

Waiting On God

Many of us are not where God wants us to be in His Church, the Body of Christ.

A major reason for this is that our lives are so busy that we are not spending the time we should “*waiting on God*”.

The gospel message that Christ brought is very serious news; it is about life or death.

There is, I feel, something radically out of place today in most of the Church of God worldwide, the Body of Christ on earth.

What is out of place is a very important part of that Body, its Head.

Ephesians 1:22-23 [NIV] *“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him [Jesus Christ] to be Head over everything for the Church, which is his Body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”*

God “*put*” everything under the feet of His Son Jesus.

They are subjective to His authority, but God “*appointed*” [or gave] Jesus to be the Head over everything “*for*” the Church.

The most wonderful gift that could ever be given to the Church or to mankind as a whole, Christ is Head over all things, not just a few things, not over most things but all things.

Can you and I honestly say before God that Jesus Christ is head over all things in our lives?

That there is nothing that is outside His control!

That there is nothing that is not the expression of His Will for us!

Ephesians 4:15-16 [NIV] *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole Body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

Notice it is only through its relationship to the Head that the Body derives nourishment and is able to grow and function effectively.

If the relationship of the Body to the Head is impaired or inactive in any way, the whole Body is disabled.

Colossians 2:18 [NIV] *“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”*

Here described is the person who claims to be super spiritual but who is inside very fleshly.

Paul is warning about the ability of such a person to deceive us, and cheat us out of our rightful inheritance.

Paul then describes how God sees such a person.

Colossians 2:19 [NIV] *“He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole Body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.”*

As soon as we lose connection with the Head, Jesus Christ, we are heading for error, or some form of deception and will eventually die.

The only condition of safety for the Body the Church is to be constantly in contact with the Head, each believer in the Body and the Body collectively.

Every believer must have direct connection with Jesus Christ the Head to be able to function effectively as a specific part of the Body.

We must never let anyone interfere with our personal connection and relationship with our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Pastors [elders] are not the Head of the Body [the Church].

They cannot take the place of the real Head Jesus Christ.

The function of an elder is **not** to be the Head of the Church, but to help the congregation develop their relationship with the Head, Jesus Christ.

The elder is **not** the one to tell you the answers to all your problems, but to show you how to find the answer from Jesus.

Some people are lazy.

They just want some human being to solve all their problems for them, instead of making the effort to build a relationship with Jesus who has the wisdom and the power to resolve any problem.

Some leaders are despotic wanting to take control of people's lives.

Some of us have been through such a regime and are now thanking God we have come out from under it.

We all have to have our personal relationship with Jesus as our personal Saviour, Master, King and Friend.

We all have to have such a close relationship with Him to know when He is pleased or not pleased with what we are doing.

We have to be sensitive to the Head.

As a guide to our relationship with Jesus Christ, let us look at four major functions of our physical heads.

1 Our heads receive input from body

Every member of the body has a direct contact with the head and can feed it with information, through the system of nerves, giving nearly instant communication.

2 Our heads make decisions for the body

Our heads decide what our body is going to do. Our arms, legs, etc. do not cut themselves off from the head and *"do their own thing"*.

John 15:5-6 [NIV] *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."*

“*Doing our own thing*” ends in failure.

3 Our heads initiate the actions of the body

The key word is initiate.

John 15:10 [NIV] *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”*

The one who takes the initiative is the head.

4 Our head co-ordinates the activity of all the members of the body

John 15:7 [NIV] *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”*

Remember a disciple is one who lives out in their own lives the words of the teacher.

If we are true disciples of Christ, the Head, we will be living out His words [commands] in our lives.

Romans 14:8 [NIV] *“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we **belong to the Lord.**”*

Jesus Christ must have first claim to our lives, the Body must always co-operate with the Head.

Ezekiel 18:4 [NIV] *“For every living soul belongs to Me, the father as well as the son – both alike belong to Me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.”*

“*Sinneth*” – Hebrew “*chata*” to miss the mark, to forfeit.

The whole reason for the Body’s existence is to co-operate with the Head.

If we fail to do this we “*miss the mark*”, miss the whole purpose for existence and the goal [target] we should be aiming for.

Romans 1:20 [NIV] *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

We need to have these basic functions of our own head in mind when we consider our own personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the relationship of the Church as a whole with Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us that we are without excuse, **we are living in a body which functions in the same way as God’s spiritual [the invisible] world functions.**

Romans 1:21-25 [NIV] *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. **Therefore God gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – Who is forever praised. Amen.”*

This is where this society has gone, having “*missed the mark*” and leaving Jesus Christ the Head out of their lives.

How are these functions of the Head [Jesus Christ] operative in the Church [the Body]?

Through the work of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17 [NIV] *“Now the **Lord** is the spirit.”*

Lord, Greek *“kurios”* [koo-ree-os] supreme in authority – controller – God.

Same word is applied to Jesus Christ, and the Old Testament parallel word is Hebrew *“yehovah”* [yeh-ho-vaw] self-existent, eternal, the Lord, God.

Ephesians 2:18, 22 [NIV] *“For through Him we both have access to the Father **by one Spirit.**” ... “And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives **by His Spirit.**”*

God indwelling in us by the Holy Spirit is the only way we have contact with God, Jesus Christ the Head.

The Holy Spirit is the only way that Jesus Christ communicates with the Body, directs the Body, controls the Body, preserves the Body and empowers the Body.

The physical equivalent of the Holy Spirit is our system of nerves.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;”*

Now we can see how important this command is, we are cutting off our life support.

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV] *“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession – to the praise of His glory.**”*

The active Holy Spirit in our lives is compared to a down-payment, guaranteeing eternal life.

