

Pictures of the People of God

1 Cor 12:27 *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*

The Development of the Body of Christ Pt. 1 Eph. 4:11-16 *Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 22nd*

Isaiah 55:7-9 and 1 Cor 2:14 reminds us that we won't naturally "get" God and his ways. Because of the vast differences between us, the only way we can genuinely comprehend Him is if He takes the initiative to reveal himself to us. Thankfully, He has and continues to do this through: Nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Ro 1); His word (Ps. 19:7-11) and most clearly through Jesus. (Heb. 1:1-3) His Holy Spirit continues to reveal Him and His purposes to His people. (1 Cor 2:9-13; John 16:13) We've been discussing many of the ways God describes us in His word. Some of these pictures reveal the precious nature of our relationship with Him. (The Treasure and Priceless Pearl of Mt. 13:44-46). Others focus on the "Progression" of this relationship such as The Potter and Clay (Isaiah 64:8) and the Shepherd and His Sheep. (Ps. 23; 100; Jn 10) Some of these pictures reveal the very personal nature of our relationship such as God describing us as the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; Rev. 19:6-9)

Yet another picture (or analogy) often used in scripture is that we (His church) are called "The Body of Christ".

This picture reveals the important and practical nature of the church according to God's design.

Last week we focused on the Distinction or Contrasts between individual churches as well as members of any particular church. This morning I'd like to focus on the importance of Developing the Body of Christ.

Paul opens Eph. 4 with a plea that we *"walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called"*

Churches, Like Bodies, need to grow/ develop in: Maturity

Maturity (Christlikeness) Vs 11-16 *"For the perfecting of the saints"*

katartismos': complete furnishing/equipping. from katartiz'o: to complete, repair, adjust.

This Process of Maturity involves:

1. A Healthy Diet. You are what you eat!

A. God's word is soul **food**: *"Thy words were found and I did eat them..."* Jer. 15:16

1) Milk (1 Pt 2:2) *"Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby"* (also Heb. 5:12,13)

2) Bread (Jn 6:48) *"I am the bread of life..."* 53- 63 *"The words that I speak... are spirit and life"*

3) Meat (Heb. 5:14) *"belongs to those that are of a full age (telios: complete, mature) who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good (kalos: valuable) and evil" (kakos: intrinsically worthless)*

B. It's not what you eat, but what you **digest** that benefits you. (Josh. 1:8)

1) Spiritual growth/work requires spiritual resources. 2 Tim 2:15-17 *"Study (spoudazō: diligent effort) to shew thyself approved (dokimos: acceptable, tried) unto God, a workman (ergat'ēs: toiler/teacher {from ergon}) that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

C. What we ingest, affects us! **Garbage in → Garbage out!** 2 Tim. 2:16,17 *"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker:"* (gan'graina: gangrene)

2. Regular **Exercise**: *"for the work (ergon: toil, effort) of the ministry"* (diakonia: attendance, service)

A. Maturity enables:

1) **Ministry!** Heb. 5:14 *"meat belongs to those that are of a full age (telios: complete, mature) who by reason of use"*

2) **Clarity!** *"have their senses exercised (gymnazo: to train) to discern both good (kalos: valuable) and evil" (kakos: intrinsically worthless)*

B. Jesus modeled this: Lk 2:52 *"increased in wisdom... stature... favor with God and man"*

Jn 5:17 *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."*

Jn 9:4 *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work,"*

C. We're commanded to follow his example. Col 3:22-24 *"whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."*

1 Tim 4:7-8 *"refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."*

3. A Meaningful **Purpose** Eph. 4:12 *“for the edifying (oikodome’: building up) of the body of Christ:”*

A. What’s your real “purpose” in life? *Some day you ’re recognize what it should have been!*

Rev. 4:11 *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (thel’ema: purpose {Jer 29:11}) they are and were created.”* (See Gal. 6:1-10)

Gal 6:1-2 *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Gal 6:10 *“As we have therefore opportunity, (Xairos: season) let us do good unto all men, (Ergaz’omai’ agathos’: engaged in benefiting) especially (mal’ista: particularly) them who are of the household of faith.”*

Who are you “building up?”

B. Remember “Church” is ekklesia: a called out assembly, belonging to the Lord.

1) What are we called **for**? 2 Cor 6:1 *“We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain...”*

2) What are we called **from**? 2 Cor 6:17 *“wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate...”*

See also Eph. 2:1-10 *“We are His workmanship created . . . unto good works”*

1 Peter 2:9-11 *“ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”*

C. This was on Jesus’ heart enroute to Gethsemane! Jn 15:16 *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit”*

Mt 7:16,17 *“Ye shall know them by their fruit!...every good tree brings forth good fruit”*

1) The mark of maturity in every plant and animal **is the ability to reproduce!**

Who’ll be in heaven because of you? (2 Tim. 2:1,2)

Conclusion:

Notice God’s goal for our maturity: Ephesians 4:13

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, (Tele’os: complete, mature: from tello: to set out for a specific point or goal. {Jer. 29:11}) unto the measure of the stature (hēliki’a: maturity) of the fulness of Christ:” (plē’rōma: replete, complete; from pleroo: Influenced

Eph. 5:17,18 *“be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

And be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit”

Application: Eph. 4:11,12 *“God gave...pastors and teachers,*

1) *“For the perfecting of the saints) katartismos’: equipping. from katartiz’o: to complete, repair, adjust.*

Are you willing to partner with God’s spirit to make some repairs and adjustments to your spiritual diet in order to “be better furnished”?

2) *“for the work of the ministry”* Are you willing to partner with God as he seeks to get you in “SHAPE” in His service to others?

(Spiritual Gift, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences)

3) *“for the edifying of the body of Christ”* Are you willing to partner with God and invest yourself in the edifying (building up) of others?

Pray (reach up)! and then Obey (reach out)!

