

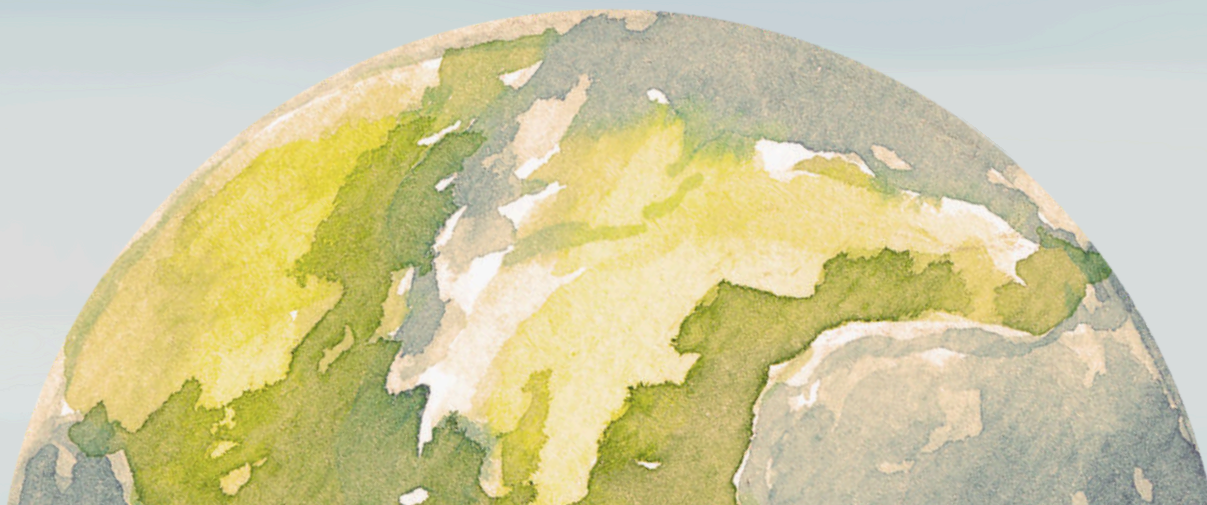


Global Ministries

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
and the United Church of Christ



WORLD COMMUNION
SUNDAY 2025
SERMON



Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 12 -27

Sermon Title: Honouring the "Weaker" Members

INTRODUCTION

Beloved in Christ, I greet you in the mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Today, we join millions of Christians around the globe to celebrate **World Communion Sunday**.

From Africa to Asia, from Europe to the Americas, from the islands of the Pacific to the deserts of the Middle East – the family of God gathers at one table: different languages, different cultures, different traditions, yet one loaf, one cup, one Saviour.

Here in Zambia, we know the beauty of unity in diversity. We come from **73 ethnic groups**, speaking many languages and observing diverse traditions, but we proudly say, "*One Zambia, One Nation*." Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 12 remind us of this truth in the church: **though we are many, we are one body in Christ**. And the surprising part is this – in God's Kingdom, the so-called *weaker members* are given greater honour.

It is worth noting some of the key themes that Paul raises in the passage.

Firstly, the ideas of unity in diversity (vv. 12–13)

Paul states that just as the human body is one, though it has many parts, so is the body of Christ. He further points out that through baptism in one Spirit, all believers — Jew or Greek, slave or free — are made one. Thus, the mentioned diversity is not a threat but a gift for the unity of the church.

Secondly, Paul mentions the necessity of every member (vv. 14–20)

From Paul's perspective, no part of the body can claim it doesn't belong ("Because I am not an eye, I do not belong..."). Inferiority complexes and exclusion have no place; not every member is essential. God Himself arranged the body to function with interdependence.

Thirdly, interdependence and mutual care (vv. 21–26)

The stronger cannot despise the weaker ("I don't need you"). On the contrary, weaker or less "honourable" members receive greater honour and care, just as hidden but vital body parts are protected. Amazingly, in Paul's language, when one member suffers, the whole body suffers; when one rejoices, all rejoice.

Fourthly, Paul ultimately highlights Christ as the source of unity (v. 27)

In this regard, the church is not just like a body; it **is** the body of Christ. Paul brings forth the reality that believers are individually members, yet collectively part of Christ's living presence in the world.

While preaching or teaching for this passage can take many perspectives, allow me to focus on the theme **"Honouring the Weaker Members"** through the following points:

1. God's Kingdom Upsets Human Hierarchies

Paul writes, *"On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable"* (v. 22).

In African society, as in many parts of the world, people are often valued for their wealth, social status, or influence. But in God's Kingdom, things are reversed. The child, the widow, the poor farmer, the unemployed youth – these are not forgotten; they are indispensable.

Think about Zambian culture: in a traditional village, every member contributes to community life. Even the elderly grandmother who no longer farms plays a vital role. She is the storyteller, the keeper of wisdom, the one who blesses the children. The community is not complete without her.

In the same way, Paul says the church is incomplete without its so-called weaker members. Their prayers, their faith, and their endurance are treasures in God's eyes.

2. Communion is a Table of Equality

At the Lord's Table, the ground is level: the politician and the peasant kneel side by side. The miner from the Copperbelt and the fisherman from Luapula, the businesswoman in Lusaka and the market trader in Chisokone – all are welcomed with the same grace.

In Corinth, Paul was addressing divisions where the rich despised the poor. Today, World Communion Sunday reminds us that the Lord's Supper breaks down every barrier – tribal, economic, educational, denominational, and continental, among others.

Just as the famous African *philosophy of 'Ubuntu' – 'I am because we are'* – emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity, so too at Communion we declare that none of us can stand alone. We are only complete when we all sit together at the Lord's Table and treat each other as equals despite our evident differences.

3. The Church Must Live This Reversal Daily

It is one thing to share bread and a cup on Sunday. It is another thing to live this message on Monday.

If God gives greater honour to the weaker members, then we must do the same in our communities. This means:

- Giving special attention to orphans and vulnerable children.
- Valuing the voices of women and youth in the life of the church.
- Honouring those who serve quietly, like church cleaners and ushers whose work is often unnoticed but indispensable.
- Advocating for justice where the poor are exploited – whether in the mines, the farms, or the markets.

In Zambia, when a village celebrates a harvest, everyone shares – even the poorest household receives from the abundance. That is how the church should live every day: not hoarding honour for the strong, but lifting those considered weak.

On this World Communion Sunday, we join hands with believers from every continent. We eat nshima in Zambia, rice in Asia, tortillas in Latin America, bread in Europe – but in Christ it is one loaf.

The Lord's Table is not just a ritual; it is a revolution. It declares to the world that:

- The poor are indispensable.

- The stranger is welcome.
- The weak are honoured.
- The body of Christ cannot be whole unless all are included.

Conclusion

Beloved, the world tells us to honour the powerful. But the Word of God tells us: *"God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it"* (v. 24).

As Zambia teaches us through our national motto, *"One Zambia, One Nation,"* the church must live by the motto, *"One Body, One Spirit in Christ."*

Let this Communion Sunday renew our calling to be a church that lives differently – a church that lifts the lowly, empowers the weak, and honours every member as precious in the sight of God.

In *1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27*, Paul teaches that the church, as the body of Christ, is made up of diverse but equally indispensable members. God overturns worldly hierarchies by honouring the weaker parts, and calls believers to live in unity, mutual care, and interdependence, so that Christ's body may truly reflect His presence in the world.

Amen.

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