

The Body

by Norman Meeten

The sermon emphasizes the profound truth that all believers are united as the body of Christ, called to live in harmony and embrace diversity through the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:07:48

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 4:14, Colossians 2:19

Topics: "Body Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God has the power to bring order and restoration to every aspect of our lives, including our spirits, souls, bodies, circumstances, and even our churches. The purpose of having a physical body is for God to express His life through us. The preacher laments that the church has lost its voice in the world, as there are now many competing voices vying for people's attention. He highlights the importance of the power of a single glance or look from Jesus, which can have a profound impact on a person's life. The preacher encourages believers to strive to emulate Jesus and to believe that they can become like Him.

Transcript

Perhaps as my tool this morning is a training ground for the mission field, a desk for me in the tropics. But you will need twenty degrees to bring it anywhere up near to the temperature of India at the moment. So if you think that you're hot, in India they were probably putting their sweaters on if it was this cold.

Amen. Praise the Lord, it's lovely to be together in his presence, to worship him and love him, to let our hearts go free. To acknowledge that he's here in the midst of us, he's no longer remote and distant.

But by the power of his spirit he's come and made his abode in our hearts. For all that was once external, a long way off, is now nigh unto us. A condition of which we have just demonstrated as we participated in the breaking of bread.

Not just some casual, repetitive habit that we got into, but a conscious realisation and acknowledgement of the presence of the Lord in the midst of his people. And not just our sentiments that we read about in the New Testament, they are truth. It's become the very substance of our lives.

Praise God. This morning I'd like you to turn with me into the first epistle to the Corinthians, and in the chapter that follows, the one from which George referred to, which was chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, and

he refers to the breaking of bread. Of course in chapter 10 we also read about the breaking of bread where it makes it very intimate, reminding us that we are that body, we are that bread that is broken.

Glory be to his name. And in the eleventh chapter it talks about discerning the Lord's body, and the failure to do that, beloved, can have terrible implications, and may be the explanation to many of the problems that exist in the church and in the lives of individuals. Again, it can be a repetition on a Sunday morning as these words are often read at the breaking of bread, associated with the failure to realise what it's really all about.

Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he wasn't just passing on his own thoughts about the matter. I want to read to you in chapter 12 now, reading from verse 12. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body being many, are one body, so also Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the eye? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were an eye, where were the smelling? But now hath God set members, every one of them in the body, as it had pleased him.

And if they were all one member, where were the bodies? But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need, but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.

That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. For one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondary prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, government, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

Amen. I was reading this passage of Chichester just a few days ago, and this phrase came home to my heart in a new and fresh and vibrant way. Verse 27, you are the body of Christ.

You are the body of Christ. Of course, that's a mystery. The apostle uses many analogies to try and do justice in explaining the nature of the church of Jesus Christ and talks of it as a building in which God comes to live.

You'll read that at the end of the second chapter of the Ephesian Epistle. It's not a building made with stones, wood, and horses, but a building made up of you and me, Peter says, living stones. I said last night that Peter got many things wrong in the beginning, but eventually the Spirit of God sorted them out,

and he got them so wonderfully right when he wrote his first epistle, where he speaks of us as a spiritual house.

Amen. Amen. We're God's building.

Paul also speaks of the church as the bride of Christ. Hallelujah. A wonderful analogy.

The very perfection of the revelation of our union and oneness with him. They married to Christ. The church is a family.

The outworking of the bridal relationship, making it a community. Here he speaks of the church as a body. And perhaps the analogy of the body outstrips all the rest.

Amen. You might opt for the building. If you're all family-orientated, you will go in for the family.

But really it is the body, the analogy of the body of Christ, that is the most magnificent. Because it's in the body of Christ, beloved, the two become one. Even in the concept of the bride and the bridegroom.

Because they are two persons, whereas in the illustration of the body, it's all one. Amen. Amen.

It's not an organization, it's not a denomination. Bless the Lord. It's a living organism.

It has a degree of organization. Your physical anatomy has a degree of organization. It would be chaotic if it hadn't.

There would be no coordination. Amen. I once saw a man who had lost all sense of coordination in his body.

Something had gone wrong in his head. His arm would shoot out here and his leg would shoot out here. He was a most pitiful sight.

The wonderful thing was that God came in to be and put what was wrong right and got him all back into order. Blessed be his name. God can do those things.

He can do them in the realm of our spirit. He can do them in the realm of our soul. He can do them in the realm of our body.

He can do them in the realm of our circumstances, the environment which we find ourselves. He can do those sort of things in the realms of our churches. Amen.

Because he wants to bring us into the reality of the truth, beloved, that is revealed in these wonderful analogies in Scripture. So often we read them and we see them just as pictures, just as stories. Like we read the parables and we fail to see, beloved, the implication or allow the Spirit to make application of those wonderful revelations to our own heart and being.

You are the body of Christ. You will hear me say that again and again and again this morning, beloved, because I want by the Spirit of God for that to penetrate into our hearts, bring us into the truth of what that statement is all about. It sounds so simple and yet it is so profound.

You are the body of Christ. Some of you look perplexed. You say, well that's just a very common sense statement.

Paul wrote it. It's more than that, beloved. It's a revelation from heaven, came under the inspiration of the Spirit, has implications without working, that few of us have yet discovered and explored and are living in the good of.

