

Working Well Together: The Body of Christ

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[0 : 00] My name is Tobin. If this is the first time you're here, I'm one of the pastors here. When we started the church, we started praying and dreaming about the church like eight years ago, seven years ago.

And one of the things that we knew that God wanted us to do, we wanted to be a church that was a family. We wanted to be a church that people knew your name. We wanted to be a church where everyone knew your name.

You can tell how old I am. I love the show Cheers. It was about a bar and everybody came in. Everybody knew your name. But we wanted to be a church where everybody knew your name and everybody knew a part of your story. We feel like so often it's easy to come into a church and you just come and you go and no one knows you and they don't know your story and they don't connect and you're not a part of the community.

You're just a lone wolf Christian. And we prayed that Watermark wouldn't be like that. I mean, I don't know how we're doing in that area, but that's our prayer. That's a driving thing of a community and a family. Well, we have these name tags that always fall off on the floor and stick to everybody, right?

Part of it was so if you don't have a name tag, we know you're a visitor. And the second part of it was that we can know everybody and just call them by name and just get to know a part of the story. One of the other things we prayed about is that we prayed that as a family, we realized as a family, as a church body, that if all the pieces don't work together within the church body, the parents and the mom and the kids, and at my house we all have chores, and if we don't do our chores, we don't work together, that the body's not going to work.

[1 : 24] It's not going to be healthy. You know, we believe, I believe with all heart that many people sit in church and they just feel a restlessness in their soul.

And I think that that restlessness is due to a couple things. But one of them is just that God has given everybody spiritual gifts to serve and to use these gifts and to be a part of the body. And because we're not using these gifts to serve, instead we're just consumers. And that's a strong word, I know, but it's big in Hong Kong. We're consumers, you know.

And so, and unfortunately that happens in the church. And we wanted to be a church that wasn't consumers. We wanted to be a church that people served, that you discovered your spiritual gifts and you knew what they were.

And then you used them freely and you blessed people and you blessed the Lord in that. We're looking at a church in Corinthians that's not doing very well in that.

[2 : 19] We've been talking about it. These passages are kind of intense passages because Paul is just, he's just kind of going at them, you know. And the church is in this middle of this city that's out of control and it's full of idols and it's wealthy and it's a seaport.

And everything flows in and out of Corinth, kind of like Hong Kong. And the church just has been doing very well because they've come from these temples and these idols and this sexuality. And they've come to Christ.

But these, the scars they have on their body and the memories of these things are just still there. And so they struggle with it. They really struggle with self-centeredness. They struggle with pride. They struggle with selfishness.

And we've been reading about it throughout the scriptures. They've struggled with it. And who is their leader? And they want the best leader. And they don't like this guy. And Paul's no good. And we like these other guys.

And they've struggled with it. And where they serve. And whose house church they're a part of. And whose community group they're in. And it's just amazing how quickly these divisions happen in their lives.

[3 : 13] And then it just starts to destroy the body of Christ. And so Paul's looking and he's hearing these stories. And he's getting letters from them. And he's getting secret letters from other people. And he's trying to address our pride and our selfishness in our life.

And talk about these things. And last week, the church was divided over this idea of spiritual gifts. We talked about when we come to Christ. The Bible says that you and I walk in darkness. That we're enemies to God. We're enemies to the gospel. There's no way, if you're in here and you're not in the family of Christ, there's no way that you can come to Christ by yourself. It's literally impossible.

Because your soul is opposed to a holy, righteous God. And we're told that sometime in there that God's spirit comes into our life. And he kind of quickens us.

He opens our eyes to Jesus. And then we have choices to make. Are we going to consider him? Or are we going to pursue him? And our desire is that we see that he's so beautiful and lovely and amazing.

[4 : 11] That we just pursue him. And in that journey, all of a sudden, we come to this place. Where we see the holiness of God and our unholiness. And our need for a substitute. Our need for a savior.

And we invite Christ into our life. And we become a Christian. And the Bible says that when that happens, God's spirit comes into your life fully. You're indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You're not going to get any more of the spirit.

You're not going to get any less of the spirit. All of the spirit is in you at that time. And then you have these gifts that God gives you. And these gifts are these supernatural abilities. These supernatural abilities that allow you to do things and to minister to people and to the body.

And to bring glory to the Lord. And the church saw these things. And they saw these powers and all these things. And they struggled with it. Because they didn't like their gift. They wanted it to be another gift.

