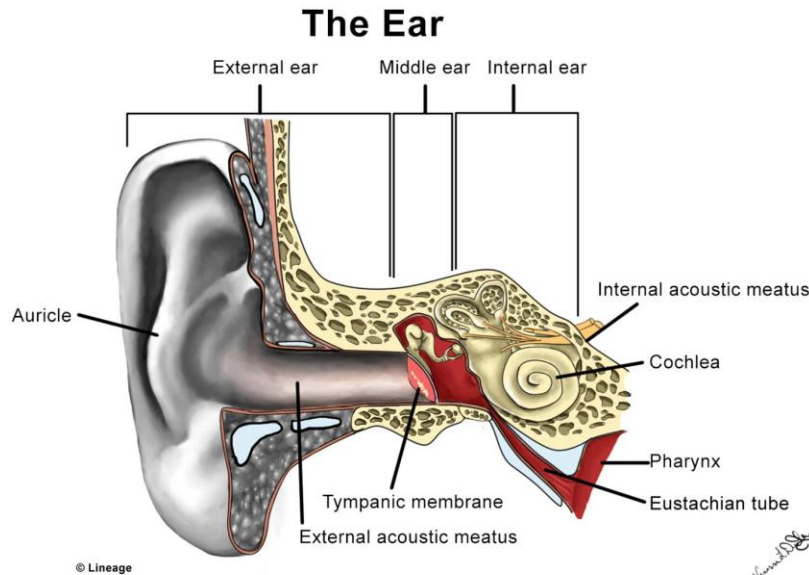
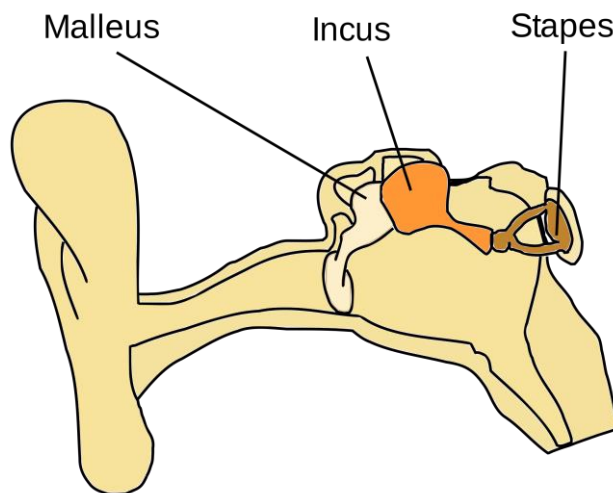


I have always been fascinated with how God designed the human body. Take for example what is happening right now. You are hearing me speak...you are hearing words...and that is happening because the three (3) little bones, the smallest bones in your body, in fact, are moving together inside of your ear...



You see in the middle of your ear, called the middle ear, (red in the diagram) is where the Tympanic Membrane is...that's your eardrum. Sound is coming through your ear canal and vibrates on that tympanic membrane (that's happening right now) and further down the canal, deeper in your MIDDLE EAR, the hammer, anvil and stirrup, the three smallest bones in your body, (aka, the malleus, incus, and stapes) are vibrating together...see a close-up of these 3:



Auditory ossicles

Together, the hammer, anvil and stirrup form a short chain or bridge that crosses the middle ear and transmits these vibrations to the liquid in your Cochlea, which is then transmitted up your auditory nerve into your brain and your brain interprets what you are hearing. All caused by evolution, right? Random chance? No...all caused by the creative power of our heavenly Father.

You say, “What’s your point?” My point is that the human body is absolutely amazing! It is so intricate and so amazingly detailed and complicated. Listen...LITERALLY... if your malleus, (your hammer) was missing...you couldn’t hear me or anything else. You need your hammer and it’s about the size of the end of a grain of rice, so you can hear. Think about that! Amazing! **Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 12.**

Today, we continue in our study of Spiritual Gifts...



