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## JESUS WORKS THROUGH US

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### Part 10 of Jesus Loves His Church

Pastor Mark Driscoll | August 23, 2012

### THANK YOU

Alright. Jesus works through us. This is going to be awkward. Most of you who serve do so quietly, humbly. You don't want to be recognized, so go ahead and stand if you serve in any capacity at Mars Hill Church: usher, greeter, set up, tear down, Community Group leader, Redemption Group leader, kids' ministry, offering counter, usher, steward. Can you guys say thank you? Thank you, thank you, thank you. Alright, you can have a seat since I've embarrassed you.

Every Sunday at Mars Hill Church, we hold thirty-some services across four states, fourteen locations. Just on the weekends alone, we have anywhere, depending upon the weekend, from one thousand to maybe as many as two thousand people who are volunteering on what's supposed to be their day off, showing up to serve us. That's good, right? We appreciate that and so we want to publicly say thank you.

And that fits in to today's topic that ultimately, Jesus works through us. That's how he gets his work done. So we'll be in 1 Corinthians 12. Go ahead and find that on your app or in your Bible, and we're going to look at a letter that a pastor named Paul wrote to a church, talking about how God works through his people.

### WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST

His first big idea is this, that we are the body of Christ, and here's how the Apostle Paul says it. First Corinthians 12:12, "For just as the body." I've got to stop right there. This is Paul's analogy, his metaphor, for the church. It's actually his favorite metaphor for the church in the whole New Testament. Sometimes the church is described as a family, sometimes as the bride of Christ, sometimes like a military unit marching against sin and Satan, and here, we see Paul's favorite metaphor: the church is like a body.

This is an amazingly appropriate analogy because it's cross-cultural, it spans time, it always works. When you're a parent, let's say, with a kid, one of the first things you start to teach the kid is their parts. Nose, nose, nose. Ear, ear, ear. Eye, whoop, ouch. Right? You teach the kids the body parts, and Paul uses the analogy of the body because it's familiar to everybody, everywhere.

I read this; it said in this commentator's work on 1 Corinthians, he says our body has 206 bones, 650 skeletal muscles, and 210 types of cells. I know, that's amazing. When the psalmist says that we're fearfully and wonderfully made, what he's talking about is the way that God has intricately orchestrated our body is magnificent, and all that has to happen for us to even do simple tasks is absolutely mind-blowing.

I know some of you will say, "Oh, I'm pre-med and you've got your numbers wrong." Look, I know. I went to a really bad school where the valedictorian couldn't even spell "valedictorian." I'm just telling you what I read in a book, and my big idea is this: that all of the systems in the body working together, it's amazingly complex and simple things like me being able to communicate to you, you being able to hear and process information while seeing the sermon, all of that is a series of amazingly intricate interworkings among parts of the body.

And so he says that a church is like that. It's like our body, and sometimes we don't know that our body is so magnificently created until something's not working. Amen? Or it's not working appropriately. A little ache, a little pain, a little failure, and all of a sudden you realize the way everything really is interconnected and one thing affects everything. So, you twist your ankle, then your knee hurts, then your hip hurts, and then all of a sudden you can't sleep, and now all of a sudden your neck is out of alignment and your whole life is ruined because you twisted your ankle, because everything is very connected and interworking together. And that's Paul's point as he talks about the body, that everyone has to be working together like the parts in a body.

"For just as the body is one and has many members." I'll stop again. When he's talking about the members, this is what we mean at Mars Hill Church by membership. Some of you say, "Oh, I don't believe in membership." Well, it's not like membership in American Express where you get a discount on certain things. The way it works in our church is membership is membership in the body. And when he's talking about members, he's talking about fingers, and toes, and arms, and legs, and ears, and eyes, and nose, and there are different members, different parts of the body.

So our membership class, which we invite you to and the lead pastors will tell you about, it is an invitation to become a part of the body. Not just getting a privileged position in the org chart, but getting a job description and something to do. That's what it means to be a member of our church.

And some will wonder, "Is membership biblical?" Well, I was reading this book called the Bible and it says that the church is to have what? Members. So, we have members of the church. Christians who are owning the mission of Mars Hill Church and saying, "I have these abilities and I want to serve in this way, and I believe this is my part in the body, working with my brothers and sisters for the forward progress of the gospel of Jesus."

"Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body." Everybody's got to work together. What we can't have is single-issue

voters saying, "I only care about my thing." We need to care about everything. We can't even say, "I only care about my Community Group, or my service, or my local church." We also need to care about the whole.

I had a very sad conversation not long ago. I had someone from one Mars Hill church say, "Well, I don't care about that Mars Hill church." That's like a brother and a sister saying, "Well, I don't care about that other kid in the family." Well, you should. You have the same Father, you're part of the same family. I said, "Don't you recognize that the church you say you don't care about, that's the church that planted the church that you're in? Those are the people who sent the leaders and the dollars so that the church you say you love could come into existence." "Oh, I didn't know that." Okay, well, you need to understand that everybody is participating, and giving, and serving, and you've been blessed and now you're to be a blessing.

And so yes, we want you to love your friends and beyond. We want you to love your Community Group and beyond. We want you to love your service and beyond. We want you to love your church and beyond, and to love all that is Mars Hill Church. To love all that is Mars Hill Church, not just your ministry, not just your area of specialization, but to appreciate the entirety of what God's doing at our church. And so he's saying it's one body, right? We're all in it together.

"So it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized." And the baptism of the Spirit is the moment at which you become a Christian. He's talking here not about water baptism but Spirit baptism, and this is when you're a non-Christian and the Holy Spirit comes and brings the message of Jesus. God became a man, he lived without sin, he went to the cross and died in our place for our sins, he forgives our sin, he connects us to the life of God, he saves us. His name is Jesus.

When that awakens in you, that's evidence that the Holy Spirit has brought new life and new birth in you, so now God is your Father and the church is your family, and you're connected to your brothers and sisters. And God has apportioned for you some contribution to make for the health, and wellness, and the forward progress of the church, the benefit of the whole family.

