

## Discipleship 101      Chapter 10      The Body of Christ

Opening prayer and insights from the last week.

Revelation 1:20 (Jesus) The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches, and the lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation 2:1 (Jesus) To the angel (messenger) of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.

Jesus, is running the church from heaven as his people will listen. What implications does that have for us that are a part of the Body of Christ? How about those not participating in the Body of Christ?

Ephesians 4: 7,8 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives and gave gifts to men."

Ephesians 4:3-6 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is only one Body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

The Lord gives an anointing to a particular group of people to be his church. It is that anointing that makes it his church, not because man wants it to be that. The people must act under his authority by faith to receive that authority from him, He can remove that anointing as well. What is the Spirit trying to accomplish in those given this anointing? What are the tools Jesus has given to each group called?

You can think of Jesus wearing the Spiritual mantle of a cloak – which is the Apostolic mantle of the authority of his church. All authority and gifts of the Spirit are in this cloak but is only able to be used according to the maturity and faith of the people under his authority. It must be present for the church to be his. The church has to be trusted in the will of the Lord. What is the implication in this for us?

Revelation 2:4, 5 (Jesus) Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

Revelation 2:7 (Jesus) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

God has made it known that love for God is first and most important. To those who are given more, more is required. This church had been given a lot in the Lord but had left off pursuing the Lord and was going through the motions. God will warn those who are attentive to his Spirit. If the group does not listen and repent, what will happen? The group losing the power and anointing of God's Spirit doesn't

mean that the individuals have lost their relationship with Christ, only as a corporate Body they no longer have his authority. Some of these or other individuals whom God will call can receive that anointing and God will raise up a new group. There could be more than one distinct church operating under a separate anointing as a church in that area. What would be the implications of a church without the anointing that continued to have church services and meet as a church?

2 Timothy 2:11-13 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

The word for faithless is weak in faith. Disowning the Lord is turning from relationship with him. On an individual basis, we can turn from him but he isn't turning from us just because we are struggling, only if we turn from him. What is God's desire for us and what is his Spirit striving to do in our lives.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' and the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'. On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while the presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the Body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the Body, but that its parts should have equal concern for one another.

This passage says that special grace is given to those who are not as able in the natural so that spiritually they are playing a key role in the health and well being of the church. They must be encouraged to grow in the Lord as anyone else but greater grace is given to make up for lack in the natural. What does that mean for people that otherwise may be thought of as unimportant?

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

2 Timothy 1:6,7 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and of self discipline.

What are the implications for you as a group here now? Do you desire spiritual gifts to serve the Body or just to have?

One final question that each one must consider silently on his own: Whose authority is your life under? – God's, your own, something else ... ?

There will be a ministry time to pray for one another, one by one again. Each one prayed for should voice what in their hearts they want of God and the others pray to strengthen them and impart some gift to help them serve. Pray to make that way of service clear as well. Pray to give boldness. Pray to stir people up spiritually and to manifest the Lord's Spirit in each one.