

September 9, 2017

SOMA: The Body of Christ

1Corinthians 12:27

02:51 PR: Alright for Soma, you already heard what it is about. Soma is the word for body. Scripture talks about the church as being the body of Christ. So this is a series on the church, and we are going to take, for the next seven weeks, starting today and next week actually is the beginning of the one of the other passages. Today, we are going to be talking about the Body of Christ. But we are going to take one of the other passages and look at what type of community God wants us to be. The church is not a place so often when we talk about church, we talk about we go to church. You cannot go to church. The church is not a place. The church meets at a place. The church is not a place. The church is a people. Jesus did not die on the cross just so you and I can get together an hour or two every Sunday, hear a good sermon and listen to some great songs and leave. That is not what church is to be all about. Jesus died on the cross in order to form a family to make us one body of people Who become an authentic community of faith who do life together and as we do life together, the way he envisioned it, we will reflect Jesus to the world. The question is, "Is being part of what..." And I hear this all the time throughout my ministry, "Is being part of a local church really vital to my faith and life, Pastor?"

04:15 PR: I was at Versailles having dinner one time, and there was this group of ladies, 10 ladies in this circle eating and fellow-shiping but talking and of all times, they were talking about faith and Christianity in the church, and all 10 of them noted that at one time, they attended church but they just didn't see it as important anymore. And I go, "Wow." I see this common too. For some reason, God said go to Starbucks, and this particular one. I always go to a different one, but this particular one, go there and sit down. This place. This never happens to me, so I'm not super spiritual. I'm not trying to be super spiritual, but I did it and right next to me plops down a seminary student. A woman seminary student who is learning Hebrew and I said, "Hey, I kind of know the language and can help her out." But her friend comes in, a little bit later and they are talking. I'm hearing the conversation and she said, "Hey, how are you doing? How is your church life? How is your spiritual life?" "Oh I don't attend church anymore." "You don't attend church anymore? Well, you should try my church."

05:16 PR: And she is talking about how she is just too busy and it's just not as important to her in her life and I see this all the time. I have met so many Christians in places I have been lately who no longer attend the church as though church is an option and then that's how, when I grew up, that was the question in the church. Or that's how people saw being part of a local church. That something as kind of optional and I've heard this question over and over again. Can you be a Christian and not attend church or belong to a church? And my quick response is always well, God describes us as sheep. The most dangerous place for sheep to be is alone, so it's not a good idea but there is a better answer and there is a longer answer. That won't be too long.

06:00 PR: But is it necessary for salvation? Well, of course not. It's not necessary for salvation. It's not one of those boxes you check off, "Okay, I went to church today, okay, I prayed, I read my Bible, I gave." It's not a check [06:14] . In order to be saved; we attend church because we are saved. It's a response to our salvation, it's not in order to be saved. We are saved by grace and grace alone. But in response to that grace, we are to be part of a community of faith. It is a response. I think the problem with the question, and I don't like the question anymore, I don't try to answer it anymore 'cause it doesn't have an answer, "Is the church vital to my faith in life," because it

assumes something. It assumes that I actually have a choice on this matter, that being part of the church or the body of Christ is an option. And it's not an option. It's something... Church says you are... Look at... And take out your outline. You're gonna need your outline today. So take out your outline. We're gonna do some projects here. Alright, here's the one verse in Ephesians I, and let's read it together. Is it up there? Ephesians I, or do I have that?

[background conversation]

07:15 PR: Oh yeah, actually that's it, but I cut it in pieces. I want those... So you can focus on the most important parts. Anyway, let me read it to you, "All praise to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms, because we are united with Christ." Now catch this, even before the world... Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ, for what purposes? To be holy and without fault in his eyes; number one. Number two though, God decided in advance to adopt us into his family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and notice, it gave him great pleasure. What pleases God? Two things: That we're united with him, and as a result, we become holy and faultless; number two though, that he adopts us into his family. Now here's the project, look at the verse and circle all the times it says, "us" and "we." So how many times? And I'll wait until someone has the answer. So how many times does it say "us" and "we?" He who has blessed me with every spiritual blessing, no. He's blessed us, because we are united in Christ. How many times?

