

**FROM DUST TO DIAMONDS - IN 40 DAYS
YOU WERE FORMED FOR GOD'S FAMILY
1 Corinthians 12:1-13:8a and Matthew 5:13-16**

By Guest Speaker: Beth Hedges, Area Director InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA

M.I. The diverse Body of Christ should be a loving family that attracts others.

Potluck Anxiety (A skit by Kirstin Vander Giessen-Reitsma)

Beth's character thinks that _____

Wayne's character thinks that _____

Nicole's character thinks that _____

I. The body of Christ – diverse unity (1 Cor. 12:1-13)

A. The creation of the Body of Christ

Created when people say _____ by the power of the Holy Spirit

B. Difference is the spice of life

There are _____ kinds of gifts, service and working. There are a _____ of gifts.

C. Unity in the Spirit

There is the _____ Spirit, Lord and God. There is _____ Body.

II. How can we act like the Body we are? Being a loving family (1 Cor 12:14-13:8a)

A. Everyone _____ and everyone _____

B. The Loving Family of God

- Love means _____

- Love means being _____

- Love means _____

- Love means being _____

- Love means _____

- Being a truly healthy and loving family

III. The result?

**We are the _____ of the earth, the _____ of the world and the _____ on the hill –
Matt. 5:13-16**

A. Corporate reality

B. What does it take to have a corporate impact?

- Commitment to a _____

- Commitment to _____ building relationships in this community

- Commitment to _____ in this community

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Lauren's character thinks that what we bring is about status, needs to hide who she is, will I pretend? Am I proud of whom I am? Pressured.

Wayne's character thinks that what he brought isn't good enough, ashamed of what he brought, unsure about what he brought, Nicole's character thinks that her gift needs PR, recognizes the value of diversity, we bring who we are, that diversity is needed, that Lauren and Wayne bring good things, and hides her own gift because it is quirky, ashamed of what she brought.

But the truth is that we are the diverse Body of Christ, which should be a loving family that attracts others.

I. The body of Christ – diverse unity (1 Cor. 12:1-13).

A. The creation of the Body of Christ.

Created when people say Jesus is Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit. 12: 3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

1. We don't create the Body of Christ, God does. It is His Body created by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Like your family – both biological family and the family that raised us – we have no choice about who is family. We have no choice about who is part of our family in God. If God has called them and made them speak by the Spirit of God that Jesus is Lord then they are part of our family.

3. Anyone who has spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is Lord is part of the body and we need each and every one of them. And, it is out of the Holy Spirit that we are then able to be the family that God wants us to be.

I took the El-train on Thursday afternoon and a middle-aged woman with social skills that were slightly off, sat next to me – and I knew this because she started a conversation with me on the El about her recent corn surgery and misdiagnosis of vascular disease (which is what killed her mother at 80) as well as why she was transferring at Jackson (because it has better lighting). It would have been easy to be rude but my thought was, “This is someone that Jesus loves,” so I tried to be interested. It was the kind of conversation that feels awkward and odd but in the midst of it she also breathed out, “Bless Jesus and praise Jesus.” Now I don’t know whether she has said by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is Lord – but if she has, she is family and I need to care for her as family (and if not I still need to care for her as one of God’s precious creations).

We do not create God’s family but we are a part of His family and we need to be aware that there are not choices about who is, and who is not in our family.

B. Difference is the spice of life.

There are different kinds of gifts, service and working. There are a variety of gifts.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of

tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. And in the church God has appointed: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

1. There are a variety of gifts and things that we bring to the body of Christ. The variety of what we bring to the body includes wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, plus apostles, teachers, help others, administration, which are mentioned here. As well as what is mentioned in Romans and Ephesians which includes serving, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy and evangelists.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

2. The gifts are given for the common good. The point of our diversity is not so we can play one-upmanship with each other, but so that we can, as a varied people

serve one another and the common good. What I have to bring to the family of God is not for me but for the common good. Going back to the skit, the delight and joy of a potluck is the variety of the food. The great thing is that in one place you can end up with more than what you alone can cook. And it means good eating – it is the same with the Body of Christ.

C. Unity in the Spirit

There is the same Spirit, Lord and God. There is one Body.

1. But all of us have the same source. What we bring to the family of God comes from God himself. Who I am and what I bring is not from me and what you bring is not from you; faith, wisdom, healing, tongues, leadership, administration all come from God.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

2. One of the results of the fact that all of what we bring comes from God is that this means that God delights in diversity. Think about a rabbit, a giraffe, an orchid, a tulip, and a pine tree if we look at creation then it seems God likes diversity. After all how many different kinds of rocks do you really need? Yet God created such diversity.

