“The Church Is Someone’s Body”

07/10/2016

I Corinthians 12:4-14

You are aware, I am sure, that of the fact that you, your body, is made up of 37.2 trillion cells. All those trillions of cells are grouped into something called tissue. And when a group of tissues work together, that group is called an organ? And when a group of organs work together we call this a body?

God made each of us with an amazing body. You are made up of eight systems that constantly co-operate with one another. The nervous system, your muscles, the circulatory system, the digestive system, your bones, the excretory system, the respiratory system, and the integumentary system.

Each system is a display of exceptional scientific genius and art; a miraculous design by an even more Amazing Creator. Each part of your body was designed by your Creator to cooperate. Your muscles cooperate with your bones. Your nervous system cooperates with your circulatory system so that you function as one unit. It should astonish you what God did when He created a human being.

On any single day of your life, you can figure that your heart beats roughly 110,000 times. Your blood travels 12,000 miles; that’s three times a minute. Your digestive system processes 7.8 pounds of waste. Your lungs take in 438 cubic feet of air. And as far as science can tell, we are made up of approximately 37.2 trillion cells.

Now, I’m sure you’ll agree with me that the body is amazing. Yet, here’s where I am going this morning. The Church is Someone’s body.

That’s what we find in the Bible. The LORD has taken this awesome entity called a body and uses it as an illustration of the way His Church works. Just like the body works together, His Church works together. There is no entity on the earth so varied, yet so unified. We are the Church. The Church is a beautiful tapestry of people and personalities and gifts and abilities and likes and dislikes. Each Believer is vastly different from every other Believer. Yet, we are one; one body.

I say that because that is what we read in the Scripture. Please open your Bible with me today to I Corinthians chapter twelve where you find the Church. Let’s begin at verse twelve. I Corinthians 12:12 *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

*(14) For the body is not one member, but many. (15) If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

*(18) But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. (19) And if they were all one member, where were the body? (20) But now are they many members, yet but one body. (21) And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”*

You see, *our* view of the Church is a building. And we’ll make it as beautiful as we can. We dress it up and we clean it up. On the other hand, *God’s* picture is a body. And the way a body functions and the way it relates is the way the LORD’s Church works.

I Corinthians 12:12 *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (25) “…that the members should have the same care one for another. (26) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”*

I’ve titled today’s sermon “The Church Is Someone’s Body.” Shall we pray?

The pictures the LORD uses in the Bible are designed to help us see things as He sees them. His pictures are here to move us toward one thing: understanding Him. The LORD always uses things like parables, allegories, similes, and other illustrations to teach us His ways.

My hope today is to move you from seeing the Church as you see it to the way He sees it and to get you to see your responsibility to other people in the body of Christ. So, let’s see what the Bible teaches here. How does the LORD see the Church?

First, the Church is not just a group of people. According to this passage, it is a living body. It’s Someone else’s body; it’s His body.

Think with me about what’s really going on. We are people connected to each other by a very real Person. We’re not connected because we believe the same thing or because we’re all part of the same organization. We’re not connect because we’re on the same team. Those things may be true. But baseball players and groups of Zen Buddhists and being a part of the Carpenters Union aren’t related to each other like Christians are related inside the Body of Christ. It’s not even being like we’re part of the same race.

Look again at verse thirteen I Corinthians 12:13 *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*

God’s Spirit has baptized (immersed) each one of us into a new kind of water. He has, by the work of His Son, brought you into a spiritual relationship not only with Himself. But there’s much more. You’ve been brought into a new relationship with every other person who is related to the LORD Jesus Christ by His saving grace. In this sense, we’re more than just brothers and sisters; the Church is much more than a family. We’re more than a race. We’re more even that arms and legs in a body. We are one Person. That Person is Jesus Christ. That’s the nature of Christ’s Body today.

And not only has the Holy Spirit baptized you into Christ’s Body, He’s also the One Who enables us to drink out of the same cup, so-to-speak. Actually we are drinking “into” that same cup, which is the Holy Spirit Himself. Now usually we drink because we are thirsty. And in this case our thirst is for something spiritual. And where do we get this spiritual water? And we get it partly from being connected to others who are also in the Body of Christ. That means we’re here to *give* refreshment and *receive* refreshment from each other.

So you see, the Body of Christ is a whole lot more than a Church building or a denomination. We are not just a group of people. It’s being a living part of Someone else’s body. We are the body of the LORD Jesus Christ. He lives in you and you live in Him. You are alive with Christ. That’s what we mean when we say that the Church is the Body of Christ.

First, the Church is not just a group of people. According to this passage, it is a living body.

Second, we are totally different.

