

“So, What About... The Holy Spirit?”

Part 7: Can I be unique and also belong?

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 - [watch online](#)

Summary: There is something beautiful and powerful that happens when we realize God created us as unique individuals. But the Holy Spirit wasn't given just so individuals could experience God on their own. The Holy Spirit is creating a community whose unity is as unique as the individuals who form it.

Main points:

03:07 We often view the Holy Spirit through a mix of western individualism and tribalism.

04:14 The Holy Spirit transforms YOU and ME into an inexplicable WE.

06:35 The Holy Spirit makes individual Jesus Followers into unique members of the same body.

07:15 Forced uniformity is a product of broken humanity. Unique unity is a product of the Holy Spirit.

08:30 The Holy Spirit eclipses the significance of our differences.

09:17 In the Body of Christ, unity isn't based on shared beliefs but on a shared indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

09:56 Jesus Followers are more deeply united to each other than they are to any other group.

11:19 We cannot be the Body of Christ alone.

14:23 In the Body of Christ we are all connected.

17:30 The unity of a diverse Church displays the Kingdom of God to a divided world.

This week's practice... 15:06

Read:

Gal 3:26-28

Pray:

Holy Spirit, help me see my primary identity in the Body of Christ.

Connect...

- Prioritize gatherings
- Commit to a Connect Group
- Join an Alliance (1:1)
- Text another JF and see how they are doing

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you in this week's message?
2. Jon said, "The Holy Spirit eclipses the significance of our differences." Where have you (or haven't you) seen this play out? What was the result?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 and Galatians 3:26-28. What is encouraging about these passages for you personally? Challenging?
4. Part of our goal this week is to "connect." What do you think the difference is between simply getting together with others and connecting as the Body of Christ? Are there ways you can better connect in your life's rhythm?
5. How can you group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

IN: Unique. Something about that word that I think most of us gravitate toward.

- Unique experiences, unique tastes, unique personality.
- We love the idea of being unique individuals.

But there's a dark side to this quest of unique individuality...

- Can often lead to self-centered tendencies even subtle/and not so subtle narcissism.

But what's the alternative just uniformity/group think... everyone thinking/doing/looking the same...

Nope... there's something so much better... It's something only the HS can do... so, let's talk about it together.

WE: There is something profound/powerful about knowing we are all unique individuals.

- **Fred Rogers:** "You are a very special person. There is only one like you in the whole world. There's never been anyone exactly like you before, and there will never be again. Only you. And people can like you exactly as you are."

And this idea... the importance of the individual was central in the teachings of Jesus

- Leaving the 99 for the one
- Sparrows and hairs. (Luke 12:6-7)

Western society took this idea and ran w/ it...

- Humanism of 15th/16th cent.
- Which led to the Age of Enlightenment...
 - Where got ideas such as- individual humans rights... life... liberty... property. Free speech

Led to some awesome effects (slavery abolished/women/children rights)...

But the danger is when this focus on the individual becomes the ultimate good/goal... we become our own idols... we start worshiping ourselves and whatever makes us unique... our identity becomes self-focused/narcissistic.

If we are all autonomous individuals pursuing our best lives now... sooner or later we are going to run into other people trying to do the same thing...

People stop being other unique images of God and become either tools to get us what we want or obstructions keeping us from what we want

- And to stay happy we have to remove these obstacles by cutting them out/or taking them out.

So to protect our individual best lives we turn to tribalism... joining w/ like minded people in an echo chamber who reinforce what we think is best... and we might give up some of our individuality for uniformity in order to fit in but it's really about self-preservation.

And b/c of this ingrained view of the world... **We often view the HS through a mix of western individualism and tribalism.**

I know that can seem like a simplified generalization... but it's a common thread for much of the American church.

When we talk about the HS it's either... fill me/lead me/heal me/give me

Or it's... Come HS fill this place... give us an experience...

- HS convict THEM of the sins my group disagrees w/
- Come flood this nation... so that people who believe/think/look/talk like me (the holy ones) can be in power.

There is something so much bigger/better/more beautiful than ultra-individualism or tribalism available to all of us...

If you remember... "The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give life to a new people who will show the world the life Jesus offers."

So as we take a turn in this series from focusing on how the HS interacts w/ us as individuals... to what it means to be the NEW PEOPLE of God TOGETHER

We need a good foundation... **The Holy Spirit transforms YOU and ME into an inexplicable WE.**

GOD: Paul explains in 1st letter to Corinthians Date: 53-54 AD

Diverse/Economic Center: Port city... lots of temples to Greek/roman gods

Lived there for about 1.5 yrs (Acts 18)... Leaves to start other communities of JF's...

Get's word things are not going well... a lot of problems... So Paul writes them a letter.

One of the problems: people having all these different intense spiritual experiences in gatherings...

- Getting crazy/disorganized free for all...
- Some saying their gift better than others...
- They are the unique individual...

He talks about different gifts from the HS (coming in a few weeks) saying they all come from the same HS... and while addressing this, Paul says something fundamental about the role of the HS.

1 Cor. 12:12 Might seem pretty straightforward but lets spend just a couple seconds thinking this through.

Is your hand part of your body? Yes. What if it's amputated? Would you call it your body?

Now, if all our parts are separated (gross I know) that wouldn't really be a body anymore... it'd be a macabre scene of dead limbs.

It takes all the parts together to make the body... but no part alone is THE body.

They are different/unique... but they are that way for the good of the whole body.

Each part is connected to the other parts... and it is together they make up the whole body.

Paul says... So it is w/ the body of Christ- a metaphor Paul likes to use when talking about the Church. The community of JF's.

The HS makes individual JF's into unique members of the same body.

But what does that really look like...

