

Church, the body of Christ

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[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be here this morning, and it's good to know that our Lord Jesus is alive, and that is why we are here.

You know, it's not really a part of my message, but 1 Peter, he says here, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found in the praise and honor and glorying at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

I just feel like I've been in a great trial of my faith this week. If I would not be convinced that I'm supposed to be here and bring this message, I'd be at home right now.

But praise God, he has brought me here. The devil tried everything he could that God allowed to keep me at home. Let's praise the Lord for that.

Thank you for your prayers. Let's turn to Romans chapter 12. I want to talk about the church today and the body of Christ.

[1 : 37] Jesus being the head of the church. There's many very good scriptures concerning that, but I think we'll just go on.

We'll start in Romans chapter 12. I want to look at the body, the church. Let's start in verse 1.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And may not conform to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

For I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

[2 : 46] For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith, or ministry let us wait on our ministering, or he that teaches on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth with diligence, he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness, let love be without dissimulation, abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good, be kindly affection one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

You know, we hear, we read these first two verses many times here, but we don't so many times continue on.

But he talks about our relationship in the body, and walking together, and to be the body of Christ, the church that God desires.

And it starts with being born again, and giving ourselves to the Lord Jesus. Verse 1, I beseech you, I beseech you, brethren, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, make a decisive dedication of our bodies to the Lord Jesus.

[4 : 40] That's what he's saying. It has to be a decision that we make, and it's not just something that we do in passing, it's not just something that, you know, we just kind of go through the form of it, but we make that decision, and it's a decision that will stand for the rest of our life.

And as we make that decision, to give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, a living sacrifice, and to be holy, and to be acceptable to God, to be acceptable in his sight, not to, not to seek after the approval of men necessarily.

The Bible, Jesus said, he said, woe when all men speak well of you. And so there's many times that we cannot actually have the approval of men.

But more important, that we have the approval of God on our life. That must be our goal. That must be our walk.

That must be our heart's desire. And all of that, he says, is only our reasonable service. It's just the beginning of our walk with Christ.

[6 : 02] It's just the beginning of us being, being what God wants us to be. And be not conformed to this world.

So we are bought by a price, by the blood of Jesus. The most costly, the most costly thing that is, that has ever been on this earth, and it's the blood of Jesus.

And we are bought by that blood. We are bought by that blood. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Transformed by the renewing of our mind. And, you know, it's not just that we changed our thinking. No, but we turned around, and we're going the opposite direction.

We're now, we've been brought out of the kingdom of darkness, and now we're in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We've totally changed. We have a new life in Christ.

[7 : 13] We've made that decision, that we will no longer follow the dictates of self and sin.

We've renounced the world, and now we are following after Christ. And He has transformed us, and He has renewed our mind, that we might think the thoughts of God, that the Holy Spirit can come and speak through us.

He can bring His thoughts into our mind, that we will prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

God wants us to fulfill His will in this life. He wants us to walk in that way. He wants us to show to others what His will is here on this earth.

And if we will do this, if we will walk in this way, that we must know the voice of the Spirit of God, we must have a relationship with Him, that when He speaks to us, that we hear, and we receive from Him, and He can direct our path.

[8 : 30] Yesterday, it was so clear. My thoughts were elsewhere, and all of a sudden, the Lord brought this message to me, and just, I just, you know, it's just, when He speaks, we need to know that's the only way that the will of God can be done in this world, in our life, in the life of the church, and our community, and our families, is when we are in such a position that we hear the voice of God.

We hear Him speaking to us, and then we can make that decision, and we can follow after whatever He is saying. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Now, you know, we've come to this place, we've given ourselves to Him, and we've learned to know His voice, and we walk with God, and He uses us in His kingdom, but He admonishes us here not to be lifted up in pride, not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.

Why? Because, you know, that is one of the next temptations that the devil will bring, is to be lifted up in pride.

Oh, see what I did. See what God helped me to do. See what God directed. He used me to do this. You know, God will use us if we will walk humbly with Him.

