

1Cor.12:12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

12:14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

12:15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

12:16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

12:18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

12:19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

12:20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

12:21 And the 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."

12:22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

12:23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,

12:24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,

12:25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

[From today's sermon]

"There is no division in the body, but all the members have their common welfare in one another... If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. You are the body of Christ, and individually members of it."

How great is the collective body of the entire world, with Christ as its head, as a historical and organic entity?

Just as the body is made up of countless cells, tissues, and organs, how wonderful is the body formed by the saints who are connected to Christ and kept alive by His life! And how wonderful it is to know that our lives are nurtured in such wonderful encouragement and mutual help!

Those who have returned to heaven and whom we cannot meet now are also connected to us now as the body of Jesus.

We learn the beauty of living without division, caring for one another, loving one another, and looking out for one another as parts of the same body. There is no one above or below; the parts that are inconspicuous and seem small are honored, and the parts that are conspicuous are humble, creating harmony and unity. We share suffering and joy, caring for one another like a family. There is one body of Christ, and we are welcomed as an inseparable part of that body, sharing in the joy of being part of it.

Good morning, everyone.

It hasn't rained for a long time, but now it's raining heavily all of a sudden. We don't know when it will start raining so heavily that a warning will be issued, so please be careful.

Today is the annual memorial service for the departed at Shobara Church. We would like to thank the bereaved families for attending.

Today, I would like to share a passage from the Bible that tells us that each person who is saved and guided by Jesus is united as one, forming a body that is more than just brothers, sisters, and family.

12:12 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.

12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all given the same Spirit to drink.

12:14 For the body is not made up of one member, but of many.

We all have bodies. Bodies have many parts. There are bones, flesh, skin, hair, and organs. Bones have all kinds of bones, flesh, blood vessels, nerves, and muscles. Organs include all kinds of organs.

This body is truly marvelously made. When we feel pain in one part of our body, we rub it gently with our hands, and the warmth of our hands helps to soothe the pain and promote healing. The muscles of the heart continue to beat without rest, even when we are asleep and not thinking about anything. The lungs and internal organs also never cease to function.

All of them work together as one, serving each other to form a single body. We share life and spend our days maintaining our bodies for a single purpose.

When we get sick, we realize how precious our health is. But how much work does each part of our body do day and night to maintain our health? Each part serves the body, and the body protects each part. This reminds me of the saying, “One for all, all for one.” This means, “One person is for everyone, and everyone is for one person.”

12:15 If the foot says, “I am not a hand, so I do not belong to the body,” it does not mean that it does not belong to the body.

12:16 And if the ear says, “I am not an eye, so I do not belong to the body,” it does not mean that it does not belong to the body.

12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the smell be?

12:18 But now God has placed the members in the body, each one of them, as He has determined.

12:19 If all were a single member, where would the body be?

12:20 But now there are many members, yet one body.

12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I am not needed,” nor can the head say to the feet, “I am not needed.”

Such is the intricate nature of the various organs of the body, but when it comes to a group of people, something strange happens. It is the idea that “you are not needed.” Perhaps it could be called the logic of bullying.

It seems that we sometimes lose the ability to overcome differences. We tend to value those who think like us, who are easy to understand, and who are enjoyable to talk to, while excluding those who are difficult to understand, who are not enjoyable to be around, who do not share our values, or who are incompatible with us. The logic of gathering only similar people and excluding those who are different is akin to the eyes telling the hands, “You are unnecessary,” or the head telling the feet, “You are unnecessary.” If such a thing were to be carried out, the body would not function, yet people forget such obvious truths and judge others' worth, select, ignore, or abandon them based on their own standards. No matter how excellent the feet are, if they were hands or eyes, they could not form a single body.

12:22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem weaker are more necessary.
12:23 And the parts of the body that we think are less honorable, we clothe with greater honor. The parts that are not as beautiful are made more beautiful,
12:24 so that the parts that are more beautiful do not need to be made more beautiful. God has made the parts that are weaker more beautiful, so that the body may be harmonious.
12:25 This is so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for each other.

No, that is not the case. Rather, it is this way.

12:22 Rather, the parts of the body that seem weaker are necessary,
12:23 and the parts of the body that we think are less presentable are treated with special care. We make the parts that are less attractive more attractive,
12:24 but the parts that are already attractive don't need that. God has made the parts that seem less honorable even more honorable, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.
12:25

If the body is divided, how can it be a body? If a garment is torn in pieces, how can it keep itself warm?

Rather, they are joined together, caring for one another, concerned for one another, attentive to one another, and protecting one another.

12:26 If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a member of it.

This is the image of the church, which is the body of Christ. And the church does not only refer to the place where we are now. There are many churches in the world, and there have been many in the past, present, and future. All of them are the body of Christ. We have been invited into this grown, large body of Christ. And as an indispensable and unique part of one body, we serve Christ, serve the body, and Christ and the body, the whole church, serve each and every one of us. We share our suffering and our joy together.

This is true both on earth and in heaven. We are grafted into God's organic life, where life is poured out daily, and there is growth and fruit. We help, care for, worry about, and serve one another, sharing both suffering and joy, and growing together. This is the body of Christ, the

church. I earnestly wish that the world could be like this. Division and superiority, contempt and exclusion. Disregard and exploitation. And rejection. Ignorance and oppression. In this pain-filled world, I earnestly pray that the fellowship of God's body may be reestablished, and that each and every one of us may find refuge and rest in the church.

◇Prayer: Heavenly Father, We thank You for today's worship. Thank You so much for teaching us the beautiful order and nature of the body of Christ, with Christ as its head. How wonderful it would be if the world were like this, one body, one family. Strengthen and guide us this week so that we may bear witness to the beauty of the church as the body of Christ. Please lead all those who suffer into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and our neighbors. Use us. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.