THINKING ABOUT THE BODY

**DATE:**

**TEXT: Romans 12:3-8**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Paul began his thoughts in **chapter 12** by dealing with the individual.

He started off by ***thinking about the believer***. **vs.1&2**

Paul's emphasis there was to get believers to understand that they had an obligation to the Lord to give Him the best of their service and sacrifice.

The rest of this chapter is given over to the individual believer's duty to and place in the whole body of Christ.

As we consider Paul's words in our text this evening we find that there are 3 observations that every believer needs to make concerning where he or she fits in to God's plan for the body of Christ.

Allow me to share those three observations with you now as we move from:

***Thinking About The Believer*** to ***Thinking About The Body***.

**~~~OPENING PRAYER~~~**

 **I. v.3** **WATCH OUR PRIDE IN THE BODY**

The first word of our text refers us back to the first two verses of this chapter.

One of the greatest dangers we face is the sin of pride.

In fact, pride is at the very root of all sin!

How is that possible? Because "***I***" is at the center of pr**i**de!

Also notice that Paul's remarks are not given to an isolated few - but to all believers – ***“to every man”***

Pride is a sin that we all deal with.

Notice the challenge against pride that we are given in - **v. 3**.

**A.** **The Danger We Are To Avoid** –

The danger of pride is a two-fold:

**1.** **Self-Deception** –

The first problem that Paul addresses is that of thinking more of yourself than you ought to think.

***“not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;”***

 I think Paul has in mind those people who tend to look down on other.

→Maybe they think that others aren't as holy as they themselves think they are.

→Maybe they tend to feel that their gifts are superior to those of others.

→Maybe they want to be in control- believing that God has vested them with all the answers to all problems.

Sadly - there are many who think they are "***God's gift to the church***."

Some people actually believe that if they and their talents were removed from the life of the local church - the church would cease to function.

John spoke of a man like this in **III John 9**.

He mentioned a man named Diotrephes, who "***loveth to have the preeminence among them.***"

Too many - like Diotrephes - have forgotten that the church existed before they did and will continue to exist after they are long gone!

The conclusion of the matter is this: every believer is important - but none is essential!

That is - there is a place in the work of God for all the redeemed - but the whole work rests on the shoulders of none!

 When any church or ministry becomes dependent on the gifts and abilities of just one or two individuals - that ministry is in danger and needs a spiritual overhaul!

May we learn the truth of Paul's words in -

**Philippians 2:3-5 – *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”
4 “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”
5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”***

**Self-Deception**

**2.** **Self-Deprecation** –

The opposite end of the spectrum is those folks who display a "***false humility***."

There are the people who when asked to do something in the church say things like - "***I can't do it! I don't have any talents. I don't have any abilities. I can't do anything.***"

If you are saved - there is something you can do!

When the Lord saved us - He gifted you in some area –

**I Corinthians 12:7** – ***“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”***

 It is up to us to find out what that gift is and to get busy using it for the glory of God. (If you’re not sure – ask the Pastor)

To do less is to not walk by faith.

When we adopt this attitude –

→We are saying that the Lord is not capable!

→We are saying that He didn't know what He was doing when He saved and gifted you for service!

I don't think I would want to be guilty of saying that to the Lord!

How about you?

🢣Also in this group are those people who try to downplay what the Lord has gifted them to do.

That is - the Lord will use them in a mighty way and when they are complimented - in a genuine way - they just shrug it off and act like nothing great was done.

This attitude is a lie and a sham! It is false humility!

If the Lord has used your life in a great way - don't deny Him the glory He is due!

When someone comes up and brags on you - just tell them that all the glory belongs to the Lord Who chooses and uses vessels according to His will!

 **The Danger We Are To Avoid**

**B.** **The Decision We Are To Accept** – (end of v.3)

Between these two extremes is the balance we are to strive for.

Paul calls on us to "***think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***"

The word "***soberly***" means "***sanely, intelligently***."

This verse is teaching us that we need to make an honest assessment of what the Lord has done in our lives.

If He has gifted you in an area - do not become puffed up in that gift.

Instead - submit your life to the Lord and allow Him to use that gift for His glory!

If He hasn't gifted you in a particular area - then humbly accept that and use the gifts you do have.

Simply accept the Lord's will for you life as it is revealed - giving Him the glory and yielding yourself completely to His will.

The bottom line here is that we need to be honest about what the Lord has done for us by His grace.

If He has gifted you - just use that gift and let Him have the glory.

 🢣Don't think it makes you better than anyone else.

🢣By the same token - don't assume a position of false humility - by pretending that God isn't doing anything through you.

Both extremes are wrong!

