

Baptism Into the Body of Christ

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being baptized into Christ, immersed in his death and resurrection, and becoming one with him in order to be acceptable to God and receive salvation.

Duration: 43:09

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:1-4, Romans 14:23, Hebrews 6:1-2

Topics: "Body Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of being new people in Christ. He emphasizes that as Christians, we have died to sin and it no longer has a hold over us. The speaker uses the analogy of a slave and a master to illustrate this point. He also highlights the importance of being part of a local church and actively functioning within it, based on biblical principles. The sermon references Romans 6 and emphasizes the need to live a life that reflects our new identity in Christ.

Transcript

Alright, so we maybe just start again in Hebrews chapter 6. We're dealing with a foundation. And maybe at the end of this series you'll know them off by heart. Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 1 Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. Now, we're going to deal with verse 2, the first one there, the doctrine of baptisms, and you'll notice that it is baptisms in the plural. So, obviously inferring that there is more than one baptism.

Now, he doesn't tell us what the other baptisms are, or what all the baptisms are. And so we have to go to the various scriptures to see which they are. There are in fact four in my understanding.

And this confuses some people sometimes. They find it very difficult to understand how there can be four baptisms. But you'll see them as we go along.

The first one is baptism into Christ. The second one, baptism into water. The third one, baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And the fourth one, baptism in suffering. Now, we're going to deal with the first one, which is baptism in Christ. But before we do that, we need to just talk about this concept of baptism, because it is obviously fundamental to the next four weeks.

And the word is a confusing word, because it is just like faith, it is a religious word. It's a word which has very clear religious connotations. And it's rather sad, because of that we don't get a correct understanding of the meaning of that word and the way in which that word is used.

The word baptism is not an English word. It never existed in English until they came to translate in 1611 the Bible under the authorisation of King James into the King James Bible, or the authorised version. And when they did that, they came across this word in the Greek, which is called, which in Greek is baptizo, and they now had to translate this word.

Now, that created a problem for them, because the word simply means to dip, or to immerse. That's all that it means. It has no religious connotations in its natural use in Greek.

But if they were to translate it correctly, if they were to translate it immerse, or to dip, that would create a problem for them, because they were not doing that, particularly as far as word baptism was concerned, because these were Church of England scholars, and they were sprinkling, and so immediately they had a problem. So if they translated this correctly, they would now have a problem, because what they were doing, and what they were translating were two different things. So they took the easy way out, and what they did is they kept the Greek word, and they simply anglicised it.

And so they changed it from baptizo to baptism, and even if you look in the English, it is spelt with a Z, which would normally be spelt with an S, which shows how it came across from the Greek. Now that, as I say, creates a problem, because now we have this religious word, which some people associate with sprinkling, other people associate with immersion, or with adult baptism. Now we will deal with that as we go along, but the sad thing is, because of that confusion now, we lose out on some very important teaching the Scripture has, on other aspects of this great doctrine.

Particularly this first one, which we are going to deal with tonight, which is the baptism in Christ. And you will see why this is important. But I want to just read you a little piece, which comes from Thais, and which deals with the origin of this word in the Greek language, and the actual meaning of the word.

Now Thais quotes a Greek poet and physician, a man called Nicander, who lived about 200 BC. And so this is in classical Greek writing, and he says that this man has a recipe for making pickles. Now this is not a very sanctified thing, but obviously this is how the word is used, to make pickles.

And there are in fact two Greek words, the one is baptizo, and the one is bapto. They are two different words based on the same root. Now you will see the meaning and the difference between these two.

He says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be dipped, bapto, into boiling water, and then baptizo, or baptized, in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution, but the first is temporary, the second, the act of baptizing the vegetable produces a permanent change. And so the one is just putting it in and out, and the other one actually allows for it to remain there.