Because those other gifts were really cool. Because you were up front talking with that gift. And everybody goes, ooh, that's really cool. And maybe they had a gift that was behind the scenes. And so the church started to cause, again, these factions and divisions.

[5 : 13] And the church started just to fall apart. Does that make sense? And so last week, when you left, I gave you some spiritual gifts.

I gave you the categories and the names and some spiritual gifts. And so to start off, what I would like to do is I like for you, if you got the list and you wrote out what your spiritual gifts are, I want you just to take that sheet of paper.

And remember, gifts are these things that are given to you. You can't choose them. God gives them to you because he knows you need them. This is how you're going to serve the body. So I want you to write down on your sheet of paper what you think your spiritual gift is.

Now, I'm not going to embarrass anybody. I'm not going to embarrass you or anything like that. But I want you to write down. I'm going to give you three seconds. What was your spiritual gift? What do you think one of your spiritual gifts is? And then as you write that spiritual gift down, because we're going to talk about this gift, because I believe, and I think the scripture is really clear, that God gives us these gifts and these powers and these ministries because he knows that's how we're going to grow.

God knows you're sitting here, and he knows that you're not going to grow unless he gives you the supernatural ability and powers and ministries and a glimpse of himself. And so he gives you a gift that is a sliver of his personality and his character, and he knows that the only way you are going to grow is if you use that gift to serve him and to serve others.

[6 : 36] And so write out on your list, what was your gift? What did you write out? So the other thing I want you to ask is if you're a piece of the body, what piece of the body would you think you are?

And this is even harder, because he's going to get into this really weird illustration and discussion day. He's going to talk about that. But what is your gift? Okay, so if God gave you the gift of exhortation, which is encouragement, people tell you that you're a great counselor, that you're a great listener, that you have the ability to help people grow, you have the ability to help people

motivate, you have the ability to help people take the next step in their faith, that you love coming alongside of people.

If that's the gift that God gave you, can you raise your hand? Excellent. Excellent. Okay, so now if he gave you the gift of teaching, now he gave you this ability to communicate spiritual truth in such a way that people, that you can package it and you can look at things, and it's really crazy like today's passage, and you're like, it's going to take me two hours to teach this, but he can help you package it to where you don't lose the message of the gospel and the truth, and so that when you teach it, people remember and they change, and people learn, and people really change spiritually. If God gave you that gift of teaching, raise your hand. Okay, excellent. Excellent. I'm taking notes, okay, because we have positions that are opening up in Sunday school class and all these things, and so how about the gift of service?

The gift of service is where you see needs. You look around and you see needs. You see physical needs. You see spiritual needs. You see material needs, and you just meet them. You see a need, and you just meet it.

[8 : 21] You know, someone's yard needs mowing. That doesn't work in Hong Kong. Someone's car needs washing, and you just wash it or something like that, and then when you meet these physical needs and you serve these people, people are blessed.

When you do these things, people are encouraged by you. They're just blessed by you, and the thing is that when you serve and you do these things, it encourages you. It energizes you, and you go, wow, I wish I could do some more.

There's somebody else I can wash their car for, or whatever that is. Who has that gift of service?

Okay. Now, see, the thing is I know a lot of you, and I know your gifts, and I know some of you aren't even lifting your hands because you're afraid to, or you don't want, well, maybe I'm right. I don't know if I'm maybe. I don't know what is going on. Okay, so one last gift. And I wrote out these gifts. This is right here. We wrote out all these gifts, 25 of them, and we put them on a sheet of paper so you can look at these and read through them and pray about them and think about them. So if you've got the gift of pastoring, now the gift of pastoring or being a pastor or a shepherd is that you love walking alongside of people. You just love people. You love guiding people.

[9 : 29] You love taking people on their spiritual journey. You love people helping them walk a lifetime with God. You love taking their next step in their spiritual journey. You want to get involved in people's lives deeply.

You love shepherding people. You just love people and their journey and their choices, even when they make bad choices. You just still come alongside of them. Who has the gift of pastoring in here?

Raise your hand. Okay. Okay. You know, some of you, I saw it. I said, I know you did. I'm glad you did. And I know some of you didn't raise your hand. And, you know, you did.

But let me tell you something because you should know this. If we were in a church of Corinth today, everyone who said those were their gifts, none of you would have been valued. If you were in a church of Corinth today, and you didn't have any gift except for the big three, speaking in tongues, gifts, miracles, and healings, if you didn't have any of those three gifts, you would have been cut off.

