

THE VISION, PRACTICE, AND BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Crucial Experiences in the Practice of the Church Life (3)

How to Realize the Church Life in a Practical Way in the Reality of the One New Man

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 2:15; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10

- I. The first item of a walk that is worthy of God's calling is that we must be diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3); this oneness is already within us, so there is no need to attain, gain, or receive it; what we need today is to keep, preserve, and maintain what we have already gained:**
- A. Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the oneness of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself; at the time we believed in the Lord Jesus, this wonderful, inexhaustible Spirit came into us as the oneness.
 - B. First John 3:14-15 indicates that the love for the brothers is a proof that we have eternal life within us; therefore, the genuine oneness is the very Spirit who is within us.
 - C. Every real Christian has this oneness, which is nothing less than the living Lord Himself as the wonderful, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who is within us (2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45b); now what we need is not to receive or gain this oneness but to endeavor, strive, and struggle to keep, maintain, and preserve the oneness.
- II. Five phrases in Ephesians 4:1-3 give us a practical way to keep the oneness: *lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, bearing one another in love, and the uniting bond of peace*; these five items are a test to us in the practice of the church life; by this test we can see whether or not we are practically in the church life:**
- A. We should not set up a higher standard for others, but in lowliness we should love the weaker ones:
 - 1. As long as we take something other than Christ Himself as our standard, we do not have lowliness; if we put forth a high standard, we are not lowly in our mind and attitude.
 - 2. Regardless of how good, heavenly, or spiritual something is, as long as it is something other than Christ Himself, it will cause division.
 - 3. The weaker ones, the younger ones, and the backsliders need more love in the Lord; to love them will solve most of their problems; otherwise, we will set up a high standard out of pride and not lowliness.
 - B. We must sacrifice ourselves to be meek in our attitude—Num. 12:3; Matt. 5:5:

1. The Greek word for *meekness* implies mildness, gentleness, and unselfishness.
 2. Meekness is a matter of an unselfish attitude that is mild and gentle, never argues for oneself, and never makes an excuse for oneself—cf. 2 Chron. 1:10; Col. 2:2-3; Phil. 4:5; Num. 12:3.
 3. In order to be meek, we must sacrifice ourselves, regardless of how we are treated; in the church life we must not have a harsh, hard, or cruel attitude.
 4. In order to have the proper attitude, we must not be selfish; unselfishness produces meekness, mildness, and gentleness.
 5. In many local churches the problems come mostly from wrong, careless, cold, and harsh attitudes; Satan always uses careless attitudes to attack the church—Eph. 6:16.
 6. In order to have the church life, we need to learn that it is very fine, not rough; according to the type, the church is a corporate meal offering, a cake, made of fine flour—Lev. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:17.
- C. To be long-suffering is to endure mistreatment; to be long-suffering is mainly related to our spoken word:
1. A brother may wrong us, but for the Lord's glory and for the sake of the church life, we should not speak a word about it; to utter, express, and talk about everything that happens to us requires no long-suffering or patience.
 2. If we see the leading brothers quarreling, we may immediately go and relate this to another brother, but if we have learned the lesson, for the Lord's glory and for the sake of His church we will not say a word.
 3. If we learn to keep our words in such a proper way, we will realize the true meaning of the word *suffering* in the church life.
 4. Immediately after a message is given, we may begin to criticize the speaker, but if we have learned the lesson, we will say nothing negative about the ministry, despite what we feel about it, for the sake of the practice of the church life; our mouths will be under the control of the Holy Spirit.
 5. Our speech and our conversation damage the church more than anything else; once a story is secondhand, it begins to change, and eventually it can become a great exaggeration; this is always the case with rumors.
 6. In order to learn the lesson of long-suffering, we need to experience the suffering of restricting our mouth and stopping our tongue; we may see and hear many things, but we should not speak a word without the anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit so that the church life will be kept from damage.
- D. In order to bear one another in love, we need to fight against suspicion and fear in the church life:
1. Instead of suspicion and fear, we should have only love; love should prevail in the church life; love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything in the church life—12:31b.
 2. To have suspicion toward a brother means that our love is gone; then after suspicion, fear will follow; 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