[10 : 19] But if we will take the honor and the glory to ourselves, He will leave us, and we'll have to figure it out for ourselves from there on. Not to think of Himself more highly than He ought to think, but to think soberly, soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

He has given us all a measure of faith. He has given us all a manifestation of the Spirit. He's given us all gifts, talents, as we heard earlier.

He's given us, He's given us these that He might use us in His church, in His kingdom. For as we have many members in one body, all members have not the same office.

So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. So we have one body, we have one church, and I believe that, you know, there's this thing of the universal church, but we are not, we are at one and at unity with the local body.

That's what He's talking about, I believe. He's talking about the local body here. And He says, He says, we are many, but we are one body in Christ.

[11 : 50] And we are all members one of another. We are members one of another. And we have gifts differing one from another according to the grace that He's given to us.

So we have different gifts. And, you know, if we would all have the same gift, then there would be a lot of things that would not get done in this, in church life.

So we have different gifts. And He has given us, when He gives you a gift, it's the grace to do it. It's the grace to walk in it.

If you will walk in faith, if you will walk in faith, then the grace will be there to walk it out.

And as you walk it out, He will add more. Instead of one talent, you will have two. Instead of five talents, He will have six, seven, ten. But that is how it works in this walk with our Lord.

[12 : 57] And He gives us, He gives us grace to walk it out. Doesn't say that we won't be tested.

Doesn't say that there won't be a trial of our faith. It doesn't say that we won't come up against some impossibilities. Or it will look impossible to us.

This morning, it looked impossible for me to come. But I'm here, praise God. The trial of our faith, it will be there.

But it's necessary that our faith can grow. It is necessary that our faith can mature and that we can become stronger and that we can walk with our Lord and fulfill all His plan and will for us.

verse 9, Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil.

[14 : 03] Cleave to that which is good. Let love flow. Let brotherly love flow in our midst. true love.

True love. Not just letting on or not just making a show, but true love that comes by the Spirit of God.

And as we walk in humility in the gifts and the callings of God, then I believe the church, what we'll see here in a little bit, I believe the church will be edified.

The church will be strengthened. The church can go on and fulfill the will and the purpose of God.

Talking about humility, let's just look at Philippians just a minute here.

Humility and unity. In chapter 1, verse 27, the last part, he says, That ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

[15 : 24] that we stand fast in one spirit. That one spirit is the Holy Spirit. That one spirit, the Holy Spirit, is the one that as we all are led by the Spirit of God, that will bring us into the unity of the Spirit.

That is how that works. The Spirit of God will bring us together. And as He puts us all in our place, then we will be in the unity of the Spirit.

And He says, With one spirit and with one mind. You know, with all the same goal, with all the same thing. And let me just get this verse.

There's another verse that says very much the same thing. In 1 Corinthians 1.10, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing.

That there be no divisions among you. But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. You know, and the only way that that is possible is as we walk in the Spirit of God.

[16 : 40] As I walk in the Spirit and you walk in the Spirit, then we will agree together. We will have the same mind in things that come up.

We will have the mind of Christ. And there will be no divisions among us. Perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

That is His will and His desire for us. In Philippians 2, verse 2. Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory. There we have it again. Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Not to do things because of strife or vain glory or pride.

But in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

[17 : 54] Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Do nothing through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, in humility, esteem others better.

than ourselves. Be like-minded and of one accord and of one mind. The will of God will be accomplished as we continue on, as we walk in this way in lowliness of mind and esteem others better than ourselves.

There's one verse out of 1 John. 1 John 1, 7. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Walking in the light, having fellowship one with another. One with another. And, you know, I believe this fellowship, it's not just...

I mean, we're having fellowship today, yes. We're here together and all of that, but, you know, knowing each other and speaking with each other and challenging each other and looking out for each other, it's a part of fellowship.

[19 : 35] And as we walk in the light, when we are challenged by our brother, then we will hear and we will allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse us and to set us free.

