

LXXXV. A HEALTHY BODY: 1 Corinthians 12:14-26

INTRODUCTION. What is the Church?

Some think of the Church as a building where you attend services and programs.

Some think of the Church as an organization, much like a normal non-profit who provides services especially to those in need.

Some think of the Church as a business which exists to expand their profits and reach.

Some think of the Church like a club wherein you choose which one most closely aligns with your felt needs, and which exists to meet all of those felt needs.

The Lord Jesus Christ, on the other hand, wants you to think about His Church in a vastly different way than many do today. He wants you to think of His Church like a body, even more specifically HIS body.

CON(TEXT). **1 Corinthians 12:14a** "For the body..." see vs 27 also

DOCTRINE. The Church is the mystical body of Christ on earth. It is united, diverse, and made up of indispensable members.

OUTLINE.

First,

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH (1 Corinthians 12:14-24).

Second,

FOUR MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

First, we need to consider these:

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH (1 Corinthians 12:14-24).

I. LIKE A BODY, THE CHURCH IS AN ORGANISM (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

1 Corinthians 12:14a "For the body..."

The Church is not a a building, an organization, a mercy ministry, a

business, nor is the church a club. The Church is a living organism—a body; even the mystical body of Christ!

Think again of the many metaphors in the Scriptures concerning the relationship between Christ and His Church:

I) Christ is the Vine and we are the Branches (John 15:1-11).

II) Christ is the King and we are lesser kings and priests in His Kingdom (Revelation 1:4-8).

III) We are Fellow Sons and Heirs with Christ, seeing He is our big brother who both earned and shares His inheritance with us (Romans 8:16-17).

IV) Christ is the Great Shepherd and we are His Sheep (John 10:1-19).

V) Christ is the Bridegroom and we are the Bride (Ephesians 5:25-27).

VI) Christ is the Head and we are the Body (See also Ephesians 5:23 "Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior" and Colossians 1:18 "he is the head of the body, the church").

And the only image used that is not a living organism is that we are the Temple of God. Yet, when Peter says:

VII) We are Living Stones making up the Temple of God, which is Christ (1 Peter 2:1-6).

1 Peter 2:5 "You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

I) The Church is an organism (a body; even the body of Christ).

USE FOR REBUKE

Let this truth rebuke those who think or talk of the Church like it is a building, or an organization, or mercy ministry, or a business, or a club!

Christ did not die for a building. Christ did not shed His precious blood for an organization. Christ did not suffer under the wrath of God for a mercy ministry. Christ did not allow Himself to be nailed to a tree for a business. Christ did not drink the cup for a club. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for the Church, which now being converted, makes up the body of Christ!

II) More specifically, the Church is an organized organism.

- Though the Church is a body, that in no way infers that it is unorganized. There are pastors, deacons, and members which make up the body; there are set times for public worship and fellowship; there are duties and responsibilities we have toward one another.

USE FOR REBUKE

Let this truth rebuke those who are not faithful members of a local church!

They rightly understand that the Church is an organism—a body—but they wrongly live as though the Church is not an organized organism—and they walk with no pastors, no accountability, and mostly rotten fruit.

II. LIKE A BODY, THE CHURCH IS UNITED (1 Corinthians 12:14-16).

1 Corinthians 12:14-16

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

BOYS AND GIRLS... [elaborate on vs. 15]

USE FOR EXAMINATION

Q. Do you find yourself doing the very thing Paul is condemning here?

I EXHORT YOU TO submit to Christ's sovereign purpose for the church—that we would be one body, united through faith in Christ as Savior and King.

III. LIKE A BODY, THE CHURCH IS DIVERSE (1 Corinthians 12:17-20).

1 Corinthians 12:17-20

"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. 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."

BOYS AND GIRLS... [elaborate on vs. 17]

USE FOR EXAMINATION

Q. Do you find yourself doing the very thing Paul is condemning here?

I EXHORT YOU AGAIN TO submit to Christ's sovereign purpose for the church—that we would not all be the exact same, but diverse.

USE FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

You are specifically wired and gifted in such a way that, when you are walking by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are a blessing to the Church at large and your local church in particular.

When you are not present both in body and in spirit, you are missed, whether the other members of the body realize it at that time or not.

USE FOR EXHORTATION

1. *Be present in body and spirit.*

2. *Therefore, keep your eyes fixed on Christ, your knees bent in prayer,*

*your hands to the plow, and however you are gifted, labor in those areas to edify Christ's church so that we all become more like Christ.
"I SAY AGAIN..."*

IV. LIKE A BODY, THE CHURCH IS MADE UP OF INDISPENSABLE MEMBERS (1 Corinthians 12:22-24).

1 Corinthians 12:22-24

"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 unrepresentable 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,"

BOYS AND GIRLS...

USE FOR COMFORT

Beloved Brothers and sisters in Christ, Christ Jesus did not bleed for those whom are dispensable. If you belong to Christ Jesus through faith, you are indispensable. Christ will not throw you away. The body needs you to function properly. We need one another to be present in body and spirit, as we all labor to help one another grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ!

USE FOR WARNING / AWAKENING

UNBELIEVERS, the sad but true reality of your current spiritual state in that you are DISPENSABLE. You have sinned against God and if you have not become a Christian you are still under the wrath of God! You will not be preserved, but thrown out, even into hell.

But the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man as you are. He lived without sin, as you have not. He died paying the penalty for sin, as you deserve. He arose from the dead, as you cannot.

And He both offers you eternal life and demands that you turn from your sin and trust in Him alone for salvation.

Repent and believe the gospel. Be baptized in water. Join with the Church. Walk with the Church all the days of your life for God's glory and your good. And, by God's grace, you will be one of those indispensable members of Christ's body!

