

(The Activity of the Holy Spirit) the Body of Beauty

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that glorifies God and magnifies Christ through our bodies, regardless of circumstances.

Duration: 41:50

Scripture: Philippians 1:12

Topics: "Living For Christ", "The Body as a Temple"

Description

Peter Brandon preaches on 'The Activity of the Holy Spirit: The Body of Beauty,' emphasizing the significance of the Christian body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. He discusses the various states of the body, including the body of sin, the body of death, and the body of discipline, ultimately leading to the body of beauty where Christ is magnified. Brandon illustrates how living for Christ transforms our lives and answers fundamental questions about purpose and direction. He encourages believers to allow Christ to be seen in their lives, highlighting that true beauty comes from living for God's glory. The sermon concludes with a call to trust in Christ for holiness and transformation.

Transcript

The subject this morning is the body of beauty. We've looked at the body, the Lord's body, and we've seen that that was totally unique. We've looked at that awful thing, the body of sin in Romans 6, and we've seen what a vulgar thing that is.

We've looked at the Christian's body, the body as a temple of the Holy Ghost, and we've seen three things about it. The body can be tainted, the body will be tested, but if we remember that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, then we shall live that victorious life. We looked at the body of death, and we noticed that that can have a spiritual meaning because of the flesh that's in us, and we've looked at the physical meaning, because every person will die apart from the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And then we looked at the body of consecration. Now may I say this, there is nothing more beautiful than to see a group of people consecrated to the Lord. And I can say this to you now after many years of experience, I've never seen Jesus Christ spoiling a life, not once.

Seen sins smashing thousands of lives. Then we looked at the body of discipline, and we noticed that no matter what experience that the Lord may give you, if it's not maintained by a life of communion and discipline, it can be lost. And so all of us must get down to a disciplined body, so we go to bed at night, get up in the morning, we have regular times of communion with the Lord.

Now we're going to look at this body of beauty, and we'll find this in Philippians 1. Philippians 1, and we shall commence reading at verse 12. But I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places. Note that, the palace and other places.

And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of goodwill. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my bonds, but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour, yet what I shall choose not I want not. For I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. The address that I want to give you this morning begins in prison, and here is a man, he's about 53 years of age, he looks almost 83 because his body is badly mutilated, and he is chained to two soldiers from the imperial guard. Outside the window of his prison, there is a guard constantly watching him.

At the gate of the prison, there's another guard watching him. In the corner of the prison, there's a man by the name of Epaphroditus, and he is dictating or he is actually writing a letter that this prisoner is dictating. And all of a sudden, the man that's dictating the letter says, Epaphroditus, write this, that Christ shall be magnified in my body.

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. And you can imagine Epaphroditus putting his pen down saying, Sir, can you honestly say that? Your body is all mutilated for the sake of Christ. Your back's scarred because of the persecution you've received.

You are now in prison with the death sentence over your head, and can you say that? Epaphroditus, write this, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. And that shows to us the whole philosophy of Christian living. It answers the three great questions that crowds of young people are asking today all over the Western world.

Why am I here? Where am I going? How am I living? And what's my choice? And in that one verse, it answers all those problems. Where am I going? The object of living, for me to live is Christ. On one occasion, I forgot to take a book with me, and I was in London, and I was travelling on the old tube trains.

And so I had to read the people in the tube trains. And I looked, and there was one young lady, and she had her face in a kind of a beauty box. And all the time she was in that tube, at least all the time I was with her, I could see her applying makeup to her face.

And then I looked, and I said, I know what she's living for. She's living for glamour. And then I turned from her to another person, and I shall never forget this.

He was a man with a very coloured suit, and he had the Greyhound Gazette, and he had another gambling book, and he was ticking off all the winners. And then I thought I knew what he was living for, gambling. Then my eyes went to another fellow, and he had some things in his ears, and he was standing up, and all the time he was doing this.

And then it dawned upon me. In those days, he was living for rock and roll. Now we're going back, but he just lived for it the whole time.

And then I noticed a young couple, and they were very foolish. They were embarrassing everyone in the tube. And I must say this, they were just living for sex.

And that's all. What a vulgar thing. And then I looked, and I saw a man, and he had two little girls with him.

And he was looking at one girl, and the other little girl, and he was tidying the bow in her hair. And then I knew what he was living for. He was living for his family.

Then I saw a young man come in with two books under both arms, and thick rimmed glasses. And he buried his face in this book, and I could see what he was living for. He was just living for knowledge.

And then two fellows came in, all in red and white, with a wiggler in their hand, and they were going to watch the arsenal. And I knew what they were living for. They were living for the gunners, the arsenal.

They lived for it. It was everything to them. And then I saw one poor fellow, and I felt very sorry for him.

He was white. He was about 19. He looked about 50.

And I smelled him, and I could tell it immediately. He was living for drugs. And he was killing himself.

