

Sunday Devotion for Listening Sunday: October 20, 2019

Devotion Reading: Romans 12: 4-8

Devotion Theme: One Body, Many Gifts, One Purpose

⁴For we have many members in one body, and not all the members have the same function. ⁵In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace God has given us. If the gift is prophecy, do it in complete agreement with the faith. ⁷If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. ⁸If it is encouraging, then encourage. If it is contributing, be generous. If it is leadership, be diligent. If it is showing mercy, do it cheerfully.

What would you do if Jesus came walking through the door this morning and preached to you about what he had done? What would you think as he laid out the plan of salvation and opened the Scriptures to you to show you the way to heaven is through him alone? What would you say when he was telling you about his perfect suffering and death and was gesturing with hands that had the nail holes in them?

How would you feel when Jesus made the point that he didn't come here to take away his own sins, but that he came to take away your sins? Would you start to squirm in your chair when he pointed out that sin is part of you and your life and you are not a good person? Would you start to sweat a little when he pointed out the sins that you have tried to hide, but are still part of your life and he sees those things? Would you start to get up when he said that you deserve to be punished for your sins?

If you got up and walked out that would be a terrible thing. If you stayed in your seat long enough you would hear something wonderful. You would hear Jesus say, "I love you and I willingly went to that cross to take away every one of those sins. My mission on this earth was to save you from sin, death and the devil, and to give you new hope and a new life in me." Would you be paying attention when we said, "I have taken the punishment that you deserve for your sins. Be at peace, your sins are forgiven fully and freely now and forever?"

If Jesus were here this morning preaching this message, how would you feel? You would probably be filled with joy and be thankful that the Savior was telling you this. How would you put your joy and thankfulness into action for the love that he has shown to you in forgiving your sins?

We don't have to wonder what we would do, because we do have Jesus speaking to us every Sunday through his Word. Every Sunday we hear this message that Jesus has done all that was needed to save us. Every Sunday we hear this message that our sins are forgiven and heaven is ours. We don't need to wonder about what Jesus would say, because we have what Jesus says and it comforts us and gives us hope in our forgiveness.

The problem we have is in the thanksgiving part. Maybe it would be different if Jesus were speaking with us himself, and he asked us how we were thanking and serving him. However, on our own we often struggle to put our thanks and praise for what Jesus has done into action.

God expects a joyful response from each of his children, when we hear that Gospel it will fill us up with faith and it will need to be put into action. This response doesn't get us a step closer to heaven, but it does help us to share the good news with others.

Our sermon text talks about this joyful response. Paul talks about the body of Christ often in his writings because he is encouraging believers not only to have a joyful response, but to search for ways to serve and thank their Lord by living their faith.

Think about the body of Christ as an orchestra. There is one body, with many parts, but they work together for one purpose. There is also one orchestra with many instruments, but they all have one purpose: to work together to make beautiful music. They have to practice their parts together and individually. They have to come in at the right time and count the notes correctly. If one member of the orchestra does not do his or her job, that can throw the whole piece off.

Paul tells us when it comes to our life of faith and thanks, we are all part of the orchestra of Christ. Some are trumpeters, some are flutists, some are percussion and drums. Some are beginners who need more practice, some are seasoned veterans who have done this before. We all need to come together and work together to make the work Jesus has given us become like a beautiful piece of music.

Paul tells us to make the best use of our gifts. It doesn't matter our level of experience or even the instrument we are. Just use those gifts well. Be a trumpet and toot loudly, be a drummer and bang happily, be a oboe and play away. There is one orchestra, with many instruments, working hard to make that piece of music amazing.

Paul doesn't use the orchestra as his example he uses the body, but the point is the same. There is one body, many gifts, but one purpose. We are joined together in the work of Christ as one body. There are many people with many gifts, but the purpose is the same: to share the Gospel of Jesus with as many people as possible.

The call Jesus has given us is urgent. The music is in front of us. We can't just sit and not play. The job that God has given to us is clear. Our gifts are clear. Our motivation is clear. We are one orchestra, many instruments, with one purpose.

Today, we take another step in planning our ministry which seeks to accomplish that purpose. We hope and pray that all members of Christ's body will take part in our Listening Sunday. This is part of the work which Jesus has laid before us at Summerlin Lutheran Church and to all his believers on earth. We pray that we will use our gifts to play our part to God's glory. A lesson from Romans 12.

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