

Immersed Into Christ

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the concept of being baptized into Christ and the implications of being part of His body, both in the universal church and local assemblies. It emphasizes the transformative nature of salvation, where believers are placed in Christ and called to abide in Him to experience the fullness of life and blessings. The teaching explores the theological and practical aspects of being in Christ, highlighting the need to be actively engaged in a local church while being part of the universal body of Christ.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 2:10, John 15:4, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Baptism into Christ", "The Body of Christ"

Description

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Transcript

All right, we're in Hebrews chapter 6. Hebrews chapter 6 and we'll read verses 1 through 8. Hebrews chapter 6, reading verses 1 through 8. 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, for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God.

But if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near being cursed, whose end is to be burnt. So we're in verse 2, so we're dealing with those foundational principles, milk of the doctrine of Christ or the foundation. And verse 2, the first one, the doctrine of baptisms.

And you'll see that it is baptisms in the plural, so that tells us that there is more than one baptism. And of course to some people that's news, because they think there's only one baptism, which is water baptism, but clearly there is more than one. In fact we'll find out that there are four different baptisms.

Now we need to speak about this word baptism, of course, because it is a very crucial word to understanding any of the baptisms, but it is also very important to understand how we read the Bible. And the history of the word, the Greek word is baptizo, from which you can clearly hear we get the word baptize, baptizo, baptize. The word literally means to dip or to submerge or to immerse or to dunk or to plunge.

Any of those words will do. It is a secular word. We've spoken about this before.

We spoke about this, in fact, last week when we dealt with the issue of faith. Faith, the word faith, Greek word for faith, pistos, is not a theological or a religious word. It's simply a word which means trust or confidence.

And the same with the word baptizo, is not a religious term. Now here's where we have the problem, because when we use the word baptize in English, it is always a religious term. You never use it outside of the context of Christianity primarily, although Judaism has its forms of baptism as well.

But it is never used in the world for anything. And so the problem now is that we have this religious term which never was a religious term. The way the word came about in English is a real problem.

Wycliffe was the first translator to translate the Bible into English. And he operated, we've got to understand the context in which he functioned, and that was in the context of the Anglican or the Episcopalian Church. When he came to this word, he would have to... there's only one way to translate that word, well, all of the options I gave you.

But there was no such word as baptize when he did the translation. So the way he would have to translate the word is simply the word immerse or dip. One of those two would probably be the best.

The problem was that the church that he was part of did not immerse. Obviously we understand immerse means to put under, to put inside of, and maybe that's a better word, to put inside. The Anglican Church sprinkles babies.

And so if he translated the word the way it should have been translated, then that would have created a massive problem in the church, because it would then expose the church for doing what it should not be doing, or not doing what it should be doing. And so to be safe, what he did is he created a new word. And he simply took the Greek word and he Anglicized it, made it an English word.

And so it changed baptizo to baptize. And then subsequent translators had the same problem. The King James Version, which is the basically the cornerstone on which most modern translations are based, operated in the same environment.

When the translators in 1611 translated the King James Version, they had clear instructions from King James, who was the King of England and of Scotland at the time, to not upset the church, not to do anything that would contradict what the church was doing. And so again, they had to make a decision. Are we going to translate this word the way it should be translated, or are we going to be careful and not upset the king and not upset the church? There are other words that had the same problem, the word bishop

amongst others.

And so they had bishops. The word bishop comes from the word episkopos, and so they again used that word simply to match what they were doing. So you can see that in fact what they were doing in some of these instances was adapting the Word of God to what their practice is.

And of course we do exactly the same thing today. Many Christians change the Word of God in order to suit their own practice, and their own sin, or their own disobedience, or whatever it is. And so there are all sorts of new theologies, and there are all sorts of new translations.

Translations that are gender-neutral, for instance, because people don't like the idea that God reveals himself as the Father. And so they change the translations to suit their own ideas. All right, so now getting back to the word then.

The word then simply means to immerse. In Afrikaans, it creates the translators for some reason translated it correctly. Now, South Africa is predominantly a reformed environment, and when the translation, the first translation, was done in 1953, the Dutch Reformed Church was the state church.

And they also sprinkle babies. But when they translated the word, they translated it dup, which means you can hear from dip. So they translated it correctly.

