

Spiritual People, Share and Shine!

✠ One drink... ✠ One body... ♥ One heart

In the name of Jesus, who sends His dear Holy Spirit on all believers, dear gifted saints of God,

“Where do I fit in?” Everyone asks, but especially conscientious Christians who see how good our gracious God has been to us. By faith we truly want to love Him back. “Here am I! – send me, send me,” we sing. “But where? Where does God want me to serve?” My own struggles becoming a pastor make me extra sensitive and extra grateful for the way God guides and directs our lives of service. I did not plan this for our elections, but by the Lord’s sermon planning this message comes from the great gifts chapter, 1 Corinthians 12, on our Annual Meeting Sunday. To get the point we need to translate verse one more literally, “*Now about spiritual gifts and spiritual people, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.*” (TPA) One of the most encouraging facts is this: Each one gets one – at least one spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit besides the gift of saving faith that makes us Christians in the first place. You can’t see the Spirit any more than you can see the wind. But just as you can see where the wind is blowing, so you can see where the Holy Spirit is blessing. He manifests Himself by giving as He inspired the Apostle Paul to write in verse 7: “*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*” Blessed to be a blessing, **Spiritual People, Share and Shine!** United together we enjoy...

✠ One drink... (vv.12f)

“*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*” “*O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*” “*I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.*” (Psalms 42:1f; 63:1; 143:6 NIV) Our souls would shrivel and die without the Holy Spirit’s thirst-quenching water of life in Word and sacraments. We’re like a deer too scared to “*stoop down and drink and live*” (CW 338:2). In the arid Judean wilderness they understood the body longing for water as when David was fleeing from King Saul. The land cracks with thirst like our souls for the grace and mercy of God. The Corinthians could feel their souls refreshed by the Holy Spirit’s mercy and grace. Gratitude powered by the Gospel and guided by the law of love uses spiritual gifts to build up our fellow Christians with **One drink**.

Ever find yourself longing for **One drink**? Recovering alcoholics know that battle with the bottle. But too long without water makes the whole body think of nothing else. We once convinced our dad to take us hiking across the dunes to the Pacific. He said we wouldn’t make it, but we kids were determined. So we could walk half our time, then turn back. Up one dune, down the next, past that band of bushes, pressing westward as fast as our little legs would go across an endless sea of sand.... Dad was right. Time to turn back. But then we had two problems. Thirst and lost. Fortunately, Dad always knew the way. But nothing could be done about the water until we got back for that **One drink** – fresh and cool.

A band of brothers and sisters we are for Christ. But it’s much closer than that. The dear Holy Spirit uses a picture even little children can understand. Here’s the **body** – that’s us. Here’s the **Head** – that’s Jesus. “*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*” In our Baptism, in hearing God’s Word, in Christ’s Holy Supper we quench our thirsty souls on the water of life.

† **One body...** (vv.14-21)

We feel our differences the more involved we become and especially at election time. Different backgrounds and interests, keeping a job, growing a family – all these are part of the way God made us **One body** with Christ as our Head. *“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason cease to be 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 cease to be 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?”*

God did not design us as one big eye or one big ear. Little children annoyed with each other can pick up and go home. But the body cannot do that. And when Christians don’t get their way, when “my way or the highway” becomes the attitude as in Corinth, body parts sit at home and pout while everyone else suffers. “Where do I fit in?” depends on what gift(s) God has given you. But if you never try to discover them or feel discontented for not having more? One part missing, hurts the whole body.

How would the head get around if the feet didn’t carry it? How would the feet know where to go if the head didn’t tell them? One of my earliest childhood memories is a headless chicken running out from behind the hedge where my father was busy with his hatchet. I shut my eyes, hoping to see no more. But loud squawking kept up until *thwack*, and then silent running feet. Did you know headless chickens run into everything because they have no eyes to see? After that at chicken time, I made sure I was somewhere else. The only thing worse is the body of Christ trying to run without its Head.

“God has arranged 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!’” Congregations need generals and privates. Pastors need Sunday School teachers and elders. Church presidents need cleaners and Board members. And if you ever have to decline when asked to fill a need, please pray for those who have to do extra duty like the good arm that’s not broken. Pray God to fill our needs in this **One body**. Christ’s Church has vital work to reach souls redeemed by His blood.

♥ **One heart...** (vv.26f)

For a long time evolution convinced medicine certain parts were not needed. Appendix, tonsils? “Take ‘em out. Who’ll notice?” Apparently, some people did. “The Bible must be wrong,” experts said. “The brain, not the heart, makes feelings.” But then heart surgeons discovered too many times patients who liked Italian food after their transplant, just like the original owner of the heart. Your little big toe? Have your sons push a refrigerator cart to catch your toes, and you won’t want to take your boot off until the moving is done. Little tooth infected? You feel chest pains like a heart attack. The dentist’s root canal pulls out a tiny infected root to hold up and say, “Here’s your problem” – for the whole body. Other way too. If one part is honored, the whole body beams. A woman complimented for her beautiful face feels the glow through her entire body. The body of Christ, the Christian church, works that way spiritually with **One heart**. Suffer one, suffer all. Rejoice one, rejoice all. **One heart** from God.

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Just because you cannot say, “Yes,” for an election does not make you any less a part of Christ’s body. Even if sin makes us too weak, we come together for refreshment on the **One drink** in the Holy Spirit’s Word and sacrament. You belong in the **One body** of Christ because He chose you to receive His forgiveness by faith. Now He calls you to give thanks by serving your neighbor at home and in the community. When we rejoice with the **One heart** of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray fervently for the Gospel ministry of our church and our synod. Throughout this sermon your heart knew its place and its prime time to pump your blood. In the sin-forgiving, soul-saving blood of Christ you know you belong right here with your fellow body parts. **Spiritual People, Share and Shine!** Amen.