

Christ's Beautiful Body

I was a bit sentimental Monday morning. You know those newsletters I mess up every week and send out on Saturday evening? I write the majority of those on Monday morning. Typically, update the prayer request portion on Saturday afternoon. But, Monday morning, I'll pull up the website for the member's tab and begin to fill in information for the next week (who's teaching, get-togethers, men/women studies, etc.). Then I pull up the directory for birthdays and anniversaries. Business as usual on Monday morning. I pulled up the directory, and, as always, this picture is on the front page. For whatever reason, I didn't scroll past it this time. I sat and looked at all the faces and went down memory lane. You know - that was almost 5 years ago. I found myself literally smiling as I looked at your smile. Christ's beautiful body.

The honeymoon phase is over, but many have grown closer to the Lord and one another. The relationship deepens. A body isn't perfect, but what doesn't kill it makes it stronger, as we say. And many times, believe it or not, the biggest struggles can come from within, not without. So today, we're remembering the beauty of Christ's body and how we should value it, protect it, and fight for it.

There are many approaches one could take to this. Still, I gravitated to 2 passages that we usually look at from an individual aspect. However, as we'll see, there's a bigger/greater context that you may be surprised to learn. They are 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 & Philippians 4:4-9. We're considering the beauty of these passages and the need for each one in its proper setting.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- Chapter 12 begins the discussion of spiritual gifts.
- A body is made up of members.
- We need to view one another as God does.
 - Just as they thought speaking in tongues was the more excellent gift (when, in fact, prophecy was), so we do in the body.
 - Those gifts would go away. The one at Corinth, whether popular or not, wealthy or not, who had love obtained the greatest gift.
- Written to combat pride and envy in the church.

Philippians 4:4-9

- Back up to verses 1-3 for context.
- It was a joyful letter, yet there were issues.
- You can have a joyful church, yet you can have issues.
- How do we handle conflict within the body?
 - Imagine if we kept the church's salvation in mind when dealing with issues. Imagine if we behaved in a way that was motivated by the value of the church?
- None of this has any meaning without Christ. He's the head. There's no beauty without Him!