So when you speak to someone who is in one of those churches, and they speak to you about baptism, it becomes a lot easier, because the word they have is not a special word that sort of covers all the bases. It is a word that is very, very specific. So one of the arguments that we use in talking about these things is that we have a habit of, we have a kind of a cookie, which is very hard, called a rusk, and part of our tradition.

And you dip it in the coffee, and it soaks, and it gets hard, and it gets soft in the coffee, and you you eat it that way. And so we talk about dipping your rusk in the coffee. And so one of the arguments that we use, we say you don't take the rusk, and then you take a few drops of coffee, and you dip it, or you sprinkle it on the rusk.

The rusk is baptized in the coffee. That's the, that's the language. All right, so the word means to immerse.

Now, the problem is that because it has this religious connotation, and it is only seen to be in the context of water baptism, we make all sorts of mistakes in reading the New Testament. So whenever we read the word baptized, we immediately say, this is water baptism. And in fact, there are commentators that make the same mistake, simply because every time they see the word, they say, oh, this is water baptism.

If you translate it, and we're going to do a little exercise a little later on, and you'll see that it changes the entire meaning of a text if you translate it correctly. So the first baptism that we're going to speak about this evening, because of the sequence in which it happens, is baptism into Christ. Baptism into Christ.

And so in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, for by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. I'm going to come back to this verse a little later on. But what he says, for by one spirit we are all immersed into one body.

Now, first of all, when you have these baptisms, you have to ask a few questions. When you find the word baptism, you have to ask a few questions. The first question you need to ask is, what is the medium? And

what I mean by that is, what is it that the person is being baptized into? And of course the verse tells us, for by one spirit were you all baptized into one body.

Not into water, but into a body. I'm going to come back to that in a half an hour or so. The second question we must ask is, who is the baptizer? And these things help to clarify what we're dealing with.

So when someone is baptized in water, what is the medium? It is water. Who is the baptizer? Another Christian. Maybe a leader in the church, or just another Christian.

Doesn't have to be a pastor. But another believer baptizes them. Now here you can see that the medium is not water, but a body, and the baptizer is the Holy Spirit, and not a Christian.

So this cannot be water baptism. This must be something else. As I said, we're going to come back to that verse.

In Galatians chapter 3 verse 26, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We spoke about this last week. We're saved by faith.

For as many as of you as were immersed into Christ, baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. So again, you can see that he is talking here not about being put in water, but being put into Christ. Are we good, Hatcher? We're put into Christ.

We'll see how this plays out in a moment. But here's one of the... this is the first thing that happens when I get saved, is I get put into Christ. And that may not make a lot of sense to you, but I trust that as we go on it will make more more sense.

So he speaks about being put into Christ, and putting on Christ. So two expressions about the same thing. You're put into him, and you put him on.

So it's no longer me, and we're going to conclude with this verse from Galatians, it's no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me. And so I cease to exist, he begins to exist. And obviously you say, well I still live.

Yeah, I live in him. I don't live in myself. Let me make this a little easier before we move on.

You remember that Jacob bought the birthright from his brother Esau for a pot of stew. We touched on that on Sunday. And then Jacob goes to his father, who is blind, has cataracts, and he says, give me the blessing.

Now the father wouldn't have given him the blessing, because the blessing belonged to Esau, but Esau had legitimately sold it. God honored that contract that they'd entered into when he sold his birthright for a pot of stew. And so obviously Jacob can't come to his father and say, look, here's the deal.

This is how it worked. Because his father wouldn't accept that, but God did. So Jacob now has to get his father's sign off on the inheritance.

And so he comes, and he doesn't come to his father and say, hey dad, here I am. I'm Jacob. I'm the second born, and I've come for the firstborn blessing.

Of course he wouldn't get that. So how does he come? He comes in his brother. He comes in his brother's name.

He says, I am Esau. He is covered with his brother's clothing, because his father feels the roughness of the clothing, smells the field on the clothing. He's covered by the skins of the animals and the blood on the inside of those skins, still on his arms.

And so he is no longer Jacob, but he's appearing as Esau, and he receives the blessing. The same thing applies to us. And if you say, well, Jacob was a crook, then every one of us is a crook.

Because if you come to God and you say, hey God, here I am. I'm Joe Soap, and you better bless me. God says, I don't know, you know, I don't know who you are.

I'm not interested. But when I come, I say, Lord, I'm coming in my brother's name, in Jesus' name. I am coming clothed in his righteousness.

