because we're under the influence of one Spirit (v13a)

This is where v13 comes into play

The first part of which we'll look at this week, and the second part next week – b/c he
packs a whole bunch into it, with all kinds of implications

We're one he says – *For in one Spirit* [v13] *we were all baptized into one body—Jews or
Greeks, slaves or free*

We are one b/c as believers, as followers of Jesus Christ – we were all baptized in the
Spirit, into one body

And how it must grieve the Spirit to see cracks in our unity from time to time
How it must quench him to hear us grumble or complain or stir the pot or have a bad
attitude

We are one, and we have the ability to live it out, b/c we're under the influence of the one
Spirit . . .

- **Much like our water baptism**

That's one of the analogies Paul makes here

In our salvation, we've been brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit – much like
we're brought under the influence of water in our *physical* baptism
That's what the word baptize means – to dip under; to immerse

So Paul is saying that we've been immersed in the HS, brought under his influence – for
the purpose of bringing us *into one body*, the body of Christ, the church
Just like we've been baptized in water, as a *picture* of being brought into a *relationship*
with Christ; Paul's uses the metaphor of baptism here, to draw an analogy

Second, under the influence of the Spirit, we're . . .

- **Washed and renewed for life**

Baptized in the Spirit, under his influence, we are washed and renewed to *get* life, *for* life
Titus 3:4-7 – *4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior
appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but
according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy
Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that
being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal
life.*

We are one, b/c we're under the influence of the same Spirit, who saved us by washing
our sins away and renewing our souls, v5 . . .

That we might have life in the first place, and life forever, v7

Much like we're washed and refreshed by the same water in baptism, to show it – to
show our eternal life and cleansing of sin

We're washed and renewed for life

Third, under the influence of the Spirit we're . . .

- **Able to receive God's love**

No Spirit, no love; That's the implication of **Rom 5:5** – *God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*

The HS is the means by which we receive the love of God into our hearts

It's like he's the funnel, our heart the destination, and God's love the liquid – poured out so freely from above, as we sing *****

The bottom line being, that the HS *enables* us to *receive* that love; No Spirit, no love

And then finally, under the influence of the Spirit, we're . . .

- **No longer separated by race or class**

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free

In Christ, and under the influence of the HS – distinctions of race and social class no longer matter

Jew, Greek, slave, free, even male and female differences as Paul says in Gal 3:28 – are a moot point when it comes to both our *salvation*, and our unity

Differences no longer make any difference when it comes to our oneness in the church

- That doesn't mean we're a bunch of androgynous "Pat's" walking around, neither male or female
Nor does it mean that distinctions of male and female have *no* significance in *any* area of life and godliness
For instance, there are some roles in the church, like pastors, elders, and deacons – that can only be filled by *men*; The Bible is clear on that
In which case male/female distinctions matter *very* much

And the same is true of marriage – where husbands are to be men, and wives, women

And in the home – where the husband is called to fulfill his role in a certain way, by leading, while the wife is called to fulfill her role by following

Call it servant-leadership and dignified-submission

The male/female distinction is not completely irrelevant in the church

That's not Paul's point

- Nor is he saying that *socioeconomic* differences mean nothing
If that were the case, God would have told us to give the same *amount* of money, instead of the same *percentage*
He would have told each person to give 10 *dollars* instead of 10 *percent*
But he didn't; Ensuring that those who *make* more, would *give* more
And that the ministry of the church would depend not on equal giving, but on equal sacrifice
So socioeconomic differences *do* matter to some extent

The point being, that this text doesn't negate every aspect of difference among us

They *do matter* in some respects; But not when it comes to our unity

Not when it comes to fully accepting one another as family

None of our distinctions and differences – whether racial, cultural, financial, or social, should divide us; Ever (**Summary**)

- And you know as well as I, it starts right here, in your heart; With what you feel and what you think

So if you have negative thoughts and feelings about those who are different than you . . .

About those who are black, if you're white; Or those who are white, if you're black

Or those who are poor, if you're rich; Or rich, if you're poor

If you have ungodly thoughts or feelings about someone who's different than you . . .

The time has come to take those thoughts captive, repent of them, and go out of your way to treat them like the brother or sister in Christ that they are

So that we can reflect the uncommon community God intends, and embrace the arrangement he's made – even though we're different

And we *can* do it, b/c we're under the influence of the *same* Spirit, with the *same* love in our hearts

Pray – Lord, thank you for the unity that's ours, in your Spirit; And thank you for the unity and uncommon community we already enjoy – we're blessed

But I think there's more to be had, and more that's needed

So will you affirm and bless those who are living it these days? And convict those who aren't? And remind those who have forgotten?

We don't want to squander the blessing, nor quench your Spirit