Second, we need to consider these:

FOUR MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

I. LIKE A HEALTHY BODY, THERE IS NO DIVISION (1 Corinthians

12:25a).

1 Corinthians 12:25a

"that there may be no division in the body," (*division / dissension*)

- **Dissensions:** To stand apart; disunity.
- **Divisions:** Creating new sects. The word can mean *capturing*.

BOYS AND GIRLS...

II. LIKE A HEALTHY BODY, THERE IS IMPARTIAL CARE FOR EACH MEMBER (1 Corinthians 12:25b).

1 Corinthians 12:25b

"but that the members may have the same care (*or Concern*) for one another."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

III. LIKE A HEALTHY BODY, THERE IS MUTUAL SUFFERING (1 Corinthians 12:26a).

1 Corinthians 12:26a

"If one member suffers, all suffer together;"

BOYS AND GIRLS...

IV. LIKE A HEALTHY BODY, THERE IS MUTUAL REJOICING (1 Corinthians 12:26b).

1 Corinthians 12:26b

"if one member is honored, all rejoice together."

BOYS AND GIRLS...

- **HENRY:** "Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. We should be so far from slighting our brethren's sufferings that we should suffer with them, so far from envying their honours that we should rejoice with them and reckon ourselves honoured in them." — **Henry, Matthew. Unabridged Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (best navigation) . OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.**

CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS.

Because Christ died and was raised for us,

Let us be united, with no divisions.

Let us be diverse, yet have the same care or concern for one another's well being, and

Let us suffer either those who suffer, and rejoice with those who are honored

*for God's great glory!
Amen.*

HELPS

MATTHEW HENRY

"II. Each member has its particular form, place, and use.

1. The meanest member makes a part of the body.

The foot and ear are less useful, perhaps, than the hand and eye; but because one is not a hand, and the other an eye, shall they say, therefore, that they do not belong to the body? v. 15, 16. So every member of the body mystical cannot have the same place and office; but what then? Shall it hereupon disown relation to the body? Because it is not fixed in the same station, or favoured with the same gifts as others, shall it say, "I do not belong to Christ?" No, the meanest member of his body is as much a member as the noblest, and as truly regarded by him. All his members are dear to him.

2. There must be a distinction of members in the body.

One member of a body is not a body; this is made up of many; and among these many there must be a distinction, difference of situation, shape, use, etc. So it is in the body of Christ; its members must have different uses, and therefore have different powers, and be in different places, some having one gift, and others a different one. Variety in the members of the body contributes to the beauty of it. What a monster would a body be if it were all ear, or eye, or arm! So it is for the beauty and good appearance of the church that there should be diversity of gifts and offices in it.

3. The disposal of members in a natural body, and their situation, are as God pleases.

We may plainly perceive the divine wisdom in the distribution of the members; but it was made according to the counsel of his will; he distinguished and distributed them as he pleased. So is it also in the members of Christ's body: they are chosen out to such stations, and endued with such gifts, as God pleases. He who is sovereign Lord of all disposes his favours and gifts as he will. And who should gainsay his pleasure? What foundation is here for repining in ourselves, or envying others? We should be doing the duties of our own place, and not murmuring in ourselves, nor quarrelling with others, that we are not in theirs.

4. All the members of the body are, in some respect, useful and necessary to each other:

God has so fitted and tempered them together that they are all necessary to one another, and to the whole body; there is no part redundant and unnecessary. Every member serves some good purpose or other: it is useful to its fellow-members, and necessary to the good state of the whole body. Nor is there a member of the body of Christ but may and ought to be useful to his fellow-members, and at some times, and in some cases, is needful to them. None should despise and envy another, seeing God has made the distinction between them as he pleased, yet so as to keep them all in some degree of mutual dependence, and make them valuable to each other, and concerned for each other, because of their mutual usefulness. Those who excel in any gift cannot say that they have no need of those who in that gift are their inferiors, while perhaps, in other gifts, they exceed them. Nay, the lowest members of all have their use, and the highest cannot do well without them. The eye has need of the hand, and the head of the feet.

5. Such is the man's concern for his whole body that on the less honourable members more abundant honour is bestowed, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

Those parts which are not fit, like the rest, to be exposed to view, which are either deformed or shameful, we most carefully clothe and cover; whereas the comely parts have no such need. The wisdom of Providence has so contrived and tempered things that the most abundant regard and honour should be paid to that which most wanted it, v. 24. So should the members of Christ's body behave towards their fellow-members: instead of despising them, or reproaching them, for their infirmities, they should endeavour to cover and conceal them, and put the best face upon them that they can.

6. Divine wisdom has contrived and ordered things in this manner that the members of the body should not be schismatics, divided from each other and acting upon separate interests, but well affected to each other, tenderly concerned for each other, having a fellow-feeling of each other's griefs and a communion in each other's pleasures and joys, v. 25, 26.

God has tempered the members of the body natural in the manner mentioned, that there might be no schism in the body (v. 25), no rupture nor disunion among the members, nor so much as the least mutual disregard. This should be avoided also in the spiritual body of Christ. There should be no schism in this body, but the members should be closely united by the strongest bonds of love. All decays of this affection are the seeds of schism. Where Christians grow cold towards each other, they will be careless and unconcerned for each other. And this mutual disregard is a schism begun. The members of the natural body are made to have a care and concern for each other, to prevent a schism in it. So should it be in Christ's body; the members should sympathize with each other. As in the natural body the pain of the one part afflicts the whole, the ease and pleasure of one part affects the whole, so should Christians reckon themselves honoured in the honours of their fellow-christians, and should suffer in their sufferings. Note, Christian sympathy is a

great branch of Christian duty. We should be so far from slighting our brethren's sufferings that we should suffer with them, so far from envying their honours that we should rejoice with them and reckon ourselves honoured in them.