Don't lose sight of Paul's use of the word "***GRACE***" - **vs. 3, 6.**

This word reminds us of two important truths:

**1.)** ***We are all saved by grace***

We got into this thing the same way and we all came from the same place!

We are washed in the same blood.

We are headed to the same Heaven.

We sing the same song.

Regardless of our respective backgrounds -

We are all sinners that God has saved by His marvelous grace - **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

You or I will never be better than any other believer!

***Saved by grace and***

**2.)** ***We are all serving by grace***.

 As Paul said in **I Corinthians 15:10** - ***"But by the grace of God I am what I am."***

If you and I are living the right kind of lives for Jesus Christ - then we will never be any more or any less than He intends us to be.

Whatever gifts - talents - abilities we have are ours by His grace and are to be used for His glory.

They were not given to us so that we could exalt ourselves - but that we might be able to live for God – honor Jesus and glorify the Father.

God's grace - active in the life of the believer - is that which equalizes us one with the other.

God decides what we do and to what extent we do it.

Therefore - He leaves us no room for the exercise of foolish pride in the arena of our walk with Him.

**I.** **Watch Our Pride in the Body**

**II. vs. 4-5** **WATCH OUR PLACE IN THE BODY**

Paul's next objective is to teach the individuals that they should use their respective gifts for the good of the whole body of Christ.

**A. v. 4** **Understand The Image** –

Paul draws our attention to the human body to illustrate what he is about to teach.

 Paul reminds us of what a complex creation the human is.

Our bodies are made up of trillions of cells - over 200 bones - over 600 muscles and other specialized systems that cause us to be able to live and function.

The body is very diverse - but it is the perfect picture of unity.

No part in the body tries to take the office that belongs to another. (Do the function of the other)

Each part simply does its intended duty and as a result - the entire body is able to live - function and enjoy life.

***SOME FACTS ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY***

**1.** 7.5 trillion cells. More complex than the most advanced computer.

**2.** Each cell has 200 trillion tiny groups of atoms called protein molecules.

**3.** Largest molecule is called DNA. Carries hereditary information from the parents to the offspring. Also carries genetic code. It determines if you will be a man or a mammoth.

**4.** DNA in one cell is 6 feet long. Total DNA in body would fill a box the size of an ice cube, but if it were joined together, it would reach to the sun and back 400 times.

 **5.** All our cells contain the information found in all the other cells. Each cell in your body carries all the necessary information for another you.

**6.** If the coded DNA information and instructions of one human were translated into English, it would fill a 1000 volume encyclopedia.

**7.** In cell division the cell forms a rotating double -helix. It rotates at 75 turns per second. This is equal to straightening out a cathedral full of tangled microphone wire in under a split-second. Yet, the cells duplication is so accurate that it is equivalent to a rate of less than one letter for an entire set of Encyclopedia Britannica.

Paul appeals to the human body as a grand example of diversity and unity.

He wants his readers to see that the same unity of design and purpose is to exist within the body of Christ. (The Church)

That is the idea he turns to in **verse 5**.

**Understand The Image**

**B. v. 5a** **Understand The Individuality** –

He begins by reminding us that we are individuals.

We are saved individually and we are gifted by God individually - **I Corinthians 12:4-11**.

We are special to God as individual persons.

 Let us never be ashamed of who we are as an individual in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He loved you! He died for you! He saved you!

He has a special place in His body just for you!

Therefore - we must never try to force someone else to conform to our idea of what a Christian should be!

God has some strange people in His family - but each one of them is important to what the Lord is doing.

**Understand The Image**  **Understand The Individuality**

**C. v. 5b** **Understand The Integration** –

While the body is made up of many components -they all function together seamlessly!

When my eyes see something it wants to investigate closer - the hand responds by reaching out and lifting the object.

When I want to move from one location to another –

My feet and body respond by moving in the chosen direction.

There is a wonderful integration and cooperation within the human body.

This is the kind of seamless integration and cooperation that should exist within the body of Christ.

 Sadly - many believers have come to believe that they can get along just as well without other believers.

If someone is just a little different - we allow them no place in our idea of what a believer is and we refuse to cooperate with them.

(By the way - I am not referring to compromising doctrinal standards for the sake of unity!)

We are to be a body - but one distinct truth about the body is that every cell in my body possesses the same DNA!

Just as every true believer in the body of Christ possesses the DNA of spiritual life: The Holy Spirit –

**Romans 8:9 – *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”***

Since that is true - every genuine believer will accept certain fundamentals of the faith and will be identifiable as a child of God!

Again - we can turn our attention to the human body to see these ideas pictured for us.

**I Corinthians 12:14-26** gives us a humorous illustration using the human body to speak of the body of Christ.

While our bodies are one whole - they are made up of individual parts that do specialized tasks from which the whole body benefits.