3. It is always a temptation to know others' attitude toward us, how they consider us, and what is being said about us; in order to realize the church life, we must reject this temptation—cf. Eccl. 7:21-22.
- E. We need to be diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
 1. If we have peace only with God and not with all the brothers, we have lost the church life.
 2. The church life is tested by the peace we have, not only vertically with God but also horizontally with all the brothers.
 3. We should not be over-related or under-related to anyone; the uniting bond of peace is the balanced relatedness in the church.

III. We need to consider *one new man* in Ephesians 2:15 together with *one mouth* in Romans 15:6 and *speak the same thing* in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

- A. For the church as the one new man, we all need to take Christ as our person in the matter of speaking—Matt. 12:34-37; Eph. 3:17a; John 7:16-18; 8:28, 38a; 12:49-50; 14:10.
- B. The entire Bible has one mouth and speaks the same thing—Heb. 1:1-2a.
- C. In today's Christianity there are many mouths, each speaking a different thing; this is the pitiful situation of every preacher wanting to speak his own thing and thinking it a shame to speak what others have spoken—Gen. 11:7, 9.
- D. In the past there were too many mouths because there were too many persons.
- E. In the one new man there is one mouth to speak the same thing—Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.
- F. There is only one new man, and the one new man has only one person, so the one new man speaks with one mouth and says the same thing.
- G. *With one accord* and *with one mouth* (Rom 15:6) mean that even though we are many and all are speaking, we all *speak the same thing* (1 Cor. 1:10):
 1. The church is the one new man with only one person—Christ—and this person controls our speaking; thus, whatever He speaks is surely *the same thing*.
 2. When we are about to speak, we need to resolve a basic question: in this matter of speaking, am I the person or is Christ the person?
 3. If in our speaking we do not take ourselves as the person but allow Christ to be the person, then there will be one mouth, and everyone will speak the same thing.
- H. In the one new man there is only one person, and only this person has the freedom to speak—Matt. 17:5:
 1. In the one new man there is no freedom for us to speak our own things.
 2. The Lord Jesus has the absolute freedom to speak, and our natural man has absolutely no freedom to speak.
- I. Although we are many and come from many places, we all have one mouth, and we all speak the same thing; this is because we all are the one new man having only one person—Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; 3:17a; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.
- J. If we hold Christ as the Head (acknowledging that only He is the Head and

coming absolutely under His authority), we cannot have different interpretations of Scripture—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Col. 2:19:

1. Differences arise when someone is not holding the Head, because Christ cannot possibly say one thing to one member and something else to another.
 2. Christ is the unique authority in the Body; the place of all the members is to hold the Head and to acknowledge Him as the unique and supreme authority in all things.
- K. Only one kind of ministry builds up and never divides—this is the unique ministry of God’s economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4:
1. “Human pride always likes to make the self different from others. You may speak one thing, but I would never speak what you speak because of my pride. I want to speak something different from what you speak, something new and something better. This is the self, and this is fleshly pride” (*The Divine Economy*, p. 124).
 2. The only way that we can be preserved in the eternal oneness for the one new man is to teach the same thing, the economy of God—Rom. 15:6.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

IN THE NEW MAN THERE BEING ONLY ONE MOUTH

The Body is a matter of being members one of another, but for the new man the requirements are even more than what the Body requires. For many years I read Romans 15:6, which says, “That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify... God.” I felt that I did not understand this word. How could so many Christians come together and have only one mouth? I did not understand it at that time. One day, however, I saw that the church is one new man. How many mouths does a man have? He has one. Not only are we all members one of another, but we also all speak with one mouth. Do you see how much is required of us? It is already restricting enough to be members one of another, and now even when we speak, we all have to have one mouth. This is not my word; it is Paul’s word. How many mouths does the one new man have? One. Then who is the mouth? If you say that Christ is the mouth, you are too transcendent. In order to resolve this matter, you must see that there is only one new man with only one person. In the whole body there is only one mouth, but who controls this mouth? It is the person who controls the mouth.