You are the body of Christ. Go back into verse 13. It says, For by one Spirit are you all baptized into one body, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Now where it says, by one Spirit, literally translates, beloved, that means in the power of one Spirit. For in the power of one Spirit are we all baptized into the body of Christ, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. All barriers down, all divisions annihilated.

That great middle wall of perdition, beloved, that once divided Jew and Gentile, gone forever. That barrier that once divided man from God, gone forever. That barrier, beloved, that once did and still does divide Irish from Irish, gone forever.

That barrier that divides English, beloved, from Indian or African, gone forever. By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. We are one.

Glory to his name. I often say when I'm in Africa I forget that I'm black. No, I forget that I'm white.

You see that's how clearly I've forgotten it. A young Indian once said to me, I have forgotten that you are not Indian. He didn't say, I've forgotten that you're English.

He said, I've forgotten that you're not Indian. And he said, listen, you speak to an interpreter for six hours. And he'd forgotten that I wasn't Indian.

Glory to his name. That's what happens when the Spirit of God takes you up and delivers you from what you are, from what you have been, and brings you in. That's the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

It's in the power of that one Spirit. Then we are born again. There are only two ways into the body of Christ.

You're either born into it or you're baptized in it. There are two analogies speaking of the same glorious truth. Men divide them theologically, but in the Spirit they are one.

You can't be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ without being baptized in the power of that one Spirit. It's only because we've been neglecting Him, beloved, that people have failed to understand the truth. And I praise God many have been in the truth, beloved, without understanding it.

Isn't that wonderful? God's bigger than the limitations of our ability to understand, define and work it all out. Don't think that you've got to wait, beloved, until you can think it all through, that you can understand the Greek or the Hebrew or all the rest of it, beloved. God can do that to you by the power of His Spirit and bring you right in.

And you don't even know what you're in. Lots of people are in, beloved, without knowing what they're in. Lots of people are baptized in the Spirit and don't really know it.

They should do. But they may not define it in the same way that we do. I can't for the life of me conceive that Hudson Taylor wasn't baptized in the Holy Ghost or George Muller or William Carey.

But they didn't use the language that we use today. Amen. Many of their lives, beloved, if you read their lives, it makes some of our lives look pretty pathetic.

And I sometimes wonder what's happened to us. A quality, a calibre of life, that was worked out in the lives of many of these great men and women of God. Read Mary's letter of calibre.

You wonder whether she was human or whether she was superhuman. Of course she was superhuman, living a human life. Amen.

No, we're not all Mary's letters. We're not all William Carey's. That will become very evident, beloved, as we look at the Scripture this morning.

But by the Spirit we are brought into, baptized in the power of the Spirit into the Body of Christ. We're in. Beloved, are you in? Amen.

You are the Body of Christ. Now I know a God, beloved, that has an ability to say that about men and women who don't know it. Like when He looked at the woman of Sychar, the harlot of Sychar, He looked at her and He didn't see her as the harlot of Sychar.

He saw her as the bride of Christ. That needs faith. And that's how you and I are supposed to look at men and women, beloved, and by that same faith believe God to bring them in.

I have the capacity to believe, beloved, that every man and every woman, if not actually, potentially, is in the Body of Christ this morning. You can be, and you should be. Glory to His name.

And if you will be, beloved, you can be before you walk through that door. Blessed be His name by the operation of the Spirit of God. Wonderful.

You come in supernaturally. Not by standing on the dotted line. Not by agreeing to the system of doctrines.

Not by joining a particular company. But there are many people who join our companies, even our companies, who aren't really members of the Body of Christ. And because we govern our churches democratically, that means that the majority of rights, beloved, we get into some of the pickles that we have.

Because ultimately, if you follow that, the line of thinking, beloved, you'll end up with the unregenerate outvoting the regenerate. That's where our problems lie. That's why it's so vital that you and I learn to discern the Body of Christ.

Praise God for all those who come to our meetings. Praise God for all who come, put themselves under the influence of the Gospel. That's wonderful.

All who will may come. Amen. And they can come to more than our meetings.

They can come right in. Blessed be His name. We should never bar anyone, beloved.

Glory to His name. Jesus had a great, big, open, generous, all-embracing, all-inclusive disposition. An open heart.

Once I lived in a community house, there was always someone knocking at the door. My friend would shout down the corridor, put more water in the soup, another person to add to the table. All who will may come.

Amen. That's what we wrote on our wedding invitation when we got married. All who will may come.

We were crazy. Well, we thought we were the week before we got married. Had nothing to pay for the wedding.

Amen. But it only proved, beloved, the immensity and greatness of God's heart and His ability to fulfil the Word that is spoken deep within us. Amen.

Has God enlarged your heart, beloved? Has He given you an all-embracing sort of disposition that doesn't keep people at arm's length? That it's all illustrious? When the man cried unclean, unclean, you didn't run away like the rest of them did, beloved. Everybody went right up to Him and put his arms around Him and loved Him whole. Loved Him whole.

Amen. By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bonds or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. That's why I like one cup, beloved, when we break bread.

And one love. People all got afraid, beloved, they weren't drinking out of one cup anymore. They had little tiny cups, little cups, all exclusive.

They're frightened of catching something. You know I once went to a church in India, beloved, where when it came to the breaking of bread those who wanted to drink out of separate cups went this side and those who wanted to drink out of one cup went this side. In one meeting, beloved, a great cleavage, a violation of the truth and revelation of the works of the Body of Christ supposedly being enacted for men and women to see the reality of it, but there in an instant they chopped it right down to the middle.