— Henry, Matthew. Unabridged Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (best navigation) . OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening / Big-Picture Questions (Icebreakers)

1. Before hearing this sermon, how did you tend to think of "the church"? Did any of the wrong views mentioned (building, organization, business, club) describe your previous thinking? Why or why not?
2. The preacher says the overarching doctrine is: *"The church is the mystical body of Christ on earth. It is united, diverse, and made up of indispensable members."*
 - Which part of this statement is most comforting to you? Which part is most challenging?

Section 1: Four Foundational Truths About the Identity of the Church (vv. 14–24)

Truth 1 – The Church Is an Organism (Living, Not Dead) 3. Why does the sermon emphasize that the church is a *living organism* rather than a dead institution? How do the other biblical metaphors (vine & branches, temple of living stones, shepherd & sheep, etc.) reinforce this?

1. The preacher rebukes both extremes: treating the church like a mere organization *and* refusing to be part of an organized local church.
 - Where do you see each of these errors today? Which one tempts you more personally?

Truth 2 – The Church Is United (One Body) 5. Paul imagines body parts talking and complaining ("I'm not a hand, so I don't belong"). How does this illustrate wrong thinking about our place in the church? Share a time when you felt "lesser" because of your gifts or role.

Truth 3 – The Church Is Diverse 6. Why is diversity in gifts, personalities, and roles not just tolerable but *necessary* according to verses 17–21? What happens when everyone tries to be the same body part (eye, ear, etc.)?

1. The sermon warns against two opposite sins:
 - Thinking "I'm not needed because I'm not like them."
 - Thinking "I don't need them because they're not like me."Which of these two attitudes have you struggled with, and how does

the text correct it?

Truth 4 – The Church Is Made Up of Indispensable Members 8. Many humble Christians feel “dispensable” or insignificant. According to verses 22–24, how does God view the “weaker” or “less honorable” parts of the body? What practical encouragement does this give you?

1. The preacher says, “Jesus Christ did not bleed for those who are dispensable.” How should this truth affect the way we view ourselves and other ordinary members of our local church?

Section 2: Four Marks of a Healthy Church (vv. 25–26)

1. **No Division** – What is the difference between *dissension* and *division* as explained in the sermon? How can we guard against both in our church?
2. **Impartial Care** – “The members may have the same care for one another.”
 - How well does our church (or your small group) practice impartial care? Where do we show favoritism?
3. **Mutual Suffering** – “If one member suffers, all suffer together.”
 - On a scale of 1–10, how well do you personally enter into the suffering of others in the church? What would growth in this area look like?
4. **Mutual Rejoicing** – “If one member is honored, all rejoice together.”
 - Why is rejoicing with others often harder than suffering with them? Share a time when you struggled with jealousy instead of rejoicing.

Personal Application & Self-Examination

1. The sermon repeatedly calls for self-examination. Pick one area and answer honestly:
 - Am I present both **in body and in spirit** when the church gathers?
 - Am I actively using my gifts to build others up, or am I mostly a consumer?
 - Do I treat any fellow believers as unnecessary?
2. The preacher says most Christians feel dispensable while some feel superior. Which temptation is stronger in your life right now, and what specific action or truth from this sermon will help you fight it?
3. For parents or those who teach children: How would you explain to a child (using the body illustration) that every part of the church matters?

Action & Prayer Questions

1. What is one practical step you can take this week to live out the truth that you are an *indispensable* member of Christ’s body?
2. How can our group/church better reflect the four marks of a healthy church (no division, impartial care, mutual suffering, mutual rejoicing)?

Brainstorm 1–2 concrete ideas.

3. Spend time praying together using the sermon's closing prayer as a model. Ask God to make your local church a clearer picture of Christ's body.

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors, the question we need to ask ourselves today as we come to this text of Scripture is, what is the church? What is the church? Some think of the church as a building where you attend services and programs. Some think of the church as an organization much like a typical nonprofit which provides services especially to those in need. Some think of the church more along the lines of a business which exists rather to expand their profits and their reach. And some think of the church more like a club wherein you choose which one most closely aligns with your felt needs and which exists to meet all of those felt needs.

But the Lord Jesus Christ on the other hand wants you to think about his church in a vastly different way than many do today. He wants you to think of his church like a body, like a physical body, like a human body. Even more specifically, he wants you to think of the church like his body. Look at verse 14, the very beginning of that. Just the first few words in our text of Scripture for today. For the body—and he is speaking of the church. He is particularly writing this letter to the church at Corinth because they were a local church that was not functioning correctly. It was not functioning like a body made up of many members and the body of Christ which exists to glorify the Lord and to work together for his name's sake.

Look also at the beginning of verse 27, though it is not in the text that we are really looking at today. Lord willing, we will look at it next week. But notice how he says in verse 27, just in case any of us are saying, "Well, the body, how should we think of that?" Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. So there is the way that the Lord Jesus Christ wants you to think about his church. Not like a building, not like an organization, not like a typical nonprofit, not like a business, not like a country club or anything like that, but like a body, more specifically, his body.

Now, here is the doctrine that we should learn from these verses. Here is the overarching teaching that I think God would have us comprehend and apply: The church is the mystical body of Christ on earth. It is united, diverse, and made up of indispensable members. The church is the mystical body of Christ on earth. It is united, diverse, and made up of indispensable members.