The church is not merely the Body but also the one new man. The Body needs Christ as its life, whereas the new man needs Christ as his person. When you want to speak, when I want to speak, when any one of us wants to speak, we must resolve the basic question: who is the person that is speaking here? If you are the person, you have your own mouth. If I am the person, I have my own mouth. Thus, you have your mouth, and I have my mouth; therefore, there are two mouths. When each one is a person individually and each one speaks his own matters, we have many mouths. This is a society or a denomination, and this is the condition of today’s degraded Christianity. In the Lord’s recovery, however, the church is the Body, and the church is the one new man. The Body has Christ as life, and the new man has Christ as a person. When you speak, it is not you who are the person; when I speak, neither

is it I. When anyone speaks, it is Christ who is the person. What is the result? The result is that there is only one mouth.

This is why in 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul says that all “speak the same thing.” This verse greatly bothered me many years ago. I thought, “How could all Christians speak the same thing?” It seemed to me that this was impossible, but one day I understood. The church is the one new man with only one person, and this person controls our speaking, so whatever He speaks is surely “the same thing” that we all speak as the new man.

Many preachers and pastors in today’s Christianity are all their own persons, all have their own mouths, and all speak their own things. Therefore, they have many mouths, each speaking a different thing. However, the church is not like this. The church is the one new man with Christ as his person. Whenever the brothers and sisters are about to speak something, they do not take themselves as the person; instead, they allow Christ to be the person. You let Christ be your person when you speak, and I let Christ be my person when I speak. Eventually, everyone speaks the same thing.

Consider the Bible. The Old and New Testaments contain sixty-six books written by more than forty different authors in many different places over a period of fifteen or sixteen hundred years. The first book, Genesis, was written about 1500 B.C., while the last book, Revelation, was written after A.D. 90. Do they all have one mouth? Do they all speak the same thing? The entire Bible has one mouth and speaks the same thing, even though it was written over a long period of time by many different people in many different places. Now you can understand what it means to have one mouth speaking the same thing. In the East, in the West, in the United States, in Germany, in Great Britain, in Japan, and in Korea, we can have many people speaking, but all have one mouth and say one thing. Although we are many and we come from many places, all of us have one mouth, and we all speak the same thing. This is because we all are the one new man having only one person.

Dear brothers and sisters, what I have fellowshiped with you here is something that I know. Many times I wanted to speak, but I checked within, asking myself, “Is it I who want to speak, or is it the Lord?” In other words, in the matter of speaking, is the Lord the person, or am I the person? If it is I, there will be a problem; if it is the Lord, there will be no problem. If I allow the Lord to be the person, He is the One who speaks; then two months later, if you allow the Lord to be the person, you will speak the same thing that I have spoken. We have one mouth speaking the same thing.

In Christianity today you see a pitiful condition because every preacher wants to speak his own thing, and he thinks it is a shame to speak what others have spoken. Thus, you speak your thing, and he speaks his; sometimes someone will use something from someone else’s speaking, but he will do it secretly. This has actually happened in America. Fifteen years ago, before the Lord’s recovery went to the United States, almost no one spoke about the human spirit and transformation, but now these have become common terms. There are also some people who used our materials to study the book of Romans, and after they finished their studies and

printed them, they said that they discovered these things themselves through their own study. This is not proper.

There is, however, another condition in which people blindly follow others: I speak whatever you speak, and you speak whatever I speak. In this way we make a show to everyone that we all have only one mouth and that we speak the same thing. You must see that in neither case is the condition right. We do not want the condition in Christianity, nor do we want a condition of blindly following others. We want a condition in which the one new man speaks. There is only one new man, and this one new man has only one person, so the one new man speaks with one mouth and says the same thing.