That's fellowship. That's the local body. That's the body of Christ. That's where that happens, is in our fellowship together, one with another.

Fellowship one with another. Now turn to Ephesians chapter 4. Verse 1, And I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

You know, and the end of the chapter before this, he's talking about the fullness of God and being full of the fullness of God, being full of the Holy Ghost and the power of the Spirit in us.

And then he beseeches us that we would walk worthy of this calling that God has called us to. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

[20 : 55] There it is again. Lowliness and meekness. Lowliness, meekness, the opposite of pride, the opposite of haughtiness, the opposite of arrogance.

That's how we will walk with our Savior. And that is how we will walk with one another, is in lowliness and meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

endeavoring. You know, sometimes it takes work. Sometimes it takes some doing on our part to keep the unity.

But he admonishes us to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit of God. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all. But on every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

[22 : 22] every one of us. We have grace according to that gift that God has given us. There's one body, there is one Spirit, there is one Lord, there is one faith, there is one baptism.

You know, when there's various spirits, there's only one that's the Holy Ghost. And the others are all others, other spirits. There's only one that we can follow.

There's only one that we can listen to. There's many others that will come and whisper in your ear or maybe they'll shout in your ear. But whatever they do, you can't listen to them, you can't follow them.

It is only the Spirit of God that we can give an ear to and we can hear what He says and we need to know His voice and follow Him.

verse 11, He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers the ministry gifts. And what are those given for?

[23 : 29] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And what is the goal in all of this? Till we all come in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie and wait to deceive.

The will of God is that we as a body, that we are perfected, that we are built up, that we are edified to the point that we come together in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, or we might say of the acknowledging of the Son of God and His rightful place and what He does in our hearts and lives.

And as we acknowledge the Son of God, that we are brought unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

This is the will of God, that we come to the place, to the fullness of the stature of the Christ, of the Son of God, that when people see us, they see Jesus in us.

When the devil comes, he sees Jesus in you. When he attacks you because you are a son of God and he hates Jesus, and so therefore he's going to come and he's going to attack you.

[25 : 25] We must be strong in the time of attack, in the time of trial. We must be strong and faithful and never doubt.

You know, you know, the devil will come and attack you and then he'll tell you, well, there must be something wrong in your life because you're sick or whatever went wrong.

You know, if you were living right, then everything would go well. Well, if you weren't living right, then he'd let you go probably.

That we all come in the unity of the faith. Verse 14, that we're no more children tossed to and fro. God wants us to grow up. He wants us to mature. He wants us to grow up in our Christian walk. That we're no more children tossed to and fro when those winds of doctrine come and they hit us just like a wave hits a boat in the sea.

[26 : 45] They hit us. Those winds of doctrine, they will hit. But he wants us to be strong.

He wants us to be mature. That when they come, we will not waver. When they come, we will stand firm. We will know where we stand.

We stand on the word of God. And we know that that doctrine is false. And we will not yield to it. No more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Back and forth, just swinging back and forth and no stability. Notice what he says here. By the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

You know, the devil uses people. He uses people to bring his winds of doctrine. He uses people to come and try to lead you astray.

[27 : 54] Yes, he does. And many times, they will have a lot of truth. They might claim to be a Christian. They might claim to have a walk with the Lord.

But they'll, and they might have a lot of good things to say, but then they'll inject the poison. The only way that we can stand is if we grow up in Christ and we're, you know, this is another reason for the body.

You know, we're in this together. We're not, we're not standing out there by ourselves. but we're standing together.

And when those winds of doctrine hit, when the trials and the storms of life hit, whatever comes your way, you're not by yourself, but you have the body that will stand together.

We will stand together and we will be victorious over every attack of the enemy. no more children tossed to and fro.

[29 : 12] You know, you know, I was reminded of the children of Israel. They were coming out on the way from Egypt to the promised land and somewhere there in the wilderness.

There were people that were lagging behind. There were people that just couldn't keep up and they were, you know, whatever reason. And so they were out there more or less scattered by themselves.

