

# Polish (6)

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the importance of unity and love within the body of Christ amidst diversity and suffering.*

**Duration:** 1:09:28

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, 2 Corinthians 2:11, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:3, James 4:6

**Topics:** "Polish"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of accepting and forgiving one another in the Christian faith. He emphasizes the need for unity among believers, using the analogy of different body parts working together. The speaker also addresses the issue of criticism and how it can discourage some Christians, even leading them to turn away from their faith. He highlights the significance of understanding and accepting the different gifts that God gives to each individual in the body of Christ. The sermon concludes with a mention of the book 'When Bad Things Happen to Good People' and the speaker's personal experiences with loss and suffering in the context of God's work.

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## Transcript

I ask for your help as we say your holy word today. There's so much that we need to learn as we walk with you. Thank you for what you're doing around the world.

Strengthen your church. We don't want to be constantly needing another blessing, another meeting, another chorus. But we want to be able to go forward by faith even in the midst of periods of dryness or difficulty.

Now I'd like to begin something this morning that I call Operation Feedback. I'd like to speak to you, but maybe you want to say something to me. Or English.

So if you can take a piece of paper, those who want to. Or maybe God has said something to you in English, good chance for you to practice. We have English books and two of our team members are there.

You could also give it to them if you want. Oh, it's easy up here to know what you are thinking down there. So this feedback from you, these prayer requests from you, can help me in my praying and my thinking.

And we believe that this will be a help for you as well to express some of your burdens or your thoughts on paper. We know that God hears and answers prayer. We've been seeing that already in this time together.

One of our great burdens is to get you into the Word of God, studying and thinking for yourself. I have two books that will help you do that. This one is called, if you could give the title and mention the name.

Tremendous book of Bible studies that you can use. And another very simple Bible study course by a very close friend of ours, William McDonald. So be sure to go and pick up some of these books.

I'm glad they're giving you some free time at this conference, because during that time maybe you can sit somewhere and do a little reading. I just came from a conference, really a music festival, where from 8 in the morning until midnight there were meetings all the time. So I'm impressed with your desire to have at least some free time to pray and to read the Word of God and to read some of these books.

I want to just mention also again a book I spoke about two days ago. By Warren Weirdsby, entitled... This man is now with the famous radio ministry, Back to the Bible Broadcast. He's the leader of that.

Many, many people have questions that are answered in this great book. Some people are agnostics because of the problem of suffering. Why all of this suffering? How can there be a God of love when there is so much suffering? Three of our team members today went over to visit Auschwitz, as they have never seen that.

Mind-bending experience for people. How could God allow this? If you study the history of your own country, go back hundreds and hundreds of years tremendous suffering from all over the world. As Christians, we don't have a total, little, simple, easy answer.

But we do have, and this is a book dealing with that difficult subject. In English, the subtitle is, When Bad Things Happen to Good People. 24 years ago, on the beginning of our visits to Poland, about 24 years ago, two of our very best men were killed out here on the highway.

Two of my very close friends that I had trained to take over the work in the British Isles so that I could go to India. That these two men had been killed. Of course, we asked why.

I've had many friends killed in the line of action in God's work. Another close friend was having his morning quiet time serving Jesus Christ in the land of Turkey. There was a knock on the door.

He went to the door, and he was shot to death on the doorstep. His wife, carrying his baby, came down and found her husband dead at the doorstep. We're not even sure why he was killed.

Most people believe it was a mistake. The gunman shot the wrong man. They were not after this innocent brother, witness for Jesus Christ.

There may even be someone here in the tent. There's bitterness in your heart because of suffering that has come into your family or your home. Maybe you know someone.

Why not give them a copy of that? I'd like you now to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And remember that you'll be discussing this subject in your small groups immediately after the meeting. There are a number of passages of Scripture on our hearts.

But we want to start with 1 Corinthians 12. We want to read from verse 12 to verse 27. We feel the reading of the Word of God is more important than anything we're doing.

Read, let us concentrate. ...to you in Poland, I am rereading it in English from my own edification. ...for the body is not one, but many.

If the leg were to fall, because I am not a hand, I am not part of the body. Is that why I am not part of the body? And if the ear were to fall, because I am not an eye, I am not part of the body. Is that why I am not part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would the ear be? And if the whole body were an ear, where would the hearing be? Meanwhile, God placed the members in the body, each of them as in the body.

And if all of them were one member, where would the body be? And yes, there are many members, but one body. So the eye cannot say, hands, I don't need you. Or the head, legs, I don't need you.