Now, as we study through this passage of Scripture, I want to do it under just two main headings for you to understand, for you to follow along with me where

we are going. The first thing that we will notice, I believe, in verses 14–24 are these four foundational truths concerning the identity of the church. Verses 14–24. Four foundational truths concerning the identity of the church. And then second, as we can see in verses 25 and 26, four marks of a healthy church. So four foundational truths in verses 14–24. And then to conclude, four marks of a healthy church in verses 25 and 26. Now, you just need to know going into it, these are not the only four marks of a healthy church, but these are four specific things that do mark every healthy, especially local church.

Now, let us consider that first main thing, these four foundational truths concerning the identity of the church. Look with me again at the very first part of verse 14. And let me just try to drive that point home that I brought up to you in the introduction. Here is the first main foundational truth concerning the identity of the church that you need to grasp. ***Like a body, the church is an organism.*** Like a body, the church is an organism. Meaning it is alive. It is living. It is active. That is what he would have us understand by “for the body” in the first part of verse 14. This is kind of what is underneath everything. If you do not comprehend that the church is a living organism, the body of Christ on earth—and he is even, as he says in verse 27, clarifying, “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it”—if we do not understand that and we still have the wrong thinking of a building, an organization, a business, a nonprofit, a club, all those things are dead. There is no life. It is not an organism. But the church is an organism living and active.

Beloved brothers and sisters, the church is not a building. The church is not an organization. The church is not a mercy ministry. It is not a business. Nor is the church a club. The church is a living organism, a body, even the mystical body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I want you to think with me again about the metaphors used in the Scriptures concerning the church. And I want you to pay careful attention to the fact that each one of these is alive. Christ does not use any dead metaphors for the church. They are all living. First, John 15, Christ is the vine and we are the branches, alive, plugged in to Christ, united to Christ. A vine is a living thing. Christ is the king and we are lesser kings and priests in his kingdom. Kings and priests are living beings. That is Revelation 1:4–8. And we are also called fellow sons and heirs with Christ. We are sons in the Father’s family. God the Father has adopted us into his family and we are fellows with the Lord Jesus Christ. Sons are alive. Also, Christ is the great shepherd and we are his sheep, a part of his flock. Sheep, though they may be dumb, are alive. Christ is the bridegroom, and we are the bride. All living metaphors.

And here is the interesting thing. Look at me. The only metaphor used in Scripture that you could argue with me and say, “Well, that is not a living thing” is when the church is called the temple of God. Right? A temple. That is a building. But in 1 Peter chapter 2:5 when Peter uses that metaphor, this is what he says in verse 5. He says, “You yourselves, like living stones, living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." So even when Peter uses the only metaphor in Scripture that the church is the temple of God that we would say well that metaphor is a building, it is a dead thing, Peter makes sure and says you are individually the stones which make up the temple of God which is Christ—living stones, alive, active stones. So you need to just get that really clear in your mind. The church is an organism, a body, even the body of Christ.

Let me use that truth to offer some rebukes. This truth, let it rebuke those who think or talk of the church like it is a building, or who think and talk of the church as though it is just an organization or a man-made institution, or those who talk of the church like it is a mercy ministry, or those who speak of the church or think of the church like it is a business or a club. This should rebuke all of those who think like that.

Now, here is why this really matters. It does not only matter because the metaphors in Scripture are all living. It matters because brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ did not die for a building. We do not call this the church. This building is not the church. We do not call it that. You should not call it that. This is the church building. It is where the church meets together for worship and for various other things. But Christ did not die for a building. Christ did not shed his precious blood for an organization. He did not suffer under the wrath of God for a mercy ministry. He did not allow himself to be nailed to a tree for a business. The Lord Jesus did not drink the cup for a club. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for the church which now being converted makes up a living body, even the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, more specifically, what we need to understand and what I will caution you away from by this point is that the church is not just an organism. But as has been said and how we should think about it, *the church is an organized organism*. An organized organism. We are not an organization. We are an organism. But you need to be very careful though. The church is a body. This in no way implies or infers that we are unorganized. There are pastors, there are deacons, there are church members which make up the body. There are set times for public worship and fellowship. There are processes of church discipline. So let this also serve to rebuke. Let this truth that the church is not just an organism but an organized organism with specific duties to fulfill and responsibilities to fulfill toward one another. Let that truth serve to rebuke those who are not faithful members of a local church. They rightly, if we are being charitable, those who are not faithful members of a local church, they might rightly understand that the church is an organism, a body. It is not a building, not a business, not a mercy ministry, all those things. But they wrongly live as though the church is not an organized organism. And they walk with no pastors overseeing their souls, no accountability toward other Christians, no active participation in the life of the body to help build up the body of Christ. And the result is mostly rotten fruit.

The church is an organism. And so there are some who think of the church like an organization, but they are a faithful part of a church, but they need to be rebuked because that is not what the church is. Then there are others who know

the church is the body of Christ and then they fall into the ditch of like I am not going to be a part of a local church because it is not about a building. It is like yeah it is just a convenient place that we get to gather to worship the Lord and help one another grow into godliness. So both sides of that need to be rebuked. But we need to have that very clear in our mind. The church is an organism and the church is an organized organism.

