

The Priority of the Body of Christ Pt.2

Romans 12:4-5 (NKJV)

Romans 12:3-5 (NKJV)

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Introduction:

The Church is the most unique physical and spiritual organism on this planet. Notice I did not say organization or institution or building. The church is not an organization although it is organize , it is not an institution although it was ordained by God and it is not building although it has a foundation and structure.

It is a living, breathing and growing organism with a Head and a body. It was elected and formed in the mind of God long before the world

began and is being created in time and history. The church was planned by the Father, given to the Son and purchased by the Son on the Cross, and sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of Redemption.

It is not brick and mortar but rather spirit and body. It does not have one address but millions of addresses. It gathers to feed, and scatters to grow. It is made up of all kinds of people from different nations, tribes and tongues. It includes Jew and Gentile, Male and female, Adult and children, Slave and free, Kings and peasants.

They have varieties of backgrounds and education. Great personalities and strange personalities. It includes former murderers and rapist, former drug addicts and dealers, from homosexuals and adulterers and fornicators. It is full of formerly self righteous people and some who have never drank or smoked or chewed tobacco. The greatest amount them is the least and they are considers fools to the world. They believe in a God they have not seen and trust in a Savior they have only read about. They look

forward to a future world without sin and hate the darkness they live in now.

They are always repenting of sin and desiring to be more righteous. They are often overwhelmed with sorrow but at the same time can have unspeakable JOY.

They are the church— —the ecclesia, the assembly of the Saints, the called out ones.

They are the Building of God built on the foundation of the Apostles with Jesus Christ being the Chief cornerstone.

They are the Bride of Christ, a chaste virgin, pure and clean awaiting the arrival of the Bridegroom.

They are True Israel, the ones who believe as Father Abraham believed and righteousness was imputed to Him

They are the flock of God, whom the true shepherd calls by name..

They are the body of Christ with many members and He is the Head

That is what they are, the church. That is what we are....the church.

And each analogy or picture the Bible paints regarding the church gives us a different important detail about the church.

1. The word church— ecclesia- means assembly but not just any assembly, we are the called out assembly.

Called out of darkness to light

Called to Holiness and Obedience

Called out of the World and to the separation.

Call for Edification and Evangelism

2. We are the Building of God. We have a foundation upon which we are built which the Apostles doctrine, and we stay true and straight in that doctrine by aligning ourselves with the Cornerstone, Jesus Christ. We build on the

foundation a life of righteous works that glorify the Father who works in us to accomplish this.

3. We are the Bride of Christ, uniquely His, for whom He is greatly jealous for her purity and protection. and we look forward to the wedding supper of the Lamb where we are eternally united to Christ without spot or blemish.

4. We are the True Israel, not the Israel of external religion, or the Israel of physical descent from Abraham but we are the Spiritual seed of Abraham with the Righteousness of Christ imputed by faith.

5. We are the Flock of God, the sheep of his pasture. The sheep of another fold that know their shepherd and are individually called by name. We are prone to wander and to be led astray. We are easily hurt and often under attack. But the True shepherd knows us and protects us and lays down his life for the sheep.

6. And we were His body, with many members and many functions totally controlled by the Head who is Christ. We are the arms and legs, feet and hands of Christ to dying world. We are the only Christ the world will see. So it is paramount that the body stay clean and presentable and the it remains strong in healthy so the Head can use his body to reach the world and glorify Himself.

This is the picture Paul paints for us in Romans 12

We are the Body. Other verses describe us this way.

Ephesians 1:22–23 (NKJV)

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

Ephesians 2:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new

man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Ephesians 4:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who

is the head—Christ—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.

Ephesians 5:23 (NKJV)

²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

Ephesians 5:28–30 (NKJV)

²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Colossians 1:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

Colossians 2:19 (NKJV)

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.

Colossians 3:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Lesson:

I. The Admonition

II. The Anatomy

III. The Analogy

I. The Admonition

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself

more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

To emphasize the necessity of meekness, Paul uses a form of *phroneō* (**to think**) four times in verse 3. A Christian is not to overestimate himself, to **think more highly** (*hyperphroneō*) **of himself than he ought to think**, but is to think of himself as he really is. He is not to overvalue his abilities, his gifts, or his worth but make an accurate estimate of himself. “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing,” Paul elsewhere cautions, “he deceives himself” (Gal. 6:3). And an honest estimate will be very low (cf. 1 Tim. 1:12–16).

