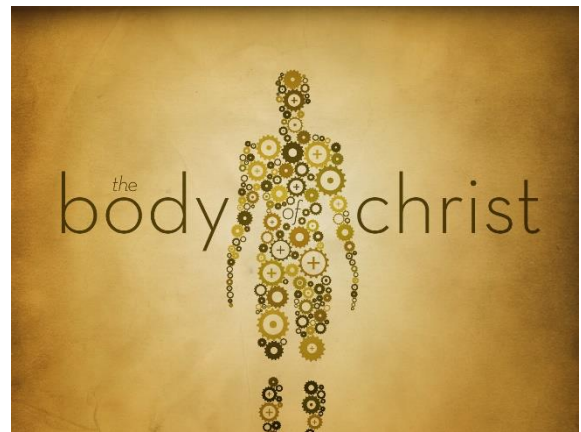


PATHFINDERS

ST. LAWRENCE

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31, 25 APRIL 2021

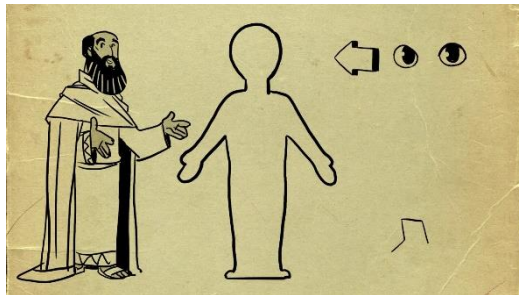


Intro	<p>What makes the Church unique? What is it about the Church that makes it different from any other large gathering of people: a club, a school, or a pub even? Well, there's nothing like the Church, because it turns our natural ideas of what people are worth on their heads. The truth is that as the Body of Jesus, we ALL have a role to play, even the church janitor.</p>
Read	<p>1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (NIV UK)</p> <p>¹²Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptised by^[a] one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.</p> <p>¹⁵Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.</p> <p>²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers,</p>

every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Watch



This video breaks down how the body of Christ works! We all have a part to play in bringing the good news of Jesus to this world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evRQUxzn8qA>

Think

What do people who don't go to church think of Christians and the church?

No doubt there are several things that pop into your head. My list, compiled from years of interacting with non-Christians (and also what I thought when I wasn't a Christian) is that Christians and the Church are a bunch of uptight, self-righteous, arrogant, no-fun, and boring group of people.

So what is the Church? What makes it different from a purely social club?

On an extremely basic level, it has a lot in common with those things. For some, the church is a relic of some kind of past time when they were kids, for others, they're there to meet people, and for some other people still, it's a major place of encouragement and central to their lives. For a lot of people, though, it's a really passive experience of consumerism. What does that mean? Well, a consumer does what? It consumes. And that's how a lot of people see church: it's a place to go to get something you need. But, the Bible's view of the Church couldn't be further from this idea. Matthew 5:14-16 says "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." The Church is completely different from the world, but it *isn't* completely separate from the world. Instead, the Bible describes it as a light that shines brightly to illuminate the world around it, that shows things as they really are when not covered in the darkness.

How do people treat the church as consumers? Do you ever find yourself doing that?

I know I certainly do. I've often seen church as something to attend to get something. In the past, I've been critical of worship styles, song choices, styles of dress, custom, etc. What are ways you have done this? It's really easy to slip into this mindset as people who live in the West. We live in a world of pretty easy access to anything and everything we might want. What do we do when something doesn't give us what we want? We throw it away. It's easy to let the Church slip into that mindset too.

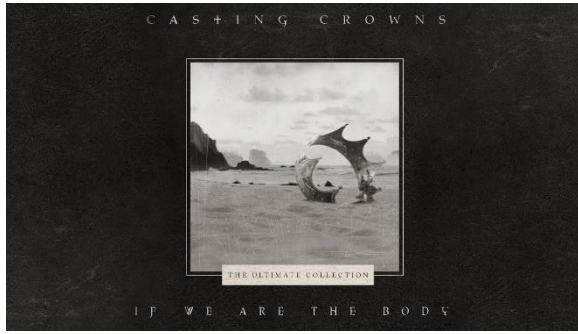
What unhelpful things does this mindset lead to? What are people missing out on who treat their Christian faith in this way?

When you have an entire group of people so obsessively focused on themselves and their needs, you don't have room to love your neighbour. You miss the unique and precious dynamic of a church family. Jesus told us that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Think about the most self-sacrificial person you've ever known. Who might it be? A friend, a parent, a teacher maybe? What made you love them so much? Surely it was the fact that they threw away every comfort of their own to love and serve you wasn't it? See, that's what Jesus did for us too. He came down from heaven itself to be with a people who didn't want Him, so that He could save them. *That* is our model. *That* is what the Church is called to reflect. The church isn't just a community of Christians. It doesn't exist purely for the sake of the people who are in it. Instead, Jesus said that Christians are to stand out-to "shine" in a dark world.

So where do you fit in?

Maybe you ask yourself this question a lot. Well, we've seen above that the mission of the Church isn't to be a club of people obsessed with their own needs. No, our Scripture passage today teaches us that we *all* serve a role in the mission Jesus gave us to share His Word. There's not a part of the Body of Christ (what Scripture calls the Church) that can say to the other part of the Body "I don't need you" or "you're not necessary." No, we all have a particular mission ourselves that works into the huge mission of being the light that shines on this dark world. As you get older, you will begin to start to understand what your role may be. But the cool thing is that you don't have to wait until you grow up! You can start playing your part today by serving your church. Jesus gave you gifts of things you excel at to serve the Gospel. Do you like to learn? Learn all you can for the sake of growing your Bible knowledge so you can teach others some day. Do you like to play music? Talk to David and see if you can join the music team! Do you like Bible studies and do you think you want to start a Bible study with your classmates at school? Talk to me, Al Wenham, David, or Clare and we would love to help you learn how to lead a Bible study. There are so many ways that you, even now, can be a light shining in the darkness! No task is too small and no cause unimportant when the Gospel is driving it.

Listen



This song is a big wake up call. It calls us to remember that we are the Body of Christ and challenges us to remember that if we are the Body, then why aren't we reaching out into the world with God's love and the Gospel of Jesus?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fouqn5Xg5-E>

Pray

- Consider how you've used the Church as a consumer in the past. Ask Jesus to help you be like Him, serving the Church, instead of passively consuming.
- Ask Jesus to show you what sort of gifts you may have that you can contribute to the Church.
- Thank God that He made you unique with special gifts and talents to reflect His love and glory.
- Pray that you would reach out in love to this world with the Gospel as part of the Body of Christ.