On the contrary, these members of the body, which seem to be weaker, are more needed. And those, which in the body seem to be less needed, are given greater respect. Because our decent members don't need it.

Why are we decent members? We don't need it. But God shaped the body in such a way, and gave the middle one greater respect, so that there would be no division in the body. And if one member suffers, all members suffer from it.

And if one member suffers, all members suffer from it. You are the body of Christ, and you are separate members. The Church in Corinth had great problems related to the lack of unity.

And the Church of Jesus Christ in the world today is having great problems with disunity. So I think it's good that we have chosen this morning this subject of unity and love and forgiveness. Now it is not very easy for me to speak to a group like this.

We may have some here, who do not even know the Lord Jesus Christ as personal saviour yet. Though maybe some have crossed that line last night. To say to you, if I had you alone, is not what I would say to a group of teenagers, who represent the majority of this audience.

Again, it's a problem because I am so ignorant of Poland. And that's one of the reasons I am extremely hesitant to come. But we somehow have to believe that God can overrule these problems.

Some of the problems that we have in England, you may not have here in Poland. For example, we have a tremendous gap between the young people and the older people. We have at least a hundred thousand young people, who have pulled out of the churches and started their own youth-oriented churches.

And though they welcome older people, many of these new groups have no older people. And as we consider the subject of unity, we hope this message will not bring this unity. We discover in England that what young people respond to, actually sometimes upsets older people.

Especially the music that many of the young people like, the older people are not sure that this music is from God. I am very much involved in the whole world of Christian music. And in America, this is one of the biggest divisions in the church right now.

You need a lot of wisdom. What to receive, and what to send back. And if we don't have wisdom in this area, the divisions we have in some of our churches will be brought into your churches.

If probably in some way, in some other way, I have the privilege of ministering in churches of all the different denominations. ...and say that you are of their denomination. And people often ask me, what church are you from? I believe that God wants me to maintain a true commitment to unity and being interdenominational.

I am not against denominations, I am pro denominations. God uses different parts of the body of Christ. We had some people in England that turned against the denominations.

Always saying, these are not from God. So they started their own group. They call that the New Testament Church.

Now it's the New Denomination. They have the same kind of hierarchy, leadership, and apostles. God's unity is in the midst of diversity.

We see that clearly in this passage. Let us just look at these verses, a few of them, very, very carefully. Verse 12 says, one body has many different members.

Very, very clear. All the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. Now there are many other related scriptures.

When our work was first being born, 30 years ago, I went through the whole New Testament, and I looked at the subject of unity. Then I listed every verse on the subject of love. Then I took a big piece of paper, and I wrote on the top, the different fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5.22. I wonder how many have memorized even one verse in the last two days.

I'm afraid even to ask. Maybe if you have decided to memorize scripture as a result of our time together, you could write me a note in... You can write me a tiny note, a note. Every Christian should memorize Galatians 5.22. Peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, self-control.

Against such there is no law. I should have warned you ahead of time. You work on that one over the weekend.

Praise the Lord. And here we see this same emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12. Because 1 Corinthians 12 must be linked together with the chapters before and the chapters after.

Chapter 11 is about the Lord's table. One of the greatest things that unites us in the work and in Christ. And all believers should be welcomed to the Lord's table to take communion.

Yet we have churches, especially in England, if you don't have a special letter from the exact same kind of church down the other side of the country, you cannot break bread at the table or take communion in their church. And in some cases, Hunsans are not even allowed to break bread and have communion with their own wives, even though they are both believers. Now we have a new group in California.

That's a place for many, many things. They have now claimed that they are the only true church. And one of their groups has spread, believe it or not, to West Germany.

And some very good people have left their churches and they have joined this group and they believe they are the only New Testament church in the world today. Now I'll just be very honest with you. If that were Christianity, I'm not saying they are not believers individually.

Some of them probably are believers. If that were Christianity, I would be an agnostic. It is so impossible for me to grasp how people can be so narrow and so judgmental of others.

It is so impossible for me to grasp how people can be so narrow and so judgmental of others. Look at 1 Corinthians 13. Memorize that chapter if you possibly can.

One of the greatest chapters in the Word of God. Verse 13. Verse 13.

For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body. Whether you're Lutheran or Pentecostal or Baptist or whatever, you are baptized by one Spirit into one body. That is absolutely clear in the Word of God.

