

Sermon "IT'S ONLY A NAIL" March 15, 2020

1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 24-27

Notes from "HE CHOSE THE NAILS by Max Lucado

They built a new church building and people came from far and wide to see it. They admired its beauty! Up on the roof, a little nail heard the people praising everything about the lovely structure-except the nail! No one even knew he was there, and he became angry and jealous.

"If I am that insignificant, nobody will miss me if I quit!" So the nail then released its hold, slid down the roof, and fell in the mud.

That night it rained and rained. Soon, the shingle that had no nail blew away, and the roof began to leak. The water streaked the walls and the beautiful murals. The plaster began to fall, the carpet was stained, and the pulpit Bible was ruined by water. All this because a little nail decided to quit!

But what of the nail? While holding the shingle, it was obscure but it was also useful. Buried in the mud it was just as obscure, but now it was useless and would soon be eaten up by rust!

The moral of the story – every member is important to the church! You may, like the nail, feel obscure at times, but just like the nail, your absence is felt. When you are not present for worship, in some way the body of Christ hurts. We are ALL a part of God's ministry.

The importance of the nail is the idea of our sermon today. A small nail holding one shingle on the church roof has a very important part to do in the body of Christ. And if that nail has an important work to do, imagine what you and I have to do in the body of Christ.

Jesus in our text this morning that Bruce read, is speaking about the body of Christ.

The body of Christ, the church is made up of many parts and each part works independently, yet together to make a whole, complete workable unit. All parts may be different but God has made them compatible, so when one part is broken, the whole body suffers. For Jesus said that in vs. 18-20 God has placed each part

in the body just as he wanted it to be. If all the parts were the same, how

could there be a body? As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one

body.

The body of Christ is made up of those who have experienced the brokenness of this world, sorrow, grief, hunger, poverty, all those things that remind us that we are not perfect, those are the people who are in the body of Christ.

Jesus is telling us that as our lives live in the brokenness of this world, we are blessed. We don't need to be perfect or to pretend that the sinfulness of this world does not affect our lives.

We are blessed regardless of what we are experiencing.

1 Jesus is telling us that we are like that nail, we need to hold the body of Christ together by loving each other and working together for the glory of God.

Billy Graham says "Church-goers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out."

We need each other in the body of Christ. Though we might think of ourselves like that nail, we are indeed important in the body of Christ. When we cling together the body grows and the light shines.

This is demonstrated very clearly in the following:

Randy Frazee has written a book called "The Connecting Church." He has a son who was born without a left hand. One day in Sunday School the teacher was talking with the children about the church. To illustrate her point she folded her hands together and said, "Here's the church, here's the steeple; open the doors and see all the people."

She asked the class to do it along with her – obviously not thinking about his son's inability to pull this exercise off. Then it dawned on her that the boy wouldn't be able to join in.

Before she could do anything about it, the little boy next to his son, a friend of his from the time they were babies, reached out his left hand and said, "Let's do it together." The two boys proceeded to join their hands together to make the church and the steeple.

Frazee says, "This hand exercise should never be done again by an individual because the church is not a collection of individuals, but the one body of Christ."

Let's do it together is the key phrase here. As the body of Christ, we must do it together. We must help each other in our faith. We must touch each other with the Spirit of Christ. We in the body of Christ are important to each other. WE touch each other in that body of Christ. We touch when we reach out a hand to say good morning. We touch when we offer a shoulder for one to lean on. We touch when we extend a hand to help another through grief.

The following story is about how touching each other in the body of Christ, reaching out to each other in worship can be very Christ like.

TOUCH IN CHURCH by Ann Weems. Reaching for Rainbows What is all this touching in church?

It used to be a person could come to church and sit in the pew and not be bothered by all this friendliness and certainly not by touching.

I used to come to church and leave untouched.

Now I have to be nervous about what's expected of me. I have to worry about

2 responding to the person sitting next to me.

Oh, I wish it could be the way it used to be; I could just ask the person next to me: How are you?

And the person could answer: Oh, just fine, And we'd both go home strangers who have known each other for twenty years. But now the pastor asks us to look at each other.

I'm worried about that hurt look I saw in that woman's eyes.

Now I'm concerned, because when the minister asks us to pass the peace, The man next to me held my hand so tightly I wondered if he had been touched in years.

Now I'm upset because the lady next to me cried and then apologized And said it was because I was so kind and that she needed A friend right now. Now I have to get involved. Now I have to suffer when this community suffers. Now I have to be more than a person coming to observe a service.

That man last week told me I'd never know how much I'd touched his life.

All I did was smile and tell him I understood what it was to be lonely.

Lord, I'm not big enough to touch and be touched!

The stretching scares me. What if I disappoint somebody? What if I'm too pushy? What if I cling too much? What if somebody ignores me? "Then they say to Pass the peace."

"The pastor says: "The peace of God be with you." And we say "And with you."

Lord, I can't resist meaning it! I'm touched by it, I'm enveloped by it! I find I do care about that person next to me!

I find I am involved! And I'm scared. O Lord, be here beside me. You touch me, Lord, so that I can touch and be touched!

So that I can care and be cared for!

So that I can share my life with all those others that belong to you! All this touching in church – Lord, it's changing me!

It's only a nail, but let's touch one another and be the nail that holds us together.
Amen