But the second truth, and really that is just kind of like the foundational thing for making sure we grasp this whole passage. The second truth, and the one that he really gets to in verses 14–16, is this. ***Like a body, the church is united.*** The church is united. Look at verses 14–16. For the body does not consist of one member. And by member, all throughout here, he is talking about body parts. The church, the body does not consist of one member or one body part, but of many. We can see that he is talking about body parts, which is a way that Greek word can be translated very easily. We see that that is what he is getting at in verse 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. 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. His whole point is that we are individually there are many different members, many different body parts, but we are all one body, united in the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Boys and girls, imagine your different body parts could talk. Okay, that is what Paul is doing in these verses. He is imagining that your foot could talk. We know your foot cannot talk. He is imagining that your ear can talk. We know your ear cannot talk, but just imagine for a minute, boys and girls. Look up here. Imagine your foot could talk and your foot says because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body. I am not a part of your physical body. If your foot said that, would you say, "Okay, I guess you are not a part of my body." No. You would say, "No, no, you are. I am looking at you. You are a part of the body, a part of my body." And imagine that your ear could speak and it says, "You know what? I really wish I were an eye. And if I were an eyeball, then I would be a part of the body, but I am an ear, so I am not a part of the body." If your ear said that, you would just say, "You are dumb. You are still a part of my body. You want to be an eye, but you are an ear." And so it is the same with the church, boys and girls. There are some people who are gifted in certain ways, and they would be like, "Well, if I were gifted in that way, I would be a real part of the body, but I am only gifted in this way, so I am not really a part of the body." And Paul is saying, "Nope, you are still a part of the body. The body is united. Many different body parts, but we all make up one body."

But notice what he is saying. Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body. You see what he is rhetorically doing, right? It should cause you to examine yourself to look at the ways that you have been gifted specifically by the Lord both naturally and supernaturally by the power of the Spirit and spiritual gifts. And I want you to examine yourself. Do you do the very thing that Paul is rebuking in these verses or that Paul is rather showing you the foolishness of in these verses?

Do you look at others' gifts and abilities and how they serve the Lord just in general and think, well, if I were like that, I would be a real vital part of the body, but I am not. If I were an eye, it would be great, but I am just an ear. If I were a hand, that would be great, but I am just a foot. I exhort you, brothers and sisters, to submit to Christ's sovereign purpose for the church, that we would be one body, united through faith in Christ Jesus, and we would all be content with whatever body part the Lord has made us in his body. So even if you think wrongly, he is saying the church is still united. That would not make it any less a part of the body.

Now look, not only is the church united, one body, even if people are thinking wrongly, one body. Notice the next truth that we should learn here in verses 17–20. ***Like a body, the church is diverse.*** Not only united, making up one body, but the church, he is emphasizing, is diverse. Verses 17 through 21. 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? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. There is the sovereignty of God. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts yet one body. 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.

Now notice the first little section in verses 14–16 serves to make us examine: do I think of myself like well I am an ear. If I were an eye I would be a really crucial part and he is like yeah you are still a part of the body. If the foot says because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body. So that first little section should cause us to examine ourselves and say, "Do I wish I were that? And because I am not like that, I am not a part of the body." Paul says, "Nope, you still are." And then in verses 17–21, it kind of switches to not those who think, "If I were like that, I would be vital," but it switches to those who would think I am like this and they are not like me. And because they are not, who cares? Everyone should be like me. So it goes both ways. Then you have to examine yourself as you look at these verses and not only realize the church is united and we are all gifted differently and contribute differently to help one another grow up and glorify the Lord, but we also need to see that not everyone should be exactly like us. Not everyone should be exactly like us.

Boys and girls, look up here at me again. Paul says in this passage in verse 17, if you have your Bible open, look at that. 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? Okay, do you see that, boys and girls? Do you realize what he is saying? He is drawing you and I to imagine a human body that is just an ear. Is that going to be useful at all? He is super good at hearing, really bad at speaking, really bad at seeing, cannot do anything. But that is what those are like who have their gifts and abilities that the Lord has given them and look on others with disdain because the others are not as much like them or despise other parts of the body. It is like you are acting as though or thinking as though the body should be made up of an entire eyeball. What use is that? That is what Paul is saying. It is like, no, no, no. If

the whole body were an ear, that is dumb. If the whole body were an eye, think of how foolish that is. So, the church, boys and girls, the church is united. We are one body, but we are one body just like our physical body. We have a lot of different body parts. And it is good because ears cannot see, eyes cannot speak, feet cannot grab unless you have really interesting feet. So like a body, the church is united but also diverse.

And so I ask you adults again to examine yourself. Look at verse 21 again. 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. Do you do that to other people in the body of Christ? I have got my giftings, my abilities, how the Lord has wired me. I am good. I do not need you. I do not need you. I have got everything that I need to grow up into maturity, to be edified, to glorify the Lord. If that is you, you need to repent. You are but an ear. You need the eyes. You need the hands. You need the feet. All of us need one another. So I exhort you again, submit to Christ's sovereign purpose for the church, that we would not all be the exact same but diverse and we would be mutually dependent upon one another if we are going to glorify the Lord and if we are individually going to grow in holiness and Christlikeness.

This also serves to rebuke those lone-wolf Christians. They are but a hand and they are trying to do the function of a whole body but they are only a hand. This also serves to rebuke those who disdain or despise the local church but also those who are a part of local churches but always keep people distant. They do not open up. They do not come around. You do not know them. They do not know you. And maybe some of you are like that. You are not engaged. You are not laboring to edify and help build up the body of Christ and be built up. You just attend things. You get just close enough to be like, I am being faithful, but you are not a vital intricate functioning part of the body. It is like the hand who never does anything to help the rest of the body. It is like, well, yeah, you are connected, but you are lame. Lame in the sense of you do not do anything. So, examine yourself. Are you doing your part in the way the Lord has gifted you to help build up the body of Christ and be a functioning part of the body of Christ for God's glory? 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.

