

Ephesians 13-12-20b

We pick up our study now. We're looking at Ephesians chapter 2 via John chapter 6 and a couple of other passages now Let me encourage you and encourage all of us. Don't let your mind Don't let your soul do what these Pharisees did when it comes to this body of Christ truth This is a really big deal.

This is an important thing for us to get hold of Remember what Jesus said here in John 6 if you can grasp this if you can enter into this idea of Partaking of Christ. This is life. This is eternal life This is one of the central truths of the church age right here this thing that Paul is talking about we the church are his body the Fullness of him who fills all in all this is a fullness truth this is a truth without which you cannot be a Truly functional and certainly not an advanced church age believer You can't get there without getting a hold of this.

So we're spending a little bit of time on it Don't give up on it. Don't say wow. I'll sure be glad when we get back to this This is something we need and and the only way to get it is to give it a little thought Think about it.

Let it sink in Review in your mind these scriptures and we're going to look at them tonight There are three or four really central scripture passages in the New Testament that present and turn The gemstone of this truth in the light so that we can see its facets and we can look at the the prismatic rainbow of colors of God's character that it reveals This is not something to miss if you don't get it right away Do not lose heart Stick with it. Think about it discuss it Meditate on it pray over it. I'm telling you there is a there is a profound and very Influential and motivating truth here in terms of what it means for you and me to be in Christ You remember we saw a list of all of the benefits in him We have in him in him in him and we think well, that's nice But when's the last time it was a Wednesday afternoon and something happened and he thought well, you know in him I have redemption in him.

I have inheritance in him I you know, it doesn't really it's not necessarily a rubber meets the road kind of truth, but if we grasp What the functional nature of in him is what it means as we're just getting through the day using our eyes using our ears using our tongues using our hands if this becomes a Living part of our thought process. It is a profoundly Life-changing truth, so don't give up on it. Don't wait for it to be over Let it sink in Some things we've got a plant down at work that Patti put in down there.

It's a great plant And it needs to be watered and usually she's there to do it But once in a while she's elsewhere and so I water the plant and one thing I've learned about that plant We've got a great big peanut brittle jar. That's like I don't know what that thing holds like a gallon or gallon and a half Of water. It's got a big lid on so go down to the break room fill the thing up come back and this this pot Holds this plant and and it's got a bunch of soil and detritus in there If you water that plant too fast if you just pour the water all at once it comes right out the bottom It's got one of

those trays You pour it in the top and it just seems to bypass the soil and can all come out the tray And if you're not careful, it can overflow and get on the carpet and at work.

This is not a good thing What I have learned about watering that plant is I give it a little bit then I go over to one of the other plants I give it a little bit then I come back and after that has sunk in I can give it some more water and I just walk back and forth between the two plants and I pour a little in this one a little in that one little in This one little in that one till all the water is gone And when I look at the bottom of the tray, none of it's showing up down there It all depends on do I give it time to sink in or do I just dump it all in there and it all comes out? The bottom and the plant winds up being dry a couple of days later. This truth is kind of like that Take it take it in sips Take it in chunks and let it sink in I'm telling you This is an um, the more you think about this the more amazing it gets in Him we are his body. Look at just quickly review again I'm just gonna read it Ephesians chapter 2 you who were dead and trespasses and sins In which you once walked according to the course of this world According to the Prince of the power of the air the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience Among whom also we also once conducted ourselves the lusts of our flesh our flesh Our flesh can't get anything done.

Our flesh draws us away from God Our flesh makes it impossible to please God makes it impossible to understand God the carnal mind Cannot understand the things of the spirit. They are spiritually discerned It's not what we do in the physical flesh that counts. It's what we do as body of Christ It's the flesh of Jesus Christ.

It's the body of Christ Where things happen that please God it's a level above. It's a transcendent truth it's Remembering that it isn't did I give money? Did I say some appropriate words? Did I? physically accomplish some task Remember how the Word of God is a judge is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart It is the thoughts and intents of the heart where we dwell and function as body of Christ It's what we as body of Christ get done Sometimes it's expressed in this flesh sometimes not but this flesh is Wasting away. We are going to be unclothed of this flesh and over clothed as body of Christ well, we have a lot to cover on that but God who is rich in mercy This is Ephesians 2 for because of his great love with which he loved us and the fact that we are now The glorified body of Christ on this earth.

