

# The Body of Christ

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[0:00] Now we have in our midst this morning a gold medal winning athlete and I'd like to call forward Usain Bolt! Come forward now to demonstrate his skills for us.

! We're highly honoured to have you here today, Usain Bolt. Now we're going to just demonstrate something for everyone today.

So I'll get Usain to just get ready. On your marks. Get ready. Get set.

Go! Yay! Thanks for that. What an athlete. What a champion. Now you might think what's this got to do with communion?

Well I'll get to that. Here we have the body of Christ. The body of Christ. The body of Christ. We have the body of Usain Bolt in effect. But here we have the body of Christ.

[1:14] In 1 Corinthians 10 verse 16. You'll see what I'm driving at shortly. 1 Corinthians 10 verse 16. And we've got a presentation but I think that might not be working just now but that's okay.

1 Corinthians 10 and verse 16. Here we have the body of Christ. You are the body. You are the body. You are the body. 1 Corinthians 10 verse 16. The cup of blessing which we bless is not the communion of the blood of Christ.

The bread which we break is not the communion of the body of Christ. One bread, one body. Now I could picture it again with another picture of holding a loaf before you because if it was a true demonstration of that night where he was betrayed, he had one loaf, one bread that he broke into several pieces and distributed on the night of the Last Supper.

And here we have, if you can picture it, one loaf, one bread, one bread which we break. And it speaks of one body, the body of Christ. It says as we see, the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

And this word bread, you could also put it this loaf which we break, is it not the body of Christ? And how does that song go? We are one, but we are many.

[2:40] And from all the lands on earth we come. We'll share a dream and sing with one voice. I am, you are, we are the body of Christ.

Aren't we? We are many, but we are one. We've come from many lands, many countries, many continents. And I am, you are, we are the body of Christ. That's what we read here in this verse here, verse 17, 1 Corinthians 10.

For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread. We are many, but we are one. We are one, but we are many.

One bread, one body. Paul says we being many are one. One bread, one loaf. It says here there's a communion. There's a communion, there's a common union. One bread, one body.

We have a unity of the body. We come from different countries and cultures, different languages and dialects and tongues. You know, even, I talk more, I talk funny than, funny than my wife, Julie.

[3:42] She's got the Southampton accent. I've got the, the more proper Manchester kind of accent. If, if I bung it on. You know, you can, can I have that? But we come from many countries, many continents.

Even within countries, there's differences. There's different nations represented here, but one body. Amen? We are one. We're one. We're all one. One united fellowship.

And we have one mission, one vision. On your marks. Get ready. Next slide. Get ready. When you come and fellowship, come with an expectancy.

Get limbered up. Get prepared. Prepare your hearts. Examine your hearts. The Bible says get ready for communion. Get ready. Get ready. Examine your hearts. Get ready for God to do something in your soul.

Get ready for some blessed fellowship. Get ready. Just keep it on. Get ready. Get ready. We are all partakers together. We all take part. Get ready. We need to be connected.

[4:41] Get ready today, as it were, for that time of fellowship. In, in this place of worship, in this place of fellowship. That God has given each one of us a part to play.

Every one of us has a part. We have a calling. We've got a purpose. You know, just as the athlete has to focus on the finishing line ahead. We have a purpose.

We are one. But we are many. And while being many, we are different. Yet we are one people.

There's a wonderful diversity in our members. We're all different.

We've all had different experiences. You know, I was talking with some people through the week and how they talked about their experience of becoming a Christian. We've all had a different kind of experience of how we've come to know the Lord and how the Lord's taken us through our different experiences of life.

We've all had those different experiences that have brought us to the place of salvation, to know the Lord. We've all got different abilities and different giftings.

[5:42] Get ready. Get set. God has set the members, every one. It tells us there. I know we're having trouble with the slides, but it's 1 Corinthians 12 verse 18, which is back a few.

1 Corinthians 12 verse 18. But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him. That's the one. But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him.

Get ready. Get set. Get set. There's a sense where we're set in the body. God's given us a place.

He's given us different giftings and different capacities to serve. Get settled.

Where you're gifted. Everybody belongs. God has set the members, every one of them, in the body as it has pleased him. Find where you are set. Every one.

Every part has a different function. There's a variety. Just as a human body, you know, your nose is where the nose belongs and the ears where the ears belong. We've got a place we're set in the body where we can function and serve.

[6:45] We're set by God. Everyone. Every believer. One problem we can have is that some, they drift in and out. They're not set. God wants us to be set. Set.

Solid. Connected. Where we belong. And as it pleases God, so find your place of service. Be set where you can serve. Be set where you can please God.

