

One Body; Many Parts: Adventures in the Arnon, Part 2; Series: Loving the Lord in the Land

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

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If you weren't here last week, a tiny little recap – as this message is Part 2 of 2. So, last week I told you about the waterfall at the end of the Arnon Gorge and how our team made our way behind the falls and then George told us that we were going to jump through the falls, in order to feel the love of God come down on us with all that pressure and all that force.



I watched as several guys jumped through the falls, and then I went through (Come on, girls!), but I didn't get through. I got stuck, face-up, underneath the falls. I don't know quite how long I was underneath, but I thought I wasn't going to make it – that this was it... that they were going to be pulling my body out of the gorge. But then Jeff reached in and grabbed my arm, and pulled me out. And I was so grateful – and the body of Christ there gathered around me with prayer and hugs and all the right things – and that was the point of last week... that there is one

body, but many parts, and we suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who rejoice and take care of each other and all that...

But today, I want to focus in on a learning that I have been unpacking ever since the gorge. You see, there was a split second when Jeff grabbed my arm to pull me out of the waterfall, that I didn't want to take his help. That split second was so split that it didn't translate into any actual resistance or hesitation, but I know that I had this fleeting thought of frustration and defeat. I had wanted to make it through that waterfall By Myself.

Something I have been learning a lot about lately is that though I am one person, I have many different parts (used sections of an orange to illustrate the different parts).



The parts of Riley in the movie, *Inside Out*.

So as the physical body is not made up of one part, but of many... so also, the internal person is not made up of one part but of many.

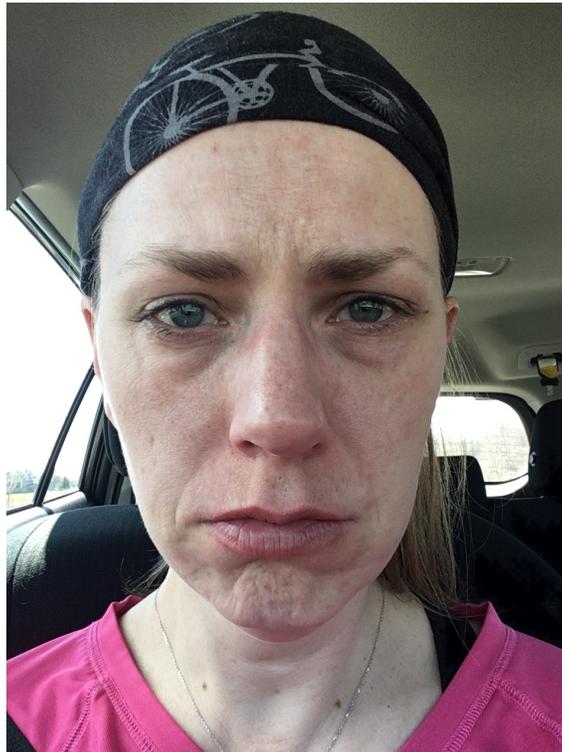
I have a part of me that is strong and independent.



This part of me was widowed, watched my daughter go through cancer treatments, and left a really messy job situation – and she survived. This part of me has a theme song, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger!” by Kelly Clarkson (and by the way, she borrowed that quote from Freidrich Nietzsche). This part of me has a hash tag: #wecandohardthings. And a Bible verse: Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through him who gives me strength.

I have often thought this is the real me. That this is all of who I am.

But this is only a part of me. I also have a part of me that can’t do all the hard things...



This is a picture of me after saying good bye to my girls before leaving for the Middle East. This part of me isn’t strong... it needs help sometimes... This part of me doesn’t surface very often. I like to keep her in the back. Hidden away. I remember once someone in a small group I was in suggested that I was needy and the strong part of me absolutely raged. How *dare* you suggest that I am needy! The needy part of me stepped further back into the shadows.

And there are more parts of me – and more parts of you... You know this is true. You and I talk like this all the time... “There’s part of me that wants to volunteer for this opportunity and another part of me that is concerned that I’m spreading myself too thin.” “There is a part of me that wants to go out with my friends, but there is another part of me that just wants to stay

at home and binge watch *This Is Us*.” “There is a part of me that loves my mom so much, I don’t know what I’d do without her, and another part of me that gets so upset with her!”

There are the parts that are full of joy and gratitude for this life that we get to live... and there are parts that are afraid and waiting for the other shoe to drop. There are parts that are competent and intelligent and articulate... and parts that are confused and embarrassed. There are parts that are patient and curious and parts that are angry and annoyed.

I want you to begin to consider the possibility that we must become aware of these different parts of ourselves and the important part each of them plays... and the helpful things each of these parts has to say...

The metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12 is about how the physical parts of our body are all part of the body... Even so, the many different parts of the body of Christ are all part of the body. But I call this in the outline, a Metaphor Adjacent. The physical body is also a metaphor for the interior person. Each part of you is part of your person... (paraphrased 1 Corinthians 12:15-26)

Now if the AFRAID part should say, “Because I am not a JOYFUL, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ANGRY part should say, “Because I am not PATIENT and CENTERED, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were PATIENT and CENTERED, where would the sense of ANGER at INJUSTICE be? If the whole body were ANGRY, where would the sense of GRATITUDE be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

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

This may seem a little strange, but here's the thing... If we do not acknowledge these different parts of who we are, these parts are going to show up in ways that hurt ourselves and other people. In his book, *Wholeheartedness*, Chuck De Groat writes: "To the extent that we ignore our vast inner sea with all its diversity and complexity, we inflict our dividedness on others. As Franciscan priest and author Richard Rohr writes, 'Whole people see and create wholeness wherever they go; split people see and create splits in everything and everybody.' In other words, paying attention to what's going on inside is crucial for wholehearted living and flourishing relationships" (De Groat, *Wholeheartedness*, p. 60).

Split people see and create splits in everything and everybody...



According to Matthew 23, the Pharisees were people who were split and created splits in everything and everybody. Jesus said, "Do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." (Their words say something, but their actions show that there are other things going on in there...) "They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them" (Matthew 23:3-4).

The hidden and divided parts of Sarah (Abraham's wife's) life led to her giving her maidservant, Hagar, to Abraham... and then to her abuse of her own maidservant... The unacknowledged parts of King David led him into paths of self-deception, creating splits in the lives of Bathsheba and Uriah, her husband... The splits in Judas led to his betraying Jesus.. the splits in Peter to denying Jesus.

There are lots of parts to who we are. One option is to deny or squish down or ignore the parts of ourselves that we don't like or that we are embarrassed of... the emotions that

scare us or that are unattractive. “I’m not lustful! I’m not jealous! I’m not afraid! I’m not needy!” Or perhaps we try to pray them away, like Paul tried to pray away the thorn in his flesh... “Take away my fear! Take away my neediness! Take away my shame! Take away my anger!” We can keep trying that option... but often what happens when we ignore or hate or wish away these uncomfortable emotions is that they show up and hurt people in unexpected ways.

But there is another way...



What if we saw the parts of who we are as parts that have important things to contribute to the working of our person? What if when Jesus invited us to pray for those who persecute us and to love our enemies, what if we applied that to our internal enemies? What if, instead of praying *away* those parts, what if we prayed *for* those parts... extending hospitality and love to the parts of ourselves that we are at war with... What if you could say to the angry part of yourself... well, first, recognize that it *is* a part of you – not all of you – a *part* of you... and say to it, “Hey, I see you, angry Heidi... What’s going on here? Tell me what you’re angry about? What is it that you need?” And what you might find when you acknowledge that part of yourself as a part of yourself that has something to offer... that that part of yourself calms down a little bit and you are able to make choices and decisions that are more whole. (Used a whole orange as an illustration here.) This is the wholeness of Jesus who lives in you by his Spirit... And this wholeness will spread to other people.

What we are wanting to avoid is internal *division* (see 1 Corinthians 12) that represses/boxes out/ignores parts of ourselves and then hurts ourselves and others... What we

are wanting instead is a self-awareness that comes from an internal conversation (with Christ in us, the hope of glory, at our centre) that honours the various parts so that we can live with maturity and not reactivity... This is wholehearted living... This is integrated living... This is the undivided heart of Ezekiel 11 (to which I referred in our words of assurance earlier in the service).

So, back to the Arnon... The strong and independent part of me is an important part of me. It is a part that has gotten stronger in the face of adversity and I am where I am today, in part, because of this part of me. But in the gorge, when the waters below and above were threatening to take my life, and Jeff's hand reached in to grab my arm, I needed the strong and independent part of me to step back and to let the part of me that needs and depends on others – the part of me that may even have been needy at points in my life – to take a step forward and to receive the rescue that was appropriate to my situation. And I am also here and alive today because of that needy part of me!

I want to close with a story from a Christian psychologist who coauthored a book about this kind of way of understanding ourselves (*Boundaries for Your Soul*, by Kimerbly Miller and Alison Cook). Alison told a story about the Bible Study at the shelter and the woman who was difficult to understand and just kept talking about her collection of orange peels [I had an orange peeling to illustrate]. Alison excused herself to ask her pastor what she should do... Pastor said, Listen to what she has to say... They listened attentively to her and as she felt heard and listened to, her desperate need to share started to wane... and she thanked the group for listening to her... (wanted to give some of her orange peels as a thank you) And then... "In our weekly gatherings, I have caught a glimpse of what Jesus meant when he turned the tables on the notion of the strong and the weak—when we all come together, there is tremendous spiritual power. And the same truth applies to the parts of your soul: What might happen inside of you as you gather [all the parts of yourself] and listen attentively to each one..." (p. 121).

When I think about each of us in this room, not just as persons, but as persons with parts inside – parts that need to be heard and loved by ourselves, by each other, and by Jesus – I feel a sense of hope. Paul felt that hope. He wrote in Romans 7 – the good that I want to do, that I do not do. And the evil I do not want to do, that I do! Who will rescue me from this body

that is subject to death (and splits and division!)? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(move to communion table)

“Jesus wants not just to influence us, but to rescue us; not just to inform us, but to heal us; not just to give us something to think about, but to feed us, and to feed us with himself.” N.T.

Wright.

This rescue, this healing, this feeding, this re-integration of who we are – this is what Jesus has for us... and he makes us into whole people who see and create wholeness wherever we go...