

## EIGHTH LAY TALK

# TALK #13 BODY OF CHRIST

### Overview of All Talks

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience; it is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver 1/15 of the Emmaus talk—one message, fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. In general, 2/3 of your presentation will come from the outlines; the remaining 1/3 will come from your original insights and personal experience.

The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The expanded outline intends to provide a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

*This presentation is allotted a maximum of 20 to 25 minutes.* Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

### Overview for Speaker

Remember that the whole intent of The Walk to Emmaus movement is to develop church leadership and strengthen the witness of the Christian community in word and deed. In the CHRISTIAN ACTION talk, pilgrims heard about sharing Christ with others in word and deed. In the DISCIPLESHIP talk, they heard about being a Christian leader. In the CHANGING OUR WORLD talk, pilgrims were challenged to make a plan for being a Christian influence in the everyday arenas of their lives. And now, in the BODY OF CHRIST talk, pilgrims are shown what it means to be the church in the world.



This talk aims to help pilgrims understand the nature of the church, some of its important characteristics, and the threefold mission. Illustrate each point with personal and positive examples of the church in mission. Your aim is to inspire pilgrims to participate fully in their congregations and cooperate with other members. Through your witness, leave pilgrims with an enhanced appreciation of the value of the church for every Christian who wants to grow spiritually and be a fruit-bearing disciple.

**The talk is scheduled for Sunday at 11:00 a.m.**

### Overview of All Talks

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 73-hour experience. It is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members and the talk. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver all of the Emmaus talks—one message, fifteen presentations.

Your talk will use the outline provided. In general, 50% of your presentation will come from the outline, the remaining 50% will come from your original insights and personal experience. The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The assigned topic provides a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the message. A talk outline is a script; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

This presentation is usually a maximum of 30 to 35 minutes. Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

### Overview for Speaker

Remember that the whole intent of The Walk to Emmaus movement is to develop church leadership and strengthen the witness of the Christian community in word and deed. In the TALK ACTION talk, pilgrims heard about sharing Christ with others in word and deed. In the DISTRESSER talk, they heard about being a Christian leader. In the CHANGING OUR WORLD talk, pilgrims were challenged to make a plan for being a Christian influence in the everyday arenas of their lives. And now, in the BODY OF CHRIST talk, pilgrims are shown what it means to be the church in the world.



# Expanded Outline: BODY OF CHRIST

## **Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:**

*Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.*

## **Opening Story (1-2 minutes)**

Choose a story or experience from your own life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult with the Lay Director or a Spiritual Director for assistance. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention of pilgrims and move them into the theme of this talk. For example, you might do the following:

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the title of this talk is BODY OF CHRIST.**

## **I. What is the body of Christ?**

- A. When we became Christians, we became new persons (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:14-16). We became part of a group of people with a common calling: to belong to Jesus Christ. No matter where we are or what we do or who we are, we are joined together like parts of a new body to reflect in the world the Christ in whose image we are created. This new body, comprised of all Christians, is known as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-20). You and I and all Christians everywhere make up the working parts of that body, the church universal.
- B. The body of Christ is, however, more than the community of Christians everywhere. This term also describes the church fulfilling its mission in the world.
  1. The body of Christ is the entire community of the redeemed, incorporated into Christ. In their desire to grow in holiness, these persons radiate the gospel and Christian love all around them.
  2. The body of Christ is the community of disciples united by faith in Christ and response to Jesus' call to "Follow me," to be the church wherever they are. The body of Christ continues Christ's ministry in the world today.
  3. The body of Christ finds expression in various forms of church:
    - a) a local congregation
    - b) an ecumenical mission formed of different faith backgrounds
    - c) a family seeking to live in faith
    - d) wherever two or three are gathered in Christ's name.



4. In short, the body of Christ is the Christian community in mission to the world.
- C. The great challenge of today's church is to empower and equip more members of the body to engage in Christian action in their everyday lives. This has been the goal of The Walk to Emmaus from the beginning—to raise up Christian leaders and renew the church as the body of Christ in action. Nothing should take the place of the local church.

## II. Those Who Make Up the Body of Christ

The church is more than its building, organizational structure and institutions, or appointed leaders. Sometimes people mistake these for the church, though they are important aspects and features. Rather, the church refers to all the people of God who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to continue Christ's life and ministry wherever they are.