[pause]

08:36 PR: Six, I heard that. Yeah, six is correct. Bingo, you win Jeopardy for 100. Now, how many times does it say "me," "my" or "I?" "Me," "my," or "I?" None. He has blessed... No, we read the passage this way, "He has blessed me with every spiritual blessing because I am united with Christ, and he has chosen me to be holy, and God has, in advance, adopted me into his family," but that's not what it says, does it? In the church, there are no only children. You're not an only child at church. So it's "us," it's not "me." In fact, in Corinthians, it says this, "All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it." You do not have a choice. You are part of the body of Christ. So the real question is, is why? Why before the foundation of the world would Jesus adopt having us be united with him by faith in Jesus, does he slap us into his family? Why does he adopt us? Because adoption assumes something, right? When you're adopted, you're adopted into something, right? Not into nothing. What are you adopted into?

10:01 S?: A family.

10:01 PR: A family, yeah. You're a part of a family. Why would God slap together and... Look around you, this odd concoction of people. Why would he do that? It's crazy, right? 'Cause it's easier living alone, isn't it? Well, maybe not. Think on that. Is it easier living in... How about your families? All your families are all together right? You get no problems with your family. You're a homogeneous unit, it's easy to live in a homogeneous unit. Well, maybe not. And yet, God chooses not just to create a family of a homogeneous unit, he creates a family out of us all. All ages and types and backgrounds and genders, socioeconomic groups, ethnicities, colors, likes, dislikes, all kinds of body shapes and types, and he slaps us all together. It's kind of humorous. God has a sense of humor about it. Why would he do this? That's the real question. What is God's purpose for us? We live in a culture that has programmed us that when we approach anything in our lives, we ask

the question, "How does this benefit me?" And we bring this kind of mentality into the church and we determine whether or not we do something based upon our evaluation of, "How does this benefit me?" But part of being a follower of Jesus is the death of me.

11:36 PR: In order to become a follower, you gotta deny yourself, take up this cross and follow me. It's part of being a Christian. It's part of being a follower of Jesus, that it's the death of me. So now it's no longer about me, it's about him. God did not create us to be consumers but to make a contribution. Rick Warren says, "We are made by God and for God. How does it benefit me is the wrong question again." We keep answering or asking the wrong question. The right question is: Why is the church part of my destiny, or why is the church part of our destiny? Why before the creation of the world did God purpose [12:14] to be part of his family? So the real question is: What's God's vision for the church or his family? What's the purpose of the church? How do we fit into his vision, and what is it? What does it mean to be the body of Christ? That's what we're gonna look at today.

12:30 PR: So let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we begin this journey, help us discover why, why did you go to the cross with the whole purpose of slapping us into this family? And it's an oddball of characters and it's kind of humorous and it's a challenge though. It's an incredible challenge bringing a diverse group of people together to be united in a singular purpose in you. But it's a challenge that's really worth it. It's like a marriage. When you invest the time, it is worth it. When you get to the end, becoming one, there's something valuable to that. Help us discover the same type of unity that you and the Father and the Holy Spirit share. Use this whole series to help us to learn how to do life together and be the church that you envisioned. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. And all God's people prayed.

13:20 PR: Alright so first, what is God's vision for the church? And it's mind-blowing. It's huge. Here's what it says, when the disciples asked Jesus, "Hey, tell us how to pray," he said "Okay, here it is," and he gave them a list to be praying for. Now catch this, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Now unpack that one. What are all the things that spin out of that? What are some... What kind of things should I be praying for so that our life together here will be on earth as it is in heaven? What is life like in heaven? How do we make it happen here so we become a taste of heaven? Now, again, we read this passage and we think that, "I am the taste of heaven. Jesus can work in me so powerfully so that I can be a taste of heaven." But that's not what the prayer says, does it?

14:18 PR: How does this prayer begin? "My father who art in heaven." Yes or no? No. What does it say? "Our Father who art in heaven." What it means is we can only fulfill the vision that God has for the church together. You cannot do it as an individual. In fact, Jesus goes on says "Hey, my prayer is not for them alone, I pray also for those who believe in me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as you in me and I am in you." What Jesus is saying, "Hey Father, I want this body of people that I have adopted, I want them to experience such incredible unity, they experience what we experience." That we experience the same union that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit experience. We experience the same fellowship, the... Imagine the tightness of the fellowship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. When you read the scripture, they're always in sync. They're always having a... They're not arguing. They're not, "Hey, that's mine," or "This is mine," or "I'm gonna do this," "No, I'm gonna do that." They're not arguing, but they have a singular focus, they got each other's back, an incredible union, incredible fellowship, and what Jesus is saying is, "I want my church to have that kind of fellowship. That kind of union." That's a huge

vision, but what does it look like?