But you can see that in both of them, very clearly the pickle is dipped in, it's immersed in either the boiling water initially, or in the vinegar afterwards. Now here's a very important aspect that Thayer highlights, and this is one of the reasons why I want to read this section from him. He says, When used in the New

Testament, the word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism.

Now that is very important, because most people when they hear about baptism, they immediately say, water baptism, that's the thing that comes into mind. Now Thayer, who wrote a lexicon on New Testament Greek, and is a respected scholar, he says no, in fact, the most often times, or the times when this word is most often used, it has nothing to do with water baptism. It has to do with baptism in Christ.

Then he says, When used in the New Testament, the word more often refers to union, and identification with Christ, than to our water baptism. And he quotes Mark 16.16, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Now that's a very important verse, because many people base a teaching on that called baptismal regeneration, which basically says that unless you're baptized, you're not saved.

You're not a true Christian unless you're baptized, and they quote that verse, saying that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But you'll see that Mark 16.16 does not necessarily refer to water baptism. It may very well be referring to baptism in Christ.

And he says, Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with Him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle. And so, what he is also saying is that that baptizo does maybe not make a major change, but baptizo results in a change in the item that is dipped.

And so there's just very quickly the difference between those words. Now if we go to Romans 6, you'll immediately see how this now becomes, how Romans 6 will take on new meaning for you, I trust. Now Romans 6 is used by most people who teach water baptism to teach water baptism from.

Romans 6 in fact does not teach water baptism. It says nothing about water baptism in Romans 6. And let's read the first four verses. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not.

How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Would you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Now do you see any reference to water there? It makes no reference to water at all. And in fact it tells us clearly what we should be baptized into in this context.

We are not denying the principle of water baptism, we will deal with that next week. But he says in verse 3 very clearly, Do you not know as many as were baptized into Christ? Baptized into Christ. Now you see the problem because we have this word baptize which has these religious connotations and connotations of water.

But now if we replace that word baptize there with the word that should have been there which is immersed and we read it again. Now you will see in verse 3, let's read verse 3 again, it says, Or do you not know that as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death? Therefore we who were buried with Him through immersion into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so you also should walk in the universe of life. You can see that it takes on a totally different meaning.

And this in fact is the correct reading of that passage. So what is Paul teaching here in Romans chapter 6? He is saying that we should be taken and be placed into Christ. The same way as you would take the

pickle and you would put it into the vinegar he says we must be placed into Christ.

Now obviously this is not a physical thing. This is not something that happens in the body. This is a spiritual thing that he is speaking about.

And you would have to pick up the whole argument that Paul develops over several chapters here in the book of Romans. And he is dealing with a whole process of salvation. How do I actually get saved? How am I actually freed from the law? How am I actually freed from the issue that we spoke about before, dead works.

How do I get rid of those things? How do I escape God's judgment? And he says the only way I can do that is if I cease to exist. Because as long as I exist I am guilty of the law. As long as I exist I am worthy of God's judgment.

But if I cease to exist the demands of the law upon me cease. And he uses the picture of marriage. And he says that if someone is married to someone the only thing that can break that marriage is death.

Nothing else can separate. We know that we have divorce today and Jesus said that wasn't the plan from the beginning. That wasn't the way that God designed it.

But the only thing that can break that covenant between two people is death. And now he says in the same way the only thing that can break the hold of the law of the Old Testament upon us is death. And so what needs to happen is I need to die.

But unfortunately the problem is if I have to die physically I would be dead. And if I'm dead I would be damned because I died in my sins. But he says what has happened and this is quite a complicated argument that he presents here but what happened is he says in fact he places us in God placed us in Christ.

And when Jesus was nailed to the cross we died with Christ in God's reckoning. Now as I say this is maybe a little bit complicated but if you read these chapters you'll find that this is the argument that he presents. And so we were placed in Christ.

And so that when Jesus died we died. Which now released the hold of the law upon us. Which released the old judgments and condemnation that was against us from us.

And when Christ rose again we rose again in him. And this is the argument he presents. So that we can now be new people.

