

Sunday Sermon: January 27, 2019

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians: 12: 12-21, 26,27

Sermon Theme: Joined Together to Work Together

<sup>12</sup> The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

<sup>14</sup> Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. <sup>16</sup> 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 cease to be part of the body. <sup>17</sup> 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? <sup>18</sup> But in fact God has arranged 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>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.

My kids love Lego building block sets. Lego has come a long way even since I was little. When I was little you bought a container of generic Legos and then you had to put them together. I was really good at building walls, but not much else. I guess that was the problem, the pieces were fun, but I really couldn’t put them together to make much.

Today, when you buy sets of Legos. You open the box and there are individual bags of Legos for different parts of the Lego build. There are directions that tell you which bag to open and which block goes where.

Each block in the bag is important to the build. The right piece has to go in the right place or else you have to tear it apart and start over. However, when the all the blocks come together there is a wonderful building, or car, or plane.

In our sermon text, this morning, Paul talks about similar to Legos. There are a lot of parts that come together into something wonderful. Paul pictures us as a body with many parts. These parts are not separate. Instead, they are parts that are joined together to work together.

You don’t have to be a biology major to understand the picture that Paul is using. Whatever we are doing from the simple things, like turning on a light, to the complex, like driving a car, the parts of the body work together to make those actions happen. Paul says in the same way congregations, church members, all have to work together to get the work done. **<sup>12</sup> The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

Many times we want to think of ourselves as unique individuals. I have original thoughts that you don’t have and you have original thoughts that I don’t. I have a style that you do not have and you have one that I do not. I see things my way and you see things your way.

The problem is understanding that sometimes our thoughts, feelings and emotions are not always the most important. Our sinful nature wants us to think that we are always right and that everyone else should think and act like we do. However, Paul says that it is a very good thing that God created with unique gifts and talents. God had a plan when he gave us all different gifts, talents and abilities.

The body is made up of many unique parts. These parts have different functions. Hands do not function like feet and arms do not function like legs. God has given gifts and abilities in his church so that some can be hands, some feet, some arms, some legs. Each one is important to the body.

Sometimes my kids lose a Lego piece from their set. When that happens I usually ask them why they just can’t use a different piece. They always tell me they can’t because that was an important and unique piece. The other pieces are not the correct size, shape or style.

Do you feel like an important piece of the congregation at Summerlin Lutheran? Do you feel like you are the perfect shape, size, and style. Your gifts, perfect abilities and talents are the most important for what God needs for his body to be complete?

We are, but we don't always feel that way. Instead of feeling that we are the piece that is needed, we often feel like there are other pieces, other parts, other people that could do the job that we are meant to do. There are many times that we might not even want to be a part of the body. Paul talks about this type of thinking. <sup>15</sup> **If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.** <sup>16</sup> **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 cease to be part of the body.** <sup>17</sup> **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?** <sup>18</sup> **But in fact God has arranged 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.**

It's our own sinfulness that keeps us away from the important work that God wants us to do in the body. There are two sins that Paul is talking about here. One of them of the sin of undervaluing the gifts God has given to us. Because I do not have this gift, I am not important. Because I am not a hand and I do not have the gift to preach, or sing a solo, or talk to people, I have no gifts that the body, my church, can use. The gifts I do have are unimportant.

The other sinful temptation that Paul talks about is jealousy of others gifts. If I can't be the church chairman, the choir director, the treasurer because someone else has those gifts, I will not do anything because I don't have the gifts they have.

Paul answers these sins by showing us that each of ours gifts from the greatest to the least, is important in the body of Christ. Like that one lego that was so important, our gifts and abilities are needed and important in the work that we have been given.

**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>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.**

I don't think anyone would say that a body is loose confederation of different parts. I think everyone understands how amazingly God has joined the parts of the body together to do work. Paul wants us to see that our place in the work our congregation is just as important because we are joined together by something that is very strong.

We are not joined by ligaments and tendons, or by the little clip on blocks that Legos have, we are joined together by the faith in Christ that the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. We are joined together because the blood of Christ has washed our sins away. We are joined together as a family of believers because God has adopted us into his family. We are heirs together of the blessings of heaven.

Because Jesus has forgiven us and has already given us heaven, our faith will want to show itself in acts of Christian love and service for other people. Our unity as a body is special because we can do so much for each other and for others when we are joined together and working together than we can alone.

God has given each individual part work to do in the Great Commission. Each of us are to work to spread the Gospel to many others, as Jesus commanded.

God also joins us together to work together. Often we can do more together than we can do alone. We have had reason to rejoice at Summerlin Lutheran Church. We can see God's hand of blessing for the work we have joined together to do for almost 28 years. We have a beautiful worship facility. Many of you have come because the Gospel was shared with you either in this church or by members of this church. We worked together to share an invitation with over 500 homes last Easter. We worked together to have a special offering to cancel our operating deficit just last year. When we work together, God, in his love and mercy, can do amazing things in and through us.

Not only that, but the work we do together as a synod is much more effective when people band together to begin a mission in Africa, or Asia, or South America. By being a member of this congregation you have done that work together with your brothers and sisters in faith around this country.

God certainly blesses the work of those who joined together as they work together, but Paul also reminds us that, if we are not working together our ministry will suffer. <sup>26</sup>**If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.**

We know this by experience. If you break your arm, the whole body suffers because you cannot use that arm. If you break your leg, your body suffers as you use crutches. Even if you stub your toe, the body suffers even when this little part is hurt. The same thing happens in a church. The body of Christ suffers when its parts are not working together, when its people are not taking part in the ministry that they have to do.

There is only one thing that will motivate us to see and take part in this wonderful mission we have. **Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

We are not just a body, a social group, or corporation, we are joined together in Christ and through faith in Christ. We are joined around the wonderful news of the Savior and what he has given to us. We are part of the body of Christ and we are important, because God says we are important.

God has brought us together here, now, to do his work in this place, at this time. May we praise and thank our God for what he has done for us in Jesus by gladly using our gifts and talents to work together to complete the work that God has given us to do. Amen.