And then another man came in, quite well dressed, and he slumped in the chair. And he was totally paralytically drunk. And for him, it was to live liquor.

But listen to this man. For me, to live Christ, to die is good. You see, God made this wonderful world, for the pleasure of man.

And I'm sure everyone in this tent would agree, it's brought great glory to us. You've only got to look at those lovely hills, and you'll see something of glory. It pleases man.

But he created man, so that man might live for his glory. And you see, a person is never really happy, until he gets back to the original purpose of God's creation, so that he lives for the glory of God. And when you live for the glory of God, then you reach the peak of real happiness.

You see, inside every one of us, there is a God-shaped hole. And nothing in this world can fill that gap, only God. And when you really get right with God, and when you really get back to glorifying God, then, of course, you reach the bliss of life.

And this man, although in prison, could say, for me, to live is Christ. But then he had a prayer, that Christ should be magnified in his body. Now, what does it mean? Before you could become an officer in the Roman army, you had to spend at least 18 months to two years in the Imperial Guard.

And you were constantly going in and out of Caesar's palace. Now, his palace was magnificent. Buckingham Palace would be just a hut in comparison with it.

If I had time to describe to you the brilliance of that palace, many of you would begin to feel that you were living in a wilderness. These men were pick soldiers. They were all over 14 stone.

They were all above six feet in height. And they were clever. And they were physically strong.

And when they became centurions, they had to kiss the toe of Caesar. They had to touch the scepter and acknowledge him as God. And if they swore their allegiance to another deity, according to the historians, they were sacked immediately.

And if they failed in duty, especially in battle, invariably they committed suicide. That's why the Philippian jailer, who was a centurion, when he saw all his prisoners being liberated, he took out a sword and was going to kill himself. That was the normal thing that a centurion would do.

If he failed in business. And here's Paul and he's chained to two of them. Now, may I say this? How would you like to be chained to the greatest Christian that ever lived? You would be chained to dynamite.

And when these men came and they were chained to the apostle, first of all, they would look at him and think that he was a wizard old man. What all this fuss about keeping him in prison? This wizard old thing. But then he would say, gentlemen, would you mind if I prayed? Do what you like.

But he wouldn't pray for five minutes. He would pray for two hours and they were chained to him. Can you imagine what they were trying to do? Oh dear, he's still at it.

How long is that? Two hours. And they were chained to him. Can you see? They couldn't get away.

Then after that long prayer, he would say, do you know why I'm here, gentlemen? No. No. For preaching Christ.

Would you like me to tell you about him? If you like. Couldn't get away. And then he would preach Christ to them and they were there for four hours.

And you could imagine when they unlock themselves and a new lock came in every four hours, they, you'll be lucky if you get out there without being converted. And off they would go. You see, and they were coming and going, coming and going.

He was probably there for six months. And what happened? He was saying this, Lord, these men only see a little Lord Jesus. Through my life, may he be telescoped, brought near.

That's what the word magnified means. Here to telescope, to bring Jesus near in my body. Then he said, not only to be telescoped, but Lord, magnify him.

What does that mean? They only see a little Lord. May he be magnified. In my body.

And this is what happened. Two thirds of the imperial guard were converted. Being chained to the apostle.

And that's why all over the Roman Caesars household, there were many Christians because they were chained to the apostle. And he had the object, for me to live Christ. Now, my dear friends, do get that in your mind.

You've got one body. You'll never get it again. And Christ wants to be magnified in your body so that when people get near you, they begin to see the Lord Jesus in you.

And that's the most beautiful thing about a Christian's body. Christ being magnified in the body. But then we have the destiny of life.

For me to live is Christ. To die is gain. Now, I shall talk about the proof of this destiny in the next session.

So I'm not going into the details of that. But I want to read to you now from the script. I was going to quote this, but I don't think I will.

We'll read these scriptures together and we'll see three people who die. One, an unbeliever. Two, a foolish believer.

And then we'll see a Christian who was prepared to die. And it's a very interesting study. Would you turn first of all to Luke chapter 16.

Luke 16. These are the words of the Lord Jesus. Verse 18, please.

Whoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery. And whosoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery. There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

The purple garment was worn only by dignified people. So he must have been a very dignified man to wear the purple. The fine linen was always worn when they went to the synagogue.

So he was not only a dignified man, he was a religious man. And that's very important to understand that. And fared sumptuously every day.

That meant he lived in absolute luxury. So he had everything really in this life to make him happy. He had dignity.

He had religiousness. And he had a very pleasurable time. And he had the best kind of food.

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus which laid at his gate full of sores desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. In other words, the dogs were kinder to him than human beings.

But this man had a simple faith. Because the word Lazarus means God is my helper. All right.

Now let's come to verse 22. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

Now you will notice Abraham is the figure of faith. Bosom is the expression of the body that speaks of rest. And this person was carried by the angels and he was placed in Abraham's bosom.