The imagery actually is to take a body part and just to chop it off. And that's what the church was doing. The church was taking all of these gifts, and they just said, well, we don't really like any of those other gifts. We just want these three gifts.

[10 : 40] And if you have these three gifts, you're welcome, and you can come be a part of our church. But if you're not a part of these three gifts, if you don't have these talents, we're just going to cut you off. We don't value those gifts whatsoever.

And Paul is looking at his church, and he's going, what are you guys doing? You're killing yourself. You're destroying yourself. You're taking away these amazing gifts that God has given for you, and you're saying, no, they're terrible.

They're trash. I don't want to raise my hand. I'm afraid of it. But in the Greek, it actually says they're despising God's spirit in his life. And so Paul goes after this church and after us, I think, sometimes. And we got 10 minutes to finish this sermon, so we're going to see what happens here. But I want to look at three or four things. And the first thing is this. Paul, in this passage, is going to say this. He's going to say that when you come to Christ, two different unions happen in your life. You have two different relationships to begin. Two relationships that were never there before. They are there

now, and they're going to change you forever.

[11 : 40] And what he's going to say in verses 12 and 13 is this. When you come to Christ, the very first thing that changes in your life is the Holy Spirit comes in, and he gives you the supernatural union to Jesus.

That when you come to Christ and you become a Christian, the Bible says that you are totally, and this is what he says in verses 12 and 13, you are totally united. You're totally grafted in. You're totally a part of Christ.

Everything that's true of Christ is true of you. All that's powers of Christ are true of you. Sin that was on you, Christ died for on the cross. You experience everything. Paul says in Philippians, I want to know Christ, his suffering, the power of his resurrection.

And what he's saying there is that you and Christ are the same. That you've been united. You've been molded. You have this incredible union. The second thing he says is this in verse 13. That when we come to Christ, there's this union that happens.

This union is that all Christians are brought together. That all Christians are united. In the same way that you came together as Christ and you and you and Christ, in the same way he's saying here that all Christians come together and that you all are united.

[12 : 46] You all are the church. You don't go to church. Paul is saying you are the church. You don't go to watermark.

Paul says you are watermark. There's this union that happens and it's mystical. It's supernatural. And the Holy Spirit comes in and he represents us to Christ.

And we represent the world. We represent Christ to the world. We're Christ now. Bodies, his hands and his feet like Jeremy sang in the communion message. And now we are one together. We are the church.

And the church at Corinth forgot that. And so Paul uses this imagery of the body. And he's going to use it about 17 times. And he's going to say you and I are the body. And he's going to tell us two things about the body.

Two things that the church was forgetting. Two things that you and I must never forget. And the first thing about the body that Paul says is there is a unity in the body.

[13 : 52] That the body is one. That the body is one with Christ. That Jesus is the head and that we are the body. And that to become spiritually mature, to grow in our faith, it always means that we do it within community.

We don't separate ourselves. What Paul is saying here is that fellowship is not optional. He says if you want to be spiritually healthy as a Christian, if you want to grow as a Christian, you can only do that within the body.

Now I know that in the West, in Texas, we're terrible at this. Because all we teach about is individuality. And we have all these books and we have all these programs and all these things that you go through.

And we say if you really want to get deep with Christ, you just go get a book, go read it by yourself, and you'll get deep with Christ. Or you know, you can't come to this class, let me give you the notes and just read the notes on yourself and then you have everything. That's Hong Kong, right?

But that's not what the Bible says. And Paul says that you can't do that because you need to be together in the body. You have to be together and unified. And if you're not a part of the body, you're not going to grow.

[14 : 57] He's going to say that there's no such thing as long-wolf Christians. He's going to say that a Christian by himself is in danger and is not the body of Christ. And he's going to say, using the body analogy, that if a cell or an organ goes off by itself, it separates itself from the body, what happens?

If a cell decides to do its own thing, what happens? What's that cell called? It's called cancer, right? If a cell decides to do its own thing, it's called cancer.

And when the organ goes off and separates itself from the whole body, it dies. And so Paul is talking in here and he says, within this union, the first thing you and I need to know, because the church at Corinth forgot it, was that we are called to be together.

The spiritual life is together. It's unity. And without unity, whatever gift you are, whatever body part you are, you're going to die. The second thing that Paul teaches us, because the church at Corinth didn't get it, and my prayer is, is that you and I would get it.

That as the body of Christ, there's not just there's a unity, but as the body of Christ, there's a diversity. You see, the church at Corinth hated diversity.

