

Has the Church Lost Its Purpose?

“Together”

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

God Commands Me in His Word – Love Him with All my Heart, My Soul, My Mind - and to Love One Another as Myself

Introduction: This morning I would like to look scripturally at the roles in in the church.

- A. Paul says everyone has a role and we will look closer at this passage in a moment but this passage sets up this introduction and the foundation of where all other roles in the church fall.
- 12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For [a]by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason [b]any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason [c]any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19 If they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now there are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, [d]it is much truer*

that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body which we [e]deem less honorable, [f]on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, 24 whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 so that there may be no [g]division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is [h]honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- We all have a role to play in God's Church we all have purpose none more important than the other and we all need each other but there is one part of the body that belongs to only one.
- Only Christ can be the head of the Church, Jesus is the final authority in the Church it is His body and He is in control!
 - We will speak in a moment how much each part need one another to operate and to do God's will but nothing will be accomplished that is pleasing to God if Christ is not the Head of it all!
 - *15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the*

fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. Colossians 1:15-20

- I have heard the discussion that the church belongs to the elders or the pastors that is wrong!
- I have in response that the church doesn't belong to elders it belongs to the people and they should have a say in what goes on lets vote.
That is wrong!

➤ The Church belongs to Christ and He alone has authority over it and He governs it with His Word and that is why I have said before that the only thing that a church can do wrong is to be unbiblical and that is why it needs leaders that are given to the study of God's Word to guide the flock in the Word of God!

1. What authority does the elder or pastor have none accept that of the Word of God it is the governing strength and power of the Church God calls men and gifts men to study and expound God's Word to lead not where his opinions lead or his aspirations of popularity leads but where the head of the Church leads through His Word!

- The pastor has no authority to tell you how to live where to live.
- The pastor has no authority over your life at all as a matter fact he is a shepherd, he is an under shepherd who serves the sheep look out for what is best for the sheep the authority rest with the one to whom the sheep belong and pastor should remind themselves often they are not the stars of God's church!

B. Paul says there in verse 18 of Colossians 1 He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

1. Everything in the church Jesus should be at the tip of the spear!

- There should not be an activity, and event, a service, a prayer, whatever you can think of that Jesus is not in first place!
- He is the Head of the Church in every way!
 - We must be careful when we come in disagreement with leadership (are they human and make mistakes of course and make no mistake God will fix that) but be very careful how you come into disagreement with what Christ is leading through church leadership for His glory!
- Christ is the head of the Church!
 2. If you feel like church leadership namely your shepherd your pastor is not following God's direction first talk to God about it tell Him to set him straight then go to your pastor tell him where you think he is biblically in error and then see he and God can work it out! Maybe you just saved him from terrible trouble!

Transition: So in short the first role in the church that is clearly defined is the head that is Christ and He governs His church by His Word through leaders that He ordains. To whom much is given much is required.

- A. But what about the rest of us and I say us because we all fall in the next category as sheep!
1. What's our purpose and have we lost it?
 - *First let's go back to the text in 1 Corinthians: 12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For [a]by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not*

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Corinthians 12:12-27

- Maybe it is a stretch to call it a purpose but it is certainly a description of the body of Christ is to say to cause unity of believers.

I. The Church Body is to Unify 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

- A. The Church is one body now it is made up of many parts and will get to that in a moment but for now I want you to see that it is one body and for a body to function there has to be unity!

1. Satan's greatest attack on the church is to cause disunity in the church to separate believers from one another.

= We can go all the way back to creation and we can see that when God created man that He seen that it was not good that man should be alone that he needed someone so he created Eve!

- Although man has a personal relationship with God through Christ man is designed, created in such a way that we need each in this journey.

2. We are to be yoked to one another as we are yoked with Christ!

- *14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 2 Corinthians 6:14-16*

- The Church is not to embrace the world, the church is not to embrace unbelievers but to bind ourselves to one another in the common bond of Christ!

- It seem as if often we are more forgiving of unbelievers in our lives then our brothers and sisters in Christ!