- A. *Laity and clergy*—In the PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS talk, you heard that each of us is a minister. Laity and clergy alike are called to serve God through our service to humankind and participation in the church.
  1. Laity serve by being witnesses to the living Christ and carrying the gospel into their homes, workplaces, communities, and institutions that shape the lives of people.
  2. Clergy serve by fostering Christian community, interpreting God's Word, administering the sacraments, and equipping the saints for doing ministry in their world.
  3. Laity and clergy are meant to support one another and work as a team, never in competition. We should not expect pastors to carry the entire load of taking the gospel to the world!
- B. *Individuals and groups*—Each individual Christian—man, woman, and child—is an important member of the body of Christ. But the church is also made up of groups that can join resources to foster faith and act together to impact society.
- C. *Families*—The Christian family is an expression of the body of Christ. Strong churches need the involvement of families, not just individuals. Families have been called the “domestic church”—the place where people's lives are most deeply shaped. In Christian tradition, the family of faith has always been seen as the primary setting for Christian education and faith formation. Once-a-week Sunday church activities cannot compete with the influences of society. Christian nurture and training must be part of home life. Martin Luther saw parents as priests.
- D. *People of all kinds*—The church consists of people of every race, class, and background. This is part of the church's witness at its best—that in Christ, all natural differences that normally separate people in the world are overcome (Gal. 3:27-28).



When people who would otherwise be divided unite in Christian love and work for the common good, then the church is truly an expression of the body of Christ—a sign of Christ’s life with us now and a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven.

### III. Characteristics of the Body of Christ

- A. *Alive*—The body of Christ is alive and life-giving. Vital churches reflect the triumph of Easter, not the gloom of Good Friday. Christians should become change agents where they live. The church should be a factory to produce saints, not a warehouse to keep them in!
- B. *Covenantal*—The heart of the church is covenant: God’s commitment to us in Christ, and our commitment to God and one another in Christ. We commit to help one another live this life in grace by vowing to support the church’s common life and ministry with our prayers, presence, gifts, and service. Without covenant and commitment, there is no church.
  - 1. When trouble arises in your congregation, do you criticize and seek another church to serve you, or do you look for a way to serve where you are—to reconcile and bring healing, to affirm your bond in Christ?
  - 2. Though he knew his friends would abandon him after their last supper, Jesus stayed at the table with them. We are called to “stay at the table” with one another despite differences and dislikes, to learn covenant love.
- C. *Gifted*—Every Christian is a vital member of the living body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). Together we can accomplish more than we can alone (Rom. 12:3-8). We have responsibility to help one another discover our gifts. Christianity is not a solitary practice.
  - 1. No one person is given all of the gifts for ministry; no one person is sufficient for carrying out the total ministry of Jesus Christ in the world. Rather, the Holy Spirit distributes the various qualities and gifts of Christ’s life and ministry among those who respond to the call. Christ needs us—not off on our own but together. Each Christian has a vital and unique contribution to make, and God equips us for the task.
  - 2. Jesus promises that those who follow him will do even greater works than he did (John 14:12). Is this not the case through the body of Christ? The church is not a depository of God’s grace but an empowering agency for God’s ministries.
  - 3. Sometimes we confuse gifts with natural talents (e.g., a musical ability, a talent with money or sales, artistic talent). A talent can be used to build up oneself. But a talent becomes a spiritual gift when it is offered in love to glorify God and build up the body of Christ.
- D. *Renewing*—The church needs constant renewal and reform.



1. Members need new challenges to live the Christian life. Since the time of the apostles, every generation has had to respond anew to Christ's call, open itself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and commit to be the church in its time and place. The same is true of our generation. We must be intentional in witness to each other and to the world.
2. Old methods don't always work; God calls for new ministries for new situations. The church needs to constantly develop new leaders. Tradition is important, but too many churches operate according to the slogan "We've always done it that way."