[16:21] They cut off everybody who wasn't like them. You didn't speak the same language. You didn't have the same socioeconomic status. You couldn't have the same oratory skills. You didn't have the same gifts.

You didn't have the same amount of money. You didn't hang around with the same people. The church of Corinth hated diversity, and they split off their members, and they said, you cannot be with us.

And so Paul is talking to this church, and he's saying, how can you do this? Because the body of Christ isn't just one organ, and the body of Christ isn't just one gift.

And the church at Corinth was denying this, and they said, no, we want to be same. We want to be sameness. We want to be conformed. We want to be just like everybody else. And Paul says, that's crazy. And if you read it in Greek, and if you read it in English, 15, 16, 17, and 18 are crazy passages.

I mean, it's almost like a comedy. You have ears talking to eyes, and eyes talking to ears, and feet talking to everybody else. And Paul is warning them. He's saying, be careful, because you're going to take certain people when they come into church who have certain gifts, and you're going to make them low.

[17:27] And you're going to take certain people who come into your church with certain gifts, and you're going to make them high. And Paul says, if you do that, you're going to kill the body.

You're going to take away God's spirit. You're going to take away that supernatural aspect of what's working in Watermark in the church of Corinth. So let's say you and I have this chance, and we have this choice, and we could say, what kind of body part are we going to be?

What kind of spiritual gift do we want? And Paul says in verse 17, you cannot say that, because if you say that, everybody's going to pick the same piece of body. Everybody's going to pick the same gift, because that's the value.

And what you don't realize here is what he's saying is this. What we think is the face and the head and something really sexy, God thinks maybe it's the buttocks.

And so the church here was saying, we want to be the head, and we want to be the face, and we want to be sexy. And what God is saying is what you really are is you're the pigu. You're the buttocks. And so everybody in the church, they had the same values.

[18:43] They wanted to be sexy. They wanted to be a sexy body of church. And so they were the but. And so they said, hey, I'm the church. We're the buttocks. I mean, if you want to know about butts, come to butts, because that's where we are.

We're just one big but. Our whole church is one big but. We don't have a lot of other gifts. We just have butts. Now, the question is, would one big but instead of the rest of the parts of the body, would that be a healthy thing?

Now, I know I'm going to get in trouble for this with my wife when I go home today. I didn't compare anybody's butts. I didn't talk about sizes or ethnicities of butts.

But I'm saying about pieces of the body. And what we think are sexy, what God is thinking is it's just a but. And we want to surround ourselves with people who are just butts, because we like that.

And Paul says, if you do that, the body doesn't function. The body dies. It doesn't work. Some of us, our faces or hands or arms, but we look around and we see we want to be a but.

[19:53] And so we hide our arm-ness and our hand-ness and our face-nesses, and we try to be butts. And Paul says, if you do that, you make the body less. Okay, I like watches.

I never wore watches in college. But when I went to China, I started learning Chinese. And when I learned Chinese, I went into the marketplace. And there's these little guys with all these old Rolexes they had collected during the Cultural Revolution.

And they were real at that time. Now they're all fake. And we were, they were. And so we were talking about it, and that's how I learned Chinese. I learned Chinese through watches and pieces, these little old guys.

And it was amazing. And so I like watches now. I don't know why. I'm in the profession where I can't like watches. So last, on May 14th, my watch broke.

I've had this watch for 25 years. I've timed all of our kids' births on it, all my sermons on it, everything I use for this watch. I love this watch. It worked. And so I got up, and I'm starting to

watch, and the watch broke.

[20 : 51] And I've come up to the staff, and I go, guys, you've got to help me because I can't time my sermons anymore because my watch broke. And one of the staffs, who's not going to get a raise this year, said, I never realized you timed any of your sermons.

Bad staff. He's a butt, right? But I realized that, you know, and so this watch has 124 moving parts in it, 124 parts.

But when one of these parts breaks or doesn't function right, what happens to the watch? Does it work?

Paul uses this analogy of the body, and I study medicine, and I'm looking at Derek back there who's a doctor, and some of you are doctors here. But you know how many organs are in the body?

There's like 78 organs in the body.

There's five vital organs. There's 12 organ systems in your body. And if any of those organs aren't working well, even the ones that you don't think about very much, the body isn't healthy.

[22 : 01] In fact, if any of those organs aren't functioning 50% well or 80% well or even 10% less than they should, the body could have some really bad problems.

And so Paul is using this analogy of the body, and he's saying the same thing is true of you and me. That we're all in here.