It's not me and my righteousness. It's not who I am, what I've done. It's what Jesus has done.

The Father blesses us. And so I must be in him to receive anything from the Father. All right, so Galatians 3.27, for as many of us were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, 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.

So here's the key, or the heart, to this whole racial problem that people have, and that Christians have. We, in being put into Christ, lose our own identity. And as we've said many times before, we're no longer Americans or Russians or Ukrainians.

We are in Christ. And God is not interested in my ethnicity. He's interested only in one thing, and that is, am I in Christ? And the same applies to male and female.

Now we understand that when we live here on earth, that there are roles in which we function within the context of family, in the context of the church, and there definitely are ethnicities. As we move around, we're very aware of those things. But the moment we come into the church, it's no longer me.

And it's not just my ethnicity, it's not just my gender, it's my social standing. Those who were freemen were of a higher social class than those who were slaves. Unfortunately, in churches we still have ethnic prejudice and discrimination.

We have class discrimination in most churches. And so we lose that. We have no educational differences.

We have no differences. We are one in Christ. And that's how God sees us, and that is how we ought to see one another.

We don't see one another against our ethnic or our educational or our class or our financial status. We see one another as those who are in Christ. And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs, according to the promise.

Romans chapter 6, verse 3. And I'm going to stand still here for a little while, because this is where the whole process is explained to us, and yet at the same time, this is where this whole thing goes wrong. Because the moment people come to Romans chapter 6, I don't know how many messages and studies I've heard on Romans chapter 6 teaching on water baptism. Romans chapter 6 does not deal with water

baptism, and I'll show it to you in a moment.

So let's read the verses, and then I'll go back and we'll unpack them. Romans 6, verse 3, and I think I'm going to go through verse 6. Or do you not know that as many of us 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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

All right, now let's read those verses again, but using the right word. Do you not know that as many of us as were placed into Christ, immersed into Christ Jesus, were immersed or placed into his death? Can you see the different meaning? Therefore we 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 we also should walk in newness of life. So again, go back to verse 3. Do you not know that as many of us as were immersed into Christ—not water, but into Christ? You see, I mean, it just beats me that people can take a verse—and we're talking about educated people who've been trained in theology—can take a verse, and when it speaks about being baptized into Christ, now suddenly it becomes baptized into water.

It's not what it's dealing with. And in the process, not only do you say, well, it's just a small mistake. No, it destroys the whole meaning of this passage, because this explains the process of salvation.

So now stick with me, because it's a little complex. He says, do you not know that as many of us as were immersed or placed into Christ were placed into his death? In other words, we spoke earlier about the fact that when I come to God now as a Christian, I come not in myself, but I come in Jesus. But it goes right back to my salvation.

On what basis am I born again? Remember, Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3, you must be born again. And he says, well, how can I be born a second time? Well, you would have two lives if you were born a second time. The fact is that we don't have two lives.

The fact is the process of salvation is that I get to die, the old me gets to die, that old me who was under the sentence of God's wrath, the sentence of death because of my sin, is dead. And the new person is raised, and I'm speaking spiritually, of course, to be a new creature. So Corinthians says then that the old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new.

How did that happen? It happened because I died and I was raised a new person. When did that happen? It happened 2,000 years ago. And so this is what he's explaining.

So he's saying we were put into his—so when Jesus died at the cross, we were participants in his death, not just in the sense that we were those who accused him, but in the sense that we were already in God's foreknowledge in Christ. And so we died. When Christ rose, we were in Christ, and we rose in a new creature.

So this is what he's going to deal with now. Verse 4, therefore, we were buried with him through immersion into death. In other words, I ceased to exist, the old me ceased to exist, when I died with Christ.

Now I know this creates a problem, because he said, well, he died 2,000 years ago, and I was only born the other day. But remember that time is no problem with God. Yesterday and today and tomorrow is all

now with him.

Two million years ago is now with God. Two million years in the future is still now with God. God does not have this concept.

So 2,000 years ago and now, in God's understanding, those things just come together, because there is no sense of time. So we 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 we also should walk in newness of life. And so we speak so glibly about being born again.

But being born again, there's clearly more to it than that, and that's what we find in this verse. So when I was born again, the old me stopped living, because I was died with Christ, in Christ. I was raised in Christ, and now I walk in newness of life.