**THERE BEING NO FREEDOM
TO SPEAK OUR OWN THINGS IN THE NEW MAN**

In the new man there is no freedom to speak your own things. This is more limiting and restricting than being members one of another. Everyone knows that what limits you the most is the matter of speaking. If I cannot say this or that—whatever I like—then I am very much restricted, but if I can say whatever I want, then I am very free. However, in the church, in the Body of Christ, and especially in the new man, neither your natural man nor my natural man has freedom of speech. This is because we ourselves are not the persons. In the one new man there is only one person. Only this person has the freedom to speak, and our natural man has absolutely no freedom of speech. The Lord has the absolute freedom to speak, and I absolutely have no freedom to speak. We cannot allow the natural man to speak; we definitely must not allow it. Only the one person should speak.

You have to consider *one mouth* in Romans 15:6 and *speak the same thing* in 1 Corinthians 1:10 together with *one new man* in Ephesians 2:15. Otherwise, you will never understand the first two verses. You may wonder how the entire church can have only one mouth and how millions of members can speak the same thing. Humanly speaking, this is absolutely impossible. However, we must see that in Romans 15, Paul is speaking of a local church. In a local church there must be only one mouth. Here in Taipei there should be only one mouth. There should also be only one mouth in the churches in Southeast Asia. This is because there is only one person. In the past you had too many mouths because you had too many persons. When there are many persons, there are many ideas; when there are many ideas, there are many opinions, but we thank the Lord that now there is one mouth and one person here. There are no policemen here; each of us is absolutely free, but on the other hand, you have absolutely no freedom because within you there is another person. You may be about to speak, but something “pinches” you from within, telling you not to say anything. All you can say is, “Thank the Lord!” When you want to speak again, the Lord pinches you again, so you simply say Amen! If the Lord did not pinch this one and that one, I tell you, the brothers and sisters would most certainly quarrel when they come together.

There are many people in the church in Taipei, but there is no quarreling. The reason is that for many years they have had the grace to take Christ as their person. It is not I speaking, nor is it you speaking, nor is it he speaking, nor is it the

brothers speaking, nor is it the sisters speaking; instead, everyone says, "Lord, You speak!"

Do not think that the reason we do not speak is because we were born with only half a lip. No, rather it seems that we were born with eight lips. Many years ago, however, when I was young, I made those careful calculations. It was not up to me to be a man, but if I am a man, then I must be a Christian; if I am going to be a Christian, then I must be one according to the Bible; if I am going to live according to the Bible, then I will be "chained." Hence, many times at critical moments I did not say anything. Why? Because the person within me did not speak. I am not the person; Christ is. We should take Christ not only to be our life but also to be our person. We should not only eat His riches to take them in and assimilate them into our being; we should also allow Him to be our person.

TOGETHER TAKING CHRIST AS THE PERSON IN THE NEW MAN

If you visit Christianity throughout all the world, you will not hear the phrase *taking Christ as the person*. This matter, however, is truly in the Bible because the church is the new man. Today this new man needs a person, and who is this person? It is Christ Himself. How do we know this? It is because Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may make His home in your hearts." If Christ wants to make His home in our heart, does this not mean that He wants to be the person there? When you live in a house and make it your home, then you become the person of that house. Ephesians says more clearly than the other books that we must let Christ make His home in our heart, and this is because He wants to be the person in us.

This, however, does not mean that He is in you as your person, He is in me as my person, and He is in another one as his person. This is an improper understanding. I tell you that He is in all of us as one person. The person in you is the person who is in me. We all have only one person. Who is this person? This person is Christ.

Brothers and sisters, in the last days of this age, before the Lord will be able to return, we must see the Body and the new man. When we come to the end of the Bible, in Revelation 22, the Spirit and the bride appear. At the end the new man is a bride. The church's experience in Christ definitely must arrive at this stage. First it is the Body, then it is the new man, and finally it is the bride. It is not as some say in Christianity, that the believers will be gathered into one place, and the Lord will change them instantly into His bride. Instead, today we must receive grace to see the Body, to see the new man, and finally to see the bride.

