

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 1 Corinthians 12. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 12.

INTRODUCTION

Let's start today with some fun facts, because now that I have a kindergartener...this is my life:

- Your eyes blink around 20 times a minute. That's over ten million times a year!
- The entire surface of your skin is replaced every month, which means you have about 1,000 different skins in your life!
 - Think: snakes.
- If you live to age 70, your heart will have beat around 2.5 billion times!
- Your body has enough iron in it to make a nail 3 inches long.
- One in every 2000 babies is born with a tooth.
 - Yikes.
- One person in 20 has an extra rib, and they are most often men.
 - Eve took one from us, so we're taking it back!
- There are 59,650 miles of blood vessels in the human body.

- Like fingerprints, every person has a unique tongue print.
 - Imagine if that's how we ID'd people.
- The acid in your stomach is strong enough to dissolve razorblades.
 - Don't try that.
- The human feet have 52 bones, accounting for one-quarter of all the human body's bones.
- The tooth is the only part of the human body that can't repair itself.
- And your nose can remember 50,000 different scents and women are better smellers than men.
 - Which is why after mowing my lawn, I'm totally fine, but Maryse says, "Go take a shower! You stink!"

Our bodies are amazing! And, if you haven't figured it out by now, we're going to talk about bodies today, but metaphorically. So, let's dig in. 1 Corinthians 12:12.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-14

[12] For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

[14] For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

EXPLAIN: COMPLEX

Now, remember, this is coming on the heels of our discussion last week on Spiritual Gifts,

- where Paul ended by saying that all spiritual gifts
- are EMPOWERED by one and the same Spirit,
- who apportions to EACH ONE individually AS HE WILLS.
 - So, every Christian has spiritual gifts,
 - and they are all from the same Spirit.
 - And they are under the divine sovereignty of God.

And, now he turns to the illustration of the body, and the first thing I want to point out in this metaphor is that the members of the body are **SLIDE**

COMPLEX.

- There is ONE body, but it has MANY members.
- There is unity,
- in that there are not bodies of Christ,
- but one body of Christ. One church.
- One unified body.
- But that body is made up of many members
- who are diverse and COMPLEX.

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Verse 15:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:15-17

[15] If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. [16] And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

EXPLAIN: DIVERSE

So, Paul is making his point about complexity. While there is one body, there are many COMPLEX members. Even in our church this is true.

- Young and old.
- Married and singles.
- Wealthy and just making it.
- White collar and blue collar.
- Democrats and Republicans.
- Some of you were raised in the church,
 - some of you are brand new at this.
- Home schoolers and public schoolers.
 - And all my homeschool jokes are now invalid
 - because we just started homeschooling...
 - so, bring on the emails!
 - Actually, Harper made me these pants...
 - Pretty good...

You see, there's complexity

- in taste
- and ability
- and gifting
- and finances
- and all kinds of things.

Now, back to the text, Paul addresses what naturally CAN occur in something as complex as the church, which is: **some members of the body can begin to become envious of another member**. Right?

- Some insecurity can set it
- and we can disdain other members of the body.

We talked about this a little bit last week when talking about a seeming hierarchy of Spiritual Gifts.

- As if someone with the gift of helping or administration
- is lesser than someone with the gift of teaching or evangelism.

No, that is crazy! All the parts of the body are necessary. This thing is COMPLEX. Verse 18:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:18-20

[18] But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them,

as he chose. [19] If all were a single member, where would the body be?

[20] As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

EXPLAIN: CRUCIAL

And this is where I'll make my second observation about the body of Christ today. While the members of the body are COMPLEX, each member of the body is **SLIDE CRUCIAL**. The members of the body are COMPLEX, and yet, each one is CRUCIAL.

I mean, notice what he said in verse 18: **God arranged the members...as he chose!**

- This isn't an accident.
- You aren't the part you are by mistake.

He's emphasizing that he made you

- a foot
- or a hand
- or an ear
- or an eye
- ON PURPOSE!

And praise God for that! If all the members would be the same IT WOULDN'T BE A BODY.

Here's also what this means...

- **not only are you a crucial part of THE body...**
- **but you are a crucial part of THIS body.**

God providentially brought you here,

- with your gifts and talents,
- to be used by God,
- for God,
- and for the building of his church.

Listen to me,

- are you a foot? We need one of those!
- Are you an eye? We need one of those!
- Are you a hand? We need one of those!

You say, *“how do you know you need someone like me?”* Here’s how I know:

- BECAUSE YOU’RE HERE!
- And God wouldn’t have brought you here
- unless he had a role for you to play in this body.

