

**ENTERING INTO THE FOURTH STAGE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE
TO ARRIVE AT A FULL-GROWN MAN
FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PURPOSE**

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

Arriving at a Full-grown Man

(2)

**Growing Up into Christ in All Things,
Learning Christ as the Reality Is in Jesus,
and Being Renewed in the Spirit of the Mind**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:13-16, 20-24

- I. In order to arrive at a full-grown man for the fulfillment of God's purpose, we need to grow up into Christ in all things—Eph. 4:15-16, 24:**
- A. To be no longer little children (v. 14), we need to grow up into Christ; this is to have Christ increase in us in all things until we arrive at a full-grown man.
 - B. We all need to grow up into Christ in all things, that is, in every single thing, whether big or small—v. 15.
 - C. There are still many things in which we have not grown up into Christ; in these things we are not in Christ but are outside of Christ.
 - D. When we all grow up into Christ in all things, we all will be one in Christ; this is the universal one new man—v. 24.
 - E. Ephesians 4:15 says that we grow up into the Head; the word *Head* here indicates that our growth in life by the increase of Christ should be the growth of the members of the Body under the Head.
 - F. Growing up into Christ in all things is for the practical existence of the universal one new man—v. 24.
 - G. To grow in life is to grow with the growth of God; this means that true growth is the increase of God, the addition of God—Col. 2:19.
 - H. Ephesians 4 speaks of the perfecting of the new man through the growth of life:
 - 1. In Ephesians 2:15 we see the creation of the new man organically; in 4:13-16 we see the perfecting of the new man in relation to his function.
 - 2. The organically perfect new man needs to be perfected through the growth of life in order to function in a proper way—vv. 13, 15, 24:
 - a. The more the new man grows through receiving the proper nourishment, the more he will function normally.
 - b. The growth into Christ in verse 15 equals the putting on of the new man in verse 24.
 - 3. For the growth of the corporate new man, we need to experience the crucified, resurrected, ascended, and descending Christ so that the all-inclusive Christ is wrought into us to be our everything; then the organically perfect new man will become perfect functionally—3:16-17a; 4:13, 24.
- II. In order to arrive at a full-grown man for the fulfillment of God's purpose, we need to learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus—vv. 20-21:**

- A. The living of the one new man should be exactly the same as the living of Jesus—vv. 20-21:
 - 1. The way the Lord Jesus lived on earth is the way the new man should live today—Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:57; 4:34; 5:17, 19, 30; 6:38; 17:4.
 - 2. Our standard of living must be according to the reality in Jesus, the reality lived out by the Lord Jesus when He was on earth—Eph. 4:20-21:
 - a. He was one with God, and He lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God.
 - b. Jesus lived in a way that always corresponded to God’s righteousness and holiness—v. 24.
 - c. The human living of Jesus was according to the reality, that is, according to God Himself, full of righteousness and holiness.
 - 3. We need to learn Christ and to be taught in Him to live a life of reality—v. 20; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24.
 - 4. As a corporate person, the new man should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God.
 - 5. If we live according to the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4:23), we will have the daily living of the corporate new man—a living that corresponds to the reality in Jesus.
- B. In order to live the life of the new man as the reality is in Jesus, we must put off the community life of the old man and put on the community life of the new man—vv. 22, 24:
 - 1. To put off regarding the “former manner of life, the old man,” is to put off our way of living—v. 22.
 - 2. To put on the church life as the one new man is to put on a corporate entity produced by the mingling of the divine Spirit with the regenerated human spirit; in this marvelous entity there is only Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit mingled with our spirit—Col. 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
 - 3. The church life is the daily walk of the corporate new man, a walk that is absolutely new in nature and in manner—Eph. 4:17-32.
 - 4. Since the one new man is according to God Himself, with God’s life and nature, the new man must have a life that is divine; such a life will be corporate, not individualistic—v. 24.

III. In order to arrive at a full-grown man for the fulfillment of God’s purpose, we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind—v. 23:

- A. According to Ephesians 4:23, the key to putting off the old man and putting on the new man is in being renewed in the spirit of our mind:
 - 1. When the life-giving Spirit, who dwells in and is mingled with our regenerated spirit, spreads into our mind, this mingled spirit becomes the spirit of our mind; it is by this mingled spirit that our mind is renewed.
 - 2. The renewing Spirit is mingled with our regenerated spirit as one mingled spirit to spread into our mind to renew our entire being as a member of the new man—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 4:22, 24.
 - 3. The only possibility of God’s purpose being fulfilled in this age is that we would all be willing to be renewed in the spirit of our mind—1:9; 3:11; 4:23.