Be set. Please God. That's the main thing, isn't it? As it has pleased him. We're designed by God, each one of us, every one of us, to be part of that united whole, the body of Christ.

And he's designed us, made us, everyone, for his will, for his purpose. Next slide is 1 Corinthians 12, verse 20. But now are they many members yet, but one body.

And the eye cannot say, verse 21, and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Now much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

[7:48] We know, of course, as our own human body, that every part has a need of the other parts. So the head can't say to the feet, I have no need of you, and vice versa.

The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. We are one, but we are many. And the church of God is the body, the body of Christ. We do things together as one, praising together, worshipping together, studying together, praying together, breaking bread together, suffering together, witnessing together, fellowshiping together.

So many different organs that have that function, different functions, but together we make up the body. And it says everyone is necessary. There's a need.

No matter how seemingly insignificant, we all have value. We're all vital. And we all can do what is valuable to the church, to the body. The young person who walks godly, there's a blessing from you.

The older one who stands strong in the Lord, you've got a part to play. The mother who acts with honour and dignity before her children, before the world. The father who leads his house after God's truth.

[9:06] God's got his blessing there for you. The Sunday school helper who encourages the little ones. The one who delivers the Bible study. There's a blessing there.

The one who encourages us to pray. The one who sings joyfully unto the Lord. The one who prays privately for the church, hopefully for the pastor. There's a blessing for you. Thank you.

The one who sings joyfully unto the Lord. We've all got a part to play. And we need one another. Even the parts that might seem more feeble, maybe not so significant. The ones that seem like they're not very seen.

They are necessary. We've all got different gifts and abilities. And we all can do different works in different ways. Yet all with the same aim. Get ready.

Get set. Go. Paul says the weaker members are necessary. David says next verse, Psalm 84 verse 10. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.

[10:06] I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. David's saying here that he'd rather have just, even just a, what might seem an insignificant place to occupy.

And I thank God for Peter and others that have been helping, greeting on the door. That's an important role, isn't it? To have a friendly face of welcome, especially when a newcomer comes.

And we can all be that face.

We can all be that greeter. You don't have to be appointed. I don't need to give you a badge for you to be a greeter in this church. Amen? I don't need to have a roster with your name on it to say, be friendly and welcome people who come to church.

That's all of our jobs, isn't it? We should all be such. We should all be greeters. And everyone is important. Every part of the body is important. So next slide, get ready, get set and go.

That's the message today, this morning. For we, the body of Christ, we're talking about the communion time where we reflect on that physical bread that speaks of his physical body. Where is his body today?

[11:09] Right here. The body of Christ. Ye are the body of Christ. So go, go to work. Go and grow. The Lord wants us to grow, to function. He wants us to be such a body.

Next slide, 1 Corinthians 12, 23. It says, and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

I know there's some people in this church that have been a bit worried about their liver. Now, your liver isn't something that's kind of out there. People can't say you've got a good-looking liver.

But your liver is one of those parts that might seem less honourable. But it's very important, isn't it? And we could think of so many things alike to that.

And likewise in the church, every believer. You might think, oh, I'm just a humble, you know, just a quiet achiever. The ones who help in so many different ways, in practical ways.

[12:10] You know, some have brought some food to share after the service. Some help with the clean-up and the tidying up and the dishes and whatnot. Every part has a part to play.

Get ready, get set, go. Be prepared to learn to serve. Get ready. Get set. Let God set you and place you where you can thrive, where you can be a blessing, where you can be used of God, where, most importantly, you can please Him.

And go. Go to work. Go forward. Go in service. Go strong. Go forward in your spiritual life. Go towards that finishing line. We've all got a work to fulfil.

And even those members that are less honourable, God counts them as honourable. As someone has pointed out, now this is a bit of a kind of, bringing it right down to the finer detail of a body, when you think of a body.

And here's what someone has pointed out. The human gut, it's not something you think about, but the human gut is home to approximately 100 trillion bacteria cells. There's a whole ecosystem of microorganisms, and all of them are doing their part inside of us without us even thinking about it.

[13:26] You think of that 100 trillion bacteria cells. Every part, every cell, every little microorganism has a part to play. So you might think, I'm just an eensy-weensy, insignificant Christian, but every part has a

blessed place to fulfil.

And everyone has a measure of faith, a gifting. We all can play a part for this body, the body of Christ, to go forward. And when we get together, that's when it happens.

It's that collective effort, isn't it? That collective energy that God sustains his spiritual people to reach out, to grow, to be a growing people.

And in the body of Christ, there is no hierarchy as such. There's no pecking order or ranking in the body of Christ. We're all just as important. Every part of the body is important.

