

Coach House Church BEACONS

UNITED WE STAND

23RD MAY 2020

Have you ever stumped your toe? It really hurts. A little toe is so tiny and seems so insignificant, but it really affects your whole body if it doesn't work properly. In the bible it says we as a church are a body.

Let's read about it in: 1 Corinthians 12 –

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts

that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?"

So, just like when your little toe suffers and that causes the rest of your body to suffer, so when one in the church suffers the rest of us suffer too. When one rejoices the rest rejoice.

If we do this right, it stops jealousy in its tracks. No part of the body feels offended, upset or jealous when another part is honoured. In fact, they all feel honoured. That's how we should be as a body of Christ. If you have a great idea and someone else gets the credit, praise God that they are being honoured. If one falls to temptation, don't mock them or disgrace them. Go and help them get up and not fall again. We are all unique. We don't all have the same skills or the same function in the body of Christ.

In the bible verse we just read Paul here is talking about spiritual gifts. He talks of prophesying and speaking in tongues and teaching. This can be extended to welcoming others or making cups of tea or encouraging others. These are all gifts from God, and we are to use them faithfully. We shouldn't wish we were someone else, or in the position of someone else, but faithfully use what we've been given. There are other examples of the bible telling us to be faithful with what we have but one of these was highlighted by Jamie in his last beacon risk and reward. Jesus, in Matthew's gospel, told of three servants. Their master entrusted them with money when he went away. Two of them invested it and were rewarded but the last one buried it in the ground. We need to use what God has given us faithfully and not hide it away. We need to speak to the people around us as we

might be the one Christian they know and God has entrusted us to be His representative to that person.

We need to keep central the death and resurrection of Jesus and that being the only way to heaven

Since we are the body of Christ, we are Jesus representative on the earth. Note, I said representative. We, together as the church, represent Jesus. Now I am part of the coach house church and this is part of the church, but when I say the church here, I mean the whole body of Christ. Every Christian, everyone who follows Jesus on the earth. So, we shouldn't fight each other or fall out about issues that don't matter. We need to work together and not let insignificant theological disputes divide us. I am not saying that theology doesn't matter and that we shouldn't know about it, but we should know the difference between what is central to our faith and what we can let go. We need to keep central the death and resurrection of Jesus and that being the only way to heaven but other than that we can let go of the disagreements about style or whether we need to have a cross up or which version of the bible we prefer. If something is unhelpful, we can gently point it out but we don't need to refuse to speak to or work with another church because we don't agree on every point.

There is a joke that goes like this: "I was walking across a bridge one day, and I saw a man standing on the edge, about to jump. I ran over and said: "Stop. Don't do it." "Why shouldn't I?" he asked. "Well, there's so much to live for!" "Like what?" "Are you religious?" He said: "Yes." I said: "Me too. Are you Christian or Buddhist?" "Christian." "Me too. Are you Catholic or Protestant?" "Protestant." "Me too. Are you Episcopalian or Baptist?" "Baptist." "Wow. Me too. Are you Baptist Church of God or Baptist Church of the Lord?" "Baptist Church of God." "Me too. Are you original Baptist Church of God, or are you Reformed Baptist Church of God?"

"Reformed Baptist Church of God."

"Me too. Are you Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1879, or Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1915?"

He said: "Reformed Baptist Church of God, Reformation of 1915."

So I pushed him off."

The joke is funny but makes a serious point. We are so good at falling out with each other and the devil has definitely used division in the church to his advantage.

We need to be, and stay, united as one church.

So we have different purposes, we should rejoice and mourn together and we should stay united.

He is in us and we are in Him

We are the body of Christ.



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