Some went that side and some went that side. I'm so glad that perfect love casts out fear. Amen.

Isn't that wonderful? No matter what you've got, beloved, I'm happy to catch it. Amen. It all goes through the sieve of His precious blood, beloved, and come out on one side all pure and clean and lovely.

You say you're naive. Well, I'm happy to be naive, beloved, in the presence of God and His Word and His truth. The trouble with so many of us, beloved, is we become so complicated, so sophisticated, so analytical that unless we put it through the sieve of our reason and get it all worked out there by our impression and our interpretation of it, we'll have nothing to do.

Oh, we go through the routine. But essentially, beloved, we've never understood the mystery and wonder in the depths of our heart. Glory to His name.

You are the Body of Christ. By one Spirit or in the power of one Spirit we're all baptized into that one Body. Go to the preceding verse.

Verse 12, For as the Body is one and has many members and all the members of that one Body being many are one Body, so also Christ. See the indivisibility, beloved, of that statement. He said the Body is one, so also Christ.

That's amazing, isn't it? That's why I said that this analogy, beloved, I've stripped even the analogy of the bridal relationship because in the bridal relationship you have two persons. The building, as the house of God, it's one place, beloved, and another person. Here the two become one.

This is the great mystery. Do you understand the indivisibility of the Trinity? Well, that's what the Spirit of God wants to bring you and me up into. Read the end of the 17th chapter of John's Gospel where Jesus is praying, beloved, for you and for me.

Glory to His name. Thank you. It says in verse 20, Mother, pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they may be one.

As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me in the glory that thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them as thou hast loved me, that they may be one. Beloved, this is what happens when the Holy Ghost comes. Jesus said so.

He said that that day you'll know that I'm in you, Father. You are in me and I am in you. We're one.

That's what the Gospel is all about. That's what makes you and constitutes you a genuine Christian. That's what makes you the body of Christ.

You are the body of Christ. By one spirit of, or in the power of that one spirit, we're baptized into that one body. The body is one, beloved.

So also is Christ. The two are one. That's the same lovely analogy in John chapter 15 when he talks about the vine and the branch.

The vine and the branch, beloved, are one. They're indivisible. They're inseparable.

Essentially, you separate them, beloved, and there's no life in the branch. The branch only has life because it's one with the vine. You are the body of Christ.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians in the second letter, says this. You're here instead of Christ. You're here instead of Christ, or in Christ's stead.

That's how the Orthodox version puts it. But you're here instead of Christ. You are the body of Christ.

That which is taken the place, beloved, of the incarnate body that graced the earth for 30 years and displayed to us, beloved, the nature of God and depicted for us the nature of man. Man who should live on the earth in the image of God. Amen.

It's one body. It is one Christ. You and I here this morning, beloved, are here instead of Christ.

Not Christ up there, not Christ over there, not Christ in here, not Christ in the building, but Christ in here. Indivisible oneness and unity. That's the answer to the problem of sin.

That's the answer to the problem of all our hang-ups. That's the answer to the problem of all the demons that hassle men and women. Glory be to Christ.

Paul says it in different ways, doesn't he? In the Colossian epistle he says Christ is our life. Not my life and his life. His life and my life.

But the two become one. Do you believe, beloved, that Jesus prayed in vain? Or do you believe that that prayer was heard in heaven and as a result of that prayer being heard in heaven, beloved, the eternal Father heard it and empowered the Spirit to implement the very thing that Jesus appraised to make it a reality, a possibility, an answer. Some of you look absolutely stoned.

You think this is what we do with the gospel, beloved, this is what we do with the church. We relegate it, we isolate it to a day in the week. We relegate it to a cross.

We interpret it, beloved, as a way of behaving when we come together. The Scriptures do say that when we come together we must neglect the gathering of our towns together. And that, beloved, is in order to appreciate and learn the wonder and mystery of it all in a conscious and tangible way.

Hallelujah. But that's not the church, beloved. You've denuded it of its reality.

The church is living men and women, beloved, who have embraced the mystery of the gospel and have become one with Christ so that wherever they are, Christ is. Wherever Christ is, they are. Now you try and work all that out in your head, beloved, you'll land up in trouble.

Amen. I remember once going to a Chinese conference in London and the pastor said to me, Brother, I want you to do one thing. I said, What's that, pastor? He said, Chop their heads off.

He said, They have enough hot knowledge, theological knowledge, to hand draw and quarter you. But he said, There's nothing down here. And I'm so glad that God decapitated quite a lot of people in those days and many of the openings that we have in the Far East today, beloved, are the outworking and the result of that.

Glory to his name. Beyond our capacity to reason and work out, you don't have to be clever, beloved. You don't have to have a D.V. or a university degree to qualify, to understand it.

It's a mystery, hidden from the ages and the generations. Glory be to God. In verse 14 it says, For the body is not one member, but many.

Here's the paradox. It's one, but it's many. We're one, beloved, but we're many.

And we're only a fragment of the body of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. If you read the writings of the apostle Paul, you'll find that there was only one church in one city or one locality. And that's how you can work out, beloved, whether he was writing to a city or whether he was writing to a district.

When he wrote to a district, he referred to the churches. When he wrote to a city, beloved, he referred to the church. When he wrote to Colossae, he wrote to the church.

But there was an expression of a church in the house of Philemon, there was an expression of a church in the house of the Cathars, there was an expression of a church probably in many houses in that city. But as far as the apostle was concerned, there was only one church. There was only one church in Dublin.

Amen. Now you can legalise that, beloved. You can get into bondage about it.

But that's what God says in the Spirit. Glory to his name. There's one body, many members.

There were members, beloved, in all sorts of funny positions. Amen. That's why you have to learn to discern.

You may not bear the dark eyes of Constantine or agree with their theology, beloved, but if someone has been born again and baptised by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ, beloved, then they are a member of the church, no matter how shabby the situation in which they are presently located. Amen. And if you think that you know it all and you've got it all sorted out, beloved, then you need to do some repentance.

Now bless God for all that he's shown to us, beloved, and the tremendous revelation that he's entrusted to us, and what a responsibility we have to be faithful to that which we personally know. And we must not compromise, beloved, or water it down for anyone anywhere. We must fearlessly preach the Word of God and lift the standard high.

Blessed be his name. Yes, there's one body, beloved, but many members. Praise God.

Many members. None of all of them are yet revealed. They're called the elect.

Now don't take me up on the subject of predestination. I won't bite. Amen.

I have no problem with it, but I'm not going to argue about it. But this is what people do with the Word of God. Instead of embracing the truth and living in the reality of it, as far as God gives them understanding and ability, beloved, we argue about it.

And use these things as a cause for division, beloved, instead of seeing them as part of an aspect of the great almighty mind of God. Amen. One body, many members.

Praise God. And all these members, beloved, are interdependent one upon the other. Listen to it.

If the foot shall say, because I'm not the hand, am I not of the body? Is it therefore not of the body? If the ear shall say, because I'm not the eye, am I not of the body? Is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? Amen. What tremendous diversity. Have a look around the room, beloved.

See if you can see anyone like you. If you can, feel sorry for them. And even if we had so-called identical twins here, beloved, you discover if you knew them after a little while, they wouldn't be identical at all.

There are no two identicals. We're all different. That's, again, the great wisdom and mystery of God, that we're all so different.

Now the result, usually the result of our differences, beloved, is that we become competitive. We play off one against the other. We have aspirations for superiority.

And you get this sort of thing. Amen. Differences, beloved, are ordained of God not to be competitive but complementary.

Amen. Look at the person sitting right next to you, beloved, and acknowledge that they are your complement. And the Scripture says that without that person you wouldn't be made perfect.

Amen. We like, you see, this is the tremendous stuff that we have, beloved, in our society, Western society, the tremendous stress that we have on individuality. It begins with our evangelism, all emphasising, beloved, the personal existence.

We must have a personal relationship with the Lord, but it mustn't stop there. The moment, beloved, you've had a genuine personal relationship with the Lord, it stops being personal and becomes corporate. That's the great leap.

That's the proof that your personal relationship with the Lord has been profoundly set. You die to what you are personally, individually, and become a part of the great corporate expression of Christ. The many-faceted aspects of the nature of Jesus can take all of men, beloved, past, present and future, to do real justice to what God revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus.

Now, we should all seek to emulate Him, because you all seek to be like Jesus. We think of it, oh, to be like Him, oh, to be like Him. Stop aspiring, beloved, and stop believing that you can be.

Not because you're anybody, but because He has the ability, beloved, to fulfil His word and conform you to His own likeness and image and make your life complement a true testimony of Jesus to men and women, individually, personally, but more so corporately. And Paul talks about the churches as the house of God. He talks about the temple of God, the temple of the Holy Ghost.

He applies that truth both individually and corporately. Both aspects, both aspects. Amen.

We all have to know that individually, personally, that we are the body of Christ, that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost, that we are the bride of Christ, that we are a true member of the family of God. But then we have to realise that we are only a part, that we all need each other. And what one can do, the other one can't necessarily do.

My toes can't see, and if they didn't have eyes, beloved, to guide them, they'd be in difficulty. I met a man last week who was blind for 35 years and then, by an operation in America, is now able to see. I'd noticed this man.

His walk was strange. He was odd, according to an objective assessment of his life. And then someone said to me, he was blind for 35 years.

I'd explained everything. I knew why he walked, sort of, strange, like this, cautiously, as if he was going to kick his toe off suddenly. Hadn't had any eyes for 35 years.

15, 19 months, that was that. And then suddenly being able to see. I remember once asking the blind person, I said, would you like to be able to see? She said, no.

No. Couldn't cope with it, couldn't handle it. I once took her to buy a dress.

She wanted a particular blend or a particular shade of turquoise. I think she tried on about 25 dresses in March and September, all different shades of turquoise, but we couldn't find the right shade. Now, you might laugh at that, but she wasn't laughing at it.

It was a very sick history. And I once threatened to her that I'd mix up her wardrobe, because when she appeared, she was always with the right things to match, with the right things, never anything out of place. She said, it wouldn't matter if we mixed it all up, I'd still sort it all out.

Now, how she could do it, I don't know. But she knew exactly what she wanted when she was looking for a particular shade of turquoise. We didn't find it.

I took her to the assistant in Marks and Spencers, and she got up looking at me. She said, can she really see or not? I said, no, she's blind, she's no eyes at all. Glory be to God.