We need you! You are CRUCIAL! Why? Because you’re here!

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ILLUSTRATION: COMPENSATION

So, I’ve been getting these migraines with what’s called aura,

- so, they’re these headaches that just hit me
- with these visual disturbances.
- It’s like flashes of light,
- and blind spots,
- and other vision changes.

The way I’ve described it is like:

- imagine you stare at the sun,
- and then you know you’ve got that
- blurry blob thing in your field of vision?
- Well, the headaches are like that,
- but the blob doesn’t go away.

And I actually have an MRI on Friday to make sure it's not something sketchy.

But as that's happening, I can find myself kind-of seeing. Like, if I squint and really focus I can just kinda make out what I'm looking at.

The way I understand it is,

- when you have some sort of trauma or issue with your eye,
- your brain will compensate for that ghetto eye,
- and take the good eye and the bad eye and, like,
- merge the two together to compensate
- and you not just have messed up vision.

It's fascinating!

The same thing can happen for people who are blind, or deaf...their bodies compensate for those losses, with heightened other senses...kind of a compensation.

And even people who have lost limbs have these sensations like they can still feel their legs or arms. It's amazing!

It's like our bodies can compensate for themselves when members are missing. And that's incredible!

But even though your body might be able to trick you into thinking that things are better than they really are. The reality is:

- it you've lost a limb
- or you've lost an eye
- or you've lost a sense of sight or hearing or smell...
- **YOU ARE AT A LOSS!**

So it is with the body of Christ. YOU ARE CRUCIAL.

- We might think we're doing fine without you...
- You might think you're doing fine without us...
- But we're compensating...
- We'd be better with you in your place
- as a member of the body!

Verse 21:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:21-24a

[21] The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." [22] On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, [23] and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, [24] which our more presentable parts do not require.

EXPLAIN: WEAK

Now Paul flips the argument on to the other side,

- where instead of one part of the body envies other parts
- NOW a part feels superior to what they think are lesser parts.

A sense of superiority can breed notions of self-sufficiency and they can imagine that the minor players are dispensable. But again, it is obvious in a body that no part is autonomous.

And Paul mentions parts that seem to be weaker or less honorable or unpresentable...now what does he mean here?

Well, likely he's referring to the parts of the body

- that we cover with clothes,
- or are private,
- or even internal organs that are hidden from view.
- They don't seem to be out there in the spotlight.

But Paul says **the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.**

ILLUSTRATION: COLON

A part of the body I never really gave much thought to was the colon.

Yes, he's talking about colons from the pulpit...welcome to Fathom.

- But I never really thought about the colon...
- until my mom was diagnosed with colorectal cancer...
- and her oncologist encouraged me to get a colonoscopy early
- just to make sure that the cancer wasn't genetic.

So, all of a sudden,

- something that was weaker...
- and less honorable...
- and unpresentable...
- was now indispensable!
- And treated with greater honor.

All of a sudden,

- I wanted to have the best-looking colon out there...
- and I had never though those things before!

Paul continues to reinforce that the members of the body are COMPLEX and CRUCIAL. He goes on in the rest of verse 24:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:24b-26

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, [25] that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. [26] If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

EXPLAIN: CONNECTED

So, the members of the body of Christ are COMPLEX, and each is CRUCIAL, but finally, they are **SLIDE CONNECTED**.

- We are connected.
- When one suffers, they all suffer.

We know this to be true with our own bodies, right?

- When your back hurts, man, it can affect everything!
- When you get a rock in your shoe, just try to walk normal.
 - No! You look crazy!
 - It doesn't just affect the foot,
 - but the whole body.

We are CONNECTED.

- We feel each other's pain,
- and we feel each other's victories.
- We care for one another.

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ILLUSTRATION: ITCH

I've heard it explained like this:

- When my brain receives a message
- from my left elbow
- that it itches,
- it doesn't send down magic "brain power juice" to fix it.
- Instead, it sends a message to the fingers on my right hand,
- *"Go take care of left elbow."*

And in the same way, when we pray, God doesn't usually "zap" power straight down from heaven to accomplish his will.

- He often moves a member of his body to do the work,
- through their spiritual gifts.

APPLICATION

I know a lot of people today who think that you can be a Christian and not be connected to a church...but that is simply not how the Bible talks about the church! And I don't just mean showing up for a service every now and again...I mean connected to a church!

And I will be very bold and say this: **If you want God to work in your life, you have to be part of the body.**

- You see, sitting on the sidelines of the church,
- even if you were hearing the best sermons in the world
- (which I assure you, you aren't),
- means that you're experiencing only a small fraction
- of what God has for you.

