

THE CHURCH: OUR SHARED LIFE

EPHESIANS 1:4

0A Christian physician wrote some powerful words once that portray our life in Christ's body as seen through our human bodies -

Sometimes a dreaded thing occurs in the body - mutiny - resulting in a tumor... A tumor is called benign if its effect is fairly localized and it stays within membrane boundaries. But the most traumatizing condition in the body occurs when disloyal cells defy inhibition. They multiply without any checks on growth, spreading rapidly throughout the body, choking out normal cells. White cells, armed against foreign invaders, will not attack the body's own mutinous cells. Physicians fear no other malfunction more deeply: it is called cancer. For still mysterious reasons, these cells-and they may be cells from the brain, liver, kidney, bone, blood, skin, or other tissues-grow wild, out of control. Each is a healthy, functioning cell, but disloyal, no longer acting in regard to the rest of the body.

Even the white cells, the dependable palace guard, can destroy the body through rebellion. Sometimes they recklessly reproduce, clogging the bloodstream, overloading the lymph system, strangling the body's normal functions-such as leukemia,

He continues: Because I am a surgeon and not a prophet, I tremble to make the analogy between cancer in the physical body and mutiny in the spiritual body of Christ. But I must. In His warnings to the church, Jesus Christ showed no concern about the shocks and bruises His Body would meet from external forces. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church," He said flatly (Matthew 16:18). He moved easily, unthreatened, among sinners and criminals. But He cried out against the kind of disloyalty that comes from within.

Few doctrines are more important than the Church. Because of the constant attack, we need to be good students of the subject. Because we are fellow members of the Body, we need to apply ourselves to mutual harmony. And because disease can diminish the effectiveness of the Body, we must maintain habits of health and a consistent program of exercise in harmony with God's Body-building program.

Furthermore, a regular checkup by the Great physician is a must. Not once a year but at least once a week. And be prepared for the cost of that visit.

As a prominent convert to Christ put it a century ago, "Coming to Christ is free, it costs you nothing. It is the owner's dues, they cost you everything."

The Owner of our Body is the Lord. Let us reflect again on what He is doing! First of all, the Church has been Divinely Formed and preserved!

What do we mean by that?

- I. It was called by God into existence. Ephesians 1:4 "Chosen in Him before foundation of the world"
- II. It is equipped by the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's plan

- A. Ephesians 4:11
- B. Romans 12
- C. 1Corinthians 12
- III. It shall be disciplined by Christ for purity
 - A. Revelation 2-3 Christ walking amidst his church. Note: 2:18-23 Thyatira
 - B. I John 5:16 The sin unto death = discipline and chasten
 - C. I Corinthians 11:28-31
 - D. II Corinthians 5:2-5
 - E. Then of course Matthew 18:15-20
 - 1. Note 4 Steps
 - 2. And vital involvement Christ

Next, the church is directly commissioned Matthew 28, John 4

- Making Disciples
- Offering true worship
- Purpose = Please (Worship/Glorifying)
- Making Disciples of Jesus Christ

Finally and where we shall conclude tonight. The church is distinctly described as a shared life that is realized as we are

- Living in World
- Serving in body
- Pursuing Christ-likeness

Christian Oneness. The Church: A shared Life

- I. Living in the world > outward relationship
 - A. Fellow citizens Eph 2:19 > Phil 3:20 = our shared rules of conduct
 - 1. #4847-Sumpolities(n) Eph 2:19 but fellow citizens with the saints
 - 2. Politeuomai(v) Acts 23:1 I have lived in all good conscience
 - 3. Ph 1:27 Let your conversation be
 - 4. Politeuma(n) Ph 3:20 For our community(lit) is in heaven
 - 5. Polites = citizen of same town
 - B. Fellow Workers Rom. 16:3,9,21 Our shared labor union. Sunergos(adj) Rom 16:3,9,21 My---
 - 1. I Cor 3:9 We are----with God working w/God
 - 2. ii Cor 1:24 Are----of your joy produces joy in church
 - 3. II Cor 8:23 My partner and ---concerning you
 - 4. Phil 2:25 My brother and --- lifts lowly work to the high calling
 - 5. Phil 4:3 Other My --- Reflects on our eternal design
 - 6. Col 4:11 Focus on kingdom task??
 - 7. 1Th 3:2, Phile 1, 24; 3J8 - Laboring for truth
 - C. Fellow Partners/Partakers Phil. 1:7 = Our Shared Fellowship Sugkoinoonos(n)
 - 1. Eph 5:11 Have no – w/the unfruitful woks neg sin
 - 2. Phil 1:7 You were --- in defense and conf pos grace
 - 3. Rev 18:4 Be not --- of her sin
 - D. Fellow strugglers/Athletes = Our Shared Struggle
 - 1. Sunagonidzomai Rom 15:30 In prayer
 - 2. Sunathleo Phil 1:27 Striving faith Gospel Phil 4:3 Shared Paul's struggle

- II. What's Next?? The Church is Distinctly Described As Shared Life Serving in the Body
> Inward Relationship
- A. Fellow Feelers I Peter 3:8 = Our shared concern/sympathy #4834-
sumpatheo sumpasko = To experience the same. (See Brand and yancey)
 - B. Fellow conforters/strengtheners Rom. 1:12 = Our shared strength/comfort
sumparakaleo=console jointly
 - C. Fellow slaves Col.1:7; 4:7 - Our shared master #4889-sundoulos=sharing
same master (not service)
- III. Pursuing Christlikeness > Upward Relationship
- A. Fellow Spirits, Life sharers Phil 2:2 = Our shared soul/life sumpsukos
 - B. Fellow imitators Phil 3:17 = Our shared model/example; - summimetes=followers
together
- Fellow partakers, Heirs and members Eph. 3:6 = Our shared source/wealth/body
summetokos=coparticipants, joint holders