So having confused you with that I trust that you'll just mull over that and just read these chapters. Read particularly chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Romans. And you'll pick up that picture.

But now you'll see what he is saying here then. In verse 2 of chapter 6 he says How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Now he says as Christians as far as we are concerned as far as God is concerned we have died to sin. Sin no longer has a hold over us.

And he uses the picture of a slave and a master. And he says sin is no longer our master. What freed us from the hold of sin in our lives? Death.

But now he explains how we died. You do not know that as many of us as were baptized or put into or immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death. Now I know that you may find that difficult to accept but that's what the word of God says and what we've got to do is we've got to accept some of these things by faith.

And so when Paul says that when Jesus died when we were immersed in him and we died with him and then he continued we have to believe that and accept that by faith. Now verse 4 says Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life. So what does he say? He is saying we were placed into Christ and we became one with him in his death and we became one with him in his burial and we became one with him in his resurrection.

Now this is a spiritual picture and we say well how can that happen? Christ died 2000 years ago I was only born 15 years ago. I'm still young you see. So how is it possible that that could happen? But remember that God is not bound by time.

God doesn't operate in the context of time and so 2000 years ago and today and 2000 years in the future with God is now. It's all now. God has no past and present and future.

God doesn't operate in the context of time and so God is able to do that in his economy. And so what he presents here and let's now get down to the more simple aspects of this having left you with something to chew on and that is that there is just a simple process that we have been placed in Christ we have been immersed in Christ. Now that is very important for a number of reasons and this is very central to the teaching of the New Testament.

It's essential first of all in order for us to be saved because the way we are because of our sinful nature because of the marks of sin upon us both physically and emotionally and spiritually and intellectually in every way sin has marked us and has scarred us and because of that we cannot enter into the presence of God we cannot ever be acceptable in the presence of God and so what God does is he makes provision for us to be placed inside of Christ and within Christ we become acceptable to God. So it's the same way as you take something that doesn't look very good and very acceptable and you wrap it up in a parcel and now that thing becomes it looks very pretty, it looks very acceptable because it's wrapped in something which is presentable. But the problem is still inside.

Now we know that our problem of sin God is dealing with that and we'll speak about that maybe a little bit in the future. But that's the only way we can be acceptable to God. Now we have an illustration in the Old Testament which illustrates this very clearly I believe and that is Jacob and Esau two brothers they were twins Esau was born first and Jacob was born a few minutes later because of the fact that Esau was born first he had the birthright and so all of the blessings and all of the inheritance of the father would go to Esau Jacob would get nothing that was the custom in those days.

Now Jacob does a deal with Esau he buys the birthright from Esau for a pot of stew but the day now comes when the blessing has to be had from their father and so they now go to or Isaac now says I've got to give the blessing and there's a problem now because now Jacob has legally bought this birthright but his father is now going to give it but his father will never give it to the younger son he's going to give it to the older son but his father was blind he probably had cataracts and so he couldn't see anymore and so what happens is Isaac says to Esau he says go out into the field and go and kill an animal he was a hunter and prepare me a meal and when I've eaten I will give you the blessing now Jacob's mother hears about

this and she says to Jacob now look what we'll do is we go and

kill two little kids two goats they kill the goats she prepares it just as Esau would have prepared it she takes the skins of those goats and she puts them on Jacob's arms because Jacob was a smooth man the scripture says he wasn't hairy whereas Esau was a hairy man she puts Esau's clothes on Jacob and Jacob now comes before his father his father can't see he hears the voice and he says but this is Jacob's voice and he says come let me embrace you and he embraces and he smells the clothes and he smells but this is Esau's clothing he feels their arms and he says no but this is this is this is he must have been very hairy for a goatskin to feel like what it was but so he says yeah this is this feels like Esau and he gives Jacob the blessing now many people say but Jacob was a crook then