And what he's saying is our unity is around our diversity. To be the church means there is unity but not uniformity, that there is diversity, but there need not be division. If we're all just trying to see people meet Jesus, and see churches get planted, and see the church become glorious to the glory of God, then we're all working together to make this the best possible church in the grace of God that it can be.

And so he talks about Jews, and Greeks, and slave, and free, and let me say, in the ancient world, there was great hostility between these groups. They didn't get along at all. The slaves and free? They didn't like each other. How many slaves love their slave master? How many slave masters have close friendships with their slaves, treating them as peers and equals? It didn't happen. There was animosity. There was hostility.

Jews and Greeks, or Gentiles, they didn't get along either. There was actually some who would say that if a Gentile woman was giving birth, and she was in the midst of, let's say, hemorrhaging and miscarrying, that it would be wrong for a Jewish person to even assist in the birth because you would be bringing another Gentile upon the earth, and the goal was to let her and the child die.

You're talking great animosity, great hostility between people groups. This is not unlike racism in the South in the '50s and '60s. This is not unlike the kind of genocide that's still practiced in some countries, where groups absolutely racially or culturally are so divided that they hate one another.

Yet, here's what happens. When Jesus comes, he makes a new humanity. It's no longer male and female, and slave and free, and Jew and Greek. What it is is Christian. Those who are now forgiven of sin, adopted into the family of God, and they are the church. And in the church, there's this new third race, there's this new humanity, there's this new category for people.

And all of a sudden, what they previously identified themselves as: male, female, Jew, Gentile, slave, free, rich, poor, young, white, black, old, Democrat, Republican, PhD, GED; whatever it was, all of that becomes secondary and what becomes primary is Jesus loves me, Jesus loves you, we're the church, we're in it together. We're like a family. We can have unity without uniformity. We can have unity around our diversity, and our diversity need not lead to division.

What that means is in a church like ours, we are the body of Christ, and there will be a lot of different kinds of people: races, cultures, classes, backgrounds, experiences, and interests, and we'll be a weird, odd, strange group. And when people look at the church and they ask, "What brings you all together? You guys have nothing in common." Jesus is alive and he loves all of us, and he made us a family.

And because of his love, we want to work together to be the best family we can be, and we want to invite other people to get to know Jesus and join our family. Amen? All other causes need to go to the side. The cause of Jesus has to always be the highest priority.

And he says this is all done by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes you a Christian, makes me a Christian. The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit empowers us for ministry. The Holy Spirit keeps us focused on the mission of Jesus, and that is his goal.

### ***Greater Works***

Now, let me say this: Jesus predicted this would happen. In this amazing line in John 14, Jesus says, you know, "I've come to do the Father's work," and he says, "I'm going to leave and you're going to do greater works than me." What does that mean? I mean, how many of you really feel like, "Yeah, Jesus' resume is pretty good, but I think I can top that." Right? "I think I can top that. I'm going to cast out demons, you know, water ski without a boat, rise from death, et cetera." There's no way.

So what does he mean, "You're going to do greater works than me"? I don't think he's in any way saying that we're going to do anything greater than atone for the sin of the world, but I think what he's saying is that when he came, he came in a physical body. Jesus is eternally God, second member of the Trinity, he comes down from heaven, he takes upon himself human flesh, he adds to his divinity humanity. God becomes a man, but then he assumes the limitations of a physical body.

When he was in his physical body on the earth, he couldn't be everywhere. He had to be in the place that he was, Galilee, or Jerusalem, or going through Samaria, wherever he happened to be. He couldn't talk to every single person on the planet because of the limitations of the physical body. Well, you can only be in one place at one time. He also got tired and

he couldn't be working twenty-four hours a day. He couldn't lay hands and pray over every single sick and hurting person because he only had two hands.

And what he's saying in John 14, as you read in context, he says that he will die for sin, rise to forgive sinners, and he will return to heaven, and then he says he'll send the Holy Spirit. And he'll send the Holy Spirit to the church. He'll send the Holy Spirit to the Christians, so the third member of the Trinity brings the life of the second member of the Trinity so that now, our sin is taken away, we're connected to the living Jesus, we get to do ministry. For some, it's vocational; for others, it's volunteer; but it's all for Jesus.

And now there are a few billion people on the earth who claim to be Christians, and for those who really are Christians, they've been baptized in the Holy Spirit. They've been born again by the Holy Spirit. They've been taken from spiritual death to life. What it means now is we can do greater works than Jesus. Not greater in kind, but greater in number.

Jesus could only teach a certain number of people; we could teach a whole lot of people because there are a lot of us. Jesus could only lay hands and pray over a certain number of people while he was in a physical body on the earth; we have a lot more hands. Amen? We could serve, we could love, we could care, we could pray, we could give. Together, filled with the Holy Spirit as Jesus was filled with Holy Spirit, we could be doing ministry to the glory of God. And if every one of God's people does their part, we could continue the work of Jesus in greater number around the earth. That's the big idea. That's the invitation.

I hope this gets you excited. Some of you wake up and you wonder, "Why am I here? What am I doing?" Jesus loves you, Jesus serves you, sends the Spirit so that you could be serving others, and God is giving you some things to do that if you do them will give him glory and also give you joy because you'll be doing what it is you were made to do. You're going to enjoy that. See people get saved, see churches get planted, see our church grow in maturity and in numbers, and there'll be a joy about that, because that's exactly what the Holy Spirit wants for you, and that's what he wants for me, and that's what he wants for us. And when we're obedient, he gives us joy. He gives us joy.

And so here, when he talks about the Holy Spirit, he's talking about the fact that what Jesus promised has actually happened, that Jesus has finished his work and returned into the presence of the Father, and sent the Holy Spirit to empower our work on his behalf as his people.

## **WE NEED PEOPLE LIKE YOU, AND UNLIKE YOU**

Now, he goes on. We need people like you, and unlike you. Alright, here's what I'm saying: we need people like you, but man, if everybody was like you, that would not be good. Amen?

I always say this at my house: if there was two of me, one of us would have to die, right? There's only room for one of me. Grace is totally unlike me. Praise—thank you, Father. Right? Thank you for that. My wife, Grace, is totally unlike me and it's good. It's really good because that diversity makes us stronger. It makes us better.

So it is in the church. Some of you, you want everybody to be just like you. No, that would not be good. We need people like you and we need people unlike you. Here's how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 12:14–21: "For the body does not consist of one member but of many."

Here's what he's saying: lots of different people, lots of different experiences, lots of different backgrounds, lots of different abilities, lots of different opportunities. Everybody's different. Amen? You could look at this as a bad thing or a good thing. God looks at it as a good thing. God sees this diversity making us stronger.

So what he's saying is, first of all, acknowledge, recognize in the church that some people are really different than you. Now, if you're not careful, what you'll do is you'll think people like me are holy, people unlike me are unholy. They're thinking the same thing. The truth is, we need people like you, we need people unlike you, and God has got a lot of diversity in the church, and he does so intentionally.

"But of many." Now, here he goes into something funny. Now, if you're new to Mars Hill, we believe God has a sense of humor, okay? We just do. Some people don't. Most of them are called theologians. "Theologian" literally means "not funny," okay? If you go to seminary, Bible college, you would—you don't—it's not a lot of laughing. It's not a lot of fun. It's just not. Like, I've been there. Guys in suits parsing Greek words, using Latin terms. No one's ever accidentally walked on campus at a seminary and confused it for a comedy club, okay? It's just not a fun place.

Now, these guys are really smart but sometimes they're not really funny, and the result is when they read the Bible, they miss the funny parts. Some of the Bible's really funny, right? I've seen God's attributes listed in systematic theologies; I've never seen humor as an attribute of God, but God is funny. He just is.

You could read the Bible, and every once in awhile, something really funny happens or God says something really funny. And if you're not looking at it assuming that God has a sense of humor, you'll miss it. Not everything in the Bible's funny, but some things in the Bible only make sense if you understand God has a sense of humor.

I think here, God, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is going to use a series of kind of funny jokes. Okay? So, just read it with me. Here's what he 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.' It's a little funny. Right? It would be like the hand looking at the foot, saying, 'We're different, I'm leaving.' It's just not a good idea. The hand and the foot need each other, right? I mean, the foot walks to the nachos, the hand picks them up. They're a team. Right? They're a team. They really need each other in a vital way, particularly in any nacho situation. One without the other, completely ineffective. The foot cannot pick up the nacho, and if it does, you don't want to eat it. Amen? Right? And the hand cannot walk to the nacho without the foot. They're essential for the nacho experience, the full, complete, holistic nacho experience. It's a little funny here, right?"

Now, how many of you, you wish that more people were like you? Just so you know, you're the only person who thinks that, but hypothetically, you wish all or more people were like you. What you're saying is, "I want the church to reflect me, not Jesus," and in the diversity of the church, we're reflecting the greatness of Jesus, and we want the church to reflect the fullness of Jesus, not just us.

So, he's using a little analogy here, he's using a little comedy here. He goes on: "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." Now, he's using here the ear and the eye. Do you like your ear? Yes. The fact you answered that question means the ear is helpful. Amen? The eye. Do you like your eye? You like your eye.

Now, what if your eye and ear decided that they were no longer going to function together? Well, your whole life would be very complicated. That's his big idea. The ear and the eye work together. Somebody yells, "Duck!" and you duck because your eye sees something approaching. It spares you. Everything works together.

He continues his little analogy: "If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be?" That's a good question. Right? How many of you have taken your earbuds and stuck them in your eye? If you have, I apologize. You should stop drinking. Right? I mean, it's a situation where you go, no, you know, that's not really the best and highest use of the eye is listening. Right? I don't stick my ear bud in my eye. Similarly, he says, so the ear and the eye need to be working together.

He continues this little analogy: "Where would the sense of smell be?" True. If your nose and your ear and your eye decided, "We're sick of each other. We're totally different," and they decided they'd no longer function together, everything in your life would cease to exist as you know it. So it is in the church body when we allow our preferences to become our prejudices. When we decide that people unlike us aren't welcome here because they're different than we are.

"But as it is"—and this is what's really important: "God has arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose." So, who puts the church body together? God does. Friends, don't despise who you are. Don't despise who you are. Some of you say, "Man, I'm a hand, I wish I was a foot." "I'm a teacher, I wish I was an accountant." "I'm an accountant, I wish I was a leader." "I'm a graphics person, I wish I was a musician." "I love working with the kids, but I really wish that I could be a lead pastor." You know what? God decided what you would be.

God decided where you would fit, and here's why: because you're needed. We need people like you. Do you know what someone with five heads is? A monster. You don't need five heads. That's a lot of hats, all the money for haircuts, let alone the product. It's very—you need one head. You need two hands. You need two feet. God put your physical body together perfectly. He knew what he was doing arranging all the parts. So it is with our church body. He gave you gifts and abilities, he gave them gifts and abilities, he arranged it all together. Some of you wonder why you're here.

Let me say this: some of you are going to walk into Mars Hill Church and get really frustrated. You say, "Man, they really stink at this," whatever "this" is, and the list is long, so there's a whole bunch of things that it could be. What that may be is you understanding and seeing that there is a deficit in the church body, and the reason you see it is because that's your part. And rather than getting frustrated, help. Rather than criticizing, right, yelling at all the ears, "Hey, there's no nose here!" Well, you're here. You can now smell that it stinks. Help us. Help us fix this problem.

The difference is this: you can come in with the attitude of a critic or a servant, and a critic and a servant, they see the same hole in a church, and they just respond differently. The critic sort of gets frustrated that someone isn't like them, fixing it, and the servant says, "That must be why I'm here." You see the difference? What he's saying is, you're needed. We need people like you and we need people unlike you, and you need people unlike you.

### ***Prophet, Priest, or King***

Now, let me say this: we like to talk about at Mars Hill Church basically three categories of gifts, or abilities, or ways that people are hardwired. We talk about prophets, priests, and kings. Let me give you a really practical application of this analogy. Jesus comes as prophet, priest, and king. Classic, historic, biblical Protestant theology.

As a prophet, he preaches and teaches. He rebukes error and sin. He corrects heresy. He protects us from wolves who would lead us astray. As a priest, Jesus loves us and he prays for us, and he intercedes for us, and he comforts us, and he's patient, and long-suffering, and enduring with us. And as a king, he distributes leaders, and gifts, and stewards dollars, and he advances and expands his kingdom, and he cares a lot about stewardship and the good use of all the resources entrusted to the church.

For those of you who are more prophets, you're going to look at the church and you're going to evaluate it primarily through a prophetic lens. What's our doctrine? What's our doctrinal statement? What books are in the bookstore? How do we articulate our theology? Are we making sure that we have bookends to orthodoxy and we don't go astray? Okay. How many of you are more prophets? You love systematic theologies, footnotes, apologetics. That's you. Okay. How many of you that's you? That's okay. Me too.

How many of you are more priests? You say, "You know what, I'm going to evaluate the health, strength, and well-being of Mars Hill Church based upon love and care." Do we have Community Groups where people are doing life together, praying for one another, serving one another, on mission to their community? Are we doing service projects to help the poor, the widow, the orphan, the needy? Do we care about single moms? Do we care about those caught in the sex trade? Do we care about sexual assault victims? What's going on at Redemption Groups? Do we really care about those who are sinned against or stuck in sin, or those who have been assaulted or addicted? Are we really helping hurting people or is this just a big show?

For those of you who are kings, you're going to look at our budgets and spreadsheets. You're going to look at our real estate and our technology. You're going to ask questions like: if I give to this church, are they stewarding resources well? Are they trustworthy? Are they wasting money and wasting opportunity or are they maximizing the resources that God has given them? Do they hire the best people? Do they use the best technology? Do they try to make every dollar count and are they maximizing the resources that God has given them?

Here's my question to you: which one counts? Answer: they're all very important. We want to be biblical, loving, and effective. Biblical, loving, and effective. Now, here's what can happen. To use Paul's analogy, these various groups can say, "I have no need of you," and all of a sudden, our preferences become our prejudices. All of a sudden, the goal is not that the church would reflect Jesus to the world, but that the church would reflect me.

So, what can happen is sometimes the prophets don't really care much about the priestly work or the kingly work. "What do we need Community Groups for? What do we need Mercy Ministry for? What do we need to help the poor for? What do we need to do Redemption Groups for? Can't we just have sermons and books? Why do we need to put so much time, and energy, and effort into people? They just need to shut up, and repent, and suck it up, and grow up." That's sort of classic prophet. "Easy enough."

The priest will come along and say, "Well, what do we need the kings for? They don't love people. They're always doing spreadsheets, and paperwork, and budget analysis, and looking at a real estate and software. They're not very loving."

Let me submit this to you: prophets, priests, and kings love differently. A prophet loves by preaching, and teaching, and guarding us theologically. A priest loves by serving, and caring, and praying, and comforting, and encouraging. And a king loves us by stewarding, and organizing, and leading, and resourcing. This is how it works in a family, right? Somebody's got

to pay the rent, somebody's got to hug the kids, and somebody's got to discipline them. Otherwise, they're not going to be raised well. So it is in a church family.

Let me say this: in the history of Mars Hill Church, what do you think I am? Prophet, priest, or king? I'm up front yelling at everyone, okay, so, prophet. Yeah. Okay? Prophet. So when we started Mars Hill Church, it was heavy prophet. Sermon, sermon, sermon, sermon, sermon, sermon, sermon. I think we got up to like six thousand people, and we had seventeen small groups. All you priests are like, "Oh, no." That's what God was thinking too. So, you're in good company. Right? Which means we love two hundred people, the rest, I don't know. They just got yelled at a lot. That's it. That's it. Right? Like, I yelled at them, what else is there? I don't know, does anybody talk to them? I'll yell at them again.

So, we didn't have a way to get people connected to one another, so Pastor Brad comes along and he, by the grace of God, creates Community Groups. Now there's over six hundred Community Groups. Get in one, there's one near you. Then we realized, "Man, there are some people who have been sexually assaulted." If you just took all the women that have been sexually assaulted that call Mars Hill Church home, we'd still have a megachurch. One in three women, one in six men. There's addiction, there's abuse, there's assault, there's people that have sinned, there's people that have been sinned against. There's deep hurt. How are we going to help all these people? Pastor Mike Wilkerson comes along, creates Redemption Groups, a biblically based, gospel-centered, Jesus-focused way to help hurting people with really tough issues.

So we went from the prophet work, preach, repentance, give your life to Jesus, people do, now we got all these people. I'd never been a member of a church, I didn't have any business background. I don't know what to do with all these people. So then the priests come along. "Okay, we're going to do groups. We're going to love people. We're going to care for people. We're going to pray for people. We're going to walk with people. We're going to intercede for people. We're going to invest in people."

Well, next thing you know, the church grows again. It explodes. Well, then the third leg of the stool is the kings. I mean, any stool without three legs is going to be unbalanced and fall over eventually. Where we're at right now in the history of our church is really a king season. Thirty-some services, fourteen locations, four states. Somebody needs to have a chart. Amen? A hundred and fifty employees, millions of dollars. The government has laws. I don't want to be doing prison ministry from the inside. Somebody needs to know what they are, right?

Technology, policies, insurance, disability, retirement. Somebody gets pregnant and they're on staff, and then they have a major complication and their costs escalate, and somebody needs to love them enough to make sure that they have decent health insurance before the crisis hits. So, you always think of the king as unloving until you need help, then you realize, boy, kings are really helpful and they love differently.

See, the prophets, they're primarily going to love you with their words, written or spoken. The priests are primarily going to love you with their hands. They're going to serve, and hug, and embrace, and care, and pray. And the kings are primarily going to love you with their wisdom. They're going to help architect a world in which people can be blessed, and loved, and flourish. They're going to create a world in which the prophets can teach and the priests can love and serve because the proverbial house was built for the family to dwell in.

Pray for us. We need more kings. And because we come sort of from more of a young, urban, arty vibe, it's always "Ah, the kings are too corporate, the kings are, you know, too organized. The kings tuck their shirt in, we don't trust them." And that's how you can tell who a king is, they do tuck their shirt in. That's how they identify themselves. It's like a tribal marking. Right? So, they have their shirt tucked in and they're sober. King. Okay? If their shirt's untucked and they're not sober, artist. That's how you can distinguish between these two groups, and we need both. We need both.

And so where we're at as a church is we have a good number of prophets, we have a good number of priests, what we're really needing is more kings, executive pastors who can help lead and run our local churches. To what? To organize the priests and the prophets to maximize their giftedness. Be praying for us as a church, but don't allow this attitude to come into being: "I have no need of you!" That doesn't sound very good, does it?

Let me ask you this: who would you be most inclined to say that to? A prophet, a priest, or a king? Some of you would say, "I would never say that to a prophet," probably because you're a prophet. Some of you would say, "I'd never say that to a priest," probably because you're a priest. Some of you'd say, "I'd never say that to a king," probably because you're a king. Don't say it to anybody. Don't say it about any group of people. We need each other.

Right now, the kings are trying to get real estate so that what? We can plant churches. So that what? The gospel can be preached. So that what? People can be saved. So that what? So that the priests can love and serve them in Jesus' name. That's good, right? And everybody is loving, just loving according to their gifting, loving differently.

Please don't allow Satan to do this. Please don't allow Satan to whisper in your ear and say, "You love people, they don't." Allow the Holy Spirit to whisper in your ear and say, "You love people, they do too. They just love them differently than you." And to be a good, healthy family, we can never have that attitude, "I have no need of you."

It's like your hands deciding they don't need your head. Can you imagine that? You wake up one morning and your hands, they say, "You know what? We took a vote. It's two to one, or ten to one if you like, and we decided that the head is not like us. We're going to get rid of the head. We're going to literally remove the head because the head is just unlike us." Well, we call that suicide.

Churches commit suicide all the time. People decide they don't want anybody who's not like them and they cut off whole parts of the body. "We're going to stop preaching, stop teaching, stop calling people to repentance." On my way here, I passed a church, and the sign said, "An inclusive community where all are welcome." I would add, "Except for God." If you welcome all people, all races, all cultures, all generations, that's biblical. If you welcome all doctrines, that's not.

And if what you're saying is, "It doesn't matter what you think about Jesus, it doesn't matter what you think about the Bible, it doesn't matter what you think about sin, it doesn't matter what you think about repentance, we draw no lines here. We assume that everyone's going to heaven and we're all in this together, and it doesn't matter what you think about Jesus. You'll be fine." As a prophet, it just brings me to great frustration and concern for the well-being of people, because we're not truly loving them until we tell them the truth, that they're sinners and they need Jesus. Churches like that have decided, "We don't need the prophets. We don't need theology. We don't need the Bible."

Other churches lob off whole parts of the body. "We don't need biblical counseling. We don't need small groups and Community Groups. We don't need Redemption Groups. We don't need to get into the details and the hard parts of people's lives. God forbid we get involved with sexual assault victims and those who have been sinned against in the sex trade industry because that's just so difficult, it's so hard, it's so painful. We just really don't need to get involved in that kind of unpleasant activity of helping hurting people," and they cut

off whole parts of the body.

And others come along and they say, “Well, as long as the Bible is taught and the people are loved, we don’t need the kings. We don’t need systems, policies, procedures, budgets, real estate, or technology,” and they literally just cut their legs off and they can’t run and proceed forward to the kingdom of God.

I’m begging you, never allow this attitude to settle in to our church: “I have no need of you!” What a horrible thing to say. But let me say this: we say this when we criticize. We say this when we question. We say this when we allow suspicion to enter into our hearts. We say this when we don’t trust someone because they’re not like us. Do you understand?

Let me say this: we need everyone. We need all of your gifts. We need all of your experiences. We need the men and the women. We need the young and the old. We need the rich and the poor. We need the black and the white. We need the single and the married. We need the Democrat and the Republican. We need everybody. We need all of your backgrounds, all of your experiences, all of your giftedness, because that makes us a better church and allows us to love and serve more people better. Do you get that? That’s Paul’s big idea.

Every morning when you wake up, you’re brushing your teeth, you’re getting dressed, you’re eating your breakfast, just remind yourself, “My church is a body, and just like I appreciate the functionality of my physical body, so too, I appreciate the body of Christ, my church, and I’m grateful for people that are unlike me, the parts that are different, because, man, when we work together, it goes a lot better.” That’s Paul’s big idea.

## WHICH PART OF THIS BODY ARE YOU?

Here’s my last question. Which part of this body are you? Where do you fit? Some of you already know. Some of you know. You say, “You know what? Community Group leader, that’s my thing.” Great. Redemption Group leader. Great. Deacon, elder, usher, sound, light, video, music, set up, tear down, kids’ ministry, security, volunteering in the office, counseling in community, student ministry. The list goes on. You know where you fit. Praise God. God’s using you. We’re thankful for you, and I mean that with all my heart.

Some of you, you’re new. Find a place to plug in. Some of you ask, “What, is this a ‘get connected’ pitch?” Yes! I’m not—you know what, I’m not even going to try and find a creative way to do it. I’m not going to bring out a dancing monkey. I’m not going to promise you a hundred-fold blessing. I’m not going to hand out prayer hankies. No. Just find something and do it. Okay?

Here’s how he says it: “On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” There are parts of our body that are not that tough, right? But you need them. So it is with some of you. Some of you are not tough, you’re tender. Some of you couldn’t go to war, but you’d be a great battlefield doctor or nurse to help those who’ve been shot. We need each other. Some of you are like soldiers, you’re going to march forward for the kingdom of God. Some of you are like doctors who are going to come alongside and comfort and bandage the wounded. Everybody’s indispensable. We’re all working in this together.

“And on those parts that we think less honorable we bestow greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty.” Okay, now this is kind of funny. Okay? You’re welcome, I did not wear a halter top today. Amen? You’re welcome. It’s a demonstration of my love for you. I didn’t wear a European swimsuit. Not that I have one, but I didn’t wear one. I didn’t. I didn’t wear a mini skirt or a women’s roller derby outfit. Why? Other than the obvious, because there are certain parts that are what? Less presentable. Do you get the joke here? See, that’s the joke.

So it is in the church. Not everybody should get on stage. Some of you are saying, “You shouldn’t be on stage.” I sometimes agree with that, but not everybody should get on stage. You ever watch the *American Idol* auditions? Not everybody should lead worship. Amen? They just shouldn’t. Not every gift is highly public, presentable, just like certain parts of your body, cover.

I saw this at Starbucks not long ago. This guy, single for a reason that I’ll explain now. Okay? I’m sitting in one of those big, comfy, overstuffed chairs. This guy takes his shoes off, puts his foot up, and starts picking his toes in Starbucks. Okay? Now, I’m sitting there, holding down my coffee, sort of, and I look around, and there’s—we’re all sitting there like... Does this have to happen right here, right now? It’s a huge planet. There’s nowhere else this could happen? Right now is toe jam removing time. Like, seriously?

And this guy, just completely oblivious. He finishes one foot, takes off his other shoe, and goes to work on the other foot, okay? Now, being a prophet, I had to speak on behalf of us all, because that’s my part in the body. So, I said, “Hey!” Like that, because I had to get his attention. I said, “We don’t want to see your feet! We don’t want to see your feet! Put them away! Put your shoes on!” Talked to him like a small child, okay?

He looks at me, he says, “What? There’s nothing wrong with it.” I said, “We all agree, right?” And everybody, “Yes. Yeah.” All of a sudden, “Yes.” So, congregational meeting, unanimous vote. Yes, we all agree, your shoes should go on. He says, “Well, I disagree with you.” I said, “You’re single, right?” He said, “Yes.” I said, “I’m trying to help you.” Right? Because there’s not one woman on earth just like, “I’m going to Starbucks today. If I see a man picking his toes, I know that I’ve found the one.” Just completely—

But here’s what he didn’t understand, like, there’s presentable parts of the body, there’s parts of the body not so presentable, right? Like, you wouldn’t put your foot on your Christmas card, right? You put your face.

That’s what Paul is saying, that for some of you, you have gifts, you have skills, you have talents, you have abilities, but you will covet other people’s talents, skills, and abilities because they’re more public. Say, “Man, I wish I could play guitar so I could get on the stage. I wish I could do this or that. I want to be up front. I want to be up front.” Don’t want to be up front. Just be whoever you are, do whatever you do. Again, the Holy Spirit has chosen who you are and what you do. Be content with that, rejoice in that, be good at that, because quite frankly, we need that. That’s his big point.

He goes on: “Which our more,” verse 24, “presentable parts do not require. “But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it.” Here’s what he’s saying: sometimes it’s people who are serving in a less or an invisible way that God pays particular attention to, God bestows particular dignity upon, and God shows particular gratitude toward. It’s true. It’s true.

Some of you are just crazy, wicked smart. Some of you have amazing talents in editing, or film, or audio, or administration, or accounting, or legal, and it’s really hard for your gifts to be public because they’re private gifts. They’re specializations. They’re particular skills. What he’s saying is that God sees that, God knows that. Don’t be worried about the audience, be

worried about the audience of one. "Lord, you know what I'm doing. I love you. You've given me something to do. The church really needs it. Nobody sees it but you, but that's all that matters." Right? See, the truth is God sees and knows all.

For those of you who are in the church, let me encourage you to encourage others. As you see people serving, say thanks. As you see people that are serving behind the scenes in less or invisible ways, say thanks, and that could be one of the ways that you're giving greater honor to those parts. Thank you.

You know who I'm grateful for? Accountants. You know why? I can't count. Right? I'm grateful for those who have legal ability because I don't want to go to jail. I'm grateful for those who have the ability to negotiate real estate because I want a place where the gospel can be preached and people can gather. And sometimes, certain gifts are less visible, but they're not less important. They're just specializations, so say thank you to those who are serving. And I want to say thank you to those who are serving in those areas.

He goes on: "That there may be no division in the body." That's a beautiful thing when the priests say, "Thank you, kings, for getting us a building," and the kings say, "Thank you, prophets, for preaching the gospel," and the prophets say, "Thank you, priests, for loving the people." That's good, right? That's good.

The other day I came home, long, hard day at work. My kids were waiting for me. "How'd it go today, Dad?" "It went good." "Thank you for working hard, buying us this home, and allowing Mom to stay home with us." They're starting to understand, yeah, Mom and I are a team. We work together. When Dad goes to work, it's to provide for the family, and Mom and I agree, it's best for her to stay home. See, Mom's more of a priest. She loves the kids very, very much and she serves them very faithfully. And the kids are saying, "Oh, that's what Dad does and that's what Mom does, and when they work together, man, it makes for a better family." That's no division. It's no division.

See, you can have diversity without division. You can have unity without uniformity. I see it all the time. Churches are either dominated by the kings, dominated by the priests, or dominated by the prophets. When they all work together, it's a beautiful church. More people get saved, more churches get planted, more hurting people get helped. Do you want that for our church? I do.

I believe in the grace of God, we've been strong in the prophet. I believe in the grace of God, we're growing stronger in the priest, and I believe we're in the season when God has highlighted the kings and said, "You need more."

"So there'd be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another." That's what he's talking about, right? Just caring for one another. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." What he's saying is we're all in this together. We all need each other.

Friends, if you're here and you've never really plugged in to a church, whether it's our church or another church, just find a place you're needed and please pour yourself out to the glory of God and the good of others. Please don't be a consumer. Please don't be a consumer. Please don't be a critic walking in saying, "You know, I think theologically, I could be cleaner than these people," or "Priestwise, I didn't feel very loved," or "Kingwise, I think I would organize it differently." Help. We're acknowledging we need help.

This past year, we've seen fourteen hundred people baptized. Right now, we're pregnant with five more church plants that are just Mars Hill, and we have seven other men that want to go out and start independent churches. We're pregnant with twelve churches. I don't know what they call a woman who's pregnant with twelve kids. I would assume "tired." You know? I mean, there's just a lot going on, and what that means is yes, there are holes, and yes, there are needs, but we would ask you to come with a heart to help, because we desperately need you. And so we're going to give you an opportunity to do that today.

And here's what we're talking about: we're talking about serving Jesus because he served us. We're talking about serving Jesus because he continues to serve us. Jesus comes and he serves people. He feeds them, he prays for them. He does the prophetic work of preaching and teaching, he does the priestly work of loving and encouraging, he does the kingly work of raising up leaders and commissioning them out to be good stewards of the resources of the kingdom of God. And then Jesus goes to the cross, and he suffers and dies in our place for our sins, and he serves us. And he rises to take away sin and give us righteousness, and to impart to us the Holy Spirit, and he keeps serving us. And when we're serving, we're serving the God who served us. We're serving the God who continues to serve us.

## **SIGN UP AND SERVE**

And let me submit this to you: we're going to allow you today to just go ahead and find your place in the body. Okay? I'm going to make this as simple as I can. For those of you who are in your teens, this is a piece of paper. Okay? It's sort of like a text. Sort of like a text. Okay?

Here's what happened to me. I had the most amazing experience. I went to college as a non-Christian, and then God saved me. I got baptized in the Holy Spirit, meaning I got a new life in Christ, I got connected to the living Jesus. I start reading the Bible. One of the first things I notice in the Bible, it talks a lot about God's people and the church, so I go looking for a church. I don't know what I'm looking for, I'm just hoping I don't end up in a cult, okay? I find a church where they go through the Bible and they're talking about Jesus, and I think, "Okay, that's where I'm going."

And I sat there for a while, and quite frankly, I was treating the church like a hotel and not a home. You know the difference? Any of you ever pick up your hotel room? Any of you ever make your bed at your hotel? You don't. People treat hotels horribly. Right? I mean, you're just eating food and dropping it on the floor. Right? You got to blow your nose so you go get a clean towel.

I mean, people do things in hotels they would never do at their house, right? You call down to the front desk, "Yeah, there's nachos on the ceiling and I'm out of towels, and somebody needs to come and pick this up right now. And by the way, the toilet's clogged." "What happened?" "I put a towel in it." "Why?" "I wanted to see what would happen. Yeah, send a lifeguard too. It's a real situation we got up here."

People do horrible things to hotels that they would never do to their home. Why? They have no sense of ownership and they have no intention of staying for a long period of time, and they have this assumption: "Well, I pay people to clean up after me." You can't do that at your house. Right? How many of you have tried that with your mom? "Yeah, Mom. There's food all over my room, and nobody's made my bed, and I'm out of towels, and the toilet's plugged." Your mom would tell you, "Figure it out, and your dad's coming home, so hurry." Right? Because there's a difference between a home and a hotel.

I realized sitting in church one day, I had been treating the church like a hotel. I come in, make a mess, go out. I don't serve, I don't give, I'm not helping out with the chores. This isn't like a home to me, it's like a hotel. And on that Sunday, the pastor got up and he said, "Hey! I want this church to be your home." He said, "So, we're going to send around a list, and I want you to sign up and just serve." So that's what we're doing today.

Now, I was a brand-new Christian. I didn't know you weren't supposed to check all the boxes. Okay? Nobody told me that. So it said, "Do you want to be in a men's Bible study?" Yes, I do. "Do you want to be in a relationship class to understand biblically how to love?" Well, yes, I do. "Do you want to take a class on Isaiah?" Well, certainly. "Would you like to be in a coed Community Group?" Of course. "Would you like to serve in the children's ministry on Sunday?" Yes, I do. "Would you like to run the mid-week children's ministry during the women's Bible study?" As a matter of fact, that sounds incredible. "On Saturdays, they're going to be delivering meals to elderly shut-ins who can't get out. Would you like to do that?" Yes, I can carry food to old people and love them. Yes.

I signed up for almost everything, okay? I was taking eighteen credit hours. I was a brand-new Christian. I literally signed up, I think, for six Bible studies. I taught children's Sunday school. I showed up at the mid-week women's Bible study and there was like ten to twenty kids depending on the week. I was the only person who signed up. I had all the kids. I had my own daycare. And it was awesome.

And on Saturdays, I would go to the homes of elderly people and I would deliver meals to shut-ins, and then they would always want you to sit down and talk to them because nobody ever came to visit them.

That's how I spent my college years. I didn't ever drink; I didn't have time. I didn't have a lot of hobbies, I didn't do any drinking, I didn't do any partying. I just went to school and I worked, I had a job and I served at the church, and it was awesome.

Some of you say, "What about burnout?" Okay, let me say this: when it comes to ministry, the average Christian is this close [*arms spread wide*] to burnout, okay? I didn't burn out because it was awesome.

And then they passed around a clipboard one Sunday, and they said, "Who wants to go to the men's retreat?" I was like, "I don't know what a men's retreat is, but I'm a man. Apparently I need to check that little box," and I checked the box. I'd never been to a men's retreat.

We go to the woods, guys have beards, and they're barbecuing, and I thought, "Well, this has turned out fantastically." And then the guys all start singing, and I thought, "Well, this is interesting. Guys sing to Jesus. Nice." So I sang a little bit, and then they said, "Hey, go out and spend some time in prayer, all by yourself with the Lord, and just get some time with Jesus." I thought, "Well, I've never really done that. Okay."

When I was out on that prayer walk, God spoke to me, and he called me into ministry. He said, "To marry Grace, preach the Bible, plant churches, and train men." Spoke audibly. And you know what, that sounded great to me, because I love the church. The church was awesome.

What I noticed was as soon as I started serving, I started loving the church more, loving the people more. Next thing you know, I started giving financially, as a college kid. There's two kinds of broke. Right? Broke and college broke. I was college broke, paying my own way through college. I felt convicted of the Holy Spirit to start giving \$100 a month.

