



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Church: Church as the Body of Christ

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by 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. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now 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. And 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. If 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? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

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!”

1 Corinthians 12:12-21 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In this passage of scripture, Paul reminds us that we are the Body of Christ. He writes these words to the people at Corinth. From the beginning, the church at Corinth had a lot of drama and problems. There were problems of hierarchies, understanding unity, regarding sexuality and marriage, politics, the economy, and they were suing each other. Paul wanted the people at Corinth to know that even though that had all these problems and challenges, they were still connected. They were the body of Christ – baptized by one Spirit.

The church at Corinth created hierarchies as to who was important and who was not, who was valuable and who was dispensable. Paul tells the church at Corinth that this is absolutely wrong. He tells them about the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the Church, where you cannot disconnect the gift from the person. Paul is letting them know they need to resist the temptation of creating hierarchies and not see themselves as individuals apart from the church. The body of Christ, which is the church, cannot function if they don’t realize they need each other to flourish. The church is never to be built on a select number of gifts, or on a small group of people but on the foundation of Christ.

The church is not an event, a location, a product or an experience. The church is the Body of Christ. The church is the family of God.

As the body of Christ, we are intricately connected to each other. We are to express this connection to the world. In the middle of this pandemic people are slowly drifting away from the church – drifting away from relationships, away from spiritual companionship. We create hierarchies – where we exclude, isolate and regard some as important and others as dispensable.

When I have lost harmony with another, my whole life is thrown out of tune. --Howard Thurman

Howard Thurman’s words are God’s words to us as well. Some people think you can be a Christian without the church. We are to be joined to the body of Christ. WE are the church. It is in our unity that we are the church, as a body we are the Church.

The church is not a religious community of worshippers of Christ but is Christ himself who has taken form among people. --Dietrich Bonhoeffer

God refuses to exist without us, without the people of God.

What does it mean to be the body of Christ?

1. We **all** have a part to play. We all have a unique story, unique gifts, a particular family we come from. God wants to use all of this for you to be a gift to the world.
2. We are part of something bigger than ourselves.
 - Locally: we should be connected to those in the body - to a local church or small group.
 - Globally: we have been baptized in His name – regardless of country or denomination, we are all part of the Body of Christ.
 - Historically: transcends space and time - understand that the church did not start in America, but it started with Christ 2000 years ago.
3. The well-being of my brother or sister determines my well-being. If we are in the body together, we are to hurt when someone else is hurting.
4. We are the presence of CHRIST in the world.

God in God's mercy joins us to Christ to his body - this is a mystery. The good news is that God loves us so much that God put skin on. We are to be his body in the world.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas continues in our summer sermon series Church: Being a Community of Jesus Followers. Today Pastor Rich's sermon focuses on the church as the body of Christ, looking at Paul's words to the church in Corinth and how this message connects to our congregation in Queens.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin who was the person or persons that would throw your family off course, the person by their actions added stress to the family? How did that make you feel when you were around that person?
3. What part are you playing within the church? If you are not presently participating in the church, what can God be calling you to, how can you use your gifts to offer it to the body?
4. What does it mean to you to accept all denominations and Christians from all cultures as part of our body? What can you learn from another perspective about the body?
5. If we are the presence of Christ in the world, what does it look like to show Christ's mercy, grace and love to others? What testimony can you practically show not in words but in practice this week and moving forward?