

We are a Family
Your Joy is My Joy, Pt. 1
1 Corinthians 12:12-26

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I. INTRODUCTION

a. I have a question for all of us: what pops into the mind of the average un-churched person when they think about church?

- i. What images do they see? What experiences would they expect? What would be their definition of this word – church.
 - For many people, they might conjure up memories of growing up in a church that was very liturgical and ritualistic.
 1. Going to worship or mass every week, sometimes multiples times a week.
 2. Following a liturgy. Taking the eucharist, reciting creeds, going to confession, etc...
 - Others might think of a church that is highly produced.
 1. Incredible music, lights, video, dynamic preaching, art.
 - Maybe some think of the small fundamentalist church, where the pastor goes on political rants and the list of rules is long.
- ii. Regardless of what pops into their mind, I think it is safe to say that when most people think of church, they think of a place and an experience.
 - They think of a building and some sort of worship service experience.
 - They think of what we are doing right now.



b. Now, what if we asked the same group of people about the word family...what pops into their head when they think about family.

- i. For many people, when they think about family, they think about people they love and cherish.
 - Others think about people that have deeply hurt them.
 - Maybe for most people it is somewhere in between or a little bit of both.
- ii. But regardless, when anybody thinks of family, they think of people that they have this bond with whether they want that bond or not.
 - Technically speaking, your family are the people that you have a biological or legal bond with.
 1. For example, my son is forever my family member because I am his biological father. My wife is his biological mother. We have this bond that cannot be broken.
 2. It's the same with my daughter, even though she is adopted and we are not her biological parents. But legally speaking, we are her forever family.
 - We have this bond with one another that hopefully impacts our feelings for one another but is not dependent on our feelings for one another.



c. And, when it comes to the Bible, the Bible doesn't speak of the church as a place or experience, the Bible envisions the church like a family.

- i. A group of people that you have this irreversible bond with.
 - And just like a family lives together in a house and spends time together...so a church regularly gathers to do what we are doing this morning...
 1. But, the fact that we worship together on Sunday mornings doesn't make us a church anymore than living in the same house with people makes them your family.
- ii. And this morning, I want to look into the Bible to show us what it means that being a part of a church means that you are a part of a family.
 - And if that is true, then there is so much more associated with being a part of a church than just showing up on Sunday morning.

d. Through the month of August, we are going to be taking a break from our King Jesus sermon series to spend time talking about what we believe God is calling us to do at Grace Hill Church as we enter our third year of ministry.

- i. A month from today, Grace Hill will turn two years old.



- And we think it is important to mark these occasions by being reminded of who we are as a church and what we believe God has called us to do.
 1. And so, this morning, we are going to talk about what it means that at Grace Hill we are a family.
- And then next week, we will begin sharing with you what we believe God is calling us to do as a family over this next year.

II. WE ARE A FAMILY.

- a. **And so, this morning, I'd like us to learn from 1 Corinthians 12 about what it means that when you join Grace Hill Church, you join a family.**
 - i. So, I first want to read v.12-13.
 - Because these verses are going to explain to us, theologically, how it is that when you come to Christ, you become a part of the church, and therefore you have this irreversible bond with everyone else who is a follower of Christ.
 - ii. **Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.**
- b. **One of the primary metaphors the Bible uses to describe the church is that of a body...specifically, the Bible says that the church is the body of Christ.**
 - i. And in our passage this morning, Paul tells us that we were all baptized into one body...the body of Christ.



- Now, when Paul uses that word baptize, I immediately think of Romans 6 where Paul explains what he means when he says we were baptized into the body of Christ.
 - But get ready...we have to do some deep Bible Study...
- ii. **Read Romans 6:3-9.**
- **v.3** – Okay, so what it means to come to Christ means to believe that you have sinned before God and deserve His judgement.
 1. Yet, you also believe that God is offering you a free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus, who came to take the judgement that we deserve for our sin in our place on the cross.
 2. So, here in v.3, what it means to be baptized into the death of Jesus means that when Jesus died on the cross, our we also died with Jesus on the cross.
 3. Think of baptism when one is immersed under water.
 4. As you are lowered in the water, it is like your old self is going down into the grave with Jesus.
 - **v.4** – But when we baptize, we don't immerse you under water and keep you down there! No, we raise you out of the water.
 1. Just as Jesus rose again from the dead having conquered sin and death, we now have new life like Jesus.
 2. We are forgiven. We are no longer under the condemnation of God. We are redeemed.



