



Taking Some Time to Reconnect with God

May 22, 2020

Prayer:

O God, You have shown that all we truly need is to love. Expand our hearts to embrace Your world and show ourselves as children of a compassionate God, for the sake of Your Son Jesus. Amen.

Read: I Corinthians 12:12-31

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 New International Version (NIV)

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ 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!” ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ 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, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

Reflect:

In this part of I Corinthians, Paul draws a picture for how we can think about how God has made us different but still one in Jesus. We are the body of Christ. Just like all of the variety of different body parts make up a single human being, so all the different Spiritual Gifts given to Christians work together in the Body of Christ.

When we separate ourselves from others, especially in the church, it can be for a number of different reasons. One can be misunderstanding. Another can be arrogance. Another one can be insecurity. The results of these reasons often play out in one of two ways: ‘I’m not like them, so I can’t be a part’ or ‘They’re not like me, so they can’t be a part.’ Paul uses the picture of the Body of Christ to show how neither of those results make sense in the life of believers in Jesus.

Imagine if our feet could take themselves off because they weren't hands. What a mess! Whether that happened because our feet were taught that everyone should be a hands, because they decided that they didn't want to be a part of a body where there were hands to distract from their awesomeness as feet, or because they were embarrassed because they knew they'd never be able to be all that hands were, the problem would be that it'd be pretty difficult for the body as a whole to walk around. Or imagine if your ears took off because they're not eyes. . .etc. The body would be left mutilated and less than it was created to be.

Imagine if your eyes said to your hands, "I don't need you!" You should be eyes, just like me! Again, it doesn't matter whether that comes because they'd been taught that only eyes were important to the body, or that hands were unimportant. I wouldn't matter if the eyes said that because of their pride in being eyes, or their shame that they couldn't be as cool as hands so they needed to get rid of what was threatening them, the end is the same as before. Whatever it ends up meaning for the body part in question, you end up with a mutilated body that can't do what it was created to do.

This is both the wonderful way that God has put the church together and the reason that schism in the church is so disastrous. Can we really do our best when parts of us aren't working right, or don't exist? How often do you think about your elbow? If you're like me, not very often—until you can't bend it. Several years ago I had surgery on my left elbow, my dominant hand. The brace was bent, but not quite enough to allow the fork to get into my mouth. That experience changed my perspective on the importance of a working elbow.

As this letter, this part of Scripture, has continued to point out, we are one in Christ Jesus—even though we are not the same. Even though we are drawn to different teachers emphasizing different facets of the gem that is the Gospel of Jesus, we are all one because the Jesus of that Good News calls all of us. Even though some of us are eyes, ears, hands, feet—yes, and even elbows—we're still part of the one Body of Jesus Christ.

What Spiritual Gift—or gifts—do you have? How do you use it and how do you use it to help the others with whom you serve Christ?

Be Blessed:

May you be blessed with patient, kind, true, believing, hopeful and enduring love. Amen.