

Family of Faith
April 25, 2010

I'm going to speak from three passages of Scripture today: Galatians 6:10 [KJV], 1 Corinthians 12:12 [NASB], and 1 John 5:4 [KJV]. **Galatians 6:10: "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men but especially unto them who are of the household of faith."**

1 Corinthians 12:12: "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all of the members are of the body, though they be many are one body, so also is Christ." Verse 13: "For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body."

1 John 5:4: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This morning we are going to talk about being a part of the "Family of Faith."

I seriously believe that the concept and the truth about us being the body of Christ is possibly the most misunderstood, mistaught and least-taught concept. What we have done in modern society and in Christianity is, unfortunately, that we have turned everything into "It's all about me!" It's all about what I want. It's all about MY needs. It's about what is best for ME, and God wants you to be taken care of. God wants your needs to be met and supplied.

Paul said, "He will supply all of my need according to His riches in glory," but the principle of it all is not just about me getting mine, but **it's about us getting ours**. You hear people say, "Well, if you don't want your blessing, I'll push you out of the way and get yours too." That's not the body of Christ! **I** can't really get blessed until **we** are all blessed.

The Bible says that if one member, one person in this room is suffering, then we all suffer. If one person in this room is honored, then we are all honored; and it goes much further than individuals and individual churches. I thank God for the individual bodies of churches we have, but we have to look beyond that. It's not just about our thing.

Jesus never preached the gospel of the castle. He preached the gospel of the Kingdom. So it's not about our castle. It's great to have a nice castle; but more so, it's about building the Kingdom. It's amazing to me how we can be joined here today in the town of Saint Albans; yet, somebody on the other side of the world is tuning into what is happening in Saint Albans.

What is even more amazing is that they can be tuning in on the other side of the world and feel the same spirit that we feel here, because we have all been baptized into the same body. So when our brothers and our sisters overseas are suffering, then we are suffering. Why do churches support missions? It's because if they are suffering, we are suffering. We are one body.

We are a household of faith. The word "household" in the Greek means "to be a family or to be a home." One of the definitions for "family" is "a group of things having common characteristics." Think about it in the natural realm. For everybody in here, your family has its own way of doing things. Families cook food differently and celebrate holidays differently. Some people go all out on Christmas Eve, and some go all out on Christmas day.

It's the same thing with the body of Christ as a whole and each church. Each church has its own flavor. Each church has its own way of praising. Some churches don't wave flags. Maranatha waves flags, and it's important that we don't think that the way we do things means that our thing is THE thing. Just because this is the way WE do it doesn't mean we are the only ones that have it.

When you get into the body of Christ, each person and each church has its own flavor. Thank God we are not all the same. We all have our own common characteristics, but sometimes we let those things divide and separate us.

The thing about being part of the body of Christ is that it doesn't matter whether you are white, black, red, yellow, pink, or purple with green stripes. If you are part of the body of Christ, we are all serving and worshipping the same God. So what we have to do is look beyond those things that normally divide and separate us and find some common ground.

You may not worship like I do, but we still believe there is only one God! We still believe that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. We all believe in the birth, the death, the burial, the resurrection, and the second coming of Jesus Christ. We still believe that there is power in the blood. We still believe that by His stripes we all can be healed. We all have to find common ground, and as long as you and I believe in Jesus, let's join together as one big, happy family and dare the devil to come against us!

We are a body, individuals under one head. Another definition for "family" is "a group

of individuals living under one head," and guess who the head is? **Ephesians 5:23** says, **"Christ is head of the church."** There is only one Head of the church, and His name is Jesus!

Both definitions of family mention the word "individual." God has made us individuals, but He does not want us to be individualistic; because the body has many members, but there is only one body. So everything we do as members of the body of Christ is for the building up of the body.

Ephesians 4:16 says, **"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 [building up] of itself in love."** What each joint supplies holds the body together, and as each joint supplies what it can to the body, and each individual part supplies what it can to the body, the body is built up in love.

