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ONE BODY, MANY PARTS, MANY GIFTS (Romans 12:4-8)

...God gave us bodies that are wonderful. Your body is a unit, a single complex organism. Yet, it has a multitude of parts, functioning together for our well-being. Think of the many systems and parts found within your body...

Dr. Paul Brand tells us of the diversity and interrelatedness of our body parts, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.
...After Paul has called us as believers to worship the Lord by offering our bodies to Him and calling us to think with humility about ourselves...he now directs us to think rightly about the Church.

TWO INSIGHTS UNFOLDING THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH URGING US TO USE OUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS.

...For you exist for the body, the body does not exist for you. Discover your gift and use it in the body of Christ!

I. We As Christians Are One Body In Christ. (vv.4-5)

- A. There is UNITY in the body of Christ. There is only one body.
 - 1. Paul uses the image of the body when speaking of the church.
 - 2. Here he is teaching about the universal church. (Eph 4:4-6)
 - 3. We here at Grace are a part of this...joined to the body of Christ.
 - 4. We do wrong when we emphasize our differences with other "churches."
...we ought to celebrate our common doctrinal foundation...we are too divisive.
 - 5. This is not a call for ecumenism...think this through. Beware of pride.
- B. There is great DIVERSITY within the one body. "many parts."
 - 1. Not all the parts are the same. Each part has its own function to do within the body.
 - 2. Paul tells of this in 1 Corinth 12:12-27, some of you are feet, hands, ear, eyes, mouth.
...God has arranged the parts of the body. (v. 18) "just as He wanted them to be."
 - 3. We as Christians are all an interrelated spiritual unity.

II. We As Christians Are To Discover Our Gift And Use It Appropriately. (vv6-8)

...Each believer is given by grace a gift. You are to use it. The body needs it. Paul tells of 7 gifts:

- A. The gift of PROPHECY.
 - 1. Both the OT and the NT prophets spoke for God. They would warn, rebuke, teach, etc
 - 2. Today this gift is the proclaiming of God's Word. It is primarily what a pastor does.
...it is the gift of preaching. 1 Corinth 14:3 "for edification, and exhortation, and..."
...It is the gift of being God's spokesman, primarily to God's people. Speaking truth!
 - 3. The content is controlled and restricted here: "the faith." God's previously revealed...
- B. The gift of SERVICE.
 - 1. This is a general word for service of all kinds. It is similar to the gift of helps.
 - 2. This word is the same as used for "deacons." We are to help the weak. This is to be used in every sort of practical help that believers can give to one another.
- C. The gift of TEACHING.
 - 1. The Christian teacher is gifted with ability to present God's truth understandably.
 - 2. This is different than prophecy, this is the ability to give systematic and regular instruction in God's Word. This is any teacher... pastor, seminary, SS, small group.
- D. The gift of EXHORTATION. "ENCOURAGING" (NIV)
 - 1. This has a very broad connotation. It means, "calling someone to one's side."
So this gift encompasses the ideas of advising, pleading, encouraging, warning, strengthening, and comforting. Ex. Barnabas.
 - 2. Note the differences: Prophecy...proclaims. Teaching...systematizes and explains the truth. Exhortation...calls believers to obey and follow the truth. To do God's will...
- E. The gift of GIVING. This is the sacrificially giving of one's self. All should do this. This one gives with open-heartedness. Generosity. Ex. The Macedonians who gave...(2 Corinth 8:2-5)
- F. The gift of LEADERSHIP. The word means, "to stand before." Effective leadership must be done with diligence, with earnestness and zeal. (home/church) This involves all who would lead and direct ministries in the church.
- G. The gift of MERCY. This gifted person is endowed with special sensitivity to suffering and sorrow, and has the ability to help. It is feeling put into action. Done with cheerfulness!!!

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES: