

Date: July 26, 2026

Texts: Isaiah 44. 6-8 / Romans 12. 1-8

Title: "Get Real"

Intro -

these verses today serve as somewhat of a continuation of:

"living in view of God's mercy..."

a natural carry-on - vs. 3

have sober judgment...

do not think more highly...

basic point =

none of us can do what we need to do...

none of us can be what we need to be.... what we could hope to be...

on our own

not in aspect of our lives

cf. - the World Cup may be gone, but Spain serves as a helpful

illustration here (if I may...)

- called: "the team with no stars..."

others had Mbappe... Kane... Haaland... Messi...

Spain knew - and played with - the understanding that

it takes a team...

it takes all of them together...

now...

this approach does not always work in sports...

but this time - Spain won

(and my illustration holds water - at least until

the next tournament...)

the same is true when it comes to growth in faith, or -

in how we express that faith in the world around us

wherein Paul offers one of the easier (and - more consistent...) analogies

for us to try and grasp - vs. 4:

one body... - many members...

I) One Body

Paul develops this more fully in his letter to the Corinthians, where he writes:

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone -
it is the same God at work.”

our unity is found in the fact there is one God...

we are not out there, each one of us living individually
on an island... coming up with our own set of
beliefs... creating our own idols to worship...

rather -

we coalesce... we gather...

around the one God who reminds us...

that we are one people...

one family...

one faith...

with a glorious diversity of gifts

now...

we can focus on that glorious diversity

(as some choose for their starting point...)

but typically, they get bogged down in the differences

and never quite get to the unity...

to the belonging...

to the wonder of a family in the faith

so - we need to begin with this foundation of “one God...”

and - we need to celebrate the nature of this God -

cf. - as one way we might think of ourselves with sober judgment...

one way to guard against thinking more highly of ourselves
than we ought...

namely - a reminder that we are not created to... not designed to...

“go it alone...”

to live on that island, and call all the shots

rather - we have been blessed to have a God who is much better suited to

“calling the shots,” and -

who invites us to join together in doing the work

to see that design be a blessing for all

this is what Paul celebrates in the different gifts we find present...

all working together in one ministry of grace

cf. - think about your own homes / households here -

one topic I bring up with people who are getting married is this:

(cf. - Jake and Mallory - have we gone over this yet, or -

later today...?)

... this -

who does what around the house...?

are you each okay with that...?

why does one do this thing while the other does that...?

is one chore more important than the other...?

why are they all important - together...?

i.e. - there is one task of “keeping house”

but there are myriad ways to be involved in the work

there is one goal in “keeping house”

(making it suitable for living... making it welcoming and a place

where you grow together as a couple... as a family...)

but there are many things that need to be done for this

to be realized

which is similar to our “one ministry of grace” in the church -

- to make this body... this fellowship... a welcoming place

where all may grow together, and -

be nurtured and sent out...

to carry on that ministry of grace wherever we find ourselves

II) Many Members

and the important lesson Paul would impart to us is that it takes all of us...

“so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

let's go back to recent sporting accomplishments...

you may have read or seen that Britain's Josh Kerr broke

the world record for the mile (which had stood for 27 years...)

while he achieved this feat as an individual -

he did not accomplish it alone

he talks about his team - not just trainer and coach, etc., but -

the runners who went out with him -

his pacer - for early in the race...

his (what I call...) pusher - for later stages...

note - these runners dropped out / did not finish

because they expended themselves to set Josh up

to achieve his goal...

when I ran track, they called the first one - “the rabbit”

as he or she goes out to help everyone with

the setting of the pace, but without any expectation

of winning...

Kerr talks about his team like this:

“He was a rock for me mentally, right by my side every step of the way and had more confidence in me than I did sometimes.”

such that together...

... he set the mark

cf. - Paul goes on to provide an illustrative listing of what we might each bring to the table... so that “records” might fall...

an illustrative listing of the sorts of gifts we might see among ourselves...
to spur one another on...
to make a mark in our communities

key - illustrative... not exhaustive.

illustrative... not definitive

i.e. - the sorts of gifts and abilities that enable members of the body

to bring the reality of grace to bear in the lives of others

- there are seven specific gifts noted here

is that all there is to it...?

what if I don't see anything that really matches up with me?

what if I take a "Spiritual Gifts Inventory"

and I'm not there...?

what's to become of me then...?

cf. - I think there are two ways to look at this -

("this" being the area or areas of giftedness we each have

and - to be clear - we each have this...

whether or not we feel like we do)

two ways:

1) Paul begins this teaching by making note we should be
transformed...

that is a helpful way to get at just who we are as the people of God

- we are transformed...

and the the work we are doing can be described as

"transforming..."

we are "transformers"

(and - not to worry - you have borne with me and sports

analogies... we're not going to go into the whole

Transformers toys / movies thing...)

but -

let's dip our topees into the world of electrical engineering
where the function of a transformer is to transfer electric energy
from one circuit to another - often in a way that involves
a change in voltage, current, phase, whatever...

the same function / role applies to us:
as people transformed by Christ -
we go into the workplace... into our schools... communities...
to transfer Christ's energy to those whom we meet...
to take this energy... this power...
and bring it to bear in ways that offer blessing

and we can do this by embracing our 2) - vocation...
our calling...
that intersection of our joys and our gifts
with legitimate human needs

it may be that this finds form where we work...
it may be that it comes out when we go to the gym...
possibly even on the golf course (as long as it's not
Sunday morning...)

it could even find form in the church (but it doesn't have to be
limited to here - that's the beauty of... that's wonder of...
that's the grace of - all the diversity God has given to
this body that we call our "family in the faith")

so...

- what's yours...?
what's your vocation...? How do your gifts / abilities / interests
give shape to how you live your life?

if winning the World Cup... if breaking a world record... - if these take a team
let us find our place in this family... this team...
and encourage one another on - as we are gifted... as we are called...
as we are able...