

## **BODY BUILDING EPHESIANS 4:7-16**

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended" - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Let me inform you of a truth about Jesus you may not have known... [Jesus Christ is into body building!](#)

While on earth He healed the sick, and worked miracles, and raised the dead, and preached the Gospel, but when He ascended to the right hand of God He took up body building! *You don't believe me?*

Well, just think of all the **dumbbells** He's lifted over the years! In fact, there're quite few here this morning.

He also likes **clean-n-jerks**. I'm the classic example. He cleaned up this jerk - *and I'm thankful every day.*

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus promised, **"I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."** The exalted Christ is far from idle. For 1900 years He's been busy building the Church - His body!

And in Chapter 4 Paul reveals His workout plan.

The other day I was at the grocery store and I was looking for some Gatorade. I couldn't believe it - they don't sell plain ole Gatorade anymore. It's now **"The G Series."** Today, you drink your Gatorade in stages...

You drink one blend before the workout. It's a primer.

Another blend hydrates and fuels your performance.

The last mix helps your body recover and grow.

*Apparently, real body building occurs in stages...*

Likewise the body building Jesus did also occurred in three stages... Paul discusses them in our text...

Verses 7-10 reveal what Jesus did to prepare for the building - the **primer**. Verse 11 is about the **performers**. Gifted people through which He works. Then verses 12-16 - the *recovery* - the **purpose** for His building.

And this is what we want to talk about this morning. Call it, “**The J Series.**” How Jesus builds up His body!

Paul begins his thoughts in verse 7, “**But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.**” The growth hormone for the Christian is grace. It’s unmerited favor. It’s love you don’t deserve.

Grace not only saves us. It propels us, and makes us effective, and bestows God’s blessing on our efforts.

Grace is like a fruit basket. All kinds of delectable edibles come in the same basket. In the basket of grace you’ll find God’s *presence* and *pardon*, but also His *power* and His *peace*. It’s all a product of grace.

When Jesus builds His body it’s always by grace!

In the previous verses Paul spoke of our unity. We’re one body - a collection of believers bound up in Christ.

But now Paul focuses on us individually and the role we play in the Body - the grace that propels each of us.

Realize, our unity never diminishes the love Jesus has for us personally. Yes, He sees one Church, but never as an indistinguishable blend - *we’re a fruit bowl not a smoothie*. He never fails to see us and love us individually. As Augustine once said, “**Christ loves each one of us, as if there were only one of us to love.**”

Thus, when Jesus builds His body it's one person at a time. He builds the whole by strengthening each part.

The Church is no pre-fab building. You could say, **Jesus stick builds His church!** It's one timber at a time.

The Lord gives each of us grace - *and as if that were not enough* - He gives it "**according to the measure of Christ's gift.**" This is wonderful news... for when God gave Christ, He gave us the greatest gift He could give.

For me to relinquish my son to die in your place, would be the pinnacle of sacrifice. *So it was for God.*

Nothing else He gives will ever be more valuable.

And this has amazing ramifications. Romans 8:32 tells us now that God has given us His Son, there's no limit to the gifts He's willing to bestow. "**He who did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**"

In these next few verses Paul will stress how Jesus uses each of us to build up one another - but He does so against the backdrop of His all-prevailing grace.

In other words, if by grace, then the sky is the limit!

Jesus is not held back by our sin and shortcomings, our weaknesses and unworthiness, our inadequacies and incompetencies, our quirks or the fact we're jerks.

Jesus plans to *build us up in a new life* by the same means He *brought us out of the old life* - by grace!

In verse 8 Paul explains *what Jesus did* to prepare for *what Jesus gives*...  
“Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Here Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, but not quite the way it was written. The Psalm reads, “You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men...”

Paul writes, “*gave gifts to men.*”

Apparently, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul accentuated a different aspect of the picture the psalmist painted. He has in mind a familiar scene in the ancient world... A conquering general returns home from battle to the applause of the crowd.

The public lines the street and throws tokens of affection at him. He receives their gifts and accolades.

But the Victor also brings gifts for His people. He comes with the spoils of battle - captives and treasure.

