

# WE ARE THE BODY “HEART THAT SERVES”

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## OPEN:

- Jesus has ascended and He sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.
    - Though no longer physically present, He doesn't abandon or forget about us.
  
  - Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to live in us...He is our guide helping us navigate through the journey called life.
    - As we submit to His leadership, we experience victory...when we ignore Him, we fail to live up to our potential.
  
    - Just like every child needs a family...every believer benefits from the encouragement and support of other believers.
  
  - In His departure, Jesus created a place where we can belong...
    - Jesus is the first to mention the church.
  
    - **Matthew 16:18 (NLT) - ...I will build my church and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.**
  
    - We see the church gaining momentum and taking off in the book of Acts.
  
    - **Acts 2:41 (NLT) – Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day – about 3000 in all.**
  
    - The church is referred to as the Body of Christ.
  
    - **1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT) – All of you together are Christ's body and each of you is a part of it.**
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- ❖ We represent Christ on earth.
  
  - ❖ Over the years, the church has fallen short of what it should be.

- The church at Corinth certainly had its problems.
- Power struggles, lack of leadership, false teaching, shallow teaching (people don't know what they believe), selfishness, materialism, worldliness...there are many dangers that can derail or distract the church.
- Do you really think Satan is going to sit back and let the church accomplish what God put it here to do?
  - **1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)** – Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.
  - ✓ Illustration: reminds me of my bird feeders in the back yard...the neighbor's cat hides in the plants and then pounces on a bird...ambushed.
- ❖ Here is the thing...when it comes to this Body of Christ (local church) we get to decide what we want to look like...how we want to operate.

## 1) LET'S CHOOSE TO **LOVE** ONE ANOTHER. *(PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)*

- There are over 59 “one another” passages in the N.T.
  - Jesus speaking: **John 13:34-35 (NLT)** - .... Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”
  - ✓ **Galatians 6:10 (NLT)** – Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone – especially to those in the family of faith.
  - ✓ We need to take care of each other...**Galatians 6:2-3 (NLT)** - <sup>2</sup> Share each other's burdens (huge boulder), and in this way obey the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.
    - I've observed...we have helped some people who had a burden and when they got back on their feet they became a blessing to others.

- Caution: we strive to take care of needs when we hear about them but we are careful not to enable or encourage irresponsible living...budget counseling may be needed.
- ✓ **Romans 15:2 (NLT)** - <sup>2</sup> We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.
- ✓ **Romans 15:5-7 (NLT)** - <sup>5</sup> May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. <sup>6</sup> Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.
- ✓ We are to honor and respect one another.

**Romans 12:10 (NLT)** – Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

- ✓ Be patient and kind to one another.

**Ephesians 4:2-4 (NLT)** - <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup> For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

- When we do get crossways with each other...we need to privately and politely talk it out. There is no room for bitterness and grudges.

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)** - <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- ❖ When we truly love one another and want what is best for each other the Spirit of God can work mightily.

**2) LET'S CHOOSE TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER.** (PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)

- We are stronger together.

**Romans 12:3b-8 (NLT)** - ...Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.<sup>4</sup> Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,<sup>5</sup> so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.<sup>6</sup> In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.<sup>7</sup> If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well.<sup>8</sup> If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

- There are a few passages in the N.T. that list different gifts...the list is not the same leading us to believe the Holy Spirit gives a unique blend of gifts to each believer as it would best help the body.
- John MacArthur: like a palate of basic colors the Holy Spirit mixes these colors to create a unique color.
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (NLT)** - <sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. <sup>7</sup> A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NLT)** - <sup>12</sup> The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. <sup>14</sup> Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. <sup>15</sup> If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? <sup>18</sup> But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where He wants it. <sup>19</sup> How strange a body would be if it had only one part! <sup>20</sup> Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." <sup>22</sup> In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. <sup>23</sup> And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we

carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, <sup>24</sup> while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. <sup>25</sup> This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. <sup>7</sup> All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

- ✓ Clearly, we need each other. You have a unique contribution to make.
- ✓ Serve in your sweet spot.
  - Illustration used by Charles Swindol but written by George Reavis in 1940:

Once upon a time, the animals decided that they should do something meaningful to meet the problems of the new world, so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer, all of the animals took all of the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming. In fact, he was better than his instructor. However, he made only passing marks in flying and was very poor at running. Since he was so slow in running, he had to drop his swimming class and do extra running. This cause his webbed feet to become badly worn, meaning that he dropped to an average mark in swimming. Fortunately, “average” was acceptable, therefore nobody worried about it – except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but developed a nervous twitch in his leg muscles because he had so much makeup work to do in swimming. The squirrel was excellent in climbing, but he encountered constant frustration in flying class because his teacher insisted that he start from the ground up instead of from the treetop down. He developed cramps from overexertion, so he ended up with a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was a real problems student and was severely disciplined for being non-conformist. In climbing class, he beat all of the others to the top, but insisted on using his own way of getting there!

The principle here is that we each have our own strengths and need to be working hard to maximize them, not handicap our potential by becoming good at something that isn't natural for us.

We need to identify our ducks, rabbits, squirrel, and eagles in the church and encourage them to serve where they are strong instead of making average performers out of them all.

### 3) LET'S CHOOSE TO **REACH** OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. *(PRO PRESENTER SLIDE BULLETIN OUTLINE)*

Let's team up together and go show and share the love of Christ with those in the community.

We are not a "spiritual country club" we are a life-saving station.

- Parable of the Lighthouse.

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves, they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost.

Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding areas, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little life-saving station grew.

Some of the new members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea.

So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it as a sort of club.

Less of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life boat crews to do this work.

The mission of life-saving was still lip-service but most were too busy or lacked the necessary commitment to take part in the life-saving activities personally.

About this time, a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet, and half-drowned people.

They were dirty and sick, and some of them had black skin, yellow skin, and some spoke a strange language, and the beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal life pattern of the club.

But some members insisted that life-saving was their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the life of all the various kinds of people were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. They evolved into a club and yet another life-saving station was founded.

If you visit the seacoast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, only now most of the people drown.

❖ Certainly, we come together for fellowship, encouragement, instruction and worship but our heart beat is for those lost at sea.

- How might we reach them?
- When we show kindness, the Holy Spirit uses it to soften their hearts.
- If you want your faith to take on a new vibrancy...get involved in "search and rescue."

**Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT)** - <sup>8</sup> God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

**CLOSE:**

- How are you doing loving others in the church? Are you building some close friendships? Are you including new families and individuals God is bringing to us? Anyone you need to get things right with?
- How are you using your gift to strengthen the Body? If you are looking for an opportunity stop by Connection Point. Is there something you need...we want to help you be successful?
- When is the last time you've been out on "search and rescue?" Ask the Lord for opportunities and go for it!

We are the Body?

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Message Notes  
April 22, 2018**