because he impersonated his brother and on that basis he received the blessing but in fact what this teaches us is exactly the way in which we have to receive blessing from God if Jacob appeared before God and he said before his father Esau and he says how's it father Esau here I am I'm Jacob I want the blessing you can imagine what his father would say to him he'd say look I've got no blessing for you the blessing is not yours the blessing is your brother's and that's what happens if we stand before God and we say God I want blessings I want eternal life I want salvation I want heaven whatever it is and God says but you can't have it because it's not yours to have and so what have we got to do we've got to come in another way and I'm not suggesting that we come in a dishonest way because

this is the provision that God has made for us and so we come not in our own name if we have to come and say hey Lord here I am whatever my name is God says I don't know who you are you're a sinner you're dead as far as I'm concerned you don't count but we come in the name of our brother Jesus Christ and we say father and that's how we pray every time we pray we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because if we pray in our own name we'll get nothing but if we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus that makes it acceptable but we come not only in his name but we come closed with Jesus placed inside of Jesus and you'll see this teaching as it goes through in the New Testament we'll go through quite a few more verses now and so we come in and so when God looks at us and of course God is

not stupid God doesn't God knows that we're inside there but he finds his son acceptable he finds it acceptable that we come in the name of his son closed with his son with his son's clothing with his son's righteousness with Jesus' righteousness and obviously remember that animals have been killed and so blood had been shed in order for Jacob to have his arms covered and of course blood had been shed on the cross of Calvary for us so that we might be able to be acceptable before God and so when we come to God for blessing or for whatever it is we come not in our own name but we come in the name of our brother in the same way we come hidden in Christ and the father looks at his son and he says I'm pleased with my son and therefore I can give you a blessing and that's why works don't count

dead works remember the first principle because it doesn't matter what I do God's not interested in it there's only one who ever pleased him and that was his own son the Lord Jesus this is my beloved son he said on two occasions in whom I am well pleased here he him and so there's very briefly the principle that he establishes here now also before we move on from Romans 6 you'll see another important thing about this aspect of baptism and that is the comparison to the death and the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus now you'll see in water baptism the same picture and so the person would go into the water be buried and then come out on the other side it's a picture of a grave in the same way now if we go to 2 Corinthians chapter oh no sorry let's go to Galatians chapter 3 and

if you can't keep up that's fine but we have quite a few scriptures I want to show you quickly Galatians chapter 3 and verse 26 for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus now that's what we dealt with last week we come by faith we accept and we believe in the Lord Jesus verse 27 for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ isn't that what we've exactly been saying and so when I'm put into Christ I've put on Christ and so the father doesn't see me he sees Christ and then in verse 28 says there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither slave nor free there is neither male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ then you are Abraham's seed and he is according to the promise and so when God looks at me he doesn't see me as a

South African or white or black or Greek or whatever it is because he doesn't actually see me he's actually seeing the Lord Jesus Christ and that's why he says it doesn't matter whether you were of Greek origin or of Hebrew origin as far as God is concerned those things don't exist anymore because we are in Christ that is the way we come and so you'll see again here the issues of faith that we become sons in that process and that we are baptized into Christ and thereby put on Christ and so again that concept now right through the New Testament about 150 times in the New Testament you'll find this phrase in him or in Christ those two those two or sorry and the third one in me sometimes Jesus spoke about in me in John chapter 15 he says abide in me and so remaining in him so about 150 times

you find this concept so it's a very important concept in the New Testament I'm going to just take you to a few in fact quite a few but I believe it's important that we now see the consequences of this quite complicated thought that I've presented to you let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 5 few books back in fact one book back 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 17 therefore if anyone is in Christ you see the same the same concept if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation old things have passed away behold all things have become new it's a very well known verse and so again he's saying we're not in Christ I cease to exist I become something new I become someone new I become someone in Christ in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 another book back and verse 2 the second verse 1 Corinthians 1 verse 2

