

Sermon Series Title: “The Church of God”

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We’re going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

“We are in our “The Church of God” sermon series, and we see that we are defined not by who we are but whose we are as the Church.”

Call: Revelation 5:11-12

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Title: “Church as Body”

Next Week’s Call: Revelation 5:13-14

Next Week’s Text: John 1:12-13

Next Week’s Title: “Church as Family”

Future Calls: Revelation 15:3, 4; Revelation 21:1-4, 5-7, 22-23

Future Titles: “Church as Bride” (Ephesians 5:22-33), “The Eternality of the Church” (Revelation 21:1-7)

Fallen Condition Focus: We are not united in Christ.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ unites us by being torn apart. He was dispensable to make us indispensable. He honored us by receiving dishonor Himself. He considered us, when we didn’t consider Him, even if it cost Him His life.

Central Truth: “The church is the body of Christ through the grace and love of Christ.”

Summary: As we’ve looked at Church as Building and City, we are going to look at the Church as Body. This is a familiar illustration for the church, but it’s a very appropriate one. We are united in Christ, diverse in our gifts, and in need of one another. We are able to do this in the grace and love of Christ who gave Himself for us.

Reflective Questions:

1. What does it mean for you that the Bible uses the image of a body to describe the church?

2. What are some obstacles for a church's unity in Christ? What are some ways we can improve our unity in Christ as an EM?
3. How can we better appreciate the diversity in our community?
4. In every church, there are people who feel disconnected and unwanted. What are some practical ways to honor and care for all our members?

## I. Introduction

- A. Hook
- B. Transition
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

## II. The Beauty of the Body

- A. Context of 1 Corinthians- division- following different church leaders, elevating certain gifts over others, private communion services
- B. Membership Class- organization or organism?
- C. Organization- Church as Building and City- set programs, departments, structure, organization; Elders and Deacons; different gifts in the church
- D. Organism- body
  1. Living, breathing, moving
  2. The location of the church is not just our building, but it's going out and moving, interacting with the world for His glory.
  3. Our growth is organic.
    - a) OT- centripetal; NT- both centripetal and centrifugal
- E. The Trellis and the Vine
  1. Church is more than just programs and functions.
  2. These services, programs, and functions are platforms for the church to meet together, worship, connect, disciple, and grow.
  3. You need both: emphasis on the organization, forget about the individual OR emphasis on the organism, forget about the corporate.

## III. The Unity of the Body (vv. 12-13)

- A. We are one body, though many members.
  1. 1 Corinthians 11- communion; 1 Corinthians 10- we eat one bread together as we are one body
  2. Members- literally organs and limbs (versus club membership)
- B. Baptized into one Spirit- it's the Spirit who has given us these gifts
  1. Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification
- C. Two main forms of distinctions back then: ethnicity and vocation/class

- D. Paul takes this moment to say that ethnicity and vocation/class are not our main identity. Our identity is our union with Christ, which unites us to one another.
  - 1. Marriage- primacy of relationship; leave and cleave
- E. Obstacles to unity (both obvious and unclear)
  - 1. Hatred, pride, envy, dissent, resentment, lack of forgiveness/grace/love
  - 2. Unity in mainly something else, outside of Christ (ethnicity, politics, hobbies, passions, etc.)
- F. Call for Unity
  - 1. Love God, love neighbor
    - a) Parent Punishment
  - 2. Connection (Side by Side)
    - a) Interest, Invitation, Inclusion
    - b) Pastor Tim Keller- day off
  - 3. Faith & Mission
    - a) Pastors
    - b) Closest friends in college- mission trip
    - c) The world will know that we are disciples of Jesus.
- IV. The Diversity of the Body (vv. 14, 17-20)
  - A. We are many members; diverse parts of one body.
  - B. In vv. 27-30, we see a list of the gifts: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helping, administrating, tongues.
  - C. God is the one who arranged us this way for His glory.
    - 1. AGT Dream Teams- adversity, hardship, brokenness- something beautiful
  - D. Our diversity makes our body that much stronger, or else we would not be able to have other “senses” or “abilities.”
  - E. Our diversity makes us more beautiful, or we’ll just be a monster (commentator- 100 elbows or 100 ears).
  - F. Appreciate the diversity in our community: unique stories, faiths, personalities, gifts, talents, abilities, heart. And we cultivate it.
- V. The Necessity of the Body (vv. 15-16, 21-26)
  - A. We need one another. (Safe, seen, soothed, supported but also known and needed)
  - B. View of self- “I don’t belong.” We are all vital parts of the body.
  - C. View of others- “I have no need of you.” We are all indispensable.

- D. Every church, especially growing churches- ppl feel disconnected and unwanted; and there are ppl who don't think they need others (member who didn't want new ppl)
  - E. The "weaker" (possibly less showy, less "vital") are indispensable.
  - F. The less honorable should receive greater honor.
  - G. The unpresentable parts should have greater modest.
  - H. Most likely, Paul is speaking of internal organs, which are absolutely important.
    - 1. Pituitary Gland
  - I. This shows us a glimpse of what the goal/vision of the church is. The gospel calls us to consider the other and the weaker.
    - 1. The people who feel disconnected and unwanted will never say that.
    - 2. It's our call to look out for that. If we're waiting for others to connect with and consider us, it'll not happen.
      - a) Members talking to me about loneliness
    - 3. Our welcoming committee can't be the only ones who are welcoming. We can all welcome and be hospitable. We can make welcome others to empower them to welcome.
  - J. We have the same care for one another.
    - 1. Toothache, Backache- debilitating
    - 2. It takes time.
  - K. We are called to suffer/rejoice together
- VI. The Ability for the Body
- A. He was torn apart, so we may be one.
  - B. He was the perfect prophet, teacher, miracle maker, healer, helper... and He gave these gifts to us. He is who unites us. He is how we are diverse. He created and gifted us to be the individuals we are.
  - C. Christ is the head and yet, He called us indispensable, enough to be dispensable Himself.
  - D. He received dishonor to bestow honor upon us.
  - E. He was the "stronger" and yet considered us. He said He didn't want eternity without us.
  - F. He weeps with and suffered for us. He hurt so much because of our sin, that He came down to take it upon Himself.