Amen. You can do things that I can't do, and I can do things that you can't do. Blessed be His name.

We're all essential, each to the other. And if you don't recognise it's down on the earth you're going to be very uncomfortable in heaven if you ever get there, because I'm going to be there. You might say that's presumption.

Yes, I presume upon the faithfulness of God, beloved to fulfil His word and honour His promise to me. You can be as presumptuous as I am on that point this morning. Blessed be His name.

But it does mean, brother, that there are ramifications to be worked out down here on the earth if that's going to be a reality in heaven. I've got to begin to discover the realities of heaven down here on earth. We pray, don't we? The Lord's prayer, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You see, we've got a different concept of heaven that we have on the earth. That's because we fail to see, beloved, the normal life of the church. So many people say to me, it's like hell on earth.

And the tragedy is, beloved, that is often so near the truth instead of being like heaven on earth. Glory be to God. Is that your point of view, brother, heaven on earth? Is that your domestic testimony, heaven on earth? Is that your church testimony, brother, heaven on earth? Glory to God.

If I read this book properly, brother, it can be so. Now in that day you're staring your head in the sand and pretending it's so, but it's not so. And that's perhaps why the Lord talked to us in the way that he did last night, beloved.

Because if it is not so, then there must be causes as to why it shouldn't be so. Because God doesn't hang the truth before a note, like a carrot before a lure. Endlessly, onward, out, in opening, is to come unto the reality of the things that he says.

That's what people call it idealism. But it's not idealism. It's faith.

It's believing what God said and aligning oneself with the truth of God's word and believing that he can do what he says. It's because we've lost sight, beloved, of what God says he can do. And we've lured ourselves that we no longer move into it.

Praise the Lord. It's radical. You are the body of Christ.

You're here in spirit of Christ. The body is, beloved, Christ is. One.

Glory to his name. He has many members. You happen to be one of those members.

If by the Spirit, beloved, or in the power of that Spirit, you have been baptized into the body of Christ, you are a member of Christ. That's why later down it says, the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of you. Who is the head? Who is the head of the body? Jesus.

All right. This is my head joined to my body by my neck. Amen.

And essentially what goes on up here, beloved, governs what's going on in the rest of here. Amen. That's why the mind, beloved, the mind in the scripture is associated with the heart in the realm of the Spirit.

As a man thinks it's in his heart, so he is. The two things, beloved. But in the physical anatomy, it's what goes on up here.

Amen. Your brain, beloved, is like the most magnificent telecommunication system that was ever conceived. It's more accurate, it's more sensitive, beloved, it can adjust itself, tune itself up, beloved, to the most modern developments.

Praise God. It doesn't have to banter, beloved, with new numbers and extended numbers and changing your dialing code and all these sorts of things. It's not affected by fax or email or all these sorts of things, but it's outdone the love of them.

Oh, then it has this tremendous ability to adapt again and again and again. The slightest indication, beloved, it reacts. All linked by what is called the nervous system.

Now, I'm not a doctor, and the doctors probably gave me and put me all right on these things afterwards. Never mind. But I know that in the realm of the Spirit, beloved, this is but an analogy.

In the realm of the nature, if I put my hand on a hot plate, beloved, immediately my mind goes hot. Faster than I can ring from Liverpool to Dublin. Amen.

Amen. The head cannot pay for the feet. I have no idea who Jesus is.

The head. Praise God. You are the body.

The same head, beloved, that graced the incarnate body is the same head, beloved, that rules and governs the spiritual body. It's our relationship to the head. Look into the Colossian Epistles.

There's a very interesting statement. I think it's in Colossians chapter 2. It appears in the negative, but I'm going to read it in the positive, without altering the emphasis. You can do that with Scripture.

You don't change the truth, beloved. You just emphasize what's behind the subject. It says in verse 19, I read it as it is, and then I'll read it as I want it to be.

I'm not holding the head from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment and ministry, knit together. Oh, I love that phrase, knit together. Do you know how to knit? I do.

Do you know how to knit? I have a ball of wool and two needles, beloved, and I started off with two pea sticks which my mum got out of the garden, shaved down, and put some points on the end of the ball of string. That's how I learned to knit. Lots of people don't know how to knit.

Well, God knows how to knit. Glory be to God. He knits you and me together.

Isn't that wonderful? Someone says, what is knitting? A lot of holes with little lines around it. Amen. Being knit together increases with the increase of God.

What a magnificent sentiment. Let me read it again. Not holding the head from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment and ministry, are knit together increases with the increase of God.

The supply of the Spirit with being increasing it with the increase of God all the time via the great lifting head. Now let me read it as I want to read it. Holding the head.

Holding the head from which all the bands, by joints and bands, having nourishment, ministers, and knit together increases with the increase of God. But if you're holding the head, you see, that's the problem with lots of modern teaching, beloved, that elevates man and substitutes something else, beloved, for that relationship that you and I, according to the ordination of God, should enjoy intimately with our living head. Nothing must come between you and the head.

He is your head, beloved. You are a member in His body. What He says about the living head, the body must express.

That's the analogy. Your life, beloved, needs to be an expression. The head, you are the body of Christ.

The reason why you have a body, personally, the reason why we have this body, corporately, beloved, is because God is wanting to express His life through men and women like you and me. This is the wonder, the mystery, beloved, of this great age in which we live, the age called the church. This is what the church is all about.