It says whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, we've been all made to drink into one Spirit. And then it's reemphasized again in verse 14. For the body is not one member, but many members.

You say, why are there so many different kinds of Christians? This is important. And I think one of the most important reasons, and it's often been missed, even by mature men of God, is because as God works in the world, He does not destroy the human factor. We are all human beings.

The Word of God says this treasure, the Spirit of God, is in an earthen vessel. We are those earthen vessels. Some are big, some are very small.

And so wherever God is working, man is also working. And as people, as human beings, we have the tendency to make a mess. If we would only understand it, we'd be a lot happier.

Because many of us, even as children, are injected with a perfectionism that ultimately destroys us if it doesn't get brought under control. And a lot of our disunity comes because we're expecting too much from other people, especially our Christian leaders. And you know, there's a danger of elevating Christian leaders.

And we don't realize that these Christian leaders are just weak, ordinary people that God has put His hand on. But no matter how much anointing is earned by a man or a woman that doesn't destroy the human factor, he doesn't become some kind of spiritual clone. One of these days I hope to speak to you on the subject of dealing with discouragement in your Christian life.

Because many of God's people are discouraged. They're not living in victory and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And I believe one of the reasons for this discouragement is our failure to really understand Christian growth, spiritual growth.

I've counseled people. I've gone to meetings like this. They've made a decision for Christ.

And for several weeks they felt really great. Then they had some failures, some sin in their life. They didn't expect that to happen.

And so they become discouraged. It is the most common ailment I know among God's people. This is why the time together each morning of getting into the Word and discussing these things and learning to apply them in our lives is so important.

Now verse 15 through 17 shows that every member in the body is important. And yet we're all different. No, God gives different gifts to people.

Not all of you are going to have the gift of public preaching. Not all of you are going to have the gift of administrative leadership. And this whole section has very important teaching about the gifts of the Spirit.

And it's so amazing how God's people are fighting over the gifts. Why can't we simply accept God's Word that He gives different gifts to different people? Also in terms of the natural abilities that God gives us. We don't become jealous of other people.

Now I love music. This morning I was listening on tape to Amy Grant challenging my heart. My wife said, please turn that off, put on Sandy Patty.

I don't know if you've heard of these people. Then I put on my Silver Wind tape. My wife doesn't like the Silver Wind.

She likes the nice quiet music out of the 50s. I love music. But I cannot sing.

I cannot play. I don't even understand what these notes on the page. What this all is.

It looks like a chicken lapping on the music page. But I don't sit over here. Ooh! When I'm listening to these people singing.

Ooh! I wish I could sing. God! Why didn't you give me a beautiful voice? You don't love me. You don't love me.

You're terrible. You don't love me. No, I rejoice that they have that gift.

I have enough problems handling my own gifts. And if you have a gift. If you have a gift to sing like Amy Grant or Sandy Patty or any of those people.

And you have your own Polish equivalent. You need to pray for them. Because it's not easy.

So easily they get criticized. One minute they get lifted up. Oh! God is using you.

The next minute. Boom! They get hit on the head for some song that somebody didn't like. And some Christian musicians have turned away from the Christian faith because the criticism was so great.

If yesterday we spoke about accepting ourselves. Today we want to hear from God. About accepting one another, forgiving one another, loving one another, acknowledging our oneness in Jesus Christ.

Look at the way God expresses it. Verse 15 and 16. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body.

Look at 16. Read that. Sometimes I offend people because I say something that causes people to laugh.

What a false concept of Christianity if we think we cannot laugh at God's people. And this explanation of unity in many ways is quite funny. The ear saying to the nose, I don't need you.

The foot saying to the ear, I don't need you. I can assure you God has a sense of humor even if you don't. And if He doesn't have a sense of humor, I don't know how He ever created a character like me.

And if He doesn't have a sense of humor, then by no means. And I can tell you, I know what it means to cry. Often, many times I cried.

I think we are all much more complicated when it comes to our mental structure, our mind, our feelings than we usually want to admit. And sometimes before we harshly judge another brother's behavior, we should pray for him. We should ask, why is he doing that? We don't know what he has suffered that has caused him perhaps to have that problem or that difference in his life.

And sometimes in our churches, what we think is a doctrinal problem is actually more a psychological problem. So we all need one another. You know there is another conference going on not far from here.

And another OM leader, a close friend of mine, is speaking at that conference. He is going to come and see us tomorrow. Some of you know brother Mickey Walker.

He has five or six children. He has a big beard. And his specialty is teaching people how to witness effectively for Jesus Christ.

