

Theme: The Church becomes a beautiful community of diversity as we embrace each other with our different gifts, experiences, ethnicities, and backgrounds and submit to God's Word together.

I. Intro - A Symphony vs One Instrument

- A. Symphony - sound together; now refers to orchestral
- B. One instrument can be beautiful - but it is limited
- C. A richness that comes from different instruments, vocalists blending harmoniously together
- D. The Church is called to be like an orchestra or symphony, not just a solo instrument

II. The Source of Diversity - The Trinity

- A. A passage about diversity
 - ⁴ There are **different** kinds of **gifts**, but the same Spirit.
 - ⁵ There are **different** kinds of **service**, but the same Lord.
 - ⁶ There are **different** kinds of **working**, but the same God works all of them in all men. 1 Corinthians 12:4–6
- 1. Paul is stressing different kinds of spiritual gifts
- 2. Different (3x), gifts, service, working
- 3. He then shows various manifestations of the Spirit
Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit 1 Corinthians 12:7–9
 - a. Another title for gifts - manifestation of the Spirit
 - b. Manifestation given to 'each one' - and differently

- c. A list of varied manifestations/gifts
- 4. The example of the body (and the Church)
Now the body is not made up of one part but of many... ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 1 Corinthians 12:14, 19–20
 - a. One body - but many, varied parts
 - b. If everything was the same, it is not a body!
 - c. One body - but many diverse parts
 - d. Every single part is needed for the body to be healthy and to function well

B. The source of diversity is the Trinity

- ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same **Spirit**.
 - ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same **Lord**.
 - ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same **God** works all of them in all men. 1 Corinthians 12:4–6
1. Spirit, Lord (Jesus), and God (the Father) - Trinity
 2. Notice the Trinitarian structure - different and same
 - ⁴ There are **different** kinds of gifts, but the **same** Spirit.
 - ⁵ There are **different** kinds of service, but the **same** Lord.
 - ⁶ There are **different** kinds of working, but the **same** God works all of them in all men. 1 Corinthians 12:4–6
 3. The reason for the diversity of gifts in the Church is because our God is the Holy Trinity, One God eternally existent as Three Persons.

4. The Trinity is also the reason for the healthy diversity in the Church, the Body of Christ.
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**.¹³ 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...¹⁸ But in fact **God** has arranged the parts in the **body**, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 1 Cor 12:12–13, 18
 - a. Another Trinitarian reference - Christ, Spirit, God
 - b. The reason for the diversity in the body is so that it is a reflection of the Trinity.
 - c. This is true not only of the human body but also the Body of Christ, the Church.
5. The Trinity is the source of all reality, so we should expect to see unity and diversity, the one and the many throughout creation, including the Church.

III. The Church: The Beautiful Community of Unity and Diversity

- A. The application - the Church is called to unity & diversity
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.¹³ 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...²⁷ Now you are **the body of Christ**, and **each one of you is a part** of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 27
 1. Unity - unit, one body (2x), one Spirit (2x), body of Christ
 2. Diversity - many parts, parts are many, all, Jews or Greeks, slave or free, each one of you is a part

3. The Church must walk in and display both unity and diversity.
4. The unity of the Church is found in us holding to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, our common experience of the Gospel and the Spirit, and the way we are willing to give up our 'rights' to serve the needs of others in the church.
5. The Church becomes a beautiful community of diversity as we embrace each other with our different gifts, experiences, ethnicities, and backgrounds and **submit to God's Word together**.
6. The diversity of the Church is found in the fact that we come from different 'tribes' and backgrounds, and therefore are diverse in our perception and practice of gifts, ministry, and culture.
7. A healthy, beautiful local church will express both unity and diversity, and will not be built upon the distortions of either uniformity or chaos.
 - a. Uniformity - everyone is so similar no real diversity is allowed
 - b. Chaos - no real unity of the faith; we believe and practice what we want rather than what God's Word teaches

- B. We must work hard to welcome diversity in the church
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!"²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 1 Corinthians 12:21–22, 25–26

1. This seems nonsensical when thinking of the human body - but Paul brings it up because it was happening in the church in Corinth
2. There is an ever-present danger that we will reject the diverse parts that God adds to the body.
3. We usually do not outright reject diverse parts that God has brought to us, rather we simply do not have 'equal concern' for them and do not rejoice and suffer with them.
4. But this communicates to them that we value uniformity over true unity and diversity, and personal preferences and comfort over the beautiful community of diversity.
5. This especially requires the 'stronger parts' to be willing to sacrifice to make sure the 'weaker parts' (those without power and position) are valued, honored, and given greater influence.
6. To be the beautiful community of diversity will require hard work, now and until Christ returns.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Diversity in 2020

1. This year presents major challenges for the church to embrace diversity - differing responses to the coronavirus and the extent of ongoing racism and how to address it
2. Our culture increasingly encourages simply reducing our contact with those with whom we disagree, harshly judging them, and lobbing verbal Molotov cocktails at them and their beliefs.

3. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart.* We are clustering on social media, the news media we consume, and even in physical neighborhoods - attempting to establish uniformity rather than living with the tension of diversity.
4. But in the universe flowing out of the life of the Trinity health and thriving requires diversity, not uniformity.
5. It is especially important that the evangelical Church rise up and embrace racial diversity in this day.
 - a. I firmly believe we missed this opportunity in the 1960's with Dr. King, and we were therefore banished to another generation in the wilderness.
 - b. I believe if the evangelical church does not answer the call this time it may lead to our utter marginalization and contribute to a deathly breakdown in our culture.

B. Am I working to embrace diversity?

1. Uniformity and chaos are easy to achieve but unity with true diversity is hard work!
2. True diversity requires a willingness to listen, to assume the best about the other person's motives, words, and actions, and the willingness to embrace our differences as a strength rather than resisting them as a problem.
3. Beautiful diversity does not just happen because we are "open" to it. Because of our sinful tendencies, it will have to be intentionally pursued.
4. Beautiful diversity will require intentionally reaching out to build relationships with people of different ethnicities, experiences, backgrounds, and views.

5. Do I realize true health and beauty REQUIRE diversity, both in my personal life and at BRCC?
6. Am I praying for BRCC to be a place of beautiful diversity in ethnicity, gifts, backgrounds, and viewpoints?
7. When tensions arise because of diversity am I willing to patiently pray, talk, and work through them - or do I just avoid the person?

C. A prayer for a beautiful community of diversity

The Beautiful Community - Diversity

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

July 5, 2020

Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Teaching keywords: Church; Trinity; spiritual gifts

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13

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⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:4–7