- B. The renewal of the mind is for the full existence and real practice of the one new man—vv. 22-24; Col. 3:10-11:
1. The focal point of our being renewed in the spirit of our mind is the one new man—Eph. 4:23-24.
 2. Throughout our life, our national and racial mentality has been built up, but for the existence of the one new man, this mentality must be renewed—Col. 3:10-11:
 - a. Our natural and national mentality was educated and built up according to our racial and cultural background; this is the greatest hindrance to the existence of the new man.
 - b. In order for the one new man to come into full existence, we must experience a thorough renewal of our mind, which has been built up according to our nationality and culture.
 3. The only way that the one new man can be realized practically is by our mind being renewed—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10-11:
 - a. We need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind actually and daily in our living; otherwise, there is no way for the Lord to have the new man.
 - b. In our prayer we need to have a desire to enter into the practicality of the one new man; thus, we need to ask the Lord to renew our mind for the one new man—Rom. 12:2.
 - c. When we drink of the Spirit, we will be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and this renewing will make us all into one new man—1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:23-24.
 - d. When our mind has been renewed, the one new man will come into existence in a practical way—v. 24.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

GROWING UP

Into the Head, Christ

By holding to truth in love we grow up into Christ in all things [Eph. 4:15]. To be no longer babes (v. 14) we need to grow up into Christ. This is to have Christ increase in us in all things until we attain to a full-grown man (v. 13). The word *Head* here in verse 15 indicates that our growth in life with Christ should be the growth of the members in the Body under the Head.

The fact that we grow in Christ by holding to truth in love proves that holding to truth involves more than not telling lies. Do you believe that you can grow in Christ simply by telling the truth instead of lies? This is not what enables us to grow in Christ. There are a good number of unbelievers who are honest and who do not tell lies. Nevertheless, their speaking of the truth does not cause them to grow up in Christ.

To grow up into the Head means that we care only for Christ and the church. We grow by caring only for Christ and the church, that is, by handling truth in love. We do not grow by some kind of honesty or sincerity related to ethical behavior.

In this verse the matter of growth is specifically related to growing up into

Christ, the Head, in all things. Verses 13 through 16 all point to the need for growth. If we would be a full-grown man, we need to grow. Likewise, if we would be no longer babes tossed to and fro and carried about, we also need to grow. But we should grow up into Christ, not up into ourselves or into something else apart from Christ.

Paul clearly says that we are to grow up into the One who is the Head. This indicates that our growth must be in the Body. In order to grow into the Head, we must surely be in the Body. Many Christians are apparently growing spiritually; however, their supposed growth is not in the Body. I have known some Christians who have actually become more dissenting as they have had this kind of growth. It seems that the more they grow, the more critical they become. When they have relatively little growth, they are no problem in the church life. But as they grow, they become troublesome. This is an indication that their growth is not growth into the Head. As long as anyone's growth is not into the Head, it is not growth in the Body.

It is of great importance that Paul does not tell us to grow up into the Savior, into the Master, or into the Lord. He says specifically that we are to grow up into the Head. This can take place only in the Body. If you do not remain in the Body, you may have a certain kind of growth, but it will not be the growth into the Head.

In All Things

In verse 15 Paul tells us that we must grow up into the Head in all things. In certain aspects you have grown up into the Head, but in other aspects you probably have not. According to my experience, the most difficult matter in which to grow up into Christ, the Head, is in our talking. Psalm 141:3 says, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." Because it is so hard for us to control our speaking, we should make this our prayer also. Whether you are young or old, a brother or a sister, this is an area in which all of us desperately need to grow up into Christ as the Head.

If we bring to the Lord this matter of growing up into Him in all things, we shall see that there are many small things in which we have not yet grown up into the Head. How much we still need to grow up into Christ! May this need for growth touch our heart and turn us afresh to the Lord. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 384-385)

THE TRUTH IN JESUS

In Ephesians 4:20 Paul speaks of learning Christ and in verse 21, of having been "taught in Him as the truth is in Jesus." In a note on 4:21 J. N. Darby points out that in Greek there is an emphatic article before *Jesus*. He then goes on to say that this indicates that "Jesus' is personally brought into relief." The truth in Jesus is the real situation of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, a life filled with truth, reality. Jesus lived a life of always doing things in God, with God, and for God. God was in His life, and He was one with God. This is the truth in Jesus. Jesus lived in a way that always corresponded to God's righteousness and holiness.

In verse 24 Paul says that the new man is created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth. This truth no doubt is the very truth in Jesus. Our standard of living should not be according to the law or according to the standards

of society; it must be according to the truth in Jesus, the reality lived out by Jesus when He was on earth. Hence, the life of Jesus should be our life today in the church. In other words, the living of the new man should be exactly the same as the living of Jesus. The way Jesus lived on earth is the way the new man should live today.