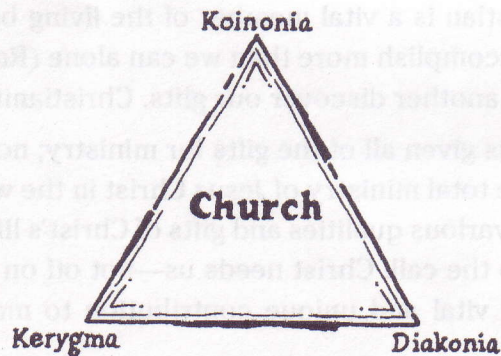
E. *Mission-minded*—The body of Christ does not exist for its own maintenance but for mission. Its action is characterized by breathing in and breathing out. It breathes in piety and study so that it can breathe out faith in action. The church gathers for worship and nurture, then scatters for witness and humble service. It receives grace from God so that it can share grace with the world.

F. *Confident*—The body of Christ lives in the confidence of Christ's final victory.

#### IV. The Body of Christ in Action

The risen Lord commanded us as the church, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Three New Testament words describe the action required to fulfill this mission.

[Show a visual of the following.]



A. *Kerygma* (proclamation)—*Kerygma* (pronounced ker-IG-ma) is the Greek word in the New Testament for the proclamation of the good news. The church's mission is to preach and teach the good news—the story of God's love in Jesus Christ.

1. This is the job description of the entire church, not just the pastor. Every Christian is called to give witness to Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22).

The message of Christ is proclaimed not only from the pulpits of churches but also at the family table, the workplace, and in community affairs. Christians proclaim the gospel when they tell others God loves them, share their faith in Christ with others, inspire others to seek the higher road, or mediate God's forgiveness.



2. Modeling Christian living is important, but it is not enough. We must also identify for people the Source of this life in grace.

Talking about their faith, especially with friends and colleagues, is difficult for many Christians. The church must help people learn to share the story of Jesus and the story of their own faith in simple and natural ways. “How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him [Christ]?” (Rom. 10:14).

B. *Koinonia* (Christian community)—*Koinonia* (pronounced coy-noh-NEE-ah) is the Greek word in the New Testament for the caring, grace-filled fellowship of the Holy Spirit that characterized the early church (Acts 2:43-47).

1. The church’s mission is not only to *tell* the good news but to *be* that good news. The church’s mission is to be a Christian community for people. *Koinonia* is the family of God being realized among us. *Koinonia* is life together in grace. It is where people discover grace as a way of life.
2. If the church does not live in grace, then what witness can we give the world? If the church is not learning how to live in peace, then where can hope be found?
3. The church’s mission is not to be a showplace for the perfect but a home for real people seeking wholeness—where people feel accepted in their weaknesses and strengths, where they are inspired and supported to be new persons.
4. *Koinonia* is the spiritual family in which persons are related to God, renewed in spirit, and re-formed by grace and discipline in the likeness of Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). The church alone is in the business of Christian formation—helping people know God and mature spiritually.

C. *Diakonia* (service)—*Diakonia* (pronounced dee-ack-oh-NEE-ah) is the Greek word in the New Testament for service. The church’s mission is not only to tell about God’s grace (*kerygma*) and to live together in God’s grace (*koinonia*) but also to share God’s grace in deeds of love and service (*diakonia*). The church’s mission is to serve the world by sharing the love God gives.

1. The church’s service is to offer hospitality to the lonely and the stranger. The church is not a club with closed membership but a house where the door is always open and there is always a place for hungry souls at the table (Matt. 25:31-46). The church’s service is to offer God’s healing to the sick in body, mind, spirit, and relationship; to extend Christ’s outreach to those who live “having no hope and without God” (Eph. 2:12); to seek to erase the lines that divide people; to bear witness to the truth and be the conscience of society.
2. “Find a need and meet it” is a good motto for the church. We cannot wait for the world to come to the church. The people of God must convince the world of the reality of the gospel, or it will remain unconvinced. The church must reach out to



people where they live and exhibit willingness to meet real needs and to love people as they are.

3. There is a difference between church work and the work of the church. Too often the church excels in involving many people in church work (committees, bazaars, programs) when it ought to be equipping and sending more people to do the work of the church in the world—being Christ in the workplace, family, and community, ministering even to the “least of these” (Matt. 25:40).

*[Share ways your church or the Christian community engages in diakonia.]*

In summary, through *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*, the church’s mission is to produce fruit-bearing disciples committed to making the world a more Christ-centered, loving, and just community (Matt. 28:18-20).