This is why the church, beloved, should have something to say to the world. That is, it hasn't any longer. Amen.

We listen to the politicians. We listen to the film passion designers. We listen to all sorts of diversity of voices.

And they are multitudinous. There are many voices clamoring for your attention. I remember when I was a student of theology, one of the books we had to read was called The Battle for the Mind by a man called Sargent.

It's all psychological. But there was an element of truth in it. Beloved, I tell you, there is something baffling, baffling in the exertion, the headship, the lordship, the mind of Christ in men and women.

Everything that you and I do, beloved, everything that we do as individuals, everything that we do as we seek to complement one another by the operation of the Holy Ghost should all be the outworking of what's going on in the mind of Christ. That's why Paul says, you have the mind of Christ. You read that in the second chapter of this same letter.

He says, you have the mind of Christ, risen from the dead. He says, let this mind be in you. Be renewed in your mind.

Amen. It was in the scripture, beloved, that's quoted on your brochure. Only one person seems to have read it.

Amen. I didn't get it. From the moment it was quoted, I knew where it was.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God, which He shall re-reserve. Be not conformed to this world. Wasn't that what God was saying to us last night, beloved? Do you want your camel shirt? Do you want your leather belt? Do you want your locust or wild honey? My wife said, I'd like the honey, but I'm not keen on the locust.

Locust? Amen. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you might prove what is a good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Jesus coming to the world, He said, a body thou hast given to me to do thy will, O God.

Keep exaltation to us, beloved. Do with our bodies exactly what Jesus did with His body. Present it in order that it may become an expression of the will of God, the mind of Christ.

Keep our great living head, holding the head, glory to His name, beloved. Are you holding Him? Your lips, your ears, your eyes, your hands, your feet. You study those things, beloved, in the life of the Lord Jesus.

What He did with His hands. What He did with His feet. What He did with His eyes.

Remember the single look of the man accomplished more in that man's life than all the preachings ever heard, all the miracles that he'd been witness to, all that he'd been involved in. A single glance, beloved, devastating, broke him up all on the inside and set him, beloved, onward, onward, via Calvary to a place called Pentecost, where all the reality of that one single gaze was distilled into his heart and made him another man. He was Peter if you don't recognise him.

Just a single glimpse from Jesus. There was an Indian who once said to a bishop, it's the look in the eye. People often say to me, your eyes will get you into trouble.

They won't, beloved. I'll look at you. And if you're sitting on the back row, you're better ammunition for me than the front row.

Glory be to God. I can't look at you, beloved, and say what I've got to say to you, then I don't believe what I'm saying. Not to do.

Drop your eyes when you look at them. Amen. Because they can't take what you're saying.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Every member, beloved, is to compliment one another.

God's taken the captive spirit out of you. It's in the world, beloved. Go into any secular bookshop and you'll see it all along the shelf.

How to obtain, how to aspire, how to come into this realm of excellence, how to make money, how to do this and that. And even when they're making millions, beloved, they say it's repression. It's only because they're not making billions.

They've only got a load of London, beloved, and the seas and coasting around in their great cars and chariots, beloved. They're making billions. Millions, they say.

Not billions anymore. Go into a Christian bookshop, beloved, you'll see the same collection of books. The world is prepped into so-called Christian literature.

God help us. God's taken the competitive spirit out of you, beloved, both spiritually and naturally. Has God brought to you, beloved, where you're content to be nothing? Nobody.

All the ambition. That is for the people to look at. That's all God can use, according to the first chapter of this lovely letter.

That is for the people to whom He chooses. Amen. You see, the natural man, beloved, has got it all the wrong way round.

It says again in that chapter, the natural man doesn't think as God thinks. Of course, when you talk like this, beloved, people take it to their heart. There's violence, beloved, all that we naturally desire and aspire unto.

God has to do something very radical on the inside of us to change our inward disposition and make us content, beloved, to be subject, subject to our great living head and interdependent one upon the other, acknowledging that we can't do without you. Oh, glory to His name. Verse 18 says, But now hath God set members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.

Amen. Nothing to do with you, nothing to do with me. That's why you happen to be where you are.

But do you believe in providence? If you don't, then you don't believe Romans chapter 8, verse 28, which literally or properly translated means this, God works all things together for good to them that love Him. Most of us quote it in the King James Version where it says, All things work together for good to them that love Him. That's a very bad translation, beloved.

You are not the subject or victim of things. Not all things working together for you. It's God working all things together for you.

Because that turns it off of matters unto God. You're not the placing of things. You're not the victim of your circumstances, your environment, where you happen to be.

It's God. It's God. It's God sovereignly reigning and ruling by the great expression of His living head, Christ Jesus.

It's God. High over all. God is working all things together for you.

He ever has been, beloved. He never will be. Blessed be His name.

Once you settle that in your heart, beloved, you come to peace. You'll get off the knife edge of what lots of people call Christianity. Amen.

Which is an endurance verse. Very painful to ride on the knife edge. Scripture says there's a rest for the people of God.

That's not a life of indolence. That's not a life of indolence, beloved. It's a life of glorious activity in the realm of the Spirit.

You believe in God's providential activity. I mean, these people are going to get their children. It's all right.

They're not taking exception to what I'm saying. I wouldn't be upset if they did because it'd be an issue between them and the Lord because I can't usurp that position between head and end. No use preaching

and not practicing.