15:40 PR: 'Cause I'm a very concrete thinker. I think in imagery, I need to see a picture for it. So is there a picture of a heavenly community that we can see and say, "Yeah, that's what we can become" And the answer is yes. It's in Revelation 7:9-11. And in Revelation 7, here's the setup of the chapter. The tribulation is just about to begin, and the first part of the chapter gives a picture of the church before tribulation, and then 7:9-11 gives you a picture of the church after the tribulation and after the church goes through the final end times. Beforehand, we are just one tribe of Israel. Even Israel was not even united, it's broken up into 12 different tribes. They're easy to count, 12,000 each. They're one small ethnic group, but they're divided, divided by tribes of this tribalism. You get to the end of it though, and you get a picture of the church in heaven.

16:36 PR: Here's how it's described. "After this, there before me was a great multitude that no one could count." Isn't it amazing? They can count it. Now no one can count it. From every tribe, every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the lamb, and they were wearing white robes and they were holding palm branches in their hands, and they cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb." And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell down on their faces before the throne and they worshipped God.

17:11 PR: Get the picture of it. It's not just one nation, it's every nation. It's not divided by tribe there, it's every nation, tribe, and people of every language together. And they can't be counted. They're united with a singular purpose and that's to worship God, and you cannot do that sitting at home on your butt, watching TV shows. You cannot do it. You cannot fulfill the vision of God being disconnected from the body of Christ or seeing it is optional. In fact, in Ephesians, he says it even more. Paul says, "His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity," and that cannot occur by you slipping in and slipping out every Sunday. It means more than just spending an hour or two on a Sunday. And the challenge... And here's how... How many of you... A lot of married people here, right? Now you've been working on this your whole life, being two to one becoming united. How's it going? Easy. Piece of cake, right? You guys got it all down. Right now, you're like this. You're like the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Right?

[laughter]

18:22 PR: Think about it. How many years have you been working on it and you still don't got it down. Imagine, this is what we're called to do as a church. It's not gonna happen one or two hours a Sunday, and especially not gonna happen if you come just once in a while. It's not gonna happen. You know how hard it is for marriage or having a best friend? You know how hard that work is? It means we need to spend some significant time together in community. Every nation, tribe, people, tongue, worshipping under one roof. God says when we do that, people will get a taste of heaven. And what's really happening in the scripture is God is just re-weaving the fabric of humanity, which was torn apart in Genesis 3 and Genesis 11. Sin drove us apart, in Christ God is bringing us together, re-weaving the fabric of humanity. That's God's vision. So where do we fit in? What's the method? What's the purpose of the church? Here's what it is. Here's the purpose for the church. This is how we are woven into this whole thing.

19:23 PR: Jesus says two audacious things about the church: That when God's people come together and share the kind of bond and love as the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit do, here's what

happens. And they're incredible. He says it twice in one passage in John 17, "May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I in them and You in me so that they may be brought into complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved me even as I have loved you." Now, who's the world? The world is the Biblical word for those who haven't come to faith yet. And what the passage is saying is when God's people, this diverse group of people, come together and they do life together, and they do it in such a way that they come to complete unity, that they're loving each other in community, that people will begin to discover Jesus was sent from God. Jesus was God's divine messenger with a divine message that will change their life and change the world. And it says they will get the message. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world." They will get it. They will understand that God loves me [20:35] [REDACTED] I guess as they see the reality of love in God's people.

20:40 PR: So before people are able to believe the message, they need to see the message in us. Well, why is it? Because seeing is believing. That's the language of our world. That's the spiritual condition of the world. If you look in Luke 4, which is a quotation of Isaiah 61, the whole purpose of Jesus' coming was to open the eyes of the blind. All of us understand this. All of us before we came to faith had probably no consciousness of the spiritual world. But you come to faith and all of a sudden this whole new world opened up to you, and you saw what you thought was bunk before. I did. I thought Christianity was just bunk. You thought it bunk before and now you have a love for it. You crave it. You can't get enough of it. That's what happens.