 Our human bodies are a marvel of individuality and harmony.

Every part has a duty and all parts come together for the good of the whole.

None are unimportant and none should be left out!

The body of Christ is no different! (The Church)

Every member has been gifted in some area or another.

We must isolate that gift - use it for the glory of God and refuse to try and take to ourselves a gift that we have not been given.

Do what God gifted you to do and leave others to do what He gifted them to do!

Don't be jealous of what the grace of God has produced in the life of another believer! Rather rejoice!

**I.** **Watch Our Pride in the Body**

**II.** **Watch Our Place in the Body**

**III. vs. 6-8** **WATCH OUR PERFORMANCE IN THE** **BODY**

Just as we are to find our niche in the body of Christ -

We are also to carry out our duty to Him in the correct fashion.

Paul closes this section by teaching us how to do just that!

 **A. v. 6a** **Our Call** –

This verse reminds us of what we have just been talking about.

When we were saved - we all received The Gift!

That's right - at the moment of conversion you received the Holy Spirit and with Him –

You also received your gifts to use in the body of Christ.

Therefore - there is no need for you to come to God and pray for the Holy Spirit - or for any gift from the Spirit.

You got all of God that you are ever going to get.

The question is whether or not God’s going to get all of you?

What you do need to do is to ask the Lord to show us the gifts He has given us - so that He can use us in that area for which He gifted us.

By the way - if you walk in humble submission to the Lord -He will reveal His gift to you by giving you opportunity to exercise that gift for His glory.

Your duty is simply to be what the Lord saved you to be!

**Our Call**

**B. vs. 6b-8a** **Our Condition** –

In these verses Paul mentions some of the spiritual gifts the Spirit of God gives to the church.

 Some of the other lists of gifts are also found in –

**I Corinthians 12:28-31**

**Ephesians 4:11-12**

**I Peter 4:10** ***– “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”***

There are many gifts given to the church.

Here Paul speaks of those that relate to **Expounding the Word of God** - **vs. 6b-8a**;

And those that relate to **Expanding the Work of God**, **v. 8b**.

Of course - none of these lists are exhaustive!

God gifts people for many different tasks in the body of Christ.

Paul's idea is that we should seek to determine that gift that we have been given and then we should ***consecrate*** that gift to the Lord. (To dedicate somebody or something to a particular purpose)

We should wait on Him to open the doors.

We should wait on Him to give the opportunities for service.

When and how God uses us is His business.

Being available and willing to be used of Him is ours!

 **Our Call**  **Our Condition**

**C. v. 8b** **Our Caution** –

The last part of **v. 8** deals with our attitude as we use the gifts.

We must always be cautious that we do it the Lord's way only.

He mentions three gifts: ***giving, ruling and showing mercy***.

Then - he tells how these gifts are to be administered.

I believe that these three statements can be applied across the board to the exercise of all spiritual gifts.

Paul says that our gifts are to be used with ***simplicity, diligence and cheerfulness***.

It might do us good to investigate these three words before we stop this evening.

**1.** **Simplicity** –

This is a word that means - "**with sincerity; free from mental pretense and hypocrisy.**"

In other words whether it be giving or any other exercise of the spiritual gifts - it must be done with a pure heart.

Let us minister for Jesus without thoughts of self.

We should serve Him for His glory not for personal gain!

 **2.** **Diligence** –

This word means - "***With haste (Ill. Our word "speed" comes from this word!) and earnestness striving after something.***"

This refers to seeing the urgency of the moment and reaching out with the best of our ability to make a difference in the lives of others while there is time.

**3.** **Cheerfulness** –

This word means "***with excited joy and readiness of mind.***"

We get the English word "***hilarious***" from this word.

Being allowed to exercise our gifts in the service of God should fill our hearts with unbridled joy and excitement.

That is the idea: serving God from an excited heart.

Going to church because you want to!

Witnessing because you want to.

Serving Jesus - in your area of giftedness because you are excited about being all the Lord wants you to be!

**CONCLUSION:**

As we think about the Body of Christ this evening –

I wonder how well we are filling out the places we have been called on to fill.

 As you listened this evening - did the Spirit of God touch your heart and say, "***Right there is where you need work!***"?

Maybe it is in the arena of pride or false humility.

Maybe you haven't been exercising your spiritual gifts as you should.

Maybe you haven't even discovered you area of giftedness.

Maybe you have been trying to take someone else's place in the body of Christ.

Maybe you have been doing your job - but with a wrong attitude.

You know if there is a need - and if there is – you can bring it to Jesus right now.

Will you do that?

The altar is always open, won’t you come.

**INVITATION**