John 16:12-15 [NIV] *“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.** He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is Mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is Mine and make it known to you.”*

The Holy Spirit is the One who took over from Jesus Christ after His ascension.

The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth.

The Holy Spirit as One Person of the God head will speak as God speaking.

Note the rules of Greek grammar are broken when speaking of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit *“pneuma”* is neuter [not masculine or feminine] in Greek but is translated *“He”* to emphasise that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The Church going into the future without the Holy Spirit to guide is moving into disaster not being warned of things that are going to happen.

One distinctive mark of the Holy Spirit is He will glorify Jesus Christ.

Any act which does not glorify Jesus Christ is **not** of the Holy Spirit.

There are many such *“acts”* in the charismatic type churches, that exalt personalities rather than Jesus, these acts may be spiritual but they are not from the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:14 [NIV] *“...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

The implication of this scripture is a continuing process, continually being led by the Holy Spirit.

This is proof we are the sons of God.

Grown up son not a child of God.

Some people who talk most about the Holy Spirit know least about being led by the Holy Spirit, for it is not a one-time experience but an on-going relationship.

Matthew 7:21 [NIV] *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

We can have all sorts of good doctrines and religious activities, but if the Holy Spirit is not teaching and leading we have no contact with God.

Where should the initiative be?

John 15:16 [NIV] *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.”*

What is being stated here?

The initiative does **not** come from us, it comes from God.

Only what God chooses is going to produce lasting fruit.

Effective [answered] prayers come when we allow God to have the initiative.

a) We didn't get saved because we were trying hard only because God chose to save us.

John 6:44 [NIV] *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

This is very humbling for it locks us into total dependence on God, which is just what we are all afraid of.

b) We can have all sorts of campaigns, programmes, religious activities, but if God did not initiate them they will not bear any **lasting** fruit.

c) Even our prayers for such activities will not be answered in a positive way by God, only situations and activities that are initiated by God, receive answered prayers.

I feel that God is waiting until we come to realise our total dependency on Him, before He will initiate and then empower activities that bring growth to the Church.

I feel also that the things in our own personal lives in which God is going to be involved are only those He has chosen for us.

This applies to marriage, career, job in the Church, etc.

Allow God to choose your partner, job and place in the Church.

Find out God's choice, don't make our own decision.

Initiative comes from God through the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:21-26 [NIV] *“Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection. So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. **Show us which of these two You have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.**’ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.”*

God was the One who chose the 12th disciple to take the place of Judas.

Acts 13:1-3 [NIV] *“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’** So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”*

Holy Spirit chose Barnabas to be an apostle to do a job of work.

Acts 14:26 [NIV] *“From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the **work they had now completed.**”*

The work completed that had been initiated by Holy Spirit.

How often can we say that of any work we have done for God?

1 Corinthians 2:16 [NIV] *“For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? **But we have the mind of Christ.**”*

1 Corinthians 2:16 [Phillips] *“Incredible as it may sound, **we who are spiritual have the very thoughts of Christ!**”*

1 Corinthians 2:16 [Amplified] *“**But we have the mind of Christ, the Messiah, and do hold the thoughts, feelings and purposes of His heart.**”*

The “we” I feel refers to the church as a whole, the mind of Christ is **not** given to one individual.

The mind of Christ is given to the Body by the Head, and until the Body learns to find mind of Christ it will go largely undiscovered.

Can we say in our church or fellowship “we have the mind of Christ”?

Does it even occur to us that we should be able to say this?

How then do we have the mind of Christ?

Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to take the initiative.

What is the key to allowing this to happen?

One word ... wait.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 [NIV] *“...for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and **to wait for his Son** from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”*

Serve and wait.

Build a strong relationship by serving one another in love and wait for Christ’s initiative.

Isaiah 64:4 [NIV] *“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, **who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.**”*

God empowers those who wait for His initiative.

This is a distinct characteristic of the one true God.

Why?

I feel one reason could be that God who is outside of time wants us to experience what it is like **not** to be limited by time by waiting, time passing, for Him to act.

We are in a *“must do it now”* and *“must have it now”* generation who need to learn this lesson from God.

Are we to be inactive while we wait?

Isaiah 59:1-2 [NIV] *“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; **your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.**”*

Confess our sins to God so that we are not cut off from hearing what He wants us to do when the time comes.

It is a very basic overall teaching of God’s Word, both Old and New Covenant, that we are only forgiven those sins we confess to God.

We are commanded to go even further to ask God to show us our hidden sins so we can confess them and be forgiven.

Psalms 19:12-14 [Amplified] *“Who can discern his lapses and errors? [Hebrew – to stray] Clear me from hidden and unconscious faults. [Hebrew – to miss the mark] **Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;** [Hebrew – offences] let them not have dominion over me! Then shall I be blameless, and I shall be innocent and clear of the great transgression.” [Hebrew – revolt or rebellion]*

We are also to ask God to forgive us and help us to steer clear of presumptuous sins, these are offences to the sovereignty of God.

For example, by taking the initiative out of His hands when trying to do His work our way.

God sees presumptuous sins as rebellion against Him.

James 5:16 [NIV] *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*

“Sins” [Greek – side slip, lapse or deviation, unintentional error].

This does not mean all sins in our lives.

These are confessed only to God but these *“slip-ups”*.

Knowing someone else is aware could help us to resist and overcome the sin in the future.

What God is telling us to do is to be fully prepared for when He wants to use us in some project He initiates and not be like the foolish virgins.

Matthew 25:1-13 [NIV] *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. **The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.** The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the Bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. **‘Open the door for us!’** **But He replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’** Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”*

Remember the oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, the One through whom Jesus Christ is working and speaking here in His Church on earth, as Head of the Church.

All the virgins had to wait, but only half were ready when the call for being with and the time for working with Christ arrived!