Now that's taken over by Christ. Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. And therefore it speaks of a man going to heaven.

But now notice the other man. In hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments and seeth Abraham a father of and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveth thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And beside all this between us and you there is a great goal fixed so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot neither can they pass to us that would come from them. Then he said, I pray thee therefore father that thou wouldst send him to my father's house for I have five brothers that he may testify unto them lest they come into this place of torment.

And Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets let them hear them. And he said, Nay father Abraham but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Now may I say this quickly if there's any here unsaved now we want to say this to you in deep love if you had a heart attack and died you would go straight to hell. That's why you would be foolish to leave this camp without getting saved. Now do grither if you're saying for me to live is self to die would be a tragedy.

And hundreds of people are dying like that. Now the next person is entirely different he's a Christian but this person's living for self. And it's Luke chapter 12.

Now you read this verse 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, beware of covetousness now note this for a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses. In other words he's saying don't lay up treasure on earth lay them up in heaven. Your life does not depend upon the abundance of things that you possess.

You see I hear Christians saying this look how the Lord's blessed me with these great ocean going yachts and great mansions of houses the Lord hasn't blessed you with that all your blessings are in heaven. You've blessed yourself with that. Now here's a person who probably is a Christian but dies in poverty.

Now you listen to this. And he spake a parable unto them saying the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself saying what shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits.

And he said this will I do I will pull down my barns and build greater and there I will bestow all my fruits and goods. And I will say to my soul there has much goods laid up for many years take thine eat, drink and be merry. In other words he was living for his retirement.

A nice house, nice place to rest and so on. See what the Lord says. But God said unto him Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee then who shall those things be which thou hast provided? Look at verse 21.

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Have you got it? Not someone that's not right with God but not rich toward God. In other words he died as a lairder Christian.

Went in for the material and lost the joy of living for Christ. Now this actually happened in Brisbane only a few weeks ago. A very rich Christian came to me and he has given me permission to say this.

He said when I was 35 years of age I made the biggest blunder in my life. I took a very high position in a company and I reached the top. I made it and spiritually I'm bankrupt.

I've wasted 50 years but fortunately the last few years he's given to God. Don't you do that. In your profession go so far so that you can take money and feed your family but don't go in with this one determination you're going to get to the top.

Please Lord. Lose life and then you will gain life. You see there are scores of Christians who when they retire all they want to do is to see the world.

Isn't that sad? Just like the people of the world. When you get to your retirement you say now's the opportunity to serve the Lord. And here was a man who obviously died and he went to heaven in a very poor state.

He had nothing to take with him. Now let's look at another man. 2 Timothy chapter 4. Now this will thrill you.

Every time I read this it almost brings tears to my eyes. And this man is in a prison if the historians are right where many people died before they were actually... It was a real dungeon. Now that's all I can say.

But now he's writing to a young man called Timothy and he's giving him his parting words and verse 6 he says this. I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. The word departure there means the sailing away.

It's a beautiful word. It's the idea of a boat being moored by a jetty and all the sails are out and the winds blowing into them and it's being kept anchored by two horses and then the ropes are released and off it goes. Now says the apostle there's only a couple of ropes holding me down to this earth.

The time of my departure, my sailing away. Isn't that lovely? The sailing away has come. And then he says I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I've kept the faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Isn't that wonderful? Going into heaven with all the riches of glory. Laying up treasure in heaven.

Oh this thrills me as I talk to you young people about this. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous God shall give to me at that day and not to me only but unto all them that love is appearing. What a wonderful way to go into the presence of God.

Now if the historians are right and I believe they were that's the prayer that the apostle prayed just before he was beheaded. And what a wonderful way to go into glory. When I was a young person I knew a man called and we called him Granddad Triumph.

He was granddad to everyone. In his younger days before he was saved he was the first man to lack Brooklands and win it. It was an international race.

And so I understand in Britain they had old pictures of him going round in his Napier car. And he won that for seven years running. I think he was the only racing champion that ever won it for seven consecutive years.

And the last time he went round his car crashed and he was burning underneath the car and miraculously he was pulled out. And whilst the flames were around him he called unto the Lord for salvation and that man was gloriously saved with his burning car over him. From that moment he became an out and out Christian and he was one of the men that first invented the old jet engine and he worked for Napier all his life.

But he was a Christian that was filled with the Holy Spirit. When old Granddad Triumph was dying when he was 85 all his children and grandchildren were around the bed and it was a benediction. He was quietly saying hallelujah, glory.

And when he couldn't speak for he was so weak he just got his thumb up and went like that and went into the glory of heaven. May God give you all the grace if the Lord doesn't come to go into his presence like that. I fought a good fight.

I finished the course that God gave it to me. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. So that's the destiny.

