

Title: Ye Are The Body of Christ
Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 27
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1 Corinthians 12: 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Our subject: Ye Are the Body of Christ

This speaks of Christ's spiritual body—his church—made up of each individual believer, who is a member in particular, inseparably united to Christ and to one another in Christ.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh **for his body's sake, which is the church:**

1 Corinthians 12: 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Lately, it has become more evident to me, and given me much cause to thank God, that God alone has established this work and given each believer, in particular, something very rare and very special.

He has put you who believe in his body. I see that God has given you who believe a heart constrained by the love of Christ: constrained to believe and honor Christ in your worship and in your lives and much of that is by your love and care of one another.

This love of Christ cannot be established in the heart by threats of men or any other force from man—but only by the power and grace of God.

Zechariah 4: 6:...This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

The means is the constant, repeated hearing of the gospel: of God the Father's sovereign, electing, saving grace; of the faith and fidelity of Christ Jesus and his accomplished work of redemption of his particular people on the cross; of the irresistible regenerating, converting, preserving grace of God the Holy Spirit. And it is my prayer that God would continue to use this means to grow us in his love by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12: 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Proposition and Divisions: This is a powerful reminder of three things: 1) That God alone is to be praised for his grace toward each of us who are in Christ's body. 2) Of our union with Christ, and of our union with one another in Christ and 3) Of the great responsibility and privilege of serving Christ, particularly by caring for one another, as members of his body.

I. FIRST, THIS BLESSING REMINDS US THAT GOD ALONE IS TO BE PRAISED FOR PUTTING US IN CHRIST'S BODY.

The church at Corinth had problems. One of the causes was that some were full of pride over the gifts God had given them. So the Holy Spirit moved Paul to remind them of what we also need to always remember: **v2: Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3: Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.**

Sinners Saved by Grace

Brethren, we were Gentiles, carried away unto dumb idols. We each had some little idol god carved out in our imagination: the god who “wants to” but “can’t” –idol; the god who died for everybody but accomplished the redemption of none is an idol; the god who must wait on man’s puny will is an idol. And all the while we served that idol god here is what we were calling the Lord Jesus accursed—**v3: Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed:**

We may have claimed to be speaking by the Spirit of God. But saying that the blood of Christ was common to all men without exception, counting Christ to have shed his blood in vain, is to call the Lord Jesus accursed. And no man that does so is speaking by the Spirit of God. But now, we have only God to glory in that we can say in faith from a true heart that Jesus is Lord, because—**v3:...no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.** God the Father put us in Christ. And God the Holy Spirit quickened us and brought us to confess Jesus Christ is Lord of Lords and King of kings.

1 Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Application: So brethren, if we ever find ourselves becoming proud of grace—remember what we were and who made the difference.

II. SECONDLY, THIS GREAT BLESSING REMINDS US OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST AND OUR UNION WITH ONE ANOTHER AS MEMBERS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST—V12: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

The human body is the illustration: From the top of the head to the sole of the feet the body is one body—**v12: For as the body is one...**

And our body **v12: has many members:** Some are seen and their usefulness is more prominent: hands, eyes, the nose. Other members are not as noticeable their use not as prominent: ears, feet

Yet, each member—though different, though serving a different function—is still one body—**v12: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body:**

So it is with Christ and his body—**v12: so also is Christ.**

1 Corinthians 12: 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Christ is our Head. Each believer is a member in particular. Together we make up the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12: 13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We come from different backgrounds but we all are made one body—by one Spirit and all drink into one Spirit. This does not speak of water baptism: water-baptism & baptism of the Spirit are two different things. John the Baptist said,

Matthew 3:11: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Water baptism does not regenerate a dead sinner nor does water baptism join us into Christ’s spiritual body—only the Holy Spirit regenerates and unites us to the body of Christ. It is possible to be baptized in water and not to be

baptized in the Holy Spirit. Our text speaks of regeneration, conversion, sanctification by God the Holy Spirit. **v13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,**

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No matter our carnal station in life—**v13:..whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.** every true believer is a partaker of one spirit, one life, with every other believer, therefore we are one in Christ our Kinsman Redeemer. So remember our union—each member is one with each other, each one in the body of Christ.

