

Introduction

- 1 I was recently talking to a non-Christian friend about how amazing the human body is
- 2 What's amazing is so many think it just evolved from an animal, rather than made by a Creator
- 3 His reply was **it was illogical to believe in a Supreme Being** who created the world!!!
- 4 Human body has many amazing things about it, with its ability to recover from injury, DNA etc
- 5 Human body **has many parts, some seem** to be more important than others, but all play a role
- 6 When one part suffers eg hit finger with hammer the whole body feels it, or players pull muscle

I The Church is the Body of Christ

A 12:12 Worldwide Church is called the Body of Christ, with Jesus as its Head

- 1 Bible gives a very good example of how the human body is just like the worldwide church
- 2 Human body has many parts all working together to make us live effectively in the world
- 3 Have a head, eyes, ears, legs, arms, throats, blood vessels, muscles, heart, all in one body.
- 4 In the same way the church **is described as one body with one head**, who is Jesus Christ.
- 5 Col. 1:18 **“And He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church”**
- 6 Church has many parts and **amazingly has spread** to most countries all around the world.
- 7 Math 16:18 Jesus **“I will build my church & the gates of Hades will not overcome it”**
- 8 But there are thousands of churches who do not trust the Bible 100% as being God's word
- 9 They do not preach that to belong to Jesus and his church, a person **must repent of sin & believe** in Jesus as their own personal Saviour & **receive** Lord Jesus into their hearts/lives

B 12:13 The Holy Spirit baptizes each new believer from every culture, into one Body

- 1 Bible teaches that God, the Holy Spirit **opens a person's eyes to realise he is a sinner under God's judgement and the only way to escape** is to repent of sin, believe in Jesus
- 2 12:13 Doesn't matter from where a person comes in the world, **Holy Spirit makes person** a member of the worldwide Body of Christ, comes to live in new believer's heart- change
- 3 Holy Spirit then helps every new believer to **grow** as a Chn, to **live for, obey Jesus daily**
- 4 J'n 3:5 **“No-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water & the Spirit”**
- 5 Being baptized in water **does not make** a person a Chn – **just outward sign** of what has happened in heart **after** a believer has repented, believed, been born again by Holy Spirit

C 12:14-24 The Body has many different parts but all are equally important

- 1 As verses say, each human body is 1, has many different parts, **all of which are important**
- 2 No one part like the eye, or hand or foot or head can claim to be superior to the other parts
- 3 Some body parts are on the outside, some on inside, which can't be seen yet still important
- 4 In same way the Body of Christ has many parts, each of us having a special part to play.
eg Musicians use their hands, eyes, ears, voices, minds, some feet, to help us **worship** God
- 5 At our service today, **many are gifted in different ways** - welcoming-music-reading-C4K
- 6 Some do ministry that everyone sees, but others type, print bulletins, clean church-not seen
- 7 12:20 But **all** play parts in one body working together, **of equal importance** in God's eyes
- 8 Psalm 139:14 tells us God created each one of us, so each is fearfully & wonderfully made

D 12:25 - 26 All members of the Body should care for one another in suffering & honour

- 1 25 We need one another, **must help** 1 another, work together to bring glory to Body, Head
eg If someone is sick, facing an operation or medical treatment, we should pray for them
- 2 There should be no divisions or jealousy between them – work together to obey the Head
- 3 By working together **all parts bring glory to the Head**, thus building up our local church
- 4 At church, do we only speak to our friends **or do we try to speak to visitors, those alone?**
eg Do we try to encourage other Christians in their faith, by talking about spiritual things

- D 5 The more mature Christians should help the newer Christians to grow spiritually in faith
- 6 **12:26 The unity of the church** is seen in both suffering **and** honour
- a **Suffering** by one part of our body, means the whole body hurts **eg** Have back problem
- b If Chn churches **are persecuted** in many countries overseas, **we should pray for them**
- c After disasters occur in non-Chns countries & aid is sent, often Chns won't be given any
- d To help Chns in the Body of Christ receive help donate to Chn groups who send to them
- 7 When 1 section of Christ's body is blessed with new converts, rejoice with them-Baptists!!

II 12:27-30, 7, 11 God Chooses Leaders to build up the Body of Christ

- A 12:27, 7,11 **Every** believer plays a part in the **church**, using gift(s) **given** by the **Holy** Spirit
- 1 27 Paul tells each Chn in the church at Corinth, they are members of the Body of Christ
- 2 This is a great gift from God to belong to the Body of Christ, but brings big responsibility
- 3 As with a human body, each member of the Body of Christ has a part to play in his church
- 4 **12:7** Great thing about being a Chn is-God equips every Chn with gift(s) to work in church
- 5 But the gift is not to bring glory to the individual, but is to help the **whole church** to **grow**
- 6 **12:11** It is God, the Holy Spirit who decides which spiritual gift(s) each person will receive
- 7 Holy Spirit **knows who** we are, **what we** can do, so **gives us right gifts** to work in church
- 8 We can certainly pray to find out what gift(s) He has given us and eagerly ask for certain gifts (12:31), **but He knows us best and will decide which gift we can handle and use.**

B The 19 Spiritual Gifts listed in the N.T. Letters are not complete, just examples

Won't spend great deal of time on this subject **as it can be controversial** – 4 things

- 1 These are **gifts given** by God to every believer **to help build** the Body of Christ for **free**, so there are no grounds for boasting or pride about the particular gift(s) each are given.
- 2 There are many other gifts which God has given to believers, not listed in the N.T.
eg Children's ministry, music, youth work, special prayer gift, comedy, drama, language..
- 3 The **only gifts repeated** in Romans, 1 Cor., Ephesians, 1 Peter are preaching, teaching
These 2 gifts are **central** to the Book of Acts thru'out - **used to equip others for ministry**
- 4 For this reason Paul wrote that gifts used **without love are nothing** in 1 Corinthians 13

C 12:28-30 God chooses & gifts leaders to build up the Body of Christ, which is his Church

- 1 **28** God chooses leaders in the church to achieve certain goals, so must fit in with His plans
- 2 God places them there to do a job in particular place at particular time –knows their hearts
- 3 **eg** In 2005 Bruce was chosen to come here, focus was to be young families, cross-cultural
- 4 **28** God knew Stanley family had necessary gifts of the Holy Spirit **to be effective in this**
- 5 Eph 4:7, 11-12 gives a good summary of how these leaders should exercise, use their gifts
- "It was Christ who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, ... evangelists ...pastors & teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so Body of Christ may be built up**
- 6 Leaders are chosen to a disciple & build up other church members **b Teach them** how to find their God-given gifts **c encourage them to use** their gifts **d to make** the church strong
- e To reach out into the community **f Make church grow** **g Learn Bible** at home groups etc.
- 7 **Prophet a** Can tell future **like Isaiah b Preaches** God's word, **encourages, warns** re sin
- 8 **Teacher a** Clearly explains God's word **b Helps** folk remember it **cApplies it** to their lives
- 9 Gifts of helps, administration - handle finance, admin., help new members, church growth
- 10 **12:29-30** We all can't have these very public gifts, but like body parts every gift is needed
- 11 **But a** Everyone has special place in the Body of Christ **b You have place just right for you**
c Each of us must find that place **d Bring glory to God** by filling their place well in Body

III Important things for each to ask self? - Importance of allowing God to change us within

- 1 Have you been baptized into Christ's Body by Holy Spirit after repenting, believing in Jesus
- 2 Have you **a** Found out what your spiritual gift(s) is **b** Are you using these to help build Body