- v.5 – Our old self and sinful bodies were united to Jesus, crucified, and buried in the ground.
 1. But, our new self and redeemed bodies are united to the resurrected Jesus as he rose from the grave and now lives forever.
 2. In other words, what it means to be part of the body of Christ means that we are united to Jesus. We are righteous as Jesus is righteous. We will live forever in God's Kingdom as Jesus will live forever in God's Kingdom.
- Finish with v.6-9.

c. So, think about it, if as individual Christians, we are all united to Jesus...we all had our old self crucified with Jesus and buried in the grave...and we all have a new self that is united to the resurrected Jesus...what this means...is that we are united to one another.

- i. When Kim and I adopted our daughter, Christy, she didn't just become our daughter.
 - She also became my son's sister. She became our parent's grandchild. She became our brother's and sister's niece.
 - Because Christy has this legal union with Kim and myself as her parents, she also became united with all these other people.
- ii. And it is the same with the body of Christ.



- As we are literally united with the body of Christ through the gospel, we also become united with all the other people who are united to Jesus.
 - And this is what we call the church...all of the people in all times and places who are united to Jesus.
 1. We are all a family.
- iii. This is why it is so important when Paul says 1 Corinthians 12:13 that the labels the world has given you (Jew or Greek, Slave or Free) has no bearing on your union and participation in the body of Christ.
- The body of Christ is not a family of people who have worldly commonalities.
 - Our one commonality...the one thing that binds us together is the fact that we have been saved through the death and resurrection of Jesus and we now belong to Him.
 - We are brothers and sisters. And we rejoice when anyone comes to faith in Christ because that means we have gained a brother or sister.
- iv. The church is a family, not a place, not an experience.

d. Now, as we continue in our passage in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul is going to begin teaching on local expressions of this big, large family that we have called the church.

- i. We are called to commit to a local family as an expression of this larger family that is the church.



- So, you have the big universal church which is a big family...and then you have the local church...which is our local family.
 - And it is in our local church where we are able to live out what it means to be a part of a church family.
- ii. **And so, as we dig into the rest of our passage, I want to give us three things family members do so that the body will thrive.**
- And it's worth mentioning that in the Bible, there is no category for being a Christian and not being a part of the church.
 1. You can't do that. You cannot exercise your faith on your own.
 2. The Christian faith is not an individual matter between you and God.
 - Being a Christian means you have joined a family...and God has called you to contribute to and also benefit from your family.
 1. He has made it that you cannot thrive in your faith without your family.
 - And this is why, all of what we are going to learn about today has to do with how we engage with our local family.
 1. We are a part of big global family and we live this out on a local level as we commit to a local church.
- iii. **So, three things family members do so that this body will thrive.**



III. #1 – FAMILY MEMBERS TAKE OWNERSHIP.

a. Let's read the remainder of our passage this morning together.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

- i. So, Paul is taking this imagery of the church begin the body of Christ and he is running with the analogy.
 - If you look at your own body, you have many different parts with different functions, but all of those parts are connected into, benefit from, and contribute to the same body.
 1. There is uniqueness and value to each part of the body but there is unity in that we are all working together for the same body.
 - And because of that, each part of the body takes an ownership stake in the health of the body.
 1. If one part suffers, we all suffer and compensate.
 2. If one part rejoices, we all rejoice and thrive!

b. What does it mean to take ownership of something?

- i. Imagine that there was a local coffee shop that you frequented most days on your way to work.
 - You loved the coffee, you loved the baristas, and you loved what this coffee shop brings to the community.



