

October 6: World Communion Sunday

Series: Why Do You Buy That?

Message: #5: Power in Numbers

Text: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted.” -Proverbs 27:5-6

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16 (CEB)

Memory Verse: “Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many.” -1 Corinthians 12:12

Blurb: It’s easy to break a single stick. Yet when you hold a bunch of sticks, it is very hard to break them all together. Do you feel like you are cracking and splintering? Then you need to join the rest of the “sticks” this Sunday at worship. It’s World Communion Sunday and we’re celebrating how we have the Body of Christ as Jesus’ gift of support for us!

Opening Song: *Goodness of God* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Holy Communion - Open Communion

World Communion Sunday

Everyone needs a bulletin to know your station.

Memory Verse:

“Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many.” -1 Corinthians 12:12

Worship Music Set:

The Way

Many Gifts, One Spirit

Great Are You Lord

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Grow Moment: Grow Groups -Andrew

Serve Moment: Trunk-or-Treat -Andrew

Message: Why Do You Buy That? #5: Power in Numbers

Bumper video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VM2eLhvsSM> (60 seconds)
Coca-Cola, 1971 - 'Hilltop' | 'I'd like to buy the world a Coke' by Billy Davis

PP#1: Image for “It’s The Real Thing” from a Coke commercial.

Remember this? This was an iconic Coke commercial from 1971. It’s ranked in the Top Ten advertisement campaigns of all time. *Campaign Magazine* called it, “one of the best-loved and most influential ads in TV history” [2007 *Campaign Magazine*]. After the turbulent ’60s, there was a weary-ness of how people around the world were locked in anger, war, struggle, arguments, turmoil and division. Sound familiar? Pretty relevant today, don’t you think? So, trying to capture this desire for global harmony, especially by young people, Coca-Cola gathered 1,000 teens from all over the world on a hilltop in Italy—this commercial is known as the “Hilltop” commercial—and had them sing together in harmony this catchy song expressing their hope for harmony in our world.

“I’d like to buy the world a home, and furnish it with love. Grow apple trees, and honey bees, and snow-white turtle doves.” Can you hear the idyllic vision of peace? Stop the conflict. Let’s find a way to get along! “I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony. I’d like to buy the world a Coke and keep it company.” Notice the linking of the desire for harmony among peoples to the drinking of Coke. The tag line is powerful: “It’s the real thing...what world wants today.” Now, is that harmony, or is that Coca-Cola? The answer is, “Yes!” Coke and peace go together. Yearn for peace? Buy someone a Coke! Maybe the universal love for Coke can help bring people together!

The marketing firm that created this commercial for Coke had two executives grounded at an airport in Ireland with flight cancellations. They noticed all the people around them all crabby and frustrated at the airport. But a bit later, they saw two people sitting together drinking Cokes and having a friendly, happy conversation. One executive wrote on a napkin, “I’d like to buy the world a Coke” and handed off to the other. That became the foundation for this commercial!

The commercial was so captivating that they took the song and released it as a full-length pop song, dropping the references to Coke. It reached #7 on the charts! As for the commercial, it’s been reworked over and over again, especially at Christmas.

PP#2: Why Do We Buy That? #5: Power in Numbers

“Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted.” -Proverbs 27:5-6

Why Do We Buy That? Power in numbers. Proverbs 27:5-6 says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted.”

Our reality is that we all hunger for that harmony and unity, but we don’t make it to the hilltop very often. Much of the time we are looking only at ourselves, thinking we’re right, and selfishly demanding our way. There are tons of commercials that show us that reality, too, aren’t there? Think of Twix, the ongoing left or right side argument. Or the big Mike and Ike breakup...buy the candy that has the name you like better and the other crossed off. Or “tastes great” vs. “less filling” hollering matches. Or—yes, I’m going to go there!—the Oreo war: which is better, the cookie or cream? Here’s one of those commercials, a *quiet* disagreement in a library!

Commercial Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueqbTJhmXH4> (34 seconds)
Funny OREO Whisper Fight - NFL Super Bowl XLVII Commercial - 2013

PP#3: *Image: which part of the Oreo is better, cookie or cream?*

Did you hear it? “Choose your side!” Battle lines drawn! If you don’t agree with me, you’re wrong, and I smash a chair across your back! Sure, it’s a spoof, but like we’ve been seeing, commercials use humor and extreme to tap into a deeper truth. And that truth is our tendency to be stubborn, selfish, thinking I’m right and you’re wrong, and justifying hostility to the other who is different, or thinks differently, or who behaves differently. 1970s, and still today!

