



FULLNESS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

*THE CHURCH | WEEK 4
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Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The Church, His body, is the fullness of Him on earth.

- He is the head. We are the body.
- He determines the direction. We follow.
- He coordinates the movement. We obey.

→ Following Jesus isn't just about agreeing with Him. It's about yielding to Him. Trusting that He knows what is right and true and best for us all.

Freedom is not the absence of any and all boundaries. It's the presence of the right boundaries.

What if the Church was given to us by God as a way of limiting our lives?
What if the body of Christ is the design God uses to protect us from ourselves?

Because if left to ourselves...

- We drift away from God.
- We drift away from holiness.
- We drift into independence when true freedom is found in interdependence.

LIMITS IN OUR LIVES THROUGH THE CHURCH

LIMIT #1: Our Identity is Limited by Membership

In consumer memberships, participation is optional. ***In the body of Christ, it's not.***

1 Corinthians 12:12

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13-14

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

When you give your life to Jesus, ***you are a member of His body.***

- Your participation strengthens others, your presence matters, and your absence is felt.

LIMIT #2: Our Direction is Limited by His Mission

Matthew 28:18-20

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Because He accomplished His mission to make a way for us to be reunited with the Father, Jesus was given all authority in Heaven and on Earth.

- That authority means that ***He gets to determine the direction of everything in Heaven and on Earth, including our direction.***

Jesus doesn't hand us a GPS with options. He hands us a mission. If you're a part of His body, you don't get to choose a different mission.

The body moves toward what the Head values. And what does Jesus value?

- Lost people.
 - Reconciliation
 - Holiness
 - Love of neighbor
 - The glory of the Father.
- ***This is His direction.***

A faith with no limits will eventually become a faith with no direction.

LIMIT #3: Our Authority is Limited by Love

Matthew 20:25–26

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.

“It shall not be so among you.”

That sentence assumes two things:

- There is meant to be authority in the Church.
- Authority within the Church is meant to look different.

Authority in His Kingdom is not guided by preference. It is governed by love.

The question is not, ***“Do I have authority?”*** The question is, ***“Is my authority shaped by love?”***

- Authority that is not limited by love will always eventually wound others. But authority that is limited by love, that becomes life-giving.

LIMIT #4: Our Independence is Limited by Accountability

Hebrews 3:12–13

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

“Exhort one another every day”

- We need people in our daily lives who will hold us accountable and draw us closer to Jesus.

Accountability is how the body says, ***“Something’s not right here. Let’s address this before it spreads.”***

It may sound counterintuitive, but the Church limiting your life is a beautiful thing.

Philippians 2:3–8

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

Trust in Jesus

If Jesus limited Himself for you...

- If the One with all authority washed feet...
 - If the One who could grasp power chose the cross...
- Then His limits aren't cruel. **They're loving.**

The real question isn't, ***“Do I like these limits?”*** Maybe it's, ***“Do I trust the One who designed them?”***

Be a Member

To be a member means your presence matters.

True freedom isn't found in standing alone. It's found in belonging to Him and with His people.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How does viewing the Church as a “design God uses to protect us from ourselves” change your perspective on its rules or expectations?
2. In the body of Christ, participation is not optional. Your presence matters. How does this realization change the way you view your commitment to the church compared to other organizations you belong to?
3. Jesus is the “Head” who determines our direction. Of all the directions listed—lost people, reconciliation, holiness, love of neighbor, and the glory of the Father—which one do you find most challenging to prioritize over your own personal preferences?
4. Why is daily exhortation necessary to keep us from “drifting away” from God? Who in your life holds you accountable and draws you closer to God?