We are his presence on this earth We are the resting place when he was on this earth. He was where the Holy Spirit manifested power How were those miracles accomplished? How was the storm stilled? How were the lepers cleansed? How was the withered arm healed? It was the flesh of Jesus Christ Inhabited by the power of God's Spirit. That's the power that did these things.

What is the power that transformed and raised Christ's? Incarnate body from the dead and glorified him and raised him. It was the Holy Spirit What is it that inhabits us both individually and collectively? It's God the Holy Spirit. We are now his flesh We are his body You just have to think about it to begin to realize what God is doing Why it is the Holy Spirit is present in this world why it is that after the rapture the man of sin can be revealed because that which inhibits that which

restrains is us as The as the temple of the Holy Spirit as the dwelling place of God's presence on earth We are Jesus Christ walking around right now.

We are the witness. We are the testimony We are the presence of God on this earth as God the Holy Spirit expresses the glory of God in and through us That's why it's important to pay attention to the little things That's why it's important to discipline our minds. That's why it's important to guard our lips and Bridal our tongues That's why it's important to be diligent and be faithful in the little things because we are the body of Christ in which God the Holy Spirit dwells and Expresses the presence of God on this earth and literally when the Lord Jesus comes and takes us out of this earth all hell will break loose Because that which restrains that's you and me that's and in a microcosm When we forget this and we don't function as body of Christ and God the Holy Spirit isn't able to express the glory of God little hells break loose Every day in our periphery in our family in our workplace in our Bursting radius because it is only the body of Christ inhabited by the Spirit of God that spreads light that reflects the character and the goodness of God and any time we put that light under a basket any time Our light does not shine before men any time we quench that light in our lives The darkness that is fully represented in the tribulation the tribulation is a picture of what the absence of the Spirit of God and the absence of the body of Christ is on earth and every time you and I fail to express the fruit of that spirit We're bringing about a little mini tribulation in our own life and in our own periphery It's all of a piece.

It's all the same truth People say oh what it would be like if I could have just walked with Jesus walked by the shore of Galilee Haven't walked by my side two little sets of footprints going down the beach wouldn't that be great? You've got that it's us now. That's what this is and it's so critical to understand. That's what's going on in John chapter 6 Jesus says Does does the? Presentation of this truth offend you that you have to partake of me that you have to be me Imbibing his flesh, you know, they say you are what you eat.

Well in the spiritual sense. This is true Partaking of the bread of life the word of life. What does John 1 1 say? This is John chapter 6 What's John 1 1 in the beginning was the word the word was with God the word was God 1 2 says what? The word became what? Flesh and dwelt among us.

Well that word made flesh doesn't dwell among us anymore. What dwells among us now? us We are the word made flesh the word in us is the body of Christ. You see the connection here the Go to 1st Corinthians chapter 11 John Acts Romans 1st Corinthians chapter 11 Paul is writing to a church that's really struggling to understand its identity and its power in Christ He says in verse 23 Well, let me go back to verse 17 1st Corinthians 11 17 in giving the word Instructions what instructions he's talking about how women ought to behave how how people ought to treat each other to flee from idolatry to If you if you go back to chapter 10 verse 23 all things are lawful But not all things are helpful all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify Be considerate of other people the things you do may not be prohibited in Scripture.

