

KNOWING THE BODY—THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY

Evening Session—Message One

The Growth of the Body—into the Head and the Function of the Body—out from the Head

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19

- I. The Body of Christ, as the church of God, is the organism of the Triune God, not an organization of human beings—John 15:1-5; Eph. 1:22-23.**
- II. The organic building up of the Body is the growth of the Body, which is the growth of God, the increase of God as life, in all the members—2:21-22; 4:16; Col. 2:19; cf. John 3:30:**
 - A. To grow in life is to have more of God in us; our problem is that we are short of God—cf. Job 1:1-5; 42:1-6.
 - B. The growing members are the building members—Eph. 4:16.
- III. We need to grow up into Christ, the Head, in all things—v. 15:**
 - A. In order to grow up into the Head, we must hold to truth in love:
 1. Truth here means things that are true—Rom. 3:4:
 - a. We need to hold to God's eternal economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4:
 - (1) This is the economy of the mystery hidden in God—Eph. 3:9.
 - (2) This economy is to have the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate in the New Jerusalem for the manifestation of Christ as God's multifarious wisdom—vv. 10-11; 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 1:30.
 - b. We need to hold to the all-inclusive Christ—John 14:6; Eph. 1:23:
 - (1) His measure is immeasurable—3:18.
 - (2) His riches are unsearchable—v. 8.
 - c. We need to hold to the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15:
 - (1) The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—Acts 9:4; 1 Cor. 12:12.
 - (2) The Body of Christ is the fullness, the expression, of Christ and of God—Eph. 1:23; 3:19.
 2. We hold to truth in the element and sphere of the divine love—Eph. 4:15.
 - B. We grow up into the Head in all things—in all things means in everything, big or small in our daily life and in our work—cf. Zech. 4:6, 10.
 - C. We grow up into the Head through acknowledging the authority of the headship of Christ—cf. Josh. 9:14:
 1. As the Head of everyone—1 Cor. 11:3.
 2. As the Head of the church—Eph. 5:23.
 3. As the Head of all things—Eph. 1:22, 10.
 - D. We grow up into the Head by allowing Christ to increase and grow in all the inward parts of our being:
 1. In order to grow in life, we must know, we must use, and we must exercise our mingled spirit:

- a. Ephesians 1:17 shows that we need to pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to fully know Christ and God's economy.
 - b. Ephesians 2:22 says that all the believers are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 - c. Ephesians 3:5 says that the mystery of Christ has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit.
 - d. Ephesians 3:16 shows that we need to pray to be strengthened into the inner man, which is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life.
 - e. Ephesians 4:23 tells us to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.
 - f. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled in spirit.
 - g. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to pray at every time in spirit.
2. In order to grow in life, we must feed on the milk and food of the holy Word, as the embodiment of Christ, the living Word of God—1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14.

IV. As we grow up into the Head in life, our function will come out from the Head for the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16:

- A. When we allow Christ to be the Head in everything and when we grow up into Him in all things, we will be supplied with the riches of His life, receiving something from Him to transfuse into other members of the Body—1 Cor. 14:4b; John 7:37-39:
 - 1. To build up the Body of Christ is to minister Christ as the life-giving Spirit into the saints for their growth into Christ—2 Cor. 3:6, 8.
 - 2. We must help the saints learn to enjoy the Lord and be nourished by the Lord so that they can grow—Phil. 1:25; 2 Cor. 1:24.
- B. All the Body causes the growth of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:16:
 - 1. This growth is through every joint of the rich supply—all the particular gifts in the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12.
 - 2. This growth is through the operation in measure of each one part—every member in the Body of Christ—vv. 7-8.
- C. The building up of the Body of Christ is in love and by love—1 Cor. 8:1b:
 - 1. Love is the most excellent way to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:13.
 - 2. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as God's inner substance (1 John 4:8, 16) 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—Eph. 5:25; 6:24; 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2.