

Church Alive

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[0:00] Colossians 3, verse 12.

Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, so that which also ye are called in one body. And be ye thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

[1:19] There's much in these scriptures. And this is really just a launching pad for something I wanted to talk about today. I wanted to talk about church life and ministry. Body ministry.

And we see in Colossians 3, verse 12, what the best dressed saints are wearing. It says to put on some things. Talking more about, not about the clothes so much that we wear, but about putting on, wearing.

The compassion. Those bowels of mercies. You know, the actual bowels. That heart. That compassion. That kindness. That humbleness of mind.

That meekness. That long-suffering. And it talks about one another. What we should do with one another. Forbearing one another. I know Julie has a lot of forbearing to do with me.

And it's me putting up with one another. And sometimes there's a bit of that in church, isn't there? Where we have to put up with one another. And the forgiving of one another. And of the bond of perfectness, which is love.

[2:20] And the peace of God. Reeling in our hearts. And the one body. Being thankful. It's got the sense there. In verse 15. Be constantly thankful. Is the sense of it.

And in verse 16. Of the word of Christ. It's got the sense of. Let it be continually dwelling in us. Continually at home in you.

In abundance. That word. And think of church and ministry. That's what I'd like to look at today. And some truths about church life and ministry.

And the first one is. You can see this a lot here. And all of these. All of these.

Sorry. All of these truths. Have got a common theme. And it's one. And the first one.

[3:20] Is one another. One another. You see that in this passage that we've read. As well as many others. One another. Church is about one another. One another.

It's not about. As a son would have. They use this radio station. I don't know if you've heard of this one. W-I-F-M.

What's in it for me? Some churches are like that. And sometimes saints can be like that too. They're looking for a church about me. What's in it for me? What am I going to get out of church?

Rather than thinking about one another. Which is what we should have. The heart attitude to have. How a church should operate. It should be about one another.

One another. That kind of spirit that should be evident. That there's a one another-ness in our meeting together. That kind of spirit. Of forbearing. Of forgiving. Of teaching.

[4:20] Of admonishing one another. And there's many scriptures. I meant to get a list out. And there's quite a long list you could get as you look through the word. Many Bible verses that talk about one another.

One another. Love one another. Admonish one another. Exhort one another. Edify one another. You look through your concordance and have a look. That's your homework for today.

There's lots of one another's in the word. And we see that in this passage too. God's ideal is that we care about one another. We think about one another when we come to church.

It's not all about me. And what am I going to get out of it? It's like some have said when they've come to a church. They've said, I didn't get anything out of it. I didn't get anything out of that. But rather, shouldn't we be, I'm going to put something into church today. I'm going to get a blessing to another saint. And give another blessing to a brother or a sister.

[5:19] It's about one another. That God's church can be equipped and energized and edified and mobilized. For the glory of God. To the glory of God. One another. An assembly of God's people.

A chosen people. Assembling together. And thinking about one another. And the fruits are there. The fruits of the Spirit are there. As there's that active care for one another.

That's how church should be. That's how church ought to be. Ought to operate. With our hearts caring for one another. With those bowels of mercies. That compassion.

That tender heartedness. Where our bowels are moved. As it were. In the sense of a loving. And a caring. And a tender heartedness. That we care.

There's a tenderness. There's an urging within. For one another. That's what it ought to be. Ought to know. That the word of God is in us. Moving in our hearts. And living through us.

[6:16] As we share the word with one another. And it's spoken by one another. To one another. As we read in this passage. In word and in song.

Even in the songs. As we have the blessing of our brother. A minister in song. That is an admonishing. And a teaching. One another. It's what church should be. Isn't it?

It's how we should be. Brothers and sisters. Real life Christianity. That's impacting our world. That's reproducing disciples. That's encouraging one another. Because Christianity.

Is not meant to be. A spectator sport. A spectator sport. So. We're not meant to be. Like that old fashioned cartoon. Of the man called Norm.