But what effect do they have on others? Does my attitude affect others I may find it like a comfortable shoe to walk around being cranky or walk around being short-tempered to walk around being dissatisfied and maybe I'm not technically committing any sins when I'm just kind of you know grumpy But what is that doing to other people? What effect am I having on others because I am part of a body and The parts don't live in isolation shouldn't Let no one seek his own remember Philippians chapter 2 Look out not only for your own interests, but also the interests of others Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus who did everything for the benefit of us and nothing for the benefit of Himself he emptied himself took on the form of a servant. What does a servant do? What does a servant do is there even such a thing as a servant if there isn't somebody to serve? Somebody else's interests to be served to be accomplished somebody else's tasks to be fulfilled What is a servant, you know on a remote desert island where one guy gets marooned? No such thing as a servant Can that guy ever be a servant if he's on the island by himself? No why? Nobody to serve if the Lord Jesus took on the form of a servant. What is absolutely this? necessary What's the necessity? He is operating in the interest of and on the behalf of and for the sake of someone else who is that someone else? Us if he was going to serve God the father Alone he didn't have to leave glory He could be up there and serve God the father if he emptied himself and took on the form of a servant Who is he serving? And if that's us and Paul says let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus What is our mind supposed to be I? Am here to serve Love is sacrificial towards self and beneficial toward others.

This is another way of saying. We are saying we are here to serve right so You look at first Corinthians chapter 10 verse 24 let no one seek his own, but each one the others and Notice well-being is in italics because it's not just well-being You're actively watching how things are going for others I Gauge my success or failure by how others are doing not how I'm doing I? Serve God by looking out for others not looking out for myself. It's the opposite of the Mayhem in a store when they are having a sale it's it's the opposite of the the mayhem in a Theater after the movies over and you're crunching the popcorn on your way out It's sticking to your shoes because people have wantonly Served themselves stuffed themselves thrown their trash around because hey, I don't have to clean up.

I'm leaving I paid for my ticket and some other poor guys got to schlep in there with the broom and and a mop and clean everything up for hours after people leave because they were Only thinking about themselves So when you get to first Corinthians 11 verse 23 he says for I Received Well that implies that he's referencing. What's just above he says look what do you not have houses to eat and drink in do you? Despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing go to verse 17 This is first Corinthians 11 17 and giving these instructions. I do not praise Since you come together not for the better, but for the worse Your fellowship doesn't benefit it destroys.

It doesn't build up it tears down Now think about this when you come together, it's not for better,

but for worse. What did we say about serving? For there to be any service for there be any servant there has to be at least two people there, right? Somebody who is looking out for the interests of the other person that's serving That's the mind of Christ and he says when you come together, it doesn't benefit it tears down We think about our fellowship. We think about our interaction our contact with one another The people come away from it benefited and built up or do they come away from it damaged Do they come away from it sinned against do they come away from it less? Than what they were before.

Are they the one having to try to? Serve because we're not in the mood and we're not in the mode and we're not capable and we're not qualified and we're not equipped to be a benefit it's the other person having to do all of the bearing with and all of the the The work of service and trying to reflect the glory of God because we're not doing it in whatever this mode is You do not come together for the better But for the worse first of all when you come together as a church as the word church here Just means assembly when you get together as a group This can be a group of two a group of three Jesus said two or three are gathered there am I in the midst, right? So don't think church means it's underneath the steeple and in between the pews This is any assembly I Hear there are divisions among you and I partly believe it there are schisms There are what does it mean when there are divisions? this is contention this is Opposition this is combat. This is attack. This is one person opposed and Throwing a roadblock in the way of another There are divisions and he says I I can believe it For there must be factions among you so that those who are approved may be recognized among you if you were all Workmen approved unto God that needed not to be ashamed there wouldn't be divisions But since only some of you are doing what you're supposed to naturally there's going to be factions and divisions Because some of you are doing what you're supposed to and the rest of you are not Therefore when you come together in one place it is not to eat the Lord's Supper Interesting Introduction of a new topic here.

He's been talking about idolatry. He's been talking about women In the church and and how they speak and whether their their head is covered or uncovered And then he says when you come together it is not to eat the Lord's meal And we immediately think oh well. This is the upper room.

It's the bread in the cup It's the Kool-Aid in the cracker. It's the it's just a little ritual. That's not what he's talking about at all He's talking about the Lord's meal.

