

THE WAY AND WONDER OF THE CHURCH

STUDY No 3

THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORDS IN THE SCRIPTURES

The Danger of Reductionism – the word **Worship**

- a. We tend to limit words, to reduce their meaning, to set limits on them.
- b. Worship is reduced in its meaning to us by thinking it refers to a fifty minute segment at the beginning of a service led by the worship band.
- c. Worship really means the totality of what we do with our whole man, this includes our personal body. All we do is to be worship.
- d. Jesus brought together two words, *'worship' and 'serve'* when He replied to Satan's temptation. (Matt 4v10) This is a quotation from an Old Testament verse; the Hebrew language used many 'couplets.' These are occasions when the same thing is said in two lines but uses different words and images. So, worship and service is the same thing. *Jesus worshipped His Father in all that He did in His body, working in the carpenter's shop right through to the cross* which was the climactic act of His totally worshipful life.

The Danger of Reductionism – the word **Meeting**

- a. Church meetings become limited to two or three constituent parts. The part led by the praise band, the preached word and then a time of so-called 'ministry' to conclude.
- b. There is a *richness* and *variety* that *Christ wants to work in and through His body as the congregation meets together.*
- c. The best section of scripture to study these rich possibilities is 1 Corinthians chapter 11 through 14.
- d. Remember, it is impossible to come to meetings without your body being involved!

The Danger of Reductionism – the word **Gift.**

- a. Just as our human bodies have many varied organs and members, so the body of Christ has great variety of members.
- b. The gifts and ministries God gives His church body are also varied and together are able to carry the richness of Christ the Head first to the rest of the body and then to the world in healing life.
- c. Unfortunately **we limit (reduce) the word gift to a few things** such as speaking in tongues or mission evangelism instead of the many sided gifting that God has given.

The Danger of Reductionism – the word **Building-up**

- a. This word is sometimes translated ‘*edify.*’
- b. It is always connected to the theme of the body of Christ, the building up of the household of faith, the body. (1 Cor 14v3, 4,5,12,17&26)
- c. ***We cannot build one another up unless it involves worship and service in our bodily, physical life.***
- d. Spiritual life and ministry does not end in the church meeting, it is for the world too and is the means by which healing begins to be brought to the world. (Eph 4v8, ***gifts given to man for mankind at large***)

THE “BODY” REVELATION WAS GIVEN TO PAUL

- a. He speaks of this in Ephesians. (3v4)
- b. The other New Testament writers do not have this particular revelation in the way Paul received it from the Lord.
- c. John the apostle had the revelation of the church as the family of the Father.
- d. It is the Father’s household. In it there is the Holy Spirit who is the chief servant in the house.
- e. This chief servant seeks, finds, teaches and brings the bride safely home to the son. (Genesis 24, one of the great romantic stories of the Bible is a picture of this)
- f. Jesus is the Son, and is the elder brother in the household, caring for His siblings under the leadership of the Father. (Heb 2v12)
- g. There is an occasion when Paul joins the thought of ***the Church as the Bride of the Son with the revelation of it being His body.*** (Eph 5v25-33)
- h. This point is important because of the way it ***conveys intimacy*** in a special way.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR BODIES FOR HIS BODY

- a. Paul writes of ***the church as the body of Christ*** in four epistles. Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians.
- b. In three of these he writes of our individual human bodies first. (Rom 12v1 first before 12v4, 1 Cor 6v13 before 6v15, Col 1v21)
- c. There can be ***no body of Christ on earth without our bodies!***

OUR BODIES MEMBERS OF CHRIST OR JOINED TO WHAT?

- a. ***We must not separate our body from our inward (spiritual) man. We are a total being, our ‘me’ includes body, spirit and soul. We will not be bodiless.***
- b. In Gen 2v7 we see the way God made man, first his body, then the breath of His Spirit into the body and so man “Became a living soul.” Note the order. ***Body is so important, soul is that part of us that is gifted with powers to integrate together in one proper whole both body and spirit, so that body expresses spirit.***
- c. ***The spiritual realm is not ethereal, vague, high up in the air and detached from the material physical realm of our bodies and what we touch and move amongst in this world of matter.***

- d. ***Spiritual growth involves our bodies!***
- e. ***“All things are lawful” (1Cor 6v12) A Corinthian ‘catch-phrase.’ False liberty, “it does not matter what I do with my body because it does not affect my spirit life.” This is wrong,*** Paul corrects it saying that it really matters what we connect our bodies to, what we do with them, and we cannot give them to a prostitute. If we do so then we enter into ***not only a physical union but there is transference of spirit too.*** (6v18) The marriage service says, “with my body, I thee worship.”
- f. ***“Your bodies are the members of Christ,” do not do things in them and with them that contradict that reality.*** (6v15)
- g. Bible never says, “Give Christ your all” or “give Him your everything.” It is more **specific**, locates everything we are in our physical body, it says **“present your bodies”** (Rom12v1)
- h. We must ***learn to make this a regular habit.*** Perhaps sitting before the Lord and saying to Him, “I give you my feet, my hands, my organs, my head with its brain inside.” The old hymn says, “Take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of Thy love,” and many other such things.
- i. Our bodies will not disappear but shall be raised. This is part of our salvation, to have new bodies, which are still made of matter, still physical, but changed as is Jesus’ body. He could eat and be touched, wear clothes in His resurrection body. ***God loves matter! (Material, physical things including our bodies. He is FOR our bodies and our bodies are FOR Him.*** (1Cor 6v13) (Phil 3v21)
- j. ***Glorify God in your body.*** (1Cor 6v20) ***And nothing else.***