We need to also use this. You who are laboring to walk faithfully for the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to be encouraged. You are specifically wired and gifted in such a way that when you are walking by the power of the Spirit, you are a blessing to the church at large and to your local church in particular. When you are walking in obedience to the Lord, you are a blessing to the local church that you are a part of. Be encouraged. When you are not present, both in body and in spirit, you are missed. Whether the other members of the body realize it at that time or not, I do not mean, oh, we miss you, which we do. I mean you are missed whether the people realize it or not because you have been made a vital intricate part of that body and when you are not present in body or in spirit you are missed. You are specifically wired and gifted in such a way that when you are walking by the power of the Spirit, you are a blessing and you are needed to help build up the

body of Christ for God's glory.

And so, let me give you an exhortation from that. Be present both in body and in spirit. Be present both in body and in spirit. When the church gathers together for worship, for public worship, be present, not just physically, but physically and in spirit. When the church gathers together for times of fellowship and mutual encouragement and fellowship meals, things like that, be present, not just physically, but also in spirit. Some of you are fine at being present physically, but your heart is not here. You are not present in spirit. You are not thinking, "How can I maybe encourage somebody? How can I ask somebody how they are doing or how I can pray for them?" You come late, you leave early, and you are not here in spirit even when you are here. So I exhort you because you are specifically gifted and you are an intricate part of the body of Christ, especially as it pertains to your local church to be present in body and spirit. I also exhort you, keep your eyes fixed on Christ, your knees bent in prayer, your hands to the plow, and however you are gifted, labor in those areas to edify Christ's church so that we all become more like Christ. That is why you have been gifted and why you have been saved and put in the body of Christ. So that you would no longer live for yourselves, but you would live for Christ who for your sake died and was raised. And the specific ways you have been gifted are given to you so that you would labor as you walk in holiness, you would labor to use those gifts so that the other believers especially in your local church would become more like Jesus. So when you are not present in body or not present in spirit, the people around you that God has sovereignly placed you in a body with are not going to be as much like Jesus as they would be if you labored using the gifts that God had given you.

One body, many members, and all the giftings and all the ways that we are to work together is for edification to build up the body of Christ. So that we would, Ephesians 4, we would grow into maturity into the likeness of the Lord Jesus. So I just ask you to think, do I want to be more like Jesus? Then you need everyone to help you. Do I want other people to be more like Jesus? Do I want them to hate their sin more and love Jesus more and walk in holiness and use this one life God has given them for his glory? Do I want to see other people walking in the truth? Then you must be active in body and in spirit and labor however you have been gifted to build them up.

So there is the third main truth under these foundational truths. The church is like a body, an organism. It is united or one body. The church is diverse and we cannot say I have no need of anyone else.

But now the fourth point that we need to see here in verses 22–24 is this. ***Like a body, the church is made up of indispensable members.*** The church is made up of indispensable members. Verses 22–24. Look, on the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. Stop right there. How many of you would say, "I seem or feel to be an insignificant or kind of dispensable part of the church." Like if I am not there on Sundays or I am not there with my community group or I am not there when somebody reaches out and needs help, that is not

going to change anything. I am not preaching. I am not teaching. I am not leading anything. I do not have a lot of money to give. Whatever it may be. I am not good at talking to people. Whatever. I seem to be weak and kind of dispensable. Look at what God says. On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, meaning they are vital members of a particular church. Vital members of the body. Verse 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, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it.

I think you can get his metaphor that he is saying, "We bestow the greater honor on those parts that are less honorable." There are some parts of your body that you cover and adorn in a different way than others. We bestow the greater honor and the unpresentable parts—adults, parts of your body that you do not present in public—less honorable or the parts of the body we think less honorable we would just bestow the greater honor and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty which our more presentable parts do not require but God has so composed the body giving greater honor to the part that lacked it. All he is trying to do is say, "Think about the parts of your body that do not look very lovely." Well, you bestow greater honor on it to cover up the part that is less honorable. The parts that are unpresentable, yeah, they are kind of in the background or you hide them with modesty. All he is trying to say is for those of us who think I am not a very beautiful part of the body, he is saying you are still an indispensable part of the body and more care and devotion is even given to those parts of the body that the parts that are always uncovered and look fine, they do not need as much. Saying if you think of yourself like a less honorable part of the body, we bestow the greater honor. You need the church even more. The church needs you. Unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty. Yeah, there are some in the body who are not like out-front parts of the body that everyone sees. Yeah, they are covered up. But as you know, the parts that you cover up are still indispensable. Just because I cover them in public does not mean they are dispensable parts of my body. And so it is with the body of Christ. Greater honor to the part that lacked it. The part you really need to understand is that last part of verse 22. This is what he is getting at. The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. Like a body, the church is made up of indispensable members.

And my thinking is most Christians probably fall into that one. Most just typical humble Christians in an ordinary church fall into thinking they are dispensable more than they fall into thinking everyone should be great like me. Like he said before, the Corinthians were obviously falling into that. Everyone should be able to speak in tongues like I do. Like you guys are out of your mind. I think most people in their humility that leads them to fall into thinking that they are dispensable. You need to just look right here at God's word. Even if you seem to be weaker, you beloved brothers and sisters, you are indispensable. And I think it is a lie the enemy tries to sow in your heart to make you think you are dispensable. So that if

you are not actively engaged, if you are not present in body and spirit and laboring to use the gifts God has given you, you are robbing the other people of how a means that God is going to use to make them more like Jesus. You are indispensable. But if the devil can get you to believe you are dispensable, then you are robbing the church. He is getting you to rob the church of a necessary means God has given them to grow up to be more like Jesus.

