

Team Jesus

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Preacher: Ray Sweet

[0 : 0 0] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana, and I'm so thankful that you're tuned into this radio broadcast today. I believe that God wants to speak to us today through His Word as He wants to mold and shape your heart and mine more and more into the image of Christ.

Now, I know that there's probably some listening to me right now who grew up reading those old Peanuts comic strips with Charlie Brown in them. You know, those things are just absolutely timeless.

But one of my favorites has Linus watching TV when a bold Lucy comes in and demands that he change the channel. And that's when Linus says, well, what makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?

And Lucy looks at him and says, these five fingers right here, individually, they're nothing. But when I curl them together into a single unit, they form a weapon that's terrible to behold.

And that's when Linus kind of lowers his head and says, okay, what channel do you want? And then he looks at his own fingers and he says, why can't you guys get organized like that?

[1 : 1 0] Now, I know you probably can't tell now, but I was blessed to play basketball in Bible college for four years. And I'll never forget one day in practice, coach called us together and he asked us to go around and share our strengths and our weaknesses.

And the reason he did that is because we had guys trying to do things in games that didn't fit their gifts. For example, a big man would get a rebound and I or another point guard would come ready to receive that outlet pass, put our hands up, well, here's the ball, give it to me.

And instead of throwing it, they wouldn't even look our way, that guy would start dribbling down the court. The only problem, they weren't always the best dribblers. And guess what happened probably 75% of the time?

Some quick little guard would pick their pocket, throw it ahead, and they would get an easy bucket. So coach made us go around and share what our strengths and weaknesses were on the basketball court.

Because we couldn't have a team of all little guys who were great ball handlers, but couldn't put the ball in the hole or get rebounds. We couldn't have a team of just pure shooters who couldn't move the ball around or even drive to the basket when your defender was overplaying.

[2 : 1 5] We couldn't have all big guys who could only operate kind of down around the basket. We needed all of us using our gifts, working together as one unit so we could reach our potential.

And you know what? The same thing's true for the church. And yet while most of us who've played on a team have probably been told what we can and can't do based on our strengths, people are a little more sensitive to that stuff in the church, aren't they?

And yet when I've been to churches that are all about getting people connected into serving where they have gifts and passions and skills and calling, it's awesome to see what the Lord can do through us broken vessels.

We call that here at FCC getting the right people on the right seat on the bus. And in one sense, that's what we've been talking about the last couple of weeks as we've jumped into this unique and even controversial topic of spiritual gifts.

And according to the word, spiritual gifts are not your natural abilities. They are gifts imparted to believers, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit, so that we can minister in a supernatural way in God's power and through his leading.

[3 : 27] And the best part is you and I may have different gifts, and that's by design, so that we can form this incredible team for the glory of God. So just for fun, and I know this is a little cheesy, we're going to call this Team Jesus.

But as we pick back up here in the 11th week of this series, many of you have heard me talk about the reality that Paul is writing to a church in this ancient city of Corinth. And while we can expect the culture around the church to be ungodly and chaotic, sadly, that's happening in the church too.

There's no kumbaya being saying around the church campfire here. These people are dividing over all sorts of stuff, like leadership. Some are saying, I follow Paul. Others, I follow Apollo.

Still others, Peter. And there's even major division over their God-given gifts. Some are spouting that their gifts are the most important thing, putting themselves on a pedestal while looking down on others and the gifts they have.

And there's even a lot of abuse of these gifts, where they're just making it all about themselves and using their gifts in unhealthy and disruptive ways. Taking gifts that are designed to be used for Team Jesus, and some of them are manipulating those gifts instead for Team Me, Me, Me.

[4 : 44] So, if you want to go ahead and start to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 12, we've walked through these first 11 verses, and we've talked about the reality that your gifts are for me, and my gifts are to benefit you.

We are called to edify the saved, to transform the lost. And we've seen that while there are around 19 or 20 different spiritual gifts that are listed throughout the New Testament, God uses our gifts with our own unique personalities and passions and skills, and we're never going to fit into just this rigid little box that we like to design.

All these things make our calling as unique, honestly, as your fingerprint. Then last week, we talked about nine specific gifts and how they can function in the church.

And while certain ones are debated pretty intensely and have been longer than any of us have been alive, the purpose of our gifts is not to divide. It's to edify and transform because it's all about Jesus.

So, if you have your outline, grab those for me and fill in this first point today. Team Jesus is one body. Team Jesus is one body.

[6 : 00] And don't forget, you can always go to the YouVersion, Y-O-U version Bible app. It's free to download. You can go to the menu, go to events, go to First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana, and then you can see our outline.

So, Team Jesus is one body. You know, about three or four years ago, I was told I had an umbilical hernia, which means in your belly button, that needed to be taken care of at some point.

