

INTRODUCTION:

As you may recall, last week I introduced a vision for what Sappony should be in 2020 and beyond. I have been endeavoring for a while to get us to think of ourselves in terms of being disciples of Christ. Last week we noted that disciples of Christ ABIDE, CONNECT, and SHARE. The 5 G's of this, or the how, are GOD TIME, GATHER TIME, GROUP TIME, GIVE TIME, and GO TIME. You also may remember that I pointed out that if each person at Sappony reached one person per year, we could reach all of the lost people in Sussex County in eight years. I'm going to continue to throw these facts at you.

Last week, of course we discussed that a true disciple ABIDES in Christ and Christ in him. We also discussed, if you recall, that this means that Christ should get the first and best of your time! We discussed that abiding in Christ means remaining in Him and receiving your strength and nourishment from Him. Today, we will see that a true disciple CONNECTS with other believers as we turn to our scripture this morning.

MAIN TEXT (1 Corinthians 12:12-28)

BACKGROUND: 1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul in about 55 A. D. or about 5 years after he had preached there. Corinth was a city full of everything sinful and contained the temple of Aphrodite with 1,000 prostitutes. Paul wrote to correct problems in the church at Corinth including division, immorality, and aberrant beliefs. Today we will see from Paul's letter to the church at Corinth that YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND HATE HIS BODY, YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND DETACHED FROM HIS BODY, YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND NOT CONCERNED FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS BODY and finally YOU CANNOT FULFILL GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE WITHOUT BEING CONNECTED TO HIS BODY.

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

1. YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND HATE HIS BODY

- a. (12:12) For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ.
 - i. If I am in Christ and you are in Christ, we are in Christ together, whether we want to be or not.
 - ii. Being a part of the same body means that we are under the same head.
- b. If you are a Christian, you are a part of the body of Christ. You cannot be a part of the body and be detached from the body. If I were to detach my left hand and throw it to the side, what would happen?
 - i. The hand would wither and die.
 - ii. The rest of my body would not function nearly as well.
- c. (12:13-14) For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. So the body is not one part but many.
 - i. Everyone who confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead (Rom 10:9-10) is saved.
 - ii. When you are saved, you take on the Holy Spirit.
- d. What about people who say, “I love Christ but hate the church”?
 - i. Is it really possible to love Christ and hate His body?
 - ii. It is really possible to love Christ and hate His bride?
- e. If we are all filled with His Spirit, why the rugged individualism? There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian.

2. YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND DETACHED FROM HIS BODY

- a. (12:15-16) If the foot should say, "Because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body," in spite of this it still belongs to the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body," in spite of this it still belongs to the body.
 - i. If you claim Christ, you are a member of His body.
 - ii. Saying you are not does not make it true.
- b. (12:17-18) If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But God has placed each one of the parts in one body just as He wanted.
 - i. The God who created the universe and everything in it created you as well.
 - ii. He created you with a purpose and put you in a place.
 - iii. There is only one of you. We do not all have the same function.
- c. (12:19-20) And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? Now there are many parts, yet one body.
 - i. The giftings that I bring to this body of believers are complementary to the giftings that you all bring to this body of believers.
 - ii. If you take your giftings elsewhere, without God moving you, you deprive the body of your unique contribution.
- d. I said it earlier, there are no Lone Ranger Christians. The Christian life is not an individual event. We are all part of the same body.

3. YOU CAN'T BE UNITED WITH CHRIST AND NOT CONCERNED FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS BODY

- a. (12:21-22) So the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" or again, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" But even more, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary.
 - i. God has designed the body in a way that the parts rely on each other.
- b. (12:23-24) And those parts of the body that we think to be less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts have a better presentation. But our presentable parts have no need of clothing.
 - i. Those parts that we cover up have the privilege of allowing us to procreate.
 - ii. We do not get to decide the importance of another member of Christ's body because He has put that member in their place.
- c. (12:26) So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
 - i. When I broke my femur, my entire body ceased to function for a time.
 - ii. When one part of the body of Christ is broken, it is up to us to care for that member!
- d. Christ has a purpose for His church being united together as one body. And without being united to that body, you cannot fulfill God's will for your life.

4. YOU CANNOT FULFILL GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE WITHOUT BEING CONNECTED TO HIS BODY.

- a. (12:27-28) now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. And God has placed these in the church.
 - i. Paul goes on to give a list of gifts that God has given to the church.

- ii. Note again, “*you are the body of Christ*”
- b. We cannot look at our ultimate purpose without looking at the stated purpose of Christ’s church.
 - i. (Matthew 28:19-20) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you.
 - 1. How would you do this alone?
 - 2. You cannot teach someone to observe all that He has commanded if you yourself are not observing all that He has commanded.
 - ii. (Acts 1:8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
 - 1. If you are saved, the Holy Spirit has come on you, the same as it has the other believers.
 - 2. How can you be an effective witness for Christ when you are not connected to His body?
 - iii. (Hebrews 10:24-25) And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
 - 1. If you are not part of the church body, how will you promote love and good works?
 - 2. How will you encourage others as you see the day drawing near?

CONCLUSION:

Quite simply, there is no way to be a true disciple of Christ apart from being connected to the body of Christ. It is impossible, not my word, but God's word. You cannot be united with Christ and hate His body and bride. You cannot be united with Christ and be detached from His body. You cannot be united with Christ and not be concerned for His people, and you cannot fulfill God's plan for your life outside of connection with Christ and with His people. Who is ready to connect with Christ today?