

The Church

by Robert Arthur

The Church is the body of Christ, made up of many members with different gifts and functions, united under the Lord Jesus Christ.

Duration: 44:34

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, John 13:34-35, Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Galatians 5:13-14, Ephesians 4:11-13, Colossians 1:18, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Church", "The Body of Christ", "Unity in the Church"

Description

Robert Arthur emphasizes the significance of the Church as the body of Christ, highlighting that believers are called into fellowship with Jesus and are part of His divine plan. He discusses the diversity of gifts within the Church, stressing that each member has a unique role and function, all under the headship of Christ. Arthur encourages believers to recognize their responsibilities and the joy that comes from serving the Lord, even amidst trials. He underscores the importance of love as the foundation of all actions within the Church, urging unity and mutual care among its members. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of the Church's purpose and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's guidance in all matters.

Transcript

The Bible Conference leaks it a little time ago, when some were sent to me in the mail, and I quickly opened it, always interested in just what an advertisement of the conference, conference really has to report. And I noticed the 12th Bible Conference, May 7 and 8, and I paced over quickly, and I noticed speakers expected. Carl Fatt, Robert Arthur, Tom McCullough, and others.

We all know who Brother Fatt is, we've heard Brother Arthur, we've heard Brother McCullough. Now, I was asked to speak, I'm just wondering if I and others, or whether we're still going to have that glorious expectation following what little I have to say. But anyway, that's interesting.

I hope that we'll be able to speak by the Spirit of God, and as the Lord desires to have us do so. I'd like to turn to 1 Corinthians. This morning we had a lot reported to us about the wonders of the Lord Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.

And that's one of the most wonderful, in fact it is, the most wonderful truth of true Christianity. Christ Jesus, raised from the dead, ascended on high, and he's the living Lord and Savior. He's told of all the truth, Christ living.

The Lord Jesus Christ. He's the speaker. He's the worker.

He's the revealer. He's the one we're waiting for. He's the one we're living for.

He's the one we're serving. He's the one. I would like to continue this ministry this afternoon with thinking a little bit about His body.

We've heard a few verses in the early part of 1 Corinthians, and we read in verse 9, God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord. Has that ever really gripped your heart? That you have been called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus. If you've been saved of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have personally, you have responded, then you shall divinely be called into the grace that is in Christ, and all the claims of Christ, and all the responsibilities for honoring Him, and for living for Him, and for serving Him.

Real trials, because when He was in this world, and He bore tribulation and difficulties, sinners against Himself. He endured that for us, and we're going to endure it for Him. But it also has its real joy, just as He, for the joy that was suffering, despising the shame, and lived as God manifested in the flesh, poised to fill His followers with real privileges in flesh.

Denial, self-denial, enduring, all that is part of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Then in chapter 2, for just a moment, in chapter 2, the apostle says, and I, brethren, when I don't see a speech or a wisdom, you say, Jesus Christ our Lord. We talk to each other about our relationship to Him, our service for Him, our learning of Him.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not words of man, but a demonstration of the Spirit. Now, for those young believers today, one might just suggest this, that in the book of Crete, and His church, and the apostle emphasizes the Lord Jesus, the importance of it, you have been saved, if you have, but remember that you are called into a fellowship, and if you want to read an epistle that gives you a real, proper sense of relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ and His believers, read the first chapter. In the rest of chapter 2 and chapter 3, you have defined, to you, the difference between spiritual believers, I have to say, even in simply convinced.

Many, just because you were in the fellowship of some group of believers, don't assume that necessarily, therefore, then in chapter 4, the apostle Paul speaks of his own ministry. Difficulties that come in relationship to that you want to be a servant of the Lord, whether in business or out of business, whether in vocation or out of vocation, too many people read that verse, to be standing in the vocation, in the vacation wherewith you are called. And here this apostle is, this suffering apostle, and if you want to serve the Lord, just get a joy to suffer for His name's sake.

Suffer for Christ's sake. No matter what young people may say, in school may say, say whatever you say, go wherever you go, and let them say whatever they want to say. In chapter 5, we have the awful, the awful case, and in chapter 6, we have a few questions, such as going to law, eating certain things.

