

**Union United Methodist Church**

Sermon Outline: **Where Are You At? Part 5: Love & Unity in Diversity**

August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **John 17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Philippians 2**

**1. Diversity in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)**

- **Christ is the Head of the Church. All Christians together are the body of Christ**  
As with a human body, there are many parts in the Body of Christ.
- **We are not all the same - in what we bring to the body. Nor do we all have the same level of spiritual maturity.**  
Some are stronger than others in their faith and love.  
God has given to each of us gifts that, together, make the body stronger and complete in its function.
- **Christ treasures every part of His Body.**  
Every one of us who has been saved and cleansed by the blood of Christ is precious to Jesus.
- **When one part suffers, the whole body suffers.**  
We have all experienced this - a toothache or hurting toe can have the effect of making the whole person suffer. The pain is uncomfortable, and we feel it all over - at least it has an impact on our sense of well-being.
- **It is important that we value each other - because Christ died for all.**  
When we do so, we are "discerning" the body of Christ. That is, we are being mindful of Christ in each of us.  
God designed the body to function as one unit - no division.
- **We were each purchased with the precious life and blood of Christ, and we each, as Christians have the Holy Spirit in us.** Whether one is a baby in Christ spiritually mature, we are invaluable to God.

**"You were bought at a price;** do not become slaves of human beings."

1 Corinthians 7:23 NIV

"Do you not know that **your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.** Therefore honor God with your bodies."

1 Corinthians 6:20 NIV

## 2. The Mind of Christ

- **Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples - then and now**

**9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.**<sup>10</sup>All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.<sup>11</sup>I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, **so that they may be one as we are one.**

<sup>15</sup>My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

**20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,<sup>21</sup>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."**

John 17 NIV

- **Jesus wants us to have the unity and love similar to that in the Trinity**
- **Paul urges us to let the mind of Christ dwell in us - to imitate the humility that Christ Jesus demonstrated:**

**5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,**  
**6 who, though he was in the form of God,**  
**did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,**  
**7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.** And being found in human form, **8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross.**  
**9** Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

Philippians 2:5-9 NRSV

### 3. Discerning the Body of Christ

**For Christians, not discerning the body of Christ has consequences.**

- Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write:

**“26 Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.**

**27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.**

**33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.” 1 Corinthians 11:26-33 NIV**

**Verse 31 in NRSV: “But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged.”**

- Who is the person sitting next to you? Is that person also in Christ? Then that person is part of Christ’s body and should be treated as we would the Lord.

- Other consequence of poor discernment:

**“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. ”**

**1 Peter 3:7 NIV**

In talking about answers to prayer, Jesus added:

**“when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” Mark 11:25 NIV**

- In practice - Paul shows us how to have the mind of Christ:  
"1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ,  
any consolation from love,  
any sharing in the Spirit,  
any compassion and sympathy,  
2 make my joy complete:  
be of the same mind,  
having the same love,  
being in full accord and of one mind.  
3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,  
but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.  
4 Let each of you look not to your own interests,  
but to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:1-4 NRSV