

Gifted & Placed To Please God – 1Corinthians 12:12-26

Bible Study ~ 4/12/17

Grace Church of Lockeford

Last week we saw that our gifts have been given to us to benefit the entire body of Christ. There is no such thing as a spiritual gift given to be exercised in private. As we continue in the same chapter as last week we are again confronted with the proper exercise and understanding of Spiritual gifts. Paul demonstrates the connection between Spiritual gifts and a healthy body of Christ. These verses reveal three essential elements that enable the body of Christ to function properly. Only as the body of Christ functions as He intends will it be effective in the work He has commanded. The first essential element is that...

1. **Though Many Members, We Are One Body vv. 12-14**

The statement, “we are one body” sums up the argument presented in these three verses. *v. 12* presents an irrefutable fact. The physical body is one body that is made of many parts or members. Though the parts differ, they are the same body. Paul then states that this same thing is true of the body of Christ. In what way? That is answered in *v. 13*. This word “For” here has the idea of “because”. By one Spirit we are baptized into the body. This is not water baptism, obviously, it is spirit baptism. He places us into the body of Christ. Neither our nationality nor social status are taken into account. All are equal in Christ. We drink of the same Spirit. So all believers are placed into the body by the Holy Spirit. In *v. 14* we learn that though we are all part of the same body and there is no longer any distinction in nationality or social status, that does not mean there are no distinctions at all. We are all different and as such function differently within the body of Christ. We are one body, but many members. Many members, but one body. There is both unity and diversity in the body of Christ. Paul is stressing both of these aspects here. What is important in these verses is that despite our diversity, we are still one body.

What a blessing! That we can come into a relationship with one another where the divisions that separate us in society are dissolved in Christ! There is unity here! We are all sinners and all saved the same way! We all come into the body of Christ by the same work of the Holy Spirit! We are one body! Having emphasized our unity, Paul goes on to describe a second essential element. Namely, how...

2. **The Body Members Differ By Divine Placement vv. 15-19**

For these five verses the argument is summed up by stating that, “we are placed by God”. Here in *v. 15* Paul reduces the argument to absurdity. It is patently ridiculous to state that because a body part is not another body part, it is not part of the body. So why is Paul making these ridiculous statements? Because it is no less ridiculous for a member of the body of Christ to disassociate from the body because you don’t have the gift or position you desire. Your role or function in the body is vital, and must be performed in order to maintain a healthy body! In *v. 16* the absurdity continues. The ear wants to be an eye and since it can’t, it says it isn’t part of the body. Ridiculous! But how often do we find these attitudes present in the body of Christ? Everyone wants the same gift, everyone wants to be visible. And the result is a body that is confused and ineffective.

In *v. 17* Paul begins to apply the argument. If the body was one big eye, it would be deaf! If it was one big ear, it would have no sense of smell! Remember, in *v. 12* Paul said that the body of Christ is like the physical body. He has an application he is going for and we find it in the *v. 18*. God places the members of the body of Christ how it pleases Him! Trying to say that you should be a different part is telling God He doesn’t know what He is doing! The same is true if we refuse to fill the role or use the gifts He has given. It is vital to bear in mind that God has placed us where He wants us to be and our positions please Him. Paul is very specific here. God has placed the members, “each one of them”. God took into account everything about you and me. Based on His omniscience, omnipotence, and foreknowledge, He has placed us where it pleases Him. Each and every one of us has been deliberately and directly placed by God! Effectiveness and satisfaction come when we trust that He knows best, and serve faithfully where we are.

v. 19 presents us with a crucial question to consider. In the Corinthian church, everyone wanted the high visibility gifts. Basically, they all wanted to be an eye. A body that is made up entirely of an eye is an unhealthy and mostly useless body! There is diversity within the body of Christ because it is necessary for the healthy and effective function of the body!

This is a huge blessing! We are placed by God as He has pleased, gifted as He has determined, and when we serve faithfully, there will be joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment like we have never known! God has you and me exactly where He wants us and He will use us there! Don't be discontent! Don't desire a different gift or function! Be faithful. What a blessing to know that we are one body and we are placed by God. The third and final essential element we will look at is how...