In chapter 7, you young people who have some thought in regard to marriage, well, if you want to know something about marriage, just read, care, better tell, doesn't he, go right over from chapter 6 to chapter 8. But all those who want to know what God's rules and regulations of marriage are, more than all the world can offer in regard to this matter, in its magazines and its books that are filled with ideas and false ideas

about sex, and it tells you all you need to know about, in chapter 8 and chapter 9, you have a good deal to do about giving. If you wonder whether you're giving enough, or if you're giving in the right way, or if you're giving to the right cause, you have to give. In chapter 7, we have the introduction of the real significance of the unit, local and universal.

There is one body, even though on a very low level, and that continues on in chapter 12, chapter 11, 12, 13, 14, and winds up with chapter 15. Chapter 11, again, we have truth relative to the headship, who is the head. We conduct ourselves, husbands, wives, men, women, conduct ourselves based upon who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

And so he gives us the necessary rulings about the Lord's suffering. And in chapter 12, he takes us in regard to spiritual exercise. Now concerning spiritual gifts, or spiritual matters, matters pertaining to the brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

He doesn't want you to be wise. He doesn't want you to say, well, I didn't know that I was a Christian. The Lord doesn't want that.

He wants you to know who's functioning, who's doing, and so read carefully, all that is heading, namely the truth of Christ and his church, are spoken of in symbol as of. And he says that there are spiritual exercises in this body. And he says, I don't want you, you know that we were Gentiles.

You know, we were ignorant, we simply did jolly what we did, Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, where there's no life, and no God, and no joy, and all you're going after. He says, once you were that, Gentiles, simply interested in things. And he says, we were idols.

And he says, I want you to know, in verse 3, wherefore I give you to understand. The call of Jesus occurs. And an old man can say that Jesus is the Lord.

It's the Holy Spirit who teaches. For that reason, that Lord and Savior, and anyone who denies, why? The apostle says that in the end. Discipline him from the assembly.

Have nothing to do with him, except to count him as an unsaved. It's only the Holy Spirit, and it's really the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit really instructs the soul about, and no man can take that word in blasphemy, and do so by the Holy Spirit. This is the mark of the difference between regeneracy and unregeneracy.

The Holy Spirit teaches love, regard, reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the head of the church. He's the, I should say, he's the head of the body.

He's the controller of the body. It's his church. You remember in Matthew chapter, in prophecy, my church.

I will build my church. And all believers can always remember that. That the church is his.

It's not our church. It's not, it's his church. And I am only honored to be in it, and related to him in it.

It's his church. I will build my church, says my Lord. It's his body.

He's the head of it. He's the controller of it. He's the regulator in it.

He's the mover. He's the revealer. It's his body.

From verse 4 through verse 13, we have the emphasis on the controller and the head, the spiritual moving in the body. Notice what it says. Now, there are diversities, or different gifts, different kinds given from God.

And there are differences, or frustrations, or functions, or movings. But, it's the same Lord. Man may say a different thing, and he may do something different.

The same wording is not so important. We can say one thing in five different ways. And the way you say it is not so important.

It's whether it's the Spirit who says it. And there are differences, or diversities, but it is the same God. We have here today, and at this conference, the word of God is being unfolded.

If so, we, that God is doing it. It's either of God, or it's of me. I am either an instrument.

He says, let the prophet speak two or three. Let the man, let each one who is hearing be the judge. Is God speaking this? Is this the word of God? Is this the truth of the Lord? Is this the manifestation of His Spirit? Does this honor the Lord Jesus Christ? How does this draw me closer to Him? How does this make me more responsible? The hearer is to evaluate, and he is not to be dead about this.

To know whether or not this is of the Lord. And if you do not know whether or not this is of the Lord, then the word of God comes to you in verse one, and He says, to be knowing these things. Is this of God, or is it not of God? Is this a spiritual movement, or is it a human organization? Which is it? If it's a spiritual movement, verse seven, but the manifestation of the Spirit, one of the manifestations of the Spirit, and it's really the real demonstration of the Spirit, is whether or not there is a, is this building up? Is this comforting? Is this convicting? Is this revealing? Is this informing? Is this helping? Is it doing something, or is it just filling up the time, and beating around the bush, and just exalting itself, or promoting man, or whatever it is? The manifestation of the Spirit is, is this a help to me? Is this doing something for me? Is it speaking to me? That's the manifestation of the Spirit.

