

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The word of God for this morning is found in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*? 20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. 21 And 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 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

Throughout the world we can see examples of how someone is treated better because of the station they have in life. What janitor has a reserved parking spot in front of the building they work at? Those spaces are reserved for the president or C.E.O. of the company.

And what kicker on a football team isn't mocked and derided by the commentators because of his perceived position of worthlessness. The quarterback, receivers and running backs typically get all the accolades.

But what customer walking into a building which hasn't been cleaned wouldn't walk out because of it. Even the lowly janitor makes an impact in the way a company projects itself. And how many times would a game of football end in a 0-0 tie if it wasn't for the kicker?

Now as unfortunate as it is that some are looked upon differently in the world because of the station they have in life. It is even more unfortunate that this attitude can and does spill over into the body of Christ. In our text for today we are reminded that **"God built the body."**

When the Holy Spirit had Paul write this first epistle to the Corinthians there was a problem of showing favoritism. Specifically in regards to spiritual gifts – who had them and which were more important. And because of this the Lord through the Apostle Paul needed to remind them that **“God built the body”** not only in regards to spiritual gifts but in all ways.

Although some of the spiritual gifts are no longer present in the church, many still and will remain until the coming of our Lord and Savior. But when we begin to separate and choose amongst ourselves which member of the body because of the gifts he or she has been given (spiritual or not) by the Spirit of God we err and divide the body of Christ.

One of the reasons God built the body is that it would be done in a balanced way.

“But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. 21 And 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 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need.”

If we were to allow our sinful pride and arrogance to decide how the body is put together we would end up with some incredibly unbalanced. Don't we naturally think that what we have to offer is the thing that Christ needs the most of? We end up saying just as in Paul's example. **“I have no need of you!”** And how is this done? You may need to answer this for yourself since I cannot see into your hearts. But some that seem to be a standing problem in the church at large is how much someone does within the congregation. Or it may be how much someone puts into the offering plate. No matter what, a problem exists when any one part of the body begins to think that because they can do more, the other parts of the body are not needed. We also begin to think that the other parts of the body cannot aid in what another member of the body is doing. Because of this the natural balance of the body is disrupted and it is not a good thing. It is not pleasing to God.

If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

As we see then from that portion of our text God has established different parts of the body because they are needed. To make up a body different parts are needed. A body isn't one big eye nor is it one huge ear. Different people are placed into the body according to the will of God. He has placed us all in it as He pleased. This is vital for us to remember. One of the reasons why it is so important is that we find contentment in being who we are in the body.

If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body?

Be happy and content being who you are. Be happy and content with the gifts you have been given and use them to the glory of Christ. If you debase yourself because you feel you don't have the gifts to do a certain thing ask God for help. Ask Him to strengthen you and cause different gifts of the Spirit to be granted to you. But do it for His sake and not for the sake of being found greater in the eyes of the rest of the body. And also be content with the fact that the Lord may want you to be a certain kind of member of the body for a very long time. No one else may have what you have. But it is Christ who put you there for His good pleasure.

And we can be humbled by the fact that **"God built the body"** by using all of mankind. **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.** The Lord didn't just pluck out the so-called beautiful people of the world to make up this body. He uses the rich and the poor. He uses the great and the small. And because of that we can see how we should humble ourselves and give glory to the other members before we desire to have the glory shown to ourselves.

And another reason why we should be content with the way **"God built the body"** is that He did it the same amongst us all...through the means of grace. **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.** We have all been brought into the body of Christ through the same means of grace and by the same Spirit. Every single one of us has been cleansed of our sins in our baptism. It should remind us of our equality as sinners and our equality in Christ. In this way it helps us to see one another as true equals in the body of Christ with the result **that there should be no schism (rift or separation) in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.**

And finally, **"God built the body"** in Christ. **For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.** If the body wouldn't be founded in Christ it could never function. The body outside of Christ is what we find in the world. We would find separation, segregation, favoritism, pride and arrogance. But in Christ we find none of these things.

Jesus Christ came into the world with the attitude and purpose of bringing us all together through His life, death and resurrection. In Christ we see the example we should follow and the example we should try to emulate by the power of the Spirit. By remembering the fact that He brought us to Himself through our baptism and continues to keep us in Him through the hearing of His word and strengthened through the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Being reminded through the Lord's Table of the great humility and sacrifice that was needed for all men.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. Be happy with who you're in the body of Christ. Pray that the Lord would cause spiritual growth in your lives to further aid the body. Pray that the Lord would give you the humility to give glory to the other members of the body before desiring for yourself. And above all give Christ the greatest glory who on account of His service to us all founded and holds the body together. Amen.