

Visible

Prayer

Let us look together at Romans 12:1-8 NLT

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: 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. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

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. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 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.

Today we have had communion. Now what does it mean to be one body in Christ. I mean if you read Romans you will see that the last 11 chapters have been about the fact that we were sinners and that God is Holy and Just. He explains that we are under God to be judged, condemned and suffer his wrath for our sin... Yet, he points out that our loving God in His infinite wisdom and mercy sent his Son Jesus, the very Jesus we celebrate at Christmas and Easter. Easter recognizes the Jesus in his perfect obedience to the Father in death, justified us, redeemed us, reconciled us and took our place. We are told in John 3:16 that if we believe in him we shall not perish but have eternal life.

We have no condemnation because of Christ.

Are we as individuals in the body of Christ visible showing mercy because we have been shown this great mercy?

Outline by John Piper.

Since our Christian walk is built upon our receipt of mercy from God, it seems natural that we would extend that mercy to others in a real, tangible and visible way doesn't it?

What did we do to deserve this gift of mercy from Jesus? Nothing... We do not have to earn it, it is given to us. What I am getting at is that we don't try to earn mercy through our actions. Rather, as Christians, we are able to live a merciful life because we ourselves have received it.

Paul tells us here in Romans Chapter 12 about the Christian walk and our calling into it. He sees our lives and specifically how we live them out as Christians as worship toward God.

This morning Let's examine verses 4-6 more closely. This morning we are a Church, we are the body of Christ

This morning I will briefly discuss two aspects of these verses:

- 1) Unity of the body of Christ in Christ Jesus
- 2) Individuality is valued in the body of Christ

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

We the church, are many individuals that make up one body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:27 Paul says "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it"

Friends this morning how many of you have heard the phrase "In Christ"? What does this mean?

It means that we are all unified "in" our relationship with Christ. We are therefore in relation to each other in a very real and tangible sense. We have often heard other Christians and probably many of us have said Good morning brother or sister. If I am a son of God and you are a daughter of God, then you ARE my sister.

That is stage one of understanding the relationship... But there is more to what in Christ means. Turn with me to Philippians 3:8,9.

Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

Outline by John Piper.

In short, Christ is your lord and everything else is superfluous. Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also.

We are joint heirs with Christ...

Think of how awesome that is!

So what have we received in this inheritance?

- [1 Corinthians 1:4](#), we receive *grace* in Christ.
- [Romans 3:24](#), our *redemption* is in Christ.
- [Galatians 2:17](#), we are *justified* in Christ.
- [Ephesians 4:32](#), we have *forgiveness* of sins in Christ.
- [Romans 8:1](#), there is *no condemnation* in Christ.
- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#), we are a *new creation* in Christ.
- [Romans 6:23](#), we have *eternal life* in Christ.
- [Philippians 4:19](#), God supplies *all our needs* in Christ.
- [Ephesians 1:3](#), we have every *spiritual blessing* of heaven in Christ
- [Colossians 1:28](#), we will be presented to God *perfect* in Christ.
- [Romans 8:32](#), we cannot be separated from the *love of God* in Christ.

This morning as we examined ourselves, did we find ourselves standing in awe of Jesus? Has Paul succeeded in passing his message that we love Jesus? When Jesus was told he was loved... He told those who said it, in this case Simon to feed of his sheep.

This morning do we love Jesus?

This morning are we being merciful?

As well as our physical presence, is our Christian walk visibly present?

So this morning I am aware that in our modern culture when we say that we are members of the body of Christ; what many are referring to is the Church here in Salmo... and they are correct, but it is more than that, it is all the Christian brothers and sisters from all the churches.

Romans 12:5 "So we, though many, are one body in Christ. We all like to think of Christ dying for us personally. And this is so valuable to each of us and so very real. But this morning I ask you to consider that Christ died one for all. "

This means that we were Redeemed together, justified together, Forgiven together, became new creations together... A major theme here is unity.

Outline by John Piper.

“Oh, let us never trivialize the church! It cost God the life of his Son to create this. And what you share with the persons sitting near you in Christ is a life and an inheritance and a union so great and so profound that it surpasses the value of all other human relationships and all inheritances and can never end.”

So unity in the body of Christ is created in Christ Jesus.

My second point this morning is Individuality is valued in Christ. We need to be visible as a unified church, but we also need to be visible as individuals...

What did Paul say again? “So we, though many are one body in Christ and INDIVIDUALLY members one of another.”

We are to be unified in purpose... Christ is our purpose and we are to individually participate. We saw the part on how we are to be in unity but there is another aspect here. Let’s look at Romans 12 verses 6-8 CEV

God has also given each of us different gifts to use. If we can prophesy, we should do it according to the amount of faith we have. If we can serve others, we should serve. If we can teach, we should teach. If we can encourage others, we should encourage them. If we can give, we should be generous. If we are leaders, we should do our best. If we are good to others, we should do it cheerfully.

Do you see here how we are not all the same? Diversity is celebrated. “Each of us different gifts” and we are to contribute individually. But did you notice how we are directed to utilize them? We are encouraged to use our individual gifts for the good of the body of Christ.

What is our take away here?

True individuality is found in our relationships with the body of Christ and in Him.

Do we want to be visible for Christ?

Did we get that our individuality our identity in Christ is seen in our serving each other?

Hint: * If you are trying to discover who you really are, you can find this by living in relationship with others in the body and by serving and being served in the body of Christ. Paul goes on in Romans to show that from this unified position the power of the church is seen as we express our individual identity with Christ in relation to the World. It is simply really... If you love other people with all your heart and do this not in your own strength but in his, you will truly discover who you are.

Outline by John Piper.