

Body Bugs: Dealing with infections that hinder unity in the body – Week three

Body Bug #2: Bad Communication

Joshua 22:1-34

Main Idea: Unity among believers is extremely fragile and can be quickly lost through misunderstanding motives and through poor communication. But unity is restored through courageous communication with an agreement to find our ultimate unity in God.

1. FIRST PROBLEM – Unity in the body of Christ is threatened when we become suspicious of cultural differences. Joshua 22:1-9

- A. For over forty years, the eastern tribes had gained a reputation of being different.
 - 1. They requested land before Israel had crossed the Jordan. Num. 32:5
 - 2. They seemed to request land for the wrong reason. Num. 32:1-4
 - 3. Moses was skeptical of their motives (Num. 32:6-15), but granted their request (32:16ff).
- B. The attitude of the eastern tribes aroused suspicion. They were an *out-there, on-the-edge* group.
 - 1. Joshua appeared suspicious before the conquest. Joshua 1:12-18
 - 2. They proved themselves in the conquest but suspicions remained. Joshua 22:1-9
- C. Unity is threatened when we become suspicious of cultural differences.
 - 1. Christians do have cultural differences: racial, theological, worship style, traditions, etc.
 - 2. When one group becomes suspicious of another, it takes the moral higher ground, and feels self righteous.

2. SECOND PROBLEM – Unity in the body is threatened by occasions of poor communication. Joshua 22:10-12

- A. *The communication failure of the eastern tribes* – They did something capable of gross misinterpretation, without informing the western tribes. 22:10
 - 1. What they did looked very bad. 22:10-11
 - 2. Yet their motives were not bad. 22:26-27
- B. *The communication failure of the western tribes* – They prepare for war without first asking questions. 22:12
 - 1. They misunderstand motives.
 - 2. They gather at Shiloh, assuming the moral higher ground. 22:12a
 - 3. They don't ask the obvious question: "Why did you do it?"
- C. Whenever we act without communicating, we risk misunderstanding and disunity.

3. SOLUTION – Unity in the body is restored through courageous communication. Joshua 22:13-29

- A. Let's define courageous communication.
- B. The western tribes set up a meeting to explore the problem. 22:13-15
- C. The western tribes immediately begin to assign blame. 22:16-20
 - 1. They possess a condescending tone. 22:16a
 - 2. They question their commitment to God. 22:16b
 - 3. They bring up the sins of the past: sin of Peor and Achan. 22:17-18a,20
 - 4. They blame them for messing up their lives. 22:18b
- D. The eastern tribes respond. 22:21-29
 - 1. They affirm their commitment to God. 22:21-23
 - 2. They explain their decision was based upon fear of rejection and failure. 22:24-27
- E. After a hard and painful discussion, they arrive at understanding and reconciliation. 22:30-34