

## **The Body of Christ**

### **1 Corinthians 12 (slide)**

What a challenge this song brings to us.

We ARE the BODY of Christ. Let that sink in for a moment. The church, the fellowship of saints represents CHRIST. When Jesus ascended he left this world in physical form. I can't show Him to you in physical form. So, where is He? How do I know He is real? His physical manifestation in the world is US. When people ask where is Jesus what should our answer be? Look at the church. Come and see, come and be with us and you will find HIM and experience HIM (Yancey girl)

We are His body with arms that reach, hands that heal, words that teach, feet that go, and love that shows Jesus is the way.

Just to be sure, we are a messy community, with lots of brokenness but moving towards Jesus who is the head.

The church at Corinth was a carnal church. They were plagued with divisions. They had never matured as believers and were still like babies in Christ. They tolerated immorality in their midst. Yet, this was still a spiritual congregation. It seems that this carnal group exhibited most, if not all, of the spiritual gifts. You see, it isn't just the perfect saints that possess spiritual gifts, but every believer has at least one spiritual gift and probably more.

Today I want to talk about how God has gifted us with all we need to function as the body of Christ to the world.

#### **1 Corinthians 12 vs 4-7,11-14 (slide)**

**<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**

He then lists some of the gifts and continues in vs 11

**<sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. <sup>12</sup>Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup>Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.**

## **1. One Source - Holy Spirit (slide)**

Understand that this is the Spirit of the One who prayed the prayer of unity in John. Can you see from these verses why spiritual gifts should never cause division in the body?

There is only one Source.

The Holy Spirit is the source of life in the body

He is the One who gives gifts. It is the same God at work in all of us.

## **2. Truths about spiritual gifts**

### **1. Spiritual gifts cannot be generated by you v4 (slide)**

You can imitate but you can't generate. Clearly, these are gifts of grace from one Source, the Holy Spirit.

### **2. Spiritual gifts are not for you v7 (slide)**

They are not meant to bring attention to you or to elevate you. They are given for the common good of the body that then brings glory to the Head that is Jesus.

The gifts speak to the presence of God in your life but not necessarily to spirituality. You are not the one producing your gift. There have been many very gifted people who, though living in sin, have still operated in their gifts and been used by God. This is because their gift is not for them but the body. (Jimmy S). Paul's sobering statement.

### **1 Corinthians 9 v27 (slide)**

**<sup>27</sup> No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

It is possible for me to preach (use my gift) and not be right with God. This tells you and me not to look at one's gifting to determine spirituality. It's all about character as a measure of spirituality. Becoming like Jesus has to do with the transformation of my character. Remember how Paul ends the chapter...if I am the most gifted guy in the room and have not love...means nothing.

### **3. Spiritual gifts have no value outside the body v20 (slide)**

The value of the gift is seen in the body because that is its very purpose for existing. Take a BIG toe –on its own it must have a serious complex. Big, smelly and always in the way BUT when part of the body, can't walk without it—essential. This is why

it is so important to live in community. It is in community that you discover your gifts and significance to the body.

Africans tend to understand this but westerners are taught more about independence and each person for himself. There is no one like you. You were created unique in every way.

This is why pride, rooted in comparing myself with others is so foreign to God's design. There are things for you to do and people to reach that no one else can. Accept it, celebrate it, live it. I may have the same gift as you but when combined with my character and personality it becomes a unique contribution to the body.

#### **4. Spiritual gifts are given sovereignly by Him. V11 (slide)**

Can there be chaos when He chooses? This is why we don't get to choose.

The problem at Corinth was not that they didn't possess gifts, it was that they wanted gifts that they had not been assigned by God. The people at Corinth were stepping outside the boundaries laid down by the Lord and were trying to practice gifts they had not received. As a result, there was chaos and confusion in the church.

When God gifts the Christian, He does so in His own Sovereign will. So, when I am saved and the Spirit comes to dwell in me He gives me gifts to use in the body. It's not for me to look at all the gifts and say..." I like that one or this one" ... the right question is "which ones have you given me?". He already knows which ones fit with your design and the way He made you.

Eagerly desire the greater gifts as a community BUT you don't get to decide who gets them or what you get. It's all HIM.

The Holy Spirit is the Source of life to this body and makes it function in unity. It is the holy Spirit that has baptized me into God's family. My spiritual birth into God's kingdom is by the Holy Spirit. We are all given the ONE Spirit to drink so we are united by HIM.

