

## Annotations on Anatomy– I Corinthians 6:19-20

### I. Introduction:

- A. Years ago, we had a member who, earlier in his life, had been a Baptist pastor.
1. Knowing the pressures and problems of the ministry, he went out of his way to be a blessing to Judy & me.
  2. He and his wife were generous, taking us out for meals, and often inviting us to their home.
  3. Sometimes he insisted that I play golf with him, always paying the greens fees for both of us.
  4. He also had a couple business enterprises and would sometimes pay me to help him.
  5. Perhaps because of these things, he thought he had the right to doctrinally and intellectually poke me once in a while.
  6. For example, he once asked: *“Have you ever noticed that **I Corinthians 6:19** might be speaking about the **CHURCH** in Corinth and **NOT** the **MEMBERS** as individuals?*
    - a. *“Isn’t the church, which obviously belongs to Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit?”*
    - b. *“And doesn’t **Ephesians 5** tell us that Christ bought the church, giving himself for it?”*
  7. In other words, aren’t there scriptures, which appear to speak about the human body, actually describing the body of Christ?
- B. The answer to that question is, *“Yes, there are.”*
1. And there are others which speak about our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and tool kits for the work of the Lord.
  2. After a brief survey last Monday, I noticed that **Christ** in the synoptic gospels says several things about our bodies. I jotted them down.
  3. And **Paul** made reference to the body in **Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians** and **Colossians**.
  4. (By the way, after considering my friend’s probing, I still believe that **I Corinthians 6** as a reference to us as individuals.)
- C. Looking back over those New Testament scriptures, a couple of thoughts popped out at me.
1. I don’t have a nice neat outline for you to follow this evening.
  2. I have only about two dozen bullet points, most of which are so obvious they don’t really need my comment.
  3. You’ve heard most of this lesson before, but I press forward nevertheless.

### II. Like your body, the local church is made up of many parts.

- A. You have heard this many times. Your body has eyes, ears, hands, feet and so much more.
1. It has a **tongue** and **lips** with which to praise the Creator and to share His message.
  2. It has a **brain** to be used to memorize scriptures and with which to compare truth and error.
  3. Actually, the human body has slightly over 200 major parts, and many of these have parts of their own.
  4. Usually when we read the word **“body”** in the Bible, it is this highly complicated body which comes to mind.
  5. But not every body is the same. Paul refers to this in **I Corinthians 15**.
  6. Doesn’t a starfish have a body? Is it as complicated as the human body?
  7. A **worm** has a body, but it doesn’t have **eyes**. Can it **smell**? I don’t know, but I do know it can’t **spell**.
  8. Is a sparrow as complex or as valuable as a cow or even as a cat?
- B. In application of this: **not every church** is as **complex** as others.
1. They don’t all have the same number of pastors and elders, and yet they are still churches of Christ.
  2. Some have a lot of money and a lot of programs, but are they any more bodies **of** Christ and **for** Christ?
  3. Is a **bug** any more or less glorious in the eyes of its Creator than a cheetah or a zebra? How about a **slug**?
  4. There may be a church somewhere in the world with a hundred members and every member of that body is operating at his and her peak efficiency. Praise the Lord if that is the case.
  5. But does mean that our church with slightly fewer members could not also bring glory to the Lord?
  6. A simple butterfly is as glorious to its Creator as a magnificent, iridescent bird of paradise.
  7. So is every church of Christ.

### III. As Paul tells us, “we have many members in one body,” but “all members have not the same office.”

- A. That is found in **Romans 12:4**, and the context goes on, “*Nevertheless, being many, (we) are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*”
1. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...* let’s use those gifts and occupy the offices into which we, as members, have been placed.
  2. Each body, whether large or small; multi-faceted or simple – every body **needs every part** to do its work properly. And that may be more true of the more simple bodies.
  3. Every part of the human body has a place and responsibility toward the body as a complete unit.
  4. And you have your special niche in this body of Christ.
- B. Again, think about your own body.
1. Isn’t it true that your **members** might divided into **three major groups**?
  2. You have organs and members which God has **designed** to be **protective**.
    - a. You have toenails and skin, eyelids and even some bones – like the skull – to protect you.
    - b. Protection is their primary purpose – sheltering, screening and preserving.
    - c. Under your protective skin are nerves which may detect things like heat and dangerous sharp objects, but they can’t completely replace your eyes in watching out for you. That is not their primary job.
    - d. Your fingernails can be decorated, but still their first job is to protect the ends of your fingers.
  3. And similarly, part of my responsibility toward our church body is to warn you of “**Reformed theology**” and other diseases.
- C. And then we also have body parts which **perform outward tasks**, like feet & legs that walk; fingers & hands.
1. God has given us biceps & triceps, to enable us to do various tasks, like brushing our teeth & combing hair.
  2. And we have eyelids flapping up and down spreading the natural lubricants which little glands in our eyes make for us.
  3. But then there are those body parts whose **primary function** is to **feed** and **maintain** the rest of the body.
    - a. This is the third major member division in our body.
    - b. For example, the first purpose of our hearts and lungs is not to improve the world in which we live.
    - c. They have been created to **maintain the rest of the body** as we work within our environment.
    - d. They feed our minds & strengthen our muscles; those things which do most of the interacting with world.
  4. **However**, the Lord has graciously enabled the heart and lungs to reach out into the world in some ways.
    - a. For example, we could never sing without lungs, as some of you well know..
- D. And when it comes to most of our body parts, it is the **responsibility** of the **collective** to help **maintain** or **develop** the individual **members** of the collective.
1. We, as an entire unit, have something to say in making or keeping our arms strong – and our feet healthy.
  2. And when some outside disease comes along, the body as a whole needs to take extra vitamin C and D, and even to walk to the doctor’s office to get some further help if necessary.
  3. We as individuals in our church have the responsibility to pray and encourage one another – even sometimes to lovingly point out potential problems.
  4. Your eye may tell your arm to check out that funny-looking mole.
- E. Our bodies have been ordained and created by God, not only to be blessing to its individual parts, it is also to be used as a blessing to other bodies.
1. For example, we are to employ our lips to share the gospel with those in need of salvation.
  2. We have feet designed to go into the highways and byways with invitations to the Lord’s feast.
  3. And we as a church body should do what we can to encourage and bless other bodies, like the ministries of Daniel Pearson and Jarred Parris.
  4. If we are not interacting with other bodies, then we are not using our members as we should.