You need to be CONNECTED.

So, let's finish off this chapter. Verse 27

1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31

[27] Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

[28] And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30] Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? [31] But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

EXPLAIN: GIFTS

So, Paul ends this section by giving another list of different gifts, or parts of the body, that members can play out.

Remember, I told you last week that there are six places in the New Testament where they list our spiritual gifts, and here is another one.

- So, we won't go into each individual gift this week,
- but I want you to note that Paul reemphasizes
- that not all possess the same gifts.
- We are COMPLEX!
- He asks all these rhetorical questions:
 - Are all apostles?
 - Do all work miracles?

- Do all speak with tongues?

- The obvious answer is NO!

And then Paul says, earnestly desire the higher gifts. What does that mean? Well, many different interpretations out there, but I will say,

The Corinthians are likely thinking

- of the more charismatic and public gifts as being higher,
- or more important.

But Paul is redefining higher here.

- The higher gifts are those that edify,
- encourage,
- and comfort others.

They need to reassess their understand of what is great...which Jesus said is the least and servant of all.

CONCLUSION

So, what to do with all of this? Well, I don't know that it even needs to be said, but:

you ARE a part of the body, and you NEED TO BE a part of the body!

ILLUSTRATION: PROM

So, when I went to prom in high school,

- I went with a gal who was...how do I put this?
- Her family was in a much higher tax bracket that my family was.
- And so, she wanted to go to dinner
- at a super boujee restaurant before we went to the dance.

And I've told you...

- I come from Flea Market people...
- we weren't 5-star restaurant kind of people.
- We were Country Town Buffet kind of people. Right?
- Like, bring a doggy bag to a buffet kind of people. OK?

So, this prom restaurant was a new experience for me.

- And, as we sat down
- the guy took my napkin
- and he unfolded it
- and placed it in my lap...
- and I almost ninja'd him, right?
- Cause not a lot of people place things in my lap.

Listen, there is a level of service I don't need!

- And help with my napkin is one of them.
- And then every time I took a drink from my water glass,
- there was someone hovering there to refill it.

It's like there was a fleet of people

- who were there just for our table,
- making sure we had everything we needed,
- exactly as we wanted it,
- with no wait involved.

And I think that a lot of us think that the church is like this nice restaurant.

- It's like, *"We come and sit down,*
- *and you take care of me.*
- *And you put that napkin in my lap,*
- *and you bring me what I want when I want it.*
- *And when the service starts to slow down,*
- *or bore me,*
- *or ask something of me...*
- *well, there are plenty of other restaurants to choose from.*
- *You don't want to lose my business!"*

The problem is the church wasn't built to serve you but for you to serve her.

- So, the less you see the church in the mindset of ME,
 - *"I want this...I want this...I want this...I want this..."*
- and instead start viewing it as a body:
 - *"This is a place where I belong,*
 - *I trust the direction.*
 - *My family and I are here,*
 - *and we're going to serve in any way possible*
 - *to make this place stronger,*
 - *better,*
 - *and fuller with the presence of Christ*
 - *so that the community might see*
 - *and God might be glorified,"*

That's when a church becomes the body.

I'll put it like this: church is not a product to consume, but a place to belong.

And until you belong to a church, until then, it's just really goofy.
That's not how it was designed to be.

APPLICATION

So, I don't know what the Spirit has for you today:

- maybe you don't know what your spiritual gifts are, and you need help. This is a COMPLEX body, and we can help. Reach out to me this week, and we'll help.
- Maybe you know what you're gifted for, but you haven't jumped into serving...well, reach out, or go to **SLIDE** **fathomchurch.org/serve** and sign up to help.
 - Man, with COVID stuff we need help with technology stuff on Sundays, and cleaning team, and greeting team, and security team. Please, go to the website and sign up!
- Maybe you need to repent for believing you aren't a CRUCIAL part of the body. Maybe you need to repent for believing someone else isn't as CRUCIAL as you?
- Maybe you just need to get CONNECTED. Goodness, sign up for a group. **SLIDE** **fathomchurch.org/groups** ... Jump in. Become a part of the body. Don't settle for compromise.

This is the body...I've just been saying it for the last few months, and it's becoming kinda a mantra around here,

- but church isn't a building you walk in...
- it's a people you walk with...

So, let's get after it! Pray with me. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

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- White, Josh. *The Body of Christ*.
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- <https://purple.com/blog/30-weirdly-fascinating-health-body-facts>