

Pictures of the People of God

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 15th

Revelation 3:14-19 reminds us that God sees churches differently that they tend to see themselves. In order to better understand what God is Looking at (and for) when He sees us, let's look into scripture to see how God describes His People. God describes His people as:

- Precious Treasures (Mt 13:44) and Pearls (Mt 13:45,46);
- Clay in the hands of a master potter (Is. 64:8; Eph. 2:10)
- The Bride of Jesus. (Eph 5:22-33; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19, 21)
- The Sheep of His Pasture (Ps. 23; 100; John 10)
- His sons and daughters. (2 Cor. 6:18; Ro. 8:14-16; Eph. 2:19; Gal 4:4-6)

Each of these reveal the Practical, Powerful, Personal and Precious ways in which God sees us.

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

Notice the Distinction of the Body of Christ.

1. Churches, like Bodies, are different! (Antioch vs. Jerusalem)

A. Cultural Differences. ("Who" are we trying to minister to?)

Urban vs. Rural. Ethnic Diversity.

B. Traditional Differences. ("How" do we do church?)

Music, Small groups, Preaching style

C. Organizational Differences. (How are they governed/guided?)

- 1) Episcopalian: Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran (*Outside by Bishops, etc.*)
- 2) Presbyterian/Reformed (*Inside church by Elders*)
- 3) Congregational (Bible, Baptist, AG, etc) *Inside by church members*

D. Philosophical Differences. (What's our Primary mission/goal?)

- 1) Relational (*Feel good, me focused*) 2 Tim. 4:1-4)
- 2) Traditional (*Rule and tradition focused*) Amish, Jews {Ro. 10:13; Mt 15:16}
- 3) Evangelical (*Lost people focused*) *Reach the lost @ any cost*
- 4) Biblical (*Christ focused! 1 Tim. 3:14,15: Eph. 4:12*)
The Great Commission Mt 28:10-20 & The Great Commandment {Mt 22:36-40}

2. Church "members" are also different by Design! 1 Cor 12:12-15

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

A. By our Function: (Calling) 1 Cor 12:5-6 *"there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."*

- 1) Form (How) Follows Function (What) Vs. 14-26; Vs. 29 *"Are all apostles? Prophets? teachers?"*
Some can "walk on their hands", but not very easily. An "eye" makes a pretty poor "ear".
- 2) Both Peter and Paul were Apostles, but they were designed differently, Because they would be "assigned" differently! Gal 2:7-9 *"when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."*

B. By our unique Form (or SHAPE) Vs. 27-31; Ro. 12:4-6 *"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."*

1) S: Spiritual Gift Ro. 12:6 *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..."*

1 Pt 4:10 *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."* (See also Eph. 4:7)

2) H: Heart (Passion) Ex. 35:35 Bezalel: God *"hath put in his heart that he may teach..."*

Col 4:12-13 *"Epaphras... laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea..."*

3) A: Ability Ex 18:21 *"thou shalt provide ... able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers..."*

Mt 25:15 *"to one he gave five talants, to another two... to another one to every man according to his several ability"*

4) P: Personality/Temperament 1 Cor 4:7 *"who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"*

5) E: Experience Ro 5:3-5 *"we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

Conclusion: Mt 16:18 Jesus said: *"I will build my church"*

(Ekklesia: a called out assembly belonging to the Lord)

1 Cor. 12:18 *"God set the members every one of them in the body, as it pleased him. ... 25 That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another."*



1 Cor. 12:27 *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members (melos: limb or part) in particular!"* (ek meros: to share a part)

Application:

- **Are you an active part of Christ's body?**
- **What part are you "shaped" to share in God's "Church" body?**

Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today

He has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way

He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died

He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.

We are the only Bible the careless world will read,

We are the sinner's gospel; we are the scoffer's creed;

We are the Lord's last message, given in word and deed;

What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

What if our hands are busy with other work than His?

What if our feet are walking where sin's allurements is?

What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?

How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?

—Annie Johnston Flint]