Glory be to God. God has set you where you are. Like it or lump it.

We've got an amazing poster. I think it's still there. It may have gone now.

In our fellowship house up in the Wirrocks, in the Longcocks, it's a picture of four fields and a fence down the middle. There's a cow in each field. It's a lovely poster.

They've all got their neck through the fence eating the grass on the other side. It's a very telling picture. The old English proverb, grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

It's a lie, beloved, an infamous lie. Amen. That's how most of us live, beloved, haggling after what we can't have.

The rot set in, beloved, in the Garden of Eden. God said to Adam, you can't have it. And the thing he only wanted, the only thing he wanted, beloved, well he couldn't have.

And isn't that true in our children? You tell them they can't have something. That's the one thing that they want to have and that's the one thing that they will go after. You prohibit something, beloved, and that's the one thing that people lust, will lust to obtain.

Amen. God has set. Amen.

You see, I have great reservations about this thing called free will. Someone said to me the other day when I'd been preaching at Lourdes, that was a good bag of Calvinism. Nothing to do with Calvin, beloved.

I mean, mention Calvin. It's amazing how people's minds are galvanized to think along particular lines, so that they assess you and judge you and accuse you of saying things that you've never dreamed of. Nothing to do with Calvin, beloved.

It's all to do with God's sovereignty. All the difference. Calvin had a little inkling into it.

I'm sure that Wesley did too. I'm reading the Vicar of Maderley at the moment. Who was he? Come on, the Vicar of Maderley.

Oh, you Irish, of course you should. Oh, you English people I'm talking to. John Fletcher.

John Fletcher of Maderley. Wesley said he should have, Wesley hoped that he would be his successor, but in fact, Fletcher died before Wesley. A tubular consumption.

Amen, an amazing man. Had a tremendous capacity, beloved, to love everyone. He wouldn't implement.

He wrote some very strong things, but overriding it all was his great heart of love that went beyond. Glory to His name. God is sovereign, beloved.

God who sets the members in the body. That's why you are where you are, living with the person who you're living, working with the person who you're working. Glory to His name.

Isn't that wonderful? Wouldn't you like to run a thousand miles away? But you can't. Not if you believe, beloved, that you are the body of Christ. If you believe in the providence of God, if you believe that God

works all things together, if only, beloved, we were going to take these things to heart, it would resolve lots of the problems for which they could find a legitimate escape or running away from.

All so easy this is today. All so easy. Way of escape.

There's only one way of escape, beloved. It's right into the heart of Jesus. To send you back.

Our God sent Hagar back, didn't He? Remember the story of Hagar back in the book of Genesis? She had a legitimate, a very good reason to run away. Amen. If ever a woman was abused and misused, beloved, by her mistress, she was.

She was a victim of a set of circumstances, beloved, that she didn't ask for. Amen. She was unison part, you could say, and she ran away and God said, what are you doing here? Go back.

Of course, the natural mind, beloved, sympathises with her. She should be allowed to go away. It's amazing how we sympathise, beloved, with people out of the will of God.

That's the trouble with so much ministry. It's just human sympathy. But if you go along the line of God, beloved, they say that you're hard.

God is never hard. Never will be hard. Glory to His name is all love.

And the reason, beloved, why He enters into us all and sets us wherever He wants us is because He loves us. And He won't just let us slip out. Oh, and I'm glad, beloved, that He hasn't let me get away with this, that, and the other over the years.

But He's held me there. And I'd like to run a thousand miles. He's held me there.

And caused me to see, beloved, that adversity was ultimately geared to bless me. And I came into the baptism of the Spirit, beloved, because God held me into a situation which was diabolical. Amen.

Utilised it all for my good to bring me to the end of myself. And I stopped blaming everyone else and pointing the finger and moaning and griping about the situations that God dealt with me. And I should have stayed there forever.

And He said, now you can pray. You can go. You can go now.

What a sense of humour. Isn't God wonderful? You are the body of Christ. You can't please yourself.

He says, I'm here to please the Father. And if you are the body of Christ, beloved, you'll be using exactly the same language. I am here to please the Father.

By my great living Head, I am subject, absolutely subject to Him. I have no choice in the matter. Glory be to God.

It locks me to God, beloved. No more wonderful upon the face of the earth than to be locked in with God. Joined indivisibly to Him.

Amen. Those members of the body which seem to be less honourable upon these we bestow more abundance on. Oh, isn't this lovely? And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

And our comely parts have no need. But God has tempted the body together having given more abundant honour to that part which lack. Do you ever feel that you lack? Do you ever feel, beloved, that you are missing when all the goodies were being given out? You know, you see these members of the body, they are gifted in this way, they can play the piano, they can play the guitar, they've got lovely voices, they're articulate, they're charismatic in personality, they have an ability to do this, that, and the other, beloved, and you feel such a weak.

Do you ever feel like that? I felt exactly like that before I came to the meeting this morning, I must confess. I thought, Lord, whatever am I doing here? I did try to get out of it, but Gary wouldn't let me slip out of the noose. He'd pulled the rope tight before I got round to asking him.

I could have been down on the southwestern coast of Italy this morning. Amen, with just one meeting a day, so they said, but my wife said, Aha! When they say one meeting a day, they mean one continuous meeting from six in the morning to twelve at night. She knows my Italian friends.

