

Sunday, January 26, 2025

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

I'm not interested in having an orchestra sound like itself. I want it to sound like the composer. —Leonard Bernstein

When I was in high school, I played an oboe in the orchestra. There were only two of us. Just two! Lots of violins, not to speak of violas, cellos and bass viols. A very strong clarinet section. Four kids played flutes. The percussion section with its drums and tympani always drowned out anything we piped on our oboes. Of course, it was worse for others. We only had one piccolo player and one bassoonist.

But this is the nature of an orchestra, isn't it? Like the church, it's a living organism composed of various instruments: violins, cellos, flutes, trumpets, drums and many more. Each instrument has its unique sound and role. The violins might play the melody, the cellos add depth with their rich tones, the flutes provide light and airy accents, and the drums keep the rhythm. Individually, each instrument can create beautiful music, but it is only when they come together under the direction of the conductor that a symphony is truly born.

Think about the features of the church using the analogy of an orchestra:

Different gifts: Just as an orchestra consists of different instruments, the body of Christ is made up of individuals with various spiritual gifts.

One conductor: In an orchestra, the conductor unifies the diverse sounds of the instruments into a harmonious performance. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is the one who distributes these gifts and brings unity among believers. Despite our diverse gifts, we are all directed by the same Spirit to work together for God's glory.

Unique roles: As an oboe player, I had a specific role, as did every musician. Together, our contribution was essential to the overall performance. Likewise, each spiritual gift within the church is vital. Paul points out that the Holy Spirit is given for the common good.

Mutual support: In an orchestra, as in the church, if one section is missing or out of tune, the entire performance suffers. There's a certain interdependence of believers within the church which requires that we all perform within our roles to the best of our abilities.

We may think we're too insignificant or too weak to make a difference — sort of the way I felt as I played my little oboe. But each of us has been given unique gifts, and it is our responsibility to use them for the common good, building up the body of Christ and advancing God's kingdom.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O Lord, help me to recognize and embrace my unique role within the body of Christ. May I work together in unity, under the direction of your Holy Spirit, to bring glory to your name and to serve your purposes. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday: Job 1-4
- Monday: Job 5-7
- Tuesday: Job 8-10
- Wednesday: Job 11-13
- Thursday: Job 14-17
- Friday: Job 18-20
- Saturday: Psalms 7-9

Verse to Remember

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult
in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*

—Psalm 9:1-2

WORD BOXES

The book of Acts tells the story of some of the apostle Paul’s journeys. Use the grid on the right to fill in the empty boxes on the left, which — when filled out correctly — will reveal the name of one of the cities Paul visited. Remember, only one of the letters derived from either the top or the bottom clue is the correct one. We’ve done one box for you.

C2	B5	B1	D3	B4	C5	E3
			I			
A2	E4	B2	E5	A1	C1	B4

	A	B	C	D	E
1	G	R	T	J	E
2	P	K	C	B	W
3	Y	X	F	I	H
4	U	N	Z	A	O
5	M	D	S	V	L

Answer: (spelled backward):
HTNIROC

Write a Personal Psalm!

In our **Daily Bible Readings**, we have just started to read the psalms. Have you ever tried to write a psalm? Sometimes, the author of the psalms wrote using an acrostic beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Here’s what you could do: Think of a word to use as the acrostic pattern — God, for example. Then write three statements expressing praise. Each sentence begins with one of the letters of the word “God.” See the example to the right.

Now you try it. Consider using words for your acrostic pattern such as: praise, goodness, thanks, prayer, etc. Write it on a sheet of paper. Share your work with someone.

Psalm of Praise

Glory to you, O God,
because you give me
comfort in my trials;

Over all the years of my
life, you have always
been there for me.

Do again today as you
have in the past!