And it is the same with us – some bring beans and rice, some bring spaghetti, some bring shrimp Jell-O.

3. We cannot boast in what we bring to the family because it is from God and we cannot be ashamed of what we bring because it is from God. Yet this is not often how we think. We look at the color of our eyes and feel bad about it, or we feel pride in it. But the reality is that you can take no credit nor can you be ashamed of what color your eyes are, they were a gift from your parents and it is the same with who we are and what we bring to God's family.

We are God's family – created by him, by his power and by the Spirit. It is a group of people that we do not define – it is God who defines His family. We are a diverse group but we also have an underlying unity – the Spirit who has given each of us ways that we can contribute to the common good.

But how can we be a better family? Despite these realities we often do not act like family, like a group whose has unity in our diversity.

II. How can we act like the Body we are? Being a loving family (1 Cor 12:14-13:8a)

A. Everyone belongs and everyone matters

1. No matter who you are, you are a part of the Body. Everyone belongs. Whether Jew or Greek, slave or free – Asian, African, Latino, native or white, poor, middle class, upper class, everyone belongs. That is pretty amazing because we all know that there are always places where we don't belong but this is not to be true with God's people – everyone belongs. 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. 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. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

2. Now the problem is that we don't see ourselves as fitting in, as having a place. We look at what we bring and think we don't belong. I'm not bringing potato salad so I don't belong. I don't teach or preach so there is no place for me. I am not a hand so I don't belong. But it is good that we are not what that other person is because then we would not be what we are to be. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

3. Sometimes what we think is that we are self-sufficient and the only thing we need is ourselves. After all what is it we are saying about reality when we don't share ourselves with others, when we do not offer who we are to the church. We say "I don't need anyone else. I am self sufficient." If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but only one body, 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!"

4. As a matter of fact the reality of being the body is that we are connected to one another. When bad things happen to one part of the body then all of us suffer and if one of us rejoices then we all can rejoice. If we are being the healthy body of Christ that we are meant to be, then there is a commonality of what is going on in our lives. Then the suffering of one is all of our concern, and the joys of one are the joys of all. This is part

of what God has made us to be with one another; but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. But it is not enough to recognize that we are one but we have to go on beyond that –

Paul says “But eagerly desire the greater gifts, and now I will show you the most excellent way.” Then he goes on to say that the most excellent way was love because what makes all of this work is the Love that comes from God.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

We can bring all of the great and wonderful things about who we are and who God has made us to the people of God, but if we don’t have love then we are not what God wants for us as a people or as individuals.

B. The Loving Family of God

How can we be the loving family of God that we are called to be?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres. Love never fails.

- Love means caring for others - Love is patient and kind. It cares for other people – being willing to walk with them in hard things and awkward ways, as well as doing what is good for people.

- Love means being humble – That means that we do not envy, do not boast, and are not proud or self-seeking. It is easy in family to allow envy and jealousies come in but when we love – when we want what is best for others according to God’s will then we are not jealous and we are not proud.

- Love means forgiving – We need to forgive one another, keeping no record of wrongs. Jesus told Peter that he was expected to forgive not just the minimum of seven times but that Jesus expected him to forgive seventy times seven – that is for every time that forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness is an active thing, a way for us to continue to grow and develop in love and as a community.

- Love means being committed to good – When we love one another then we do not delight in evil – that we do not enjoy seeing evil happen but that we rejoice with the truth.

- Love means coming alongside - Love means that we always protect, always trust, always hope, and always persevere in our relationship with one another. We look for ways to look out for one another, looking to build relationships that mean we are each other’s best allies and partners in life.

- Love means being a true healthy loving family.

The original role of family is to teach us how to relate to one another as individuals and in society.

In the book Pursuing God in the Company of Friends Rich Lamb talks about the family. For many families the reality is a dysfunctional family.

“Families learn to tolerate the hurtful. They come to expect it. They learn to discount their own perceptions and their reality. They succumb to the dysfunctional family rules. Don’t talk. Don’t feel. Don’t trust. Don’t think. Don’t question. All in an attempt to cope.”

But this is another alternative

“In a healthy family people make and keep commitments to one another. They are helpful to one another, seeing the success of one as the success of all. Small failures to keep the integrity of the family are noted, repented of and forgiven, not swept aside, ignored or accumulated until the breaking point is reached.”

“The Christian community has the potential to become the surrogate family in which People build a healthy foundation of identity and security in the love of God and are called towards love of God and others.”