To have sound judgment translates a compound (*sōphroneō*) of that verb and has the basic meaning of “to think with a sound mind, to think soberly” (as the kjv). **To think** of ourselves with **sound judgment** leads us to recognize that, in ourselves, we are nothing at all, but that, in Christ, we can be used to the glory of God through the gift of the Spirit bestowed on us. We must realize that from ourselves, from our fleshly humanness, nothing eternal can be produced, but that in the power of the Spirit we can be used to build the kingdom and honor the King.

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, **as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.**

I. The Admonition

II. The Anatomy

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

The picture here is of the human body... Paul is referring to the many members or parts of the body that make up the body... The arm is not the body, but part of the body. The leg is not the body but part of the body. The eye or nose is not the body but part of the body. There is great diversity and differences in the body members or parts but all of the individual body parts make up the whole body.

Each part of the body has a different function than other parts. The eye does not do what the foot does and foot can't do what the mouth does. The arm can't function as the neck and the neck can't do what the leg does. Each part is unique, and especially designed to do an intended function.

The Uniqueness of the Human Body

“Because it is so normal and dependable, the great wonder of the proper operation of our bodies is seldom appreciated or even noticed. We have but to think, and our hands, feet, or eyes immediately do what we want them to do. Because we have trained them to respond in certain ways, they do many things almost automatically. Our most critical bodily functions—such as our hearts’ beating and our lungs’ breathing—require no thought at all. They simply do their jobs, performing their divinely-designed functions minute after minute, day after day, year after year. The interrelationship of the parts of our bodies is so unbelievably intricate that medical science continually discovers new functions and relationships. It is often only when our bodies cease to function properly that we appreciate how marvelously God has designed them.

In his book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, the internationally renowned surgeon Dr. Paul Brand writes of the amazing diversity and interrelationship of the parts of the human body. Speaking of the body's cells, he says:

I am first struck by their variety. Chemically my cells are almost alike, but visually and functionally they are as different as the animals in a zoo. Red blood cells, discs resembling Lifesaver candies, voyage through my blood loaded with oxygen to feed the other cells. Muscle cells, which absorb so much of that nourishment, are sleek and supple, full of coiled energy. Cartilage cells with shiny black nuclei look like bunches of black-eyed peas glued tightly together for strength. Fat cells seem lazy and leaden, like bulging white plastic garbage bags jammed together.

Bone cells live in rigid structures that exude strength. Cut in cross section, bones resemble tree rings, overlapping strength with strength, offering impliability and sturdiness. In contrast, skin cells form undulating patterns of softness and texture that rise and dip, giving shape and beauty to our bodies. They curve and jut at unpredictable angles so that every person's fingerprint—not to mention his or her face—is unique.

The aristocrats of the cellular world are the sex cells and nerve cells. A woman's contribution, the egg, is one of the largest cells in the human body, its ovoid shape just visible to the unaided eye. It seems fitting that all the other cells in the body should derive from this elegant and primordial structure. In great contrast to the egg's quiet repose, the male's tiny sperm cells are furiously flagellating tadpoles with distended heads and skinny tails. They scramble for position as if competitively aware that only one of billions will gain the honor of fertilization.

The king of cells, the one I have devoted much of my life to studying, is the nerve cell. It has an aura of wisdom and complexity about it. Spiderlike, it branches out and unites the body with a computer network of dazzling sophistication. Its axons, "wires" carrying distant messages to and from the human brain, can reach a yard in length.

I never tire of viewing these varied specimens or thumbing through books which render cells. Individually they seem puny and oddly designed, but I know these invisible parts cooperate to lavish me with the phenomenon of life....

My body employs a bewildering zoo of cells, none of which individually resembles the larger

body. Just so, Christ's Body comprises an unlikely assortment of humans. Unlikely is precisely the right word, for we are decidedly unlike one another and the One we follow. From whose design come these comical human shapes which so faintly reflect the ideals of the Body as a whole?