#### **3. One functional body (slide)**

<sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God

has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,<sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.<sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

### 3. Every part is valuable (slide)

No one is more important. It's about together glorifying God rather than comparing gifts

The weaker parts are more necessary. Less gifted are treated with special nobility

Just think of the many parts of our bodies we take for granted. Yet, if any one of them was removed, the whole body would feel the loss. We tend to focus on how good we look on the outside and yet there is very little on the outside that keeps us alive. It's the stuff we can't see or don't even give a thought that keeps us alive (the names we can't spell or pronounce). Whoever thinks of their liver? Esophagus? Left ventricle? inferior vena cava? Not many of us ever give it a second thought, but take it away from your body and you will be gone pretty soon. What about your thumbs? Thank God, we have them, how would we catch a ride? Or give a thumbs up.

The liver or all those feet of colon, or the bloody heart, or the pale organ called the stomach. Those are the unseemly members. But would you rather do without something seemly—something you can wave with, write with—or would you rather do without your heart or your liver or pancreas? The irony is that I give so much time and attention to what I can see and yet I can actually live without most of what I can see. It's the unseen and unthought of parts that I can actually not live without and that are a better reflection of the health of my body. There are many members with different functions, yet one body. The inferior vena cava ain't so inferior, it seems.

No different here. We look on the outside and give credit there but it's the inside that reflects the health of the body. The unknown and unseen names without which we might as well close the doors.

No one should ever be guilty of believing that he/she is unimportant to the functioning of the body. No one should think that they are not needed. No one should ever say to or about another believer, "We don't need you."

Every member is vital, every member is important. There are no big "I's" and little "You's." There is only us and we all need each other to function as a body. It's the togetherness of it that makes the Body of Christ work.

The ability of the body to function efficiently and effectively is directly related to the number of its members functioning. Higher function, more we can accomplish

### **Romans 12 vs 6-8 (slide)**

**<sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.**

No one of these gifts is more spiritual than the other. They are all spiritual, given by the Holy spirit

Your gift is not yours. He gave it to you for this body. He knows what He is doing.

Marc and I...everyone is mobilized...hhhhmm now what?

Lynn and I --- seeing her with hospitality – how does she do it?

Harvest party, Debbie admin, Jacque organizing

Eric – mercy, generosity

Donna, Barb – serving, hospitality

Sandy – intercession, creativity

JMAW – music and worship

CALEB – video and technical

Chaplains - mercy

### **5. Choose to connect (slide)**

I believe we are still a long way off from experiencing all the gifts that are in this community.

Often the thing we are critical about is the gifting we have. We notice what's missing. The foot says to the eye "you can't walk" or the eye to the foot "you can see" You either attach to the body and use your gift or become a critic. So often the heart is saying to the body "you don't have a heart" ...ummm you are the heart...come on in. Before I become critical I must first check that I am using my gift in the body. If the arm gets skin cancer the foot doesn't just bail. It suffers too and gets the hand to a doctor There is no perfect body. We suffer together. (Sean)

The Holy Spirit has gifted this community with everything we need to thrive. If we are missing pieces in the functioning of the body, the issue is not “why are we not...” the issue is “who is not using their gift and let’s help them fan it into flame.

The body can only fully function when enough members are functioning as they are gifted to. We become paralyzed and handicapped if we have members not functioning within their gifting. That is why we are committed to a lay movement here. We want everyone who calls this their home to be functioning in their giftings in the large meetings but also as we do community on homes.

### **5. All about Jesus (slide)**

If the kingdom of God were all you how tragic that would be...the only thing more tragic is if it were all me.

None of this is about me. It’s all about honoring Him. The gifts God gives me are not for me, they are to honor Him and bless you.

I only discovered my gifts as I became part of the community and started serving and seeking to bless others.

Are you connected? Are you a part of this community? Are you using your gifts? You experience true community as you serve through your gifts and receive through the gifts of others. Are you a contributor or a consumer. There is no greater joy than to see God use me in some way to bring His presence into a life or situation.

### **Conclusion**

Would you make a decision to connect and become part of the body here? Bless us with your spiritual gift. Last weekend alone we saw the body functioning Chaplains training, habitat, baptisms, harvest party, giving, prayer, children’s, students. Every week we are being blessed as people serve with their gifts. How much more when you get involved. Take a step, sign up on the card and we can get you connected.

### **Get connected to a small group where you can use your gifts all the time as you live in community. (slide)**

Small group leaders are waiting to help you get connected to a community life group please meet with them after the service.

**20 somethings(slide).** We have a meeting set up on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9am to talk about doing life together. Come and join Pastor Terry myself and some folk who are keen to get some activities happening in this space. Invite a friend for donuts and coffee.