- B. The Church to fulfill its purpose must come together in unity and the only way to do that given all the different personalities is humility and love listen to Paul's words to the Colossians:

- *8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of*

the One who created him— 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Colossians 3:8-

13

1. In the Church there should be a concentrated effort no it should be the heart of the church to encourage each other as the body of Christ.
- We so often use Hebrews 10:25 “Not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together” to promote church attendance which is true but look at that verse in context and see the purpose the church meets!
 - *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.* Hebrews 10:23-25
- Hold fast the confession of our faith which is what?
- *9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.* Romans 10:9-10
 - That is what a church does it confesses Jesus, Jesus is focus nothing else it is our confession it is what we agree with He is Lord and He is

our hope and no matter the matter the culture or struggle we will not waver from that confession

- Then in verse 24 He says to think about you can stimulate one another to love and to good things that what the church does we serve one another stirring one another to love each other to do good!
 2. One of the greatest problems in the church is that we are cannibals we will join forces together to fight against any cause but let a brother or sister in Christ disagree on what kind of dinner we are going to have and we will eat them alive! You get the point!
- The Church to carry out the purpose of God must be unified by the love of Christ for one another laying aside our agendas and pride.
 - *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;* Philippians 2:3

Transition: There is no seniority in the church the moment a person becomes a child of God they are equally in the body of Christ!

A. Christ is the head of the Church everyone one else every believer false equally under that authority.

- The Pastor, The Elder, The Deacon, The Rich, The Poor, The Healthy, The Sick

- But I have been going to this church for 90 years I would to think I got a little more say so than, No you don't God's Word has the say!
- But I have no input because I have only been here for a couple of Sundays No, if it's Biblical the rest of us need to be provoked to love and good works!

II. Every Believer is Needed and is Necessary in the Church verse 15-25 READ

A. Now look closely at verse 18

- *18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.* 1 Corinthians 12:18

1. You are what you are in the church because that is what God desired for you to be!
 - Your brother and sister in Christ are who they are in the church because that is who God desires them to be!
2. Every part of the body is uniquely designed by God to do His will in the body!

B. What Paul is pointing out is there should be no division in the body because of jealousy over who is more important in the church.

1. Jesus settle this argument among His disciples they were arguing over who would be the greatest.
 - *46 An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."* Luke 9:46-48
 - All throughout scripture self-denial is the path to greatness in the Kingdom of God!
2. Why are we envious of the eye without it we have now direction!
 - The ear, the nose, the legs, the big toe! Did you know that it is very difficult to walk without your big toe!

C. The Church needs you to fulfill the purpose for which built it.

1. But I can't do much!
 - Show Up! And watch what God does!

- Show up and watch how God reveals how you are a part of the body of Christ!
 - It doesn't matter if you are an ear to listen or an eye to see the way!
 - A mouth to speak or sing the treasures of His truth
 - Maybe the legs to carry the gospel to distance lands
 - Maybe the arms to hold the hurting
- Just show up the church needs you!
 - So that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 1 Corinthians 12:25
- 2. God has so designed the church body in such a way that everyone is valuable and needed to the mission of bring glory to God!
 - Which is the mission of the Church!

Transition: Now let me share one more quick point concerning our role as the church.

- A. In verse 26 Paul says that the body should be so united that if part of the body is suffering then all the members should suffer with it. Or if one is honored then rejoice with them!
1. There should never be people in midst that are suffering that we do not rise to help.
 - This goes back to the question I ask a couple weeks ago do you love your church.
- Nobody in this congregation should go hungry but pastor they are about to turn our lights out because we can't pay our light bill!
 - Then so be it we will preach in the dark before we see one of ours go hungry!
 - Shame on us if we are more concerned about materiel needs when our folks are suffering I am not about a hand out I talking about helping those that cannot help themselves!

- It part of the body is suffering then all the members should suffer with it!
2. If God honors someone in our fellowship we should not be jealous be rejoice with them and be thankful that God has blessed them and honored them.
- Why can we not be happy for each other church it will drive us together for if we are happy with what God is doing in others' lives then we are saying that we believe God knows what He is doing that is called faith and faith pleases God!

Close: Let me close with this simple thought from 27

- *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.* 1
Corinthians 12:27
1. The role that you have in the church is to be your part of the body of Christ!
- We are individual members responsible to serve as God has individually gifted us to serve.
- But as individuals we make up one body the church that exist as the bride of Christ to stand in the truth of God's Word and declare the Gospel of Christ with the Authority of Christ!