

## **SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK OF GOD**

Message Seven

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

### **Shepherding the Flock of God in Dealing with Peculiarity in Order to Live Christ for the Body Life**

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Rom. 8:2, 29; 12:4-5; Phil. 1:8

- I. What the Lord needs today is the actual Body life—the actual building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16.**
- II. God's intention is to work Christ into us so that we may live Christ and express Christ in a corporate way—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17-21.**
- III. Peculiarity is a hidden factor that is a great frustration to our experience of Christ and to the Body life—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Rom. 12:4-5:**
  - A. Our peculiarity frustrates us from the richer experiences of Christ, from living Christ, and from being built up as the Body of Christ—Eph. 3:8, 17; 4:16.
  - B. Peculiarity is our biased and warped characteristics; our natural man is biased and warped and is expressed mainly in our peculiarities—1 Cor. 2:14-16.
  - C. Peculiarity is the last, final expression of the natural life, the ultimate expression of our natural being—Luke 9:54-55.
  - D. This hidden peculiarity is the strongest controller and director of our being; whatever we do is controlled by this hidden peculiarity—2 John 9-10.
  - E. Our peculiarity occupies us and frustrates us from living Christ; peculiarity is a high mountain within our being that occupies us, gives no place to Christ, and subtly keeps us from experiencing Christ—Phil. 1:20-21a.
  - F. Our peculiarity is an antichrist; it is against Christ, and it replaces Christ:
    1. The ground within us for Christ is subtly and hiddenly possessed by our peculiarity—cf. Eph. 3:17.
    2. Our inner being, our hidden being, is fully usurped by this antichrist.
  - G. If we do not see a vision concerning peculiarity, the room for Christ within us will be reduced, and we will become numb with respect to the growth in life—2 Pet. 1:5-11.
  - H. Peculiarity is an enemy to the Body life; as long as we have our peculiarity, we cannot have a proper Body life—Matt. 16:24; Rom. 12:4-5.
    - I. The real dividing factor within us is our peculiarity; this is the root of all outward division—16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11.
- IV. The function of the law of the Spirit of life is to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:2, 29:**
  - A. Eventually, through the function of the law of the Spirit of life, we will all become mature sons of God, and God will have His corporate expression—Rev. 21:7, 10-11.

- B. Conformation, which is higher than transformation, denotes the shaping of life; transformation involves a change in form, whereas conformation involves the shaping of this form into a certain image—the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 12:2; 8:29.
  - C. As the divine life grows within us and transforms us, the law of the Spirit of life functions spontaneously to conform us to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God—vv. 2, 29.
  - D. If we would be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God, we need to be conformed to Christ's death by the power of His resurrection—Phil. 3:10:
    1. Christ's death is a mold in which we are being shaped into His image as the firstborn Son of God.
    2. Unless we are conformed to the death of Christ, we cannot be conformed to the image of Christ.
- V. As we are delivered from peculiarity, we can live Christ and live the Body life in the inward parts of Christ Jesus—1:8; Philem. 7, 12, 20:**
- A. As a man, Christ had the human inward parts with their various functions, and Christ's experiences in His inward parts were His experiences in His mind, emotion, will, soul, heart, and spirit, including His love, desire, feeling, thought, decision, motive, and intention—Luke 2:49; John 2:17; Matt. 26:39; Isa. 53:2; 42:4; Mark 2:8.
  - B. Paul was a person who continually experienced Christ in His inward parts—Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16b; Rom. 8:6:
    1. Paul was one with Christ even in His inward parts—in His affection, tender mercy, and sympathy.
    2. Paul did not keep his own inward parts but took Christ's inward parts and His entire inward being as his own—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17.
    3. Paul's inner being was changed, rearranged, remodeled, and reconstituted with the inward parts of Christ.
  - C. To live Christ requires that we remain in the inward parts of Christ—Phil. 1:21a, 8:
    1. Paul experienced the inward parts of Christ; he was one with Christ in His inward parts in longing after the saints—v. 8.
    2. Paul did not live a life in his natural inner being; he lived a life in the inward parts of Christ.
    3. If we would be those who are in Christ, we must be in His inward parts, in His tender and delicate feelings—John 15:4a.
    4. To live Christ is to abide in His inward parts and there to enjoy Him as grace—Phil. 1:7; 4:23.
  - D. Since we are members of the Body of Christ, we need to have the consciousness of the Body and have a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:25-26; Rom. 12:15:
    1. In order for us to live the Body life, we need to care for our fellow members and be full of feeling for the Body.
    2. The Christ we enjoy is the Head of the Body; thus, the more we enjoy Him, the more we become conscious of the Body—Col. 2:9-10, 16-17, 19.

3. Paul took the inward parts of Christ Jesus as his own inward parts in caring for the church—Phil. 1:8:
  - a. Paul took care of the Body of Christ by taking Christ's feeling for the Body as his own feeling.
  - b. Like Paul, we should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling; this is most necessary for our living the Body life—v. 8.