

One Body, Many Parts

Pastor Charlie Berthoud

Sunday, November 16, 2025

“One Body, Many Parts” | 1 Peter 4:10 | Pastor Charlie Berthoud

Today's sermon is going to be a GAS!

According to google, the phrase "this is gonna be a gas" It's an informal, old-fashioned idiom that originated in the 1960s and 70s to describe an event or experience that will be very “enjoyable, fun, or exciting,” or “cool, entertaining, and worthwhile.”

I'm not sure how cool or fun this sermon will be, but hopefully it will be worthwhile. The real reason it will be a GAS is because of three words that I want to focus on. The first is GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE

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S

We are ten days away from Thanksgiving, the one day of the year that we are almost mandated to be grateful. And for good reason: Mental health professionals remind us regularly that cultivating an attitude of gratitude is good for us.

The apostle Paul challenges us:

Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
--1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

In her classic book *Traveling Mercies*, Anne Lamott wrote about her two favorite prayers:

“Help me, help me, help me” and
“Thank you, thank you, thank you.”



A thank you prayer is always appropriate, and in November it's especially appropriate.

Some people try to make November a month of daily gratitude. Maybe you want to get an index card or a start a note on your phone and write down something for which you're grateful every day: A cup of coffee. The sunshine. A smile from a stranger.

Or you could share your gratitude around the dinner table, with each person sharing something for which they are grateful.

Or you could get on your knees (or maybe just bow your head) every morning and pray: “Thank you God....”

It’s too easy for us to fall into cynicism, negativity, bitterness, and despair. Gratitude is good.

Today is sort of a **GRATITUDE Sunday**. I invite you to join me in a spirit of gratitude for all the people and programs of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

That leads us to our second letter

GRATITUDE APPRECIATION S

I lived in Richmond Virginia—the capital of the confederacy—for almost seven years, and during that time, I hear the word “appreciate” more than I ever had previously, or since. Our southern siblings like to express their appreciation. “I appreciate your effort.” “I appreciate your kindness.”

More directly “I appreciate YOU.” Or more accurately, “I ‘preciate you.”

Some churches have Music Appreciation Sunday, and Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Sunday, or Staff Appreciation Sunday.

Today could be considered our **Ministry Appreciation Sunday**.

My hope this GAS of a sermon is that we will more intentionally appreciate each other, for the variety of gifts, skills, talents, and commitments in this church.

The apostle Paul recognized this in writing to the Corinthian church, a church that faced some serious conflicts. He used the image of a human body to describe his **appreciation** for the wonder of church, where a variety of people come together and do great things together. Notice how he celebrates the diversity and recognizes that the one body suffers and rejoices together.

Listen for God’s word.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would 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. And if the ear would 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. If the whole

body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members yet one body. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Thanks be to God for the words of scripture. We are one body with many different parts.

So we have gratitude, appreciation, for being part of this one body, and then each of those different parts of the body is called to the S word, which is SERVICE

You heard about service back in the Children's Time, with the Bible verse:

And serve each other according to the gift each person has received,
as good managers of God's diverse gifts. (CEB)

In more traditional language the NRSVUE has it as:

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

The good news of the gospel is that God sent Jesus into the world, to proclaim a new reality, the kingdom of God. And Jesus called people to turn away from selfishness and foolishness and turn to new purpose, new meaning. He called four fishermen to leave their nets behind and to fish for people, to refocus on people, to love and to serve their neighbors.

So service is a primary goal of the Christian life. Today could be **SERVICE SUNDAY**.

I'm grateful for and I appreciate the many ways we collectively serve each other through the ministry of this church and beyond.

In a spirit of gratitude and appreciation, I want to share some photos as a sampler of the ways that Covenant people are serving God through this congregation, for the way we really are one body with many parts.

I thank God for

- Our musicians who make a joyful noise
- Our young families who support and encourage each other
- Our partnership with Stephens Elementary and the healthy snacks we provide
- Our dedicated landscapers, weeders, and rakers
- Our Guatemala partnership and the Marketplace donors and volunteers
- Our youth connection volunteers and the youth themselves who support each other
- Our building and grounds team who help keep this building in good shape
- Our deacons who provide coffee and donuts every Sunday
- Our faithful caregiving and praying and making time for each other

And so much more... (photos on next page)

Before this GAS of a sermon concludes, I'd like to give a few of you a chance to express your gratitude and appreciation for the ways we serve God and each other here at Covenant. I'm going to walk around with a microphone with the hope that some of you would be willing to express your gratitude and appreciation for the service of people here at Covenant.

I invite you to be very specific to begin by saying "I thank God for...."

[congregation members shared many expressions of gratitude]

One final thought: sometimes people tell me that they can't "do" anything to serve God through the church anymore. Some are too busy with family and work, some are limited by mobility and age.

For those of you who feel like you can't serve God through this church by going on mission trips, or singing in the choir, or climbing up ladders, or going to committee meetings, or even just getting to church, you can serve by being grateful and appreciative.

You can show that gratitude and appreciation with a smile and a kind word, or with a note or an email or phone call, or even with prayer.

We are one body with many parts, and every one of us matters. Together we can do great things. Thanks be to God. Let us pray

God we thank you that in Jesus Christ you love us and bring us together as your people and send us out to serve. Help us to know that each of us is a valuable part of this church, of your body, and that each of us can serve in this church and in the world. Amen.