With his. Bottle there. Or can. And his easy chair. And his plump belly. Sitting watching. The idiot box. As it were.

[7:10] The typical Aussie norm. Bloke. And it can be. A typical Aussie Christian. That we are spectators. Not a participator. And especially.

As churches can get larger too. That can be. Often the case. That the worshippers. For the most part. Are reduced to. Spectators. It ought not be brother.

It ought not be sister. That it's coming to church. To see. Some kind of performance. For spectators. Just to watch. God's order for worship.

Is one another. One. Another. One. Another. A participation. That's why. I've sought to introduce. As we have today. More of that. Time.

Of sharing. That time. Of being able. To testify. That time. To bring. A prayer point. And we've had some. Blessed. Testimonies this morning. And I encourage that.

[8:05] That we have that. More so the case. That as we gather jointly. There's a participation. That we're a body. We're a family. We're a community. And you know.

Sometimes. The case is that. We. Try to. Overly structure things. Too much. Where. It's overly staged. It's overly scripted. It's overly structured.

That we can find. And that ought not to be. Brothers and sisters. Where things are rostered. And if you're not on the roster. You can't do anything. That's not how it's meant to be. And so. We want to have that flexibility.

Where if you come to church. With a song on your heart. Where you come to church. With a scripture. That you want to minister. And share. A blessing you had. Through the week. That there will be that opportunity.

That you can testify. You can minister. To one another. It's how. Church ought to be. That we are that living. Organism. And which brings us.

[9:00] To the second point. One another. And secondly. One body. One body.

That's how church ought to be. A living organism. Dynamic. Living. Alive. Cohesive. And interdependent.

As a body. As your physical body. As lots of members. As we read. Through the word. Lots of members. Lots of parts. Lots of functions. Yet.

United. And cohesive. And functioning. Together. As that body is functioning. As that body is exercising itself. That's how. Christ's body should be. Functioning.

And exercising itself. And every part. Has a role to play. Every piece of you. Is important. For you. In your physical body. And likewise.

[9:55] In the church. Every one of you. Every one of us. Have a part to play. A role. A function. An ability. And numbers of abilities.

Not one of you. Not one of us. Is a useless part. As some would think. Of an appendix. As something that we can do without. But really. Every part.

Has a usefulness. And I'm sure the appendix. Has one. As well. And every one. Of you. You're not a useless. Appendix. That has no.

Importance. Or function. Every one of us. Here gathered. Is important. As God's people. For God's glory. For God to use us. As it says in 1 Corinthians 12.

22. That. Those members of the body. Which seem to be. More feeble. Are. Necessary.

[10:56] Those that seem more feeble. Those that seem more weak. Those that may seem. Less significant. God says. You.

Are. Needful. You. Are. Needful. That's why. It's good for us to gather. It's good for us to get together. It's good for us to assemble. It's. Obedience to the Lord.

And it's blessing to him. And to one another. And when we realize how weak. And dependent we are. You are needful. You are needful. God. Says.

You are needful. To one another. You are needful. And. Important. And. And. Sometimes. It's when the tough times come.

That we realize how weak. We are. When the trials come. When the tests come. We realize how. Dependent we are. Upon him.

[11:52] That we can grow. And it's like that in church too. Isn't it. When we realize how inadequate we are. When ill health comes. When sad times come.

You can grow. You can grow in two ways. You can grow. Better. Or bitter. And some. Christians sadly. Some Christians grow.

Bitter. When something happens in a church. Or. Or. An encounter with a Christian. Or some. Maybe they didn't look at you the right way.

Or they. They brushed past you without saying hello. And people get offended. So easily. Brother and sister. It ought not to be. That we should. Take offense. That we should be so.

Childish. So immature. Friends. Let's not be that way. Forbearing one another. As. His body. We realize how.

