

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

3-7-12

E Pluribus Unum!

I. Announce:

- A. Joel Weldon -
- B. Wayne (5 Loaves) - **Slide#1-5**

II. Intro:

- A. **Slide#6 Theme:** E Pluribus Unum, “Out of many, one.”
- B. **Unity** - A visitor was being shown around **a leper colony** in India. At noon a gong sounded for the midday meal. People came from all parts of the compound to the dining hall. All at once peals of laughter filled the air. Two young men, one riding on the other’s back, were pretending to be a horse and a rider and were having loads of fun. As the visitor watched, he saw that the man who carried his friend was **blind**, and the man on his back was **lame**. The one who could not see used his feet; the one who could not walk used his eyes. Together they helped each other, and they found great joy in doing it. **Imagine a church like that - each member using his or her strength to make up for another’s weakness!**
- C. Man has always been amazed by the way the different body parts cooperate.
 - 1. **Slide#7** Even **Plato** drew a famous picture in which he said that, the **head** was a citadel;...the **neck**, the Isthmus(is-mis) between the head & the body;...the **heart**, the fountain of the body;...the **pores**, the lanes of the body;...the **veins**, the canals of the body.
 - 2. So **Paul** draws this picture of the church...as a body!
 - a) *Analogies* allow a teacher to convey **abstract** concepts **through concrete** examples.
 - 3. A body consists of **many parts** but there is in it an **essential unity!**
- D. **Slide#8** To fly an old fashioned **Kite** you need what? (a string, a kite, wind, & someone to fly it)
 - 1. If the **wind** calms, if the **paper** tears, if the **sticks** breaks, if the **tail** gets caught in a tree, or the flyer lets go of the string, then the kite will come down!
 - a) Each has a part to play. Can you tell me *which part* of the Kite is more important?
- E. Let’s keep in mind that the main theme through this chapter is **Unity in Gifting!** (Read vs.4-6)

III. **Slide#9 1 BODY, WITH DIRECTION! (12-14)**

- A. (12) **Plato** had pointed out that we do not say, “My finger has a pain,” we say, “**I** have a pain.”
 - 1. There is an **I**, a personality, which gives **unity** to the many & varying parts of our bodies.
 - a) What the “**I**” is to the body, **Christ** is to the church.
- B. **Bottom line...** We need each other!

1. There should be no such thing as **isolation** in the church!
 2. How sad when one sees **his/her ministry** as the most important.
 - a) Often times even **neglecting** or even **criticizing** others who have chosen to do other work.
 - b) **An eye may see a hurt child, but it could never reach out to comfort the child like a hand could.**
- C. **Slide#10** (13,14) **Baptized into one body** – The word baptized carries a *double connotation* of being “dipped into” & “being overwhelmed by”.
1. Secular Greek sources spoke of a **submerged ship** being **baptized**.
 - a) That ship was not merely *initiated into water*; it was *thoroughly overwhelmed by water*.
 - b) The water was in the ship, **as well as** the ship being underneath the water.
 - (1) Paul’s saying that Christians are in the H.S. & that the H.S. is in the Christians.

IV. **Slide#11 1 BODY, WITH DIVERSITY! (15-19)**

- A. (15-17) Often times we struggle with exactly the opposite thinking (not, I’m too important but)... “**My ministry isn’t that important**”, “**I’m only a** (hostess, usher, bass player, children’s church helper, nursery worker, part of the moving ministry)”. **[letter today]**
1. **Are you Isolated or Insulated in the body of Christ?**
 2. **What part of the body are you functioning as...today?** (not the past)
 3. Paul says, **be an active part** in your local congregation.
 4. A church body is **healthy & efficient** only when each part is functioning perfectly.
- B. (18) **Just as He pleased** - Rest in this brothers & sisters!

V. **Slide#12 1 BODY, WITH DISCRIMINATION! (20-24)**

- A. God seeks for us to be, not independent, **but Interdependent** (or, **Mutually dependent**).
- B. **Quick test:**
1. **In this last month, did you share w/someone an area of need in your life?**
 2. **In this last month, did you express gratitude to another member of the body for what that person means to you?**
 3. **Would the sign “No Help Wanted” fit around your neck?**
 4. **If someone asked you, “How can I help you this week?” Would you be embarrassed or offended?**
 - a) Remember, when a part of your body declares **independence** from the other parts,...it starts to **die!**
- C. **Slide#13,14** (21,22) **Weaker members are necessary!** - If I handed you my watch & asked you, “**What do you see?**” You’d say, “**A black case, LED read out, 4 buttons.**” - **But** if I opening the

back, & repeated the question you'd say, "I see many small parts, tiny wheels, etc." This watch would be useless, without **every** part...even the ones you can **hardly see**.

