

CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN ROMANS

Morning Message Six

The Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, and the Practice of the Local Churches

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:4-5; 14:17; 16:1-5a, 16b, 23

I. Romans 4 lays the foundation for Romans 12—16, where we see the practical Body life, church life, and kingdom life:

- A. Justification enables Abraham and all his believing heirs to inherit the world and to exercise the dominion of God on earth—4:13.
- B. The purpose of God's justification is to have a reproduction of Christ in millions of saints, who become the members of His Body—12:4-5:
 - 1. The Body then becomes the kingdom of God on earth—14:17.
 - 2. All the local churches are expressions of the Body of Christ as the kingdom of God.

II. The Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5:

- A. The focus, the center, of the Christian life is the Body, which is the high point of God's revelation and the ultimate item of God's continual working.
- B. Romans 12 speaks of the Body from the angle of the organic union, from the uniting life, from a life that unites us together, not only with Christ but with all the other members of Christ—vv. 4-5:
 - 1. We are one Body in Christ, having an organic union with Him:
 - a. This union makes us one in life with Christ and with all the other members of His Body.
 - b. The Body is not an organization or a society but is altogether an organism produced by the union in life that we have in Christ.
 - 2. To be properly organic in the Body means that we must be organically united with Christ:
 - a. The Body is something that is held together in the organic union with Christ.
 - b. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ.
- C. We need to realize and practice the Body life by having all three parts of our being exercised—vv. 1-2, 11:
 - 1. We need to present our bodies a living sacrifice—v. 1.
 - 2. We need to have our soul transformed by the renewing of our mind—v. 2.
 - 3. We need to be burning in spirit—v. 11.
- D. If we do not have the organic union with Christ, and if we do not have our body offered, our soul transformed by the renewing of the mind, and our spirit burning, then, practically speaking, we are outside of the Body and apart from the Body.

III. The kingdom of God—Rom. 14:17:

- A. Romans 14:17 proves that the church in the church age is the kingdom of God:
 - 1. The kingdom of God is the sphere in which God exercises His authority so that He may express His glory for the fulfillment of His purpose.
 - 2. The reality of the church life is the kingdom life—Matt. 5—7.

- B. Romans 14:17 gives us an extract of the reality of the kingdom life in three items:
1. Righteousness toward ourselves:
 - a. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness are blessed—Matt. 5:6, 10.
 - b. In order to enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we need a surpassing righteousness—v. 20.
 2. Peace toward others:
 - a. Our Father is the God of peace, having a peaceful life with a peaceful nature—Rom. 15:33; 16:20.
 - b. The sons of the kingdom, the sons of God, are makers of peace—Matt. 5:9.
 3. Joy with God:
 - a. We are blessed when others reproach and persecute us, and when this happens we are to rejoice and be glad—vv. 11-12.
 - b. This joy is in the Holy Spirit—Rom. 14:17.

IV. The practice of the local churches—Rom. 16:1-5a, 9, 16b, 23:

- A. Romans begins with the designation of Jesus Christ to be the Son of God for the mass reproduction of the many sons of God as the members of the Body of Christ, and Romans ends with the practice of the local churches as the expression of the Body of Christ in many localities—1:3-4; 8:29; 12:4-5; 16:1, 16b.
- B. The local churches are the practical expression of the Body of Christ; God is expressed in Christ, Christ is expressed in the Body, and the Body is expressed in the local churches—12:4-5; 16:1, 16b.
- C. In his greetings recorded in Romans 16, Paul unveiled some crucial indicators of the proper church life both in a particular local church and among the churches:
 1. Serving the church—vv. 1-2.
 2. Risking our lives for the church—vv. 3-4.
 3. Having the church in our home—v. 5a.
 4. Never considering the church as anyone's church but acknowledging that it is the church of Christ—v. 16b.
 5. Extending hospitality to everyone in the church and being a host to all the churches—v. 23.
- D. We must be governed by the vision of the Body and follow in the footsteps of Paul (who took the lead in the fellowship of concern among the saints and between the churches), by bringing all the saints in all the churches into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—vv. 1-23.