- But imagine one day the owner of that coffee shop approaches you as a regular customer and tells you that the coffee shop is not doing well financially, and he is needing to raise investment to keep the coffee shop open.
 1. He wants to know if you'll buy into the business.
 2. And so, you end up investing in this coffee shop and purchasing a 20% stake into the company.
 3. You now have part ownership of this coffee shop you've been frequenting for years.
- Don't you think that the next time you stop by that coffee shop to grab your daily coffee, you are going to look at that coffee shop with a new set of eyes?
 1. You're going to observe the employees differently in how they perform their job.
 2. If there is a piece of trash on the ground, before you may not even notice it, but this time, what are you going to do...pick it up.
 3. If one of the light bulbs is out on the lighted sign out front, you're going to mention something to the manager.
 4. If you get a cup of coffee that isn't made right, you're not just going to ask for a new one, you are going to want to know why that happened and try and figure out how to prevent that in the future.
 5. You're going to dig into the financials with the other owner of the shop to figure out why there has been financial trouble, right.



- This is no longer your regular spot for your daily coffee, this is *YOUR* coffee shop. And you have an invested stake in its success. You are now taking ownership of that business.
- ii. **And what it means to be a part of a church family, is you take ownership in what God has called our church to do.**
- Because we are all part of the body and equally members of it.
 - We each, individually, have a vested stake in the success of our church...
 1. We have a vested stake in the joy and growth of our brothers and sisters in Christ
 2. We have a vested stake in our mission to reach our town with the gospel.
 3. We have a vested stake to ensure that we are faithfully preaching the Word of God and not veering from it.
 4. We have a vested stake in making disciples and raising up the next generation.
 5. I could go on and on...

c. And what this means to take ownership at Grace Hill Church is that as a church family we invest our time, our abilities, and our money into the ministry of this church.

- i. We don't give of our money to the church out of religious duty or obligation, we give sacrificially and generously because as a member of the body of Christ, we take ownership of the church.



- We give of our time and serve formally within the various teams that we have and informally as we care for one another.
- ii. **You know if I could just take a moment and press here...maybe even exhort my church family.**
- There are so many of you here today who have been serving faithfully and tirelessly for the last two years.
 1. You have taken ownership of this church.
 2. When you hear that the setup team is down a person, you show up.
 3. When you hear that we need someone to fill in and teach one of our kid's classes, you're willing to step up and miss service again to disciple our kids.
 4. Because you care not only about the ministry of this church, you care about all these people.
 - And, if I'm honest, there are others where I have heard you say things like:
 1. "I shouldn't have to serve in kids."
 2. "Showing up at 7:15am to unload the trailer and not leaving till 12:30pm...that's taking up a big chunk of my weekend."
 3. I've heard those things...
 - And what worries me is not the unwillingness to serve, it's the unwillingness to take ownership. It's the lack of considering everyone else here who gives of their time because they love you.
 1. You are a valuable, irreplaceable, part of this family. We need you.
 2. And the more people who take ownership of this body means the more we will thrive.



IV. #2 - FAMILY MEMBERS FULFILL THEIR MINISTRY.

a. Read 1 Corinthians 12:15-21.

- i. So, we all are united together in one body and we take ownership of this body...but we all have individual ways in which we contribute to this body.
 - Paul says in Romans 12:4-6a (NLT) - *“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,⁵ so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.”*
- ii. So, here is what this means...
 - God has specifically gifted each of you for a specific ministry within the church,
 1. And what I am not talking about right now is just serving on our various teams.
 2. I am talking about unique gifts that God has given you so you can fulfill a unique ministry in the church.
 - So, maybe God has gifted you with listening, asking good questions, and giving wise counsel and one of your ministries is to become a lay counselor here.
 1. Maybe God has gifted you with teaching...and you may have a ministry of helping teach God’s word.
 2. Maybe God has gifted you with project management and administration, and you have a ministry of helping us operate smoothly here so the ministry can thrive.