1. Maybe a reminder to your *little children* when they get the "small part in the play".
 2. Often those that are weakest & less honorable are really the most necessary. (eg. an eyelid; a tear duct, the tiny anvil bone in your inner ear)
- D. (21) **Cannot say...I have no need of you** - Some who possess *spectacular gifts* may look down on others & think of them as unimportant.
1. A certain **sea captain** and his **chief engineer** argued as to which of them was the more important to the ship. Failing to agree, they resorted to the unique plan of swapping places. The **Chief** ascended to the bridge and the **Captain** went into the engine room. After a couple of hours the **Captain** suddenly appeared on the deck covered with oil and soot. "Chief!" he yelled, wildly waving aloft a monkey wrench. "You'll have to come down here; I can't make 'er go!" "Of course you can't," replied the Chief. "She's aground!"
- E. (23) **Less honorable** - Some parts of our body we are glad that they are less honorable, & thus hidden.
1. **Like the Uvula**. You don't walk up to some one & say, "hey, nice Uvula"! **No**, we're glad it is behind a set of teeth & a set of lips!
- F. **Unpresentable parts** – private parts.
1. **Does everyone see how you have unpresentable parts? And that these parts should have greater modestly?**
 - a) He doesn't say display them; Nor place them on exhibition; but to cover them modestly!
 - b) Think of this **common sense & practical verse** with your every apparel decision...young ladies; & older ladies who dress like young ladies; & **dudes with big bellies & short shirts**

VI. Slide#15 **1 BODY, WITH DEPENDANCE! (25-27)**

- A. (26) **All the members suffer w/it** – Ever have a tooth ache? What hurt...everything hurts!
- B. (27) **You are the body** – Christ is no longer *in this world* in the body.
1. Therefore, when He wants something done, *He looks for a man, a woman, or a child*, to fulfill His work.
 2. We are His **hands** to do His work, **feet** to run upon His errands, **a voice** to speak for Him!
 - a) He has **no hands** but **our hands** to do His work today;
 He has **no feet** but **our feet** to lead men in His way;
 He has **no voice** but **our voice** to tell men how He died;
 He has **no help** but **our help** to lead them to His side. (Barclay)

3. **Slide#16** During **WWII**, a church in **Strasbourg** was destroyed. After the bombing, the members of this particular church went to see what was left and found that the entire roof had fallen in, leaving a heap of rubble and broken glass. Much to their surprise, however, **a statue of Christ with outstretched hands** that had been carved centuries before by a great artist was still standing erect. It was virtually unharmd **except that both hands had been sheered off by a falling beam**. The people hurried to a sculptor in town and asked if he could replace the hands of the statue. He was willing, and he even offered to do it for nothing. The church officials met to consider the sculptor's proposition - and decided **not** to accept his offer. **Why?** Because they felt that **the statue without hands** would be **the greatest illustration possible** that God's work is done **through His people**.

VII. **Slide#17 1 BODY, WITH DISCRETION! (28-31)**

- A. (28) **There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.** (12:5)
1. At the head of the list Paul places 1st, **Apostles**.
 - a) And rightfully so, as their job description was, as it says in Acts 1:22 that **they accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.**
 - b) **Jesus never wrote a word on paper that we know of; instead he wrote His message upon men, & these men were the apostles.**
 2. **Teachers** – these were the men who were tasked with **building up** the converts won by the preaching of the evangelists & the apostles.
 3. **Helps** – Maybe you don't have the gift of teaching or speaking. **Do you have the gift of helping out the poor, the widows, the orphans, or the strangers?**
 4. **Slide#18 Administrators** – The Greek is interesting, it literally refers to “**the work of a pilot who steers the ship through the rocks & sand bars to harbor.**”
 - a) Often the preacher is in the “**limelight**” **but** he could never do his work unless in the background there were those who shouldered the routine day to day **administration**.
 5. **Again note, Tongues** is at the end of the list (see 12:10)
 - a) So many place **tongues** at the top of the list of gifts, even pointing to it for a **barometer** of spirituality!
- B. **The best gifts?** – are
- C. **A more excellent way?** – Stay tune next week for the only thing that can bind the church into a perfect unity...**Love!** (i.e. Ch.13)
- D. **Slide#19 End story** - In a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy he should leave to his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church. No one saw the complete plans for the church until it was finished. When the people

gathered, they marveled at its beauty and completeness. Then someone asked, "But where are the lamps? How will it be lighted?" The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls. Then he gave to each family a lamp which they were to bring with them each time they came to worship. "Each time you are here the area where you are seated will be lighted," the nobleman said. "Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God's house will be dark." **Slide#20**