Why do we buy that? Because we know both commercials are true about us! We know that inner struggle: in our best moments we long to join that hilltop in Italy, but most of the time we’re fighting with our neighbor in the library.

So, trapped in our conundrum, we look to Jesus for help. Save us from ourselves, dear Lord, and lead us into a new reality! And the answer Jesus gives to us, is: *the Church*. Jesus died on the cross to defeat our sin; He rose from the grave to defeat our death; He comes to us to offer us the ability to live differently; He invites us to become His disciple; and the moment we say we are willing to follow Him, He says, “Join the crowd!”

PP#4: *Image for following Jesus not as a single follower, but in community, a church.*

This is not a two-person relationship. It’s not just you and Jesus! It’s a community. The idea of a solo relationship with God, with Jesus, is strange to the Bible, a foreign concept. Jesus starts His own ministry by assembling 12 others to live—day-by-day—in community together. He made it His custom to gather in worship with others regularly. He preached and taught constantly about God’s bigger Kingdom. His final command to His followers at the Last Supper is for them to love one another. And then, as He prays later that night, as He is preparing to face the cross, is He prays for the unity of His followers.

God made us in His image, and that image is relational and social. We are made to be a part of His family. And so Jesus-followers don’t follow Jesus alone. We follow together, as a church.

The very first Christians, when they told others about Jesus, they called each other into community. Let’s take a look at Ephesians 4, the first 16 verses. Paul is talking to the Christians in Ephesus, teaching them how to live as true Jesus-followers.

PP#5: Ephesians 4:1-16 (CEB)

1 Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from God. 2 Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love, 3 and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. 4 You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all.

Ephesians 4, verse 1, “Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord [Paul is writing from prison, he was imprisoned for being a Christian], I encourage you to live as people worthy of the call you received from God [the call to become His children, His followers]. Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. [Notice how these are ways we interact with others.] Accept each other with love, [Now, don’t skim over that familiar word too quickly: love. That’s actually a pretty big word. It colors everything else. We’ll unpack that more in a minute.] Accept each other with love, and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. [Do

you see the priority of unity? But not just any unity. It's unity in God's Spirit. That's what ties you together...not Coke!] You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all." When we are redeemed by God, we are part of His family. And God wants us to take that seriously! We are one together!

PP#6: Power in Numbers

The Body Needs You:

1. God gives you as a gift to the community

The Church is Jesus' answer to our inner struggle. But before we talk how *you* need the Church, Paul first talks about how *the Church* needs you! You are important to God's Church, God's plan for reaching others in our world. You are crucial in God's family. If you're not there, the whole suffers. You see, God has placed a portion of His giftings, important abilities, into you: gifts not *for you*, but *for His Church*. If you don't join with others, then you are keeping these gifts captive.

PP#7: Ephesians 4:1-16 (CEB)

11 He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

12 His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ 13 until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son. God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.

Verse 11, "He gave some [gifts to be] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son."

You know...it's very common for people to tell me that they are spiritual, but not religious. Last month there was some problems with the air conditioner in the parsonage. A guy came over and had to crawl around the attic. He asked me if I were the owner or renter. I explained that it is a church-owned home, and that I am a renter. He asked me what I did. I told him I was a pastor. Immediately I could see him tense up. But he simply said, "Cool." Having the door open, I asked him, "So, do you go to church?" He said, "No. That's not really for me." But then, he quickly countered, "But I'm a believer, you know. I believe in Jesus. I'm serious about that. But I really don't go to church. It's...well...not for me."

I knew what he was too kind to say. "I like Jesus, but it's the people in churches I don't really care for. It's full of people who are hypocrites, mean, judgmental, and selfish. All they want is money. They want everything their way. They really don't care about me."

In fact, this is perhaps the most common attitude about God I hear: people want God, but they don't want to deal with the mess of churches. And that may also be some of the draw of the trend lately of large churches. I can get some God, but still remain somewhat distant from having to commit to dealing with others.

