

09/10/2022

THE BODY OF CHRIST

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First 8 chapters of Romans include two major themes from Paul. After chapter 8, the following verses till chapter 12 are sort of parenthesis and therefore one can feel, chapter 12 is continuation of chapter 8.

The two themes are : To learn how Christian's were brought unto God and Exhortation to the consecration and presenting of the body to do the will of God. Followed by this is the Body of Christ.

Paul calls it as mystery in 16:25-26. The mystery, because the way we see salvation, Cross, Holy Spirit and spiritual experience from our point of view or understanding may not be God's point of view or understanding. We need to see from God's perspective.

We often see cross as the ultimate step of the salvation for mankind. However, cross is a divine means to reach to something bigger than we can ever imagine, it's for the Body of Christ. An important aspect we need to accept is that unless we go through the experience of the Cross, we cannot become part of the Body. Unless cross has done something to your life, you will not find yourself in the Body. If you are not in the body then either Cross has not done its work or at least has not completed its work.

God has not asked us to be holy, victorious, justified and sanctified to be an individual saved Christian. We miss the point when we limit our understanding with personal salvation, victory, holiness, but the true picture is much bigger than this. Each of these words are from the point of view of His Body. The whole thought of God is centred in Christ. We begin as an individual but we end as a member in the body of Christ. It's something like we cannot know how to bake just by reading but we need to be part of the performing team. That's how we understand what Christianity is.

While having communion the bread that we break is one, and even if it is broken in to number of pieces as per the number of people gonna participate, each piece of bread belongs and is the part of the loaf. We all together make the Body.

Living in the Body of Christ: Romans 12:4

Having now realised that we are the part of His body, let's understand our changed profile in the Kingdom of God. Irrespective of the culture and background that we come from, the Body of Christ has His own culture which cannot be ignored if we want to stay in the Body.

I. The relationship between the Head and myself (Col 1:18)

The first principle of living in the Body of Christ is to obey the authority of the Head. The existence, function and activity depends on this authority. Any time authority has no place, the Body is paralysed. Any part that is disobedient is paralysed. To be alive implies that we are being directed by the head. The rule is, aim at obedience. Unless we understand this truth we just have head knowledge of Christianity.

II. The relationship between the body and myself (1 Cor 12:12-27)

Our relationship with each other is of fellowship. Fellowship implies the receiving of assistance from other members of the Body. Fellowship implies that I am limited and am willing to accept what comes for others. When a member goes through hard time, it's the body that supports and strengthens him or her to stand strong. Not all days of the year you are able to pray or stand on the Word of God, but still enemy does not get an opportunity to attack, because other parts of the body are uplifting you in their prayers and protecting you. We do not live by the life that comes from our own life but by the life that comes from the Body.

III. My position as a member in the Body (1 Cor 12:26, Col 1:24)

My position in the body should define my happiness and heaviness. When any part of the Body is in pain, I should be feeling the pain and if any part of the Body is rejoicing I should be feeling the joy in my heart (1 Cor 12:26). We should not only be the one who is receiving from the body but also the one who is releasing life in the body.

What constitutes me as a member of the Body? It's nothing but Christ Himself. The Christ in me constitutes me to be eligible to be the part of His Body. It's none of my talents, gifts that makes me His part. 1 Cor 12:12 clearly speaks that the Head is the Christ and the Body is the Christ. Anything that is not from the Christ is not a part of His body. Cross is the only divine means of ruling out anything that is of ourselves - anything that can never stay in the body. We can never bring our own things in the Body. It is not a question of what is being added, rather what is being removed to become part of the Body. The cross keeps the Body cleansed from anything that is natural, anything that is from Adam. We may find it very difficult being dealt in the area that is so dear to us, but that's how the cross works in the Body.

A. No free lancing.

Unles I come to a stage that I understand that I am part an integral part of the Body, I cannot contribute in the body. I will have to wait for others, and go on with God and others. The Body cannot have many heads but one. We cannot afford to displace Jesus from the position of head and become head.

B. Saul vs David

Second important thing that I as a believer need to understand is the challenges that I am gonna face being part of the Body. The first struggle is like Goliath, which is outside and visible. David fought against this enemy and cut his head. But the second and invisible enemy is inside, his name is Saul. Saul was after David all throughout his life. Saul's characteristics is that he stands head and shoulders above the Israelites. Over and above that he is part of the team that attacked Goliath. Saul represents the human brain, notion, ideas and common sense which can be against God. That keeps the Anointed one away from the throne. Interestingly, David never fought against Saul. He never attacked Saul. Bible tells us that the victory of David over Saul began the day he killed Goliath. The stone that David threw at Goliath, not only brought Goliath down but also Saul's reign was brought down. In that same way, always remember that we are not fighting against the flesh and body, but against the principalities. When we attack the spiritual enemy, according to the principle of Kingdom, the Saul's reign is already numbered.