Now, Mickey and I, we are very, very different from each other. But we have been laboring together of one heart and one mind for twenty years. In our fellowship we have about three hundred leaders from twenty different nationalities.

Men and women. All different denominations. All different ideas.

Those who believe in the small family. I am a teacher of the small family teaching. And Mickey Walker is the leader of the large family vision.

We have those who believe in exercise program. I believe in the morning exercise program. Everybody should be jogging for Jesus.

We have others who are opposing the exercise program. Unity comes in the midst of diversity. The Pentecostals cannot say to the brethren, we don't need you.

The Lutherans cannot say to the Baptists, we don't need you. We are one body in Jesus Christ. Now often we talk about this unity.

And we have conferences about unity. But when it comes to putting it into practice down here, there is not so much of that. And I believe one of the reasons is because we are unwilling to live in repentance and brokenness at the foot of Calvary's cross.

That is where the unity is going to really come. Now let me just share something that I have shared all over the world and I have had tremendous response. Some of the ways, and you can make a list, some of the ways that this unity enters into the body of Christ.

It says in Corinthians, do not be ignorant of Satan's methods. Don't be ignorant of the methods Satan uses to bring this unity in the home, in the church, in the nation. The first way that this unity comes, number one.

Pride. That is the bottom line we say in English. The Old Testament emphasizes this.

And the New Testament emphasizes this. This unity comes by pride. There is a book on that table by Andrew Murray on the subject of humility that every believer should read and study.

What a beautiful book. Many subtle forms of pride. And in our Christian life, when we just begin to get the victory over certain kinds of pride, new kinds of pride come.

That is why it is so hard for us as human beings to handle criticism. All my life I have been trying to learn more how to handle criticism. And I have made great mistakes overreacting to criticism.

I have made other mistakes failing to react to criticism. One thing I can guarantee you. If you are going to live for Jesus Christ, and especially if you are going to be a leader, you are going to be criticized.

Learn to accept it as an opportunity to die for self and worship Jesus. Sometimes the person who is criticizing, they may have all of the facts completely mixed up. And there is no biblical teaching that says you should just shut up.

Don't say anything, just pretend you are Jesus Christ being nailed on the cross. That is super spiritual eye wash. In criticism there is a time to be silent and there is a time to explain what the situation is.

And the Apostle Paul demonstrated that in almost every one of his books. But even if the criticism seems to be very unfair and the facts are all mixed up, pray Lord, what are you trying to say to me through this funny situation? God is always willing to speak to us. The criticism may not be correct.

But there may be an element of truth that you can learn from, that you can benefit from in your Christian life. Well, we can have the whole morning just dealing with a subtle sin of pride. We must give some other points.

How does unity come? We can have the whole morning just talking about it, how this pride slips into our lives. But there is another side. There is an incredible difference of temperaments and personalities.

One of my favorite preachers, whom I really like to listen to, is John Stock. He is a preacher from the Anglican Church. I was listening to him last night on cassette tape.

Just listening to his accent is amusing for me. Perfect English accent. Always seems to be calm.

He and I have met. The first time we met was a bit of a collision. The second time we met it was a cup of tea.

The way to the heart of an Englishman is through the teabag. We are very, very different. And yet I feel a complete like-mindedness with this man and his great ministry.

And I am able to sell his books by the thousands throughout the entire world. He is a Bible expositor. I have tried that type of preaching.

I believe it is wonderful. But I am not John Stock. I am George Burwell.

I am not a Bible expositor. I am a Bible exploder. George Whitfield calls it the Ministry of Exhortation.

He was probably the most anointed Englishman in history. George Whitfield's ministry many believe was greater than even John Wesley. He preached to 20,000 people in the open air.

Tens of thousands came to Jesus Christ. Now I am not George Whitfield either. I try to learn from all these different men and contextualize it into my own life, my own personality, my own way of sharing the truth of God.

But Whitfield believed in the biblical basis of the ministry of exhortation, exhorting God's people. I like to take one Bible verse and throw it like a hand grenade at God's people and pray it will explode in their hearts and drive the powers of hell out of their lives. You like it? Yeah, that's what I like.

I am sort of a hyper-pragmatic type of person. That's the person whose goal is to see things happen, to get the job done. So I have the tendency to think, if you don't repent and obey this powerful verse, why should I give you another verse? And I am so glad that I have been asked later in the conference to speak on the subject of commitment and obedience.