Oh, we'll catch up with the rest of them someday. But what happened? Amalek came along. They came and yes, the Amalekites, they came and they attacked them and they killed some of them. Why did this happen? Because they weren't with everybody else. They weren't in the safety of the camp. They weren't in the safety of the church, you might say.

But they were out by themselves. They were lagging behind and they were vulnerable. You know, I believe people that are out by themselves, they're vulnerable.

[30 : 29] They're open. They're vulnerable to the attack of the enemy. They're vulnerable to those winds of doctrine. They're vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy against them.

You know, when that attack comes, what is the first thought? It's, oh, was I thinking right?

Am I correct in where I'm at? You know, when we, when we can go back and we can know that we are in the body of Christ, and though we might waver, our brother will stand.

Though we will be tempted, and though we might, though we might stumble, our brother will help us up.

It's a part of being in the body of Christ. but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

[32 : 16] Now this verse is a very, very loaded verse from whom the whole body, oh hallelujah, we are fitly joined together.

You know, it's not just, it's not, it didn't just happen. No, but God has brought us together into a body. He's brought us, he's brought us here and he is fitly joining us whereas I think Peter says, lively stones.

We are lively stones being used to build the temple of the Lord. Living stones and we're all, we're shaped and we're formed and we're put together to be that temple of God.

We are fitly joined together and compacted. You know, compacted, that's a pushing, a pressing together.

mother. You know, the man with the individualist mindset doesn't have any place for this to be compacted into a body.

[33 : 47] By that which every joint supplieth, you know, by that which every member supplieth, that which each and every one of you supplieth, we are all needed, we're all a vital part of the body of Christ.

According to the effectual working, effectual working, efficient working, or, you know, it's not, it's not just halfway, but it's effectual, it is very productive, it is very efficient, it will do what God intends it to do.

Very effectual working in the measure of every part, joint, when every part, every joint, every member is fulfilling his spot, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Edifying of itself in love. Perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Walking in humility and submission will help guard against false doctrine. Christ, the head of the body, the body fitly joined together and compacted together.

[35 : 39] Colossians 2, 19. And he says, and not holding the head, which is negative because of what the verses are before, but if we are holding the head to its rightful place, from which all the body, by joints and bands have nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

Jesus is the head of the church, and when we hold him up as that, and we find our place under him, in the body of Christ, what's he say here?

Joints and bands and whatever our place is, whatever our function is, we have nourishment from the head.

we have nourishment from the head. That is how you will know, you will know if it's a church or not, is it connected to the head, Christ Jesus.

But if we are connected to Jesus Christ, from which all the body, the whole body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, we are knit together, and increase, what is the result of all this?

[37 : 24] Increases with the increase of God, growth from God. You know, I like to think, you know, Corinthians says, we're all made to drink of one spirit.

We're all irrigated by the spirit of God, and here in the West, we know what it means to irrigate. We irrigate something, then it turns green.

If you shut the water off, it's going to die, it's going to turn brown. But not only are we irrigated by the spirit of God, but I believe that when we are together in the unity of the spirit, then we are watered, and it's also like a greenhouse that will grow with the growth of God.

His blessing will flow, and there will be an abundance of growth and life. 1 Peter 5, there's some admonition here.

The elders which are among you, I exhort who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

[38 : 59] feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither is being lords over God's heritage, but being in samples to the flock.

He instructs us to feed the flock of God, and that's back again to the ministry gifts that we ran there in Ephesians 5. That's the reason, that's the reason why when you get up to have a devotion, when I get up to preach, or whatever we speak to the body, it's for edification.

It must be a word that brings edification that will build up the body of Christ. Neither is being lords over God's heritage, but being in samples to the flock.

When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Ye all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

[40 : 19] Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. There it is again, humility. You're the only way that we will walk together in the unity of the

Spirit.

The only way that the Spirit of God will work through you is as you walk in humility. As you walk in humility, humility, that he can direct you, that he can speak to you.

