

## **Embodied Shalom: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made**

### **Psalm 139:13-16**

According to the National Institute of Health, “body image is how you perceive, think, and feel about your physical appearance. It encompasses the mental picture you hold of your shape, size, and features, as well as the emotions and behaviors tied to how you view yourself.”

What if instead of thinking about “body image,” we began to think about our “bodies as image”?

Body as image removes the self critical, evaluative focus and turns our eyes back to God where they belong.

With an understanding of body as image as far superior to body image, we can then understand that there is only One who sees us fully and entirely at each moment.

God sees us fully and only looks at us with compassion and love.

*Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35, 38-39*

### **The Created Body: 5 aspects**

- A mental component (intellect)
- A volitional component (will)
- An emotional component (feelings and motivations)
- A moral component (conscience)
- A physical component (the body)

### **The Particular Body: 6 aspects**

Each person is an individual – known as particularity.

- Temporality: existing in time
  - Objective time: measurable and chronological
  - Subjective time: how time is experienced – “The days are long but the years are short.”
- Spatiality: existing in particular space
- Context: the interrelated setting we live in
  - How we live, act, and understand our experiences
  - Culture, economics, politics, religion
- Ethnicity: a particular heritage
- Family/kinship: a particular family background
- Story: a particular personal narrative
  - Narratives identify us and we communicate with others by the stories we tell

Our particularity shapes how we see the world and shows how we have been shaped.

### **Action Point:**

Take time this week to make lists about yourself as *a created body* and *a particular body*. Who are you? What is changing? How are you growing? How did God knit you together? Check in with someone who knows you well to help with accuracy.

Jesus himself was not only a particular body, he was **The Particular Body** in the incarnation and the work of redemption.

- The Particular God – From the beginning, the Creator God, the Word – 1 John 1:1, 14a

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:1, 14a*

- The Particular Incarnate Son – Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:11

*When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law... Galatians 4:4*

*Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:11*

- The Particular Work – 1 Timothy 2:5

*For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5*

- The Particular Redemption – All of Ephesians 1-2 (Ephesians 1:7-10)

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him. Ephesians 1:7-10*

Our bodies AS imaging our Creator brings him honor and brings us peace – Embodied Shalom

### **Life in the Body**

“Our beliefs about our bodies are always in play because our bodies are part and parcel of what we are. Wherever we are, there our body is with us. Whatever we do, our body does.” - *Wonderfully Made*, John Kleinig

Life in the Body with Jesus:

- Washing my body with physical water through baptism
- Hearing with my ears his spoken word in the presence of other saints, gathering with the church

- Eating with my mouth the communion elements to remember the covenant Jesus made with us through his own body and blood.
- Serving with my hands and feet to help other humans in the name of Jesus
- What embodied practice would you add to this list?

Our spiritual life, created and sustained by the Holy Spirit, is always lived in the body!

Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks with  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

- St. Teresa of Avila

**Questions:**

What do you like about your body? Do you believe that your body is blessed by God? How does 'body as image' change your perspective on how to view yourself and the world?

This week, start with your head and work your way all the way down to your toes and say, "My (fill in the blank) is blessed by God." Do this with your actual hands on body parts that you struggle with. Let God lead the way to healing in your peace-filled embodiment.