## V. Your Participation

We have talked about what the body of Christ is and what it does. Now what about your participation in it? Here are a few simple guidelines—a personal plan for action as part of the body of Christ.

- A. *Focus on a need*—What need in the church, community, or world is the Spirit nudging you to do something about? What concern or burden of love seems to persistently gain your attention, as though to make itself your business?
- B. *Identify your gifts and resources*—The connection may be direct between the need and what you can offer. Or your gift may be the commitment to see that something is done, the willingness to call together the resources and people, or the concern to simply do what you can.
- C. *Seek the support of others*—Share your plan with others in the church. Work through proper channels. Be open to the counsel of others.
- D. *Work as a team*—Don’t overexaggerate your importance. Don’t be a lone ranger. And don’t underestimate the importance of your fellow workers and their gifts. Seek your pastor’s counsel and cooperation from the outset. Integrate your plans with the total ministry and priorities of the church.

*[Tell how the church has empowered you to be Christ’s representative to the world.]*



## VI. Conclusion

In the early centuries, the church expanded not only through concerted missionary efforts but also because of its power of attraction. The church offered a real alternative as a society of mutual love, support, and moral integrity—a fine model for the church today.

In a document from the days of the early church, Aristides described Christians to the Roman emperor Hadrian like this:

They love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God.<sup>1</sup>

May Christ be so manifested in the life of our churches today.

**De Colores!**

1. *The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher*, in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, ed. Allan Menzies (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 277.



# Abbreviated Outline: BODY OF CHRIST

## **Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:**

*Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.*

## **Opening Story (1-2 minutes)**

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and the title of this talk is BODY OF CHRIST.**

### **I. What is the body of Christ?**

- A. When we became Christians, we became part of a new body of people called to belong to Jesus Christ.
- B. The body of Christ is the community of disciples that carries on Christ's ministry—the Christian community in action.
- C. The challenge of the church is to develop Christian leaders and renew the body of Christ in action. This is also the purpose of The Walk to Emmaus.

### **II. Those Who Make Up the Body of Christ**

The church is more than building, institution, and official leaders, though these are important aspects of the body of Christ. The church refers to all the people of God.

- A. Laity and clergy
- B. Individuals and groups
- C. Families
- D. People of all kinds who are united in Christ

### **III. Characteristics of the Body of Christ**

- A. *Alive*—The church reflects, lives, and shares the life-giving triumph and joy of Easter, not the gloom of Good Friday.
- B. *Covenantal*—The heart of the church is a covenant between God and the people, united in Christ. In response to God's commitment to us, we commit ourselves to God and to one another for Christ's sake.



- C. *Gifted*—God gives gifts to each member of the body to use for the common life and ministry of the church (Rom. 12:3-8). Members of the body seek to equip one another. If we are to express the fullness of Christ’s ministry, we must recognize that we need one another.
- D. *Renewing*—The church needs constant renewal, reform, new challenges. Each generation must respond anew to the gospel; the church must constantly develop new leaders and help them become intentional in witnessing to one another and to the world.
- E. *Mission-minded*—The body breathes in piety and study so it can breathe out faith in action, displaying humility in service.
- F. *Confident*—The body of Christ displays and lives in the confidence of Christ’s final victory.

#### IV. The Body of Christ in Action

- A. *Kerygma* (proclamation)—The church’s mission is to preach and teach the message of God’s grace, to tell the story of God’s love in Jesus, to share our faith.
- B. *Koinonia* (community)—The church’s mission is to live together in God’s grace—to be God’s family where persons are received, renewed, and re-formed in the likeness of Christ.
- C. *Diakonia* (service)—The church’s mission is to share God’s grace in deeds of love and service, reaching out to people where they live, even to “the least of these” (Matt. 25:40).

#### V. Your Participation

- A. Focus on a need.
- B. Identify your gifts and resources.
- C. Seek the support of others.
- D. Work as a team.

*[Tell how the church has empowered you to be Christ’s representative to the world.]*

#### VI. Conclusion

The early church offered a real alternative to the culture of that day, providing a society of mutual love, support, and moral integrity—a fine model for the church today.

**De Colores!**