3. Every Member Of The Body Is Necessary vv. 20-26

We sum these seven verses up with this statement, "we need one another". v. 20 presents that there are many members. But, there is only one body. This is true physically and spiritually. v. 21 emphasizes how an eye is not self-sufficient nor self-sustaining. Therefore, an eye cannot say the hand is unnecessary. The hand is neither self-sufficient nor self-sustaining. Therefore, it cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you guys". Paul again reduces the argument to absurdity. It is obvious that the eyes need the hands and the hands the feet. Paul knows that. That is what makes it such a powerful argument! It is inescapable! All members of the physical body are important, they are needed, the same is true spiritually.

v. 22 makes it clear that far from not needing certain parts, the ones we might think of as weaker are actually more necessary! Consider the human body. A heart is fairly fragile. So fragile in fact, that it is protected by a lot of bones. Yet our hearts are necessary! Some of our most important body parts are internal, they are not easily seen. Yet without those parts, we die. This is why v. 23 explains how essential those "less honorable" parts are. There used to be several organs that were considered vestigial, meaning they were left over from evolution and were not needed. They have now discovered the uses for all those organs! There are no unnecessary body parts! Some that we may not highly regard are still vital to the healthy function of our bodies. They deserve greater honor and greater protection. This is how it is with the body of Christ! There are people who operate and use their gifts behind the scenes. But without them, the rest would be unable to function. For example, the gift of giving. This is a spiritual gift and it is not visibly exercised. Yet without this gift, the local church cannot function.

v. 24 declares that this protection and care is not as needed for our external parts. God has designed and arranged the body, giving honor to the parts that lack. While our human nature is to honor those members of Christ's body that have the visible gifts, God ensures that the parts that lack honor receive it. All parts of the body are essential! They are all necessary. For this reason we learn in v. 25 that God honors the weaker parts to eliminate division. The goal is for there to be no division in the body. The members should have the same care for one another. There is not to be, as there was in the Corinthian church, an attitude where visible gifts and servants are honored, and those behind the scenes are ignored and scorned. Our physical body is designed to care for itself. To heal when it is damaged and support weak members. The body of Christ is to do the same! We are to help the wounded heal We are to support and bear one another's burdens! When we refuse to function in this way, we break God's design and exercise disobedience.

v. 26 drives home the point of how necessary unity and care are. All you have to do is stub your toe, or get a paper cut to know that when even your smallest part suffers, the whole body suffers. The body of Christ is supposed to function in this way! We suffer with the suffering, we rejoice with the honored. In talking about Spiritual gifts, let's turn to what Paul writes in [Romans 12:9-16](#). The body of Christ is to be characterized by a love and care that is unparalleled anywhere else! We are to celebrate each other's

victories and mourn our defeats! We are to support and care for the struggling and shout hallelujah with the joyful!

We need each other! Every part of the body is necessary! Every part is vital to the health of the body! What a blessing it is that we are not alone. We are designed to function best when we function together! We need one another. There is no place in the body of Christ for “lone ranger” Christians. They are harming themselves and robbing the body of Christ.

We have been gifted and placed to please God! We are one interconnected and interdependent body! Every single member of the body has been individually placed by God for His pleasure and glory. We have been equipped to serve and will be at our best when we engage in the ministry He has given us. That ministry is to be fulfilled in connection with the rest of the body. We need one another in order to be healthy and effective as the body of Christ.

CHALLENGE: Serve where you are placed and support the body members around you.

V. 18

Set – τίθημι *tithēmi* *put; place; lay. To appoint (duty) – to assign a duty, responsibility, or obligation to someone.*

Pleased – θέλω *thelō* *wish; want. To desire – to feel or have a desire for; want strongly.*

V. 21

Need – χρεία *chreia* *need. Need – anything that is necessary but lacking.*

V. 22

Seem – δοκέω *dokeō* *think; suppose. To seem – to give a certain impression or have a certain outward aspect.*

Weaker – ἀσθενής *asthenēs* *weak; sick. Weak (strength) – wanting in physical strength; can be used of a group of people collectively.*

Necessary – ἀναγκαῖος *anagkaios* *necessary. Necessary – unavoidably determined by prior circumstances.*

V. 23

Less honorable – ἄτιμος *atimos* *dishonored; without honor. Unvalued – not held in high esteem; not valued for potentially or intrinsically admirable qualities.*

Greater – περισσότερος *perissoteros* *more; even more; greater. Greater – greater in size or importance or degree.*

Honor – τιμή *time* *honor; value; price. Value (quality) – the quality that renders something desirable or valuable.*

Bestow – περιτίθημι *peritithēmi* *put around; place around. To impart (clothe) – to bestow a quality on; understood as if wrapping something in a covering.*

Unpresentable – ἀσχήμων *aschēmōn* *unmentionable; unpresentable. Unpresentable part – something unsuitable or forbidden for public display or as a topic of conversation.*

Modesty – εὐσχημοσύνη *euschēmosynē* *presentability. Decorum – propriety in manners and conduct.*

V. 24

Composed – συγκεράννυμι *sygkerannymi* *unite; compose. To compound – to assemble a unified whole by mixing or combining different parts.*

V. 25

Schism – σχίσμα *schism* *tear; division. Schism – division of a group into opposing factions.*

Care – μεριμνάω *merimnaō* *be anxious; care for. To brood – to think moodily or anxiously about something.*