And then the empowerment. Now go back to Philippians. Let's look at this because there's something beautiful there that I haven't really revealed to you.

Verse 21 For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Now there's another way of translating that that's more correct to the Greek so the scholars inform me and it is this. For me living is Christ.

So have you got it? One moment Christ is the objective. The next moment Christ is the subjective. In other words for me living is Christ.

Christ was reliving his life in him. Now there are two kinds of lives that people can live. You can live a self-life or you can live the life of the saviour.

And can I say this? It's a sheer waste of time to live the self-life. It's a waste of time. Now can I go deeper? Every five minutes I've indulged myself in the flesh.

It's a sheer waste of time. Can I repeat that? It's a sheer waste of time. But every few moments I live for the glory of God.

It's precious and it brings joy. And here was the man who had the source of it. For me living means Christ.

Now let's give an illustration of this and then close. I'm not going to mention who it was because we want to get away from personalities. But there's a boy I'm going to call Ben Johnson and he was brilliant at maths but he was hopeless at art.

And in those days just before the war every boy had to have a basin of art. You see there were certain subjects you had to do whether you liked it or not. And every time he lined up outside the art class it was like going in to have a terrible nightmare.

Anyhow he got into the art class and he sat right at the back so that no one would see his work. And then the art master says I want you to paint that rose. Now this fella had a tremendous discipline and he was determined this time to paint the rose.

Though he had no artistic ability. And there was a piece of white paper there was his paint and he took hold of the paintbrush and he started to paint saying I'm going to do it I'm determined to do it I must do it. And he could see he was making a mess all the time.

When he looked at his painting there was a blob of paint there that shouldn't have been there and stupidly he got out his handkerchief so that no one would see and he started to smudge it and made a hole in the paper. He saw a mess he says I'm in a mess. And then after about 20 minutes trying to paint the sweat was pouring from him and he threw down the brush and he said I'm beat.

And the art master had got behind him and he was watching the painter. And when he threw down the brush he slapped him on the shoulder and said Johnson you're absolutely useless. He looked up rather surprised to see him there and said I agree sir.

He said what are you going to do with that masterpiece? He never said a word. He grabbed hold of it and screwed it into the tightest ball that was possible and went out in the front and threw it in the waste paper basket and quietly said hooray. He knew he was beaten.

Now if the Lord's going to come into your life and bless you you've got to get to that point. Lord I've made a mess of everything. If you're not saved come to him as a poor lost guilty sinner.

If you are saved and you realise you've made a mess of your Christian life come to him as a broken saint and say oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me? Right he says clean the paints Johnson and he did. He said that's not good enough for me. He says move over and he moved over and he cleaned the paint until they were really pure and clean.

Now he says get a new piece of paper and he did and he looked at him and he looked at the art master he said I can't start on this painting until it's clean until it's new. Now that's what we all need our lives cleansed from all sin and the Holy Spirit coming in giving us a completely new nature. Right he says take hold of the brush and he did.

He said don't hold it like that you're holding it like a cricket bat hold it like that he did and then he slipped his hand over his and they started to paint and his eyes nearly came out on his cheeks. He could see the rose coming. Boy he said this is wonderful and he was painting and he could see it all being formed and he got really excited.

You see it was the art master painting through him and then all of a sudden the art master said let your hand go limp you're struggling and he looked he said let it go like a piece of wet fish he knew that language so he handed himself completely over to the art master. Now some of you have made a failure of your Christian life like we all do and he wants you to hand yourself over completely to the Lord. He won't spoil you he wants to bless you and he wants you to do that today so that you say for the first time not only do I want to live for Christ I want Christ to... and when it was all done he said could I take it home sir? He said if you like and when he was out of sight he put his name underneath you know like an artist.

Now he had lost his father during the 1914-18 war and his mother was at work in order to keep him at school and when he got home he put his painting right up on an old-fashioned London like that and stuck it

up and never said a word. When his mum came home from work he was doing his maths and he wouldn't look up and the first thing she did was to look at the picture and she went straight up being a typical cockney and looked and looked at him he was doing his maths and looked again and looked at him and she said one word Liar! He said what do you mean? You didn't paint that? He said I did. She looked Did you put the brush to the paper? Yeah.

Well she said the days of miracles are not over and that's it. It's Jesus reliving his life in you and the days of miracles are not over. Now let me turn you to one scripture and close Galatians chapter 2 and 20 I am crucified with Christ that's my old life the life that I was before I was saved as God saw me in Adam and that's all being judged by the Lord Jesus on the cross nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me got it? and the life which I now live in the flesh that's in your body I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me now note this and then I'll close most of you have trusted the Lord to save you and he saved you now you've got to trust him to make you holy and he will make you holy it's as simple as that trusting him to make you holy and he will form himself in your body and then you'll have a beautiful body Jesus will be seen in you.

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