If we would live in such a way, we should not reason according to right or wrong. Instead, we should consider the various aspects of our daily life according to the truth as it is in Jesus. For example, if we are about to go shopping, we should ask whether the Lord Jesus is going shopping. The life of the one new man must be that of the reality of Jesus. If we all live in a way that is heavenly, divine, righteous, holy, and glorious, we shall have a wonderful community life in the church. This is the corporate life of the new man. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 780-781)

THE SPIRIT DIRECTING OUR BEING

The way to put on the new man is for our spirit (which is mingled with the Spirit), in which are found God, God's dwelling place, and the new man, to become the spirit of our mind. Our mind dominates and directs our whole being. For the spirit to become the spirit of our mind means that the spirit directs, controls, dominates, and possesses our mind. Instead of our mind being the mind of our spirit, our spirit should be the spirit of our mind. If the mind is the mind of our spirit, it means that our mind dominates, controls, and directs our spirit. But if our spirit is the spirit of our mind, it means that our spirit dominates, controls, and directs our mind. When the spirit directs our mind, it governs our whole being. When this is the case, our being is under the control of our spirit, in which are found God, the dwelling place of God, and the new man. It is in this spirit of our mind that we are renewed. By means of this spirit we put on the new man.

How much we put on the new man depends on how much our spirit directs our being. When our spirit dominates and directs us, there is no ground for opinions or ordinances. There is no room for our way, because our whole being is dominated, controlled, governed, and directed by our spirit.

A GRADUAL PROCESS

Putting on the new man does not take place once for all. On the contrary, it is a lifelong matter, a gradual process that goes on throughout our Christian life...The new man has already been created with Christ as the divine essence. When we were regenerated, this new man was put into our spirit. Now day by day we need to put on this new man by permitting the spirit to control our being and renew our mind. Every time part of our being is renewed, we put on a little more of the new man. Hence, the more we are renewed through the spirit controlling our mind, the more of the new man we put on. Eventually, this process of putting on the new man will be completed. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 213-214)

THE RENEWAL OF THE MIND FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE ONE NEW MAN

Every truth in the Bible has two aspects. It is the same with the one new man. The first aspect concerning this one new man is that Christ through His death on the cross in the flesh has completed the creation of this one new man. Ephesians

2:15 is one verse in the whole Bible which is so strong to tell us that this one new man has been created—“Having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace.” In the eyes of God, the one new man was created two thousand years ago on the cross, in Christ, of two peoples—the Jews and the Gentiles. Ephesians 2:15 covers nearly every aspect of this one new man, yet this verse still leaves out a major point. This major point is the existence of the one new man. The creation of the one new man was completed on the cross, but before Pentecost this one new man had still not come into existence. The existence of the one new man began on the day of Pentecost, but that was not the completion. That was the beginning of the existence of the one new man. Even today the existence of the new man is still going on to be perfected.

THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

The first step needed for the existence of the one new man is the baptism in the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-48), Christ as the Head of the Body baptized all the members in one Spirit into one Body. First Corinthians 12:13 says that we were all baptized into one Body. This verse refers to Jews, Greeks, slaves, and free. These are different races and different ranks in society. All the different races and people with all different ranks have been put into the Spirit that they all may be one Body.

DRINKING ONE SPIRIT

First Corinthians 12:13 also tells us that we were all given to drink one Spirit. The baptism in the Spirit was accomplished once for all, but the daily drinking of the one Spirit is still going on. We need to drink of the one Spirit day by day and hour by hour. We should thank the Lord that He has accomplished the first step. Now we have to carry out the second step by drinking of the Spirit.

PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN BY BEING RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF OUR MIND

Ephesians 2:15 tells us that the new man was created on the cross, yet Ephesians 4:22 tells us that we have to put off the old man. Because the new man in Ephesians is corporate, the old man, in the same principle, must also be a corporate man. We need to put off the old man, not by being taught, corrected, trained, educated, or instructed but by being renewed in the spirit of our mind (4:23). When we are being renewed in the spirit of our mind, we do not only put off the old man but also put on the new man “which according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (4:24). The one new man was created in Christ, but on you nothing of the new man may exist. Thus, we have to put on, to wear, the new man which has already been created in Christ. The way we put on the new man is by being renewed in the spirit of our mind.