[12:48] We can be interdependent. And think of your brother. Your sister. Maybe they're not having a good day. Maybe they need you. To be a blessing to them. Rather than you thinking.

And taking a front. As. Humanly we can. And. Instead to be. The church. The visible expression. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the earth.

What an amazing fact. That we. The church. Are his visible expression. On the earth. That should make us. Sit up and take notice.

Shouldn't it? To think of that. Responsibility. When. Others see you. You are. Representing him. You are. Responsible. We're.

To think of. To think of. To think of.! one body. It should be a collective spirit, a collective faith, a togetherness, a one anotherness and to be not a sleeping giant but awake and alive and roused from our slumber.

[13:51] That slumbering saints would wake up and take part and be active participants. We're meant to be an army after all. Imagine if there was an army where 90% of the soldiers were untrained and uninvolved. Every soldier needs to know what to do and to do it. I spent some short time and a couple of years in the Army Reserve and they taught us how to do the simple things, cleaning your rifle. You had to know how to do it because who knows, and it's more so the case with reserves these days, they could

be called to an active front to actually use that rifle. Brothers and sisters, a soldier can't be inactive, untrained, uninvolved. In an army it would not be optional for you. A soldier cannot opt out. It's time to mobilise the troops. It's time for the church to mobilise. It's time for the sleeping giant to wake up.

It's time for every one of you, of us, to be mobilised for ministry. One another, one body. Every one of us has a part to play. And those that might seem more feeble are needful. And friends, think of it. For yourself, people today, everyone has a part to play. A function.

So it says in 1 Corinthians 12, 12, for us the body is one and of many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. God has set us, many members, one body. He's set the members, it says, 1 Corinthians 12, 18, as it has.

As it has pleased him. In every one of you, there is a gifting, there is an ability, a function. And now, a third one. Of course, you all know this to be true. Bear with me, there's some tongue-in-cheekness here today.

[16:10] Of course, you all know. It's all about the one minister. The one minister, you know. The one minister who does everything. Superman. He's got an S underneath the shirt. You know. And that was how it used to be in this church. And it can be often still somewhat the case. But when this church commenced, it was the one minister who put all the chairs out.

The one minister who had the Sunday morning message and the Sunday night message and the Wednesday night message and the Saturday night message for the youth to prepare, as well as having a full-time job.

And that is what some churches are like. Where it's the one minister who does everything. Leaves the songs, does everything. One minister. Is that scriptural? No, sir. Absolutely not scriptural.

And even this, as much as there's a due respect to the office of pastor this and pastor that. We don't see that in the word. It's not the case. Friends, I'm just your brother. I'm your servant. I'm your minister.

As we are ministers of one another. And that brings us to the next point. Which is in 1 Corinthians 14.26. 1 Corinthians 14.26.

[17:39] It's not that we should emphasise the one minister. It's not scriptural to have such an emphasis. As we see in 1 Corinthians 14.26.

1 Corinthians 14.26. How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you, hath a son, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation, let all things be done unto edifying.

So, notice it's not one minister, but every one ministers.

Everyone ministers. That's church. Everyone ministers. Everyone serves. Everyone has a role. Everyone has a gift. Everyone has an ability.

And church should be, as we read in 1 Corinthians 14.1, where there's a desiring, a desiring to have spiritual gifts.

[18:44] There's a desiring of spiritual gifts. There's a developing of spiritual gifts. Because every believer is gifted. God has gifted all of us for ministry.

All of us for something, some kind of ministry. All of us have an assignment. All of us have a mission. As it says in Ephesians 4.16, For whom, from whom, the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplier, every joint supplier, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, make an increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Every part, every part, every one, every joint, every one has a role to play.

And I want to encourage that and support that, that you can employ the gifts that you have. As it says in 1 Peter 4.10-11, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another.

One another, one body, everyone ministers. That God, it goes on, in all things may be glorified. We want to be that kind of church where you can discover your gift.