What is the Lord's meal? It's partaking This is what Jesus was talking about in John chapter 6 Do you recognize the value of those who constitute the Lord's body are you eating that divine? Heavenly manna that food that partakes of and reflects eternal life Do they get together and and have a have a meal for food of course But that's not what the objective is the objective is fellowship sharing a meal Was a time of an opportunity for building up This is what they say is part of what's wrong with American society today is everybody's got their own schedule people don't sit down And eat together anymore Used to be families got together and and sat around a table and not only did they get their physical sustenance but there was conversation there was Interchange of well, you know how how was school? How was work? How did things go at home

today? How did how was it with your errands did the car run? Okay, what what happened when you talked to so-and-so and you went and visited an aunt Jodi how was she doing and there was this was the the strengthening and the exercising of bonds of relationship and a fellowship and of concern and of Entering into the life and the experience of other people parents Understanding what's going on with their kids kids recognizing appreciating what what their parents were doing it happened at the meal table It was a scheduled group meeting Food the food in some ways is incidental I can get my food I can eat an energy bar and keep right on going but to spend time together in this common Activity is an opportunity for something much more than the simple Partaking of food Well, they this is really kind of symptomatic because it's there aren't that many families anymore. They get together around the table Maybe once a day, maybe But in many cases, well, I stopped at McDonald's. Oh, well, you know, I put something in the microwave Oh, well, I made a snack, you know, I ate a leftover If there even are any leftovers a lot of people there's no such thing as leftovers eat the food anything left throw it away It's you know There's just the the meal table used to be and it's reflected here when you come together It isn't to do anything like what the Lord did what was important about the Lord's about the the Last Supper What are the details of that account focused on do we know exactly what they ate What that what the courses of the meal were do we know exactly what the stuff was that Jesus was dipping his? His unleavened bread into the night that he ate it.

Do we know what that was? People say oh, well, it was the Passover. It wasn't the Passover. They never got a chance to eat the Passover He said I've longed eat it with you But I'm not gonna be able to because I'm gonna be on the cross At the time the Passover lamb is being slain and I'm gonna be in the grave when the Sun goes down and everybody's sitting around eating this and if you if you study John and the People who didn't want to defile themselves by going into Pilate's quarters and so on because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover That you understand what this is all about But the upper room isn't about the food.

It's what Jesus says It's what Jesus does in washing the feet of the disciples and instructing them. This is his last Bible class This is the bread of the meal. This is the Lord's Supper.

This is the new covenant in my blood This is my body which is broken for you pay attention to the truth Have you read John 14 John 15 John 16 John 17? That's the Lord's Supper. That's the manna. That's the bread Those chapters and and of course we have read we've studied them together That's the Lord's Supper and Paul says when you all come together and you're all focused on the food You're not this is not the Lord's Supper For in eating each one takes his own supper ahead of others and one is hungry and another is drunk It for you.

It's all about the physical food in the physical drink you're just in there elbowing each other out of the way trying to get the the rolls and the the dip and stuff before it's all gone and You're not paying any attention to to to people who come who are really Destitute and this might be a chance for them to get a decent meal You're not looking over your shoulder to see if if everybody

has gotten some you're crowding up there. Wow, my favorite and and down the hatchet goes Inconsiderate Insensitive not thinking anything about the other people in the group. Why? Because there's no spiritual dynamic.

It's all about me myself and I I'm at the sale and I found my size and by golly I'll throw the rest of this stuff on the floor so that I can get up there and get this 65% off. Oh Me me me I I and this is everything that's wrong with modern American culture and It was wrong in Corinth and Paul calls them out on it He says you're not thinking about the Lord and you are not partaking of the divine meal when you get together For you, it's all about the food What he says in verse 22, do you not have houses to eat and drink in? For the for the physical necessities of life. Do you not remember that? You've got a cupboard and you've got a larder you've got Plates, you know if all you're interested is in physical food stay home Or Do you despise the assembly of God the Church of God the people of God whom you've gotten together with? Do you despise them and shame those who have nothing? You're not sensitive to their needs.