The healthy family of God shares

- (1) Fellowship - that is joy and pleasure in one another’s company. Fellowship means all the ways that we share life with one another.
 - (2) Accountability – helping each other with areas of struggle, encouraging and confronting. Accountability means a common commitment to integrity, reconciliation and mutual concerns in ways that lead to the speaking of the truth and seeking good for one another.
 - (3) Mission - that we share common commitments and goals as a community. Mission refers to that external focus that grows out of relationship with one another.
- III. The result? We are the salt of the earth, the light of the world and the city on the hill – Matthew 5:13-16.
- A. Corporate reality.

The interesting thing is that if we are aware of the diverse unity of the body of Christ; if we are bringing who we each are to the community; if we are loving (that is caring for one another as well as being each other's best advocates and protectors), then the result is a corporate identity that others can see.

When we enjoy each other (fellowship), when we challenge and help one another grow (accountability) and when we share goals and things that we are working on together (mission) then we have a corporate identity.

Jesus talks about this corporate identity and says that what it means is that we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world and the city on the hill.

As you came in this morning you received an envelope with a little salt in it. Take those out now and open them and look at the salt there. Would it be enough to salt your eggs at lunch today? Would it be enough for the chili for your whole family? Would it be enough for a dinner for 50? What about for a whole country or the whole world?

One grain of salt, one photon of light, one house on a hill none of them really make much of a difference. But a ton of salt, a few hundred photons of light, and a big city on a hill those are all things that the world can see and respond to.

Jesus says there is something about His community, about His group of followers, about His family that when we come together, we are the salt, the light and the city.

We let our light shine before all people so that they will see this light and glorify God. People will be curious; they will be incredulous; they will inquire. The source of this light they will find is not just one or two remarkable human beings but dozens of normal human beings reflecting like mirrors the awesome light of God.

It is as a community that we can impact the world around us. That is one of the reasons that when students come and ask about starting an Inter-varsity group at their campus, my first

advice is find some other Christians to pray with because it is the community of God that can be salt and light on campus, or wherever it is that there is a group of Christians to be seen – in your work, in your social network, in your family.

And we need to connect the world with the groups of salt and light and houses that we are. Do you love baseball – take a friend from church and a friend from work to a game? Do you love theatre - take a friend from school and a friend from church to a play? Do you love basketball – play with a wide variety of your friends so that salt can get out there. What do you like to do – are you creating situations where a bit of salt can flavor a bit of your life (and make sure you don't over salt or your non-church friends will feel overwhelmed).

B. What it takes to have corporate impact.

In order for us to have a corporate impact there are a few basics that need to happen.

- (1) Commitment to a community – in order for there to be a corporate impact there needs to be a community. That involves people making a commitment to a community. I see this on campus all the time -- students involved in everything and as a result they are really connected to no group. This commitment to community is a risk and a step of faith and the act in itself will change our relationship to the group. When we wander around and look for churches for months or even years then we lose many of the benefits of community because we are not committed to a group of people.
- (2) Commitment to prioritize making relationships in the community. But of course if we really want to be a part of the community it is not enough to make a decision about the community – one must prioritize this community. I don't just mean – I'll be there (I'll be there is settled when you make a commitment to be a part of a community). What I mean here is that building relationships in the group is a priority. Time is spent to build friendships. Dinner invitations are given. Social events happen. Road trips occur. Priority

is given to building relationships -- whatever that looks like for you. That may mean coffee or that may mean basketball, whatever that means for you to prioritize building relationships in the community.

- (3) Commitment to vulnerability in this community. It is not enough to do these things we also must commit to being vulnerable in the community. It is the decision to reveal yourself, who you really are in community and with others. That means being aware of what is going on in your life and thinking about who you can share back and forth with. When we first start dating someone we want to show only our good side and that is true in all relationships – but eventually for the dating relationship or friendship to be real then we need stop showing only our “date” selves and share our real selves.

Let me tell you something about this potluck we call church.

1. We all have dishes to pass.
2. We all need to share our dishes because it is only when all the dishes come together that a real feast becomes possible and that we are all satisfied.
3. None of us need to be ashamed of what we bring. Nor should we arrogantly think that what we bring is all that is needed.
4. but, if you don't come, if you don't share, if you hide who you are then the dinner will have something missing. And all of us will lose out.
5. This potluck welcomes everyone – because the host is the God of Love who longs to see everyone sitting down at the table eating good food.
6. We need to invite others to come to the potluck – because they need good food and because we need what they will bring. God loves to see a full table and so do we!
7. Come and be a part of this great and amazing potluck that is called church.

Make sure you don't miss the beans and rice, the spaghettios, or the shrimp Jell-O!

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:1-13:8a

¹Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, ⁹to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

¹²The 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. ¹³For 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.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

¹⁶And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in

fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not

delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:13-16

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.