THE BODY BEING FOR MOVING, AND THE NEW MAN BEING FOR LIVING

We still have not arrived at the highest point in our vision because our knowledge of the Body is insufficient, our knowledge of the new man is not enough, and also our knowledge of the bride is very limited. Nevertheless, I hope that we can see something concerning the Body and the new man. The Body is a matter of life, and the new man is a matter of person. The Body is for moving; it is an instrument for action. Thus, it was in one Body that the Lord Jesus reconciled both the Jewish and

Gentile believers to God. This reconciliation is a Body matter. In the past we thought that when you were saved, you were reconciled to God, and when I was saved, I was reconciled to God. In other words, we thought that we were individually saved and individually reconciled to God. This is an erroneous concept. We must see that we who were far off and separated from God were reconciled to God not individually but in a corporate instrument. What is this instrument? This instrument is the Body of Christ. In one Body both the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers have been reconciled to God. This shows us that the Body is an instrument used by Christ.

When we move, we move in our body. For example, when I came downstairs today, I did it in my body. As I speak to you now, I am doing it in my body. If I were not in my body, there would be no way for me to speak. All my actions are in my body. My body is an instrument for different actions. When the church preaches the gospel, this is an action, and this action is in the Body and is carried out by the Body. Our body is an instrument for moving. Our life needs to increase and grow in order that our body might be healthy and strong enough to meet the need of our moving.

Then what about the new man? The new man is not for moving; the new man is for decision making and for living. As a human being you may not move at all, but you still must live. The Body is for moving, and the new man is for living. Concerning the new man, Ephesians 4:24 says that it was created according to God in righteousness and holiness. Righteousness and holiness are conditions of our living. Thus, living is entirely a matter of the new man. The new man is for living, and eighty to ninety percent of our living is in making decisions. Therefore, you can see two things: the church as the Body is for moving, and the church as the new man is for living by making decisions. On the one hand, the church is the Body of Christ, and we take Christ as our life to act, to work, and to bear responsibilities. On the other hand, the church is the new man, and we take Christ as our person to make plans and to decide on how we should live. Whether it is the Body or the new man, whether in working and moving or in living and deciding, everything is corporate; nothing is individual. You must see that your living today is the living of the new man, a corporate living, and your decisions are corporate decisions and not your personal decisions. For example, you may be trying to decide and to conclude whether you should open a factory or become an educator. There is a kind of living here. If you see that you are a part in the new man, you will not want to decide by yourself as the person. You will want to take Christ as your person together with all the other parts in the new man. At this time, when you are about to make a decision concerning your human life, you will not take yourself as the person; rather, you will take Christ as your person in the new man to make the decision. When you live your life by taking Christ as your person, your living will be the living of the new man.

The living of the new man has two characteristics: one is righteousness and the other is holiness. Righteousness is according to God's ways, and holiness is according to God's nature. When all the things in your living, whether great or small, are exactly the same in their nature as God's nature and exactly the same in their ways as God's ways, then there is holiness and righteousness. However, this kind of living

is not the individual living of sanctification referred to in Christianity. Rather, the kind of living meant here is that you live a life in the new man by Christ as the person and that He is the One who makes all the decisions in you. Thus, whatever is lived out is righteousness and holiness. This is not related to our move or work; it is related only to our living. This is the aspect of the new man. The other aspect is the Body. As the Body, we move. Christ is our Head, so we move, and our moving is not based on our own strength or our own life but upon Christ as our life and strength. Furthermore, our move is not as individuals.

These two matters show that we cannot be individualistic. We must see that we are a corporate Body, and we are a corporate new man. Our living is corporate, and our moving is corporate. In our moving we take Christ as our life, and in our living we take Christ as our person. In the Body, Christ is our life, and in the new man, Christ is our person. In the Body we are members one of another, and in the new man we all have one mouth to speak the same thing. This is the church. (*One Body, One Spirit, and One New Man*, pp. 58-65)