

The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ
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Why Do You Persecute Me?

Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. ⁴ And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, *why do you persecute me?*" ⁵ And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, *whom you are persecuting.* . ." (Acts 9:3-5)

The Life of Jesus and the Life of Jesus in the Church¹

Jesus in Luke

Baptism and the descent of the Spirit (3:22)

Public speech begins ministry (4:16-27)

Heals the lame (5:17-26)

Conflict with leaders (5:29-6:11)

Centurion sends for Jesus (7:1-10)

Widow & resurrection: "Arise"/"sat up" (7:11-17)

Pharisees criticize (7:36-50)

Miraculously delivered from death; first seen
by a woman; no one believes her (24:1)

Jesus prays for killers (23:34)

Peter & Apostles in Acts of the Apostles

Baptism and the descent of the Spirit (2:1-13)

Public speech begins Apostolic ministry (2:14-36)

Heals the lame (3:1-10)

Conflict with leaders (4:1-8:3)

Centurion sends for Peter (10:1ff)

Widow & resurrection story; "Rise", "rose up" (9:36-43)

Pharisees criticize (11:1-18)

Miraculously delivered from death; first seen by a woman
but no one believes her (12:1-17)

Stephen prays for killers (7:59-60)

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with *all that Jesus began to do and teach*, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. (Acts 1:1-2)

The Beatitudes: Living in Christ

"The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching" (CCC 1716).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek [humble], for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12)

"... the Beatitudes represent a sort of veiled interior biography of Jesus" (Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 74).

1. Jesus is Poor: "no place to lay his head (Matthew 8:20)

2. Jesus is Meek: "Come to me. . . for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:28-29)

3. Jesus: the Son of God who has seen God

"No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (John 1:18).

4. Jesus is the merciful Son of God, the true Peacemaker, the one who suffers for righteousness sake, etc.

¹ See Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*. SBLMS 20 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974).

Uniting Ourselves to Christ

“Be imitators of me, *as I am of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

“I have been crucified with Christ; *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20).

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” (Philippians 2:12–13)

“Christians”

1. Beatitudes draw from Isaiah 61
2. Isaiah 61 describes the Servant Messiah—Christ
3. Christians are given the task of the Christ

Matthew 5	Isaiah 61
‘Blessed are the <i>poor in spirit</i> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’ (v. 3)	‘The <i>Spirit</i> of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the <i>poor</i> ’ (v. 1)
‘Blessed are those who <i>mourn</i> , for they shall be <i>comforted</i> ’ (v. 4)	‘to <i>comfort</i> all who <i>mourn</i> ’ (v. 2)
‘Blessed are the meek / <i>poor. . .</i> ’ (v. 5)	‘to preach good news to the <i>poor</i> ’ (v.1)
‘. . . they shall inherit the <i>land</i> ’ (v. 5)	‘. . . <i>you shall inherit the land</i> ’ (v. 7)
‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after <i>righteousness</i> , for they shall be <i>satisfied</i> ’ (v. 6)	‘ <i>Righteousness</i> ’ occurs three times in Isa 61 (v. 3, 8, 11) v. 6: God’s people will “ <i>eat the wealth of nations</i> ”
‘Blessed are <i>the pure of heart</i> ’ (v. 8)	‘to heal the <i>brokenhearted</i> ’
‘Blessed are you when men revile you. . . rejoice and <i>be glad</i> ’ (v. 11–12)	‘Let my soul <i>be glad. . .</i> ’ (v. 10; cf. v. 11) ²

The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ

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*. ¹³ *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹

⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single organ, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, *there are many parts, yet one body*. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, ²⁵ that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

² Adapted from W.D. Davies and Dale Allison, *Matthew* (The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1:437.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the *church first apostles*, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. . . (1 Corinthians 12:1–31)

1. A Body is *Undivided*: The Church is One (united by Christ her Head)
2. A Body has a *Soul*: The Church is Holy (the Holy Spirit is the soul of the Mystical Body)
3. A Body has *Many Members*: The Church is Catholic (different roles and vocations of all members)
4. A Body has a *Visible Order*: The Church is Apostolic (visible and hierarchical)

The “Whole Christ”

“Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ. The saints are acutely aware of this unity. . .” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 795).

“Let us rejoice then and give thanks that *we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself*. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God’s grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: *we have become Christ*. For if he is the head, we are the members; *he and we together are the whole man*. . . . The fullness of Christ then is the head and the members. But what does ‘head and members’ mean? Christ and the Church.”—St. Augustine³

“Our redeemer has shown himself to be one person with the holy Church whom he has taken to himself.”—Pope St. Gregory the Great⁴

“Head and members form as it were one and the same mystical person.”—St. Thomas Aquinas⁵

Redemptive Suffering in the Body of Christ

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 3:12–13)

“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. ¹³ For by one Spirit *we were all baptized into one body*. . . ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. . . ²⁶ *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together*. (1 Corinthians 12:12–13)

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh *I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church*,²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints. (Colossians 1:24)

The Bride of Christ

For the husband is the head of the wife as *Christ is the head of the church, his body*, and is himself its Savior.²⁴ As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, *as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*,²⁶ that he might *sanctify her*, having cleansed her by *the washing of water with the word*,²⁷ that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such

³ St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 21,8:PL 35,1568.

⁴ Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job, prae.*,14:PL 75,525A.

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III,48,2.

thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ Even so *husbands should love their wives as their own bodies*. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no man ever hates his own flesh, but *nourishes* and *cherishes* it, as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because *we are members of his body*. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church; ³³ however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:23–33)

One Bread, One Body

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.* (1 Corinthians 10:16–17)

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for *the marriage of the Lamb* has come, and *his Bride has made herself ready*; ⁸ it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to *the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” (Revelation 19:6–9)

Living in Christ

Do you not know that *your bodies are members of Christ*? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Shun immorality. . . ¹⁹ *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* (1 Corinthians 6:15–19)