

Remnant Life Church
September 18, 2022
Our Church at 10 Years

Part 4

The Nature of The Church: The Body of Christ
I Cor 12:12-27

The first nature of the church, through the lens of the Apostle Paul, is that we are **the People of God**

The Body of Christ

- This identification of the church tells us that the church is the extension of God's activity in the lives of men
- The term 'Body of Christ' is used to describe both the world-wide church and the local presence including us here at Remnant Life
- The image of the body of Christ also emphasizes the connectivity of the church
 - Herein lies a decision we made 10 years ago when we formed this church as a non-denominational gathering
 - Notice what I did not say
 - I did not say that we are anti-denominational
 - That is very different than non-denominational

Here is how the body of Christ is structured:

(And it is much simpler than what we have made it into today)

- Christ is the head of the church body
 - Paul writes in **Col 1:18** - *And he (that is Christ Jesus) is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*
- And within that body, we the believers, are the individual members or parts
- Why is Jesus the head of the church body?
 - Again, Paul tells us in **Col 1:15-18** - *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*
 - And since we are all the parts of the body, we must recognize that there is an interconnectedness between all those who make up the church
 - Notice that it is not those who make up a church, but the church

READ – I Cor 12:12-27

This passage is so rich with the perfect imagery of the early church

- But we should not see it as the early church meaning it is not now that way
- The 13th verse is the capsule for the entire passage

- V13 – *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jew or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*
- And the other thing that Paul emphasizes here is that there should be no division
 - Yet what is it today that predominantly characterizes the protestant church?
 - Denominations
 - Paul said we were ALL baptized and that through ALL the parts we form ONE body
 - Yet we have not done that, have we?
 - *The story is told that John Wesley, a founder of Methodism, changed his view about church division after a dream in which he was first transported to the gates of Hell. He asked, “Are there any Presbyterians here?” “Yes,” was the reply. “Any Roman Catholics?” “Yes.” “Any Congregationalists?” “Yes.” He hesitated, then said, “Not any Methodists, I hope!” To his dismay the answer was “Yes.” Suddenly in his dream he was standing at the gate of Heaven. Once again he voice the same question, “Are there any Presbyterians here?” “No,” was the reply. “Any Roman Catholics?” “No.” “Any Congregationalists?” “No.” Then he asked the question which most interested him: “Are there any Methodists here?” He was shocked to receive the same stern reply, “No!” “Well then,” he asked in surprise, “please tell me who IS in Heaven?” “CHRISTIANS!” was the jubilant answer. From that dream Wesley determined that unity was essential to the church’s success in her mission.*

There are certainly many other aspects of these verses that we could look at in much more detail as Paul lays out the majesty and divinity of Christ

- But I want us to just recognize three things because of who He is, and the impact of that on each of us, His church
 1. Each believer encourages and builds up the other
 - a. V26 – *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*
 - b. Again, what a picture and witness it would be to everyone you interact with if you never said anything negative about a fellow brother or sister in the Lord
 - c. "If someone were to pay you ten cents for every kind word you ever spoke and collect five cents for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor?"
 - d. Loving all those who attend RLC...
 2. The body of Christ is to be characterized by genuine fellowship
 - a. This is exactly why our church service is structured the way that it is
 - b. Fellowship is spending time with each other

3. The church is to be a unified body

- a. **Vv18-20** - ...*God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*
- b. This must become more certain for the world-wide church
- c. Become truer for the local churches as well

Paul knew what he was talking about when he emphasized these things to the new churches that were gathering

- The people in the church of Corinth were already debating one another
- We read in **I Cor 1:10-17** that they were even divided on which spiritual leader they should follow
 - Paul, Apollos, Cephus, Jesus –
 - You may not realize it but that is the birth of church cliques...present at the very beginning
 - Paul warned against them
 - Why?
 - Because they brought disunity and divided the people
 - And it was the earliest attempts of satan to weaken the church
- The church must become unified to stand united against the influence of the world and the schemes of the devil
- The church is the *People of God*, it is the *Body of Christ*, next week we will conclude this series by seeing how the church is also the *Temple of the Holy Spirit*