21:20 PR: The spiritual condition of the world is that they don't have that. That part of humanity is turned off. So in order for them to believe the message, they need to see the message and that's our part. That's where we fit in. And this is why there are so many... The most common healing miracle in scripture is the healing of the blind. Why? Because seeing is believing. Jesus knew in order for them to believe that they can see spiritually they need to see it physically. So he put it in the physical realm what has happened spiritually, so they can believe. They saw it then they can believe, yeah, there is something real about this Jesus. Physically, he removes [21:52] [REDACTED] the sight for the blind. There's something real. There's a spiritual reality behind this.

21:57 PR: So before people can believe the gospel, they need to see the gospel. Which is even more important today because people are so cynical. And for a good reason. You should be cynical today because there's so much fake news out there, and spin, and companies who make claims and warranties, and hide beside carefully crafted language that you didn't notice when you bought the product 'cause you thought they meant what they said, but they created it in such a way that they didn't say what they meant. Did I say that... Or they meant what they said. Alright.

22:28 PR: And you've all had products. You've had all these claims. I'm so disappointed. As a guy, as a teenager in college trying to attract women, I bought Hai Karate because they said it drives the women wild. Well, it never did. I bathed myself in the sucker. I never... No woman ever groped me or came [22:45] [REDACTED]. I couldn't get their... I couldn't get a date. So stinking. So it's a claim. And then I bought light bread, Sara Lee light bread. Sara Lee, I'm after you. 40% less calories. That's a lie. All they did was they cut the bread thinner. [laughter] That's all they did, and Budweiser had a model, "It gives life." I'm sorry. You can pop and pour Bud into a cadaver, it will never come to life. All these product claims and we become jaded. But it's worse because we experience things much deeper, much more wounding than that. Some of us had fathers who said we would be there and they weren't. Or spouses who said 'til death do us part and they broke that promise. Or boyfriends who said I love you until they got what they wanted from you and they left you or worse, they left

you with a child. And as a result, people are jaded. It's hard to believe anyone's claims.

23:51 PR: I love the musical My Fair Lady 'cause Liza is just fed up with all these guys and all their claims and there's a song she sings, and she says this, "Words, words, words. I'm so sick of words. Sing me no songs, tell me no rhymes. Don't waste my time. Show me..." And the world says the same thing to us. They're tired of the claims and the lies that people tell. "Sing me words, words, words, I'm sick of words. Sing me no songs, tell me no rhymes. Don't waste my time, show me." And that's the job of the church to show Jesus to others by having them see it in us first, which is the whole issue of credibility. It's the whole issue of credibility when the world sees us loving each other like Christ loved the church, we had a credible message. But in order for us to develop credibility, it has to be seen. And our credibility's undermined is when people don't see Christians loving each other unconditionally. And Jesus goes even further, he says, "Not only will people believe," but he says, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

25:06 PR: The word 'prove' means convince. Who are you convincing? When you're trying to convince someone, who are you... There's a particular group being talked about. It's the critic, or the cynic. Who are the critics and cynics? They are not our enemies, they are people so wounded by this world that they refuse to be gullible anymore. They refuse to be hurt anymore. It's a defensive mechanism because they're tired of being hurt, tired of being let down. And Jesus says, "Even the critic and cynic..." If we live the way Jesus tells us to live, as the body of believer, if we have the type of a community he envisioned, even the most ardent critic will be won to him. Those walls they built will be broken down.

25:49 PR: Some famous guy, I don't know who he is, [25:52] [redacted] said this: [chuckle] "The church is the best form of evangelism [25:57] [redacted] to reach the world, the best polemic defense the world of the reality of Jesus." But what will win? Notice, look at the passage really carefully. What will win the lost and convince the critic? Is it what we say? 'Cause the normal Christian response is, "We gotta preach the gospel and we gotta take an apologetics course so we can blow the arguments outta the water." When you argue with critics and preach the gospel, is that what the passage says though? It doesn't say anything about saying, does it? Yet... That's nothing about saying. It is how we live together, not as individuals but as a family. It's the quality of our fellowship. We will be the best form of evangelism and the best polemic for the world by how we treat each other, it says, the quality of life we share. And when we do, we become a tangible demonstration of the reality of God and we will win people, even the most ardent critic.