As we’ve learned, every Christian is given a spiritual gift (or more) upon your salvation. Your spiritual gift or gifting is something that’s given to you by the Holy Spirit. You can’t earn your gift, work for your gift or swap out your gift. Your gift is sovereignly designed and given to you by God, by way of His Spirit, to empower you for the common good of the church and to reach people for Jesus Christ. And just as our ear (to function properly) needs all the parts present and functioning properly, so does the church, the body of Christ...we need all parts present and functioning to BE what the Lord has designed us to be. Follow along with me...picking up in vs 12

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

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^[d] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 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. 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,^[e] 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.” 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.

The body, the church... Church family, as I think about the churches across America today, it seems to me many have turned into business, run by professionals with a Madison-avenue mindset. Many churches have foregone teaching and preaching the Word of God and turned instead to slick marketing campaigns, promotions and gimmicks. They no longer think or believe JUST preaching the Word of God is enough to draw people to Jesus. Thus, for many churches, they have become a place where people come and simply watch the show.

For many Christians in America, Sundays have become about watching the performance, much like they'll watch a football game that afternoon. Church has become a spectator sport. Christians have become "watchers" instead of "doers." They come and watch and critique and float in and out when it's convenient... They have no involvement, no commitment, no responsibilities...no...they just watch.

Now I get it...many are having to watch online right now because of Covid. I get it, particularly for the elderly and those with medical conditions, you should stay home. But, at some point...maybe next spring...it's going to be time to come back to church. The Bible is clear:

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

That was written in the first century when Christians were being killed, martyred, hauled off to Rome and fed to lions. Don't stop meeting together and that means in person. So, I understand right now we have to be very careful and very cautious...but, by Spring next year...unless something goes haywire...able-bodied folks shouldn't use Covid as an excuse not to come. We are still the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

Listen, in general today, even before Covid, many churches in this country quite candidly are little more than community social centers, where folks come to hang out and be entertained... And you know, it's a pretty good deal...because you can come and watch the show and not even buy a ticket... It's free... It's like being part of a country club and you don't have to pay any dues. Sweet!!! You see, churches like the ones I've just described are missing the hammer, the anvil and the stirrup, because they are not hearing the Word of God. Therefore, they aren't functioning correctly...and because of that...the Body of Christ in that location is sick, very sick and in a lot of cases...that congregation is pretty much dead...they've just not had the funeral yet and closed the doors.

Dear church family, when the church was established by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the 120 believers in that house in Jerusalem where Jesus held the Last Supper...Jesus never intended for the believers who were empowered by His Spirit to sit, sour and soak as spectators. Instead He said, "Go!" Go! Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit who empowers by way of His gifting to get the job done!

Are you? Are you "Going and making disciples?" Who are you discipling in your life...or are you just a spectator and continue to expect someone to feed you and constantly disciple you? If that's you, when might you move to the realm of becoming a DISCIPLER and using your gifts to grow someone else in the Lord? It's been asked many times (and I've asked it from this pulpit), if every

member were just like you, what would this church be like? Would it even exist in 2 months based on your level of maturity and commitment?

The Apostle Paul was, (in essence), asking these same questions to the members of the church at Corinth. A church greatly divided... a church steeped in sin, arguing and blatant immaturity and now that immaturity and selfishness had crept into the area of spiritual gifts. Corinth had become a place where you would go into one of their Sunday services and it was BASICALLY a zoo...a chaotic mess! The members of the church were trying to show-up one another by saying they had the superior spiritual gift... and so, the body of Christ at Corinth, instead of functioning in beautiful harmony was like an ear that couldn't hear.