The General not only *receives gifts*, but *gives gifts*.

And this is what Jesus has done!

He’s our conquering hero. He entered the battle to wrestle us from Satan. We were prisoners of sin - *but Jesus crashed the compound, overpowered the strongman,*

*freed the slaves.* Now we're captives of a kind, gracious Master. Our conqueror is now our King.

I hope you realize, **everybody serves somebody!** Either you're *a captive of Christ*, or *a slave to sin*.

Some folks pretend to be the Captain of their own fate, but they're just pawns in Satan's hand. You don't chose *TO* serve - your only choice is *WHO* you serve.

So here's Jesus... His procession marches down the halls of Heaven. He's a Conquering General returning home from battle. And He's both *receiving gifts* - the praise and adoration of folks on Earth and in Heaven. And He's also *giving out gifts* to His Church, His Body.

Pay attention to this picture it helps us understand Jesus' purposes today... He *receives our praise*, then doles out to us materials and tools to build His Body.

Jesus returned to glory not just *to build for us a place in Heaven* - but *to build for Him a Church on Earth!*

And here's the path He took, verses 9-10, (Now this, "He ascended" - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Paul gives us Jesus' itinerary between His death and resurrection - *what He did during those three days...*

He first *"descended into the lower parts of the earth."*

This could be a reference to Jesus' burial. "*Lower parts of the earth*" was an ancient phrase for the grave.

But it could mean more... Other passages like 1 Peter 3 teach that while Jesus' body lay in the grave, His Spirit descended into Hades - *the OT underworld*.

Luke 16 describes the place of the OT dead as a duplex. Hades had two sides - a joyful shore and a torturous prison. They were separated by a wide span.

Those who died believing God's promises went to Paradise. Unbelievers went to the place of torment.

*The saving side of Hades* was also referred to as "*Abraham's bosom*" It was a pocket for the faithful. *The searing side of Hades* is the bottomless pit. It's the fire that's never quenched, and the worm that never dies.

In the OT, before the work of Christ on the cross the door into the presence of God was closed. Animal sacrifices covered man's sin, but didn't erase them.

Hades served as a *holding tank for heaven* - until Jesus, the Lamb of God could offer Himself - the sacrifice to end all sacrifices - sin's permanent solution.

As soon as Jesus conquered sin, He descended to Hades, and gathered up all the OT believers who had trusted in God's salvation. They became *His captives*.

God's Conqueror then led these happy captives into the halls of heaven to the praise of the cheering crowd.

Jesus *received gifts*, but He also began to *give gifts* to those still on the Earth. And He still gives to each of us certain spiritual gifts that help build up His Body!

Today, when an unbeliever dies he or she still goes to Hades. It's flame and torment rage until the end.

In Revelation 20:14 John sees the day, yet future, when "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire."

That's the plight of the unbeliever... whereas the destiny of the believer's has changed dramatically!

Those who die in Christ no longer go to Hades - but straight into God's presence. Paul told the Corinthians, "To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." Jesus has now opened to us the door to God.

And He's still giving gifts to build up His Body...

When we were kids we'd toss a coin into the deep end of the pool, and see who could retrieve the quarter.

You'd get a big gasp of air, hold your breath, then down you'd dive until you'd touched bottom, and laid your hand on the sunken treasure. That's when all of a sudden you'd push off on the floor of the pool and torpedo to the surface, anxious to reveal the prize!

This is how I picture Jesus' *descent* and *ascent*.

He dove into the netherworld - to the bottom of the pool - the basement of life - *the safe house*. The room full of people waiting for their Savior - their Liberator.

Jesus gathered up these precious souls - took them in His arms - and pushed up off the floor of the pool.



Three days later He appeared on Earth. After another forty days He torpedoed Himself into heaven.

Certainly, He's happy to receive gifts, but that's not why He was so anxious to return to Heaven. He now has gifts - grace in His hand - He wants to give to us...

Jesus has **grace-gifts** - "**charismata**" is the Greek term - we call them, "**spiritual gifts.**" Today, Jesus gives gifts to men, for them to use, to build up His Church!

