

The Body of Christ
Titles of The Church (1)
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Introduction

The first title of the church that we are going to study is a very familiar one: The body of Christ. What does this title “The body of Christ” tell us?

First of all, the word “church” here does not mean the church buildings nor the local churches, it refers to the universal church that includes all the Christians.

The Church Is The Body Of Christ

The Bible teaches that the church is the body of Christ, that means the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

^{NAU} **Romans 12:5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 12:27** Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

^{NAU} **Ephesians 1:22 – 23** And He (from the context the word “He” refers to God) put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

^{NAU} **Colossians 1:18** He is also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.

Other references: Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:24; Colossians 2:19.

The Church Carries Out The Lord's Desire

If the body is a functional one, it would do what the head desires. The head gives out command, the body would carry it out. If the body does not carry out the head's command, then that is not a functional body; for example: a paralyzed body, a crippled body.

Then what does the Lord Jesus desire?

^{NAU} **1 Timothy 2:3 – 4** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God desires all men to be saved, He doesn't want anyone to perish. The Lord Jesus is the image of God, therefore God's desire is also the Lord's desire:

^{NAU} **Colossians 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

^{NAU} **2 Corinthians 4:4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

And the Lord Jesus himself says he seeks not his own will, but the one who sent him :

^{NJB} **John 5:30** 30 By myself I can do nothing; I can judge only as I am told to judge, and my judging is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.

The Lord Jesus does nothing on his own initiative, but speaks as the Father taught him:

^{NAU} **John 8:28** So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, (the word He is not in the original language), and I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught me.

The Lord Jesus comes to save the world:

^{NAU} **John 12:47** If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

The above verses show that the desire of the Lord Jesus is the same as that of the Father, which is to save mankind. If the church can truly carry out the Lord's desire, then the church is the saving vehicle, and the direction of the church is to save people.

Each Member In The Body Has A Different Function

In order to save people, each member of the church has to work. Each member, no matter big or small, has a different function. When all the members function properly, the body can carry out the command of the head effectively. That means each Christian has a role to play in the

body of Christ so that the church can fulfill the desire of the Lord which is to save people.

The Holy Spirit gives each of us different gifts, we should use our gifts to serve our Lord and his body. For some people their gifts are more obvious, but for others, they may or may not know what kind of gifts they have.

If we aspire to serve in certain areas, but we don't have the necessary gifts, Paul says we can pursue the gifts:

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 12:31** But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 14:1** Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

We can ask God to grant us the gifts, if our attitude is right and the motive is pure, God will grant us. But remember that's not an immediate effect, we need to work hard to learn to acquire it.

I myself do not ask for specific gifts, but rather when the church has certain need, and certain task is assigned to me then I go ahead to fulfill the need or to do whatever the Lord assigns to me, and I acquire the gifts along the way. For example, before I served in the Gospel Radio Broadcast, I did not know anything about broadcasting. But when the task was assigned to me, I just went ahead to do it even though I knew nothing about radio broadcasting. I have been learning along the way as I work. By the Lord's grace, after seven and half years serving in Gospel Radio Broadcast and then 12 years in web cast, today my readers and followers are all over the world from more than 80 countries.

When we are faithful in small things, the Lord will give us more and more important things to do. But if we are careless in handling small things, the Lord would not give us important things to do.

Each Member In The Body Is Important

There are many members in one body, each member is needed and is very dear to the Lord. Just as what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, even though eyes are important, if the whole body is full of eyes, that is not a body, that becomes a monster. If every member is a mouth, then this body can't do anything else except talking and eating.

The Body of Christ

Every member is important, when one smallest member is hurt, the whole body is hurt; when one smallest member is honored, the whole body is honored. For example: Our little finger seems to be so insignificant, but sometimes by accident I cut myself, this little finger is bandaged, suddenly I feel it is so inconvenient. Even a little finger is also important.

Conclusion

- The church is the body of Christ, Christ is the head, we are the members. We ask ourselves how is our relationship with the Lord? How is our relationship with one another?
- Are the Lord's desire and interest more important than our own desires? Which one is more important to us?
- How do we relate to one another? When the other member is hurt, are we also hurt? When the other member is honored, do we feel honored too?