Jay got up this morning and asked for volunteers for the crosswalk and the parking lot. That may not seem important to you, but what if someone were to get hit by a car crossing the street because there were no people out there working? What if there was no one directing traffic so we can get out of the parking lot? We don't think about those things. So a plea went forth this morning for help in those two areas.

There are people in here right now who are supposed to be serving in those areas, but if we allow ourselves to be individualistic and not think of the benefit of the body as a whole, then we won't step into what God has called us to do. It takes every part to make the body work.

We have people taking care of our kids throughout this building and elsewhere so that we can enjoy a church service. I have a four year-old that does not stop talking. Thank God for a classroom. Let him talk to them! If you look at this crowd today, there had to be someone who helped you find a seat.

What about our first-time visitors? There are people out front to greet them, make them feel welcome, and show them where their kids need to go. Our youth are in another room, and there are youth workers taking care of our young people, training and teaching them the Word of God. We have people who count the offering. We have all these things going on behind the scenes that you don't even see, but if we didn't have each individual part, the body could not be what the body is.

If we didn't have people running the cameras, people half way across the world would not be able to see this service right now. If we didn't have people to clean, this place would be a mess. Each thing you may not see is vital to the building up of the body.

So many times people think it's all about what goes on right here. This is the easy part. It's the Monday through Saturday stuff that makes this work. People who are willing to put blood, sweat, and tears into this church make it what it is today. There were people who had a concept of the fact that we are the body of Christ, and I want to make sure it's built up.

1 Corinthians 12:12 says there are "many members [of the body], but we are one body." We were all baptized into the body of Christ. Then **1 Corinthians 12:18** says, "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased." He set people in the body as it pleased Him.

Do you think YOU chose the church you're attending? Because it pleased God, He set you. I have no doubt that I have been set at this church. Maranatha wasn't looking for me, and I wasn't looking for Maranatha; but God, by His providence, had it already worked out in His will to set me at this church.

There are people in other services today, or are sitting at home, that are supposed to be set in this house. Some of you are supposed to be set somewhere else, but you come here because you're mad. If you take an orange seed and plant it in Iowa, I don't think you will get an orange tree; because the soil, the climate, and the atmosphere in Iowa is not conducive for an orange tree to grow. But take that same seed that can't grow in Iowa and plant it in Florida, you are going to eventually have yourself some orange juice! Iowa grows wheat and corn but not oranges.

It's the same thing with us. When we are planted in the right environment, we will grow more where we have been planted than we would have if we transplanted ourselves somewhere else. I have seen things happen in my family that I have been praying for for years, but they didn't happen until I was set here, because this is where I am supposed to be. God sets people in place.

1 Corinthians 12:25 says, "That there may be no division but that the members may have the same care one for another." Do you realize that your body takes care of itself? What if your hand got mad at your mouth and said, "I'm not going to feed you!" Our physical body can't be divided, and if it is, we will fall apart.

So many times in church when we get hurt, the first thing we do is separate ourselves. You cannot grow, because the body will heal itself; but when you separate yourself from the body (of Christ), you no longer have the capacity to be healed, because you have separated yourself from what God has called you to do.

Division comes because of individualism. We want it done the way WE think it should be done. We think the song should be sung the way WE want it to be sung. Our way is more important than what God wants.

We have people all over this country going from church to church trying to find somebody that can "feed me." Because they think they are so deep, they think there is no one that can feed them like they need to be fed. Let me tell you something. They are not deep. They are rebellious, and they don't know how to submit!

Don't you think that if God put you in a city that He already knew there would be a pastor there that could feed you, but people go from church to church and are still not happy.

For about 3 years, Tosha and I felt like we needed a change from where we were at the time. When something would pop up, we would get all excited, but God would always shut the door. Then after waiting for 3 years, we were led here. I say that to say this. We waited. We didn't circumvent the process and do something God did not tell us to do. We waited on His timing.

If we would have moved 2 years ago without waiting on God, God would not have blessed us the way He has blessed us, because we would have stepped out of His timing. **1 Corinthians 3:3 says, "For you are still carnal. For where there is envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"** People get mad over one little thing and start a new church. They throw everything out they learned where they were because of one little thing. So division comes because of individualism.