And these gifts take many forms... There're three lists in the NT... **Romans 12** lists certain **motivations of the Spirit**. These gifts permeate a believer's personality and color their tendencies - gifts of *teaching*, or *mercy*, or *organization*, or *encouragement*.

1 Corinthians 12 provides another list - the **manifestations of the Spirit**. These are more point-in-time enablings with which the Spirit empowers us - *like prophecy, or a word of wisdom, or a healing, or tongues (the praise of God in an unknown language.)*

There are both **motivations and manifestations of the Spirit** - but here in Ephesians 4:11 there's a third list of gifts - **ministries of the Spirit**. These are spiritual services performed through people to build the Church.

We read in verse 11, "**And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers...**" You would think that once Jesus torpedoed back to the surface - once He could breath in the fresh air of Heaven - He'd want to take His time and catch His breath and take it easy...

*But not so!* As soon as He broke the surface - from time back into eternity - He immediately went to work helping and building up what He had started on Earth.

The Conqueror gave gifts to His Church in the form of gifted people - *apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers*. When Christ ascended *He gave gifts to men*, and *some of those gifts were gifted men*.

Don't misunderstand, every single believer has an important place, and function, and calling in the Body.

Everyone in this room has a ministry in this Church.

You and your spiritual enablings are Christ's gift to the rest of us. No person or gift is unimportant.

Yet it's like working a jigsaw puzzle. *What's the hardest part of a puzzle?* It's fitting together the edges.

Once the corner pieces are established the rest of the puzzle fills in nicely. After the puzzle is built a missing middle piece is just as obvious - *perhaps more so* - than a lost piece on an outer edge. But in the beginning the edge pieces need to come together first.

So it was with the building of the Body, the Church.

In the early formation of the Church two ministries were strategic - the role of the *apostle* and the *prophet*.

These were men who spoke as the oracles of God.

It was to the 12 *apostles* that Jesus gave a special privilege formerly held by the

Jewish rabbis - “to bind and loose” - *to bind is to prohibit, to loose is to allow.*

This authority enabled the apostles to write sacred Scripture. This is how the Church identified the divinely inspired writings of the NT - they were authored by the first twelve apostles who were appointed by Jesus.

There were other men in the NT recognized as apostles. In fact, you could probably make a case for apostles today. The root word means “sent out.” The best translation would be “ambassador or diplomat.”

Yet no person *then or now* rises to the level of the original 12 apostles. Jesus gave them special authority.

I like the designation “big A” and “little a” apostles.

A “big A” apostle was one of the twelve. A “little a” apostle might be a cross-cultural missionary - or a leader, not just of a church, but of a larger movement.

Earlier in 2:20 Paul calls Jesus the chief cornerstone of the Church, then he refers to “the apostles and prophets” as the foundation. These men had a special role in the Church’s formation. They were *edge pieces*.

But now that the edges of Christianity are fixed - the parameters of practice and boundaries of belief - the meat of the puzzle can be filled in with two more ministries, called “evangelists” and “pastor-teachers.”

This word “evangelist” is a noble word. It's a shame that some people use it as a synonym for *charlatan* or *con-man*. What comes to mind is the three-piece suit - the slicked back hair - the smooth-talking TV preacher.

Instead the most effective evangelist is the guy next door who loves people and lives out what he believes.

He's not afraid to speak up and let folks know that Jesus is what makes him tick. He looks past their scowls, and sees their heart. He's not intimidated by fear, but motivated by love - *for Jesus and for people*.

An “**evangelist**” is a person particularly gifted in leading sinners to Jesus. Once, Billy Graham, the 20th century's most prolific evangelist, described his gift...

“It's from God. You can't manufacture it, or organize it, or manipulate it... My gift (is) from the Lord in giving an appeal to people to make a decision for Christ.

Something happens I cannot explain. I have never given an invitation my whole life when no one came.” *I have!* But I'm not Billy Graham, nor do I have his gifts.

In fact, not all evangelists are as high-profile as Billy. Some of the Lord's most effective evangelists have never occupied a pulpit. They fulfill their ministry at the kitchen table with a neighbor - or in the coffee shop with a friend - or at the ball game with a client...

An evangelist is the Church **obstetrician**. He or she specializes in delivering spiritual babies. They calm the sinner and convince the skeptic Jesus can be trusted.

Every Christian should be a *witness - and testify of what Jesus did for them* - but we're not all *evangelists*.

And if the “**evangelist**” is an **obstetrician**, the “**pastor-teacher**” is a **pediatrician**. He takes the newborn under his wing to feed, and nurture, and keep him healthy.

The word “*pastor*” is Latin for “*shepherd*.”

Which reminds me of the pastor new to his church.

At the church picnic he was introduced by one of the elders, “*as the new hog caller*.” Everybody laughed until the pastor turned to the elder, and replied, “*I’m usually called the Shepherd of the Sheep, but you know your people better than I do*.” *Not a good start...*

Yet a pastor is a spiritual shepherd. He nurtures the flock, retrieves the stray, mends the bruise, protects from predators, and leads the flock to suitable pasture.

A shepherd’s foremost job is to feed. He serves hungry hearts with a balanced diet of biblical truth.

Which means a pastor must also be a gifted teacher. That’s why “*pastor*” and “*teacher*” go hand in hand.

In fact, this is the construction in the original language. It’s literally, “*pastor-teacher*” - one word.

A couple of years ago I was at a conference with Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Jim has been used by God in wonderful ways. He loves the Lord. But he made a statement with which I disagree.

He said Christianity isn’t as much *a teaching faith* as it is *a doing and experiencing faith*. I know what he meant, that it’s not enough to simply learn and learn and never apply or experience what you’ve learned.

But learning does come first! Christianity is a body of truth that must be taught and grasped to be believed. *You can’t trust - you can’t live - what you don’t know.*

This is why the role of the pastor-teacher is vital. “Every pastor starts out with a room full of live wires, and his job is to make sure they’re properly grounded.”

It’s through gifted men that Jesus does this work, and here’s why... Verse 12, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...” The purpose of Jesus’ body building is a larger Body, a stronger Body, a fitter Body, a maturer Body, a more active Body, a more loving Body.

When we look at our Church in the mirror don’t we want a *Body by Jesus...* a Body that’s fit and fitted for ministry. He “*equips the saints for the work of ministry.*”

Realize, most churches are divided into two groups. There’re the *laity and ministers*. The laity lay around, while the ministers do all the ministry. This isn’t God’s design. He wants *every member to be a minister*.

My job as a pastor isn’t to do all the witnessing, and visiting, and counseling, and giving, and worshipping...

A pastor’s job is to equip the believers to minister.

I teach you God’s Word, so you’ll have the insight and knowledge to help the hurting and the needy - to resist the devil - to pray effectively - to walk in wisdom - to give a defense for your faith - to represent Jesus!

Bud Wilkerson coached the Oklahoma Sooners in the 1950s and 60s. He had a famous quote describing a football game that also applies to a lot of churches...

"A football game consists of 50,000 spectators, desperately needing exercise - sitting in the bleachers watching 22 men on the field desperately needing rest"

This is the case in most churches. Christians feel inadequate and unprepared to serve the Lord, so they turn to the professionals - *pastors and the like* - to do what God has called them to do. It's a sad scenario.

This is what limits the impact a church can make.

I was raised in a church where each week the pastor preached a salvation sermon, followed by an altar call.

Apparently, the pastor saw himself as an evangelist. I'm sure he felt he was being faithful to the Gospel.

The problem was that 95% of his congregation were already saved. The vast majority of church-folk are believers. Come to think of it, that's what you'd expect.

Thus, the pastor spoke to 5%, and ignored the 95%.

And as a result no one grew - no one became bolder, stronger, wiser, more equipped to influence their world for Jesus. Each week folks trudged to church - put in an hour-plus - but left no better than when they came...

We wanted to grow. We hungered to know God. We desired to work and worship... *yet we didn't know how.*

Each week we were preached at, but never taught.

The believers in that Church remained *ill-equipped* to serve Jesus. This made for an anemic, sickly Church.

