

The Culture of the Kingdom Only One Body

Studio Session 144
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05/07/2008

We were looking at how the Body of Christ is arranged in light of the admonition that we should not forsake the arrangement of the Body of Christ. We began with the principle that you are put into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. From I Corinthians 12:12, "For by one Spirit are you baptized into one Body, whether you be Jew or Greek..." in other words, no matter the diversity of your national origin, no matter the diversity of your social class - whether you're bond or free – you're put into the Body by the Spirit; the Spirit is arbitrary in the way He assembles you in the Body. Which means He does not necessarily acquiesce to your choice of arrangements; you may prefer to be put alongside another particular part within the Body, but the Holy Spirit's mandate is not your preference, what you would choose, what you would prefer. The Holy Spirit's mandate is to do the will of the One who sent Him and He searches the deep things of God, He was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to assemble the Body of Christ in the earth against a particular day, the day when the Lord would return and the Body would be completely assembled.

So the Holy Spirit then who searches the deep things of God, knows the intention of God for you, that is, what did God have in mind when He created you, what did He have in mind for Himself when He created you, that is, how He intended to live through you and therefore the extent to which His glory would be seen in the earth in you and through you. That is why every person – no matter how diverse your gifting or talentedness - can find the most complete expression of that gifting in the context of the Body of Christ. Apart from the context of the Body of Christ the world may still see the genius of a particular gifting but they'll see it alongside the scarred, tattered, bruised and restrained elements of the persons unregenerated soul. And he will present the mixture of divine genius, that is, God having given you a gift which allows people to admire the greatness of God in you, but that gift would operate within a context of brokenness and unfulfillment in the rest of a persons life. But in the kingdom, we were meant to function apart from unfulfillment and apart from the contradiction of our own folly and foolishness; we were meant to function fully to the glory of God.

We are assembled in the Body in such a way as to promote all of that and the Holy Spirit

is the one who assembles us. He places us - by His predetermination - into those relationships that are best suited to support who we are and what we are to become. If you wonder why God would choose to put someone in one particular family as opposed to in another family, it is because there are purposes greater than what may be apparent in that selection. In I Corinthians he goes on to tell us that there are many members in the one Body of Christ. In verse 27 for example, he says, "For you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." Previous to that he said, "Now the Body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the Body,' it would not for that reason cease to be part of the Body. If the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the Body,' it would not for that reason cease to be part of the Body." In other words, he's saying that every part of the Body was designed to function within the whole Body, to receive it's support from the whole Body and to give it's gifting to the whole Body. That's the way God put it together. And the natural Body then, is used as an allegory to analogize to the Body of Christ.

So his point - the deep point of Paul in I Corinthians - is that there is only one Body, although there are many members. And although the members are unique, in both their functioning....their gifting and their functioning, they were meant to function together as the Body of Christ. So he says that and speaks very, very critically of those who would divide the Body of Christ and speaks disparagingly of the results of the Body of Christ being divided. So in the first chapter of this same book, I Corinthians, we're reading from chapter 12 but in chapter 1 he says, "It's been told me by the house of Chloe that there are divisions among you. Some of you say, 'I am of Paul,' 'I am of Apollos,' 'I am of Cephas,' 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided?" Paul is keenly aware of the mandate of Christ to which he has been called as an apostle. A mandate of Christ was heard in His prayer to the Father in the book of John the 16th chapter where Jesus said, "Father, let them be one as You are in Me and I am in You, let them be one in Us." In other words, "In the same manner in which We are One, I'm praying for them to be one." What is the manner in which They were One? Jesus was in the Father; the Father was in Him. He's saying, "In this same way, let them be in Us."

Well, in what way was Jesus in the Father? He was completely under the authority of the One who sent Him, to the point where He said, "I only do what I see My Father doing." Wow. He constrained His entire activity - everything that He did in the earth, the entirety of His life on the earth - He constrained to whatever the Father was doing, "I only do what I see My Father doing," in that sense He is fully 'in' the Father, not only in the Fathers will but He is completely under the authority of the Father as to be hidden in the Father as His location from which He does what He does. And was the Father in Him? He said, "I am in the Father; the Father is in Me." Was the Father in Him? How was the Father in Him? Well of course by the Holy Spirit. He said, "The Father loves the Son and shows Him what He does." We see from the very outset of the ministry of Christ, He's

baptized in the water by John and the Holy Spirit comes down on Him in the form of a dove and the Holy Spirit immediately begins to lead His actions everywhere He went. In Matthew chapter 4, the very next thing that happens from His baptism by John is He's lead by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is that critical element that explains the relationships within the Body of Christ and explains how God communicates among these relationships so that the Head, who is Christ, is truly served by a Body that is responsive to Him who is the Head. That's the work, that's the sovereign work, of the Holy Spirit.