And the doctor told me, hey, it's not urgent, but if you ever start feeling sick to your stomach, start vomiting, if anything protrudes through that wall, get to the ER.

So, I was preaching in the Family Life Center one Sunday back in late 2020. And as I'm sitting there, just a couple minutes away from getting up to preach, I noticed that my belly button had grown significantly.

And I was feeling pretty nauseous. But once again, I was about a minute away from getting up to preach. So, I just asked God, please help me get through this. Please don't let me like barf in front of everybody.

[7 : 03] Help me to be able to preach. And while I felt a little yucky, I was able to, and I did. And as soon as I got done, I went to the back and I told a couple leaders, hey, I'm going to duck out. I'm going to head to the hospital. Here's what's going on.

And they got everything pushed back in at the hospital. And then I felt fine again. They got me scheduled for surgery. That was about a month later. And when I came to after that surgery, I'll just tell you, things just weren't right.

It was rough. And as I went home to recover that week, I just was not doing well for a routine surgery. And I know that we have some in this room or listening to this who are probably a little more prim and proper than I.

So, I'll put this as eloquent as I can, okay? My bowels weren't working. And things like a liquid diet weren't helping. In fact, all that waste still in my body was causing terrible, I mean, awful pain in my stomach.

So, I went back to the ER and come to find out, I had what they called an ileus. And there's a little bit of a debate there whether my intestines had gotten so inflamed that nothing could go through or whether they were obstructed.

[8 : 09] But regardless, it had the same result. And I spent about two days in the hospital with this awful drainage tube down my nose, through my body, all this bad stuff coming out, and then liquids being flushed through me.

And I walked an incredible amount of laps around that floor. And by the grace of God, with appreciation from some wonderful nurses, my body started to work correctly.

I hadn't been so excited for poop since my kids were potty training, okay? But I have to tell you, I hadn't thought much about my intestines before that moment. For 37 years of life before that, they'd always just done what they were supposed to do.

But when they acted up, it affected the whole body. So here Paul talks about the reality that while we are many unique parts, we form one body called the church.

So look at 1 Corinthians 12, 12 with me. It says, just as a body, the one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

[9 : 14] So it's almost like Paul is taking us back to high school biology class. Do you remember those big charts that they had that had those skeletons? And one may show the 206 bones, or the 600 muscles, or the circulatory system, or organs, and yet we put the skin back on, and what do you see?

You see one body. You see one person. And Paul says, listen, the church works the same way. Yeah, there may be a Ray, a Javier, an Emily, a Linda, a Judy, a Patrick, a Debbie.

Actually, I want to do this. On the count of three, I want you to yell your name out loud right where you are. This may freak out your family members if they're not listening, but go ahead and do it.

Ready? One, two, three. Ray. Yeah. Whatever name you yelled out, we probably got that. But the goal is that when FCC is mentioned, that it's not all about a preacher.

It's not all about an elder or any of those names. It's all about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That this body is committed to one goal, to grow so in love with Jesus, to be so immersed in His truth that we can't help but live for Him and shout His name from the rooftops.

[10 : 27] But when one part of that body decides to go rogue, just like my intestines did, it affects the whole body. And truth be told, if I wouldn't have gotten that taken care of, it would have turned deadly.

And we see this all the time in the church where a rogue part of the body can cause so much devastation that a church is left reeling. Some have even gone through a funeral where the church closed the doors, where one member of the body or maybe several, maybe a faction is not following the Holy Spirit's leading.

Maybe they don't get their way on something. Next thing you know, pride is flaring up. There's no submission to leadership like God's Word talks about. There's no respect for the unity of the church. And we're going to kick and scream until we get our way or we're going to stomp our way out and we're going to take as many people with us as possible.

And sadly, most of us have seen that before. And that breaks the heart of God. And I like what Jesus said here in Matthew 12, 25. The Word of God says, Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed.

A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. And then we see this command given to believers from Romans 12, 17 and 18.

[11 : 43] It says, do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. And then look at this, verse 18. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, because sometimes it does not, live at peace with everyone.

And when this happens, we see the Lord show up in some really big ways. When us individuals realize that we're a part of something so much bigger than ourselves. When we realize that we're a cog in the machinery of the church, charging the gates of hell to love God, love people, and make disciples.

Guys, I know that I've shared this quote with you before, but it's way too good not to share again, especially, and this is a cuss word, I know, but especially as winter is marching in.

This quote says this, snowflakes are frail, but if enough of them stick together, they can stop traffic. And you know what? Same thing's true in the church. Yes, we are made up of many unique parts.

On our own, we are frail. I am thankful for every single part, each of you in the body, but we have to realize that it's not about us. It's all about Jesus. It's all about this body shining Him in Greensburg, in Decatur County, and spreading out beyond that.