26:55 PR: What are the implications, then, for the church? Here's the implications, it means we need to do church way differently than we do. It means we need to focus our energies on the body of Christ, and growing together as a body of Christ and develop these qualities amongst us. We need to really up our game when it comes to working and doing life together. And Jesus makes it easy. He tells us how, he puts all these one and other passages, here's how to do it. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, here's how you do it. "Love one another, accept one another, be united to one another, encourage one another, restore one another, serve one another."

27:30 PR: We're gonna look at all those. It means, number two, that we take more time doing life together and not just come in and come out. It means also letting people in. It also means being part of a small group because you can't have a community in a crowd. You could only develop community in a small group, that's why I encourage you to make a small group a high priority in your life. And again, number four, it means that we need to do church differently. We need to do

two things well at the church. We need to worship well and we need to do community well. We need to worship well and we need to do community well.

28:08 PR: Well, where do we begin? We begin with one of the passages. But for today, and being part of a small group... But today we're gonna look at, quickly, what does it mean to be the body of Christ, 'cause I find this analogy incredible. It's packed with information. And I'll go through it real quick here. All of you together are Christ's body, each one of you is part of it. It's a great analogy because everyone has a body. Just take a look at your body. Even if you like it or not, look at your body. It's relatable. You understand the body. It becomes somewhat of a very obvious applications as to what Jesus meant.

28:45 PR: So what does it mean for us to be the body of Christ? First one is obvious, what are we to do and what to believe? What did the original body of Christ do? And what did the original body of Christ do? We're modeled after him, right? He's our pattern, we're body of Christ 2.0, you could say. 2.0 is based upon the 1.0 version. So we need to back to the 1.0 version and ask what did the original body of Christ do? And what did the original body of Christ believe?

29:16 PR: It's the same point that Luke makes in his book. And Luke is two books. Luke acts as one book in scripture, but we divide 'em up. And in Luke, in Acts it says, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all the things that Jesus began to do and to teach." Well if Luke is about what Jesus began to do, the assumption is Acts is about what Jesus is continuing to do, now though, through the church. And as you look at everything the church did in Acts, they did exactly the same thing that Jesus did. They met in small groups together, just like Jesus and the apostles did, they prayed together, they ate together, they worshipped together. Jesus fed the 4,000 to 5,000, you see them again feeding the hungry. In fact it's there in a parable, the parable sheep and goat Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me, I was naked and you clothed me." Jesus fed the hungry, the church was called to feed the hungry. Jesus hung around with non-believers.

30:16 PR: In fact, the cool thing is people who didn't know God loved being around Jesus, loved being around him. Can that be said the same thing about you? Do your non-Christian friends and your non-Christian family members, are they comfortable hanging around you or do they hate being around you because you're always about a sermon, always about some form of critique. And can you actually be a normal person around people without hammering them with a message or with guilt, because that's what Jesus did. They loved hanging around with him, do your non-Christian friends and family members love hanging out with you or do they go "Oh no, not that?" Jesus associated with the rich, the poor, middle class, the working people, people of all religions, various spiritual conditions, men and women, children, different colors, nations, ethnic groups with no barriers or prejudices. Can the same be said about you or about us?

31:12 PR: The two most frequent qualities in New Testament about Jesus was, he was full of grace and compassion. If people were to describe you or describe us as a church, would the first two qualities be, "They are people of compassion, and they are people of grace"? Would it be? Jesus came to serve and not to be served. Does that describe your life? What is your approach to worship? Do you attend a worship service or a worship selfish? Is it all about you or is that you coming to serve the body of Christ and to please God? Jesus lived sacrificially when have you sacrificed for him? Or when have we sacrificed for him? If you wanna know what we or the body of Christ is called to be and do, all you to do is read the gospel and ask the question, "Okay, Jesus, what did you do and what did you believe and how does it shape my life and how does it shape us? In fact, in

2018, we're gonna walk through the Gospel of John and ask that question, what did Jesus do, what did Jesus believe and how does it shape us as a congregation?