You're not considering, you know I've really got a pretty well-stocked cupboard and I know there are people here for whom this is really an opportunity to get some nourishment They don't ordinarily get why don't I step back? I who am well off and let some of these slaves and some of these poor people Step up. Why don't I look out for their interests? Instead of my own Why am I not? Sensitive that these people are part of the body of Christ and this is an opportunity to be a blessing for them to let them Concentrate on something Beside the needs of the body shall I praise you in this I do not praise you and then he describes what happened in the upper room where Jesus said Stand back everybody. I'm gonna eat the bread for myself because I've got a big day coming up and I'm gonna need my strength I've got to endure for several hours this crucifixion that's about to happen to me So, you know, I really it would really be helpful if I could fortify myself with this meal Why don't y'all just kind of sit back and let me what did he say you take you eat? This isn't the attitude these people have when they come together You need this nourishment.

You need this food. You need this teaching They're not interested in that This is my body which is broken for you in the upper room the night before Jesus knew what he was facing knew what he was Going up against he wasn't thinking about himself He was thinking about his disciples and Paul says this is everything You're not doing when you come together as a as a group this is my body which is broken for you take eat and Remember me as you do it You know try to remember This cup is the covenant in my blood This is how Jesus started out way back in John chapter 6 and now here he is at the end of his ministry And he says do you remember? When I was talking about you've got to take my flesh You've got to imbibe The covenant represented in my blood or you're never going to latch on to eternal life As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death Why is it that eating the bread and drinking the cup proclaims his death? It isn't oh wow the the details of the physical nature of the crucifixion it is the sacrificial Attitude it is recognizing that there is a higher purpose. There is a grander design It's not just

about me getting mine You proclaim the Lord's death.

What is the emblematic meaning of the Lord's death? sacrificial towards self Beneficial toward others let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus Empty himself took on the form of a servant died the death of the cross That's what it means to have the mind of Christ is to be willing To put the interests of others ahead of our own to that extent That's the mind that ought to be in us. That's what it is to recognize body of Christ We are his body to what extent should God the Holy Spirit be active in us creating in us that attitude of Denial of self Jesus said if you don't if you can't deny yourself and take up your cross What does he mean by take up your cross? He says this before he's gone to the cross What is he talking about? If you cannot deny yourself and take up your cross and follow in my footsteps You can't really be my disciple. You can't be my body on this earth if you can't do that This is our identity.

This is our function. This is our mission This is our reason for being in this life is to be Christ on this earth to have the mind that he had to be the flesh that he was and Express the way he expressed it the fullness of deity in bodily form He's not here to be the fullness of deity in bodily form. You know who's here to do that you Me this is this is what it means to be body of Christ Do you have the luxury of looking down your nose at the Gentiles if you're a Jew? Do you have the luxury of resenting the Jews if you're a Gentile? No Jesus Christ in his flesh has destroyed those selfish self-centered attitudes In his body he has made the two one and how should we now look at each other? Not as well.

You're a woman, and I'm a man not well. You're a black, and I'm white well You're a Gentile, and I'm a Jew You're a slave, and I'm a master those distinctions have been eliminated because we are all members together of the body of Christ and Look at what he says over in chapter 12 of this same book verse 12 1st Corinthians 12 12 and following as The body is one and has many members all the members of that one body being many are one body So also is Christ you remember this you're familiar with this teaching by one spirit We are all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks whether slaves are free have all been made to drink into One spirit all have been made to drink into one spirit. What are we drinking? This is the essence of Jesus Christ the life of the flesh is in the blood the life of the body of Christ is the spirit the Holy Spirit In fact the body is not one member, but many the foot can't say because I'm not a hand.

I'm not of the body the ear Should say because I'm not an eye I'm not of the body is it therefore not of the body if the whole body were an eye where would be the hearing if? The whole we're hearing where would be the smelling but now God has set the members this is verse 18 each one of them in the body as he designed as he pleases as he sees fit and If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members yet one body the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you the head can't say to the feet I have no need of you much rather those members of the body which seem to be weaker are Necessary those members of the body which we think to be less honorable on these we bestow greater honor and unpresentable Parts have greater modesty our presentable parts have no need God composed

the body verse 24 Having given greater honor to the parts which lack it just at the time We think we're looking at somebody who doesn't deserve consideration that we don't need to think Let me put their interests ahead of my own We'd better be careful because some of these are the parts to which God has assigned greater need greater honor That there should be no schism in the body verse 25 This is what he's talking about when he's talking about the Lord's table. They always quote these I've done it You're doing the ritual of the Lord's table He's a I give to you the same thing Jesus passed on to me the same night He was it took bread and broke it and you know, you slurp the kool-aid and crunch the cracker That's not what he's talking about. This is what he's talking about 1st.

