

**Outline of  
the Messages for the Full-time Training  
in the Fall Term of 2015**

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**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE BUILDING WORK OF GOD**

Message Fourteen

**The Ministry That Builds Up the Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Cor. 3:6; 4:1, 10-12; 1:8-10

- I. “For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ”—Eph. 4:12:**
- A. *Unto* in Ephesians 4:12 means “resulting in,” “for the purpose of,” or “with a view to.”
  - B. The many gifted persons in verse 11 have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ; this is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy—2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12.
  - C. The building up of the Body of Christ is the work of the ministry—Eph. 4:12:
    - 1. Whatever the gifted persons do as the work of the ministry must be for the building up of the Body of Christ.
    - 2. This building up is not accomplished directly by the gifted ones but by the saints who have been perfected by the gifted ones.
    - 3. The work of the ministry is both of the perfecting ones and the perfected ones; the building up of the Body is the work not only of the gifted ones but also of all the perfected saints.
    - 4. The unique work of building up the Body of Christ is the responsibility not mainly of the gifted ones but of all the saints.
    - 5. The gifted ones and all the believers work together to build up the Body.
  - D. The gifted persons are for the perfecting of the saints—vv. 11-12:
    - 1. The gifted persons perfect the saints in the divine dispensing in order that all the saints may be able to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ—3:1, 7-9, 15-16a; 4:12.
    - 2. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them according to the tree of life with the life supply for their growth in life—Gen. 2:9; 1 Cor. 3:2, 6; Eph. 4:13-15.
    - 3. The gifted persons perfect the saints to do what they do—v. 11.
  - E. The result of this perfecting is that we will all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—v. 13.
  - F. In order to be perfected, we need to pay attention to life and to function—vv. 12, 16; Rom. 12:4-5:

1. The way to be perfected is to grow in life and to become skillful in function.
2. To perfect a saint is to complete him, to equip him, and to furnish him—Eph. 4:12:
  - a. The saints need to be fed so that they may grow in the divine life, and they need to be trained so that they may function with the proper skill.
  - b. In spiritual things we need maturity and skill; the maturity comes from growth, and the skill comes from training.

**II. “Having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart”—2 Cor. 4:1:**

- A. This is the unique ministry common to all the apostles of Christ—the ministry of the new covenant for the accomplishing of God’s New Testament economy—3:6.
- B. All the apostles carry out the unique ministry, the ministering of Christ to others for the building up of His Body—Eph. 3:8; 4:12, 16.
- C. The function of the ministry of the new covenant is to impart life to others (2 Cor. 4:12), to supply grace to the saints (1:15; 4:15; 6:1), to dispense the processed and consummated Triune God into the believers (13:14), and to write living letters of Christ with the life-giving Spirit as the essence (3:1-6).
- D. The goal of the ministry of the new covenant is to make the believers the same as God in life, nature, and expression (vv. 3, 6, 18; 5:21), to build up the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem (Eph. 4:12, 16; Rev. 21:2), and to incorporate the believers into Christ for the consummation of the universal divine-human incorporation (John 14:20; 2 Cor. 5:20-21; Rev. 21:16).
- E. The ministry of the new covenant is produced by revelation plus suffering—2 Cor. 12:1, 7; 1:3-5, 8-10:
  1. In the Epistles of Paul we see three things—revelation, suffering, and ministry—Eph. 3:5; Rom. 16:25; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 4:1.
  2. How much life and how much reality of the riches of Christ we can minister depends upon two elements—how much revelation we have received and how much we have suffered for what has been revealed to us—Acts 22:14-15; 9:15-16.
- F. The ministers of the new covenant experience God as the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 1:8-10:
  1. The ministers of the new covenant have the response, or answer, of death in themselves so that they would not base their confidence on themselves but on God, who raises the dead—1:9; 3:5; 4:14.
  2. When we are under the killing of the Lord’s death, His resurrection life is imparted through us into others; this is to minister life for the building up of the Body of Christ—vv. 10-12.