PP#8: Power in Numbers

The Body Needs You:

1. God gives you as a gift to the community
2. We can do more together than separately

Well, Paul is reminding us, we who like Jesus, that Jesus' church needs you. And one of the major reasons why the Church needs you, is that together we can do so much more than we can do alone. You are *one* witness for Jesus, and as powerful as your witness is, it is compounded when you link with others. Together, we can reach out and have an impact in the lives of families in our neighborhood. One door giving out smiles and candy on Halloween: good, yes. But, how much more effective is a whole parking lot full of people all having a Trunk-or-Treat party with the community! How can you respond to the hurricanes this fall? How about adding your help with those of thousands of others, and bring large-scale help to large-scale destruction. How can you combat human trafficking? On my own: a little. But I can come together with my church and make a much bigger difference. The Body needs each of its parts.

I want you to see a couple of cute commercials created for De Lijn [Da-LAY], a public transportation company in Belgium. Their main message? It's better to go together than try to go it alone. Take a look at this first one.

Commercial Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgCIKGIYJ1A> (32 seconds)

De Lijn - Mieren - ENG [Ants vs. Anteater]

How do you take on the big, bad ant eater? You can't as a single ant, but together, all the ants can!

And here's the other side of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ needs you, but you also need the Body of Christ!

PP#9: Ephesians 4:1-16 (CEB)

11 He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.
12 His purpose was to equip God's people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ
13 until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God's Son. God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.

Let's go back to Ephesians 4. The last sentence of verse 13, "God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ."

Did you hear the big picture? What is God's hope, desire, plan, for each of us? To become mature Christians. That means, says Paul, that we don't focus on how much we are better than we were before Jesus—how we are no longer like we used to be...looking back—but that we look forward, we desire and yearn and strive to be more like Christ, our standard...and not just a little bit, but fully! And that fullness looks like unity with the Body of Christ. We live with others, as community. It's living out our love in our behaviors, not just once in a while, but consistently! Here's Jesus' secret in the Church: we grow in holy living when we grow with each other.

PP#10: Ephesians 4:1-16 (CEB)

14 As a result, we aren't supposed to be infants any longer who can be tossed and blown around by every wind that comes from teaching with deceitful scheming and the tricks people play to deliberately mislead others. 15 Instead, by speaking the truth with love, let's grow in every way into Christ, 16 who is the Head. The whole body grows from Him, as it is joined and held together by all the supporting ligaments. The body makes itself grow in that it builds itself up with love as each one does its part.

Verse 14, “As a result, we aren’t supposed to be infants any longer who can be tossed and blown around by every wind that comes from teaching with deceitful scheming and the tricks people play to deliberately mislead others. Instead, by speaking the truth with love, let’s grow in every way into Christ, who is the head. The whole body grows from Him, as it is joined and held together by all the supporting ligaments. The body makes itself grow in that it builds itself up with love as each one does its part.”

My air conditioner guy was right: We can be solitary Christians, we can be saved and go to heaven, all without other Christians. But Jesus wants to tackle that inner struggle we have, between singing on the hilltop and fighting in the library. And He’s telling us that if we want to grow and mature, then we need others. It has been my experience that those believers who are not connected to a local church, remain spiritual infants.

Now, usually we talk a lot about the “sweet fellowship” that other believers can provide us: the care, support, help, and encouragement. They hold us, hug us, lift us up. They help us overcome whatever problems we face. Take a look at this other De Lijn [da-LAY] commercial.

Commercial Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBnvGS4u3F0> (31 seconds)

De Lijn - Penguins [Penguins on ice raft vs. Orca]

We’ll do one more commercial, similar point. This is from Canada, promoting the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

Commercial Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WqPKa7lkV8> (30 seconds)

Stronger When We Work Together: Crabs

PP#11: Power in Numbers

The Body Needs You

You Need the Body:

1. Support and encouragement
2. Accountability and Correction

We need the body to help us face our Orcas, our seagulls. But, I’ll tell you, even *better than* support and care is the advice, correction, and accountability other disciples provide us, as they call us past our own laziness and selfishness. Proverbs 27:5-6 says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted.” We tend to not want to be called to the harder work of improving ourselves. We often want to avoid the accountability that others can give us. If I don’t have to admit that I parented badly, I can just ignore it. But the value of the Body is that people love me too much to leave me the way I am. They call me to change. They are invested in me, they love me, and they want me to improve. If I stay away, it’s easier, yes, but I also then avoid growing.