[20:12] You can discover your ability. And you can develop that and use that gift. What is your gift? What is your gift?

Of course, I'm talking to saints today. Maybe you're not saved yet. You might have different natural talents and abilities. God can still use those too when you get saved. But what of your spiritual gifts?

What of your spiritual callings? What of those spiritual ministries? God has given you one. Every part, every joint, every one. As a church, we want to encourage that.

A multiplication of gifts. As Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things which thou hast heard, commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.

So, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to others. One another to one another, to one another. That's why we have an evangelism class.

[21:18] That's why we're talking about having a Christian growth class. So that we can learn, and then we can commit to others. It's like it reads, by now you should all be teachers.

Mm. It's not one minister. It's everyone ministers, and to one another. Of course, there's different abilities, there's different gifts, there's different callings.

But everyone can minister, and the sense of minister, it means to serve. Everyone serves.

Everyone ought to serve.

We want to release that, and for a mutual benefit. So, it's not like you have to go searching for it, and making noises to make your gift known, or evident, but it will happen.

Naturally, it will be evident. It will show. And it will be for the common good. As we read of the gifts, 1 Corinthians 12, 7, it's for the mutual benefit. It's for the common good.

[22:21] It's not for us to get a buzz out of it. It's for us to bless others with it. It's for us to benefit the body with it. And it says in 1 Corinthians 14, 12, that we may excel to the edifying of the church.

For as much as you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church. That's the end result. A stronger church. That's what we want.

That's what we're praying for. The strengthening of the church. A stronger church. How can we be a stronger church? It has to be recognised. It's about one another.

When you come to church, it's not about coming, taking your hymn book and sitting down, singing the songs, and then walking straight out the door. It's about one another. It's the fellowship before the meeting.

It's the fellowship after the meeting. It's the fellowship within the meeting. It's the one another-ness. That is so critical. It's so vital. So that we won't be a weak church, but a strong church, because we care for one another.

[23:25] And it's about one body linked together, every part playing its part. And everyone ministers, everyone serves, everyone has a role and a place.

And through 1 Corinthians 14, seven times Paul uses the word edify. It means to build up. The purpose of worship is to build up.

Everything should be done to that end, so that when you do minister, whether it be by song, or by message, by revelation, by exhortation, that it be for edification, it be for the edifying, the building up.

And so you could say, if we could introduce that regular interval, as it were, it's a body-building session. A body-building session.

It's an edifying, as part, as the whole worship time should be. But it's not about being a spectator Christian, because that produces weak Christians, having that spectator Christianity, but that we have an engagement.

[24:38] That instead of adopting what's the way of the world, and being an entertainment culture, where it's all about coming to a theatre or a lecture, where we're just entertained or pleased for a time, that's the way that culture thinks.

But instead, it's about Christ's body getting together, and every one of us having a part to play. Not by confinement to some set liturgy, as mute recipients, as disengaged, bored consumers.

And as someone has put it, even that some come to church, it's almost like you see these talent shows. So you're sitting in judgment of whoever is up the front here.

And how nice their tie looks, or how well they've combed their hair, or the quaint little things they might say, or whether you've got a buzz out of it, whether you've got some goosebumps. And it's as if the people kind of come along and they say, I think I'll give that a... I reckon I'll give him an 8.5 for that.

[25:46] Or, you know, you can say, I reckon he only deserves a 2 for that. You know, some people come to church and that's what they're like.

And they think, oh, the preacher didn't tickle my fancy enough. Oh, the songs weren't to my style. It wasn't jazzy or jivey enough.

I didn't tap my toes enough. You know, as if church should be evaluated along that kind of carnal means. From his sisters, it ought not to be. We're not coming here to evaluate.

Because every one of us could find fault if that were the case. But we're here to build one another up, to edify. And hopefully, we'll get something out of it and we'll put something into it.

And friends, just to think of it, it's not about coming to church to watch the show as someone who's not engaged with it. That's why we want to foster that engagement.