Isn't this just like tribalism... giving up our individual identities to fit into the group?

- Some treat it that way
- Maybe you grew up in a religious environment that made you feel you need to conform or you were out.
- No questions/no doubts/no unique individuality
- Why you left...
- That wasn't what Jesus had in mind for his Church...

- Forced uniformity is a product of broken humanity... Unique unity is a product of the HS.

12:13 Jew/Gentile - Slave/Free the main distinctions/divisions of their culture.

Describe yourself- I'm a Free Roman Citizen.

We have similar distinctions...black/white/brown - rich/middle class/poor

But we've added more... liberal/conservative - rep/dem - Urban/rural/suburban - Baby boomer/Gen X/Millennial/GenZ

And Paul is saying we don't ignore those differences... The HS doesn't take away our individuality/uniqueness.

But the NEW he makes us into completely overshadows the significance of those differences.

In the body of Christ **The HS eclipses the significance of our differences.**

Not in the sense you are no longer black/white...

You still stay you... BUT JF's have a new PRIMARY identity- a member of the body of Christ.

HOW? We have all been baptized by the HS.

- Not talking about a separate experience of speaking in tongues/etc.
- Also not saying receive the HS when get baptized

The moment someone decides to transfer their trust/allegiance from themselves to Jesus (whatever individual process looks like) the HS comes into them/washes over them... makes them new.

- Baptizes them into the people of God.

In the Body of Christ, unity isn't based on shared beliefs but on a shared indwelling of the HS.

No matter where you come from, what language you speak, who your parents were, how much you have/don't have, who you voted for...

If JF, you are NOW a member of the body of Christ... b/c the HS is in you.... Sealed/Marked/Baptised you.

And when the significance of our differences are gone they no longer have the power to divide.

There are quite a few implications if we take this seriously. Here are 3...

1st: JF's are more deeply united to each other than they are to any other group.

If you are a member of body of Christ you have more in common w/...are more deeply united to other members of the Body than you are to those who

- Vote/Look/Speak/Love/Live the same
- Live in the same country
- Even have same last name (Don't worry not getting culty)

Tim Suttle- "...what it means to be a human being, as human was intended by God, will only become clear as we find our lives and identities in this new community."

When the world sees JF's united even though they have the same differences the rest of the world divides over... they will see the reality of the KoG... a people united in/for/through the true King.

They will see a community that is not just a picture of the KoG, but is literally living in the kingdom of God now and bringing it to those around them.

2nd: We cannot be the Body of Christ alone.

We have to be connected to the rest of the body.

What do you call an amputated hand that's trying to exist on its own?

- Dead and gross.
- Don't be gross.

Gordon Fee- *Though entered individually, salvation is seldom ever thought of simply as a one-on-one relationship with God. While such a relationship is included, to be sure, "to be saved" means especially to be joined to the people of God.*

Listen carefully... I'm not trying to get you to attend more church services... (though it wouldn't hurt... in most cases.)

I am saying to be part of the Body of Christ every individual JF needs to purposely and consistently meet with other JF's, gathered as the Church.

- Gathering for a church service is good. I know they aren't for everybody.
- A small group of JF's supporting each other... being in each others life regularly is even better (CG's)
- Having another JF who supports you/loves you/knows you is part of that (Alliances)
- And b/c of modern technology it's even easier (My Zoom guys)

Maybe you feel like you just aren't experiencing the HS in your life... are you purposely making yourself a part of the community he has created for you to experience him in?

Have you prioritized your schedule to be with a community of JF's? You're designed to experience the HS in this way.

"But people are annoying"... yes you are. That's why this kind of unity needs the HS and is proof that the HS is at work

So the idea that "my church is being alone in nature" simply doesn't make any sense...

- The Church is the *community*.

We really need to change language... We do not "go to church" we "gather as the church."

- Parents: Stop saying we're going to church... say we are going to go be with our church.

When the world sees the Body of Christ united together, learning to live with each other, bear each other's burdens, forgiving each other, and accepting each other...

They will see a community that is not just a picture of the KoG, but is literally living in the KoG now and bringing it to those around them.

3rd: In the Body of Christ we are all connected.

When our feet are out of whack it hurts our back.

When one part is weak/hurting/injured the others can't help but pay attention to it, compensate for it...

It is the same w/ the Body of Christ.

When one member is hurting, we all hurt. When one member needs extra attention/care we all do what needs to be done to help/comfort.

When the world sees the body of Christ caring for each other despite their differences...

They will see a community that is not just a picture of the KoG, but is **literally living in the KoG now and bringing it to those around them.**

YOU: So as we start looking at what it means to be a community filled with/led by HS... living in the KoG now...

Read: Gal 3:26-28

Pray: Holy Spirit, help me see my primary identity in the Body of Christ.

Connect:

- Prioritize gatherings
- Commit to a CG
- Join an Alliance
- Text another JF and see how they are doing

Not sure about “Church”

Remember, no expression of the Body of Christ is perfect... we are already not yet

But you are invited to join a community that accepts you and loves you b/c you are created in God's image.

A community that isn't united around ideology, preferences, dogmatic beliefs or cultural biases

But is united around/in/and through the love of Jesus ... the God who lived, died, and rose to restore us to himself.

WE: Jesus didn't give us the HS just so individual JF's could have some help in their individual lives

He doesn't call us to follow him in order to lose what makes us unique...

He doesn't give us the HS so that we can conform to some preformed mold.

He made us individually unique on purpose... and he uses that uniqueness to make one body... Where we can use our differences on purpose to love the world.

B/c when that body is united it brings the KoG to earth now.

The unity of a diverse Church displays the KoG to a divided world.

Next week: How we can live in unity. Ephesians 4&5

Communion- 1 Cor 10:16-17