

"THE JOINTS OF THE BODY"

"From whom (that is, Christ; under his control), the whole body fitly joined together (adjusted) and compacted (united, knit together) by that which every joint supplieth, according to (in proportion to) the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase (builds itself up) of itself in (through) love." *Eph. 4:16 KJV* (NEB offers a much better translation)

INTRODUCTION: Paul here uses the idea of the growth of the human body to illustrate the growth of the church. *Applies to Universal Church and to the Local Church.*

I. As a Body, the church is made up of a great variety of component parts.

1. The joints ~~are the various~~ ^{and} ligaments that hold the whole body together.
2. It is not one clumsy mechanical piece, Without either parts or joints, but a body of numerous organs for the accomplishment of different services.

Every joint is to supply something, but every joint is not to supply the same thing.

3. Let no one belittle "church work" as if it were opposed to true spiritual Christian service.

The members and organizations of the church must function for the service of the body itself.

The body has to serve itself before it can be useful to others.

The church must be in a healthy condition internally, strong and vigorous, before it can be the physician of a sin-sick world.

4. In ^{the local} Body we find the learned professor, and by his side the kindergarten child; the scientist lecturing on the plants, animals, atoms, and stars -- Orion & Pliades, -- and by his side one who hardly understands that the earth is round but knows that he is a poor lost sinner and that Christ died to save him.

5. One member of this ^{UNIVERSAL} Body dwells among Greenland's icy mountains, another on India's coral strands, and another under Florida's sunny skies; one wears the black skin of the African, another the red skin of the American Indian, one the yellow skin of the Chinese, and another the white skin of the Caucasian;

but all alike are members of the Body of Christ,
"whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free!!!,
fellow heirs of the same body...,
and all one in Christ Jesus."

II. The Joints of the Body might represent the Various Organizations, boards, committees, and officers, and Members of the Church.

Each part must do its share.

"the measure of every part" = by every constituent part

"that which each joint supplieth" = through the due activity of each part.

1. The deacons - servants of the church in spiritual thing

2. The Trustees - the legal officers of the corporation, as required by the laws of the state.

Responsible for the physical properties of the ch.

3. The Sunday School - Bible teaching, enlisting and winning people to Christ, the church & Bible study. (includes D.V.B.S.)

4. The W.M.F. - women's organization for missionary education, prayer, support & service in missions at home and abroad.

5. Brotherhood - a service organization enlisting the talents of the laymen of the church in support of the program of the church.

6. The T.M.U. - Training in church membership - church

7. The Clerk - keeps official records Tng. Dept.

8. Treasurer - keeps financial records

9. Music Department

10. Youth dept.

11. Kindergarten/Children's Dept.

12. Budget Committee on Stewardship

13. Other standing committees

14. Special committees

III. Although the Body has many parts it is a compact organization, and each part must work in conjunction with all the rest.

1. The whole body grows by every part growing;

the whole body develops as every part does its part.

2. The whole church grows by every member growing and doing his part in conjunction with all the others.

3. This rule, as applied to the local church, would mean that the church would have just as many workers as there are members.

The pastor with a church of 400 members would have 400 devoted helpers and workers; --- all working together -- then "the whole body grows through the due activity of each part and builds itself up in love."

4. There are certain requirements for health, growth and effective service of the body:

A. Each organ and joint must be in its proper place.

No one else can fill your place.

No Christian's life is lived by proxy.

If your work is done by someone else, then your work is not done at all.

B. Each organ and joint must have its particular and proper work assigned to it.

C. They must be regularly & faithfully exercised.

D. There must be a common sympathy and harmony between all the members of the body.

(1). Mutual cooperation and assistance

(2). Love & respect for one another: The church can build itself up in love.

(3). Constant forbearing with one another.

(4). Working for the good of the whole body.

E. Subordination to the policies of the body.

(1). All the parts in the organization of the body are subordinate, and intended for the increase of the whole body.

(2). The whole body is dependent upon its Head for its order and resources. "On Him (Christ) the whole body depends."

Christ is the Head of the Body

5. If the church is the Body of Christ, then

A. No member of this Body must do anything that Jesus would not have done when He was on the earth.

B. Every member of this Body must be ready, willing, and eager to do what Jesus would do in His or her place today.

6. EVERY CHURCH SHOULD BE A BAND OF MISSIONARIES.

The multitudes of the saved should go out after the multitudes who are not saved.

What is needed is more of that life-giving, vitalizing fire of God's Holy Spirit which will arouse every Christian to earnest, consecrated, soul-winning work.

THE JOINTS OF THE BODY

Here Paul gives a physiological metaphor taken from the picture of the human body. Ancient medical doctors regarded the head as the center and source of all the vital forces of the body.

The head was supposed to supply the body with all that it requires for health and growth.

It was more than just the seat of the intelligence.

In Colossians 2:19 and Eph. 4:16

this metaphor is used regarding the functions of the body and all its joints and parts as being fully dependent on the head.

The church is pictured as the Body of Christ, and Christ is the head of the Body or the Head of the church.

The Head is absolutely predominant over the Body.

If the head is separated from the body there can be no life or growth in the body at all. None whatsoever.

This teaches us that Christianity is more than a moral code.

It is living fellowship with Christ.

Christianity is more than a theology.

It is a living union with Christ.

The church not only gets its unity from Christ, but also its growth, its spiritual power, its moral guidance, and its ability to fulfill God's redemptive will for the world.

Several things are implied in this:

(a). It is God, not the human membership or leadership of the church, who supplies the life and power by which the church grows.

(b). This growth of the church is not merely growth in numbers, prestige, influence, or activity, by human standards of progress.

Growth in numbers and other things may come also, but it is primarily spiritual growth in vital union with Christ and in Christian maturity which is meant here.

The most important question is not merely growth in numbers, or in additions to the church, or in financial income.

The most important thing is whether or not the church conforms to the divine nature and will, whether it is fulfilling God's purpose for his church, whether the gospel is being faithfully proclaimed from pulpit, Sunday School classrooms, home visitation, and daily witnessing wherever its members rub shoulders with unsaved people during the week.

Our job is to be faithful and leave the results with God.

We can only sow the seed and water it, but it is God who gives the increase. Let's just be faithful in our part and trust the Holy Spirit to do his part.

(c) Another lesson we learn from this physiological metaphor is the interdependence of the members of the body in receiving and passing on the spiritual life from Christ our Head. We are not only receivers of blessings and strength and nourishment from Christ, but we are each one channels sharing through one another these vital forces which come ultimately from Christ our Head.

This emphasis and meaning is given through the two phrases "by every joint with which it is supplied" and "when each part is working properly." One suggested meaning of "joint" is the more general word "contact."

The literal translation would then be "through every contact of the supply"; this would suggest the way in which the vital forces of divine life and strength make their way through the ^{contacts} body of the church by an endless ^{contact} between the members of the body in a truly Christian relation with each other.

But this is true only when "each part
is working properly."

"Properly" here translates the original phrase "en metro", literally "in measure". We might paraphrase it, "through the working of every several part in its appointed measure."

scriptural background
With this ⁱⁿ mind now let us look at how these several joints and ligaments of the body of Christ, the Church, work together to meet needs and do the Lord's work in the community and world.