

## Romans 12 the Unified Body of Christ

### I. Introduction

- a. Continuing on in **Romans** and camping out in **2 Peter 1**
- b. Review last sermon on oneness with God AND oneness with one another
- c. Feeling urgency to speak being a healthy, unified, family of believers TRULY centered ON Christ especially as news headlines get crazier, and technology develops faster..the body of Christ is not to be swept up but to double down in our simplicity with Christ and one another.
  - i. I believe our ties to one another have never been more important.
  - ii. Court case coming up on 12/9 the Supreme Court is going to hear oral arguments in a case called Grand Vs. City of University Heights
    - i. Jewish man in Ohio trying to hold prayer meeting in his home..
    - ii. I find it significant that this question of believers meeting in homes surfaced while in prayer we've felt the Lord bringing us back His believers breaking bread, gathering in homes, opening the word..
      - i. Strengthening our love and unity in Christ like never before which I believe is a key element to the Lord's glory pouring out in unprecedented measure
      - ii. He wants to pour out on unified bride
  - iii. So we are going to dig in and really look at the biblical principles of being a truly healthy, united, family that is centered on Christ

### II. 2 Peter 1

- a. Context....
- b. Verse 3: For His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness.
  - 1. Before we go any further into being a united family, how to do it practically, or roles we play this is a good place to start and live life from.
- c. This simple revelation that we (sinful humans deserving of death) have been given EVERYTHING pertaining to life and godliness- that truth right there should make us sing and dance for joy. As we sit here, as believers, we have it all.
  - 1. All that lives and breathes He made for us- and every day He's helping us become more like Him.
- d. Then Peter gets practical. Shows what we are to be working on as an entire body every day.
- e. <sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with moral excellence and moral excellence with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with

self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

- i. Is this a big To Do List? A nice suggestion for a way of Christian living?
- ii. This letter is Peter's farewell address...
- f. And remember this is coming from Peter, one of the only 3 people in all of history who were closest to Jesus. This is what he wanted to say for believers to do and keep doing before he died.
  - i. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them* and have been established in the truth which is present with you. <sup>13</sup>I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* <sup>10</sup>dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, <sup>14</sup>knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. <sup>15</sup>And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.
  - ii. He's essentially saying AS LONG AS I HAVE BREATH WITHIN ME, I will remind you of these things.
    - i. Our minds are always itching to hear something we've never heard before, secrets that unlock a better life, greater success, happiness
    - ii. But what Peter is unlocking here is far greater than any get rich quick OR click baity type nonsense AND you will hands-down live a better life if you follow what the Word of God instructs you to do
    - iii. <sup>8</sup>For if these qualities are yours and are **increasing**, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. As you do these things, and not only do them but turn the heat up on them, you are getting to know **Jesus** better
- h. And when you get to know Jesus better- everything in your life comes into fruitful alignment
- i. So there's two things happening 1) Peter is giving us the building blocks to love AND to knowing Christ more deeply and that's how we become the healthy united family we are called to be
- j. Is it worth our time to dialogue with Holy Spirit on a regular basis to see if these building blocks of love are active in our lives
  - 1. **Moral excellence**- are we cutting corners...
    - i. there's a lot of things in life we could let slip and probably no one would know- that's the very heart of moral excellence

2. **Knowledge**– knowledge puffs up but love builds up. But there is a type of knowing that leads us to be people of love: Letting the Word of God be written on your heart and Letting the revelation of Christ on the cross transform how you live. <sup>2</sup> For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
3. **Self-Control** – how many marriages end because of lack of self control in some form?
4. **Steadfastness**– this implies repeated trials and repeated trusting in Jesus. There's a brokenness implied here. A breaking of self will and a choosing of God's will over our lives.
5. **Godliness**– this only comes after all the others are put to work...
6. And THEN, and only after all those things do you arrive at **love**
  - i. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
  - ii. We wonder: how do we get there? We have to walk out the building blocks of love in 2 Peter 1
  - iii. for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;
  - iv. IT's just that we don't always practice. And Peter addresses those moments when we fall short. Which happens.
- k. <sup>9</sup> For the one who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.
- l. It doesn't say if you're lacking it's because you're lazy, you're stupid, you're arrogant, selfish...there's no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus
- m. if you've gotten off track– you've forgotten how much God loves you that He laid down His life so that you wouldn't be enslaved to that sin anymore.
- n. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers *and sisters*, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choice of you;
- o. Shame won't get you back on track long term. Only love can do that. When you're struggling with self-control, or doubt, insecurity the best thing is to see how the Father looks at you in the middle of that.
  1. You are looking right into the eyes of one who loves you, sets you free washes you clean. The one who has a calling on your life and you are chosen. Remember, He didn't have to create you, He wanted to.
- p. You are not going to walk in the fullness of your calling that God has for you if there is shame lingering in your heart. If there is the tiniest bit of unworthiness or shame clinging to you– Don't leave here until you feel the Lord lift that off
- q. We are ALL working on the building blocks of love listed in 2 Peter 1 day and then individually we bring our different gifts to the table to serve one another