32:18 PR: Secondly, it tells us the depth of connection we share with each other, the depth of connection. Some churches and Christians look more like horror stories than reflections of Jesus. What do I mean by that? In horror stories, what happens? In slasher films, what happens? Body parts go flying everywhere, all disconnected. It's nasty okay? It's a horror movie but most [32:41] churches look that way, body parts laying all over the place, disconnected. Angry at each other, jealous, selfish, how does it benefit me? And then those who do belong to a local church look more like spiritual Frankensteins than human bodies, and we are called to be the body of Christ. Frankensteins are just stitched together loosely, but we're called to be way more than that. Look at your body, how is it formed together. It's seamless. When something gets affected, when my elbow hurts, it affects a lot of parts of my body simultaneously. It's an incredible bond, the body does not come apart easily. It does not come apart very easily, it is strong, it's symbiotic, it's natural, it's not forced, it's like the military band of brothers type of feel.

33:27 PR: And it's supportive, it works together in concert towards a singular goal. For instance, I'll give an example, I'm at the gym yesterday, my body's barking at me alright. I go to lift this weight and my back says "No, you're not." My hand says "Yes, you will." My mind says "you got this," my back said "No you don't, don't pick it up. Don't you do that." But my legs chimed in and says "you know what you can do it but let me do the most of the lifting" and I did it because the back and the hand and the legs worked in concert in order to pick up that weight. But now notice the hand and the back and the legs see life differently, don't they? They see life differently, but they still work in concert, that's why I define unity as that you don't have to eye to eye to walk hand in hand to accomplish God's vision. You don't have to see eye to eye but you can walk still hand in hand to accomplish God's singular vision.

34:29 PR: Third, it tells us how decisions are to be made in the church. Apostle Paul uses the same analogy. He launches off of him, he says this in Colossians, and he referred to Jesus as the head of the body of the church. "He is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy." So, Jesus is the head of the church, which means he's the brains of the operation. Stop asking me this question, every time someone, "What should we do, Pastor what do you wanna do?" It's the wrong question. Doesn't matter what I wanna do. What does Jesus wanna do? He's the brains of this operation, what does Jesus say about this. WWJD is a good phrase I like it, "What would Jesus do?" That's the question we should have. Churches spend lots of hours on creating visions, "What's the vision of the church?" And lot of them are so human-oriented, and it doesn't have to be that hard, it's not that hard. This is a church just do what Jesus did, it's simple as that. Do what he believed, believe what what he taught and do what he did. We are Body 2.0.

35:34 PR: Fourth, it tells us the type of passion we're to have, every head sends impulses. It sends impulses out to you. And when God talked about what his impulses are, what his heart is inflamed with, here's how the first time he described himself. This is God talking about himself, for himself, Exodus 34:6, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God slow to anger, in abounding and love and faithfulness." Notice, what are God's first four qualities? The impulses that he sends to, that is in him, then he sends them to us, as the head. Compassion, grace, patience, or slow to anger means either patience, forbearance, and tolerance. That cluster of things all together. Loving, faithful/loyal. If people were to describe Journey, would that be the first four qualities? They say, "Journey is a compassionate church, gracious church, forbearing, tolerant, patient, loving, faithful,

loyal church"?

36:43 PR: Fifth, this analogy tells us how to view the world around us. The human brain filters and interprets information. It collects data, interprets it and sends a response. Paul says this about coming to Christ, "From now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view, though once we regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer." He says something really interesting here. He said, "Before I met Jesus, I looked at Jesus from a worldly point of view and I said "Jesus, Messiah, son of God, no." From a humanly perspective, "absolutely not, he's a false messiah, crucify him," that's what he did. Or he did it to his followers." That's how he felt about Jesus 'cause he looked at them through his own eyes, but when it came to faith he says, "I got new eyes, and I saw something entirely different."

37:31 PR: And when you get a new head, a head has eyes, you get new eyes, you get new filters that helps us interpret the world around us and respond to it. Let me say how this makes a real difference in the real world. A person was talking to me and he said, "My brother said this to me long time ago, 'I can't be married to a fat woman.'" And she took that in and learned something. That singular phrase went into her heart, and this happens to a lot of women, and she learned something, and that is, "My value as a woman is directly correlated to my weight." Now, that is a worldly point of view. And when you get new eyes, you realize your value, ladies, is not based upon your weight or your shape or whatever it is you're looking at. It's based on two things: One, you're intrinsically valuable, because you were created by God, and you're redeemed by the blood of Jesus and you are worth every drop. That's seeing life through the eyes of Jesus. And I encourage you as a project, the project during the series is getting up and praying, "Lord, help me to see people in my circumstances today, the way you see them. Help me to respond the way that you would."