We are God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:11 says, "We are God's building, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ." So, you have to make sure your foundation is sure. If you get a crack in the wall at your house, chances are you will go and look to see if there is a crack in the foundation; and if the foundation is good, you go and look other places.

There could be a crack or a division in the drywall. So we have to make sure our foundation is secure, that what we have built our life and Christian experience on is

like the old song that says, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and His righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but only lean on Jesus' name."

I've got a foundation that is sure, and it is settled on Jesus Christ, the Rock of my salvation. My foundation is not built upon what people say. It is not built upon the opinion or doctrine of man. **My foundation is built on nothing less than Jesus Christ!** We have to have a sure foundation.

The enemy's goal for the body as a whole is to divide and conquer. He knows he cannot defeat us as a corporate body, because Jesus gave us a promise. In **Matthew 16:18** Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He didn't say it might not. He didn't say maybe it won't. He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against My church."

The enemy knows that as long as we are unified, as long as we are together and walking in one accord, there is nothing the gates of hell can do against God's church. Jesus is coming back for a glorious church without spot and without wrinkle. The enemy knows that as long as we are together, he can't touch us, and he will never go after those that are strong. He will always go after those that are weak. So if the enemy wants to defeat us as a body, he first has to weaken us before he can defeat us.

Look at **Mark 3:25**. "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Verse 26: "And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand but has an end." Verse 27: "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder [spoil] his goods unless he first binds the strong man and then he will plunder [spoil] his house."

The principle is this. I don't think it is a mistake that Jesus talked about Satan being divided and then be able to destroy the strong man's house, because division will bind us as a body. Division will bind us, tie our hands and limit what we can do as a church.

If you look at the enemy being divided against himself, there are all kinds of examples in the Old Testament. When Jehoshaphat was in that valley, God gave him a word and said, "If you send forth the praisers first."

They were surrounded by an army a lot greater than theirs, but they obeyed the word of the Lord, and they came into unity with each other and with what God said. Even though it made no sense to send out flag-wavers and trumpet-players in a battle, they did it. When they came into unity, the Word says, "The enemy began to set ambushes

against each other." When they came into unity, the enemy started fighting itself.

Four men with leprosy left the city of Samaria because of famine and went into a Syrian camp. It says that "as they walked, God caused the footsteps of four leprosy men to sound like a great army." Four leprosy men were acting on a word they didn't even hear. The word was given by a prophet that said, "About this time tomorrow God is going to turn this thing around."

They were outside the city. They didn't hear the word, but something happened. They came into agreement with the word of the Lord from the mouth of the prophet, and they began walking. As these four men walked in unity with the word of God and with each other, God caused the enemy to turn on each other, and the people got the victory.

In the New Testament when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all in one place in one accord. They had one mind, and suddenly there came the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Why? Because they were in one place in one accord.

When Solomon dedicated the temple, it says as the singers and the praisers began to lift up one sound and to lift up one voice to praise and magnify the name of the Lord, the glory of the Lord descended upon that temple so much so that the priests could not stand to minister because they were in unity with each other.

Unity is the catalyst that will cause revival to happen. Unity brings the anointing upon the body of Christ. So, the enemy knows that if he can divide us, he can bind us, but he knows he cannot do it corporately.

In 1 Peter 5:8 it says, "Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." A lion watches the herd and looks for a weak one, and as he goes after the herd, he waits for one to be separated. As soon as one separates, the lion will pounce on it and win the victory. If the enemy can cause you to separate from the body of believers you have been called to, I guarantee you he will win the victory over your life.

You have to understand that we as a body are connected to the head, and the life of the body is in Jesus. It's in the head, so the minute you disconnect, you are also disconnected from the same life that is supposed to empower you and give you strength. When you disconnect from the body, you're weakened, because we are called

as a body of believers to join together and be a family.

There will be times that your family of believers will stand with you when your own natural family won't. There are people in this worship center today who may not have any family. Who steps up to the plate and becomes their family? We do! We step in and become a family, and it isn't about us individually. It's about building up the body of Christ. So we cannot allow ourselves to become separated, because if the enemy can separate us, he will defeat us every time.