No one has more importance than another. The next verse, verse 25, it says that there be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.

[14:30] And then verse 26, whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. For one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Who's ever stubbed their toe?

And the whole body feels it, doesn't it? It's just that nerve, you know, the nervous system just jolts into action. And if one member suffer, the whole suffer.

It's like that with the body of Christ, isn't it? We should have the same care one for another. We should, as it were, suffer with one another and then rejoice with one another as well. One member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

There's this mutual care, there's bonding together. That's what God's plan is for us. This great kind of glue that joins us together as the body of Christ. We're united, we're joined.

And we've got that purpose and plan, just like the athlete on the running track, to go towards the goal. God's plan is that we are a functioning, working together people of God.

[15:29] Now, we know in Moses' day, there was some grumbling together going on, some murmuring together. In Corinth, there were some who were carnal together. In Colossae, there were some who were actually biting and devouring one another together.

Now, I hope you've had your breakfast this morning, you're not too hungry. But in Colossae, they were biting and devouring one another. Imagine that, they were kind of cannibals, Christian cannibals. There was such division and infighting, such animosity and hostility and backbiting.

But rather, we should have a oneness, shouldn't we? Not a oneness in error or disharmony, but a oneness in truth, in godly faith. A one accord that is godly. This term, one accord, it tells of a state of being of the same mind, of the same will, the same desire, the same longing.

In the New Testament, it's used some 12 times in the New Testament and 11 times in Acts, once in Romans. One accord, one accord. Think of it as like to an orchestra, which plays under the direction of a conductor.

And there's this big symphony with many instruments, all playing their parts and melodies. Now, if you're a trumpet, you can't make the sound of a violin. And vice versa, we've all got that different part to play.

[16:50] We've all got the same piece of music, and it's the same symphony. In other words, one accord. And it tells us how they were all with one accord in prayer. They were all with one accord in one place.

They continued daily with one accord. They were breaking bread with one accord. They were eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. They were praising God, having favour with all the people. They lifted up their voice to God with one accord.

They were assembled with one accord. They chose mission, to send mission people in one accord. In one accord, it speaks of a group acting as one.

It says the church prayed together. They worked together. They evangelised together. They suffered together. And Paul prayed, next scripture, Romans 15, 5, Paul prayed for the Romans that they would have this bond, this one accord.

He says, Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. Next, verse 6, That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:55] The Bible places much stress on this one another. You probably heard this before. There's some 40 odd scriptures that talk about one another.

And one third of these one another's talks of the unity of the church. It talks about being at peace with one another, not murmuring among one another, being of the same mind with one another, accepting one another, forbearing with one another, being kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

That's one third about unity of the church. Another one third is for the believers to love one another. Love one another repeated times.

Through love serve one another. Be devoted to love, to one another in love. So one third unity, one third love, and then some 15% they've reckoned is about humility, having humility together, serving one another, washing one another's feet, submitting to one another, clothing yourselves in humility towards one another.

And then there's others such as don't judge one another, don't put a stumbling block in another's way, bear one another's burdens, speak truth to one another, encourage and build up one another, provoke one another to love and good works, pray for one another, be hospitable to one another.

[19:14] So many. Obviously God places an importance on one another. It's important. How we treat one another. We're here together. We should care for one another.

And have that mind to get ready, get set, to go, to go forward together as God's people and to look after one another. Because we've got a common mission, just like the athlete, on the track, at the starter blocks.

We've got one goal. They've got one finishing line. We are one body. We should be like that body of the athlete, ready, set, going. And going together.

Next we see a creature here, a grasshopper. Now some would think a grasshopper is a fairly insignificant creature and we know it is.

One grasshopper on your lawn, it can't really do much damage. But when one grasshopper joins with other grasshoppers, grasshoppers, the resultant swarm can soon devour the vegetation in its path.

[20:20] One grasshopper. Grasshoppers demonstrate the power of community. As it says here in Proverbs 30, verse 27, the locusts have no king, yet they go forth, all of them, by bands.

When the grasshoppers, when the locusts band together, they can accomplish much together.

What we can't do on our own, we can't do together.

We cannot do it by ourselves, but we can do it together. And that's the church, isn't it? That's how we're stronger when we're together. Some neglect fellowship, they miss fellowship, they're just like a little grasshopper on its own.

But when we get together, as it were, we can be a band of a mighty force to be reckoned with, making an impact, the body of Christ in one accord together.

And going, going in mission, going in fellowship, it's how we treat each other. Let's have that mind, that heart, that consideration as we share our joys and pains.

