

Lenten Devotional March 15, 2018

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

¹²For 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. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would 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. ¹⁶And if the ear would 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. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The 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.” ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Devotional

Corey D. Rugh, Senior M.Div. Student

An incredible aspect of being a Christian is that no matter what political, economic, ethnic, racial, sex, or any other phenotypic characteristic you possess, you are a member of *one* body: the body of Christ. The members of the Corinthian congregation were no exception to such amalgamation. It seems, however, that they were diverse in some negative ways. Paul writes at the beginning of the letter, “Now I appeal to you brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters” (1 Corinthians 1:10-11). Clearly, there were some who did not have the same mind or same purpose, thus causing dissension. Anyone familiar with church life can likely conjure up a situation where such disagreement has occurred.

In an attempt to rally the Corinthians back together, Paul expounds the body-metaphor. Each member of the human body plays its specific and unique purpose. The eye cannot do what the foot can, nor can the ear perform the tasks that the hand can. Furthermore, the weaker members, such as the eyes and ears, are “indispensable.” Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to treat the seemingly weaker members of Christ’s body with greater respect and honor! Doing so is contrary to our natural instinct, by which we tend to give honor and respect only when we believe they have been rightly earned. In short, Paul is promoting equity. The result he intends is that the same care will be given to each member of Christ’s body. How blessed are we that “God has so arranged the body”!

Prayer

Loving Father, we thank you for bringing us into the body of Christ. May we give honor and respect to those around us who are feeling weak. Teach us to deny ourselves so that we may properly care for others and encourage our fellow members in their roles as indispensable parts of the body of Christ. And when we are the ones who are weak, help us accept the care given to us by other members of the same body. So we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.