

37 - Body Ministry and Relationships in the Church

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey emphasizes the importance of exercising spiritual gifts with humility and love within the church community.

Duration: 9:39

Scripture: Romans 12:9-18

Topics: "Body Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of genuine love and honesty in our relationships with others. He highlights the various gifts that the Holy Spirit has given us and encourages us to use them with enthusiasm and without holding back. The speaker also emphasizes the need to resist evil and cling to what is good, while showing kindness and devotion to one another. He reminds us to prioritize others and be humble, not considering ourselves to be wise. Additionally, the speaker encourages generosity, hospitality, and blessing those who persecute us. The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity, empathy, and prayer in our relationships with one another.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Turri back again sharing more about body ministry and our relationships to each other in the Church. Last week I spoke from 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. Tonight I would like to continue in this vein, but looking at Romans chapter 12. This passage touches on different gifts, just as 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 do, but speaks more about our attitudes and behavior towards one another.

It is all part and parcel of the same thing. In order to be effective members of the body of Christ, we must exercise the gifts that God gives us and we must do it in the way that He desires. Let's look at our passage Romans 12 verses 3 to 18.

For I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one member is one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of

faith, or ministry, let us wait on our ministering, or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth with diligence, he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation, abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. First a brief comment on verse six. Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.

Some might take this to mean that we can prophesy more if we have more faith. That's not what it means. Rather it means to speak the word that the Holy Spirit gives based on what he has shown, on that portion of the faith that he has revealed, and not based on theology or teaching that comes through some other means.

In other words, prophecy is not teaching or instruction which we can learn ourselves through study. It is a word spoken by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. What is important for our discussion tonight are the passages that emphasize that though we are many and have many different gifts, we are to function as one body.

These verses also give very direct instruction on how we are to function as one. Let's start by looking at verse three. Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Soberly means with clear thinking. We are to evaluate ourselves as objectively as possible. What gifts, what knowledge, what faith has God given me? Am I exercising that according to his will? Am I helping others or hindering them? There are two things that make this particularly difficult for us, and Paul addresses both.

The first is our natural tendency to think we are more important than we really are. After all, each of us is the most important person in our frame of reference, right? Well, no. God is the most important, and there are others as well.

But to be honest, we do tend to think of ourselves that way. At least I do. So that's the first issue.

The second one comes from everything that we do, say, and think to counter the first tendency. That is the tendency to underrate ourselves, to put ourselves down, to act modest. Usually this is just as much a false perception as the first.

This is what requires soberness of perception. So we start by being honest about ourselves. The passage then goes on to discuss the different gifts that the Holy Spirit has apportioned to us and how we are to exercise them, basically with enthusiasm and to the full, not holding back.

Then we get to verse 9. Let love be without dissimulation or without hypocrisy. In other words, as you exercise the gifts, make sure that everything you do is done from love and in love, love that is genuine, not for show. The verse continues, abhor that which is evil, cleave or cling to that which is good.

We are so often and so thoroughly attracted to that which is evil and tend to let the good slide away. This is the way our fallen human nature operates. We need to be reminded to resist evil and hold on to what is good.

Verse 10 reads, be kindly affectioned or devoted one to another with brotherly love, in honor, preferring one another. In all we do, we are to love one another, be devoted to one another, and what is perhaps the hardest, give preference to one another in honor. Oh, we pretend to do this all the time, always gesturing to others to go before us, demurring, saying that we're not worthy and so forth.

The truth really is that most of us think we're pretty special and should really be honored first, especially as we get older like me. When you are older, a pastor, well respected, and especially a foreigner in Korea, it is very difficult to remember that the Lord doesn't count any of that at all. I constantly stand in great risk of thinking too much of myself and have to remember that except for God's amazing work, I am absolutely nothing.

Of course, a good honest wife is a great protection against this sort of thing. Anyway, we're called to prefer each other. If we truly love the other, this is not that difficult.

Paul goes on in the rest of the passage to lay out what we all know is the best way to behave towards each other and towards those outside the fellowship. He also challenges us to be sincere and wholehearted in all that we do. Listen to these words from verses 11 to 18 once again.

Not slothful in business. Hey, don't be lazy, especially at work. Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, that is devoted to prayer, distributing to the necessity of saints, be generous with what you own, given to hospitality.

God loves hospitality. It's one of the chief virtues in the Old Testament. Bless them which persecute you.

Bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another.

Think of everyone the same way. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. In other words, don't be proud or haughty, but make friends with the ordinary guy.

Be not wise in your own conceits. Don't consider yourself to be wise. After all, any wisdom you have really isn't yours at all.

It's from the Lord. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If it be possible, as much as in Uliath, live peaceably with all men. This is a pretty good prescription for a Christian life. Remember, all of this is given in the context of serving, of ministering within the body of Christ, the church.

So whether you are an ordained clergyman or just an ordinary person, you are a minister of Jesus Christ in his church and you are to live as such. Not proud and selfish, but lovingly and humbly. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church really were like that? It can be and it needs to be.

You can do your part by praying and by ministering. I hope you do. Good night.

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