

REVIVE CHURCH- THE BODY

EPHESIANS SERIES #6

Recap-There are seven different pictures of the church in Ephesians and the first one we talked about last week was the ecclesia. In New Testament times the word ecclesia had a very specific meaning. It meant a governmental assembly. *The governmental assembly (Church) represents the rod in Jesus hand as He rules from Zion. We are the rod stretched forth in the Lord's hand representing His authority in whatever sphere of influence in which we operate.* **The essential feature of the Assembly (ecclesia) is governmental authority.**

We are going to cover the second picture of the church given in Ephesians and this is one that is more familiar to most and that is **the image of a body**. This is a much more pastoral picture of oneness that emphasizes the importance of everyone's role and calling in a unified expression. There is no unity without diversity.

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be *head* over all things to the church, 23which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

We need to keep the words of Jesus in front of us from Matthew 16:18 "I will build My church". **Ephesians 1:22 makes it very clear the church is His body!** The church in the world is the body of Jesus Christ. **Jesus relates to the world through us, His body.**

Hebrews 10:5-7- 5Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

6In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

7Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’ ”

- When Jesus came to the earth, He did not come to reintroduce the law which had already been introduced by Moses but to save us by being the sacrifice for our sins. In order to do that He had to have a physical body with which to provide a sacrifice.
- When the Father wanted to bring in the new covenant of grace, He didn't send tablets of stone, He send His Son in the flesh to accomplish His will. **The physical body of Jesus became the sacrifice for our sins on the cross.**
- **Since Jesus Christ death, resurrection and ascension His body is in heaven.** However, through the unveiled mystery proclaimed in the Scripture, the Spirit was poured out upon the church so that we, now the collective people continue His ministry. **We are the body of Christ on earth.**

The New Testament presents several pictures of believers as the body of Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:4-5- 4For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5so we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

The body is not a group of separated and isolated individuals, **we belong to one another and have a responsibility to one another's growth and maturity.** **Without connection to the body, we are ignoring a priority of Jesus.**

1Corinthians 12:12-13 12For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

The word emphasized in 1 Corinthians 12 is one.

- They form **one** body
- We are baptized by **one** Spirit into **one** body
- We are all given **one** spirit to drink
- **The baptism of the Holy Spirit is highlighted in this verse.** 13For by **one** Spirit we were all baptized into one body. This emphasizes the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit highlighting both the gifts needed to serve one another in the Holy Spirit's strength. It is only possible to operate in oneness when we are full of the Holy Spirit and emptied of our carnal, selfish nature.

1Corinthians 12:14-21 14For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

20But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

In our relationship to one another within the body of Christ we are meant not to be independent but interdependent. The essence of Paul's teaching is that every member needs all the other members. We cannot do what God has called us to do without one another. Therefore, we cannot say to other believers "I can get along without you or it doesn't matter what happens you ;

- Your assignment in this life is connected to others
- Your calling in this life is dependent on others

Many have not experienced what it actually means to be a healthy functioning part of the body of Christ because our natural tendencies are to run when it gets hard or doesn't benefit us. **Each person that is part of the body has strengths and weaknesses.** Our Strengths are meant to support others and our weaknesses are meant to be strengthen and supported. There is no insignificant part and there is no exalted part. God, Himself has arranged the parts in the body. 18But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased

Jesus is the head and He would not say to any part of His body that He does not need you. *There is great value places upon the entire body of Jesus Christ and we need to emphasize that value with one another.* We are purposed to be knit together in such a way that the strong are protecting the weak, we provide for one another

1Corinthians 12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Hebrews 13:3 (NKJV) Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also.

Ephesians 4:16—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

This verse gives us a picture of the finished product.

- Though there are many joints and ligaments that hold us firmly intact, all of us together who are united in Christ are one body.
- As we are held together in unity the body builds itself up (it grows up). In order to build itself up the body depends on each part to do its work.
- One unhealthy part of the body affects the health of the rest of the body.

In order to remain in good health we must each be submitted and obedient to the head. Each member of the body must be available to the head as He leads. **We don't do what we want as a body part, we do what He says.**

Colossians 2:19—and not holding fast to the **Head**, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

The body is knit together by joints and ligaments who hold fast to the head. Jesus alone is the Head.

- The joints can be viewed as **the interrelationships between the various members of the body, through which God's supply comes.** My relationship with you is my "joint" with you. **It is crucial to understand that our needs are supplied through the joints or relationships within the body.**
- The Ligaments are needed to keep the joints together. **A ligament can be viewed as our commitment to one another, or covenant love that is committed to another for better or for worse.** **When we have disagreements, difficulties or do not see eye to eye on something we remember our committed covenant love.** **Relationships that only stay intact when things are going well are no different than the world and will end as quickly as they began.** Covenant love through the blood of Jesus Christ will bring us through blessings and trials together.
- We do not get our needs met through the Head alone but through the network of joints and ligaments throughout the body which are linked in various ways to the head. **It sounds really good and religious to say I just need Jesus yet we read in the word of God that we also need one another**

1John 4:20-21 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21**And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Our spiritual nourishment is supplied through both the joints and ligaments supplied and put into place by the Lord Himself. **The Lord has arranged His body so that many of our needs are met by fellow members.**

It is important that each individual discovers their place in the body of Christ.

Let's look at a pattern for discovering your place in the body of Christ from Romans 12.

Romans 12:1-2- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1. **Present your body**-Being a follower of Jesus Christ means being a living sacrifice which is in contrast with the sacrifices of the Old Testament where an animal was placed on the altar of sacrifice and killed. We all have been called to be a living sacrifice. As a Christian you don't own your body, the Lord does. If you own it the Lord does not. *Have you ever really presented your body to the Lord and renounced your claim of ownership over it?* This is the first step-present yourself to Jesus fully. My body, my choice may be one of the most demonic inspired things ever said.
1. **Renew your mind**-We have to think differently as we discover our place. *The natural thoughts of man are always self centered-what will this do for me, how will this help my advancement.* We cannot find God's will until our entire way of thinking has been changed. Scripture says that a carnal mind is enmity with God. We are called to operate in a new way of thinking from the renewed mind given to us by Christ.
1. **Discover the will of God**-Only after your mind has been renewed are you enabled to discover the will of God for your life. *As the verse states it is first good and then acceptable as you begin to embrace His will, finally it becomes perfect in the sense that you cannot imagine anything more pleasing and fitting than being used fully by Jesus.* Without the renewed mind none of this is possible.
1. **Put away Independence**-A primary emphasis of the Holy Spirit to God's people today is that we must give up our aggressive individualism, and negative attitude toward fellow believers. God's perfect purpose will not be complete until the body is complete and all of its members united. This will bring Him much glory.

Home group questions

1. What does it mean that collectively, Christians are the body of Jesus Christ on this earth.

2. Connection to the body of Christ is essential for our growth, maturity and calling. Share testimony of how this has been true to you.
3. What is your part in the body of Christ? How does your part support the whole and in what ways do you need support from other parts?
4. Discuss the pattern for discovering your place in the body of Christ from Romans 12.