So when Paul writes to the Corinthians and tells them that they've been assembled into the Body by the Spirit and therefore, though they are many parts, they are one Body. This is what he means when he speaks of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the assembling of the Body of Christ. He's not talking about church meetings, meetings are good but meetings are not our fellowship. The arrangement of the Holy Spirit of the parts of the Body, that is our fellowship, that's the fellowship that we should not forsake. Don't tell me we have fellowship when 5000 of us meet in a building to listen to a speaker, that's not fellowship, that's a monologue. People come to get information, that's not fellowship. Fellowship is the intertwining of lives together with purposeful intent under the headship of Christ, that is the function of the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit was sent to assemble the Body of Christ and He assembles it to produce a compatibility of functioning among the parts, that everyone could see Christ in the Corporate Man.

That's what this is about, the early church understood that. It is why Paul and Peter and these others could say, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female, there's neither bond nor free." But in the world, everyone is keenly aware of racial divisions, everyone is keenly aware of social class distinctions, everyone is keenly aware of gender differences because those are the things by which we define ourselves in the world. But in the kingdom we define ourselves by the relationship with the Holy Spirit to each other because the compatibility of the Holy Spirit – that is, the compatibility between the parts – is exactly the artistry of the Holy Spirit.

I think of my children and Lucy within our own family, within our natural family, and the individuals are very different people but we never get tired of each other, it's always joyful to see each other. When the children lived at home, I never wished that they weren't at home or that I was somewhere else, and I suspect they didn't either because God put something together – a family – to teach us how to function as members of the Body of Christ. And now that I'm older and more mature and have a greater sphere of responsibility, I never wake up wishing that I were someplace else or hoping for a different assignment because I'm perfectly attuned to the thing that I'm being. You know, I don't think about retirement because most people who think of retirement think of retiring to go and do something they want to do and they've worked hard and long at

something they didn't particularly want to do so that they could get to go, at the end of their lives, and do something that they lived all their lives hoping to be able to afford to do.

When the Holy Spirit assembles the parts of the Body, we see the conjoint effort of the parts producing a result greater than the sum of the parts. It is in the unity of the Body that we see the glory of God, that's why Jesus said, "Let them be one in the manner in which You and I are One; You are in Me because Your Spirit leads Me and directs Me and motivates Me and empowers Me, shows Me what I am to do everyday, gives Me the vision for it, gives Me faith to believe it when I don't see it, Your Spirit leads Me. Your Spirit is in Me and I am in You; I have total trust in who You have made Me to be and I have total trust in the fact that You will never leave Me, You will never forsake Me, You won't send Me somewhere and cut Me off, You will provide for Me as I do what You call Me to do, You will guarantee the results, I'm free to do what You send Me to do without taking responsibility for the outcome. All these things come from the understanding: You are in Me and I am in You. That Your Spirit arranges My order and I obey You."

Paul begins first Corinthians with this teaching, "How could some of you say, 'I am of Paul,' 'I am of Apollos,' 'I am of Cephas,' because the Body is one?" And it goes on in chapter 11 to say, "When we fail to discern the Body, yet some are weak and sick and some die prematurely." So he's saying, "Pay close attention to the fact that we are one Body," but I want you to notice this amazing turn from that when he talks about his relationship to the Corinthians and it seems nearly an incompatibility. Verse 14 of chapter 4, he says, "I'm not writing this to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?"