III. Paul gets into your individual giftings in chapter 12 but look at how carefully he prefaces this topic.

a. Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brothers *and sisters*, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, <sup>[a]</sup>acceptable to God, *which is* your <sup>[b]</sup>spiritual service of worship.

1. As Pastor Todd preached on a few weeks back– your worship needs to come out in some form. It's not just singin love songs..he's talking about **sacrifice**.

b. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this <sup>[c]</sup>world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...

1. If you want to know if you have a renewed mind...the renewed mind is not self-centered, but God-centered.

c. And here is Paul's third and final point before speaking on individual giftings:

d. <sup>3</sup>For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

1. This is the last point Paul wants to make before he talks about individual giftedness. We should remember that spiritual *giftedness* does not equal spiritual *maturity*.

2. 1 Corinthians 13. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3. That's why I started this talk with the building blocks to love.

IV. <sup>4</sup>For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body's parts do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. <sup>6</sup>However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to use them properly*: if prophecy, in proportion to *one's* faith; <sup>7</sup>if service, in the *act of serving*; or the one who teaches, in the *act of teaching*; <sup>8</sup>or the one who exhorts, in the *work of exhortation*; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who is in leadership, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

a. Let's go back to that phrase "since we have gifts that differ

b. they differ. That's a very good thing. These are known as the motivational gifts. It's what you are good at, in many ways it comes naturally to you...

1. Did you notice that for 3 of the gifts in order to use them properly you just actually have to do them?
2. Why would Paul bother to say that?
3. Could it be because he's seen believers who are gifted who just...didn't walk in them?

4. I will say I think there are times when the Lord does ask you to lay something down if it's become your identity, or if you have become enslaved to it in any form. He's always looking at the motive of our heart right. And He wants our heart in first love more than anything we do.

5. But once that is purified, He brings it back.

V. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 5:14

a. Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that<sup>[b]</sup> they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

1. If you have ever held back from walking in your gift bc of some form of not feeling good enough, not wanting to mess up, not wanting to be seen..as it turns out, the bride of Christ is designed to be seen.
2. False humility cannot overcome the scriptural command "LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE."
  - i. And it's not *make* your light shine. That's striving. *Let it shine*. That means Christ is already shining through you- so just don't HIDE it.
  - ii. Because it's not about you- it's about people seeing your fruit and giving glory to our Father in heaven
  - iii. So let's talk about a couple of these gifts. When it comes to prophecy- think less about how confident you feel and focus more on conviction. It's okay if your hands are shaking..but being obedient..
  - iv. With serving- again you just have to give your yes.

VI. <sup>9</sup> Love *must be* free of hypocrisy. Don't pretend to love one another.

- a. I hope that if someone new came into this church they would see Christ actively in us..
- b. If we choose to double down in our simplicity with Christ and love for one another will be the most hope filled, joy filled, peace filled, radiant people on this planet. And that preaches the gospel

## Home Group Questions

1. Slowly read **1 Cor. 13:1-8** and discuss what stands out to you most.
2. Read through **2 Peter 1:5-7**. Why do you think godliness, brotherly affection and love come at the *end* of the list?

3. Read Romans **12:4-8** (our individual gifts) and discuss why Paul felt the need to say that to use some of the gifts properly, you just need to do them? Why is that so hard sometimes??
4. Spend some time talking and praying over the unity of the bride of Christ in this hour (**Romans 15:5-6**).