3. Maybe God has gifted you with creative arts, with music, with design, and you can help us communicate the Word of God in skillful and pleasing ways.
 4. I could go on and on...
- But look at me, each of you have that kind of gift and have that kind of ministry to fulfill in the church!
 1. And every single one of your gifts and your ministry is of critical importance to the church!
 2. There is not one that is better or more important than the other!
 3. And our body cannot thrive unless everyone is seeking to fulfill their ministry.
- iii. **The ministry of the church is not the job of the pastor or the staff.**
- Of course, we do ministry as members of the body but the job of the pastor is to equip you to do the ministry.
 - Paul says in Ephesians 4:12 that the job of the pastor is - *"to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*
 1. You have a gift for the work of ministry here at Grace Hill and the purpose of that gift is to build up this body and this family.
- iv. **So, what is that gift for you and what does it look like for you to fulfill your ministry here as a part of this family?**



V. **#3 - FAMILY MEMBERS CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.**

a. **Read 1 Corinthians 12:25-26.**

- [The word here for concern in the Greek literally means to be anxious about something. It's talking about the members of the body begin anxious about how everyone else is doing.]
- i. **When one part of your body is injured, the other parts of your body compensate.**
 - When your body is healthy but one of its members needs help, the rest of your body rushes to care for and to begin the process of healing.
- ii. In a healthy family and body, not only does each individual take ownership and not only do they each fulfill their specific purpose, but each member of the family also initiates care where care is needed.

b. **Care is something that each person should receive and benefit from in the church.**

- i. But here is what I see as the biggest hindrance to people receiving proper care in the church...it is the belief that the responsibility to provide care rests with only a few people, like the pastors, in the church and it doesn't rest with all of us in the church.
 - We just read here in 1 Corinthians 12:26 that when one member suffers, we all suffer.



- And so, of course the Pastors are specially equipped and give time to care more than others in the church.
 - But caring for one another is the responsibility of the entire body.
- ii. **A healthy church is a church where everyone is empowered to and instinctually initiates care for one another proactively instead of waiting for someone to ask for care and doing so reactively.**
- And obviously, if our ministry philosophy as a church is just centered around the Sunday morning experience and it is not centered around a being a family where each of us are known...this will be impossible.
 1. If we don't put effort towards being known by others and knowing others, how can we care for one another in this way?
- iii. **And so, this is my teaser for you to come back next week.**
- Over the next three weeks, I am going to be talking to us about what God is calling us to do as a family over this next year.
 - And next week, we will be talking about how God is calling us as a family to go deep into the gospel together.
 1. To no longer stay on the surface.
 2. But to be known, to know each other, and help each other grow deeper in our belief, and trust, and joy in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - And I am excited to announce two specific ways that we are going to focus on this over the next year.



VI. CONCLUSION

a. **Last Sunday, we had an all church family meeting where we kicked off a month of prayer together as a church.**

i. We asked everyone who calls this church their church home to take the month of August to ask God to show us how He wants us to contribute to this family over the next year.

- We asked you to pray about membership.
- We asked you to pray about giving.
- We asked you to prayer about serving.

ii. **But above all those things, we said we want to ask God to give each of us a “Your Joy is My Joy” attitude.**

- We see this from Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:3. Where Paul says that what motivates him to serve the churches so sacrificially is that he finds his joy in the joy in his brothers and sisters in Christ.
- I pray that would be true of Grace Hill. That we would be family and each of us would find our joy in our brothers and sisters being joyful.
 1. That we would take ownership of each other’s joy.
 2. That’s when a church truly begins to care for one another...is we take ownership for how one another is doing.
 3. We have a “Your Joy is My Joy” attitude.



b. If you missed that all church family meeting, you can view the video from that meeting on our website and we will also link to it in our Newsletter.

- i. But, Grace Hill...Jesus has purchased us with His blood, He has united us to Himself, and we are now family.
 - Nothing you can do about that.
- ii. So, let's take this month of August and let's pray about what it means to be a part of this family.

VII. PRAY