Now, it's true, if you're dead, you won't know. Whether it's the new spiritual, you'll know. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom.

To another is given the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. I love to hear men of God speak informatively, and with knowledge, of the word of God, whether it comes from Genesis chapter one, I love to hear men speaking anonymously. To another is given faith by the same Spirit.

We don't all have the measure of faith on an equal basis. To others, to another is given the gift of healing by the same Spirit. Not all people have.

To another, the working of miracles. Now, there are some people who are afraid of these phrases, the gift of healing, and the working of miracles. Why, if anybody has the gift of tongues, or the gift of languages, you could speak Spanish, why should I be afraid? They may not know what you're talking about.

And if you could speak German, then thank God for anyone who has the gift of tongues. And so is the gift of miracles. We ought not to be afraid of anybody of tongues.

To another is given discerning of Spirit. We have read excerpts, maybe in some extreme human demonstration meeting, where a lot goes on in the energy of the flesh. Quick to discern what's of the Spirit.

We're not all equally quick to discern. To another is given different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. But all these work as one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man.

For as the body is one and has many members, and all are members of that one body, being many are one body. So also is the head, the life, the controller, the governor. It's his body, one body.

And therefore the lady together, moved upon by the Spirit, for a grand display of His glory and His grace, His movement, His work. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free, and have been made to drink into one Spirit. Here we have that one body clearly set before us with all its different functions, its different ministrations, its different gifts, its different abilities, its different responsibilities, but one body honoring and glorifying Him.

From verse 14 through verse 18, we have an emphasis on the diversity of the body. The difference of the body is not one member, but many members. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, and if the ear shall say, because I am not, if the whole body were I, if the whole were he, where would the smell be? But now has God set the members, every one of them, in the body, and it has pleased Him.

We are not all, we don't all have the same sense of smell, and only a sense of smell. As a whole, no part of my body is outstanding, but no other part of the body, every other part of the body, is perfectly all happy about it. From verse 18 through verse 31, verse 19 through 31, we have an emphasis on the unity of the Christ as the controller.

The Spirit of God is the operator. There are different, yet there is a unity. And if all were one member, where many members, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need, let not the piano player say to one who does not play the piano, and let it not be so vice versa.

Let each member, though the gift is different, the function is different, the ability is different, equally, subjectively, under the Lord Jesus Christ. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, or 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 in every sense bodies, some body members, they may be deeper inside the body, inside the head, what would we be without certain, and I may regard them, and I may kick my foot, and I may, boom, go through that.

We treat our heads, we regard certain members of our body with great importance and with care. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we disdain, for our common parts have no need. That there be no division, that there be no fractionalism, that there be no split in the body, in the assent.

And you know frequently, this is where one part of the body, no, we're a little bit better, so frequently find that. These things, brethren and sisters, we ought nothing, we ought to remember that no man is equally loved by himself. Those different operating, functioning together, that there should be no schism in the body.

Let this thing work out under the law, without division, without section, and that the members should have the same care. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer, now ye are the body of Christ. Oh, that we might hide in regard that plural, each one of us, at least.

We are the men, and God has set some in the church, if not in importance, certainly in chronological order. At least it's in order, whatever it will mean. Anyone who is sent out by God, sent out by, secondarily,

prophets.

A prophet is simply one who speaks out the word of God, prophesies. Then there are, thirdly, teachers. The teacher is simply one who informs about the wonderful ways and workings and word of God.

The teacher outlines, the teacher delineates. There are, first, apostles sent of God. Secondly, prophets speaking for God.

Thirdly, teachers informing about the wonderful ways of the Lord. Then there are, after that, miracles, gifts of healing, health, government, diversity. Are all apostles true? Are all prophets true? We're not all speaking the same? Are all teachers true? We're not all able to? Are all workers of miracles true? Are all, do all have gifts of healing? No.

Do all speak the same? No. Do all interpret the same? But covet earnestly their destiny. And yet, show I unto you, and that more excellent way is the way that follows all brothers and sisters, with all our minds, with all our souls, with all our souls.

Have we followed the first commandment that ye love one another? Are we willing to lay down our lives? Are we willing to speak the truth in order to help to the greatest degree? Love. Love is the principal thing. Love is the great thing.

Love is the magnificent thing. The more important thing. May the Lord teach us these wonderful truths of himself, his body.

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