That is why the Word says we are to pray for one another. We are to bear one another's burdens. Let your needs be known. If we don't know what you need, we don't know what to pray for. If you're going through something, don't be afraid to tell your family. We can then come together as a family and pray and intercede for each other and build each other up.

We are a household of faith. We are a family of faith. God has called us as a **body of believers** to be connected by the Spirit of God to bear one another's burdens and to lift and build each other up and make sure the body of Christ is moving forward. The only way the people of God can move is when we become unified, and the only way people that are not a part of the body of Christ can see the move of Christ is when we get together and are unified in what God has called us to do. **The church is the representation of the Kingdom of God on earth.** So, if we want to see the Kingdom operate, the body of Christ has to come together.

Romans 12:3 says, "God has dealt to every man a measure of faith." Every person in here, from the oldest to the youngest, has been given a measure of faith. Why is that important? When you understand that everybody has faith, then you won't think that you are this super-faith man.

I have "Oh, ye of little faith" moments. I'm not leading worship and preaching all the time. There are times I open up my Bible and try to look for something, but can't get anything. There are times when I'm down. There are times I'm low, but it is at those times when I need someone else who is up to join together with me, to join our faith and build each other up in the Kingdom of God. Then when we all come together and join together as one body of believers, we won't leave the same way we came in, because we came into a corporate setting of people of faith.

1 John 5:4 says, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." Notice that John didn't say MY faith or YOUR faith. He said **OUR** faith! If we

are going to overcome the world, it has to be because of our faith. The body of Christ cares for each other. The body of Christ builds one another up. It builds up the weak areas and makes them strong. When you get in contact with somebody that is praying for you, it will build you up.

Someone here is praying for a \$300,000 house. Someone else is praying for the light bill to be paid. The same faith that is praying for the house is the same faith that is praying for the light bill! There is somebody here that is praying for a loved one to get saved. Someone else in here is battling cancer, battling depression, and battling sickness. The same faith that will save that loved one is the same faith that will heal sickness!

You may be believing for a loved one, you may be needing a healing, you may be needing a light bill to be paid, but we join our faith together. You pray for me, and I will pray for you! I'm going to use my faith to believe for you, you use your faith to believe for me; and as we join together, the Bible says that **whatever good thing you make happen for somebody else, the Lord will turn it around and do the same thing for you.**

As you pray for somebody, somebody else is praying for you. When you can't pray for yourself, when you can't do it yourself, you have some brothers and sisters in Christ who are girding you, strengthening you, and sending power your way. It's not just about US. It's about when we join together and get in one place in one accord, then watch what God can do!

Matthew 18:19 says, "Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in Heaven." If you touch and agree, it shall be done. Notice it doesn't say anything about touching each other. When we read that Scripture, the first thing we want to do is join hands. I've joined hands with people and not seen prayer answered.

I understand points of contact, and I believe in that kind of thing, but it's not just about us touching hands and praying about something. It's about when MY faith that God has dealt to ME connects with the faith that God has dealt to YOU and OUR faith connects. As we join together in ONE faith, the Spirit of Christ that is in me connects with the Spirit of Christ that is in you. The Spirit of God begins working, and whatever you ask it SHALL be done!

Look at 2 Timothy 1:5. Paul says, **"When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I**

am persuaded is in you also." Verse 6: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Verse 7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear."

In Verses 5-6, Paul says, "I am convinced about you." Then in Verse 7, Paul changes the tense. He says, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear." That means I am going to agree with you that we do not have the spirit of fear.

I believe Timothy was probably fearful. He was a young preacher, and he had a lot of responsibility on him. I can see him being fearful of certain issues, but Paul reminded him of his faith and the gifts of God that were within him through Paul laying his hands on him. Then Paul said, "God has not given us the spirit of fear." Paul joined with Timothy in faith. If you are strengthened, then I don't have to have fear; and if I'm strengthened, then you don't have to have fear.

I believe God wants us to come against the spirit of fear. If the enemy is binding you with fear, you don't have to fight fear on your own. God has not given us the spirit of fear. Don't let fear paralyze your faith.