

Team Church

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[0:00] I was standing on the soccer pitch in the pouring rain and all around me was a team wearing the same colours, working together, cheering each other on, all with the same goal and enthusiasm.

What's that got to do with communion, you may ask? It's only that one team. One team. 1 Corinthians 12. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 18.

Around the Lord's table we come and remember the body of Christ. The body of Christ. And where is that today? It's right here. Right here, right now. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 18.

2 Corinthians 13.

3 Corinthians 13.

[1:53] 3 Corinthians 13. 4 Corinthians 14. 4 Corinthians 14. 5 Corinthians 14. 5 Corinthians 14. 6.

6. 7. 8. 9. 9. 9.

9. 9. 9. 9. 10. 10. 9. 9. the analogy of members of a team.

Members of a team. We have to be one body. And we could liken the church to being one team.

Called to play the game, as it were. Looking back as a young man in the soccer team, I think I only lasted a couple of months in that soccer team.

My mum and dad will remember. But it was a good time playing in the soccer team. And having that common goal, that common endeavour.

[3:23] And wearing the colours. And playing in the mud. Playing in the pouring rain. It didn't matter. It was more fun when it was raining and muddy. And we're called to play the game, brothers and sisters, as it were, as a team.

As a body. We can liken it to that sports team on the field. Around are the cheering fans. We likewise are surrounded by witnesses. People cheering us on in the heavenlies, as it were.

God has not designed us to be doing church alone, but to be doing it together with other believers. I know I've seen some mavericks of late who've come and gone already.

They just want to do church their own way and not work in with a body, with a team, as it were. And as God's people, we're called to be one team. A well-disciplined team. A winning team.

A team of champions. Each player has a different position to play. Just as in a symphony, different instruments play together under the direction of the master conductor.

[4:25] Much better than a one-man band. One team. With different parts. Different members. As we read. As it says, diversities of gifts.

Diversities of operations. Of different administrations. Yet the whole team working as one. As one team. Each of us playing our part. Playing our position, as it were.

Fulfilling our unique role. Just quickly, three things that I would see as making a good team. What does it take for a team to be strong? And by stretching it somewhat, I could apply it to this passage that we've just read.

But I'm not wanting to disregard the word or miss the point of the word. That's what matters today. But we could see as there's one body and different members.

We could see there's one team, as it were. And yet, different members in that team. What does it take for a team to be strong? It takes, number one, commitment.

[5:27] It takes dedication. Loyalty. Training. We're developing people. The individual strengths of each of us will make us stronger as a team.

As a body. As a church assembly. So don't miss training. It's important whether you feel like it or not. If training's on, be there. You're not going to be a part of the team if you're not at training.

Come on. It's about belonging. It's about wearing the team colours. We wear the same team colours. It's about dedication through adversity and testing.

Just as we were out there on the soccer field, it started pouring with rain. I thought, oh, surely they'll blow the whistle and call the game off. But no. It didn't matter how hard it was raining. We had to play the game.

We had to play the game. It's like that in Christianity, isn't it? We don't let something upset us in such that the rain's falling or the adversity of life, the testing of the day.

[6:32] The match doesn't get caught off just because it's pouring down with rain. And we just have to get on with the game. Play on. Play on. Sometimes it's all the more fun playing in the mud. Amen.

Even when things get messy on the pitch. It's more fun. We just want to get on with it. God makes the rules in this game, as it were. We need to play by the rules. Follow the rules.

Here they are. It's a rule book. It's set for us. Let's not argue with the referee. Let's listen to the coach, as it were, the captain of our salvation.

As the body. Let's be in accord with the head, who is Christ. And let's not argue about the finer points. Oh, Paul's shoelaces are not the right colour. They're just a different shade of black or whatever it is.

It's a bit like I saw a program about the Amish. There's different sets of the Amish because some paint their special buggies are slightly different variations of the paint colour that's the official paint colour.

[7:31] And so they're dividing over such matters as that. Number one, commitment. We need to be committed and dedicated to this team, as it were.

Number two, to make a good team, you need cohesion. Cohesion and closeness and unity. It says that the Lord desires that there be no schism in the body. It says no schism in the body.

Now this word schism is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 10. The Lord doesn't want a schism in the body. 1 Corinthians 1 verse 10.

It says now, I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same line and in the same judgment.

The word divisions is this word schism. He doesn't want us to divide. He wants us to unite. Of course, unite on strong, true doctrine, not on any faulty foundation.

[8:31] It says further that he has tempered the body together. Tempered the body together. This word tempered is the same word used in Hebrews 4 verse 2 about the word being mixed with faith.

It's a mixing. Now I don't know about you, but when Julie cooks me a lovely cake, she mixes the ingredients together. It works better that way.

It's good that we're a mixture. We're a mixed bunch. Hopefully not mixed up. But we're mixed together. And the word is mixed with faith.

I trust that is the case here today. And that we'll be a close-knit body, having the same love, the same spirit, the same care, the same mind. Some members seem less honourable.

We could consider Brother Craig is not significant. He's just a driver. But Brother John wouldn't have got here without Craig. And John was telling me he'd be in big trouble.

[9:30] He'd have had a long walk. And so Brother Craig is very important today in this meeting. Some may seem less honourable.

It's like when we played the soccer and the oranges came out at half-time. Somebody did that. Some unsung hero made the oranges happen.

And while that person wasn't the centre forward, they were an important part of that team, of that game, of winning that match. And he wants us interconnected.

There's a cohesion. So we need each other. The body is needing each other. That's the point of 1 Corinthians 12. We need one another. The head can't say to the feet. You know, the nose can't say to the arms.

We don't need each other. We do need each other. We need to work together to listen to each other, to support one another. Not hog the ball. Not make a fuss.

[10:30] But get the same care one for another. There's a cohesion in the body. Thirdly, of the team, there's a commitment. There's a cohesion. Thirdly, there's a common cause. A common cause.

There's an overarching common goal that we're here about. We're here for the kingdom's business. We're here for that common objective that really counts, of being God's assembly, of being God's people in this location.

A body has a singleness of purpose. If your body started to disagree, if the different parts of your body started to disagree with one another, you'd be in all sorts of trouble.

The head of the body, who we know is Christ, decides the direction that the body should go. When your mind says, I'm going to go walk this way, it doesn't matter what various parts of your body want to do about it.

Some of them might want to have a lie down and have a sleep. But there's no argument. If the head of the body says, I'm going to walk this way, the whole body does what it says. And the body doesn't have a meeting to debate the merits of the idea.

[11:38] They just get on with it. And so a common cause is important for a soccer team, for a footy team, for a church. Common cause. We've got to focus and it's here.

It's all clear. In print. It's given to us. Everything should be directed to this end. So that we should suffer together. We should rejoice together. That's what teams do. That's what churches are meant to do.

Let's kick in the same direction. And avoid infighting, strife and variance. Whose side are you on? And consider that. There's a time limit to the match.

Time's going to run out. It's going to be the end of play. It's going to be time when the door will close. As in Noah's day, the door closed. And we need to make our life count while we have that time.

Amen.