



Introduction to the Body of Christ Sunday, October 29, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

When we think about our bodies as humans, we can't help but acknowledge how amazing they are. The number of involuntary processes that happen on a daily basis just to keep us alive are baffling. When something is wrong with our bodies, it becomes apparent to us quite quickly. If your knees give out or you chip a tooth, you will know right away. The body is a whole made up of many interdependent parts.

Like our physical human bodies, the Body of Christ is a whole made up of many interdependent parts. These parts work together to act in accordance with the will of God, just like the parts of our body work together to accomplish our wills as individuals. Unfortunately, unlike physical human bodies, it is not always obvious to us when a part is not working properly—or worse, when we are the part that is out of joint. So, we must take every precaution to cherish the body of Christ, to make sure that it is doing the will of Christ, and make sure that we are doing our part to ensure that the body is built up and active in doing His will.

Context

The illustration of the body is one of two commonly used metaphors in the New Testament to describe the church (the other being the bride). In 1 Corinthians 12-14 (another passage where the illustration is featured), Paul focuses on the diversity of the body—each person is a distinct member of the body with unique gifts. In Ephesians, Paul focuses primarily on the unity of the body—how mysterious it is that God has joined all of these diverse parts together and how, by joining them together, God has demonstrated His wisdom to the powers and authorities in the spiritual realm. So, for us to think about being the body of Christ, we ought to be reminded of the unity we share with others in it and how that unity transcends all other human relationships.

Read and Reflect (Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)

“We Are the Body”

Read Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:14-18; 3:8-10; 4:4-6; 4:15-16

Body

- Material part of human beings
- Mass of matter: *celestial bodies*
- People considered as a collective unit
 - o *Legislative body; student body*
- Richness/fullness: hair, oil, wine

The Church is the Body of Christ

- Collective unit
- Similar purpose
- Intimate connection
- Richness/fullness which should exist

Picture connected and obedient

Purpose active on His behalf

Because church is not somewhere we go, it's something we are a part of.

Discuss

- 1) What was your first experience of going to church like? If you grew up in the church, what are your earliest memories of being a part of the church?
- 2) Based on what Paul says in Ephesians, how would you describe what the church is?
- 3) Based on Pastor Don's description of the church body (collective unit, similar purpose, intimate connection, richness/fullness), how would you describe your connection to South Church?
- 4) In what ways do you think South can grow as a church (using criteria for growth found in the Bible)?
- 5) How do you already, or how can you, contribute your gifts to the ministry and building up of South Church?