And now, verse fourteen. I Corinthians 12:14 *“For the body is not one member, but many.”* You can see here why Christ’s body is what it is. But it’s not any ordinary thing. It’s one living entity made up of lots of members. Your body’s members can be counted; His can’t. All we know is that we are virtually part of each other. That’s the nature of Christ’s body.

And consider this. The Head of the body is Christ. He’s in Heaven. Yet we are His body. We are here on this earth in this world for this time.

And how this all this come about? God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son to die as the Sacrifice for your sins. Then, at the moment you repent and trust on that Sacrifice, you immediately become part of His Church.

Ask yourself about your own body. Are your toes different? They’re alike because they’re toes. But aren’t they *different* from each other. Does anyone here have two identical fingers? Each fingerprint, each toe print, each nose print, is unique. Why? Because there are simply no two members that are alike.

First, the Church is a living body.

Second, we are totally different.

Third, we need each other.

The third word from the Apostle Paul is here in verse fifteen. I Corinthians 12:15 *“If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

*(18) But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”*

The reason why there are so many of us and the reason why we are so different from each other is this. We need each other. We need those people in the Church who are different than us. The members of a body are designed to need the other members.

Imagine, if it’s possible, that your baby toe decided that it wasn’t needed by the rest of the toes or by the foot; or by you. How absolutely foolish! When you walk, your baby toe may be hardly noticed at all. It helps a bit with your balance. And, really, who here thinks that since that toe is so small, it’s not necessary? Do you need that toe? Of course, you do.

Well then, why is it that some Christians think they don’t need the rest of the Body of Christ? I wouldn’t be the least surprised if there are a lot of Christians who think just like this “We don’t need the rest of the people in this Church. Besides, they never speak to me. They might believe in Jesus. But we just don’t ever get together. So, we don’t need them.”

Look again at what the Holy Spirit says here in verse fifteen. I Corinthians 12:15 *“If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?”*

Paul is saying that it’s futile to try to exist or operate as a Christian without this huge sense of need. Christians *need* Christians. This is what makes the Church the Church. We need one another. You are not just a member in Christ’s Body if you are saved. You are a dependent member. Prac-tically speaking, you can’t get along without the rest of us. For the life of me, I can’t understand why some Christians refuse to make time for the rest of Christ’s body.

But Paul makes a further point here. He implies that there are some Christians who think that since they aren’t as significant as other members in the Body, then they aren’t really a part of the body. It’s the “poor me” philosophy of life. “Poor me. I’m just an ear. If only God had made me an eye, then I’d be important, wouldn’t I?”

The picture Paul paints here is shocking. Folks, it’s shocking to even think that you are anything other than a member of Christ’s Body and that you have life-refreshing properties. You would never think that your knee would have any interest in being an elbow. Then, why would you think that you aren’t essential to the body if you’re a knee?

Can you see what the Church is? It’s Someone else’s body. And what is Christ? He is one body with many members.

So, just like a physical body is made up of members and each member holds its unique place; so, the Body of Christ is made up of many members and we are all different from each other. So, be glad that you’re different. Enjoy it. Live like you are different. You are. But see yourself as life-refreshing. You are a life-giving member of the living Son of God. And you need the rest of the body to enable you to be the most useful member you can be.

Too many Christians miss out on fellowship with other Saints. Some of them shut themselves off from the rest of the Body of Christ and when you do that, you shut off the flow of life between the arms and the legs.

The nature of the Body of Christ is that we are connected to a very real Person. You are extremely unique inside Christ’s body. Your contribution is just as essential as everyone else’s. You need the rest of the people in our Assembly in order for you to function at your best. We are dependent upon each other just like your knee is dependent upon the leg and the foot and the toes.

Now **fourth**, the best way to live life is to see yourself as what you are and where you are is all by your Creator’s design.

Look at the word of the LORD again, verse eighteen. I Corinthians 12:18 *“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. (19) And if they were all one member, where were the body? (20) But now are they many members, yet but one body. (21) And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”*

Why did the LORD make you as He did? Why did He place you where He has placed you inside Christ’s body? Simple. Because He’s perfect and wise. It makes your Heavenly Father happy to have you where you are and for you to be what you are and to do what you do. You see, His goal is to have a body that functions well. It’s not even a question of health. He’s the one with the health-giving properties. Rather it’s a question of “Are you resting content with being what He’s made you?”

Folks, hands and eyes are important. But the body would be extremely grotesque if all we were mere eyes or hands. Everyone everywhere knows that eyes need tear ducts and ears need hammers and anvils and stirrups and timpanis. Did you know that the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup inside your ear are the three smallest bones in your body? God designed and created these three small bones to work perfectly together to do one thing: to amplify the sound that comes into your ear and sends it over to the brain for interpretation.