PP#12: Power in Numbers

The Body Needs You

You Need the Body:

1. Support and encouragement
2. Accountability and Correction
3. Opportunities to practice godly love

And don't gloss over this: the community provides those opportunities to practice real, godly love. Remember earlier when we noticed Paul calling us to love? Godly love is a lot of work, right? It means doing all those selfless things I would rather avoid: like dealing with annoying people. Other Christians are sinners saved by grace, just like you. They don't do everything right, and at times we can be very difficult, immature, and hurtful. People avoid church because they don't want to deal with this, either. But what that actually means, however, is that they don't want to do the hard work of godly love. When other believers fail to behave well, it becomes opportunities for us to practice the really difficult parts of love: forgiveness, bearing with one another, and learning to get along with people who are difficult. We get plenty of opportunities to do all that in other settings, for sure, but it's even deeper when doing it among fellow Christians. Once again, people usually use separation from church as a thinly-veiled excuse for not having to practice the hard love that Jesus calls us to. It's easier simply to avoid them! Avoiding church keeps us from having to deal with our mess, and other people's messes, too. But Jesus' own example, remember, was to spend copious amounts of time with disciples who all betrayed and abandoned Him!

When you're honest with yourself, don't you notice this in your life? It's easier to skip worship, fellowship, grow groups, service opportunities, and stay in bed, or go fishing, or work on your project. But when you do, don't you notice that you really don't grow?

So, if all you want is a little Jesus, then just put your belief in Him. But if you are listening to Him, and hear His calling you into full and abundant life—a life heading towards holiness, and maturity—then you also need to hear Him telling you to be a part of His Body. There are orcas to face, and harmonies to sing.

The real thing, what the world needs today, is the Body of Christ. The Body needs you, and you need the Body.

Holy Communion: World Communion Sunday

We're going to do Holy Communion a bit differently today. We want to express the community we have together in Christ. So, we're going to break down into smaller groups and receive Holy Communion that way. This will also make it possible for us to all drink the juice and eat the bread, all at the same time. One loaf, one body, all eating together in unity!

Today is World Communion Sunday. It's the day we celebrate that we are part of Jesus' bigger Church, not just here, but the whole world over. Christians around the globe are celebrating Holy Communion today. It marks our solidarity, our unity, and our oneness. We hear again Jesus command to love one another.

But as we celebrate our unity, we also remember that parts of our body are hurting. There are Christians in our world who are suffering because of their faith. And just as Jesus shares in our sufferings, so, as His Body, when some suffer, we all suffer.

There are six tables around the sanctuary, and each one has a country in the world where Christians are being persecuted. In your bulletin you will see a card that randomly assigns you to one of these tables. Here's a slide showing which tables are which.

We're going to pray, and then I invite you to go to your table. If you need to sit rather than stand, I invite you to choose this front table, as you can sit in the front pews.

When you get to your table, please first go around and each person introduce yourself to the others. So, we pray, then you go to your table, where you take a moment and all introduce yourselves. Then just hang on for the next part. Ready? Let's pray.

[Pray for the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' command to love one another.] Amen. Please go find your table.

[Hymn: *When in Our Music God Is Glorified*, Verses 1-2.]

[People move to a table.]

[People introduce themselves.]

I want to invite the oldest person at the table, or perhaps some other volunteer—to read through the poster for the group. There are three prayer points on each poster. As a group—silently, or out loud, however each group decides—pray for these three needs. So, one person read the poster, and as a group you pray for the three points. Ready? Go ahead.

[Each group reads and prays.]

[Hymn: Verses 3 & 4]

I now invite you all to take a piece of bread and hold it.

[Words of Institution for the bread.]

As all parts of one Body, many pieces of one loaf, I invite us to all now eat the bread together in remembrance and faith.

[We all eat the bread.]

I invite you each to take a cup of juice and hold it.

[Words of Institution for the juice.]

As all parts of one Body, each drinking from the same cup, I invite us all to now drink together in remembrance and faith.

[We all drink the juice.]

With the Body of Christ all through history and all over the world, let's pray together the prayer that Jesus taught His body to pray. "Our Father, who is in heaven....Amen."

As we return to our seats, we sing the last verse of our hymn.

[Hymn, verse 5]

Closing Song: *The Wonderful Cross*

Memory Verse:

"Christ is just like the human body—a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many." -1 Corinthians 12:12

Announcements: -Pastor David

Keep your card and pray for that country and God's family there.
See you all again Wednesday!

Benediction: -Pastor David