Corinthians 12:25. There should be no division no schism no Opposition no me and you us and them in the body body of Christ Ephesians chapter 2 No, Jew and Gentile. No I'm over here and you're over there.

There really shouldn't be denominations in The Christian faith. It's a tragedy that we're split up into denominations. One of the reasons we're a non-denominational Church I think denominations are unbiblical Avowedly so statedly so obviously so there should be no divisions in the body The members should have the same care for one another if one member suffers all the members suffer with it If one member is honored all the members rejoice with it This ought to be the nature of our fellowship of our relationship with one another.

We are a unity not a plurality A pluribus Unum our country used to recognize this truth. We might be many states, but we're one nation. We're one nation under God indivisible With liberty and justice for all what a great truth our nation used to reflect.

It's a spiritual truth E pluribus out of many Unum unity one. We are one body. Yes.

There are many members Some people are feet some people are hands some people arise some people are ears Some people are noses notice. He said where would be the smelling? Some people are the nose People say oh well. I need to get my nose fixed.

No you don't does it smell it's fine You verse 27 are the body of Christ. This is our Ephesians truth You are the body of Christ and members individually God has appointed these in the church, and he talks about Apostles and prophets spiritual gifts And this is something we're going to see coming up in Ephesians Discussion of this of the gifts of the spirit the operation of the spirit in the body But we need to focus on this we need to think about it well Next time we meet next time. We're in Ephesians.

We are going to see two more Important parallel passages that shed light on illuminate and flesh out this truth It's important to understand It's important to think about as we look at one another the first thing that needs to be in the forefront of our mind is We are members together of the body of Christ, and I have an obligation I have a command. I have a mission to be a blessing To

put the interests of these fellow members of the body ahead of my own That is to be Christ like that is to have the mind of Christ That's why Paul says in Ephesians my prayer for you is that you will have a spirit characterized by wisdom Wisdom and revelation this body of Christ thing never existed In the Old Testament day David didn't know anything about it Moses didn't know anything about it Elijah Didn't know anything about it Daniel didn't know anything about it. It's a revelation.

It is a mystery truth It's a new thing the body of Christ That your spirit will be characterized by will be infused with will be noticeably manifesting wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge the experiential oh I see how that works. I'm the kid on the field that finally figured out what it is To run a pattern to block a guy to make a play work I'm the guy on the basketball court that finally understands What a pick is and how it lets somebody go down to the hoop and score I've kept a guy from interfering because I interfered with him. I Get it now.

I remember when I was trying to play basketball the coach kept on that a pick You know set a pick set a pick. What is he talking about pick? What? Now I was standing there you know picking my face instead of instead of setting a pick and being instrumental in a play happening on the court and And later when I wasn't playing anymore, I would watch basketball and say oh, that's what a pick is I get it now Well, this is a truth that we need to understand to get Body of Christ we are his body the fullness of him who fills all in all The word was made flesh and dwelt among us guess what the word is still in flesh And it's dwelling in the world, and it's you and me we are body of Christ Well, we'll see more about this next time, but we'll close here in word of prayer father thank you for the incredible privilege you have given us of Representing the Lord Jesus Christ of being the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth of being the dwelling place for your spirit the place Where your power is manifest and made evident to the world to the angels and to us? We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find us Teachable will find us ready pupils can impress these truths on our hearts in a way that We will understand it, and we will be able to put it into practice Make it manifest in our daily tasks our daily conversations The things that we do each day as a part of human life, we pray these things in Jesus name and for his sake amen