BEING FILLED IN SPIRIT BY DRINKING THE SPIRIT FOR THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled in spirit. To be drunk with wine is to be

filled in the body, whereas to be filled in the spirit (our regenerated spirit, not God's Spirit) is to be filled with Christ (Eph. 1:23) unto the fullness of God (3:19). The Lord wants to spread from our spirit first into our mind and then into our emotion and will. Our regenerated spirit mingled with the indwelling Spirit of God spreads into our mind. It is in this mingled spirit of our mind that we are renewed. To drink of the Spirit is to open ourselves to the Lord by praying to Him, calling upon His name, and fellowshiping with Him. The Spirit of God today is the drinking water. The more we drink of the Spirit, the more He fills us with Himself, and the more He saturates our mind to renew it for transformation.

THE RENEWING OF THE MIND FOR THE ONE NEW MAN

When I was a young believer I thought that the renewing in the spirit of our mind was just for our Christian behavior. We can get our mind renewed by allowing it to be filled, possessed, and taken over by the Spirit of God. We have to pray, to fellowship with the Lord, to call on His name, and even to make a thorough confession of our sins. Then we will be transformed, and our behavior will be changed. Although this is true, the focal point of being renewed in the spirit of our mind is for the one new man.

Colossians 3:10-11 tells us that we need to "put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him; where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all." In the new man Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and freeman have no place. The renewal is not merely for our behavior. The renewal is even more to get rid of our racial ordinances and to get rid of the natural persons. Not only is there no natural person in the new man, but there is no possibility, no room, for any natural person. In the new man there is only room for Christ...The new man is Christ. Christ is all and in all with the new man. In the new man there cannot be any Jew or Greek. There cannot be any Chinese or any Japanese. In the new man there cannot be any white or any black. We all need to be renewed for the existence of the one new man.

In Colossians 3:10 are the creation of the new man and his renewal. The creation was completed on the cross, but the renewal needs to go on. We need to have our mind renewed for the existence of the new man. God has created the new man, but the new man has not fully come into existence because of our unrenewed mind. Our mind is the problem. By God's sovereignty I have been in many countries and have seen many different ordinances, many different ways of living. For people from different races and cultures to get saved is much easier than being renewed concerning their way of living...These different ordinances usually create a problem for us because our mind needs more renewing.

Romans 12:2 exhorts us not to be conformed to this age. This does not only mean that we should not be worldly in our dress and our way of living. To not be conformed to this age means even more that we should not follow the way of divisions. Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:23 are concerning the matter of renewing, and both

verses are for the Body life. Romans 12:2 says, "Be transformed by the renewing of the mind, that you may prove by testing what the will of God is." If you look into the context of Romans 12, you can see that the will of God is to have the Body. The renewing of the mind is for the Body life. The problems in the Body life are related to the different ordinances.

We need to be renewed in our natural mind, which means that our mind needs to be filled up and saturated with the Spirit. The Spirit needs to permeate every fiber of our mentality.

We need to be renewed in our mind not just for our personal, ethical behavior, but for the one new man. Many Christians today still hold on to their natural, religious, and individual concepts because they will not let the Spirit spread into their mind. They do not let the Spirit take over their mind. We all need to open ourselves up to the Lord and pray, "Lord, I am here. I want my mind to be fully opened to You. Come in and fill me up. Permeate, saturate, and possess my entire inward being." I believe if we would pray to the Lord in such a way, the Spirit would have a way to permeate our mind. When the Spirit permeates our mind, the ordinances are over... We will only care for the one new man.

The only way the one new man can be realized practically is by our minds being renewed. The one new man cannot be realized by our being corrected or taught but by the Spirit of God permeating our mentality. When the element of God gets into our mentality, we will think as He thinks; we will see things the way He does; and we will consider the situation as He does. It is then that the one new man will come into existence. There will be no races, no social ranks, and no religious differences. Christ will truly be all and in all. I believe that this is the up-to-date vision of the Lord's move on this earth. The Lord is moving on to get the one new man.

THE LORD'S MOVE TO USHER IN THE PRACTICAL EXISTENCE OF THE NEW MAN

The Lord prophesied in Matthew 16:18 that He would build His church. Whatever the Lord has prophesied must be fulfilled. Without the practical existence of the new man, the building up of the church may be vain talk. The building of the church depends upon the existence of the new man. If the new man comes into existence, no doubt, the builded church is here. Regardless of the present situation of division, the Lord is going to get the new man. Everything that the Lord is doing in this present age is to usher in the practical existence of the one new man. To drop our natural, religious concepts, our mind needs to be saturated, permeated, possessed, and taken over by our mingled spirit. Then our concepts will be fully revolutionized and we will no longer have any ordinances. The new man will then come into existence. This is the Lord's move on the earth today. (*The One New Man*, pp. 57-66)