

# Are YOU a Hand or a Lung?

Sunday 1/27 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 1/28 at 7 PM

Third Sunday after the Epiphany – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today, we are continuing a short series on Paul's first letter to the Christians living in Corinth; Paul was there preaching and teaching around AD 50; then, in AD 55, he wrote 1 Corinthians.

Last week we focused on all believers having the Holy Spirit and showing forth *the fruit of the Spirit* in their lives. We also considered *some extraordinary Spirit-given gifts* – with some still being given today, *while others have been replaced with the NT Scriptures*. Today we continue in **chapter 12** as we focus on *each of us being members of the ONE body of Christ!*

## 1. **The Body of Christ Is Similar to a Human Body:**

- a. We are **all one** in the Body of Christ: <sup>12</sup> **For 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.** <sup>13</sup> **For [by] one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- [whether] Jews or Greeks, [whether] slaves or free-- and all were [given] to drink of one Spirit.** // When we see a human body, we notice that the parts – *head, arms, legs, etc.* – are connected together in that one body, so, with a human body, *it is easy to understand many and yet one!* Now, let us see – *with the eyes of faith* – a similar reality in the body of Christ: When we were dead in sin, *we were separate*; then, when we were baptized into Christ, *we were all given the HS and made members of the body of Christ!*

- b. We belong to the same body: <sup>14</sup> **For the body does not consist of one member but of many.** <sup>15</sup> **If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.** <sup>16</sup> **And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.** // A foot could feel less important than a hand, *but try walking without a foot*; **both** belong to the same body and **both** are needed! As we belong to the same body of Christ, *that body needs our particular God-given functions!*
- c. The body needs many parts: <sup>17</sup> **If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the smelling?** // As God has made our *multi-member human bodies* in fearful and wonderful ways, *so the one body of Christ is a multi-member body!* Think about it like this: **“The body is like a choir or an orchestra, where each singer or musician has an assigned and vital role in producing a pleasing result”** (Concordia Commentary, 447).
- d. God determined our place in the body: <sup>18</sup> **But as it is, God arranged [placed] the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.** <sup>19</sup> **If all [the members] were a single member, where would the body be?** <sup>20</sup> **As it is, there are many parts [members], yet one body.** // Do you feel like a foot, *but wish you were a hand*? If so, *remember that GOD has assigned each position*; then, let us **be** content and **function** well together!
- e. We all need each other within the body: <sup>21</sup> **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.”** <sup>22</sup> **On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to**

**be weaker are indispensable** [necessary],<sup>23</sup> **and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow** [literally, put around] **the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts** [thus our private parts] **are treated with greater modesty,**<sup>24</sup> **which our more presentable parts do not require.** // *Wow, God has it all figured out in the human body!* The more visible parts, like head and hands, may be more honored, but we could not live without our vital organs – *which are hidden*, nor could we have children without our private parts – *to which God has given a special covering.* So the parts of the body of Christ are similar: I preach, *but if the financial secretary team does not do its work behind the scenes*, our congregation will soon close!

- f. God desires unity in the body: **But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it,**<sup>25</sup> **that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.**<sup>26</sup> **If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.**<sup>27</sup> **Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.** // But do we function that way – *as one body*, or more like disconnected members? With suffering, we distribute a weekly prayer list and advertise funerals; so with that info, *how do we suffer together?* By faithfully praying for those on the list and, *if we can*, actually attending in connection with funerals! Rejoicing is similar: As my whole body is rejoicing *to have the congestion out of my lungs*, so when we know that a member of the body of Christ is being honored, *let us also rejoice with that person on their happy occasion!*

## 2. **The Structure of the Body of Christ:**

- a. God's order of positions and gifts: <sup>28</sup> **And God has appointed in the church [thus in the body of Christ] first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.** // Let's break those down: Apostles – were, *for the most part*, with Jesus during His entire ministry and saw Him risen; prophets – were given divine revelations; so apostles and prophets *were unique to the early NT church*. Teachers – thus pastors, *who care for congregations spiritually*. Last week we addressed miracles, healing, and tongues – *see that sermon*. Finally, helping and administering – we are all able to help in some ways *by praying and encouraging*; we also need *good managers* to serve on our *leadership team*!
- b. We are each different, yet part of the same body: The *right answer to each question* is No. <sup>29</sup> **Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?** <sup>30</sup> **Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?** <sup>31</sup> **But earnestly desire the [greater] gifts.** // The one body of Christ has many members, *and each member is different*, but – *as ones who are saved through Jesus* – we are all called to work together for **God's glory** and **the benefit of others**! For ideas on serving, see the **Ways to Serve** brochure!

**This Week's Sermon Challenge:** Think and pray on these questions: (1) What part am I in the body of Christ (hand--*helping*, ear--*listening*, foot--*distributing*, mouth--*speaking*, etc.)? (2) How is God calling me to function as that part?

**Let Us Pray:** Dear H.S., T.Y. for making us members of the Body of Christ! *Help each one of us to function well!* In Jesus' name!

**CONNECT WITH US** → Website: [www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com](http://www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com)  
Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230