

Connected – His Body

We want to be connected to something that is bigger than we are, something that has the power, influence, and ability to help in times of need. One of the remarkable aspects of God's grace is how each of us are included in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul spoke about this connection.

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

At various times, Jesus spoke about our connection with Him.

He made it clear that our connection with Him is what produces life and fruitfulness. Being connected with Christ is the initiation and culmination, the beginning and the fulfillment of the Christian life. When you come to Christ, you become a partaker of all of the richness of His glory, grace, and salvation. God has called each of us to receive, submit, accept, and expect extra-ordinary results as a result of our personal connection with Him.

- His grace is going to be worked into us.
- His mercy is our portion.
- His love overcomes our weaknesses.
- His full joy remains and gives us strength.
- His power sustains us.
- We find forgiveness of sins in Him, healing for our body, and grace for every time of need.

We all need a practical, personal and living relationship with God that works in our daily life. We need more than theories or a series of lessons about God's provision and providential care. We need a sustainable connection that addresses all of our weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and situations. We must have a connection that effectively communicates the entirety of God's provisions for us through Christ.

Isaiah spoke at length about Christ taking us on and the impact His action has on our lives.

Isaiah 53:4 HCSB He bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains...

Isaiah 53:4 NKJV Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...

Listen to what God the Father says in Isaiah 53:11.

Isaiah 53:11 GNT After a life of suffering, He will again have joy; He will know that He did not suffer in vain. My devoted servant, with Whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for His sake I will forgive them.

The Lord carried you and me to the cross, but He has done much more. **Isaiah 46:3–4 NCV** ...I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will take care of you. I made you and will take care of you. I will carry you and save you.

Being made a part of His body brings us into all of His victory, power and life.

He has carried us like the vine carries the branch. He is holding, sustaining and giving life. He is taking and bearing your burden. He is addressing all of your sickness and bearing all of your sorrow. You can rest in the Lord. You can delight and trust in Him and in His strength. He will supply your need. This rest, delight, trust, and supply can be truly realized when we abide in Him. Your connection with Christ has made you a partaker of His body.

God has made it possible for you to really partake of Christ and really abide in Him.

Philippians 3:7-10 NKJV But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ...that I may gain Christ and be found in Him...having the righteousness which is from God by faith...that I may know Him.

This may sound incredible to some, but He will take us in. We can receive His righteousness, peace and joy. We can know His salvation, purity, and holiness. We can be made righteous with His righteousness. We can be healed by this connection with His body. We can be strengthened with the might of His power. Notice the depth of His identifying with you so that you may fully identify with Him.

Isaiah 53:4 GNT “But He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne...”

Isaiah 53:4 NIV Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows...

Isaiah 53:4 LB Yet it was our grief He bore, our sorrows that weighed Him down.

Isaiah 53:4 AMP Surely He has borne our griefs, sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses and carried our sorrows and pains of punishment...

From the Lord's point of view, this is a fact of history. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken you and borne you in His body to the cross. He has carried our sin, sickness, and sorrow. Our pain, distress and grief has been laid upon Him. The Book of Luke shows the distress and agony the LORD bore when we were laid upon Him. In the garden of

Gethsemane, Jesus was deep in prayer, just before He was taken away to be crucified.

Luke 22:44 NKJV And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

When our sorrows, sicknesses and sin were laid upon Him, Jesus felt the full impact of what we face. The full penalty of death by crucifixion was upon Him so that our great need would be fully taken care of. The Lord willingly took every part of your being and need. Christ's suffering engages every attack you may encounter. He suffered for every pain, sorrow, sickness and depression. Every event of our lives falls under the scope of His sacrifice. To express the full depth of His commitment and love, we are told *"Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ,"* (Romans 8:35).

Consider the depth of Christ's taking you in.

You have no problem, sickness, or disturbance that affects you that does not affect Him. He is moved with the feeling of your infirmity. Can you get your mind around the fact of the LORD's intimate feeling and knowledge of your every need and pain? When Jesus walked and ministered on this earth, there were times He groaned and sighed when He came to heal, deliver, or give life. Jesus was personally and physically touched by the agony and suffering of those to whom He ministered. Now we are told He sympathizes with our weakness and provides access to the throne of grace so that we can receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need, (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Listen to what He said to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 33:2–3 NIV84 This is what the Lord says, He who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is His name: 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

God said the same thing to the Psalmist.

Psalms 91:15 NIV84 He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

As soon as we realize our need for help and call out to God, there is sufficient power, mercy, and grace in Christ to do it.

God is able to do this without our cooperation.

The Lord God Jehovah is sufficient to do anything. He has the supreme power to create and sustain. He has the power to generate and regenerate. He has the power to develop and enhance. He is sufficient

to do it on His own.

Yet, God has tied all of these blessings in our lives to our connection with Christ and His body.

As we abide in Him, the fruit comes. As we call out to God, He answers us. God wants you to recognize, surrender and commit to this connection. He will not replace our desires with His or make us trust in Him. He will not make you pray and worship.

He says: "Here is this blessing and life. If you chose Me and My word and My way, I will give you rest from all of your striving."

What God is providing for us in Christ Jesus works in every area of our existence! He is able and willing to help you in every area of your life. He is able to heal your body, spirit and soul. He is able to take care of your physical and spiritual need.

Isaiah 46:3–4 NCV "...listen to me! All you people ...who are still alive, listen! I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will take care of you. I made you and will take care of you. I will carry you and save you."

You know the branch does not carry the vine, but the vine carries and holds up the branch. He has held you up and sustained you. He has sustained, strengthened and helped you. He has helped you and has already defeated your enemies. He is giving you new life. He is healing your wounds and your body. He is carrying your sorrow, burden, and grief. The LORD wants you to realize and depend on your connection to His body.

There is a profound and noticeable impact on your life when you are connected to Christ and part of His body.

2 Corinthians 2:14-15 NKJV Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

There is a fragrance of the grapevine that is sweet and intense. When one walks through a vineyard when the vines are blooming with new life, there is a fragrant freshness that is warm and deeply stirring. You should know that the character and nature of Christ in you is inescapable. You are connected to the very source of life.

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