Now church family, how do you think that church at Corinth looked to a watching world in that city? Do you think they were making a positive or negative impression on that city and that community? I'd say negative, wouldn't you? And that's exactly why the leaders of the Church at Corinth felt they needed to write to the Apostle Paul who was in Ephesus, to ask for help. Because they were in a mess. And so, Paul in responding back...uses the analogy of the human body to describe how the church MUST work together and be **unified**...even in the area of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

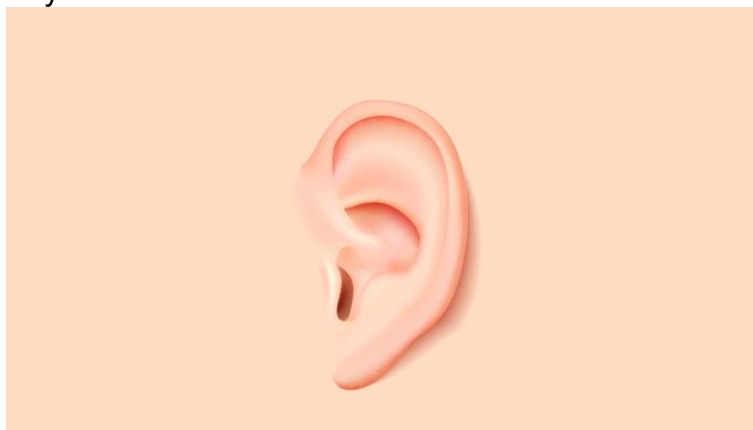
¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves^[d] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

See that word “one” over and over again... That's God's design for His church. MANY members...ONE Body! Just like the human body...keep reading...

1 Corinthians 12:15-19

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. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be?

Imagine if your entire body was an ear...



Wouldn't that be crazy? You could hear, but you couldn't see, walk, talk, for that matter you couldn't breathe, because you don't have a mouth and you don't have lungs. You wouldn't last long, would you?

Do you know what was happening at Corinth...many of the church members were desiring the flashy gifts...the showy gifts...those four we talked about last week, called the Charisma gifts...miracles, healing, tongues and interpretation of tongues. They were all trying to go after these gifts and exhibit these gifts in their services (meetings, the Ecclesia, the Sunday gatherings) and it had become a chaotic mess. And Paul said, "Don't do that because you are accentuating only a few parts of the body to the detriment of the rest." It's like putting all of your focus...only on an ear. You neglect every other part of the body. Well, the body will eventually break down. And Paul reminds them of this:

1 Corinthians 12:20-24

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts,^[e] 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." 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.

Did you catch that last part, "God has so composed the body..." Church, it is God who gives you, your gift and me, my gift. We don't get to choose our gift. Look back at vs 18 to see this very clearly...

1 Corinthians 12:18

¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

No, you and I don't get to decide or choose how we're gifted. God does that and He arranges us in the body as He wishes. You see, somebody has to be a big toe. Did you know you'll have a hard time standing up and walking without a big toe? It might not seem like it, but your big toe is a **big deal!** 😊

Are you okay with how the Lord has gifted you? You see, what the Holy Spirit has led Paul to write is this: "Don't get frustrated with being a big toe." Be content with how God made you to be. Be content with His design for your life in how you're gifted. Never forget, God is sovereign and He knows exactly what He's doing and He knows how He has made you to be. Listen, you have to be you...because you are the only you! You are a snowflake! (Now that can be taken negatively today! 😊) But, in this case, I'm meaning that just like a snowflake:



Isn't that beautiful...you are unique and there is no one like you...just like each and every snowflake is unique...no two are the same. The CHURCH, many parts...many gifts...but called to be ONE! See it...so,

1 Corinthians 12:25-26

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.

And dear church family, that's the same thing Paul told the church at Rome...

Romans 12:3-6a

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members,^[e] and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

USE THEM... Where? Here in the church...yes...but, NOT JUST HERE. You see there is no way to have a job for every church member in this church or at any local church. It's impossible. (More on that in a moment)...but, yes...I'll tell you...we do need more help here...we try to indicate that in the announcement video each Sunday and in The Weekly email we send out (if you aren't getting it, go the App or website and sign up for it).

Yes, we need help on Sat. Oct 31st with Trunk or Treat and the fireworks out at the field...



We're going to have hundreds of people here...getting candy...eating from the food trucks will have here...listening to some great music from a flatbed trailer and then seeing an amazing firework show. Would you be willing to help...hand out candy, serve water and soft drinks? Park cars, welcome people as greeters? Sign-up. And listen...while we're talking about help, how about on a given Sunday...once or twice a month...would you be on our Welcome Team?



