

The Basics of Grace

Part 7

The Grace Life part III

The Body of Christ

The Body of Christ is the essence of what God is doing today. It is unique and distinct from anything God has done before. By understanding what the Body of Christ is and what God's purpose is for the Body of Christ, we can know what we as believers should be doing.

- I. Formation of the Body of Christ (the church)
 - a. Its beginning. We know the Body of Christ began with the ministry of the Apostle Paul because this concept was never before revealed (Ephesians 3:3-6, 5:32, Colossians 1:26-27-Christ in you the hope of glory)
 - b. There is only one Body, Christ's Body (I Corinthians 12:12-13, Ephesians 4:4). Important for 2 reasons
 - i. God is one
 - ii. God is dealing with mankind in one unique way today. Those who teach there are many ways to God are wrong.
 - c. What is it exactly? Draw picture
 - i. Christ the head (Ephesians 4:15, 5:23, Colossians 1:18 (church and body synonymous))
 - ii. We members of Christ's Body. Literally the life (spiritual) in us is Christ (I Corinthians 6:15-17, 12:27, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:30, Colossians 1:27)
 - iii. We are one flesh with Christ the same as a husband and wife (Genesis 2:23-24, Ephesians 5:30-32). Not just a metaphor.
Note: This is why adultery is such a big deal. The "one flesh" is a spiritual reality (see Matthew 19:6, Romans 7:1-3) not just a figure of speech. This is how God views believers and Christ.
 - d. How was it accomplished? Through Christ's work at the cross (Ephesians 2:13-16)
 - i. Crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). We have learned in previous studies that we have been made dead to sin.
 - ii. Baptized into Christ. We were separated from sin and made dead to sin through the circumcision made without hands (Colossians 2:11-12) and baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-5, I Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27). Draw picture (Adam one with sin, separated from God. Christ's work separates us from sin and joins us to Christ.)
 - iii. Made alive (Romans 8:10, Ephesians 2:1, 5, Colossians 3:4 (note: Christ literally our life) and others). Not only are we saved *from* sin, but we are also saved *to* life in Christ.

- II. God's Purpose for the Body of Christ
 - a. To reconcile sinners to Himself in one Body (Ephesians 1:4, 2:14-19, Colossians 1:18-22, I Timothy 2:4)
 - b. To demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:9-11, 1:5-6, 12, Romans 8:18, Colossians 1:27, II Thessalonians 1:10 church=Body of Christ)
 - c. To reveal Himself in and through us. We are the manifestation of God on earth—in us are revealed the attributes of God. (II Corinthians 4:10, Ephesians 2:7-10, Philippians 1:11, II Thessalonians 1:12, Titus 2:14)
 - d. To mature (perfect) and edify the Body of Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19, 4:15-16, 5:25-27)
 - e. To complete the work He began in us (Romans 8:17-23, Philippians 1:6, 3:20-21, Colossians 3:4)
 - f. To give Jesus Christ preeminence over all (I Corinthians 15:24-28, Ephesians 1:18-23, Philippians 2:9-11, Colossians 1:17-19)
 - g. To be a dwelling place of God (Ephesians 2:22, I Corinthians 3:16-17 (see also vss. 10-11), 6:19, II Corinthians 6:16). Compare to Exodus 29:45 and also how God dwelt in the tabernacle and later the temple.
 - h. To live with us for eternity (I Thessalonians 5:10, 4:17-18)

- III. Functioning of the Body of Christ
 - a. Universally. All believers are members of the Body of Christ, regardless of location, denomination, etc. God's purpose for the Body of Christ involves all of us universally. God intends for the Body of Christ to be a living, functioning thing.
 - b. Locally. Practically, how the Body of Christ functions is locally. Local churches or groups of people.

- IV. Practicing Functioning as Members of the Body of Christ
 - a. As individuals (Colossians 3:17, 23)
 - b. In the local assembly (i.e. with fellow believers) (Galatians 5:14, Ephesians 4:31-32, Philippians 2:3, Colossians 3:16)
 - c. The Power of Love. Love is overwhelmingly one of the most important attributes of God; it is called the fulfillment of the law; it is considered the greatest gift. What is love? Is it smiling and shaking hands with everyone Sunday morning? Is it helping old ladies across the street? Is it giving money to the homeless? (Romans 5:5-8, I Corinthians 13:13, Ephesians 5:25,) God's love is enduring, selfless, not dependent on merit. Our love for each other should be the same.