to the church of God which is at Corinth to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints with all who in every place called call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours and so just the concept here of sanctified or cleansed or purified in Christ and so how how am I cleansed I'm cleansed by the blood of Jesus but I'm cleansed as I'm in him and so again you see that all of my salvation is tied up in this concept that I'm placed in Christ and so I become a new creature in Christ I become sanctified or cleansed or washed or made holy in Christ 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 22 1 Corinthians 15 22 for as in Adam all die even in Christ all shall be made alive and so not only does this concept deal with the process of getting saved it deals with the process

of the end and he says that even as in Adam all died even so in Christ all shall be made alive so what is my guarantee of the resurrection because Christ lives and because he lives I will also live this is what Jesus said and so as as as we all died in Adam we will all live in Christ 2 Corinthians chapter 2 jumping around a bit but a few pages on 2 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14 now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ and through us diffuses the fragrance of his knowledge in every prayer 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 14 and so he leads us in triumph or in victory in Christ so where is our victory not in our spirituality or in our spiritual vitality or anything that we happen to be our victory lies in Christ and so God leads us in victory in Christ if I'm outside of

Christ I'm going to be weak I'm going to be defeated and this is the problem and so the devil can get to me if I'm outside of Christ but if I'm in Christ I'm strong because he has all power he has all authority and so

I'm absolutely victorious can be absolutely victorious if I remain within Christ and then in let's go to Galatians next book Galatians chapter 2 and verse 4 but this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth to steal out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage now this whole issue of Galatians speaks about spiritual bondage and law and legalism and people being manipulated and controlled by these things but he's saying that we have been made free in Christ it's not a restrictive thing to be placed

into Christ it is in fact a liberating thing and that goes back to the book of Romans which deals with the issue of the law and the way we've been set free from the law the next book Ephesians chapter 1 and this is this is a wonderful one as well Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 3 blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ so God has given us all blessings in Christ not outside not anywhere else and so again you'll see that everything we have is to be found in Him in the book of Colossians two books on Colossians chapter 2 and the book of Colossians in fact has many many times speaks about in Christ all the different things that we have in Him but Colossians chapter 2 and verse 6 as you therefore

have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him and so it doesn't mean that I cease to live that I'm because we spoke about me ceasing to live but Paul speaks about this and he says that I'm not living anymore but the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God and so although I cease to have my own identity I've now taken on Christ's identity as far as God is concerned but I still walk in Him I still am alive and I'm still progressing but within Christ not in myself anymore not in my own right or my own identity but within Christ I continue to walk and then also in Colossians chapter 2 and verse 10 few verses down he says and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power and so my completeness and my perfection now remember let's

just go back a little bit to the book of Hebrews chapter 6 and he says that we need to not lay this foundation once we've laid the foundation what we need to do is go on to perfection now that word perfection means completeness or maturity now how will we become mature how will we become complete as we become more in Christ because our completeness is to be found in Christ because it's not me any longer but it is Him and as He as my identity becomes less pronounced and His identity His personality His characteristics His way of responding His values as those things become mine so I become more complete alright and then the last one I'm not going to take you there but John chapter 15 verse 4 I've quoted already Jesus says abide in me remain in me and so it's not something which we must do

like the pickle is taken in the hot water and put in the hot water taken out again but in fact we should be baptised into Christ like the pickle is in the vinegar and as long as that pickle is in the vinegar that pickle is safe and it can last many years but if part of the pickle sticks out above the vinegar it's going to rot it's safe as long as it's inside there and so we need to remain in Christ we need to abide in Him and so there is that first aspect and we want to now move on to another aspect of being placed into Christ or being immersed or baptised into Christ so the first aspect is a theological thing which really deals with the way in which I get saved and the way that God sees me no longer seeing me with my frailties and my weaknesses and that's what gives us great confidence

so that when I come into God's presence and I need something from Him sometimes we feel but I can't ask because I failed and I did so many bad things and I but you know all of those things are dealt with because of the fact that God doesn't see my failures He sees the perfection of His Son the Lord Jesus and