[26:42] So, that you may not be on some kind of roster, but God's put on your heart some scripture that burned in your bosom and you feel that that would be a blessing to give that to someone.

There's opportunity for that. There's not that undue focus on one man or a number of men, as it were, but there's a one anotherness. That's what church ought to be.

And that's what I want to encourage. As we read in Hebrews 10, 24, that we're all part of the action. I know in the brethren circles, they had more so the case, and that's a wonderful testimony of how church can be a blessing.

And as much as there's a degree of structure still, and naturally, there's a testing of what is said and done. Someone might get up here and give some doctrine that we might say, well, we know it's not actually what we go along with.

So there might need to be some correction made of that when someone gives a doctrine, as it were. And of course, when it says everyone brings a doctrine, of course, doctrine means teaching. There's a place where it's not a woman's role to bring a teaching when men are present.

[27:51] And so there's natural restrictions too, that time, but yet a time of liberty. And so that's my prayer that we can have such.

And of course, as a proviso too, we adhere to the King James Bible. So when you bring a Bible reading, we want it to be the King James Bible. That is what we adhere to for many good scriptural reasons.

And likewise, in terms of when it says of tongues, of course, our church holds that tongues was for a reason and a season that has been fulfilled.

And yet, we can have some come and minister in the Swahili tongue, in the French tongue, in the Kurundi tongue. And we welcome that.

But we do ask that, if you do so, that you then translate and give the English meaning. So for the common audience, we know what has been ministered. And friends, it says, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

[29:10] Let us consider one another. One another. Consider one another and exhorting one another, one another as you see the day approaching.

Edify one another, it says, 1 Thessalonians 5.11. Friends, church is meant to be vibrant and a participating time where you come to church not just to get but to give.

It's true that many Christians are not equipped to minister. Many Christians are too afraid to even pray publicly aloud.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid, brother. Don't be afraid, sister. We would encourage you in those simple steps of faith to pray.

Don't be afraid to pray. We're brothers and sisters. We're family here. And we want to encourage that. And there's some, very few, they don't know their Bible because they never get to open their Bibles and share it and be a blessing.

[30:28] So bring your Bible and bring your Bible reading. Now of course, as our numbers increase, it may not be practical for everyone to do

something in the service time.

But there's opportunity and we want to make that opportunity and have that Bible pattern, that Bible model of participating. So every one of you have the psalm, have the doctrine, have the tongue, have the revelation, have an interpretation, let all things be done unto edifying.

So there's a readiness to participate instead of being passive spectators. We bring something and we bring it in a spirit of humility, in a spirit of faith, in a spirit of wanting to build others up.

And it could be a challenging word that brings sorrow and repentance. That's a good thing too. It could be an encouragement, a song, a prayer, a petition, an intercession.

And one thing we can all do is give a hearty Amen. Amen. As they did in Nehemiah 8 verses 5 and 6, in part it says, all the people answered, Amen.

[31:37] Amen. It's not, as is the case sometimes, and again, another proviso for this sharing time, where you get some churches and someone sings a song and then everybody claps.

Now, well meaning though they be, it's not about clapping or praising or applauding a man or a woman. It's about praising God.

And we want to say Amen. We want to say Glory to God. We want to say Hallelujah. And not really clap or praise the man or person who might be a musician or singer or whatever as if it's some spectator sport.

It's the wrong attitude. And it's not the biblical idea of church, how it ought to be, how we ought to be. We ought to come to worship, come to participate, come to bless, come to edify one another, come to minister to the saints.

And through the Word, through that loving one another, through that caring for one another, we're going to grow one another together. One another together. And it's as the Word has free course and is glorified.

[32:46] I read this little saying, we don't master the scriptures, the scriptures master us. And it's about being biblical. That's what we want to be.

I love to tell the story of haunting things above, of Jesus and his glory.

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