

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Sermon Notes

Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Part 2)

(1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

What Spiritual Gifts Reveal About How God Designed the Church

"For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

Two Common Mistakes Christians Make When We Don't Understand God's Design

A. Underestimating What We Contribute

"If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body." (1 Cor. 12:15-20)

B. Overestimating What We Contribute

"And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)

One Body, Different Gifts

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not {workers of} miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:27-31)

For Further Thought and Discussion

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. How has American individualism affected the church in America?

Going Deeper

3. Please read 1 Cor. 12:12-14. What does Paul conclude about the church in which every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit? (vss. 1-11) How is the church like a human body?
4. Please read 1 Cor. 12:15-20. What is the first mistake Paul addresses in Christians who don't see the church as one body and themselves as members of that body?
5. Please read 1 Cor. 12:21-26. What is the second mistake Paul addresses in Christians who don't see the church as one body and themselves as members of that body? To which error are you more prone? Why?
6. Please read 1 Cor. 12:27-31. In what ways are these verses similar to Paul's description of the church in vs. 12-14? What do these verses add?
7. Paul seems to be listing a number of spiritual gifts or ministries in vs. 27-31. Do you think he is listing them in order of importance to the church? Why or why not? What seems to be his primary point?
8. How might your life change if you saw yourself as a member of the same body with every other Christian?

Application

What is one thing you will apply from this discussion?