- F. As Paul reminds us, when one member suffers the whole body suffers.
1. That is something I shouldn't need to emphasize. Our bodies have experienced this over and over again.
  2. A corollary to that point is that when one member is removed, it puts a strain on the rest of the body.
  3. It takes some serious adjustments if a foot has to be cut off, or if it is accidentally taken away.
  4. God has given us two eyes, because working in tandem they supply us with depth and definition of sight.
    - a. We can survive with only one eye, but that loss puts a stress on our ability to see correctly.
    - b. And if both eyes are taken away, the loss is obviously much greater.
  5. The point is: when one member is gone, it affects the entire body.
  6. That is especially true in a body with few parts in the first place – such as our little church.
  7. Having been given a place in a body, it creates responsibilities for each member toward that body.
- G. Sadly, sometimes members need to be removed for the welfare of the rest of the body.
1. This is not usually the same thing as when our ears, on their own accord, decide not to hear very well.
  2. As you know, when a cancer invades an organ, it must be removed along with a portion of that organ before the cancer spreads to other parts of the body.
  3. And when a gland, like the thyroid, becomes ill, it needs to be taken out because it is already upsetting all of the other members.
  4. Church discipline is an important work of bodily maintenance.

#### IV. In *I Corinthians 12*, Paul refers to some body members quarreling with other members of the body.

##### A. Verse 14 – *“The body is not one member, but many.*

1. *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
  - a. *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*
  - b. *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*
2. *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?*
3. *But now are they many members, yet but one body.*
4. *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*
5. *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*
6. *And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.*
7. *For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*
8. *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”*

##### B. Of course, all of this is metaphorical; it is a picture. But it is a very good picture – perhaps **too** good.

1. Do any of the members of **your** body, ever complain about other members of **your** body?
2. Don't they sometimes worry? Do your **eyes** ever weep over the pain in your **back**?
3. Does your **mind** ever suggest, *“My left hand hurts so badly, I sometimes wish I could cut it off?”*
  - a. That is getting extreme and probably irresponsible.
  - b. How are you going cut off your entire back, for example.
  - c. Rather than self-amputation, a better plan is for the mind to find a remedy – or at the very least some balm to put on that aching hand or back.
4. And then there is that church member who really bothers you.
5. Just because he makes you hurt or itch you are not given the authority to amputate.
6. Make it your mission to be a blessing to him.
7. Love him into better spiritual health.

- C. It is interesting that Paul refers to both “*feet*” & “*more comely parts*” of our bodies there in ***I Corinthians 12***.
1. Does one part of ***your body*** ever ***criticize*** another part of ***your body***?
    - a. I mean, not just observe and comment, but actually criticize?
    - b. I know many of us are prone to do this, but it is not healthful, if not actually sinful....
  2. I mean: does your eye ever tell your mind that your face is not as “*comely*” as it ought to be?
  3. Shame on you, Mr. Eye. It is not your business to make that judgment. Take care of your own mote.
  4. I, personally, don’t think that feet are the most beautiful parts of the human bodies.
    - a. But it is not my job to criticize my feet or anyone else’s feet.
    - b. And that is a good illustration because God has said, “*How BEAUTIFUL upon the mountains are the FEET of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*” – ***Isaiah 52:7***.
  5. If you think that another member of this body of Christ is not as beautiful as he ought to be, pray for him and encourage him. Criticism should be well down the list of our responses.
- D. Paul shared with the body of Christ in ***Philippi*** a well-known verse which might apply here.
1. Our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again very soon, and he “*shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto HIS glorious body.*”
  2. That isn’t speaking of the church as a body, it is all about the members which make up that body.
  3. Christ, who is the head of the body, has plans for that body of yours.
  4. Yes, it might molder in dust and ashes for a while, but even then, He has promised to resurrect it and give it greater beauty than it ever had before.
  5. According to ***I Corinthians 15*** this ***corruptible body*** will one day put on ***incorruption***.
  6. And ***John*** has said, “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*”
- E. Let us utilize the vile bodies in which we live at this moment for the glory of Christ in this world.
1. And while doing that, let us keep one eye on heaven, watching for the great day of the Lord’s return.
  2. Perhaps in this regard ***Matthew 6:22*** is appropriate: “*The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*”
  3. If we will keep our eyes, our minds, our hearts – our bodies – ***focused*** on the Lord, our bodies and our church will prosper in this world which is so full of danger and disease.