



Glyfada Christian Center



04/08/2024

Preacher Leto Karantoni, Vassilis

Topics The Church is a body; Unity

Service Sunday Service

Passages 1 Samuel 3:8-10; Romans 10:17a; Romans 12:4-5; Matthew 18:20;
1 Peter 2:9; John 17:1-26

The Church - The Body of Christ

Pastor Gail Stathis – Opening Prayer

1. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. We want to read today from 1 Samuel 3:8-10. I love this passage of Scripture. “A third time the Lord called, “Samuel!” And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So, Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

2. There’s nothing quite like hearing the voice of God. And the Bible says in Romans 10:17a, “Faith comes by hearing.” So, will you join with me as I pray for a few things for us this morning? ‘Father, we thank You, that You desire to speak to us, but Lord, we must walk in

the faith of our hearing. Lord, I pray that even as we are waiting to hear from You, that we are passionate to hear Your voice. Lord, we may not always recognize Your voice at first, but Lord, I pray today for this house, for this family, that Lord we would be so passionate to know You. That we know, Lord, as we keep waiting, You'll show us and help us to know it is You.

3. And Lord, I want to thank You for this month, August, where we slow down, where even if we have company, it's a different rhythm of life, and I pray that not only will we be passionate, to hear Your voice, but we will make place to hear Your voice this month. Lord, I pray to You that You will help us to, Lord, set aside time on the beach, or on our balconies, just to be in Your presence. We need to hear You Lord. You said if we would call to You, You would answer us. We praise You today, because You're faithful to Your promises. Your love never ends, we can trust Your Word God. Lord, we say today, we are Your servants. Speak oh Lord. Speak oh Lord. Speak oh Lord, because we need You, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Leto Karantoni – Main message

1. Good morning, everybody. Thank you, pastor Gail, for giving me the opportunity to preach the Word today. I really love preaching God's Word, and sometimes I over do it a little, I know that. I put a lot of emotion into that. But that's who I am, I'm Leto. And God called me for who I am, because God knows what He's doing with each one of us.

2. So, Romans 12:4-5, "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Hallelujah.

3. I like this topic a lot, that we are one Body. And all this time that we have been talking about 'the Body', for me, it was one of the best topics, that there are. I like this metaphor that Paul and Christ use to describe the Church. You know, we are here by Christ's grace. He died for us. HE gave Himself completely for us, in order for us to have a new, full life.

4. Each one of us, is part of the Body and all together, make this Body. All of us without exception. There is nobody who is outside the Body. God has called to be one Body. Sometimes, we ask someone, why they don't come to Church, where are you? And they answer that it is not necessary to come to Church. We're OK even by ourselves. This is wrong answer. If need be, we can be by ourselves. But God did not call us to be alone. He called us to be one Body, and in this Body to which we belong, Christ has called us to share things. He has called us to share His promises.

5. Christ said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." It is a promise for all of us, and this promise should be shared one to another. We should stand together with those who are burdened, and to remind them what Christ has said. And if they cannot do it by themselves; when I had a broken arm, my left hand couldn't do anything, but when my right hand assisted, I was able to carry certain things in a particular way. Because the right hand helped me to support myself.

6. That's why Christ wants us to share His promise, and to stand side by side with others to help each other. Christ said we should all get together to worship Him. He said that He would be in our midst when we are 2 or 3 gathered together. (Matthew 18:20). I know that

this verse is a little strange, but just think if you are alone and you have other 2 or 3 people praying together. Christ said that He will be with us, there.

7. These are not the only promises of Christ. There are many promises of Christ in the Bible. And when we are together, Christ has invited us to share them. Because His Word is 'Yes and Amen.' And in the life of Christians, the promises of Christ are, 'Yes.' 'No' doesn't exist in Christ's promises.

8. He called us to share 'Hope'. Many times, people rely on their education, on their diplomas, to how many universities they went to. Others', hopes are in their health, 'Oh, I am very well, I can endure, I hope to live another 100 years. Others rely on their wealth. Somebody said to me that their child had nothing to fear. I have so much money, that he has nothing to fear. His hopes were on his money, his wealth. But God's Word says that, we have hope which allows us to believe in things unseen. It's the anchor of our souls.