The Body of Christ, like our own bodies, is composed of individual, unlike cells that are knit together to form one Body. He is the whole thing, and the joy of the Body increases as individual cells realize they can be diverse without becoming isolated outposts.

Dr. Brand also describes the unity of the seemingly endless diversity of the cells.

What moves cells to work together? What ushers in the higher specialized functions of movement, sight, and consciousness through the coordination of a hundred trillion cells?

The secret to membership lies locked away inside each cell nucleus, chemically coiled in a strand of DNA. Once the egg and sperm share their inheritance, the DNA chemical ladder splits down the center of every gene much as the teeth of a zipper pull apart. DNA reforms itself each time the cell divides: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 cells, each with the identical DNA. Along the way cells specialize, but

each carries the entire instruction book of one hundred thousand genes. DNA is estimated to contain instructions that, if written out, would fill a thousand six-hundred-page books. A nerve cell may operate according to instructions from volume four and a kidney cell from volume twenty-five, but both carry the whole compendium. It provides each cell's sealed credential of membership in the body. Every cell possesses a genetic code so complete that the entire body could be reassembled from information in any one of the body's cells....

Just as the complete identity code of my body inheres in each individual cell, so also the reality of God permeates every cell in [Christ's] Body, linking us members with a true, organic bond. I sense that bond when I meet strangers in India or Africa or California who share my loyalty to the Head; instantly we become brothers and sisters, fellow cells in Christ's Body. I share the ecstasy of community in a universal Body that includes every man and woman in whom God resides.

(Taken from *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, by Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancy. Copyright [CO] 1980 by Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancy. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House)

There are also rebellious cells, as it were, in the Body of Christ. Some are benign, in the sense that they do not destroy the church. They simply gorge

themselves on blessings and benefits at the expense of the rest of the body. They become fatter and fatter, always taking in, seldom giving out. The focus of their whole existence is self-service. Their creed is: “I will get all I can from God and all I can from the church.” In their unfaithfulness to the Lord and to His people, they sap the church of its vitality and can so weaken it that it becomes emaciated and cannot function normally.

The church also has “cells” that are mutinous to the point of destruction. Through outright heresy and flagrant immorality, these malignant members openly attack the rest of the body, eating away at its very life.

As believers, we are all interrelated in a spiritual unity. Christ has designed us to work uniquely but harmoniously as His Body on earth—to be His own hands, His own feet, His own voice. We share a common life, a common ministry, a common power, and, above all, a common Head. We are endowed in countless different combinations of the specific gifts mentioned here and elsewhere in the New Testament. But it is our Lord’s design and desire that our diversity in spiritual gifts be manifested in unity of spiritual service.”

I. The Admonition

II. The Anatomy

III. The Analogy

1.The Body of Christ is Diverse and different

Romans 12:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith;

1 Corinthians 12:4–7 (NKJV)

⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of activities,....

2. God works in all parts of the Body of Christ

⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

3. God Gives the members of the Body and their Gifts for the profit of the Body not for yourself.

⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one **for the profit of all:**

4. God gives each members gifts as He Wills

1 Corinthians 12:11–27 (NKJV)

¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

5. God places members from all men in the Body, Sovereignly

¹² For 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. ¹³ For 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. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

6. Every Member is important, valuable and Needed.

⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

²⁰ But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. ²¹ And 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.” ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have

greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, ²⁵ that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

1. The Body of Christ is Diverse and different

2. God works in all parts of the Body of Christ

3. God Gives the members of the Body and their Gifts for the profit of the Body not for yourself.

4. God gives each members gifts as He Wills

5. God places members from all men in the Body, Sovereignly

6. Every Member is important, valuable and Needed.

The film *127 Hours* tells the story of Aron Ralston, an adventurer from Indiana who got trapped in a canyon in Utah. Nobody knew where Aron was, and he waited 127 hours with his dying arm trapped behind an unmovable rock. In the end there was only one solution. He took his dull knife, and cut off his own arm to break free, then he had to make his way through the rest of the canyon, rappel down a 65-foot (20 m) drop, and hike 7 miles (11 km) to safety.^{[2][3]} It was the only way to survive. Aaron can get along without his right arm, but he would surely be glad if there was a way for him to get it back.