Boys and girls, are there any parts on your body, do not say it out loud, but just think and be like, you know what? It would just not be a big deal if somebody just cut that off. Like, I do not really need my hand. I do not think my life would be affected negatively if someone cut my hand off. Would you ever think that or say that? No. Foot, ear, eye. No. All the body parts that you have been given by God, we would all say, "Those are not things that I am going to cut off and throw away. I need those." And so it is with the church. There are some parts that are more visible and would be a bigger deal. Like you could cut my pinky off and that would be terrible. And it would probably be worse if you cut my entire leg off. Yeah, there are some who do a bigger job and we would really miss even more. But every part of our body, it is like, "No, I would like to keep all of my body parts, please. They are all indispensable." So it is with the church. There are some who do a lot more and lead and things like that and it would be like losing your leg. That would stink. But you would never say, "Yeah, but you can just like cut my hand off. That is not as big as my leg. Who cares?" No. Every part of your body is indispensable. Even if it is the weaker part of your body. So it is with the church. Every member of Christ's church is not someone we would say, "Who cares if they are not here? Who cares if they are not using their gifts?" The church is made up like a body of indispensable members.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ did not bleed for those who are dispensable. Did Christ die for you? Was he raised for you? Then you are in no way dispensable. So do not ever think of yourself like that and do not act like that. For Christ's glory and for others' good. If you belong to Christ Jesus through faith, you are absolutely indispensable and you are a part of the body of Christ needed for your good, for others' good, and for Christ's ultimate glory. Believers, Christ will never cut you off and throw you away. The body needs you in order to function properly. We need one another to be present in body and spirit as we all labor to help one another grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Now, unbelievers, there is a warning for you here. When he says in verse 22, he is saying, "No member of the body is dispensable. No one can be just cut off and thrown away." You need to know if you are an unbeliever, you are totally dispensable. Totally dispensable. It is not just because you are so great and the Lord sees the potential in you and you are an amazing person. No, that is not what Paul is saying. He is saying because you have been saved by Christ, baptized by God the Holy Spirit, and given specific gifts, united to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are a Christian, you are totally indispensable. But if you are not a Christian, you are going to be dispensed with one day. If you will not turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, the sad but true reality of your current spiritual state, if you are outside of Christ,

is that you are dispensable. You have sinned against God. And if you have not become a Christian, you are still under the wrath of God. You will not be preserved, but you will be thrown out into hell. And so we plead with you because the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man as you are, a human being. He lived without sin as you have not. He died paying the penalty for sin as you deserve. He arose from the dead as you cannot. And he did that to offer salvation, eternal life to sinners like you. You are totally dispensable now. But Christ says, "Come to me. Receive salvation from me. Turn from your sin and trust me alone for salvation." And Christ says, "I will make you indispensable. I will forgive you of your sins. I will baptize you with God the Holy Spirit. I will give you gifts so that you would be a vital part of my body." So I say to all of you unbelievers. Repent and believe the gospel, the good news of what Christ has done to save sinners like you and me, and you will become indispensable. Be baptized in water. Join with the church. Walk with the church all the days of your life for God's glory and your good. And by God's grace, you will be one of those indispensable members of Christ's body. Christ paid everything, so it is free for you. Turn to him in faith. Like a body, the church is made up of indispensable members.

But now, in conclusion, we just need to look more quickly at verses 25 and 26 and to see what we can glean here. Four marks of a healthy church. So there we have got the four foundational truths. The church is made up of indispensable members. We are diverse. We are united. We are an organism, the body of Christ. But now notice how he turns. He is using all of this to get to the real heart of the matter with the church at Corinth because they were not united. They were not rejoicing with those who rejoiced or those who were honored. They were not suffering alongside those who were suffering. They were not impartially caring for one another. It was all divided into different sects. I follow Paul. I follow Peter. I follow Apollos. I follow Christ. They were all divided. They were all separating themselves into how their spiritual gifts functioned. And the people who spoke in tongues are elevated to being super spiritual. And the people who did not are down here. So there is a bunch of mess. There is a mess going on. And so these four foundational truths he lays out is to get here to this application. You have got to understand the foundational truths. But now he is like going for the jugular of what their spiritual problem was. He says, "Imagine you are a part of the church at Corinth and you know all these divisions are happening and there is partial sinful partiality being shown and that somebody is suffering and you are not weeping with them or helping them or somebody is honored and you are not rejoicing but you are jealous of them." Imagine you are at the church of Corinth and you are just reading verses 14 through 24 and you are like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." And then he goes that there may be no division in the body. You go, "Oh, he got us." Like, I am all in. This is great. And then when the application comes, the whole point of all this is that there would be no division in this body. And they would have to go, I think he is talking about us. He is. But we can use these things and just apply them generally to us to understand this is what a healthy body looks like.

Four marks of a healthy church. First, ***like a healthy body, there is no division.*** There is no division. The first part of verse 25, these foundational truths are so that there may be no division in the body. That word you can translate division or dissension. Dissension means that you are going to stand apart from others in disunity. So it is like I am right and I wish they believed like me but they are wrong. That is dissension. Division is the addition to dissension to where you not only stand apart in disunity but then you try to convince other people that are all united to come with you. So they would also stand apart with you in disunity. The word division means it means literally capturing someone. So the dissension is I am right, they are wrong. I am better, they are worse, I am strong, they are weak. So you separate yourself and then try to get other people to come with you. And that creates schisms or sects within the church. The word division there in the Greek is where we get our word schism. It is divisions. There are different sects within the church. There are these people, these people, these people, these people. And it is like they are competing factions. And Paul is saying that does not exist in a healthy body. No. That there may be no division in the body. Division is the opposite of unity.