[12 : 58] And I'll tell you what, I'm proud of FCC. This local body where God has placed us. I'm proud of the impact this body is making for Jesus in our community and beyond.

I'm in awe of what God has done this year alone with so much growth in the church, with so many people surrendering their lives to Christ, being baptized, with others committing themselves to be a faithful member of this body.

The growth among believers, the change among those coming to Christ, the restored marriages and relationships. It's awesome to see what the Lord can do when we're committed to Team Jesus.

One body, one church, working together for God's glory. Now here's the second thing I want you to see. Team Jesus has one leader. Team Jesus has one leader.

And you can circle the name Jesus there if you do have the outline there. Team Jesus has one leader and it's Jesus. He is the head of the church. Yes, he's going to place leaders in the church to guide his precious bride, but still, us leaders make it about him and not us.

[14 : 09] He is the head of the church. We are his body doing everything according to his word and according to his leading. And if we look back here at 1 Corinthians 12, 13, remember at the end of verse 12, it kind of talks about that it's about Christ and then it continues by saying, 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.

Do you remember a few weeks back when we talked about the phrase that Paul made about the children of Israel being baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and most of us were like, what is he even talking about?

And we realized that that statement was simply talking about identity. Dying to ourselves, discovering new life in Christ, I am identified with Jesus now, and in the Old Testament they were being identified with their leader, Moses, who clearly was a follower of Yahweh, which meant they were followers of Yahweh, the same God we worship here today.

And so as we look at this passage talking about the reality that we were baptized by one spirit and we continue to be led by the Holy Spirit, we also see this idea of identity, that we find our identity in Jesus Christ alone.

See in Ephesians 1, 22 and 23, Paul put it like this, and God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be the head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

[15 : 52] So yes, we're one body for sure, but we also are one body who have a leader who loved us so much that he would die to take our place, that he cared about you, that he cared about me when our sin had separated us from the Father for all eternity, so much so that he came into this bleak world, lived a humble life, dealt with every temptation that's thrown our way and more, and he still lived a sinless, perfect life as the long-awaited Messiah, the only one to do that, and then he willingly walked that gruesome path to the cross where he was screamed at, spit on, beaten, mocked, crucified, all by those made in his image, and as he breathed his last breath on that cross, Satan thought that evil had won, Satan thought that he was triumphant, but listen, three quiet days later, the grave could hold him no longer, that rock came flying out of the way, the Savior was risen, and life is found in the name of Jesus Christ alone, and when we make that decision to repent, to be baptized into Christ, just like Acts 2.38 tells us, he fills us with his Holy Spirit and places his seal over our hearts, and from that day forward, because he is our God and Savior, he has the headship, the leadership over my life and over the body, his church, and then last,

I want you to see this, Team Jesus is perfect unity in our diversity, perfect unity while also realizing that we have a diverse body of believers, so we're one body, one leader, following his word, his will, his ways, but there's something awesome about the fact that we don't have to fit this cookie cutter mold, that God has wired you and me uniquely to use our gifts for his glory.

You know, when I went to Bible college in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, I ended up attending a church for probably about two years that I really enjoyed. It was called Oak Hill Baptist Church, and one thing that was unique about Oak Hill was the diversity in this church body.

See, it's often said the most segregated time of the week is Sunday morning worship, but that wasn't true at Oak Hill. It was made up of white, black, Hispanic, and a few other ethnicities, and I loved it.

And when they talked about their vision, they made it clear, we're not going to be a white church that has black people in it. We're not going to be a black church with white people. We want to be the best of both or all worlds.

[18 : 39] They wanted to honor some different cultures to be relevant in that way while ultimately magnifying the name of Christ. Now, let me show you this passage in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 14.

Just stick with me for a second. I want to read 14 to 20 here. Here's what Paul says through the Holy Spirit. 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 a part of the body. And if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I do not belong to the body, it would not for that reason stop being a 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, and we make up those parts. So I mentioned diversity when it comes to ethnicity, but diversity is much more than just the shade of your skin, okay?

[19 : 48] Just the culture you come from. I just wish my skin was a little more tan, like some of you, but what I love about the Big C Church is that it's made up of Christians from every tongue, every tribe, every language, every culture, every denomination, every non-denomination, and more.

And guys, there's this joke that I know has been told by every church movement that goes something like this. A man dies. He goes to heaven. He's being shown around by Peter, and they enter this building, and as they're walking down a hallway where there's different groups in different rooms, Peter says, well, there's the missionary Baptist over there, and he looks in, and they're all laughing, and then smiling, and having a good time.

There's over there, there's the global Methodists, and they're smiling too, but then they come up on this room, and the door's closed, and the guy says, well, what about that room? And that's when Peter says, shh, you gotta be quiet, because that's where the Christian church people are.

They think they're the only ones here. So, I shared that on Wednesday night a couple weeks back in the class on teaching, and not many of them laughed either. So listen, it's okay, it's just a bad joke, but it does make a really good point.

The kingdom of God is so much bigger than our little movements, or even our church, a local church here, FCC, or even the church in America, or the church in the world in 2023.

[21 : 11] Can you imagine some of the images we read about in the book of Revelation, where believers are surrounding the throne, worshiping a God who is so worthy of our praise, and then there's gonna be no discussion like this.

Well, Malachi, nice to meet you. What was your theology on speaking in tongues? There won't be a sign as you enter that room that says, okay, Calvinists go to the left of the throne, Arminianists go to the right.

No, there's perfect unity in our God-given and God-designed diversity. And Paul talks specifically about using our gifts, our abilities, our passions, our calling to serve and impact lives for Jesus.

And to go along with what the Lord shares here, what if an eye decides that, hey, I'm just not gonna work. I'm not gonna do my part. Then guess what? The other eye has to work twice as hard and there's gonna be a bigger blind spot that affects the overall vision.

Or what if those with the gift of discernment say, you know, I would rather be teaching so I'm not gonna serve at all. If I don't get to do what I want, I'm gonna take my ball and go home. Then guess what? The body suffers.

[22 : 18] See, you and I have been given spiritual gifts and talents and passions and we're wired certain ways by the God of creation and we're called to serve Him. He deserves our time, our effort to build His church.

I remember Pastor Danny who was the lead pastor here before me. He and I, he retired and I transitioned in and he once made this comment. I don't know if he got this from someone else or if he thought of this himself but I'm gonna give him credit today.

He said, when you don't use your gifts, you're robbing me. When I don't use my gifts, I'm robbing you. See, there's this beautiful diversity among the body of Christ where each play an important role, where each serve, where our gifting and our strengths lie and listen, through different seasons of life, where and how you serve may change but all of us are called, no matter your age, you're called to use your gifts for God's glory.

Next year will be the Olympics, the Summer Olympics and it's gonna be in Paris, France in 2024 and I'm guessing a lot of us will at least pay attention to some of our favorite events.

I know people love to watch swimming or track and field but it really doesn't matter. We're gonna be rooting on the good old red, white, and blue and usually as I'm watching the sprinters, I'll say to Bethany, my wife, I'll say, look at those guys.

[23 : 39] I would love to be built like that. Their bodies are in peak physical shape. I mean, everything is firing the way it should and you can tell that years and years of hard work have gone into this one moment that for the 100 meter dash runners may last only less than 10 seconds.

Every single part of that body has to work together perfectly for them to stand on the podium and maybe even hear their national anthem played.

I love this body of believers. I brag on FCC often and I believe in the vision that God is laying on the hearts of our elders for years to come but it's gonna take the body working together each of us doing our part for FCC to be the church that we're called to be.

So do me a favor. I'm gonna take a page from Bob Russell and I'm gonna ask you to speak your name out loud on the count of three one more time. Okay? Do this for me.

Okay? On the count of three say your name. Your first name. One, two, three. Ray. Okay. If you could have heard all those at the same time that would have been a pretty chaotic sound.

[24 : 52] Right? But let's try something a little different. On the count of three say Jesus in a loud voice. One, two, three. Jesus! Now, get a little softer with me.

One, two, three. Jesus. That's more like it because we are called to use our gifts for the glory of God.

And my gifts are not about me. Your gifts are not about you. Our gifts are all about glorifying Jesus Christ. Making him known in this world.

Will you pray with me? Heavenly Father, I just thank you for these words of life that you have spoken over us today. I thank you for how much you love each of us.

That you, Father, would send the Son to this earth to die on the cross to take our place, to take our sins upon his shoulders.

[25 : 52] That when we, by faith, because you will not force us, when we, by faith, surrender our lives to your Lordship, that we will be forgiven. That we will be sat on your solid rock and that we will live lives using our gifts for your glory.

So thank you for these words of truth. May we never make it about us. May it always be about Jesus. We pray these things in his precious and holy name. And God's people said, Amen and Amen.

Hey, I want to give you this invitation today. If you're listening to this and you have some questions about God, maybe you'd want to talk about, hey, I want to give my life to the Lord.

I've lived for me for way too long. I'm ready to follow Jesus. If that's you, I want to invite you to reach out. We would love to come alongside you and be there for you.

My name is Ray Sweet. I'm the lead pastor here at First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana. You can check us out at FCCGreensburg.com. But hey, you can also call us at 812-663-8488.

[27 : 00] Ask for Pastor Ray, Pastor Steve, Pastor Mitch, Pastor Tyler, any of us would love to help you. Or you can go ahead as well and email me at ray at FCCGreensburg.com.

Hey, God bless you. I hope you have an incredible week serving the Lord.