Well that seems to be going in a different direction. What I mean is this, he begins to say in discussing...and he ends this book with a reference to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. He talks in the earlier chapters of how Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for them, they were not baptized in the name of Paul, and so on. And then he says, "The Holy Spirit assembles the Body and puts the parts together," He does that by searching the mind of God and knowing who God made you to be, the Holy Spirit then baptizes you, arranges you in the Body in the fashion in which God intended. And you should not

forsake the assembling of the Body together in this fashion because there's a day against which the assembling of the Body would be complete. All of that we understand. And then he says, "If you don't discern the Lords Body, then some are weak and sick and some die prematurely." But then in the midst of that whole, clear, continuous presentation, he inserts this thing about having not many fathers and 'I am your father'. What's difficult is, how on one hand could he say, "I am your father," to the Corinthians and then on the other hand say, "Don't say, 'I am of Paul'." Does that not seem like he's coming right up to the line? Hmmm. What does this mean and how is this compatible with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit? Well, Paul is introducing us to the core of the arrangement of the house of God; the house of God is arranged according to a patriarchal order, patriarchal model. And the moment you hear that you realize this was the order from the beginning. When God established order in creation, all of the order of creation followed a patriarchal model.

Now, the application of the patriarchal model in the Old Testament was fleshly, meaning, 'So and so begat so and so who begat so and so who begat so and so.' So it was all laid out in a fashion that celebrated human lineage and human ancestry. But now, Paul is not the human father of the Corinthians, is he. Paul was not married, Paul had no children. So on what basis does he say, "I became your father," and what is the relevance of this model to the arrangement of the house of God. And how can Paul one hand say, "The Body is not divided," and on the other hand say, "I am your father," how could he say, "Don't say, 'I am of Paul,' don't say, 'I am of Apollos' don't say, 'I am of Peter,'" and on the other hand say, "I am your father."? Do not those who consider Paul their father in the Lord – like Timothy - have the right to say, "I am of Paul."? Apparently Paul would say, "No." But how is that compatible with being able to say, "Paul is my father."? And how does all of this work together? Now obviously, this will be more than can be contained in the rest of this broadcast, so what we'll do is we'll get to as far as we can and we'll continue to work through these contexts in another broadcast. But let's give it the best run that we can for the time that we have left.

The reason that the order of God for the arrangement of the church is patriarchal, goes to the very heart of the issue of the fall of man. In the book of Luke chapter 3, right after one of these references to 'begetting', Luke 3 says, "Noah was the son of Lamech, who was the son of Methuselah, who was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of Mahalalel, who was the son of Kenan, who was the son of Enosh, who was the son of Seth," but about the time we're getting bored with this 'who was the son of' it really gets interesting, "Seth who was the son of Adam who was the son of God." When God created Adam, God made a son. When Adam sinned, his sin had the effect of separating a man from his father. When sin increases in the earth, the greatest realization associated with sin is fatherlessness. The number one problem in the earth today, the problem that besets nations, the problem underneath the problems of nations today, is fatherlessness. I could detail for you some of the horrors of fatherlessness, like the nearly

four million orphans in the Ukraine, like the gangs of young men roaming the streets in South Africa who turn routine criminal activity into violent slashfests of blood, whose fathers are dead, died from AIDS. Or those places in the United States like Detroit, where even the locals will not go into certain sections of the city after sundown because the city is ungovernable, where fatherlessness is the common denominator; the lack of order.

Now when God created Adam as His son, God foreknew that Adam would sin, so He provided for the salvation of Adam before He created Adam, "The Lamb was slain from the foundations of the world." But the problem would not be just sin, the problem would be the release into the earth of a disconnect between fathers and sons. And here when we speak of sons, we speak of offsprings, male and female and if the offsprings would not be connected back to God their Father then there would be no hope for mankind and the very purpose for which God created man would be lost. How many people – whose giftings would have revolutionized the earth – struggle with just surviving to the point where they have no time left, no creative energy left, no opportunity left, to give the gift of their person hood into the earth?

Sin, resulting in the loss of relationship between Adam and his Father, has multiplied in the earth and the consequence of it, glaringly, is fatherlessness. You see, orphans do not think about creativity; orphans hoard what they have because they understand that they are their own supply. God established – from the foundations of the world – God established a form of order that was designed to continually remind man that he has a Father and that salvation is not just about going to heaven, but salvation is about reconciling a man to his father.

I want to pursue that point with you: the reconciliation of God and man in the household of God by a patriarchal order. The order is designed to remind man of the intention of God for man. I'm Sam Soleyn, I'm sure you'll want to keep viewing these broadcasts to find out the rest of the story. I'll see you next time. God bless you, bye bye.