

Series So Far: The Holiness of the Church

Over the past four weeks, we've been discovering that God's plan for holiness is much bigger than individual believers. He is forming a holy people who reflect His character and display His Kingdom to the world.

Week 24 – Called Out, Set Apart: The Holy Assembly: God calls a holy people out of darkness and into His Kingdom.

Week 25 – Christ Loves a Holy Bride: Christ loves, cleanses and prepares His Bride.

Week 26 – Built Together as God's Dwelling: God builds believers together into His dwelling place

Week 27 – One Body, Many Members, One Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit unites every member with a unique place and purpose within Christ's Body.

Our journey so far has shown us that holiness is personal, relational and corporate. God is not only making holy individuals—He is forming a holy Church.

One Body, Many Members, One Holy Spirit

Over the past month we have seen God progressively reveal His vision for a holy Church. He has called a holy people out of darkness, Christ is lovingly preparing His holy Bride, the Holy Spirit is building believers together into God's dwelling place and now we discover that every believer has a unique place and purpose within Christ's Body. Holiness is not only about becoming more like Christ as individuals; it is about becoming the people God has designed us to be together.

This week, Pastor Heather brought these truths together by reminding us that sanctification is never simply an individual journey. God calls us into one body where every believer has a unique place, purpose and contribution. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are joined together as the Body of Christ.

The key passage for this message is 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 using the message translation, where Paul compares the Church to the human body. Just as the body has many different parts working together, the Church consists of many different people with different gifts, personalities and callings.

Although we are diverse, we are united by one Spirit and belong to one Body under Christ. Paul reminds us that every believer has been placed into the Body by God Himself. Our place is not accidental, nor is it determined by status, ability or visibility. God has carefully arranged each member exactly where He desires them to be. Every gift, every ministry and every act of service contributes to the health and growth of the whole Church.

Pastor Heather highlighted that comparison has no place in the Body of Christ. The foot should not envy the hand, nor should the eye dismiss the ear. Likewise, believers are not called to compete with one another or compare their gifts. Instead, we recognise that every member is valuable because every member belongs to Christ. The seemingly hidden or less visible ministries are often among the most essential for the life of the Church.

The scripture also teaches that the Body is designed for mutual care. When one member suffers, the whole Body suffers. When one member is honoured, everyone rejoices together. This reflects the love, compassion and unity that should characterise the people of God.

Pastor Heather reminded us that we cannot fully live out our calling in isolation. An isolated believer is disconnected from the very environment God has designed for spiritual growth. The Church is where believers are encouraged, equipped, restored and strengthened to fulfil God's purposes together.

The Holy Spirit is central to this unity. Although there are many gifts, there is only one Spirit. Every gift originates from Him and is given for the benefit of the whole Body. Spiritual gifts are not given for personal recognition but to strengthen Christ's Church and glorify Him.

Drawing from the example of Jesus calling His disciples, Pastor Heather observed that Jesus chose ordinary people—fishermen, tradesmen and a tax collector—to follow Him. They were not selected because they were the most impressive, but because Christ called them. In the same way, God delights in using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary purposes through His Spirit.

Pastor Heather concluded by reminding us that no believer is insignificant in God's Kingdom. Every member of the Body has been given a unique role, and every gift contributes to the health and mission of the Church. Our calling is not to compare ourselves with others, but to faithfully serve where God has placed us. As each member fulfils their God-given purpose, the Body grows stronger, the Church is built up, and Christ is glorified.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
— 1 Corinthians 12:27

Key Takeaways

- There is one Body of Christ and one Holy Spirit.
- God intentionally places every believer within the Body.
- Every member has equal value, regardless of visibility or role.
- Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the whole Church.
- Comparison and competition weaken the unity of the Body.
- The Church is designed for mutual care, encouragement and restoration.
- We grow best in Christian community rather than isolation.
- Jesus calls ordinary people and equips them for extraordinary purposes.
- The Word of God and the Holy Spirit work together to transform believers.
- Every believer has a unique place and purpose within Christ's Body.

Discussion Questions

1. Paul teaches that when one member suffers, every member suffers and when one is honoured, everyone rejoices. What are some practical ways we can live this out within our church and home group?
2. Pastor Heather said that an isolated believer can never fully function as God intended. Why is Christian community essential for spiritual growth and sanctification?
3. What is one practical step you can take this week to strengthen the unity of Christ's Body?
4. Last week, Pastor Alida encouraged us to read 1 Corinthians 12 and consider where we see ourselves within the Body of Christ. What gifts, abilities, experiences or passions has God given you that could strengthen His Church where He has planted you?
5. Romans 12:2 teaches that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. How does regular time in God's Word help shape the way we think, make decisions and live as part of Christ's Body?

This Week's Challenge

Read 1 Corinthians 12 again during the week.

Ask the Holy Spirit: where have You placed me within Your Body, and how can I faithfully use the gifts You have given me to build up Your Church?

Write down one practical opportunity to serve, encourage or strengthen someone in the Body of Christ this week.

Scripture Memory Challenge

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:27

Message Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31: MSG

¹²⁻¹³ You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which *he* has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

¹⁴⁻¹⁸ I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so? If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, transparent and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

¹⁹⁻²⁴ But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a *part* of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes *no* difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

²⁵⁻²⁶ The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

²⁷⁻³¹ You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body":

apostles
prophets
teachers
miracle workers
healers
helpers
organizers
those who pray in tongues.

But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts.

But now I want to lay out a far better way for you.