I was nineteen years old; \$100 a month. My rent was less than that. We had one of those condemned buildings with 27 guys and 2 bedrooms, right? It was one of those college things. A guy's literally living in the pantry. Another guy's living in the basement on a military cot. This is all true. Homeless guys are walking by going, "That's sad." It was that kind of house.

I started giving \$100 a month to the church and what I found was that God really birthed in me this deep love for the church. So, Grace transferred out to WSU to be with me, and we started serving together: kids' ministry together, babysitting together, taking meals to shut-ins together. All of a sudden, I'm teaching a small group, next thing you know, I'm becoming a leader. And then the guys start asking me, "Do you think someday you want to be a pastor?" and I said, "You know, God actually called me to that. Yeah, I do. I never even thought about ministry."

Grace and I recently had this wonderful opportunity to go back to this little church. Great church. We hadn't been back there in almost twenty years. We never went on campus at the university that we attended. We never made it there because many of those same families are still there, serving in the church. Some of the elders have been elders for twenty years. Some of the small group leaders have been small group leaders for twenty years, since we went there. Many of the same anchor families are still there. We went over to visit them, we had dinner with them, we caught up with them. I'm asking, "Hey, I used to watch your kid and now they have kids."

I don't regret any of the time I spent serving the church. I thank God for all the opportunities we had in that church. That church was used of Jesus to change my whole life. People that we still love, admire, stay in touch with, couples that mentored us, people that invested in us, and it wasn't that we were just taking. We were really involved trying to give.

I want you to have that experience. I want this to be your church. We want to be your church family. So, what we're going to allow you to do in just a moment is we're going to allow you to go ahead and just give us some of your contact information, and then go through and check. What do you want to do? What's your part in the body? Leadership, serving on Sundays, kids' ministry, helping out with music, the creative side, graphics, branding, production, sound, light, video, midweek events, administration, anything else you can do.

You may have some eccentric unique talent. You may say, "You know what? I'm a programmer, I can write code." Great. You may say, "You know what? I have some background in the arts," or "I have some background in business," or "I understand marketing or sales." Great. Write it down. Let us know.

Now, I can't guarantee you that you're going to get to do everything you want to do, but what I can guarantee is we're going to evaluate everybody and see if we can get everybody in position for the fall. Our growth months tend to be September, October, November, it levels off, and then January through Easter. So, we're coming up on our big growth season and we, quite frankly, really need you, so I'm making a plea and an invitation. Fill this out, and when you take Communion in just a moment, we're going to allow you to just drop it off.

That's what I did. As a nineteen-year-old college kid, I filled out something like this and it changed my whole life. It gave me a great love for the church, a church that I still love to this day. And at that time, because I was nineteen and I was in college, it would have been easy to say, "You know what? I don't want to really get too plugged in here because I know I'm



only here for a few years and then I'm leaving."

Some of you are going to drop roots, others of you are going to drop anchor. You know what the difference is? Roots are for a long time, anchor is for a little time. Some of you are military deployment, some of you are here on business, some of you are students, some of you are here on a contract for a job, and you're going to drop anchor at Mars Hill and then you're going to pick up anchor and then God's going to take you somewhere else.

Let me say this: serve here, plug in here, get connected here as long as you're here, and when you go from here, drop anchor there. You never know, though. God might keep you here for longer than you're anticipating, and we'd certainly welcome that.

For some of you, you're going to drop roots. You're going to be here for a really, really, really long time, and now's a good time to drop roots. Mars Hill needs you, Jesus is calling you, and I'm telling you there's a place for you in the body.

But just because you're one of those people who's in transition, don't let that be an excuse. I'm so glad that I did not spend my years in college using my church, ignoring my church, avoiding my church, and waiting years until I left it to go somewhere else.

I believe in the grace of God that Grace and I, we maximized every opportunity in that church, and to this day, I love that church with all my heart. And it was one of the great joys of my life to sit down with the pastor and his wife when we had breakfast with them, and just to say thank you. Thank you for starting this church. Thank you for training these people. Thank you for teaching the Bible. Thank you for allowing me to be involved. Thank you for allowing so many young leaders to come through your church. He's now trained, as far as I know, over one hundred pastors and elders and sent them all over the world.

I want that experience for you at Mars Hill Church, and we want to be that church for you. I want this to be a place that if you're here for a long time or a short time, you look back and say, "I got to do something and it was awesome." Amen?

## PRAYER

Father God, I thank you for the language, the metaphor, the analogy that the church is like a body. It is. God, even right now, we just think of our physical body and how all the parts are working together, how everything is interconnected, and how if anything was missing or not functioning, everything would be negatively affected. God, as we seek the health of our physical body, we seek the health of our church body. God, as we want all the parts of our body to be healthy and strong, we want all the parts of our church body to be healthy and strong.

God, I ask that you would send the Holy Spirit to those who are not Christians, and to give them faith in Jesus, and to accept his service through his death, burial, and resurrection for them. God, for those who are serving as Christians, I pray they'd be so encouraged that they would hear from the text of Scripture, "Yes, I knew that's what I was supposed to do and I'm doing it. Thank you, Lord, for helping me be obedient." And God, I pray that they would hear from us we're thankful for everybody who's doing anything.

God, for those who have not participated in the health and well-being of the local church, they've not found their place, I pray this wouldn't be an opportunity for them to feel guilty, but to feel loved and invited. And God, I pray for those who've had bad church experiences. I pray that Mars Hill Church would be a great church experience for them. And God, I thank you for the great diversity you've brought to this church family.

And God, I just want to thank you today for my first church, a church that I absolutely love. And I thank you that you allowed me, as a new Christian, teenage college student, to serve, and to learn, and to love the church that Jesus loves. I pray for our church, Lord God, that it would be biblical, prophetic, that it would be loving, priestly, and that it would be efficient, kingly, and we ask for the grace to do all well and to never say or think, "I have no need of you." Lord God, you have brought everyone here with the experiences and abilities that we need. Help us to organize them to glorify you together in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.*