We all have gifts. We're all a part of this body called Christ in the church in Watermark. And if we're not using our gifts, if we're not functioning well, if we're not understanding that God has given, you know that God has given every one of you a very unique gift.

And your gift is totally unlike my gifts. Great. And your gifts are so much better than my gifts. And God has placed you in places that are so unique so that you can use those gifts in ministries.

It is not a mistake. I believe that with all my heart, that God is sovereign. All the hairs on your head are numbered. You're here because God wants you to hear this message. He wants you to do something about it afterwards.

[23 : 04] Everything about you is not a mistake. God has molded you from the moment that you were inside your mom. The psalmist says that you were fearfully and wonderfully made. And God has gifted you. And all these gifts and all these talents that God knew that you were going to have when you came to Christ, he gave to you for a very specific purpose.

There's no accident. There's no accident. He knew that you were going to be at Watermore. He knew that we were going to be trying to do these things for his glory.

And he knew that the gifts that you had and the talents that you had and the ministries that you had, we desperately needed those things. And that if you didn't have those things, that we wouldn't function like the body. And so he brings you into our midst and he wants you to discover these things.

And the only question we have to ask ourselves is, are we going to discover our gifts? Are we going to use our gifts? Are we going to use our gifts for God's glory?

Are we going to use our gifts for the health of the church? Are we going to use our gifts? Or are we going to be like the church of Corinth that despised their gifts? Are we going to be like the church of Corinth that didn't want people to know their gifts?

[24 : 10] They were ashamed of their gifts because they didn't have the upfront gifts. They weren't pastors and so they couldn't do those things. But God has you here. He's uniquely gifted you.

You have passions and ministries and spiritual gifts that no one else has. Do you believe that? So what would it look like if the leg of the body only showed up every three weeks?

What if the leg only showed up every three weeks and the rest of the body was just waiting for the leg to show up? And when the leg shows up, everybody goes, oh, good.

We need to go to the bathroom. We've been trying to do all these things and we just can't get up because our butt is too big. And we have no legs to put underneath them. Would that be a healthy body?

What if the right hand said, you know, I'm just too young and I'm not as gifted as the left hand. I'm inexperienced.

[25 : 17] I don't really understand all this body part stuff and this body language stuff. And so I'm not as good as the left hand. So maybe I should just take a break. Maybe I should just take some classes. I mean, I could take some classes, some 2-7 classes or some other classes, precepts, whatever.

I could just take some classes and learn what it means to be a right hand. And then once I finally feel like I'm secure enough and I know enough to be a right hand, I'm going to come back and I'll be a right hand. Is that a healthy body?

It's okay to go, no. What if the left arm said, you know, I'm just too busy right now? I'm just too busy to play a significant role in the life of the body?

I'll try to clear my schedule up so that I have more time. But right now, I'm just too busy. I'll get back to you later. You see the imagery that Paul's using here? It just seems so, you read it, you go, that's the dumbest thing I ever heard, right?

My 8-year-old, I read this to her and she's like, pfft. But that's what was happening in the church. Was that a healthy church?

[26 : 25] You can go like this. What if the heart said this? What if the heart said, you know, unless I can be up front, unless I can be seen by everybody? What if the heart said, you know, I want the proper title and I want the proper respect that I deserve?

And unless I get the title and the respect I deserve, I just don't want to be a part of the body anymore. I don't want to do it. What if the heart said that? Would that be a healthy body?

My question there is always, well, who dies in that situation? Does the heart die or does the body die or what happens to that? You know, you know that the most spiritually significant and important person in my life, in the last 40 years of my life, has never been a pastor.

They've never been a staff person. I don't feel like probably as I look at my journey, I've probably never had a pastor be the most significant spiritual person in my life.

That person was a dentist. And his wife, Andy and Kay Harris. And basically about 10 years ago, when I was 10 years old, so 40 years ago, when I was 10 years old, they saw me wandering the streets of their neighborhood.

[27 : 51] They brought me to church. They already had two boys. I became the third boy. Even this day when I call them, they're like, I'm their third son.

They brought me to church and they went on this journey with me and they walked with me these last 40 years, you know. And I've seen more of Christ in Andy and Kay's life than probably anybody else.

You know how thankful I am that he didn't say, you know, I'm not a pastor. Or I'm not a staff person. I've never taken a class on this. Or I've never really learned how to do this. I'm still trying to learn how to do this.

