“The City of God: The ‘One Another’ Church”

**Romans 12:3-5; Acts 2:41-42**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Sean Hoisington, Hayden Bible Church, 9/12/21)

 When those 3,000 souls became members of the Body of Christ, it wasn’t just some club membership. Their lives were drastically changed. The church was not a place to sit and watch a good program. They were constantly gathered together, they were devoted to one another, they were accountable to each other, they were loving, forgiving, serving… it was a HEALTHY body. The church is where we will increasingly grow to exhibit the characteristics of Jesus. The church is people devoted to one another in brotherly love. God’s church is the ‘one another’ city of God.

 Christ is the head of the church, and we are members of His body, one body. He has shown us our guilt so we can see our need for His mercy (Rom. 11:32). And when we cry out to Him, He will save us (Rom. 10:13). But Romans 12:1-2 reminds us that once we are saved, we shouldn’t passively sit back and let the world mold us. We are transformed from the inside out. Our sin nature makes us drunk with self-interest, but Rom. 12:3 and Phil. 2:1-4 call us to serve others in the measure He’s given each of us. We are to serve to build up the body, not tear it down. Whatever my part in the body of Christ, my purpose is outside of myself (Rom. 12:4; Eph. 4:15-16). We may not all have the same function, but we do have a common goal: bringing glory to God. (Q1)

 We are members of Christ’s body, the church. We are the “called out” for Him. He is the Cornerstone, we are the living building blocks of the body. We are members by His **election**. He chose us before the foundation of the world. We are vessels of His **mercy**, destined to provide mercy. We are members by **baptism** into Christ (Gal. 3:27). We have been washed clean, declared righteous in Him. We are members by **birth**- new birth that is a work of God (1Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5). We are members by **promise** (Rom. 9:8). We are members by **adoption** (Gal.4:7; Rom. 8:15-16). We have been miraculously adopted into His family. All of these attributes are given by grace through faith in Jesus.

 The church is a **unified** body with Christ at the head. We are all members of that body. How do our lives reflect the truth of that membership? Everyone who is saved is called to live out their membership in healthy community with others, through devotion, accountability, and service. (Q2)

 Devoted members are committed to building up the body in love (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 10:24-25). We all stumble at times, and we need each other to help us stand back up. Read Rom. 5:8. Jesus showed us what true devotion looks like. Members of the local church are accountable members of the body of Christ. 1Peter 5:1-3 talks about elders shepherding the church. But these relationships are not just for elders. Love, service, encouragement, holiness, and purity should be hallmarks of the whole church. Gal. 6:1-2 reminds us to restore gently, without condemnation. We are to teach and admonish one another. We are to show honor to one another. This can only happen in the close fellowship of body life. (Q3)

Finally, we are to be serving members (1Peter 4:8-10; Heb. 6:9-12). Are you committed to diligently, fervently serving the rest of the body? The body of Christ holds the design for service, fellowship, encouragement, love, and sharing the truth. May God receive the glory as we live as a united church body. (Q4) (Q5)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. I drove to Spokane today with my buddy, Gary. He has a bum arm and I have a bum leg. We call ourselves the “Cripple Threat”, so watch out! Anyway, as we discussed this sermon, we wondered what parts of the body we were. Some of the suggestions were: hangnail, bunion, and appendix. Do you think we missed the point of the metaphor? OK, what is the point of the metaphor?
2. What is the source of disunity in the church? What can be done about it?
3. In discussing devotedness, Pastor Sean compared marriage with the current practice of living together. Why does God stress marriage? How is church membership like a marriage?
4. Does your schedule revolve around fellowship? Should it? Why or why not?
5. Pastor Sean gave this partial list of service: comfort, care, encouragement, teaching, admonition. How else can we serve others inside the church and outside the church?

**“We’re Marching to Zion” (Isaac Watts)**

Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known, Join in a song with sweet accord, join in a song with sweet accord, And thus surround the throne, and thus surround the throne.

We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion.
We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.

 Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry.
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground, we’re marching through Immanuel’s ground To fairer worlds on high, to fairer worlds on high.

We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion.
We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.