TAKE CARE WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR BODY

- a. ***It (your body) is part of Christ’s body, to express the life of its Head. Christ has no other body on earth through which to touch and to show Himself.***
- b. All His mind, His will; His heart is located in His body, ***His church, made up of each member including their bodies.***
- c. ***My body is for His body, not to be the expression of another head, another philosophy, another life, another way.*** (Rom 12v1-5)
- d. Living with my body daily presented unto Him is **true spiritual worship.**
- e. ***We spend more time in the world, in our daily living, at home, at work, than in Christian meetings.***
- f. We are always the body of Christ, in the world too. He wants to reach out and touch the world with His healing through us there. ***Do not relegate the truth of the body to church life and mission only.***
- g. Jesus our Head, dwelling in us, being our life, has our flesh as the vehicle through which He speaks, He loves, He reaches and saves. ***This is best accomplished unconsciously*** as far as we are concerned. ***He changes us inwardly so that we love and care and cross the boundaries of race and color and every separating wall.***
- h. The ***motivation of the Mercies of God*** carries us into this kind of living where we are presented always to Him. (Rom 12v1) Mercy, more deeply understood by us, ***His mercies to us and to the entire world should carry***

us into this love service, this spiritual worship everywhere we go, so salvation shall come in the earth and among the nations.

JOINED TO ONE HEAD, EVEN TO CHRIST JESUS

- a. ***Sin is not native to man.*** (Rom 5v12) It entered in later.
- b. This occurred ***when Eve (and Adam) presented their bodies to another head,*** an evil head, Satan.
- c. They, and ***we (through them being our forebears) became a part of the body of sin, our bodies part of that body.*** (Rom 6v6)
- d. This is why we have expressed his philosophy of selfish living, pleasing self with all its various works. He has been the spirit that has been at work and to which we have been joined. (Eph 2v1&2)
- e. Jesus changed all this. He has brought deliverance, ***cutting us off from that to which we have been joined.*** He saved us and saves us by His life. This liberation, this cutting off includes our bodies for Christ took us into Himself at Calvary and bore our sins and ***brought even our bodies with Him to the grave*** so that we could be quickened even in our mortal bodies by the Spirit of Him dwelling within us. (Rom 8v11 This verse does not primarily refer to physical healing but to ***our bodies receiving quickening so that we can live in obedience to Christ***)
- f. He has reconciled us to God through His death. We are joined to God through the Son. (Col 1v21&22)
- g. ***We cannot be joined to two heads. It is either/or. Either Christ is our Head or the wicked one through Adam's headship.*** (Rom 5 v6-21)
- h. We are ***baptized into Jesus,*** His death is our death, and ***we died in Him,*** were ***cut off from the terrible joining to Satan that we received through Adam in our first birth,*** we have been born anew and raised to newness of life now ***joined to Christ our true head.*** (Col 2v10-15)
- i. ***One baptism (By the Lord Jesus) into One Body (His) and drinking into One Spirit (The Holy Spirit of the Father and Son) is authentic life for members of Christ's body. The reign of sin and death is finished in our lives. We cannot be in Adam and in Christ at the same time.*** (Rom 5v6-21)
- j. The laws of His mind and will shall be ***expressed in my bodily life as I live joined to Him.*** He shall counsel me; teach me, love through me as by the Holy Spirit He communicates to me His ways. (Col 2v19)

MY FLESH FOR HIS BODY

- a. This phrase is even more specific. Paul uses it in Colossians chapter one verse 24.
- b. He is in prison, suffering in his body, but the ***deprivation does not impede Christ expressing Himself through this member of His body.***
- c. ***Our circumstances do not alter this; we are to live receiving from our Head.*** (Col 2v19) He is wise in all things for in Him all wisdom is to be found, He will enable us for every situation. (Col 2v3)
- d. ***He will discipline us too so that our bodies become loyal servants rather than cruel tyrants dominating us by their appetites.***

- e. We can *assist this process by learning to discipline ourselves*, quietness, silence, solitude, fasting are part of this. We *enter into His rest*; He is our Sabbath for body and soul. *Sensitivity to our Head will be nourished there*. We live with bodies presented to the Lord and as we do our minds are renewed, we are transformed and no longer conform to this world. We show forth the life of our Head and are hardly aware of doing so. In these things we grow and blessing shall come to the nations. (Rom 12v2)