

KNOWING THE BODY—THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BODY

Morning Session—Message Three

Life's Prayer for the Oneness of the Body

Scripture Reading: John 17:6-24

I. Before going to the cross the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father, expressing His earnest desire that all His believers be one:

- A. The oneness of the Body has the oneness among the three of the Divine Trinity as a model, and the oneness of the Body of Christ is the enlarged oneness of the Divine Trinity—vv. 11, 21.
- B. The church as the Body of Christ is the oneness lived out of the believers in the Triune God; we must treasure and pursue this oneness—Eph. 4:1-6.

II. There are three levels of the oneness of the believers:

- A. The first level of oneness is the oneness in the Father's name and by the Father's divine life—John 17:6-13:
 - 1. The Father's name denotes the person of the Father, the Father Himself as the source of life, the source of oneness—vv. 6, 11; 5:26, 43:
 - a. We must take the Father as the source of life and blessing—cf. Matt. 14:19; Rom. 11:36.
 - b. We must not live by our human life but by the Father's divine life—John 6:57.
 - c. We must live in our spirit to enjoy our all-inclusive sonship—Rom. 8:15-16.
 - 2. The Father's life with His nature is the element of the oneness—John 17:2; cf. Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The second level of oneness is the oneness in the reality of the sanctifying word—John 17:14-21:
 - 1. The word is the truth (v. 17), and the truth is the Triune God (14:6; 1 John 5:6b); to be sanctified by the reality of the word is to be sanctified by the Triune God Himself.
 - 2. The word, which is the truth, sanctifies God's people from the world (John 17:17) and keeps them from the ruler of the world, the evil one (v. 15):
 - a. The Father's word of reality sanctifies us and makes us pure, delivering us from the mixed-up world to separate us unto our God, the God of purity—cf. Psa. 12:6.
 - b. The more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—119:140.
 - 3. The Father's sanctifying word is the means of our oneness, bringing us into the sphere of oneness—John 17:21; Eph. 5:26.
- C. The third level of oneness is the oneness in the divine glory for the expression of the processed, mingled, and incorporated Triune God—John 17:22-24:
 - 1. The oneness of all the believers in the divine glory is the oneness in the expressed sonship with the Father's life and nature—v. 22; 5:26.
 - 2. The glory of God is the expression of God; this splendid expression of divinity delivers us from ourselves and makes us fully one—cf. Rev. 21:11.

3. In this stage of the oneness the self is fully denied:
 - a. We must be saved from our self, including ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts—John 17:21-23; Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3 John 9.
 - b. If we would give up the self, lose the self, and turn to the spirit, right away we would be in the reality of the Body—Eph. 2:22; John 16:13.
 - c. The type of the cleansing of leprosy, with the leper having to shave off all his hair, shows our continuous and thorough dealing with the problems of our own self through the application of the cross by the Spirit—Lev. 14:9:
 - (1) The glory of man, signified by the hair of the head, needs to be dealt with by the cross, for Christ to be our glory—Col. 1:27; John 12:43.
 - (2) The honor of man, signified by the beard, needs to be dealt with by the cross, for Christ to be our honor—Rom. 9:21, 23; Judg. 9:9; cf. John 21:15.
 - (3) The beauty of man, signified by the eyebrows, needs to be dealt with by the cross, for Christ to be our beauty—Exo. 28:2; Psa. 27:4, 8.
 - (4) The natural strength of man, signified by the hair of the whole body, needs to be dealt with by the cross, for Christ to be our strength—2 Cor. 12:9-10; Phil. 4:12-13.
 - d. If we live by our life with our nature to express ourselves, there will be no glory of God; in the expression of ourselves there is division.
 - e. To live and act in the Father's life with the Father's nature to express the Father is glory, and it is in this glory that we all are one.
4. Our Christian life should be a life of "glory to glory"—2 Cor. 3:16-18.

III. We need to emphasize the oneness that the Lord has given us and preserve the oneness of the Spirit by being mingled constantly with the Triune God, thus nullifying the natural man, the world with Satan, and the self—Eph. 4:1-6.