

The Church, Which Is His Body

Ephesians 1:22-23 says, "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*" This is a simple statement, but it reveals a wonderful point. The church is the body of Christ. How precious and beautiful is the thought that every Christian is a valued member of the body of Christ. Being baptized into Christ, we are partakers of His divine nature. As members of His body, we are part of Him. This metaphor is very suggestive in several ways.

First, as His body, the church is the visible proof of His presence. I cannot see your spirit, and you cannot see mine, but our bodies are visible. The presence of a living body is the evidence of the presence of a living spirit. The world cannot see the invisible Christ who dwells in His body, but it can see the body. Does Christ so live in us that our lives demonstrate the presence and power of an unseen Savior? Every Jew is a proof that Abraham lived. Every Christian is a witness to the living Christ; a living hand proves a living head (Ephesians 5:23-30).

Second, as His body, its members are all one. The head controls every member of the body, and each member is connected with each other because of its connection with the head. As members of Christ, we are members one of another, and should have the same care one for another (1 Corinthians 12:25). There are different functions for the members, but there are to be no divisions in Christ. As individual members, may we live and work under the power of this truth — "*...in honour preferring one another*" (Romans 12:5, 10; Colossians 1:18).

Third, as His body, each member is dependent upon the head. Without the head the body would be nothing but a lifeless corpse. The body exists for the head and not the head for the body. From the head each member receives its authority. If the hand is enabled to perform any artful craftsmanship it is because the wisdom of the head has been imparted. He is made wisdom unto us by God (Romans 14:7-8; Ephesians 2:21-22).

Fourth, as His body, the church is subject to suffering. Christ as is now beyond the reach of his persecutors, but His body, the church, is still exposed to scorn and tyranny. How sweet to know that the head is in deepest, closest sympathy with each suffering member. When Saul was persecuting the members of His body, Jesus said to him, "*Why persecutest thou Me?*" (Acts 9:4). We have to bear patiently. If the head, who feels the pain more keenly than the member, does not complain, why should the

member? Paul later wrote, *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ"* (Philippians 3:8; cp. Matthew 19:29; 2 Timothy 3:10-12).

Fifth, as His body, its members are His instruments of service. The body is the servant of the head; the church is the servant of Christ. The head has no way of working out its purposes but through the body. So Christ, as the living, thinking head of His body, the church, is pleased to accomplish His will, and work out His gracious purposes through the members of His body. What a privilege! We are *"instruments of righteousness unto God"* (Romans 6:13). We are not our own. We are the hands and feet, the eyes and tongue, of Christ. *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"* (Philippians 2:13). If every member of His body fully yielded to His will, what mighty acts could be accomplished!

Sixth, as His body, it is amply provided for. Bodies are often ruined through thoughtless heads, and sometimes great heads are hindered because of weak and deformed bodies. It is the work of the head to provide for the body. As members of His body, there are treasures of grace and truth awaiting us. A powerless, half-starved Christian is a discredit to Christ. Paul wrote, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:19). *"O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"* (Psalm 34:9-10). The Lord reiterated this principle when He said, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"* (Matthew 5:6).

Seventh, as His body, the church cannot see corruption. The body of Jesus, was abused, bruised, and broken, but it did not see corruption. The church may be marred and outwardly weak, but just as surely as the body of Jesus was glorified at the Transfiguration, so will His body, the church, be transformed via the resurrection at the end of time and filled with the glory of God. He, as the head of the body, has already ascended. The body, which is still on earth, will likewise one day be *"caught up"* (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Paul furthermore said, *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

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