Verse 5, for if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, so we were made one with him in his death. You can't be put into him and be separate from him. When we were put into him, we were made one with him in his death.

Certainly we also shall be in his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him. Now there's a verse that most of us know, but the meaning of the verse hopefully is coming clear. So it says, I was crucified with him, it means that I was put into him.

And so you see, in a sense, we all became sinners in Adam. We're going to see this concept later on in the book of Hebrews, when it speaks about Abraham's descendants paying tithes to Melchizedek. Well, how did Abraham's descendants pay tithes to Melchizedek? Well, because they were in his loins when he paid tithes.

So when Adam sinned, we were in Adam's DNA, if you will. We were in his loins, and out of Adam we would come. So when Adam sinned, we were in Adam, in that sense.

He represents us all, and so he sins, and therefore we become guilty because of him. And of course, this is the whole process that Jesus now reverses at the cross. And the Scripture deals with this, and this gets very, very complicated, but it deals with this, that as in Adam we all sinned, as in Christ we are all justified.

So the whole process is reversed. We were in Adam, and we became sinners. We were put in Christ, we were made righteous.

So you can see how that God reverses that whole process. So knowing this then, our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. All right, now he goes on, and he says that this applies to the law.

How can we get away from the law? Well, remember the principle was that law cannot die, that heaven and earth will pass away, but his law will endure, and his words endure forever. So the law could not be done away with. So how do we get out from under the law? And then he uses the example of marriage.

How does someone get out of a marriage? Well, technically through death. At the end of the day, if you boil it all down, there's only one way for a divorce to happen, and that is through death. And I'm not going to get into all the variations and stuff there.

So if someone is married to someone else, let's say the wife dies, is the man now free to remarry? Yeah, because she died. But now we were married to the law. So could we just leave the law, because God put us under the law, can we just leave the law and say, well, I'm no longer going to be under law, I'm going to be under grace? And I'm just taking huge shortcuts here, but can we do that? No, we can't do that.

So Paul then uses the example. He said, well, if the wife doesn't die, cannot die, how then is that man going to get out of that marriage? If he dies, and if he's raised, well, he's dead. He died, that marriage is gone.

Now he comes back to life again. And that's the analogy he's using. And obviously, you know, in practice, it's not never going to happen that way.

But in terms of our relationship with the law, that's exactly what happened. The law couldn't die. We were married to the law.

Law couldn't die. So we get to die. And having died, as Paul is explaining here, and having been raised a new creature, old things are passed away, everything has become new.

I'm now free from my old marriage to the law. And I'm free to marry someone else. And who do I marry now? Christ.

And so I'm no longer married to the taskmaster of the law, I'm married to the lover, and I say this respectfully, of Jesus Christ. And so there's the process. So the old man dies, because we die in Christ.

We get raised to walk in newness of life, and everything changes. Now there's a lot more detail to that, but let's move on. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17, I've just quoted that.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ—notice, in Christ. Now, we say, well, you know, this idea of being put into Christ is an obscure thing. And maybe this is the first time you've heard it.

I've taught on this here before, but maybe there are some, and certainly some who are watching online, who are saying, well, you know, we've never heard of this idea of being baptized into, being put into Christ. Well, the words in Christ, or in him, appear a hundred and fifty times in the New Testament. A hundred and fifty times.

The whole basis of our relationship with God is based on the fact that we are in Christ. So this is not an obscure thing. This is not an esoteric doctrine.

This is something that is part of the whole of the New Testament. I'm going to look at a few of these verses quickly as we just scroll through them. So, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old King James says, a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 2, To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

So, the previous verse said everything is new in Christ. Here he says we are sanctified, we are cleansed in Christ. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 22, For as in Adam, I referenced this verse earlier, as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive.

2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. We sing that hymn, victory in Jesus. We don't have victory in ourselves.

We don't have victory apart from him. We only have victory when we're in Jesus. And so, he leads us in triumph in Christ.

Galatians 2, verse 4, And this occurred because of false brethren secretly bringing in who came in by stealth to spy out your liberty which you have in Christ. We have freedom. We have liberty in Christ.

If you're outside of Christ, you have no freedom. You're under bondage, under the bondage of sin. But in Christ, we have freedom and we have liberty.

Ephesians 1, verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. So in him we have all spiritual blessings. And you can see as we go through Colossians 2, verse 6, As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.