Boys and girls, can you imagine if your hands and your feet were jealous of one another and competed against one another? You are like, "Well, whatever the foot wants me to do, I am not doing it. If it will help the foot, I will not do it." How are you going to tie your shoes? It would be miserable. That is what he is saying is like there is division in the body. You are a part of the same body and you exist to work together. But imagine if your hands will not do what your feet need and your feet will not do what your hands need. And so it is like, well, I really need to walk over there. And your feet are like, I am not walking over there if the hands need it. And so your hands are like, I guess I got to try to walk on my hands. I mean, you see how stupid that sounds. That is exactly what local churches are like that have divisions and sects and competing factions. That is what the church at Corinth was like. And that is why Paul is rebuking them. Beloved, a healthy body has no division. We are united in doctrine. We are united in mission. We realize we are different, but we are all to work together. And everyone else is looking and saying it is my duty to help these people in so far as I am able to help them become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. No division, same mission, same king, same Savior, same goals to help one another grow up into maturity like a healthy body. There is no division in a healthy church.

Second, look at the next part of verse 25. But that the members may have the same care or concern for one another. So the divisions even at the church at Corinth apparently led to whoever is kind of in your sect, if they need help, you are really quick to help them. But if someone that was kind of in the other group or the other sect needed help, you are just like, "Well, let the people in their group help them. I am not going to help them." That is why he says, "But that the members have the same care or concern for one another." No division. It is one of the nasty fruits of division in a body. But the thing that we can really learn here about a

healthy mark of a healthy church is there is impartial care for each member. Impartial care for each member means whoever it is if they need we labor to meet that need. It does not matter if you get along with them or if you share the same hobbies or interests or whatever. It is like somebody needs to be cared for and I am concerned for them. We are going to fulfill that. There is no sinful partiality. So ***like a healthy body, a mark of a healthy church is there is impartial care for each member.*** Again, the metaphor, imagine that your foot has a wound of some kind that you have to dress with your hands and your hands are like, "Nope, not helping that." Well, you are going to be miserable.

So like a healthy body, there is impartial care or concern for one another. So I ask you to examine yourself by that. Do you find yourself being concerned with the physical and spiritual state of those in your local church? Just those who align with you or who you share common interests, hobbies, convictions on tertiary matters or are you anybody needs help? I am there. I am actually concerned in a holy way for the spiritual and physical well-being of all those because they are a part of the same body as me. It should go beyond that to the global church, the universal church as well, but it very specifically has to be applied to the local church. A healthy local body has members that have the same care for one another and there is no sinful partiality.

Third, look what he says at the beginning of verse 26. Here is another mark of a healthy church. ***Like a healthy body, there is mutual suffering.*** Mutual suffering. By which he obviously means if someone in the body is suffering, you are hurting with them. It affects you as well because you have a concern for their spiritual and physical well-being. So if they are suffering, it is heavy on you, too. If one member suffers, all suffer together. Just like it is with your body. When one of your body parts is suffering, it is like you do not say, "Well, my foot is suffering." You say, "I am suffering." What is the specific thing? Well, my foot hurts. But you do not say, "My foot is suffering." You say, "I am suffering." And so, it should be in the body of Christ. When one member suffers, all suffer together because we intricately make up the body of Christ. This is the care and concern we have for one another.

The fourth thing that he mentions as far as a sign or a mark of a healthy church is there is mutual rejoicing. Mutual rejoicing. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. At Corinth, it would seem that those who were suffering, if they are not a part of your in-group or sect or whatever, you are just kind of like serves them right. And at the same time, it seems that he is mentioning this because if someone is a part of another group than you in the church and there are all these divisions and sects, then if they are honored, you do not rejoice with them, but you are jealous. You are jealous of them. He is saying you are all part of the same body, though. So, if they are suffering, you should be suffering. It affects you. And if somebody in the same body as you is honored, you should rejoice with them because they are a part of the same body. And it is as if you are being honored, too.

Like a healthy body, there is mutual rejoicing. With those who are honored, we all rejoice. Praise God for that. Those who are suffering. We all suffer and go to the Lord in prayer and labor to ease their suffering however we can. But these are marks of a healthy church. And you need to know that the third and fourth things I mean this has to do with your internal life. This is not like fake it. It is like how do I suffer with those who are suffering? It is like you have to actually have a care and concern, a love for that person because Christ purchased them so much so that when they are suffering, that is your response. And so if that is not your response and you do not really care when other people are suffering, you need to confess that as sin to the Lord and ask him, change my heart so that I would actually have a love for other members in your body, Christ, members that I am a part of that I would actually be affected and not just so concerned with myself and the rejoicing and not being jealous of someone. It is the same thing. Like, how do you change that? It is not just externally conform to these things and like try to fake cry. I am suffering with you or try to fake rejoice with someone who is honored. But it is a heart thing. And so, if that is not you, if you see people being honored and your first thought is not like, "Man, that is awesome," rejoicing with them. If that is not you and envy or jealousy sneaking in, then confess that to the Lord and ask him to change your heart so that you would see others in the body honored and you would be excited about it. You would rejoice with them. So the marks of a healthy church are not just here is what you can do. It is here is who we need God the Holy Spirit to make us. So spend time in prayer, plead for these things, that these things would mark us even as a local church.

Here is my conclusion. Because Christ died and was raised for us, let us be united with no divisions. Let us be diverse, yet have the same care or concern for one another's well-being. And let us suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who are honored for God's great glory. Amen.

Let us pray. Our Father, we ask you to help us understand what we should and we ask you to change us to make us more like Jesus. To make us a people who have no divisions. A people who have the same care for one another. A people who suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who are honored. Help us all to use our gifts so that we would help one another grow up into maturity and to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive us of our sins. Grant us by your Spirit to walk in holiness and purity. Help us to edify one another for your great glory. We ask you to receive these songs, prayers, the Lord's Supper, offerings, our fellowship.