[21:19] Next verse, 1 Corinthians 12, 27, it says, Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. You are the body. It's church. It's what we do together. And next is Romans 12, verse 5, So we, being many, are one body in Christ and everyone members one of another.

Don't feel disconnected. Don't feel out of contact. Let's be interdependent, interconnected, members of one another.

So we care for one another. We consider one another. We reach out to one another. We love one another. The body of Christ. Colossians 2, verse 19, it tells us that we should be holding the head, the Lord is our head, the head of the church.

It's not some pope at Rome. It's not some local pastor. It's the head, it's Christ, our shepherd, the great shepherd, the great pastor, holding the head, Christ, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increases with the increase of God.

We need to be together, bonded, welded together with the glue of God, God's love. There's many needs all around us. If we can just open our eyes and see that we all have ways we can contribute and bless one another together.

[22:39] And it's by the work of the cross. The nourishment, it says, is ministered. Our nourishment comes from Christ, our head. He nourishes the body. He is our life source.

And all the body is joined, knit together. No one is insignificant here. Every believer is important. Find where you fit. Next, we see, function where you fit.

Find where you fit and function there. Press the on button of your spiritual life, of your spiritual walk with God. May today be a day when you press the on button, as it were, that you find where you want, where God wants you to be and to be there, to do his will.

We see, just lastly, next verse is, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him who is the head, even Christ. Next, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to, next, the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Friends, today God calls us to function, to do what God has enabled us to do, teaching, praying, encouraging, blessing one another, giving, sharing, whatever your gift.

[23:59] I urge you today, be a blessing, get ready, get set, and go. God doesn't want the body of Christ to be fractured. He wants us at the starters block, as it were, to get ready, get set, and bang, to go, to go for God.

Do what God has called you to do, to care for one another with mutual care, and we've all got something to put into it today. So I urge you today to consider these truths of how can we be the body of Christ in this place?

How can we be effective for our Lord? I'll call the ushers now as we're going to come to just remember the body of Christ.

Of course, we know the scriptures tell us that it was the same night in which he was betrayed. Let a man examine himself.

Get ready. Do you know the saviour? That's what's critical and fundamental, that you are saved today. And as a believer, you're invited to be a partaker, to take part.

[25:14] This reminds us of that fateful night when our Lord was betrayed. When his body, his physical body on earth was bruised and injured, wounded for us, his face marred more than any man, his flesh torn, his hands pierced, his feet.

And why? For us. He says, this is given for you. This is broken for you. And why? For us. this blood is shed for you. And it's because of the blood shed, because of the body wounded, because of his saving of us, that we can be the body of Christ today.

You know, of course, in a sense, he's in heaven. He is our saviour in heaven praying for us. Christ. And we know that likewise, he is in the heart of every born-again believer.

He dwells in our hearts by faith. But even more tangibly too, is that we, as a corporate people, are the very body of Christ in this community.

[26:34] We are at this time, at this place, in this moment, we are the gathered body, the assembly of God. And he invites us to be partakers together of this visible picture.

Seeing the athlete, as it were, at the track, get ready, get set, go. And likewise for us, we can prepare our hearts, get ready, what God wants us to do, individually and corporately, as an individual believer and as a and assembled people of believers.

Get ready, get set. Where has God set you in the body? What is his place for you? What is his calling for you? What is his mission for you? Get set, get established, get strong, get firm, get planted, get set, and then go.

We've all got a mission to fulfil. We've got a racetrack, a race to run. We've all got a calling, a gifting, a ministry, abilities.

Go to work for God. God's will is that we be a functioning body where the nourishment comes from the head, where we're joined by bands and ligaments.

[27:56] We're bonded together by the bond of love, the bond of peace. And bless God, we are called to be his people, his body in this place.

And it's not that the church is a building, it's a body, it's a people of God. So I'll call on Brother John to come as we pray, as we commit to the Lord in this time.

Amen. Father God, thank you for this day. We thank you more and more for the son that you gave us.

He gave his life, he gave his body and died across just so that we be forgiven. We thank you.

Amen. Amen. Let's partake together. Praise the Lord.

[29:00] Ask Brother Peter to come and think about the blood of Jesus, our Lord. we thank you Lord that we can gather this morning as one body, body of Christians here this morning and we're mindful of the great sacrifice of your body hanging on the cross Lord.

We're mindful of the precious blood that was shed for each one of us here this morning and all Christians and we pray that we can concentrate on what we're doing right now, put all worldly thoughts out of our minds and think that this cup we're holding in our hands, remember what it means to us and that we can have forgiveness of sins and we thank you for this opportunity now in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's drink together. Praise the Lord. Amen.