Don't walk in the world. Don't walk in the flesh. These are terms that we've heard so many times.

Walk in Christ. Paul speaks in a different context, but in the book of Acts he says, in him we live and move and have our being. So I should never be outside of Christ.

So when I get born again, I get put into Christ. I get immersed into him. Now unlike water baptism, water baptism, you get put in the water and you get brought out again.

And it obviously symbolizes some other things. But in Christ, we don't get put into Christ and now we come out again. We're in him and then we stay.

We ought to stay there. Unfortunately many don't. But you ought to stay there and in him we move, we live, we have our existence in him, not apart from him anymore.

This is a concept again that many Christians don't want to understand because they feel they still have their own life to live. They can do their own thing. But when we understand that when I got saved, I got put into Christ and I have no life outside of him, it's like a, you know, maybe not a good analogy, but it's like a fish in a fish bowl.

As long as that fish stays inside of that bowl, it has life, it can move around, it can live. But if the fish says, I'm tired of this little bowl, I want out, it's going to die. And obviously being in Christ is not restrictive in that sense, because Christ is much bigger than a fishbowl.

But in him, we have life, we have our existence, we have freedom, we have all of these things. Outside of him, we have nothing. All right, Colossians 2.10, and you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power.

So there's that word complete. We see that in the book of Hebrews. We can see this again in the next verse when we finally get there, the word perfect or complete.

It's the same word. How do I get to be perfect or mature or complete in Christ? I'll never find it outside of him. John 15 verse 4, and this is why this is so important.

Abide in me. And I'm not going to complicate it further with the next part, and you and I in you. So it's me in him and him in me.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. The analogy of the fish and the fishbowl. The fish cannot live outside of the fishbowl.

The branch cannot exist, cannot live outside of the tree. It needs to be part of the tree so that it can receive its nutrition and its life from the root. And so we need to remain in him.

So we are put in him at our salvation, but clearly the problem is that we don't all stay in him. We get out of him, and that's when we find ourselves in all sorts of trouble. All right.

Now, back to 1 Corinthians 12, 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized or immersed into one body. So there are different aspects or dimensions to being in Christ.

The one is the theoretical, theological aspect that we've just spoken about, the judicial aspect, the legal aspect. God doesn't see me and my sin. He sees Jesus and his righteousness.

But then there is another level, and that is that the church is his body. He is the head. We are the body.

And we cannot be put into Christ and not be part of his body. And, of course, this is a real problem, because many people say, well, I like Jesus, but I don't like the church so much. And I understand that problem.

But you can't be part of him and not be part of the church, because the church is his body. And so in Corinthians, and you need to pay attention to the chapter, 1 Corinthians chapter 12 is the chapter that deals with the church. So when he says we were baptized into one body, it is not just into Christ, but it is the local assembly, or the church universal.

I'm going to come back to that in a second. So 1 Corinthians 12 speaks about the human body as being an analogy of the body of Christ. So we can't all be an ear.

There has to be an eye, and there has to be a hand, and there has to be a foot. And so God puts us into that body, and we have different roles, different functions that we play in the context of that body. So when he says, then, this body is the church, and you need to go home and read 1 Corinthians 12, and you'll get it.

You'll clearly see that he is speaking about the church. When we speak about the church, the church has two manifestations, if you will. The first is what we call the church universal.

The Apostles' Creed speaks about the holy Catholic church, and the word Catholic there does not mean Roman Catholic. The word Catholic means universal. So we are part of the universal church, and that is not just those Christians who are alive now.

That includes all Christians who have ever lived and will ever live in the future. That whole thousands, millions, I don't know, millions probably, is the universal church, the Bride of Christ. Remember, when he comes, we're going to have the marriage of the Lamb, and it's not going to be just those who are alive at that time.

It's going to be all Christians of time who are going to be part of the Bride of Christ. So when I get saved, I get put into Jesus. But at the same time, I become a member of the universal church, of the worldwide church—not the worldwide church of God that used to be in Pasadena.

So we become part, we get put into the church. You don't have to take up membership to become part of the universal church. The day you're born again, you're automatically part of that universal church.

But the church also manifests itself in the form of local assemblies or congregations. Now, we are not the church here in Sun Valley. We are part of the church in a sense.

We are a church. And if you look at 1 Corinthians chapter 12, you'll see that he is talking about a local assembly where members relate to one another. We are part of the universal church, but we cannot relate to the universal church.