And I'm sure the pastor got frustrated. *Think of it from his perspective...* each week he baits his hook, and casts it out, but doesn't catch anything. His bait might be deli-

cious - his casting might be masterful - but he's fishing in a swimming pool - there're very few fish.

And here's where our pastor went amiss.

Since no one responded to be saved, he'd broaden the invitation... *If you've back-slidden? If you told a lie this week? If a lustful thought rolled across the screen of your mind?* Of course, a lustful thought had rolled across the screen of my mind... *I was a teenage boy!*

Because the pastor failed to teach us to live victorious lives, he chastised us for our failures.

*We weren't reading our Bible enough, witnessing enough, praying enough, serving the Lord enough...*

**It's easier to beat sheep, than it is to feed sheep!**

But what if that pastor had fed His flock the meat of God's Word - padded their faith with spiritual muscle?

What if every Sunday AM had been used to equip believers to *receive from Jesus, and be loved by Jesus, and love Jesus in return, and represent Him, and minister in His name, and make a real difference?*

Rather than one person preaching the Gospel on Sundays at church, that pastor would've ended up with hundreds of people preaching the Gospel seven days a week, in hundreds of different places all around town.

The most important thing I've learned from Pastor Chuck and CC is the simple truth



that **healthy sheep reproduce**. If I feed God's flock, it'll naturally grow.

The Word of God changes lives - and changed lives become witnesses - and witnesses bring other people to Christ - and the chain reaction continues on and on.

The only sheep who fail to reproduce are weak, and sick, and malnourished sheep - who don't get well fed.

My job as a **pastor-teacher**, and our priority on Sundays - isn't to *whip the saints* - or *win the sinners*.

Winning folks to Jesus is what we should be doing Monday through Saturday in the hood and at the office.

In fact, when I do conduct an altar call it's usually an addendum to the sermon. I felt compelled that morning to invite a stray sinner or two to respond. But whether anyone steps forward isn't the measure of its success.

99% of the time the message was geared to build up the Body of Christ, and cause Christians to grow.

And it's ironic, for a church that might go several weeks without holding an altar call it's amazing to me the number of folks that we do see come to Christ.

It just reiterates the truth - **healthy sheep reproduce**.

Believers that are challenged, and encouraged, and taught are those who grow and bring others to Jesus.

And verse 13 adds, Jesus is building up His Body, **"till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God..."** Notice the insightful phrase, **"till**

*we all come to the unity of the faith.”*

Realize, there is a *“unity of the faith.”* There’s a right and a wrong interpretation. There’s truth and error.

2 Peter 1:20 tells us, *“No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation...”* Don’t ever say of the Bible, *“You have your interpretation and I have mine.”*

The right interpretation is the intent God had when He breathed it into being. What did the original authors mean when they put their thoughts down on the page?

Paul tells us that as we grow we’ll *“all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God...”* As we’re built up our awareness deepens - of *the written Word, the Bible and the living Word, Jesus.*

But when it comes to *“the unity of the faith”* I’m not moving toward you, and you’re not moving toward me.

*“Till we all come...”* We’re all moving toward God.

Evidently, none of us have arrived theologically or spiritually. No one has flawless doctrine, or a monopoly on the truth - we’re all learning, and growing, and adding, and moving toward *“the unity of the faith.”*

And into *“a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...”* Here’s the goal of all spiritual growth - *to be as much like Jesus as we can.*

Jesus is the perfect, the ultimate, the quintessential, the prototypical - the complete human! Jesus the Messiah is fully alive, fully equipped, and fully mature.

And if we want to be fully alive, we’ll be like Him.

If you aspire to be like Jesus you'll add *stature* and *fullness* to your life. You'll become deeper, and stronger, and steadier, and more steadfast in your faith.

Virtue will flow from you just as it did from Jesus.

*Don't you want to be a person of stature? That when you walk into a room, the people respect you?*

Co-workers with an otherwise foul mouth, watch their language around you. They might not agree with you, but they see your integrity and respect how you do life.

Jesus *commanded* this kind of admiration. *And I say commanded, not demanded.* He didn't sue or file a grievance requiring people to respect Him. They just did. People were in awe of His stature and His fullness.

