

Real Church – The one and many

Main Text – 1 Cor 12:12-27 (ESV)

Background

- Church in Corinth. Paul was to create a new community. Totally new identity
- Division. Lowly and Elite. Culture of honour and shame
- Jews and Greeks. Socially and culturally so different. Extreme contrast, is it possible to truly live as one?
- In midst of our diversity, how do we live as one community?

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. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

- What is the basis of our unity? What binds us together? What makes us one?

1) We belong together

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.

- Here, Paul addressed the church in Corinth
- Misalignment of who they ought to be. Lack of understanding of community
- God arranged / ordained members in the body, each one, as he chose
- Not random or without thought. Specific function. Uniquely design

2) We empower each other

19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 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 parts of the body work together
- Does each part exist for their own purposes? Do they serve themselves? Or the whole body?
- There is only one part of our body that lives to serve itself. It's a cell that do not belong to the body. What could it be?
- A church that is not aligned conflicts with the vision set by God, where we serve our own preferences and desires
- This is exactly the scenario of the church in Corinth
- Each group were convinced of their own dominant importance
- Is that a vibrant and healthy body? Is that what the world sees?
- Jesus Christ is no longer physically in this world in the flesh
- To accomplish, fulfill and continue His mission on earth, He needs you and I

Romans 10:14 (NLT) *But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?*

- As the body of Christ, we are his literal hands that serve humanity and our community, feet to advance the gospel, taking it to places only you can access, a voice to speak of His goodness and majesty
- Here is the pinnacle of creation, YOU who Christ set out to redeem – He came to seek and save the lost, inviting you and I to be members of His body
- You are members of the body of Christ on earth

3) We honour one another

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. 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. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

- In the body there is no question of which part is more important
- If any part or internal organs stop functioning, the entire body is out.

Romans 12:15-17 ¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.* ¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.* ¹⁷ *Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.*

- Verse 24: But God has so composed (*synekerasen*) the body.
- Strong's Concordance: Mixed into a new and improved, superior *compound* – "a *holistic blend*"