

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

Today I want to talk about “The Titles of the Church”; it doesn’t mean that I have finished the series of messages on “The Titles of Christians”. Indeed, there are so many meaningful and important titles of Christians in the Bible, so from time to time I will still talk about “The Titles of Christians”.

The Church is the body of Christ

First of all the word “church” does not mean church buildings nor the local churches; it refers to the spiritual church that includes all the Christians. The title that we are going to study today is: The body of Christ.

^{NASB} **1 Corinthians 12:27** Now you [plural] are Christ’s body, and individually members of it. (1Co 12:27 NASB)

The word “you” in the original Greek language is plural; it refers to all the Christians in the church. The verse says that Christians form the body of Christ, which means that Christ is the head of the church, and each individual Christian is a member of that body.

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

Here this passage says that we Christians are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. It means each individual belongs to one another. Not only do we belong to Christ, we also belong to one another.

This point is important. Nowadays many Christians like to emphasize a “personal relationship” with Jesus Christ. It is true that each Christian needs to know Jesus Christ personally, but too much emphasis on the “personal relationship” with Christ gives people the impression that all we need is to have a personal relationship with Christ and we can just ignore all the Christians. No, that is not what the Bible teaches. We are one body in Christ, but we are also connected to individual members of the body.

The Church carries out the desires of Jesus Christ

The church is the body of Christ, Christ is the head of the church. If a body is a functional body, it would do what the head desires. The head (or the brain) gives out a command, and the body would carry it out. But if the body does not carry out the head's command, then it is not a functional body, for example: a paralyzed body, a crippled body.

Then what are the desires of Christ, the head of the church?

^{NASB} **John 5:30** "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (Joh 5:30 NASB)

Here the Lord Jesus says he seeks to do not his own will, but the will of Him who sent him. It is Yahweh God who sent him into the world. What then is the will of Yahweh God?

Yahweh God desires all men to be saved

^{NASB} **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. (1Ti 2:3-4 NASB)

This passage clearly tells us that God desires all men to be saved and to know the truth.

The Lord Jesus comes to save the world

^{NASB} **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. (Joh 12:47 NASB)

Here the Lord Jesus says he comes to save the world.

These three passages, John 5:30, 1 Timothy 2:3 – 4 and John 12:47, clearly tell us that the desire of Yahweh God and of the Lord Jesus is to save the world.

The church ought to carry out the Lord's desire, then the church becomes a 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 together. Each member, whether big or small, has a different function; each Christian has a role to play in saving people. When all the members function together, the body can carry out the command of the head effectively.

The Holy Spirit gives each of us some gifts, we should use our gifts to serve our Lord and his body. For some people their gifts are more obvious, but for some other people, 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, we can pursue the gifts; we can ask Yahweh God to grant us the necessary gifts:

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

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

These two passages tell us to pursue gifts, especially the gift of love.

We can ask God to grant us the gifts we need; if our attitude is right and the motive is pure, God will grant them to us. But remember we still need to work hard to learn to acquire it.

I myself do not ask for specific gifts, but rather when the church has a certain need, or a certain task is assigned to me, then I would ask Yahweh God to grant me the gifts in order to carry out the task. 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 as I work. After the ministry of radio broadcasting was no more, we switched to zoom, youtube, and webcasting. By the Lord's grace, after seven and half years of serving in the Gospel Radio Broadcast and more than 10 years in webcasting, today I have more than 300,000 readers and followers all over the world from more than 80 countries.

^{NASB} **Luke 16:10** "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (Luk 16:10 NASB)

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 will 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, but 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 except talking and eating.

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, I have to bandage this little finger; suddenly I feel it is so inconvenient. Even a little finger is also important.

Conclusion

Now let's sum up everything:

- The church is the body of Christ, Christ is the head, we are the members.
- The body is to carry out what the head desires.
- The Lord's desire is to save people, the church is the saving vehicle.
- Between the Lord's desire and your own desire, which one is more important to you?
- To me, the Lord's interest is my interest, the Lord's desire is my desire.
- How do you relate to one another, to fellow members of the body? When another member is hurt, do you feel hurt too? When the other member is honored, do you feel honored too?