TOPIC: WHO ARE WE? WHO AM I?

I need to remember what the Church is to Christ and who I am in Christ.

KEY POINTS

- When considering our place in the world, we usually begin with "I" before moving to "we." We often actually get so entangled and self-absorbed with the minutiae of the "I" that we miss the glory of the "we."
- There are many man-made institutions whose members glory in the greatness they ascribe to their institution. They love the camaraderie, togetherness and unity of being part of something bigger than themselves. They love the history, tradition and status of a great organization.
- The Church is the only institution that will go beyond time and into eternity. To be honest, it is not really an institution at all. The Church is a body – a living organism that cannot die, be defeated or destroyed, because Jesus Christ Himself is the head of the Body.
- Therefore, if we are a part of His Body, we will live forever as He lives forever! What could be greater than to say with assurance, "I am a part of the Body of Christ?"
- We can smile with others in the same position, knowing that we are highly exalted and highly favoured, friends and brethren forever, awaiting the perfection we will all receive when Jesus returns to usher us into His eternal kingdom.
- This is a reality many of us still don't 'get'. We are part of the big, beautiful, magnificent Body of Christ!
- Yet many have no fear at all of mistreating their brethren. This is nothing new – the apostle Paul had to address the same situation to the 1st century church.
- And it is just as wrong now as it was then.
- 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 NASB: "For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. [30] For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."
- The Lord takes our mistreatment of each other extremely seriously!
- "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually" (1 Corinthians 12:27).
- Therefore, when we look at each other and interact with each other, we must always be conscious of the God-given value we each have. Our Lord Jesus felt we were valuable enough to die for, so we must take great care in how we treat each other – His treasures.
- For this reason, we should go out of our way for each other, speak well of each other and give the benefit of the doubt to each other. Every one of our brothers and sisters in Christ must be precious in our eyes.
- 1 Corinthians is filled with Paul's teaching regarding our place in the Body, the Church:
  - 6:11: "… you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."
  - 6:15a: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?"
  - 6:17: "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."
  - 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? [20] For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

KEY SCRIPTURES: Colossians 1:9-23; 1 Corinthians 11:27-30; 6:11, 15a, 17, 19-20

- This is the importance of starting with "we" before considering "I." Our human tendency is to focus on ourselves as individuals and miss the majesty of our place in the 'big picture'.
- One drop of paint in an artist's drawing is totally insignificant, but as part of the greater whole, it is beautiful in its place.
- Our place in the Body of Christ is amazing.
- Let's repeat it again – nothing can destroy the Church. With Christ as its head, it can only die if God dies, and it is impossible for God to die. The devil cannot deter the church, human governments cannot defeat the church, and human philosophy cannot destroy the church.
- However, we can die if we sever ourselves from the Church.
- Who am I? A small, insignificant but very important part of the Body of Christ. Although my contribution is small, the Lord loves and appreciates it.
- Like the widow with only two mites to offer to His glorious work, God sees me, knows me and appreciates every little thing I am able to do.
- I may have failed a thousand times before and feel like I don't have what it takes to make it. That is totally true. That's why I am happy to know that it's not up to me.
- The Spirit of God strengthens me, and my brothers and sisters come alongside to love me, encourage me and pray with me. And as I do the same for them, it is a powerful sign to the outside world that the Body of Christ is united and strong. We are ONE.
- Who are we? The Body of Christ!
- Who am I? A very valuable part of the Body of Christ!

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. What does "The Church" mean (e.g. what is it/who is in it/what are the membership requirements)? Use scripture and reference sources to support answers.
2. Based on scriptures (those quoted in the lesson and others), what does Jesus think about the Church? How does He feel about it? What does He expect from its members?
3. How do you feel about being a part of this organism/ body? Do you think others feel the same way? What are your reasons for the answers you just gave?
4. When cells in a body fight against each other, it's a serious health issue. What happens when members of the Body of Christ are in continual conflict?
5. Thoughtfully consider: If The Church is Jesus' Body, how am I treating Him?

Prayer Time

Lord, please help me to see You in Your children who are a part of Your Body. Help me to value others as I think You deserve to be valued.

L.G. ice-Breaker: Share something in your family history that is significant to you for whatever reason (motivating/discouraging/fascinating/etc.)

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS