

What Will I Give To Be In Christ?

Scriptural Text:

Romans 12:3-8

³For 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 measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Introduction

There are many things God gives us when we are in Christ: we are a new creation in Christ; we are justified by God's grace; there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. We are God's children.

But there is also one thing we need to remember today: In Christ, we become one body. Romans 12:5 says: "...in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." This means that we belong together in God's family and we should not give up meeting together. We should practise journeying as one body, one church, and one family of God.

We have to give up thinking about "I, me and myself!" and start thinking about "we, us and ourselves." The current worldly practice centres on a "me-culture". Edmund Chan, pastor and author of the book, 'Built to Last', says that we live in an age of narcissism and consumerism. The media and institutions promote the individual. People live on self-love and personal gratification.

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And in this age of consumerism, Christians may subconsciously think in the same vein: How does the church meet MY needs? We go church shopping and think that the church should serve our individual fancies.

The biblical view of being 'in Christ' is that we are one united body. However, some of us may bear the following attitudes that go against the Lord's teaching of spiritual unity. Self-centred and divided, some of us may think we are more important. On the other hand, some of us may think we are not important at all.

Attitude 1: "I'm MORE important!"

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(Romans 12:3-5)*

Let us address the first attitude. We should not think of ourselves better than others. 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 says we are one body with different functions. Some parts are more visible and others less visible. Some parts are weaker than others but they are still important in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

Imagine this: The stomach may seem a less visible and significant part of our body, but when we have an upset stomach, it affects the entire body. We become weak; we are unable to function as a whole. Therefore, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:22-23: "On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honour..."

In God's family, let us work together with the help of the Holy Spirit to support one another. Let the stronger help the weaker members with a spirit of gentleness. (Galatians 6:1) Let us in the care groups look out for one another in genuine love and support.



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Attitude 2: "I'm NOT important!"

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. (Romans 12:6a)

Some of us may adopt another attitude: "I'm not important; Leave me alone! I'm insignificant and useless; I'm a nobody!" Instead of thinking that, why not say: "How can I contribute to the family of God?" Let us use our ability according to the grace God has given us.

There is the story of Gloria from one of my previous churches. She had all along been a homemaker. After her children had grown up, she stepped forward and asked me how she could serve God in church. I saw that she could drive, and so I invited her to accompany me on my hospital visits. As a young male pastor, unmarried then, I found that having an older woman like Gloria around was really helpful. An experienced mother and grandmother, she could connect with nursing mothers and other ladies convalescing in hospitals better than I ever could!

Gloria began with just a simple question, asking where she could serve God and she ended up ministering to God's people in the way God had enabled her to. Likewise, let us ask ourselves: What do I enjoying doing? What am I good at doing? What things have I done that others affirm is my gift? In the big and small things, let us present ourselves to Jesus as a living and holy sacrifice.

One Body In Christ

Rick Warren mentions that we are like members of an orchestra. We are different musicians playing different instruments and notes. The aim of a good musician is to not to play exceptionally louder than others or to finish first. The goal is to be one with the orchestra. Under the direction of one conductor, we can produce a body of beautiful music. God is our Conductor, our Master and Lord. Under His leadership and direction, it is not about "I or me" anymore, but "we and us" as a body of Christ. It is not about whether "I'm more important" or "I'm not important", but rather, "Let us serve as a body of Christ".



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Let us pray: Heavenly Father, thank You for calling us to be in Christ. We are a new creation. We face no condemnation. Being in Christ, we are members of Your body. Teach us to give up our self-centred ways and grow as one in Your body. In Jesus' name, Amen.

- By Rev Lim Jen Huat

Reference: Rick Warren, 40 Days of Community, Purpose Driven Publishing