

Church Part 1 - "Discerning the Body (9-26-21)

Introduction: High Church - The wonder & fear (Awe!) produced by awareness of the sacred

1) Vision for the Series

Jesus' instructions and vision for His life being shared by His people . . .

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

(18) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you**. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:4-5, 8 (ESV)

(4) And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to **wait for the promise** of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now. . . (8) you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Note: The Church was born through disciplined people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

- The **Spirit** made the **Word** come alive in Jesus' disciples, and they embodied the life of Christ!
- And now the church was born, so what defined these new people?

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

(42) And they **devoted themselves** to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And **awe came upon every soul**, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And **all who believed were together** and had **all things in common**. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And **day by day, attending the temple together** and **breaking bread** in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Note: We'll unpack this in more depth as we go along, but for now notice some themes . . .

- **Devoted** to consistent spiritual practices (vs. 42 & 46 - daily habits embodying the life of Jesus!) - **Word**
- **Awe** was upon them - they were aware of and experiencing the sacred & holy - **Spirit**
- **Together** - temple, homes, prayers and practical needs - Embodied Together in everyday life

Application

- We need to grow in our knowledge and practice of the Life of Jesus
- We need the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit
- We need to learn and grow and live together - The Word & The Spirit change us personally in community

Are we awake to this fact, and living in this reality? It is vital . . .

Point 2 is today's main theme: Discerning the Body

Let's read: Paul's instructions to the Corinthians regarding gathering in worship & taking communion . . .

2) Discerning the Body

1 Corinthians 11:28-32 (ESV)

(28) Let a person **examine** himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (29) For anyone who eats and drinks **without discerning the body** eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30) That is why many of you are **weak** and **ill**, and some have **died**. (31) But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. (32) But when we are judged by the Lord, we are **disciplined** so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

- **Context** - broken relationships: non-existent & unaware of each other, or out right hurtful & divided
- **Core Issue** - Paul says - you aren't **discerning** the body
- **Consequence** - unhealthy and dying, therefore it's time to be examined & disciplined

Busted Toe Story - Hearing about it you can feel it right? Anyone done something similar, you can relate even more. Anyone have a busted toe right now? You are living with it, so it's noticeable until it's dealt with & better.

The evidence of wounding is everywhere:

People are lonely, discouraged, divided, dis-trustful, abandoning relationships, & even the church community

Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV)

(11) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to **equip** the saints for **the work of ministry**, for **building up the body of Christ**, (13) **until** we all attain to the **unity of the faith** and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to **mature manhood**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. (15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it **builds itself up in love**.

Note: Church is not just gathering to hear a preacher or prophet. The Church is about people growing . . .

- Work of the ministry - Building-up Jesus' body which is meant to produce:
- Living in **Unity** / Growing in **Knowledge** / Becoming **Mature** Spiritual Mothers & Fathers
- The End Goal - to be built up in **LOVE**

The purpose of this series is to equip, but hearing what is taught is not enough. We need to apply the Word, empowered by the Spirit's help, in real living community with one another. You can learn everything we teach in this series & still be no use to the Body. The Church does it all the time!

Example: Stained Glass Window - Consider the mosaic of a stained glass window: It's a bunch of broken pieces of different size and color, but when fit together they paint the picture of 1 complete & beautiful story!

3) Communion - Partaking of the Body

Connection with and remembrance of **Jesus** (His body broken & His blood shed)

Connection with **one another** - discerning our life interconnected with the life of the whole body.

We are the broken body brought together & made whole by the blood that forgives, heals, and brings life!

So examine yourselves: Our failures and hurts in relationship with one another are an incredible opportunity for giving and receiving the healing power of grace. Don't ever out grow the gospel of humble repentance, honest confession, & costly forgiveness. It is our life blood of relationship and wholeness - it is a holy and sacred thing before God!

Conclusion: Let's serve each other communion. Partake and then turn and give.