9. We have all been called to have one hope. A heavenly hope. We have a place in heaven. Whatever may happen, this hope, for this safety, remains where it is found. We have hope in the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. We have hope for eternal life. No matter whatever happens to us in the future, no matter what may come in our lives, whatever may happen to us, we have hope in Him, in God, in the Lord of lords, and in Him who has the real leadership and the real control in His hands.

10. How wonderful it is to be able to share such things, things which are eternal. And another which I like a lot; when Christ calls us into His Body, we belong somewhere immediately. I have heard many times lately people telling me, 'I feel like I do not belong anywhere. I look like nobody else. I don't like anything. I don't fit in anywhere.' However, we belong to one another. You belong to me; all of you. And I belong to you.

11. When Christ called us, He said, "Come to Me and I will place you all together. I will place you all close to each other. I have you drawn in the palms of My hands." And I like this because, next to my face, is Brian's face and next to Brian's face is Elpida's face. Next is Gail and next is Kitty. All our faces are in God's hand. And when Christ opens His hand, we see all of drawn there. We belong to Christ's hands. And we are all one next to the other, and we belong to one another.

12. You know, when my eye hurts, I rub it with my hand. At that moment, the hand belongs to the eye, and my eye belongs to my hand. Christ has called us to be His hands, so that we can perform His works; to be His legs, so that we can run His race, to be His voice, to share His story. People need to hear His story; they need to feel Christ's hands around them, and they need to see His feet running, in order to see His works fulfilled.

13. Chris has called each one of us separately. He chose us to be one Body. I like this, that He uses the Body metaphorically, to describe the Church. If I ask each one of you separately, how they feel about their body, I think each one of us will find some fault with our bodies. I would like to be slimmer, someone else wants to be taller, another would like blue eyes, but the Body into which Christ has called us to be, is a glorious and beautiful one. "We are a holy nation" it says in 1 Peter 2:9, "a chosen generation." We are a nation chosen to announce what good things God has done for us. We are ambassadors of Christ. And this holy nation, is His Church. This chosen nation, is the Body of Christ. We are living stones, upon living

stones. We are not soulless stones. But we are such living stones to run, to speak, to be united, to feel the love of God and to transfer this love to others.

14. I'm going to tell you a little story about my life. When I was very little, my grandfather was one of the best in building the skeleton of houses or apartment blocks. The molds they used then were not of aluminum as they are today, they were made of wood. So, each piece of wood was nailed and placed correctly where it should be, so that the building could be build correctly. But if you went to the construction site, there was chaos. One would shout, 'Bring wood,' another would go to get concrete, the concrete mixer would spin and make a noise. One would say, 'Be careful,' another would shout 'Stop!' But when the building was complete, what you would see was a perfect building. All this chaos, brought this result. Because each person knew what he had to do, he knew what to ask from another worker to give to him, so that the construction would be done correctly with the expected result.

15. This is why we have been called, so that we can do what God wants us to do. No matter how different we are from one another, from whatever career God has placed us in, it is enough to do correctly what He has called us to do, and to do precisely what He wants form us to perform His work. We are living stones, upon a living stone. A holy nation, chosen people, chosen by God. It's as if Christ threw a chain, or a lasso as the Americans call it, turning it in the air perfectly, making Ourania His target, and He pulled her towards Himself. He did the same with my friend Judy, my brother Nathan, and with all of us. He threw His lasso and put us inside His own chain. He pulled us close to Him and then He embraced us and He kept us close to Him.

16. We are one Body; glorious and shiny. We are one Body, all with Christ. We are connected to transfer His virtues. May God bless you, may He always keep you well, and never forget, by Hiis grace we are here, because of His sacrifice; to give ourselves over to do the work, that He wants done. Jesus prayed and said, "Lord, My Father help them to be united, to be together, so that people can see how they are connected to Me, as I am with You, and this love and unity, to grow day by day." (John 17:1-26). I'm going to close with this. The Church is not an organization, the Church is not an institution, but the Church is a living entity, that grows and increases and so, we have been called to grow and to increase. In the name of Jesus Christ, may He shine in our lives and in our Church. Amen.

Brian van Deventer – Closing Prayer

1. Later Paul would say to the Church, that we are like a drink offering being poured out. As you took that bread and that juice into your body, go from this place reminding yourself, He poured Himself out for me, so that I could do it for others. In the grace and the power of Jesus Christ. Now Holy Spirit, I just invite You, to just cement the Word in our hearts today. Lord, let us go from here. Holy Spirit, go with us from here that we can live in that grace and we can take You to the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.p