

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. For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

They were in the habit of fighting. They were divided in their worship, in their receiving the Lord's Supper. They had divided themselves according to their leaders. I belong to Paul said some. I belong to Appollos said others. I belong to Peter, said still others. And others who certainly knew that God was on their side boasted, I belong to Christ. They were divided in the contributions they brought to worship and to the life of the community. My gift from God is better than yours. You wait on tables, I speak in heavenly tongues. ~~They were divided and every single one knew without a doubt that they were more than any of the others were on God's side. All were certain.~~

For some it had even ceased to be a concern that they were divided, only that they would get their way. I don't need you, I have the Holy Spirit. What need have I of mere mortals when the almighty God has showered his Gifts upon me. Nothing but their demonstrating their gifts, exercising their prerogatives mattered to them. And so their worship life became chaotic, every one seeking only his own pleasure, his own needs.

~~The whole letter to the first Corinthians turns and returns repeatedly to this problem of division within the community. This morning I want to focus our attention on two of the sections of this letter.~~

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you, Paul wrote to them. If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Paul was telling the Corinthians and us that the church is not simply some human organization, a club, a society. You are God's temple, division, party-spirit within God's temple that tears apart that temple will be punished

by God.

We have just finished an annual meeting. Emotions have run high with some of us. Whenever that happens Satan tempts us to carry our hurts with us, letting them become a barrier, a wall, or even a ^{crack} ~~scar~~ within God's temple. Psalm 4 says, be angry, but do not sin. The feelings that we feel when an issue has been emotional for us we feel because God has made us to be feeling people. Not cold stones but people who can love and hate and feel pride and be hurt. within this temple of God, this people in whom the Almighty dwells, we will many times feel competing needs and demands. ~~There will be disagreements, different points of view.~~ But we all seek one thing, that this temple of God may grow and be strengthened, and serve our God who dwells in us.

Sometimes we like the Corinthians get carried away, we begin to see everything in terms of us and them, the good guys and the bad guys. And then we need to hear and remember this warning from God, if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are

What happens in annual meetings is is like what happens to me when I swim after eating. My mind tells my arms and legs to move and sends them oxygen and food to enable them to do so. But at the same time my stomach calls for that same oxygen and food so that it can digest what is in my stomach. Two parts of my body with real needs, both making demands and suddenly I experience pain. Now I can stop for a moment, letting my stomach have what it needs, and then after rest go back to my swimming, or I can fight right through the whole situation, paying no attention to the pain, until my life itself is threatened.

St. Paul says we are a body. Now one who is a hand on that body will not always see things the way one who is a foot will. But as St. Paul says, "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. We are a body, but not just any body. We are the body of Christ.

Each of us as we consider what we do and say and how we deal with one another needs to keep this constantly in mind. It is not some human creation

or institution ~~with~~ with which we deal here, but the very body of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to argue and fight and manipulate one another over issues that have to do with the city or the hospital or the school or the Epw or the Eagles that is one thing but when we tear apart this body we are guilty of crucifying Christ. Therefore as we live out our life in this Christ body our words and actings need to come through prayer, reflecting the love Christ has for each of us.

There has been a lot of depression around lately. As I understand it when people become depressed, their world shrinks smaller and smaller. They become more and more obsessed with themselves, their feelings, their aches and pains, their fears.

This body of Christ has been suffering from depression. We have turned more and more in on ourselves. And the more we think about ourselves, the worse we get.

Why are we here? What is our purpose, our meaning? Why has God given life to this body of Christ?

In our Gospel for today we read these words, "Jesus opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and ~~gave~~ gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus had a mission in this world, bringing good news to the poor and proclaiming release to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty for the oppressed. His mission was not to talk about it but to do it, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

In our world still there are poor without hope, and captives of fear and addiction and political systems, and people blind and oppressed. Christ has his work to do today. And he intends to do it through his body. And that

body you are.

Sometimes I feel like the world is going to hell all around us and we have so little faith in God that we think all that he would give us power to do is to argue about how to arrange the furniture. We have been living out a life of depression, self, self, self constantly on our mind. It is time for a change, here, in this body of Christ.

The poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed, they wait for Christ.
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Max Max&atxwxayxxsf You are the body of Christ. Be his body in this world.