Here’s why the LORD, your Creator made you what you are and placed you in this life where you are. It’s because He intends to use you in His body as He pleases, not as you please. Do you see how freeing this is? Without this sense that you are where you are by His design, you are lost even though you’re saved. God means for you to be accepting of His design upon your life. You’re *His* design. Thoroughly enjoy it.

First, the Church is a living body.

Second, we are totally different.

Third, we need each other.

Fourth, the best way to live life is to see yourself as what you are and where you are is all by your Creator’s design.

Fifth, so what if you are a small member.

You may be extremely small, but you are mighty. Please notice this big emphasis on the idea of “smallness” in the Body of Christ is. Verse 22.

I Corinthians 12:22 *“Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: (23) And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”*

Those feeble (small) bones inside your ear may be the smallest in your entire body. But, they are mighty important. The Bible says this. Zechariah 4:10 *“Despise not the day of small things.”* And here’s Luke 16:10 *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”*

Folks, everything large began small from the acorn into great oak tree and the small stream into the mighty Mississippi.

You may not feel that you have much to offer and that your place of service is small. But folks, God sees much more than man.

Do you remember the woman who only had one mite to place into the offering basket at the Temple? Jesus words were this. Luke 21:1 *“And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. (2) And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. (3) And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:…”*

Maybe you feel as though you are a baby toe or an anvil inside the ear. But God sees much more than you or I see.

You see, the Church is Somone’s Body. And we need to see that the LORD intends for us to need each other.

Here’s what happens to so many Christians. They become loners. Or they become proud. “After all, we’re part of a select group. Besides we’re better than *them*.” Those are not the attitudes that honor the LORD.

And why are there so many of us and why are we so different from each other? To remind us that we need each other. See yourself as what you are and where you are by your Creator’s design and placement.

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Sixth, and finally, what is the LORD’s purpose in a Church that is so varied and filled with uniqueness? Here’s His answer in the words of the Holy Spirit in verse 24.

I Corinthians 12:24 *“For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: (25) That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. (26) And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”*

Here’s His purpose. Here’s why we are connected to a real person. Here’s the purpose for our being totally different from everyone else. Here’s the purpose for our needing each other. And here’s the purpose for our accepting what He has made us and accepting where He has placed us in the Body. It’s so that *“the members should have the same care one for another.”*

So, how much care do you show towards others here at EBC? Are you willing to change your view of the Church and adjust yourself to His view?

His grand and glorious purpose for there being so many of us and such a variety is so that there would be quote *“no schism in the body.”* Would you like to know what a “schism” is? It’s a tear; a split; a division; just like you’d have in a shirt or a dress. A schism occurs every time one of us decides we don’t need the rest of us and we neglect the fellowship of the Saints and fail to join with the rest of His Church for Sunday worship.

Do you remember the day the LORD sent Israel across the Red Sea? He divided the waters one from the other. That’s this word “schism.” It implies a division.

And do you remember what happened to the veil in the Temple on the day Jesus died on the Cross? The Gospel says this. Mark 15:37 *“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. (38) And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”* That Old English word “rent” is this same word “schism.”

So, from now on will you see yourself at the LORD does? Folks, you are different than every other Believer just like every toe is different that every other toe or ear or nose or finger or elbow or knee. Why? Here’s the LORD’s reason: so that we’d have the same care for each other.

Whenever I teach God’s word, my hope and prayer is one thing: that you’d see what the LORD is like and that you’d see His ways and go out to walk in them. Your ways are not God’s ways.

Think about it like this. The Church is so often filled with man’s ways. The Church is really Someone’s body. The LORD has each of us different on purpose; just so that we’d see that we need each other; that we’d have the same care for each other.

God’s ways will always be higher than man’s ways. But isn’t it obvious here in this passage that the LORD’s Church is a body, vitally connected to the LORD Jesus Christ, filled with a wonderful variety of parts and members? And, aren’t you glad He made it that way? Aren’t you glad you’re in His Church?

Lastly, let’s not forget why Jesus died on Calvary. He came here so that you would find eternal life in Him. He came into this world to build His Church. And think closely about the last prayer Jesus made on that night before His crucifixion. Here’s what He said.

John 17:11 *“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me,* ***that they may be one, as we are****. (21)* ***That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us****: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

*(22) And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;* ***that they may be one, even as we are one:*** *(23) I in them, and thou in me,* ***that they may be made perfect in one****; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

Can you expect He’d be any other way that this?

Hymn # \_\_\_ “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” followed by Communion