His Son covers those things His blood washes them away and so we're able to come into His presence at any time with confidence and with boldness knowing that in fact He receives us because He receives His Son the Lord Jesus now let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and we're not going to jump around much more anymore we're just going to look at these two chapters in Corinthians and this is 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and so the second aspect now of being placed in Christ is that as far as

the practical reality of living in this world is concerned spiritually in God's reckoning I've been placed in Christ but we can't see that we don't really we cannot really that cannot really be made manifest in any way but there is a way in which it is manifest and that is that Christ is represented in the world by His church and so how do we see Jesus in fact we see Him through the church how do we hear Him we hear Him through the church in fact we should we should do now remember Jesus said to Paul on the road to Damascus Paul said but who are you Lord and Jesus says I am Paul whom you are persecuting but who was Paul persecuting He wasn't persecuting Jesus Jesus was in heaven so who was Paul persecuting He was persecuting the church but Jesus made no distinction between Himself and the

church He says if you are persecuting me He says the church He says you are persecuting me that is Jesus' statement to Paul and in fact Jesus says in Matthew He says that if you have done anything to the least of these my brethren speaking about giving someone a cup of water or visiting someone when they are not well or when they are in prison or when they have a need He says if you have done it to the least of these my brethren you have done it to me and so how do I relate to how do I bless God I bless Him by blessing the church how do I how do I how do I love God I love Him by loving the church and obviously we have a personal relationship with Him but we also have a relationship with Him through the church through the body now you will see this concept here in 1 Corinthians chapter 12

and verse 13 and He says for by one spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks whether slaves or free and we have all been made to drink into one spirit now you will see the same word here baptized the spirit does the work now we will introduce you to that concept next week but there are three aspects very quickly to baptism there is the person who is baptized the candidate there is the element into which is being baptized and there is the person who does the baptizing those are the three components or the three entities that are involved in the process now here you will see them very clearly here He says who does this work of baptizing us into Christ it is the spirit it is the Holy Spirit that does this it is not something I can do it is not something any church can

do or any minister can do this is something that God does by His spirit so verse 13 by one spirit we were all baptized into one body and so that is the element into which we are baptized the body of Christ in fact and then who is the candidate of course it is the believer the new believer here now you will see He speaks about one body what is this body well clearly if you read Corinthians 1 Corinthians 12 He now speaks not about Christ's physical body that was in the grave and that was raised again on the third day and is now ascended into heaven but He is speaking about His church now as I said the scripture draws very little distinction between the Lord Jesus and His church they are we are His body He is the head of that body and so now He says that by the spirit we are when we are

placed into Christ we were also placed into the church also placed into the church now here is a huge question what is that church and lots of people will argue and have lots of ideas as to what it is but let me just tell you that it is not a denomination it is not any particular individual church when He speaks here about the church when He speaks about the body of Christ when the scripture speaks about the body of Christ it speaks about the body of Christ or the church in two ways one there is the universal church now

we cannot see that that is a spiritual concept and that is made up of every believer every Christian who is born again not only living now but who lived in the last 2000 years and who will live until Christ comes all Christians who are born again form part of the universal

church whether we like that or not whether they in the denomination that we happen to be in or not is besides the point this is a spiritual reality the church consists not of all denominations but of all true believers the church does not consist of all local churches it consists of all true believers and so if we are truly born again we are part of that church this is a reality which God has brought about but then the church is secondly manifest in a very practical way and that is in the form of local congregations local congregations local fellowships and so God places us in a local fellowship where we can actually act and interact and relate to other people and now we need to just look at this very quickly in verse chapter 12 and verse 14 the next verse he says for in fact the body is