As we grow up into Christ this is how we should be measured. *Do people see stature and fullness in us?*

And with the character of Christ comes a steadiness.

So that, verse 14, *"we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting..."* Sadly, rather than mature and grow, many believers remain little children.

They don't know *what they believe* - let alone, *why they believe what they believe.* And as a result they get tossed by the winds of heresy and vain speculation.

Like a tiny rowboat on a rowdy sea - they rise and fall with every wave. Every pitch of the sea threatens to capsize their faith. They're up and down - in and out.

The most underrated Christian virtue just might be consistency. Faith that's not in flux. It stays the course.

When believers aren't taught the Bible they don't know what to believe, and end up vulnerable to every smooth-sounding doctrine that blows up from the gulf.

*Beware of the gulf stream!* A stream of doctrine that blows about with some force, but it goes in circles. It always sounds new, but there's nothing ever new.

This is why we teach the Bible verse by verse. When you can point to chapter and verse, then you've got truth you can count on. It's backed up by the Book!

In contrast to what Paul describes as *“trickery... cunning craftiness... deceitful plotting...”* He tells us in verse 15, *“but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ...”*

When a person teaches *the truth of God* bathed in *the love of God* believers grow up in Christ-likeness!

Author Kent Hughes points out the better translation of the Greek phrase, *“speaking the truth”* is *“truth-ing.”*

Whenever believers go out seeking to advance the truth - *by negotiation, or legislation, or participation, or articulation* - love should go hand in hand with truth.

Realize, truth by itself is a blunt instrument. People hit with truth alone suffer the spiritual equivalent of blunt force trauma. Love is what gives truth its cutting edge. Truth advanced in love becomes a mighty sword.

Finally, in verse 16, Paul speaks of Christ, *“from whom the whole body, joined and*

knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

Jesus is certainly the head of the Church, but we are His Body!

Imagine, Jesus considers you as near and vital to Him as a body part - a hand, or foot, or liver, or spleen.

Remember the ole spiritual - it's also a children's song. The lyrics read, “Knee bone connected to the back bone, back bone connected to the shoulder bone, shoulder bone connected to the neck bone, neck bone connected to the head bone...” It also talks about “the toe bone, foot bone, heel bone, ankle bone, shin bone,” then it finishes, “Now hear the word of the Lord.”

We too need to listen up. What a privilege it is to be a member of *the Body!* Jesus is not a bodiless spirit. He has two bodies! He has a glorified body in Heaven and a body on Earth that should be bringing Him glory!

Yet notice Paul refers to us *not as bones*, but as *“joints!”* Talk about an irony, you've gone from *smoking joints* and *hanging out in joints* - to *being joints*.

But I love this analogy. Think of what a joint does. It connects bones and tissues. Every joint in your body is dependent on every other joint. If the elbow don't bend, the hand won't reach, and the heart is pumping in vain.

That's why every joint has to stay in play. Paul says as *“every joint supplies...”* Every person in this room supplies a service or strength that benefits the whole.

As Paul puts it, *“every part does its share...”*

And I've got to ask, if everyone who comes to CCSM and calls us *“home”... at-*

*tended like you do, and gave like you do, and served like you do, and prayed for this church like you do* - what would this Church look like?

You say you're growing spiritually - well according to Paul, personal growth translates into corporate health and strength. If you're really growing spiritually your life will be more and more of a blessing to the rest of us.

Among pastors there's an ole adage. They like to say, "In any church 80% of the people do 20% of the work, and 20% of the people do 80% of the work."

I'd imagine in most churches that statistic is true, but I pray that our church will be different! That we'll take seriously the role Jesus wants us to play in His Church!

What is Jesus *into* today? He's a bodybuilder.

He's **primed**! He's gone to great effort to prepare to build. Jesus descended, then He ascended to give gifts to men, and to **perform** His work through gifted men.

Jesus picks us up - He coaches us up - He builds us up - all for the **purpose** of us all coming together and working together under the headship of Jesus Christ.

This is *His* goal... *is it ours?*