

Message Eight

The Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:18a, 24; 2:19; 3:15; 4:15-16

I. Christ is the Head of the Body, the church—1:18a:

- A. We must see that the church is the Body of Christ, which is an entity constituted with the Triune God and His chosen and redeemed ones—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6.
- B. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church; if there were no Body, the church would make no sense and have no meaning—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; 1:2.
- C. It is crucial for us to realize that Christ is the Head and that we are the members of His Body—Col. 1:18a; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16:
 - 1. To live in the Body is to live corporately with the members under the Head.
 - 2. To live the Body life, we must be under the Head and take the Head as our life, the principal object, and the center of our whole being—Col. 1:18a; 2:19.
 - 3. Whenever we enjoy Christ, we automatically hold Him as the Head—vv. 9-10, 16-17, 19.
 - 4. The first principle of living in the Body of Christ is to obey the authority of the Head—Eph. 4:15:
 - a. Christ is the Head of the Body, and life can flow freely only when He is in full control—v. 16.
 - b. The Body's only duty toward the Head is obedience and submission without any opinion, idea, or proposal—John 21:20-22; Acts 13:1-4a.
 - c. Our relationship to the Head determines our relationship to the other members of the Body—9:10-19:
 - 1) If we hold the Head, we cannot have a special feeling for or a special relationship and fellowship with any individual or group of individuals.
 - 2) There is no room for our preferences in the Body—1 Cor. 1:10-12.

II. The apostle filled up that which was lacking of the afflictions of Christ for His Body—Col. 1:24:

COLOSSIANS

Message Eight (continuation)

- A. If we are faithful to the Lord, we will share in His sufferings for the building up of His Body—Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:5-6; 4:10-12; Eph. 3:13; 1 Thes. 3:3.
- B. Our goal in preaching the gospel is to obtain material for the building up of the Body of Christ; for this, we must be prepared to suffer, even to be opposed and persecuted—John 15:18-21; 16:1-3.

III. The Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19:

- A. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Eph. 4:16.
- B. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way—3:16-17a:
 - 1. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 2. Without the increase of God within us, there cannot be any growth.
 - 3. The more God is added to us, the more growth He gives—Eph. 4:15-16.

IV. In the one Body of Christ we were called to the peace of Christ, which is Christ Himself—Col. 3:15:

- A. By Christ's abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances, that is, His slaying the enmity, and by His creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all the believers—Eph. 2:15-16.
- B. The peace of Christ is the oneness of the new man, the Body—4:3.
- C. For the Body life we should let the peace of Christ decide all things in our heart in our relationship with the members of His Body—Col. 3:15.

V. As members of the Body, we need to have the consciousness of the Body and have a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:25-26; Rom. 12:15:

- A. Since the Christ we enjoy is the Head of the Body, the more we enjoy Him, the more we become conscious of the Body—Col. 2:9-10, 16-17, 19.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Eight (continuation)

- B. Like Paul, we should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling; this is most necessary for our living the Body life—Phil. 1:8.
- C. The feeling for the Body of Christ is closely related to one's frame of mind, that is, to one's perception of things—Col. 2:18; 3:2; Rom. 12:2-3; Eph. 4:23.
- D. Whatever we do involves the Body; thus, in all that we do, we should care for the Body, taking the Body as the rule in our mind, thoughts, words, and actions—1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2 Cor. 8:21.

VI. The unique Body of Christ is expressed in many localities as the local churches—Col. 4:15-16; Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11:

- A. The Body of Christ is the source of the local churches; the universal Body is like the father to all the churches, and the local churches are like the children to the father—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 4-5, 16.
- B. The one Body is the one church of God, manifested in many localities as many local churches—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- C. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a certain locality—1:2; 10:32b, 17; 12:12-13, 20, 27.
- D. The church in a certain locality was often the church in a certain person's house; the meetings in the saints' homes afford every attending believer the opportunity to function, and they also strengthen the mutual fellowship among the saints—Col. 4:15-16; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philem. 2.

VII. The Body is versus the self; the enemy of the Body is the self—Col. 2:18-19, 23:

- A. The hindrance to seeing the vision of the Body and to practicing the Body is the self—vv. 18, 23:
 - 1. The greatest frustration to the building up of the Body is the self; the self is the real division, the real sect.

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2. When we have the self, we do not have the Body; when we have the Body, we do not have the self—Matt. 16:18, 24.
 3. If we would be built up in the Body, the self must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced—Luke 9:23-24.
- B. We should deny ourselves and identify ourselves with the Body; if we do this, the life that we live will fully be the Body life, and the Lord will gain the expression of His Body—Matt. 16:24; 1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18a; 3:15.