Amen, but here I am. Like it or lump it, he pulled the rope tight round my neck. Do you ever feel weaved? Bless God.

Well, here's good news to you, beloved. He's going to give you more abundance. Because you're conscious that you lack.

And when you're aware, beloved, that you lack, you find yourself utterly cast upon Him. You see, those of us who think that we've got something, we are something, we've a measure of ability, beloved, to contribute something. Amen.

The danger is that we become independent of sin and fall into sin and try and do our own thing and run our own show. But when you know, beloved, that you lack, that you haven't got it, you didn't get it by natural endowment, beloved, and you're not too conscious that you've got it by spiritual endowment apart from the fact, beloved, that you be joined to Him and that you are a part of His body on the earth and you're here, beloved, no matter what amiss you seem to make of it, that you're here to manifest Him. Amen.

Indeed, when you put your foot in it, beloved, you sometimes find that that's blessed. There were some girls who started singing down the decks at Rory in our last conference a few weeks ago and they'd got through the first line and then suddenly all fell apart and went to pieces and they were in the wrong key and they were all out of harmony and they were the singers, beloved, absolutely ghastly, with an awful cacophony of noise and they ground a hole and looked at the key and said, put it in the key that we can see. I tell you, beloved, that was a tremendous blessing to me to see those two sisters standing with the grass to say we've made a mess of it and to go on and having got the note, beloved, going, and to the glory of God.

They're mistakeful of it, giving me more good. They're missing. I guess they felt all hot under the collar and really felt that they'd messed it up.

It would feel like that. Well, it's a word of encouragement to you. Blessed be His name.

Here's another lovely word. Our time has gone. Sorry.

We should be finished by now. Verse 25. There should be no schism.

Or if you want to say schism, whichever way you like to pronounce it, beloved, it's an alternative schism or schism. There should be no schism in the body. But the member should have the same care, one for another.

Paul writes of Timothy, beloved. The reason why our second son is called Timothy is because of this scripture. Amen.

He's yet to live up to the full implications of it, but he does in measure live up to his name. Let's go on. Paul says in Philippians 2, But I trust in the Lord Jesus That's the centimotius shortly unto you.

That I also may be of good comfort when I know your estate. For I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your estate. Isn't that lovely? He naturally cared, beloved.

He was one of those men who lived the supernatural life naturally. He naturally cared. Amen, that would be the proof, beloved, that you and I are in the body of Christ.

Devoid of that schismatic disposition in our heart that is so divisive and spiteful and all the other things that we associate, beloved, and has a disposition that naturally cares. Don't put it on, you don't try. People try to love more.

And if you're still trying to love, beloved, you have never discovered what it means to be a member of the body of Christ. Once the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart, you don't try to love, beloved, you can't help but love. That's the difference of living under the law and living under grace.

Under the law, beloved, you're trying to attain under a standard. Under grace, beloved, it spontaneously flows out of you. You fulfil the same law that this time were never achieved, but in the Spirit, beloved, you will attain unto it.

Glory to His name, you will naturally care. You'll be a caring person, a loving person, an all-embracing person. Christ was.

Christ was. You are the body of Christ and with no chisel in the body of Christ, no chisel in the Godhead. The Trinity, beloved, is a fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Ghost living in heaven.

Amen. The life of love. The life of the church.

You've heard me say before, beloved, the life that Jesus lived in heaven, He came and lived on the earth. And He went back to heaven and sent the Spirit to make true what was heaven, that it be work out of Him on the earth, work out in you and me on the earth. Wonderful.

Notism. Beloved, are you at loggerheads with anyone? Are there divisions? Have you reservations? Do you see people around me? Do you avoid this one or that one? Pass by on the other side? Don't want to be involved? Aren't prepared to be implicated? The church, beloved, is ordained as God to be an expression of the life of Jesus in our day and generation. If one member suffers, then all the members suffer with it.

It's inevitable. If you're one body. You are the body of Christ.

I don't know what that statement does to you, but I know what it does to me. I can tell you the other day I read it and it came all the pressure. It leapt out of the page, hit me between the eyes.

And the significance of it dawned again, beloved, with greater clarity to my inward being and caused me to come to terms within my spirit with the responsibility of living in the outworking of it. You are the body of Christ. We have a lovely opportunity this week, beloved, of actually not just coming to meetings together, but meeting together, sharing together, fellowshiping together, caring for one another.

And if there's schism, if there's division, beloved, sort it out. That was the exhortation of the Lord to us last night. If there's sin, beloved, confess it, deal with it.

If there's division, sort it out. Now you can only be responsible for your side of it. If the other person in the situation, beloved, doesn't respond to it, well that's their problem.

But you must know that your heart is clear before God concerning that you've done all in your power that it be right. And whatever they do, you'll go on loving them, loving them. You'll heat coals of fire upon their heads and overwhelm them.

Amen. And that's the thing, beloved, that ultimately breaks us and wins us. Of course, lots of situations which we face, beloved, look so impossible.

But I want to tell you, beloved, they're not. If this is the truth, if this was what the church did all about, beloved, if this is the purpose which Jesus died and sent the Holy Ghost, to create on the earth a company of people whose lives, individually and corporately, are destined to be the expression and the ongoing outworking of His own life, then all the competitors, beloved, for that position are liars. God is true.

Amen. You are the body of Christ. Amen.

Glory be to God. Thank you, George. Amen.

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