

THE BODY OF CHRIST

(Eph. 1:15-23)

Introduction:

1. Paul's letter to the Ephesians has long been known for its emphasis on the church. The letter is often divided up into two main sections: chapters 1-3 what God has done for us in the church; and chapters 4-6 what is expected from us the church.
2. Let us this morning consider just how very much the church, the assembly of God's people, was front and center in Paul's mind in this great letter. Let us do so by means of a quick overview of the entire letter noticing especially what is said or implied about the church.

Discussion:

I. Chapter One = The Church is Christ's body.

- A. Thus, Christians are "in Him".
 1. V1 = the saints are IN CHRIST.
 2. V3 = all spiritual blessings are IN CHRIST.
 3. V4 = we were chosen IN CHRIST.
 4. V6 = we are made acceptable IN CHRIST.
 5. V7 = we have redemption, forgiveness, and riches of God's grace IN CHRIST.
 6. V10 = the saved are gathered together IN CHRIST.
 7. V11 = we have obtained an inheritance IN CHRIST.
 8. VV 12-14 = our trust is IN CHRIST and results in the praise of His glory, our salvation, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit (the down payment of the full inheritance, redemption to come).
 9. VV15-23 = Our faith is IN CHRIST and results in knowledge/wisdom/hope and, ironically we become the riches of His inheritance (v18); the fullness of Him (v23)!
- B. In the body of Christ, the church, is the only place to be if you indeed desire all of the things listed as being found only IN CHRIST.

II. Chapter Two = The Composition of the Body.

- A. VV 1-10 = The body of Christ, the church, is comprised of those who have been made alive by the grace of God offered through Christ. As such, we are the works of God = He has made us alive (5), raised us up to sit TOGETHER with Christ in the heavens (6), and prepared us for good works (10, as the body of Christ on earth).
- B. VV 11-18 = The body of Christ, the church, is comprised of Jew and Gentile; that is of all peoples. It is ONE body comprised of all peoples who have partaken of the grace of God through the cross of Christ (16); which preached provided us access to that grace (17, 18; cp. Rom. 5:1, 2).
- C. VV 19-22 = The body of Christ, the church, is the citizenry of the Kingdom of Heaven, the family of God, and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (cp. 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19); all via the doctrine (teaching) of Christ and His apostles/prophets.

III. Chapter Three = The Body is the Manifestation of the Wisdom and Glory of God.

- A. VV 1-7 = The apostles were given the charge of preaching/revealing the truth about the body of Christ, the church.
- B. VV 8-13 = This message revealed much about the body of Christ, the church.
 1. The body of Christ, the church, enjoys the unsearchable riches of Christ (8).
 2. The body of Christ, the church, shows the wisdom of God to the heavenly powers (10).
 3. The body of Christ, the church, is the eternal purpose of God (v11).
 4. The body of Christ, the church, has bold (free and fearless) access with confidence into heaven (V12; cp. 2 Pet. 1:11).

- C. VV 14-21 = The body of Christ, the church, has strength, fellowship, love, and access to power beyond understanding from God IN CHRIST; that is in the body of Christ, the church.

IV. Chapter Four = The Genesis and Nature of the Body.

- A. VV 1-16 = The body of Christ, the church, is realized by way of the one and only faith (VV 1-6). Christ has given us all that we require to be His body and to be effectively working (vv 11-16).
B. VV 17-32 = The body of Christ, the church, is a new spiritual body not a physical one. The body relates to itself via the head, Christ, not the flesh/world (cp. Gal. 4, 5).

V. Chapter Five = The Command and Control of the Body.

- A. VV 1-21 = The body of Christ, the church, is governed and operated by the head, Christ. It does not obey/follow the will of the flesh/world, but rather is filled/operated by the Spirit it thankfully has received.
B. VV 22-6:9 = the body of Christ, the church, operating now according to the head, Christ, relates to others differently (spouses, nuclear family, even in the work place).

VI. Chapter Six = The Protection of the Body.

- A. VV 10-20 = The body of Christ, the church, has been fully equipped to defend itself against the enemies of Christ, as well as to overcome those enemies (cp. 2 Cor. 10:3-6).
B. VV 21-24 = the body of Christ, the church, has comfort, peace, love, and grace through our sincere (pure = total, not mixed) faith in Christ.

Conclusion:

1. Truly Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a letter to the church about the church for the sake of the church.
2. Let us never forget the importance and significance of the church of Christ; that is, the body of Christ.
3. Invitation.

MORE ON "THE BODY OF CHRIST"

1. Consider Hos. 2.
2. Far too many people in the church defame this holy, sacred body.
 - A. The church is also called the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-33; Rev. 21:2, 9, 14 = Eph. 2:19-22). So how is the bride of our Lord and Savior treated?
 1. As something common and of no special consideration? How is the church regarded by those who claim association?
 2. As one of many brides in some religious harem? How is the bride of Christ regarded among the many brides of demons (1 Cor. 10:16-22)?
 - B. The church of Christ are the ones for whom Christ's precious blood was spilt (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:17-19). Is it not, therefore, as precious as the blood that purchased it (Heb. 10:29)?
3. At the end of the day the church of Christ is glorious and perfect, and we flawed and helpless children have been afforded the opportunity to be added to it (Eph. 2). But by no means will any be added to the church who do not reverence the body of Christ; and none shall be retained in the assembly of God who do not continually reverence His bride (Christ's words to the churches in Revelation, and the final words of that great letter = Rev. 21:26, 27; 22:14, 15).
4. Would you be a part of the body of Christ? Heed the eternal words of incorporation (Gen. 2:17; 4:7; Deut. 27-30; Is. 1; Matt. 11:28-30; 2 Cor. 5; et al). The choice, as always, is yours.