III. BEING IN THIS BODY IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHOWING US OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND PRIVILEGE OF SERVING CHRIST BY SERVING ONE ANOTHER.—also to teach us Christ's ability to provide for us using the members of his body.

Though we are one in one body, we are different members with different gifts for different purposes—**v14: For the body is not one member, but many.** In our physical body, each member is different. Likewise the body of Christ. **v4: Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5: And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6: And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7: But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

These differences were making some members in the church at Corinth feel inferior or unnecessary because they were not gifted as prominently as others or because they had more needs than other members. This is something we need to get. These illustrations Paul is using are so simple. But there is a very profound lesson the Lord is teaching here.

1 Corinthians 12: 15: If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16: And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

The foot may appear inferior to the hand: the foot does not serve as noticeably as the hand; the foot is covered up—it is not seen as much as the hand, not recognized; the foot is closer to the dust of the earth. Let's say the foot represents one who has less obvious gifts or more needs than others while the hand represents someone full of good works, one who appears to have gifts and no needs. Now notice the question in **v15: If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?**

Application: Are we to imagine there is one chosen child of God in his body that Christ shed his precious blood for, that Christ values less than another? Is there a member of our body that we value less? That you would chop off because it serves less than another member of your body? Of course not! Also, remember who gives and who withholds—**v11:...the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.**

Ephesians 4: 7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Do we imagine that Christ would count one less when Christ is the one who withheld a gift from them? Of course not!

Isaiah 42: 3: A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench:...

But where there is a gift or operation or administration or need or plenty there is reason: **v17: If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?** Each member in their appointed station serves an individual purpose for that time. If every member here was a preacher, there would be no hearers! If every member played the guitar but there were no singers.

Our all-wise God places each member, with or without, as it pleases him—v**18: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.** Remember when Moses complained about his speech impediment?

Exodus 4:11: And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

Application: Right now—whatever our condition: our ability or inability, our gifts or lack thereof, our needs or our fullness—who placed you in his body in that way?

1 Corinthians 19: And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20: But now are they many members, yet but one body.

Brethren, if we all had the same gifts, the same operation, the same administration—if we all had fullness, we would not be a body. But now there are these varying gifts and operations and needed administrations—that is what the body of Christ is because Christ has made it so. What is the purpose?

1 Corinthians 12: 21: And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

We may be like the eye and say, I have no need of thee? But when we get something in our eye what is the first member to come to its aid? The hand with its fingers.

1 Corinthians 12: 22: Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

Every member of Christ's body—gifted or less gifted, in need or prospering—are necessary. Christ gives the gift of administration and the need of administration because our Head deems it necessary. When one believer becomes weak in some way, while God has increased others in some way—that is not by accident. God does nothing by accident. No, much more, it is necessary.

Application: Why? God is giving an opportunity and a privilege to those he has increased to bear the burden, to strengthen the hands of the member who he has given a need and he had done it to teach us all that it is Christ our Head who is providing all in his body.

Ephesians 4: 16: From [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, [the joint is a fellow believers] according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

If I have a need and Christ provides you to meet that need—I shouldn't complain about situation or reject you meeting that need—because Christ says it is necessary. Christ is ministering to each member in his body, showing each believer in his body, in a practical way, that his strength is indeed made perfect in weakness.

1 Corinthians 12: 23: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

We do this with our physical bodies. When we have a member that is in need, we bestow more honor upon that member. By doing so each member has more abundance.

1 Corinthians 12: 24: For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, [God] having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: [is in need] 25: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. [You see God uses a fellow member but it is God who has given the honor the one in need and he teaches the members to have the same

care one for another.] **26: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.**

Seeing how God made our physical body to illustrate his wisdom in his church body, now every time my fingers come to the aid of my eye, I'll be reminded of Christ's care using, you, my brethren, the members of his spiritual body.

Amen!