WELCOME TEAM

We are always looking for folks who have smiling faces to greet and welcome folks. Or perhaps, you would you be willing to serve on our Parking Team:



PARKING TEAM

To help get people on and off our campus safely. In fact, as time moves forward, we're going to begin directing cars to specific parking places, like you would see at a stadium event. That's for safety and for speed to get you into the building quicker and we'll be using our golf carts for folks who need assistance. We want what we do to be very efficient so that we can get you inside and you've got time to get settled.

Church, we have all kinds of needs for folks...we need more help in Security, Hospitality, our A/V team? And on and on I could go. Just go to our website or app and to the Events page and sign-up! We'd love to have your help...

But listen, this is what I want to come back to. We're not interested, nor are we commanded in Scripture as leaders in this church to keep everyone here. We're not interested in giving everyone in the church a job at the church, because the truth is: this place, this church is simply the salt shaker:



Listen, Jesus likened us, His followers, as salt. He said, in the Sermon on the Mount, “You are the salt of the earth.” Is salt any good if it stays in the shaker? Answer: NO! Look at this picture, is this popcorn going to taste a lot better with salt on it or not....



Yes...put some salt on it! Yes, we are the salt of the earth and that means we can't stay in the shaker to be effective. We've got to get out of the building and get out there!!!

Listen, it blows my mind just how many pastors have something scheduled and going on every night of the week at the church. And do you know what that means? It means the church has no time to be the church in the community, because they're always at the shaker, **the building**.

The building... yes, unfortunately, in a lot of churches, it's become all about the building...almost like everything we do is for the building... we attend the **building**, give money to the **building**, serve in the **building**, invite people to the **building**, most members do just about all of their “Christianity” in and for the **building**. No...no...no...that's not what Jesus intended!

Jesus said, “GO!” Go! Go makes disciples of all nations! Think about it...what did He do? He trained 12 men for 3 years and then started sending them out. He sent them out two by two and then, over a period of time, He trained enough people to send out 72 to disciples at one time and

He rejoiced when they returned and told Him all that had been accomplished. He rejoiced because they were trained and they went and did the work. Are we? Are you? Is Jesus pleased?

You see, it's my job as a pastor...to train and to equip...just like Jesus did...watch...

Ephesians 4:11-12

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[a] and teachers,^[a]¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Listen, do you know what's happening right now...this is the Holy Huddle. We huddle up like a football team...



The Lord is the head coach, I am acting in the role of quarterback and I'm giving us, the team, the play from the playbook (the Bible) and then we go run the play out there...in your home...your place of work...your business, your school, your whatever... We GO and make disciples.

I was texting with a man in our church on Thursday, a former pastor, now serving as a Forest Ranger. In his job, he was called out to serve in Oregon because of all the forest fires out there. I want you to see what he said, (I asked his permission to share this with you):

“Thanks for your prayers it was a hard trip spiritually, as Oregon is a very dark place and many folks there don't want to see any light. Physically it went well... my first trip out West that I didn't have to sleep on the ground. With God's help and His people praying, our team was able to accomplish our mission. I personally was able to come alongside with a pastor trying to reach out to his community with help and relief... I believe the reason I had to go this year was to encourage this pastor.”

Do you see...that brother in Christ was being salt. He was out of the shaker. Listen church family, the work has to be done out there, by and large. Yes, we come in here on Sundays and we refresh, we re-group, we teach, we train, we equip, we worship and edify and HOLY HUDDLE, but when say Amen...then we go back out there and do the work of sharing Jesus!

Do you see? Jesus doesn't want us just inviting people to the building...He wants us to get out of the shaker and **invite people to Him.**

Church family...we are a family...one body...called to go and make disciples... Listen...are you listening...Jesus said to the church at Laodicea:

Revelation 3:22

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Are you listening? Do you have ears to hear? If you do...BTW...that would be taking the hammer, the anvil and the stirrup, the three smallest and seemingly most insignificant bones (parts of your body) to be getting that job done...and that's just fine...because hearing and the doing what the Word of God says, moves the entire body.
