

THE VISION, THE LIVING, AND THE PRACTICE OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY TODAY

Morning Message Five

The Vision of the Lord's Recovery— The Recovery of the Church Ground and of the Practice of the Local Churches

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 12:27; Rev. 1:11

I. The recovery of the church ground—Eph. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:27; 1:2; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Rev. 1:11:

- A. The local ground of the church is basically the unique oneness of the Body of Christ practiced in the local churches—Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27:
 - 1. Both the universal Body of Christ and the local churches are uniquely one.
 - 2. There is one unique Body of Christ in the universe, and there is one unique local church in each locality, respectively; this unique oneness is the basic element of the church life.
- B. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the church ground is constituted of three crucial elements:
 - 1. The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, which is called “the oneness of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3)—the oneness for which the Lord prayed in John 17:
 - a. Since the oneness of the Body of Christ is the oneness of the Spirit, the oneness practiced in a local church must be in the move of the Spirit and under the government of the Spirit.
 - b. The church ground on which a local church is built must be constituted with and prevail in the oneness executed by the Spirit.
 - 2. The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists—Rev. 1:11; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5:
 - a. The New Testament presents a clear picture that all the local churches, as the expression of the universal church—the universal Body of Christ—are located in their respective cities—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:4, 11.
 - b. The churches are established in different cities by taking a city as the boundary and ground of each local church.
 - c. The sphere and limit of a local church must be exactly the same as that of the city in which it is located—Rev. 1:11; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
 - 3. The third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit of oneness, that is, the reality of the Spirit, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity—1 John 5:6; John 16:13:
 - a. It is by this Spirit that the oneness of the Body of Christ becomes real and living.
 - b. It is by this Spirit that the ground of locality is applied in life and not in legality.
 - c. It is by this Spirit that the genuine ground of the church is linked with the Triune God—Eph. 4:3-6.

II. The recovery of the practice of the local churches—1 Cor. 10:32; 1:2; Rev. 1:11; 1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:12:

- A. The church of God, as the living Body of Christ, needs the local churches for its existence and function—1 Cor. 10:32; 1:2:
 - 1. Without the local churches, the Body of Christ has no way to exist and carry out its function in practicality.
 - 2. The local churches, being the existence of the Body of Christ for its function, are the many expressions of the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:27; 1:2.
- B. The expression of a church cannot be greater or smaller than a locality—Rev. 1:11:
 - 1. The churches in a number of places cannot be combined to form an alliance of churches.
 - 2. The church in one place cannot be divided into a number of churches.
- C. A local church is administrated by the eldership, composed of a group of elders appointed by the gifted persons who have established the church—1 Tim. 3:1-5; 5:17; Acts 14:23.
- D. After being established by the gifted persons and having its elders appointed by the gifted persons, a local church still needs the ministry of the gifted persons for its building up as a living testimony of Christ—Acts 20:17-35; Eph. 6:19-22; 2 Tim. 4:5.
- E. A local church is built up by the functioning of all its members through:
 - 1. The preaching of the gospel to get sinners saved and baptized—Matt. 28:19.
 - 2. The feeding of the new believers in their homes for their growth in life and in truth—John 21:15; 1 Pet. 2:2.
 - 3. The perfecting of the saints in the group meetings for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12.
 - 4. The prophesying in the church meetings for the building up of the church—1 Cor. 14:1-5, 23-26, 31.
- F. The building up of a local church is not only for its own building up locally but also for the building up of the entire Body of Christ universally—1 Cor. 14:3; Eph. 4:12:
 - 1. The building up of the local churches is the building up of the Body of Christ, because the local churches are the Body of Christ as its expression—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-27.
 - 2. The local churches are not the goal of God's economy but the procedure God takes to reach the goal of His economy—the reality of the Body of Christ; thus, the local churches are the procedure to bring us into the Body of Christ—Rev. 2:1; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4.