

Message Six

Closely Following the Present Vision of the Lord's Recovery by Holding to the Teaching of the Apostles to Remain in the Essence of Oneness

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Titus 1:9; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; John 17:11, 21-23

- I. We must closely follow the present vision of the Lord's recovery by holding to the teaching of the apostles, the teaching of God's eternal economy; this teaching is the holding factor of the one accord—Titus 1:9; Acts 2:42a, 46a; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:10; Eph. 1:10; 3:9:**
 - A. The central vision of God in the entire Bible is the vision of God's economy, which is God working Himself through His Divine Trinity into man, in order that man would enjoy the riches of Christ to become His members and be constituted into the Body of Christ for the manifestation of the Triune God—vv. 8-11, 16-21; 4:4-6.
 - B. The one thing, the unique thing, in the Lord's recovery is God's eternal economy with Christ as the centrality and universality—Col. 3:10-11.
 - C. The content of God's eternal economy is Christ; actually, Christ Himself in His full ministry of three stages is the divine economy—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6:
 1. Christ is the hub (the center), the spokes (the support), and the rim (the circumference) of the great wheel of God's economy—Col. 1:17; Ezek. 1:15.
 2. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge and experience of Christ; focusing on anything other than this "one thing" causes us to think differently, thus creating dissensions among us—Phil. 2:2; 3:8, 12-14; Luke 10:41b-42; Psa. 27:4.
 - D. Various strange teachings other than the unique teaching of the eternal economy of God are always used by Satan to cause dissension and even division in the church—Heb. 13:9a; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3-4.
 - E. Any teaching, even a scriptural one, that distracts us from Christ and the church is a wind that carries us away from God's central purpose—Eph. 4:14:
 1. What we teach should not be measured by whether or not it is scriptural; it must be measured by whether or not it is divisive.
 2. The winds of teaching overthrow the faith of some believers, frustrate the building up of the Body of Christ, and divide the members of the organic Body of Christ—2 Tim. 2:18; 1 Cor. 1:10-11.
 - F. The one thing that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord's recovery is the eternal economy of God; 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.
- II. 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. 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—Col. 3:10-11; Heb. 1:1-2a; cf. Gen. 11:7, 9.
- C. *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).
- D. The church is the one new man with only one person—Christ; this person controls our speaking; thus, whatever He speaks is surely *the same thing*.
- E. 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.
- F. 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; 2 Cor. 2:10.

III. The oneness in God's economy is preserved by life and light, which are the essence of oneness:

- A. Ezekiel 37 reveals that when we are gathered together in oneness, we receive the breathing of God as life and the speaking of God as light—vv. 1-14:
 - 1. The unique way to have the Body of Christ in the genuine oneness is the way of life—Matt. 7:13-14; Rev. 22:1; John 10:10a; 1:4; 8:12; Col. 2:19.
 - 2. God speaks out of the Tent of Meeting on the ground of oneness; His speaking brings in light, and light issues in life; we have light because we are on the ground of oneness—Lev. 1:1; Exo. 25:22; cf. Rom. 3:25.
 - 3. Light, life, and oneness are a cycle—the more light, the more life; the more life, the more oneness; and the more oneness, the more light—1 John 1:1-9.
- B. Psalm 133 says that *there*, upon the oneness, the Lord commands the blessing—life forever; if we would remain in the oneness, we must remain in life, because life maintains the oneness—v. 3.
- C. John 17 reveals that the essence of oneness is life and light:
 - 1. To be kept in the Father's name is to be kept by and in His life; only those who are born of the Father and have the Father's life can participate in the Father's name—v. 11.
 - 2. To be sanctified in the Father's word, the truth, is a matter of light; the sanctifying truth is the shining of the light, by which we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God—vv. 17, 21.
 - 3. To be perfected in the Father's glory is to be brought into the enjoyment of the God of glory in a corporate, built-up way to arrive at the oneness in the Triune God for His radiant expression—vv. 22-23; Eph. 4:11-13.
- D. Revelation 21 and 22 reveal that life and light are the essence of the oneness of the New Jerusalem—21:23; 22:1-2, 14, 17.

IV. Oneness keeps us from evil, whereas division opens the door to evil:

- A. Oneness is all-inclusive; it includes God the Father, Christ the Lord, the Spirit as the Giver of life, and every positive blessing—Psa. 133; Eph. 1:3; 4:4-6.

- B. Division is all-inclusive; it includes Satan, sin, worldliness, the flesh, the self, the old man, evil temper, and every negative thing—Rom. 16:17-18; Jude 19.
 - C. The New Jerusalem will be the ultimate consummation of oneness and of all the positive things included in it, but the lake of fire will be the ultimate reservoir of division and of all the negative things included in it—Rev. 21:2; 20:10.
- V. In order to remain in the essence of oneness, we must reject our self-choice and self-preference; the divisions among God's people are the result of having different preferences—Deut. 12:5, 8, 13, 17; 1 Cor. 1:10-12:**
- A. The children of Israel were not allowed to worship God and enjoy the offerings in the place of their choice; this was for the keeping of the oneness of God's people, thus avoiding the division caused by man's preference—Deut. 12:8, 13, 17; cf. John 4:24; Eph. 4:3; 1 Cor. 1:10.
 - B. In the distribution of the good land, Reuben and Gad exercised their own choice regarding their portion of the land—Num. 32:1-22:
 - 1. Eventually, because they acted according to their own choice, their land was the first part of the land of Israel to be taken over by the Gentile invaders from the east—1 Chron. 5:25-26.
 - 2. In spiritual matters it is much better not to act according to our choice but to leave matters in the hand of the Lord and let Him do what He wants according to His choice; we may think that our choice is the best, but actually it is the worst—cf. Gen. 13:5-18.
 - 3. The two tribes made their request because of what they had (a very great abundance of livestock—Num. 32:1) and because of what they saw (a land good for livestock—v. 4):
 - a. This shows that self-choice comes from two things—considering what we have and need and considering how a particular situation or opportunity that we see in front of us fits in with our needs.
 - b. In the church life and in the Lord's work, we must resist the temptation of having our self-choice for taking care of our own welfare.
 - 4. In serving the Lord, we need to learn to give up our own choice in order to avoid obligating ourselves to God and to His people—v. 22.
 - 5. Reuben and Gad did not cross the river Jordan to receive the promise of the good land with the body of the children of Israel; this signifies our old man not being dealt with and buried and our receiving the enjoyment of Christ separately, without the Body of Christ.
 - 6. We must learn not to follow the example of Reuben and Gad but to follow the pattern of the other tribes, who allowed the Lord to make the choice for them; in all that we do, we must be Body-conscious and Body-centered:
 - a. Every local church has its own administration, but whatever a local church does must be done with careful consideration of how this would affect the other churches as the local expressions of the entire Body.
 - b. We all must see that we are here for the Lord's recovery and that the Lord's recovery is of the Lord's one move by His one ministry to produce His unique Body for His unique testimony.