

“TAKE 10”- Worship While Away! (Sunday, January 26, 2025)

Share:

We praise you, God, for the diversity of your body.

**By God’s Spirit, we are one.**

From diverse backgrounds and diverse places,

**by God’s Spirit, we are one.**

From diverse cultures and diverse generations,

**by God’s Spirit, we are one.**

From diverse questions and diverse dreams,

**by God’s Spirit, we are one.**

We celebrate our diversity. We celebrate our unity.

**By God’s Spirit, we are one. Hallelujah!**

Read these words from a hymn:

*Together We Serve*

Together we serve, united by love,  
inviting God’s world to the glorious feast.  
We work and we pray, through sorrow and joy,  
extending your love to the last and the least.

We seek to become, a beacon of hope,  
a lamp for the heart and a light for the feet.  
We learn, year by year, to let love shine through  
until we see Christ in each person we meet.

We welcome the scarred, the wealthy, the poor,  
the busy, the lonely, and all who need care.  
We offer a home, to those who will come,  
our hands quick to help, our hearts ready to dare.

Together, by grace, we witness and work,  
remembering Jesus, in whom we grow strong.  
Together we serve, in Spirit and truth,  
remembering love is the strength of our song.

Read this scripture from worship:

I Corinthians 12:12-31, *The Message*

<sup>12-13</sup> You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you’re still one body. It’s exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which *he* has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

<sup>14-18</sup> I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so? If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, transparent and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

<sup>19-24</sup> But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a *part* of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes *no* difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

<sup>25-26</sup> The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

<sup>27-31</sup> You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body": apostles, prophets, Teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, organizers, those who pray in tongues. But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts.

But now I want to lay out a far better way for you.

Luke 4:14-21, *The Message*

<sup>14-15</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee powerful in the Spirit. News that he was back spread through the countryside. He taught in their meeting places to everyone's acclaim and pleasure.

<sup>16-21</sup> He came to Nazareth where he had been raised. As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place. When he stood up to read, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written, God's Spirit is on me; he's chosen me to preach the Message of good news to the poor, Sent me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the burdened and battered free, to announce, "This is God's time to shine!"

He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the place was on him, intent. Then he started in, "You've just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place."

Talk together:

- ✓ What are the values of both diversity and oneness in the body?
- ✓ How does cooperation among the various parts make a difference?
- ✓ What is the context for I Corinthians 12? Why does Paul share these words?
- ✓ How can Jesus' mission shape the understanding of the church's calling in today's world?
- ✓ Why do you think Jesus' mission provokes both amazement and anger?
- ✓ In what ways might you or our church experience similar reactions when committed to our calling as disciples?
- ✓ How does reliance on the Holy Spirit transform the way we pursue our calling and love our neighbors?
- ✓ How are we true to our mission?

Pray together:

Spirit of the living God, we praise and adore you for empowering us to claim membership within the body of Christ, a gift received through the fullness of your grace. Empower us anew, we pray, with tongues of fire and hearts of love to proclaim the reconciling word among people. Remind us that we are all members of the one body and if one member suffers, we all suffer. May we, as the body of Christ in this place, be the best evidence of your love by declaring and witnessing to this as the year of the Lord's favor for all people. We give thanks that all of us are Christ's body and rejoice in each one being a part of it. Accept our adoration and praise for these great gifts, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen

Resources Used:

*The Message*  
*Call to Worship, PCUSA Worship Companion*  
*Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal*