

# LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

## The Function of the Church

(1)

### The House of the Living God and the Pillar and Base of the Truth

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16-17; 10:32; 11:16; Eph. 2:19, 21-22

**I. *The house of God modifies the church, and the pillar and base of the truth also modifies the church; the house of God and the pillar and base of the truth describe what the church is—1 Tim. 3:15.***

**II. The church is the house of God—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:**

- A. The expression *the church of God* indicates that the church is possessed by God and that the church has the nature of God and is constituted with the element of God—Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13.
- B. The church is *of* God because it is produced of God as the source and has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, universal, and eternal—1 Cor. 3:16-17.
- C. The content of the church essentially is God Himself—10:32.

**III. The church of God is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:**

- A. The house of God is the household of God—Eph. 2:19:
  - 1. The dwelling place—the house—and the family—the household—are one entity—a group of called, regenerated ones indwelt by God Himself—1 Pet. 1:3; 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16.
  - 2. Just as Christ is not separate from the members of His Body but dwells in them, the Father is not a separate member of His household but is in all the children—Rom. 8:16; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 3:16.
  - 3. The house of God is organic in the divine life, organic in the divine nature, and organic in the Triune God—Eph. 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:4; Matt. 28:19.
  - 4. Because the church is organic, the church grows—Eph. 2:21.
- B. In speaking of the church as the house of God, Paul refers to God as the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:
  - 1. The living God, who lives in the church, must be subjective to the church and not merely objective—1 Cor. 3:16.
  - 2. Because God is living, the church as the house of God is also living in Him, by Him, and with Him.
  - 3. A living God and a living church live, move, and work together.
- C. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—the place where God can have His rest and put His trust—Eph. 2:22.

- D. The church as the house of God—the Father’s house—is the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation as the issue of Christ’s being glorified by the Father with the divine glory—John 12:23; 13:31-32; 14:20.

**IV. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6; John 11:25; 14:6; 18:37b:**

- A. *Truth* means “reality,” denoting all the real things revealed in God’s Word, which are mainly Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 2:4; Col. 2:9, 19.
- B. The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life that is indestructible, unconquerable, and able to withstand decline into death from any source—1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12, 19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7.
- C. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself—John 14:6:
  - 1. Life is the inward and intrinsic element, and truth is the outward definition and explanation—1:4; 18:37b; 8:12, 32, 36; 17:17.
  - 2. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth; in order to experience the Lord as life, we must know the truth—14:6; 11:25; 8:32, 36.
- D. The content of the church should be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Col. 2:19; 3:4:
  - 1. Truth is the shining, the expression, of the divine light—John 8:12, 32, 36; 1 John 1:5-6.
  - 2. The standard of the truth should constantly be raised higher among all the churches in the Lord’s recovery—1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15.
  - 3. We need to grow in life, be saved in life, be filled with life, and reign in life—Eph. 4:13-16; Rom. 5:10, 17.

**V. The church is the supporting pillar and the holding base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15:**

- A. The truth is the Triune God, having Christ as the embodiment, center, and expression, to produce the church as the Body of Christ, the house of God, and the kingdom of God—Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3, 5.
- B. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in the New Testament concerning Christ and the church according to God’s New Testament economy—Matt. 16:16, 18; Eph. 5:32:
  - 1. The church is the supporting pillar and holding base of all these realities.
  - 2. A local church should be such a building that holds, bears, and testifies the truth, the reality, of Christ and the church—2:22.
- C. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies to the whole universe that Christ, and Christ alone, is the reality—John 1:14, 17; 14:6.
- D. As the pillar that bears the truth and the base that upholds the pillar, the church testifies the reality, the truth, of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
- E. In order for the church to function as the pillar and base of the truth, we all need to arrive at the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1.

**VI. When every brother and sister is full of life and truth, the church will be strong as the house of the living God and the pillar and base of the truth; this is what is needed in the Lord's recovery today—1 Tim. 3:15.**