That is the only way that he can use you, is as you are clothed with humility, as it says here. And if we do not walk in humility, it says, God resists the proud.

God will resist those who are lifted up in pride, those that are lifted up in arrogance. God will resist them, but he gives grace to the humble.

Verse 7, Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

[41 : 41] We have an enemy and you all know it. And he's walking about, seeking whom he may devour. He's seeking who he can trip up.

He's seeking who he can lift up in pride, who he can pump up. You know, he can pump you up and get you to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

Whatever he can do, he will try. He will try to do it. He will try to bring a compromise. You know, the devil, he's a dealer.

He makes many deals. He'll make a deal with you, even if it's just a small one. Whatever he can, however he can make a deal with you, he'll do it.

Why? Just to get a little foothold, just to get that area in your life. That is his. You know, Jesus, there, when was it?

[42 : 49] It was before the crucifixion, but was it in the garden or before the garden? He said that Satan comes, but he has nothing in me.

There's nothing in me that belongs to the devil. And when there's nothing in you that belongs to the devil, then he doesn't, he can't, I mean, he will try, but he's limited.

But if there's something in you that is his, he has a right in your life. Seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world, knowing that Christians all over the world, they're fighting the same enemy we are.

They're going through the same trials. They're going through the same temptations. They're going through the same testings. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

you know, we might think sometimes, why does God allow these trials?

[44 : 41] But the trial of our faith, it is more precious than gold. What good is a faith that's not been tried? You know, if your faith has not been tried, how does God know that it's a true faith?

He must try your faith, that he knows your heart. After you've suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Our God, he reigns forever and ever. Hallelujah. Yes. Yes. First Corinthians 12.

We'll just read a few verses here and there. Verse 7, I believe is the verse I quoted, manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit with all.

Verse 11, but all these, all these gifts, these gifts that the spirit of God brings, they all work, but all these work at that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

[46 : 10] You know, we do not choose the gifts that we will have. For the spirit of God, he distributes these gifts as he will.

You know, the men that received the talents, they didn't decide, well, yeah, I want five. Yeah, I'll take two.

No, I believe the master decided who he's going to give five, who he's going to give two, and who he's going to give one. It's not our decision, the gifts that we have, but it's the self-same spirit, and because it's all the Holy Ghost, and he brings these gifts, oh, hallelujah.

For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

So also is Christ. The body is many members, but we are the body of Christ. Oh, hallelujah. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free, have been all made to drink into one spirit.

[47 : 42] For the body is not one member, but many, and all members are necessary. If the foot shall say, I'm not the hand, I'm not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?

If the ear will say, I'm not the eye, I'm not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?

But now are they many members, yet but one body? I believe that this is a true definition of unity in the body of Christ, is when every member finds his place, has been put in his place by the Spirit of God.

That is the unity that we are looking for. That is the unity of the Spirit that we need. Hallelujah. God has set, if we will let God deal with our hearts and make us into the man he desires us to be, then he can take us and he can fit us and make us that fitted stone in the temple of God.

[49 : 22] God has set. Those are awesome words. God has done this.

God has put you here. God has put you in your place where you are at and as you will walk faithfully he will take you on.

He will add to your life but be faithful where he has put you. The Spirit of God. Oh hallelujah.

Yes. Verse 27. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.

Members in particular. You know it didn't just happen this way. No but he planned it out and he gave us each a place to fill.

[50 : 32] We all have our place. You know and we all we're compacted together so we don't you know I had to think I had to think of a loaf of bread.

You know take a loaf of wheat bread and you know what if there was this kernel that he just refused the work of the millstone and somehow he slipped through and he got on into this loaf and he's still a little kernel.

That's not how God works. we lose our personal identity in the body of Christ.

Not that we aren't individuals but we lose our individualism compacted by that which every joint supplieth the effectual working of the spirit of God.

That is his goal. That is his desire. And as each one of us fulfills our place then we can be the instrument God can use in this last day.

[51 : 59] Hallelujah. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.