

THE BODY OF CHRIST (Romans 12:4-5)

1.The body and the church.

- a.Paul is the only writer of whom I am aware that used this comparison of the body and the church.
 - i.He did so in our text as well as 1 Corinthians.
 - ii.He also used it in Ephesians and Colossians.
- b.Colossians 1:18...
- c.Grammatically speaking, the church is set in apposition to the body, so we see Paul was stating that the church is equivalent to the body.
- d.If there is any doubt, Paul clears it up in Colossians 1:24.
- e.He stated the same thing with the two equal concepts switching places in Ephesians 1:22-23.
- f.There is no doubt that the body is the church and the church is the body.
- g.You and I have all been asked, "To what church do you belong?"
 - i.How many times have you been asked, "To what body do you belong?"?
 - ii.I wonder why the question is not asked this way more often?
 - iii.Could it be because people know what Paul said in Ephesians 4:4?
 - iv.If so, would they not then understand that there is only one church?
 - v.Since the body is the church, Paul, in effect, is saying that there is only one church.
- h.Trying to escape the force of this has caused some to argue that the different denominations are but different "members" of the one body.
 - i.This simply doesn't fit the comparison made by inspiration.
 - ii.It would be the same as saying that the various "members" of our physical bodies are "separate bodies".
 - iii.1 Corinthians 12:20 buts that false idea to rest.
- i.The very concept of the body is one of unity.
 - i.The meaning of the word denominationalism suggests the opposite.
 - ii.This word teaches division in religion.
 - iii.The New Testament teaches one body, one church.

2.The body and Christ.

- a.Notice what Paul says about the body and Christ (Ephesians 1:23).
 - i.The body, the church, in some sense, is the fulness of Jesus.
 - ii.There is debate as to what the word "fulness" indicates.
 - iii.Is it an active idea or a passive idea?
- b.Some believe it means that the church complements Christ as her head.
 - i.Weymouth, in his translations, rendered this verse: "God put all things under his feet, and has appointed him universal and supreme head of the church, which is his body, the completeness of him who everywhere fills the universe with himself".
 - ii.If this is the way the word is used, and it seems that the context may require it, this is a tremendous tribute to the church.
 - iii.It would be saying that the church is so essential to Christ that He would not be complete without it.
 - iv.A head with no body.
- c.There are those that believe it is passive, indicating the divine presence of the

- Christ fills the church.
 - i. This is definitely taught in scripture.
 - ii. Ephesians 3:16-19.
- d. However, Jesus does His work today through the church.
 - i. It is the church that takes out the saving message of the gospel.
 - ii. It is the church that does the good works for Christ.
- e. When we speak of the church, practically speaking, it is as if we are speaking of the members of Christ's physical body while He was on the earth.
 - i. Is there any way that Jesus could have shown men what God was like while He was among us without His physical body and its parts?
 - ii. Today, how can Jesus let others know about Himself except through His body, the church?
 - iii. The church is to be accomplishing the work that Jesus set out to do (Luke 19:10).
- f. There is one Head, and there is one body.

3. The body and baptism.

- a. In order to have connection to the Head, one must be in the body, the church.
 - i. A body without a head is worthless.
 - ii. How does one get into the body to have a connection to Christ?
- b. Only the scriptures can answer this for us and the answer is clear (1 Corinthians 12:13).
 - i. Notice that Paul said "we".
 - ii. This includes Paul and all those who read his inspired writings.
- c. Remember how Paul came into the body (relate the conversion of Saul).
 - i. Acts 22:16.
 - ii. This is an illustration of 1 Corinthians 12:13.
- d. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that it is into one body we are baptized.
 - i. Acts 18:8.
 - ii. This is nothing strange because this was the case throughout the book of Acts.
- e. What does this mean for us?
 - i. If we are going to have the right relationship with the Head of the church, we must be in the church, or the body.
 - ii. Ephesians 5:23 - Jesus is the Savior of the body as her Head.
 - iii. Since Jesus saves the body, it follows naturally that one must be in the body to be saved.
 - iv. One is baptized into the body of Christ, so baptism is essential to salvation.
- f. This is a different way of expressing something Jesus taught (Mark 16:16).
- g. Another way of saying this is found in Acts 2 (Acts 2:41, 47).
- h. When one is scripturally baptized, his sins are washed away and he is added to the body of Christ.
- i. There is one Head, one body, and one baptism into that one body.

4. The body and its members.

- a. There is no such thing as a Gentile church or a Jewish church (Ephesians 2:11-22) - Jesus came to break down such walls in order to make both one.
- b. Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11.

- i. There is no such thing as a national church.
 - ii. There is no such thing as a segregated church.
- c. We are what is described in Ephesians 3:6.
 - i. There are no distinctions to be made among Christians (Romans 10:12-13).
 - ii. Jesus had to give a vision to Peter and Peter had to tell his fellow apostles and other Jewish converts in order to convince them of this truth (Acts 10-11).
- d. There is a oneness in the church.
- e. However, there is also diversity in the church.
 - i. Romans 12:4-6.
 - ii. The diversity lies in the fact that we all are capable of doing different things for the well-being of the entire body.
 - iii. Not everyone is an eye or can be.
 - iv. Not everyone is a foot or can be.
 - v. We each have a role to play in the Lord's church for the church to be the body God wants it to be.
- f. In an old GA annual, there is a story told of a hand that got tired of carrying food to the mouth so it went on strike.
 - i. For a little while the hand did well resting from its previous efforts.
 - ii. Soon though, it began to weaken and tremble at every move.
 - iii. The hand soon realized that in carrying the food to the mouth, he was taking care of his own strength and happiness.
 - iv. The writer then made the point that the members of the Lord's body, the church, depend on one another so that when they serve others, they are serving themselves; and when they hurt other members of the body, they hurt themselves."
- g. There is one Head, for the one body that is entered by means of the one baptism that allows all members to become one.