not one member but many and then he says he speaks about the foot and the hand and the eye all having different functions and so what is he saying he is saying that it is not just sufficient to say I am part of the universal church now I can sit back and somehow just relax but he now speaks about functioning and so how do I function unless I am part of a local church unless I am part of a local fellowship whatever name may be on the door whichever way they meet as long as it is on a biblical basis on a biblical principles and we are not going to go into all of those details but clearly what he is saying here is that the spirit has taken me put me into a body and I now need to function any kind of church for that matter God places us in the church through his spirit that happens when we

are born again and it is a work of God even beyond that I believe that God places us in local fellowships as it pleases him now that does not mean that you are there forever it does not mean that you cannot move from there when God indicates that you now need to move on maybe for whatever reasons the time has come for you to move from one fellowship to the other now we are not saying that we must every week be in another fellowship that kind of instability is clearly not what the scripture teaches but at the same time we cannot use the scripture and say because you are in this church or that church you have to be in that church for the rest of your life you may spiritually outgrow that situation God may have a mission field or a job for you in another place and the time may come for you

to move but in the meantime we need to have an assurance in our hearts and say this is where God wants me to be right now it may not be where he wants me to be in a years time or two years time but he wants me to be in this particular place or that particular place and I need to function and I need to be a living member in that church this is part of this whole process that God brings about and then in verse 27 in the same chapter he says now you are the body of Christ and members individually you are the body of Christ but members individually and God has appointed these in the church first apostles, second prophets, thirdly teachers after that miracles and gifts of healings and so on and so what is he saying?

He is saying that we have different functions, we have different gifts and we need to operate in those areas, we can't just be passengers many people change churches because they say I know but I am not getting anything out of it you are not in the church to get anything out of it you are in the church to give, to participate and to play your role and then in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 now all of this is sandwiched or sandwiches the chapter 13 which deals with the issue of love and says that it doesn't matter what we do it doesn't matter how we function in the church it doesn't matter how great our gifts are if we don't have love we are wasting our time but chapter 14 now and verse 23 it says therefore if the whole church comes together in one place and all speak with tongues and they come

in those who are uninformed or unbelievers will they not say that you are out of your mind now all I want to take out of there is the beginning of that verse when the whole church comes together in one place now you can see there when he speaks about the church he's not speaking about a denomination how can the whole denomination come together in one place that's impossible how can the universal church come together in one place it cannot happen that will happen in heaven we will be in one place together when we get to heaven but in the meantime he's saying obviously writing to the people in Corinth and he says when you guys come together the whole church in that local in that locality in that place and then in verse 26 how is it then brethren when you come together each of you has a

psalm has a teaching has a tongue has a revelation has an interpretation that all things to be done for edification or to build up and so again you see he's emphasizing the fact that when we come together everyone has a part to play everyone has a contribution to make it's not a situation where we come and there's one man and he teaches or he does the preaching and the rest of us sit down and we say that's very nice and we go home but in fact each one has a role to play and this is the concept that he's introducing here now we can't elaborate on that any further tonight but you can see the importance then of the fact that I need to be if I'm born again it's not even something that I need to do but if I'm born again I'm placed in Christ first of all that's theologically the truth and with

that comes tremendous blessings but secondly I'm actually placed into the church into the body of Christ which is Christ on earth in that sense is represented on earth by the church and in that situation I now need to find my proper place and I need to function as a member of that church Amen Let's just pray Father we thank you for this wonderful concept of being placed in Christ and Lord we know that it's a very difficult concept to deal with and to understand but we pray that you by your spirit would make these things clear and plain to us Lord as we go through these great blessings that you have given to us as we are placed in Christ but Lord also as we understand the great responsibilities which are ours as you have placed us in the body of Christ upon this earth and so Lord as we

have responsibilities in our local fellowships we pray Lord that we may be faithful in those things and Lord that we may be those members that are truly functioning in the way that you want us to function and truly members of the body of Christ as you have indeed paid a great price to bring us into this blessing we ask these things in Jesus name Amen

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