

# The Body of Christ Series

## Lesson One: The Body of Christ - A Living Organism of Believers

**Biblical Text(s):** Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV); Romans 12:3-7; I Corinthians 12:12-31;  
I Corinthians 13:1-13; Ephesians 3:21; Ephesians 5:25

### Introduction

We have been studying The Gospel and how Hillcrest is involved with sharing it with the world. We have talked about it globally, locally, and within the walls of our building. Together we form a body--the body of Christ. A body of believers bound together by Christ's blood to form not an organization but an organism. Over the next couple of months, we will look at how we form the body and why it is important. In the coming weeks, we will focus on the following topics of study:

1. Why are we studying this, and why is it essential to our salvation (*eternal importance* - Eph 3:21)?
2. What does it mean to be a part of the body, and how does that help me find purpose?
3. How is the body of Christ unique, and therefore what are the expectations?
4. How do parts of the body work together, and how does it grow?
5. How do parts of the body work together in community and hospitality?
6. Unity in the body
7. What happens when the body breaks. How are we reconciled to God and to each other?
8. How does the body show love to its members and the world?

### There are two key teaching points we will cover in today's lesson:

- Why is the body essential, and what is the 'Head.'
- How is the body structured?

### Key Teaching Point 1: Why is the body essential, and what is the 'Head'

Read the following scripture:

Colossians 1:15-23 (NIV)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of [g] your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel

# The Body of Christ Series

that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Points to consider:

1. We have been studying “The Gospel.” Paul says that God through the church--the body-- is reconciled (?) to mankind.
2. Christ is the head of the body.
3. Christ died for the body. Note: What happens if you separate the “Head” from the “Body.” We cannot live beyond our earthly body unless we are connected through our spiritual Body to the Head (which is Christ)! Do we fully understand and appreciate the essential role of Christ’s Body?
4. Christ now lives in the body.
5. What does that mean for us 10,000 years from creation and 2000 years after Christ died for us?

## Key Teaching Point 2: Why does Paul write about “The Body” so much?

Read the following scripture:

Romans 12:3-7

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

I Corinthians 12:12-31

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[c] 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. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 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. 16 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. 17 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? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

# The Body of Christ Series

**21** 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!” **22** On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23** and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, **24** while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **25** so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26** If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

**27** Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. **28** And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? **30** Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[d]? Do all interpret? **31** Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

## Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. How/why are these passages different?
2. What do these verses say to you about the importance of Christ’s Body?
3. Why does Paul write about “The Body” so much?
4. What is your role (place) in the Body of Christ? (from a position of service or love).

## Conclusion

1. Look back at Romans 12. Why does Paul follow his discussion about “The Body” with Love?
2. We read these verses at weddings--but how do we practice them with our brothers and sisters in Christ?
3. Homework\*\*
  - a. What do we as a church need to do, to fully understand and grasp the importance of Christ’s Body in our daily lives?
  - b. How do you reflect Christ’s body to the world? Do others see Christ in us (His Body)?
  - c. How does being part of Christ’s Body give you purpose?
  - d. How would you explain the “role of the Body” in God’s design for our salvation? (Reflect on the scripture readings for this chapter and the Lord’s willingness to give himself up for the church - Ephesians 5:25 ).
  - e. In both Romans and 1 Corinthians Paul follows his discussion of the body by describing love. How do you show and receive love?