

Sermon Series: "Body Talk"—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN----46074 – Jan 26, 2003

Title: "The Perspective of the Body of Christ"

Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

Intro: *Ills.: Pet peeves*

Theme: Viewing the church through God's perspective in Christ helps us to overcome the challenges of coming together as a group of forgiven sinners.

Perspective #1: In the Body of Christ the whole is greater than the sum of the parts

- Taking a different view of myself and church
 1. Paul identifies us by the whole rather than by the individuals parts -- a different paradigm (**Print and read 12a**)
 1. **Ills.: paradigm shift-- "This is not a sick child but a child that happens to be sick"**
 2. Whose "body" is it, anyway? (**Print and read 12b-13**)
 1. This was lightening bolt theology for a Corinthian church squabbling over turf battles
 2. **Ills.: Parochial Perspective**
 3. This is not Lutherans' or Methodists'/Germans' or Hispanics'/rich or poor/charismatics' or confessionals' church—it is Jesus' Church, meant for all, irregardless of background, opinion, style (**Print and read 13b**)
- Included by Divine invitation
 3. Just as you did not choose to be born into your family so you did not make the choice to be in God's family
 1. Born again into Jesus' family through baptism ("*By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.*" vs. 13)
 2. "*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.*" Titus 3: 5-6
 4. God used someone to invite us to Jesus and his Church; so its time for us to extend the invitation to another

Perspective #2: In the Body of Christ 'equal access and equal value' is not a slogan but reality

- Things you and I cannot say--or believe--as part of the Body of Christ
 1. "I don't matter to the rest of the body." (**Print and read verses 15-20**)
 1. A covering for sinful laziness ("maybe I can duck and hide and no one will notice)
 2. A covering for sinful envy of another's gifts/responsibility/place in God's family
 - **Ills.: Prodigal son's older brother Luke 15**
 2. "I don't need the rest of the body."(**Print and read verses 21-24**)
 1. A covering for sinful prejudice or preferential treatment ("*your are not necessary*" — 'it's their loss!')
 2. A covering for sinful idolatry ("I'm indispensable to God and his Church)
 - "*For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*" 1 Cor. 4: 7
- By God's design--seeing yourself as added with a purpose by Him to this group of believers
 3. "*So God put each and every part of the body together as he wanted it.*" vs. 18
 4. **Ills. Big picture perspective**
 5. Being content with and active in your place in His bigger plan of salvation at work within your church
 6. "*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*" 1 Peter 4:10
- By God's command--some 'body care' is required (**Print and read verses 25-27**)
 7. **Ills.: Don't you just hate it when something says, "Batteries not included" or "Some assembly required"**
 8. Sometimes--for a season of our lives--all of us may require greater care from the others
 1. "*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*" Romans 12:15
 2. "*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*" John 13:35

Pet peeves

Mrs. Foster, a teacher at my school, had a frustrating day with one of her first-grade boys. "You've been doing irritating things all day today. These things are some of my pet peeves," she said sternly. "Do you know what a pet peeve is?" The young boy shook his head no. "A pet peeve is the thing that irritates a person the most. Do you know what my pet peeve is?" she asked. The boy paused. "Ummm ... Mr. Foster?"

Parochial perspective

A little girl asked her mother, "Mommy, why do you cut the ends off the meat before you cook it?" The girl's mother told her that she thought it added to the flavor by allowing the meat to better absorb the spices, but perhaps she should ask her grandmother since she always did it that way. So the little girl finds her grandmother and asks, "Grandma, why do you and Mommy cut the ends of the meat off before you cook it?" Her grandmother thought a moment and answered, "I think it allows the meat to stay tender because it soaks up the juices better, but why don't you ask your Nana, after all, I learned from her and she always did it that way." The little girl is getting a little frustrated, but climbs up in her great-grandmother's lap and asks, "Nana, why do you cut the ends off the meat before you cook it?" Nana answered, "I don't know why these women do it, I did it because my pot wasn't big enough."...

Big picture perspective

A man came to a construction site, where stonemasons were working. The man said to one, "What are you doing?" The stonemason said, "You can see, I'm chipping a stone." The man walked over to another mason and said, "What are you doing?" He answered, "I'm building a wall." The man walked over to a third mason and said, "What are you doing?" This mason answered, "I am building a cathedral." Ha! All three were doing the same thing, but what a difference perspective makes! **Citation: Gordon Johnson, "Finding Significance in Obscurity," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 82** difference in Gordon Johnson. **Citation: Gordon Johnson, "Finding Significance in Obscurity," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 82.**

1 Cor. 12:12-27

¹²For example, the body is one unit and yet has many parts. As all the parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether we are Jewish or Greek, slave or free, God gave all of us one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴As you know, the human body is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. ¹⁵Suppose a foot says, "I'm not a hand, so I'm not part of the body!" Would that mean it's no longer part of the body? ¹⁶Or suppose an ear says, "I'm not an eye, so I'm not a part of the body!" Would that mean it's no longer part of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? ¹⁸So God put each and every part of the body together as he wanted it. ¹⁹How could it be a body if it only had one part? ²⁰So there are many parts but one body. ²¹An eye can't say to a hand, "I don't need you!" Or again, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²The opposite is true. The parts of the body that we think are weaker are the ones we really need. ²³The parts of the body that we think are less honorable are the ones we give special honor. So our un-presentable parts are made more presentable. ²⁴However, our presentable parts don't need this kind of treatment. God has put the body together and given special honor to the part that doesn't have it. ²⁵God's purpose was that the body should not be divided but rather that all of its parts should feel the same concern for each other. ²⁶If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts share its suffering. If one part is praised, all the others share in its happiness. ²⁷You are Christ's body and each of you is an individual part of it.[GW]