I'm not up front all the time. I'm still learning maybe I shouldn't do that. I don't want to serve you.

Maybe my gift isn't the right gift. I'm so thankful that they didn't do that.

The passage says that you don't need a title or a sexy gift to be used massively for God's kingdom. All you need to do is be faithful.

[29 : 00] It's what the Lord gives you. Did you hear me? You don't need a title. You don't need to be a pastor.

You don't need a massive sexy gift that everybody sees and everybody's drawn towards. You don't need those things to be effective for God's kingdom. All you need to be effective for God's kingdom is to use the gift that he's given you.

Trust him. To give him the glory. And if you do that, there's going to be amazing things happening in your life. Church of Corinth, they didn't understand that.

They lost focus. They're busy comparing themselves. Gifts that God gave them. So Paul, in his passage, talks about unity.

One body of Jesus. The church. He talks about diversity. Many parts working together for the glory of God and all his people. The church of Corinth forgot this.

[30 : 10] My prayer is that we would never forget this. That we would always live it out. God has gifted you for amazing things.

I don't think I've ever been in a more gifted church than Watermark. I mean that with all my heart. The question is, are we going to use these gifts?

Are we going to discover these gifts? Are we going to go on a journey and just trust him with these gifts? Are we just going to be faithful? And see what God does in the midst of the craziness.

Does that make sense? I have two questions and we're done. If the people of the God, if people of God are Christians, and we're all a part of this body of Christ that Paul says in his passage, and you're a Christian here, that means that you're a part of the Watermark family.

It means that you are the Watermark family. So my question I have for us is, what part of that body are you?

[31 : 36] Do you know your spiritual gift? Do you know how to use it within the church family? That's my number one job, guys, as a pastor.

And the staff is to equip you to use your gifts. Do you know your spiritual gifts? Two, do you see yourself as a needed part of the body of Christ, like the passage says?

The passage says that every one of us in here, if we're in the family of God, that we're indispensable. And that if you don't use your gift and Watermark is missing a body part, then the question is, do you believe that?

Are you indispensable to God's people here? Or are we still acting like we're individual Christians? How would your life look different today? If you took this passage and this message and really applied it to your heart?

[33 : 05] If you said, I'm all in. I want to make this real. You know, the church at Corinth, they had become so self-centered and self-focused.

And in their church, they were expecting other people to serve them. They were expecting other people to take care of them. They were expecting other people to give them the honor and to elevate them.

Do we realize that the gifts are not for us? Do you realize these amazing things that God has given you aren't for you?

They're not to make you happy. They'll bring you joy as you use them. These amazing gifts are for God's glory, for his kingdom, for this church family here.

the most significant thing you're going to do this year at Watermark is to discover your gifts and use them for God's glory amongst this family.

[34 : 41] That's my prayer for us. I don't want to be one big but. I want to be hands and feet loving the Lord and loving each other.

Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your word, which is living and active and powerful and penetrating and humbling and changing but I pray for some of us in here right now who are not a part of the family of God.

I pray, Lord, that you would open their eyes and their ears and their soul to your son Jesus. I pray that they would realize that all the things they cling to for significance and for truth and for power and for reality and for help and comfort that all these things will ultimately fade away.

Wealth will fade away. Family will fade away. Education in our minds will fade away. Our body will fade away.

But the one thing we can cling to that we know is true that never changes is you. Lord, I pray that they would see your son Jesus and they would fall in love with him.

[36 : 14] Lord, I pray for the rest of us in here who are struggling. I know that there are some of us that want certain gifts and we don't have them and we will probably never get them and there are some of us who don't want our gift because it's not cool and it's not sexy and it's not up front and so we hide it and we're afraid to raise our hands because we don't want people to think less of us.

Lord, I just confess. I confess my pride and arrogance and self-sufficiency and I pray for this church, your church, our church. Father, I ask your forgiveness for us because I know there are so many people in here who are so gifted and they can do so many amazing things for your kingdom and change eternity but they're afraid or they're tired or they've lost focus of how much you love them.

Lord, I pray that today and that this week that those things would change. Father, we pray that we would be a church that would use all these gifts so that as we live to this part of Hong Kong that people would see all of your son Jesus, that we would never look down on certain gifts and elevate other gifts but they all would have parts, they all would have meaning, they would all be knitted into the body, there would be no amputations taking place and there would be no enlargement taking place that we would be the body and that we would love the people around us.

Father, we need you. we love you. We thank you for your son Christ who brings us together with you and with each other.

In his holy name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.