There are other Christians probably in the street, but we don't know them. We have no relationship with them. There are other Christians who meet in the Reformed church across the football field there.

We don't know them. They do their own thing. They have their own ideas of doctrine and so on, and that's fine.

So there's a church in Kiev, in the Ukraine. There is a church in Moscow, or churches—there are local churches in those places. We have no relationship with them.

There's no practical being the ear and them being the foot. That can only happen in the context of the local assembly. And so both of these things are true.

There are those who have a cultic approach to these things and want to say that God, when you get saved, He puts you into a local assembly and you can never leave this church. That's not true. God can move us.

We need to be sure that God has moved us. You can't just move yourself, but if God is moving you, then you need to move with God. But to say that there is no such thing as a universal church is heresy.

And so you can go right through the New Testament, look at every place where the word church is used, and I've done this exercise, and say, well, is this local or is this universal? And you'll find roughly half of the references are to universal and half of them are to local. So we're both of those things. Now, of course, the problem is that many Christians today say, I don't want to be part of a local assembly because I can't find one that suits my preferences, or whatever excuse, and obviously some have a real, a genuine case.

But the fact is that as far as possible, we need to be part of a local assembly where we can function, where we can exercise the gift that God has given to us, and that we can receive the blessing of others. So let's look very quickly then through some of these verses, 1 Corinthians 12, 18, but now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just as He pleases. So notice, God puts us in the body, and He puts us as it pleases Him.

When they built this wall, the bricks didn't get to say, well, I don't want to be down there, I want to be up here. They get to put where the mason put them. And when God puts the church together, the local church together, He puts the church together as He pleases, and we don't get to say, well, I don't want this job, I want another job, and Paul deals with us in 1 Corinthians, I don't want to be the eye, I want to be the

ear.

You don't get those choices. God does it as He pleases. Verse 27, now, you are the body of Christ and members individually.

Remember, He's speaking here about the local church. We are the body of Christ, not the only body of Christ, but we are the body of Christ that meet in this particular place, and we are members. So not one of us is the body of Christ.

We are members of that body. Remember, the word members here doesn't mean members in the same way as you're a member of the social club. This means members in the sense of arms and body parts.

I don't know what another word would be for that. So my body has many members, fingers and hands and toes and ears and eyes and those things. That's what he's referring to there.

Verse 28, and God has appointed these in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. So God puts the church together. Galatians 2.20, and we're done.

I've been crucified with Christ. Here's where this whole teaching gets summed up. I've been crucified with Christ, in Christ, if you will.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. So everything begins then with repentance and faith.

Those are the things that I do, in a sense. This step is what God does. God now takes me and puts me in Christ and puts me into the body of Christ, both the universal and the local.

And that is baptism into Christ or baptism—some people call it baptism into the body of Christ. I don't like that expression because that's only part of the deal. He places us in Christ, and Christ has a earthly manifestation, if you will, in the sense of his local church.

And he puts us in the local church, and he puts us in the universal church. Father, we thank you for this great work of salvation that you've done in saving us. Lord, these things seem to be a little complicated sometimes, and Lord, at other times we seem to oversimplify things.

But Lord, we thank you for the wonderful complexity of what you've done, how you've undone what was done in Adam, and you've undone all of our past and of our sin and of our failure. And you've made us new creatures, Lord, not just theoretically but in practice. And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to rejoice in this great work that you've done, that you didn't save us and leave us as we were, but you've transformed us and placed us in Christ.

And as long as we abide in him, we have all of these blessings and privileges that you've destined for us. And so, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to be those who abide in you, remain in you, and not those who want to walk around on our own strength and our own personality and our own ability. But Lord, we may be those who are walking, moving, and having our existence in Christ alone.

Lord, forgive us for thinking we can survive outside of you. But Lord, that we may come to a point of understanding that there is no life outside of Jesus. And Lord, that we may be those who are truly abiding

in him, not just sometimes but 24-7, every second of the day.

Lord, when we wake up in the night, that we may be found in Christ. When we wake up in the morning, that we may be found in Christ. When we're busy at our jobs, Lord, that we may be in Christ.

Lord, when we come to worship, that we may be in Christ. Make these things real, I pray, in Jesus' name. Go with us now, Lord.

Keep us and protect us. Bring us together again safely on Sunday, we pray, in Jesus' name.

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