39:01 PR: And lastly... Not lastly, but one more way. This analogy tells us how to make a difference in our world. In describing Jesus, the Body of Christ 1.0, John says this: "The word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us and we have seen his glory." Now notice that. What did Jesus do? He took the word, this concept, idea: God came into the world, dwelled among us, and as a result, we have seen... Not we have heard his glory, no, we have seen his glory. Jesus made the unseen God seen. He made the divine and spiritual tangible.

39:47 PR: Aristotle described the world as... The heaven is the world of ideas, concepts and and abstractions. God came in Jesus to move what was concept and abstraction to reality, because God is real. And he was constantly taking spiritual and doing things in the physical realm in order to help you believe in the spiritual realm. And as his body, we're called to do the same. In fact, I'll give you an example of it. In 1 John, it says this, "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth, because seeing is believing."

40:32 PR: And we're called to be word made flesh, so people may see his glory. So the concept of love... "I love you," love of God becomes physical and real. It's expressed in the physical realm so the people can believe the concept and idea: God is love. So we need to, as people, be word made flesh to others. Again, James says, "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace be warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical need," circle the word physical need, "what good is it?" In the same way, faith by itself is not accompanied... If not accompanied by action is dead, it means it's non-existent. There is no faith without action, because we are called to be the word made flesh. We are called so that people may

see God's glory. And that's what it means to be the body of Christ being word made flesh. Now, that's what it means.

41:37 PR: My reaction is "Wow!" [chuckle] That's overwhelming, but what an incredible privilege. I don't know about you, but I was never in the cool group. Never was. Never was in the popular group, never was in the good-looking group or the important people. I've always... It would be wonderful being the spiritual advisor to the President. Think what prestige that would be. I'm not gonna say anything, no. Don't go there. All right. Someone needs advice. Anybody... Let's not go there. But God calls us to be spiritual partners. He identifies us that carefully. We're not just spiritual advisors. We're spiritual partners with him. Think about the privilege of that. And the mission, talk about significance. You want a big vision for your life? Becoming a taste of heaven so that people see Jesus in you? So they crave it for themselves? That's huge. And becoming a body of believers that are so united and so in love with each other that people just come to Jesus just through our fellowship? And the cool thing about it is anyone can do it. Anyone can do this. All you have to do is do life with others and love each other as Christ loved them. You don't have to be a seminary student. You don't have to be a pastor or a theologian. Anyone can do this. Anyone can do life together and learn to love each other and become this authentic community of faith that reflects Jesus. And that's what we're going to be working on.

43:16 PR: Let's pray. Lord, we begin this journey with great anticipation, great joy. What an honor. I'm just flabbergasted that You call us the 'body of Christ.' That when You see us, You see Jesus. That You are not ashamed of us. You identify so closely. You give us Your name. You've given us an incredible vision and purpose. And I feel like sometimes we've been wasting our time on non-essential things. And we have such work to do to be this kind of community that brings people to Jesus. Lord, help us to take the time, help us to see the reality, how important it is to be the church. Not to go to church, but to be the church, be the authentic community of faith that reflects you. And when we do that, that we accomplish your vision. Then people come to know you. And there'll be a day, and what a day it will be when all people, nations, tribes, just come in singular worship and love with you and one another. Do that amongst us as we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

44:27 S?: Thank you, Pastor Richard. Let's respond and worship. If you're able to stand as we sing this song, "What a Beautiful Name" it's really about Jesus that gives us his example to be what Pastor Richard was calling 'Body 2.0'. So let's just honor and worship him.

[music]

50:06 PR: Alright. You are. That was non-dramatic. Let's start over again. You are the body of Christ. Live into that. Think through that analogy and live into it. And when Paul saw that, and in Romans, he's amazed. And he says this. When God's people function this way, he says this, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. How beautiful, how beautiful, utterly beautiful the Church is when the Church is the Church. And who brings the good news, but both seen and heard or heard, but also seen." Like Jesus, the word became flesh and we have seen his glory. May we in this journey become that kind of church. Amen.