

The Body: A Church Physical

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Some of you may be wondering why is Karl preaching this morning? Well...Pastor Jerry just got back late last night from his 2-week vacation. Pastors Micah and Albin are out. But perhaps the best answer is from a recent Mission Impossible movie when Jeremy Renner and Alec Baldwin each said, on two different occasions: "DESPERATE TIMES, DESPERATE MEASURES!"

Thank you Pastor Jerry for that pleasant and slightly exaggerated introduction. Welcome back by the way. To the rest of us, thank you all for joining us this morning as we worship the Lord together and be challenged by His Word.

As we do so, let us rejoice with the psalmist and recite Psalm 122:1 together, It reads, all together now: "I was glad when he said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord!"

As well, thank you Paul for reading I Corinthians 12: 12-18 out loud for us. I have 3 objectives for you this morning.

The first is: you will fully realize that you are an indispensable part of the Body of Christ.

The second: as an indispensable part of the body of Christ, continual spiritual assessment is an essential process to a healthy relationship with the Lord.

And third: complying and adhering to the Lord's prescription restores and maintains optimal spiritual health.

Let's begin by seeing what these scriptures tell us.

The first and second letters from Paul to the Corinthians are addressed to Christians at Corinth; those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Verse 12 tells us we are one body and we have lots of members and so is the body of Christ. Verse 13 tells us we are part of one Spirit, Jew or non-Jew, slave or free, we all drink of one Spirit. Verse 14 reminds us that we are one body with many members. Verses 15 & 16 virtually tell us that all parts of the body are important. Verse 17 reminds us that we all play significant roles in the body of Christ. And perhaps most importantly, verse 18 declares **that it is God who places us into the body of Christ and He is pleased with that!**

Reading further on, are the eye and the head more important than the hand and the feet? Verse 22 says **No!** The hand and the feet are necessary, and so are you. You are indispensable to God! God is pleased you are part of His body, the church.

So far we have God the father, who gave his only begotten son to die and shed his precious blood on the cross, so that we can be saved! Then God chose us and that pleased Him. Well...if that's so, why do we sometimes think we are not loved or valued? Hebrews 11:6a is clear. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him..."

So God is also pleased with us when we believe and are faithful. He wants us to love Him supremely. Jesus says in John 14:15: If ye love me, keep my commandments. Well...maybe today, we are not consistently pleasing and loving God. And maybe the initial part of that is that we don't have a full grip on how much Jesus really loves us!

Well...since we seem to have some problems, I suggest we have an examination of some kind. Have you ever had a physical exam before? I am sure most of you have. Perhaps a check-up before surgery? Maybe preparation for practice for an athletic team? As we get older, they seem to become quite routine, perhaps once every 5 years, or maybe annually. So, what would you do first?

Maybe seek out a quality physician. We have some good ones who go to our church. Who is trustworthy, accessible and of good reputation? So now you have made an appointment, are you willing to go through with it? Can you muster up the courage, the time, or maybe even the financial resources to get this done? It's time to go.

After a little chat or small talk, your physician will begin the assessment. He or she will observe and examine you. May even ask personal questions about your lifestyle or behaviors. Blood might be drawn to get lab work done to gain further knowledge of your situation. A specialist may be consulted to provide your physician with a detailed lab report. Now your physician will summarize the assessment data and formulate a diagnosis. A prescription is almost always recommended. Perhaps that would come in the form of exercise, diet, maybe some type of medication.

Now you are at a crossroads. Will you consent and comply with the prescription as recommended by the expert to regain or maintain optimal health? Generally, we do, don't we? *But now, let's consider this medical paradigm from a spiritual perspective.*

We also need to seek out a quality physician.

Yes, there is wisdom in many counsellors. Proverbs 11:14 validates that, but there is just one great physician, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. Go to Him! Jesus Christ, the great physician, spoke of himself when cited and applied Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18. He says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

We also need to be willing to go through this process.

Trust God and be obedient to the instructions in Psalm 139:23-24 which reads: ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me, **and lead me in the way everlasting. We need an assessment grounded in God's Word.**

Psalm 26:2 says: ² **Examine me, O LORD**, and prove me; try my reins (basal instincts) and my heart.

II Corinthians 13:5a also says: ⁵ **Examine yourselves**, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...

Back in the mid 1970s, I was visiting a small faith-based high school in rural Nebraska and in the hallway was a slogan that read: "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Yes, we need to assess how we stand not compared to those about us, but rather how we stand compared to the Word of God.

That segues nicely into the Diagnosis.

Hebrews 4:12 states: ¹² For the word of God **is quick**, and **powerful**, and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, **piercing** even to the **dividing asunder** of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Isn't it amazing that the Word of God can do all that?! And yet we ignore it so regularly. Is Jesus our "bread of life"? Is the Word of God truly our "daily bread"?

Now the Prescription:

Lamentations 3:40 declares: ⁴⁰ Let us search and try our ways, **and turn again to the LORD.**

II Timothy 3:16 says: ¹⁶ **All scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Here's a verse many of you will be familiar with: II Timothy 2:15 admonishes us to: **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

Now that we know what to do, we must comply with the prescription.

And here's what we do: ¹⁴ If my people, which are called by my name, shall **humble themselves**, and **pray**, and **seek my face**, and **turn from their wicked ways**; then will I hear from heaven, and **will forgive their sin**, and **will heal their land**. I think Nike's trademark is appropriate here: "just do it".

And now to our Restoration

To summarize Acts 2:42-47, "they continued unwavering in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer; everyone paid attention, they believed and were together, they were generous, supplied each other's needs, daily in one accord in the temple, hospitable, glad together, praised God, and found favor with everyone, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved!"

I conclude with examining my 3 objectives for this message.

One, God loves you so much so that you are indispensable to the body of Christ! Believe it!

Two, just like the medical model, we need continuous spiritual assessment based on God's Word to have a healthy relationship with the Lord.

And three, comply with the Lord's prescription and you will be restored and maintained. But like the famous TV detective of the 70s & 80s, Lieutenant Columbo, I have just one more thing. We sit in this sanctuary this morning as people who will either spend eternity in heaven or in hell. That's a very blunt statement, but perhaps it alludes to the most important decision any of us will ever make in our lifetime.

I John 5:12 states: ¹² **He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.** If we believe I John 5:12, then we know we either have Jesus and are heaven-bound, or we don't.

John 3:18 is even more condemning as it reads: ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

But the good news is Romans 10:13: ¹³ **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

And perhaps even better than that is 1st John 5:13a which says: ¹³ These things have I written unto you that **believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life**...

Trust in Christ today. If you are not fully sure of your eternal destiny or have questions about the Bible, please give me, Pastor Jerry, Pastor Albin, or others from our church an opportunity to talk with you and reason together. You will never regret it.

This sermon was preached at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji
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