You know what really bothers me? To see different Christian leaders criticizing one another. Do you have any of that here in Poland? Are all of your Christian leaders just all loving one another and moving together in the power? Praise God, all over the world there are victories in this area. I've seen many victories, but there are also some very sad ones.

That's why I listen to cassette tapes from more than 100 to nothing. I've never heard a tape of a Christian leader that I haven't had some love go out in my heart to that person. So I often hear something on a tape.

I really disagree with it. Or that we use an expression in English, it really just turns me off. Do you have a Polish equivalent of that? But I find if a person or a preacher turns me off, I pray a brief prayer and God turns me back on again.

My first source of joy is not from what other people say, it's from God's love to my own heart. That's what keeps me going day by day. Now some of you know I am of Dutch background, but born near New York City.

But I have immigrated back to Europe for the last 27 years. I now live in England. My children are British citizens.

This is our adopted country. I think if I spoke Polish, I would immigrate to Poland and live here. But I speak English and Spanish, so I am limited to where I can live.

I speak about 100 times a year, just in Britain alone. 25 years I've lived in Britain, except when I've been in India or other countries. The moment I open my mouth in England, I can be sure someone is being turned off in the meeting by my tongue.

That's a normal, psychological, sociological reaction. Maybe here I have turned someone off. Maybe by something I have said.

Let God turn you back on. We are all different. We're all growing.

We're all struggling. We have different ways of expressing what has happened in our lives by God's Spirit. And as we worship together in our churches, and in our evangelistic groups, in our prayer groups, there will be personality classes.

How beautiful to learn to live with other people. There are six of us living in this bus. Very proud of it.

And the bed is squeaky. And it's very hot. And we are all different in our temperament.

We have one Welsh person. He's in his forties. We have one Southern American from Florida.

He's in his thirties. We have one very quiet Englishman. I don't know how old he is.

We have one... We have my secretary, one very unusual American of Polish background, speaking Polish. We have my wife. My wife and I are very different from each other.

There was a period in our marriage when we thought we actually came from two different planets. But somehow God called us to marry one another. So easily I do something that bothers her.

But we are praising God together now for 27 years. And as we had a prayer meeting last night as a team, there was a sense through much weakness that we are one body in Christ called to serve Him. I hope as you have your little groups today, get to know one another.

Maybe take a moment to share a little bit of your testimony. God has brought us here to give us new friends and to cause us to grow together as part of His body. And let's not allow differences of personality and temperament to break this unity.

The Bible says, let love cover. 1 Corinthians 13 I have found in my life some of my closest friends were people that initially when they first met me, they were either afraid of me or they certainly didn't like me. We often operate too much on first impressions rather than Holy Ghost reality in our hearts.

The third way that this unity comes is differences of nationality. But I have found that within different countries there are enormous differences. South Indians do not get on with North Indians.

Northern Italians feel they are far superior to southern Italians. People from Texas are skeptical about people from Massachusetts in New England. We have about 100 teams moving out with evangelism right now around the world.

We are giving the Word of God to about 100,000 people every single week. We have the ship Dulos down in Africa with people of 30 nationalities, 300 living on that ship. So we have a little experience in this area.

Let me just say, Satan is very, very clever. He is making generalizations about other nationalities. All Germans are like this.

All Russians are like this. All Indians are like this. All Americans are like this.

The fact is a lot of this is just generalization and exaggeration. There are all kinds of Russians, all kinds of different Germans. Often the greatest tensions are between people of the very same nationality.

History shows even the very same family. I can just hear some of you say, well, that's my problem. That's the Americans or the Germans.

My problem is my little brother. That's my problem. Or my big sister.

Or my dog. Sometimes the big problems come right within our own family. And learning love and forgiveness and unity in our own family is one of the greatest challenges that we can give you at this conference.

It involves a deep level of acceptance and love and spiritual maturity to have reality and unity in the home. Number four. Doctrinal differences bring this unity.

I don't have time to get into that now. We know that doctrine is important. We as Christians believe in the basic doctrine.

But then there are many controversial side issues that the Church is fighting about. Let me give you something that perhaps you can write down. We have to, as Christians, learn to compassionately disagree.

We shouldn't be fighting and arguing with other Christians. There's no law against discussing some of these doctrinal controversies. It's not forbidden.

But we will have to learn to agree to disagree. We have the same thing in our marriages. My wife and I have agreed to disagree about music.

And other small issues. They're not big issues. But on the basic issues, we are united.

And that with love has given us 27 years of marriage.

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