

**LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER
FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Three

Loving the Lord Jesus Christ in Incorruptibility

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:24; 1:4; 2:10; 3:16-17; 4:22-24; 5:18-19; 6:10-11

I. “Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility”—Eph. 6:24:

- A. Grace is needed for us to live a church life that fulfills God’s purpose and solves God’s problem with His enemy—1:2; 3:2, 8, 10-11; 4:7, 29.
- B. The enjoyment of the Lord as grace is with those who love Him—6:24:
 - 1. Love in 1:4 refers to the love with which God loves His chosen ones and His chosen ones love Him:
 - a. It is in this love that God’s chosen ones become holy and without blemish before Him.
 - b. God first loved us, and then this divine love inspires us to love Him in return.
 - c. In such a condition and atmosphere of love, we are saturated with God to be holy and without blemish, just as He is.
 - 2. According to 3:17, we may be rooted and grounded in love, and according to verse 19, we can know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ; as God’s cultivated land, we need to be rooted for our growth, and as God’s building, we need to be grounded for our building up—1 Cor. 3:9.
 - 3. Ephesians 4:15-16 reveals that we hold to truth in love and that the Body builds itself up in love:
 - a. This is the love of God in Christ, which becomes the love of Christ in us, by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body—1 John 4:7-8, 10-12, 16, 19.
 - b. Love is the inner substance of God; the goal of Ephesians is to bring us into God’s inner substance so that we may enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love, and thereby love others as Christ did—5:2, 25.
- C. For the proper church life we need to love the Lord in incorruptibility—6:24:
 - 1. According to the usage of *incorruptible* in the writings of Paul, this word refers mainly to God and the things of God; everything natural is corruptible, but God, the divine life, and all things that are in resurrection are incorruptible—1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:42, 52-54.
 - 2. To love the Lord in incorruptibility is to love Him in the new creation, not in the old creation—Eph. 2:15; 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17.
 - 3. To love the Lord in incorruptibility is to love Him in the regenerated and renewed spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit—John 3:6; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 1:7.

4. To love the Lord in incorruptibility means to love Him according to all the incorruptible things revealed in Ephesians:
 - a. We need to love the Lord Jesus in His being the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9); in His being the element of the Body (1 Cor. 12:12); in His being reality, grace, peace, love, and light (John 1:17; 8:12; 14:6; Eph. 2:14; 1 John 4:8); and in His being the constituent of the one new man (Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10-11).
 - b. All these things are related to what is revealed and taught in Ephesians, including the Triune God, Christ, and His Body, the church.
 - c. Ephesians speaks concerning the dispensing of the Triune God to produce the church (1:3-23; 3:16-21), of what Christ is and has done for the church (1:7; 2:13-18; 5:25-27, 29), and about the church being the Body of Christ, being the bride of Christ, and being one with Christ in the heavenlies (1:22-23; 5:23, 25-27; 2:6).
 - d. All these matters are incorruptible, and if we love the Lord Jesus in all these things, our love toward Him will be incorruptible (6:24); such a love is not a natural love; it is a love in resurrection, the love that God Himself is in His divine essence (1 John 4:16).
5. In the Lord's recovery we need to love our Lord Jesus Christ in all the divine, spiritual, heavenly, and incorruptible things revealed in Ephesians concerning the Triune God, the divine life, what Christ is to us, what He has done, and the church—1:3-23; 2:5-6, 13-18; 3:16-21; 4:4-6; 5:23, 25-27.

II. Paul's blessing at the end of his Epistle to the Ephesians foreshadows a problem that would arise: the love in the church in Ephesus would fade, as indicated by the Lord's rebuke in Revelation 2:2-5:

- A. The concluding word of Ephesians 6:24 adds a condition to the presence of grace: loving the Lord in incorruptibility; this seems to imply that if the Ephesians did not love the Lord in such a way, the grace of the Lord would no longer be with them.
- B. Ephesians emphasizes the relationship between grace and love (1:2, 4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2; 6:23-24); this indicates that if we want to receive and enjoy grace continually, we need to fulfill one condition—love.
- C. The church in Ephesus failed in the matter of loving the Lord; such a failure became the main reason for the failure of the church throughout the ages—Matt. 24:12; Mark 12:30-31; cf. Dan. 7:25:
 1. The genuine ministry of the New Testament always stirs us up to love the Lord Jesus with the first love, strengthening us in the simplicity of enjoying Christ as our life supply—2 Cor. 11:2-3; 3:3-6.
 2. The churches in Asia, including the church in Ephesus, turned away from the apostle Paul's betrothing ministry (2 Tim. 1:15; 2 Cor. 11:2-3); approximately twenty-six years later, when the apostle John wrote the epistle to the church in Ephesus, they had left their first love and lost the genuine enjoyment of Christ, resulting in the loss of the testimony of the Lord (Rev. 2:4-5, 7).

III. The revelation of the church in the Epistle to the Ephesians has two main aspects: the first aspect is the work of the ministry to build up the Body of Christ, and the second aspect is our spiritual life, which comprises many spiritual experiences that enable us to live a life that matches the church life:

- A. We need to love the Lord in incorruptibility by doing the work of the ministry to build up the Body of Christ:
1. What is needed today is an organic building of the Body not directly by Christ as the Head or by the gifted persons but by all the members being perfected to function as the gifted persons do—4:11-16.
 2. The building up of the Body of Christ comprises the following categories of work, which are eternal and glorious:
 - a. We need to visit others with the gospel to bring them into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 15:5; cf. 2 Tim. 1:10), offering them as sacrifices to God (Rom. 15:16).
 - b. We need to shepherd the new believers in home meetings (John 15:16; 21:15-17), nourishing them and helping them to grow so that they can offer themselves as living sacrifices to God (1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 12:1).
 - c. We need to perfect the saints in group meetings that they may do the work of the ministry unto the organic building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25.
 - d. We need to lead the saints to prophesy, to speak for God, one by one in the church meetings for the organic building up of the church—1 Cor. 14:3, 4b, 12, 26, 31.
 3. This is the organic service of the Body of Christ, which is also the organic service of the New Testament priesthood of the gospel (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), in which we have to be like the apostle Paul, who labored and struggled in all wisdom to present every man full-grown in Christ to God (Col. 1:28-29).
- B. We need to love the Lord in incorruptibility in the spiritual experiences that match the church life as unveiled in each chapter of Ephesians:
1. Chapter 1 unveils our being chosen in Christ to be holy and without blemish before God in love (v. 4); chapter 2 unveils our being God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works (v. 10); chapter 3 unveils the unsearchable riches of Christ becoming our enjoyment, Christ making His home in our hearts, and our being filled unto all the fullness of God (vv. 8, 14-19); chapter 4 unveils our putting off the old man and putting on the new man (vv. 22-24); chapter 5 unveils our being filled in spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with our heart to the Lord (vv. 18-19); and chapter 6 unveils our being empowered in the Lord and putting on the whole armor of God (vv. 10-11).
 2. The key to all the spiritual experiences in Ephesians is to be strengthened into the inner man (3:16) in order to be supplied with the supporting grace (vv. 2, 8; 6:24).
 3. This is the miraculous yet normal way to live the church life, a revived life, a life that continually overcomes, and a life that loves the Lord in incorruptibility.