

THE CHURCH, THE MINISTRY, AND THE WORK

Message Three

(Friday—Evening Session)

Practicing the Church Life for the Building Up of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16

- I. After we see the vision of the Body of Christ, we need to practice the church life according to this vision—Acts 9:4-6; 13:1; Eph. 1:17-23; 2:21-22.**
- II. Anyone who wants to live in the Body in a practical way must be in the local churches—4:16; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 12:27; 1:2:**
 - A. The Body of Christ is manifested in the local churches; every local church is the manifestation of the Body of Christ in that locality.
 - B. Participating in the fellowship of the local church is participating in the fellowship of the Body of Christ—v. 9; 10:16-17; 11:23-26, 29.
- III. The local church is a procedure and not the goal; the goal of a local church is the building up of the Body of Christ—Matt. 16:18; 18:17:**
 - A. The local churches are the procedure for God to accomplish the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.
 - B. The local churches are the procedure to bring us into the Body of Christ.
 - C. We need to be in the local churches so that we can be ushered into the reality of the Body of Christ.
 - D. We should pay more attention to the Body of Christ than to the local churches.
 - E. In the Lord's recovery we are building the local churches for the building up of the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—v. 12.
- IV. The practice of the God-ordained way in the church life delivers the believers from hierarchy, the papal system, and the clergy-laity system for the building up of the Body of Christ—Rev. 2:6, 15; Rom. 12:4-6:**
 - A. God's intention in His economy is to have an organic Body built up for Christ—Eph. 3:9; 4:16.
 - B. The God-ordained way as revealed in the Bible is the proper practice of the church life against the papal and clergy-laity systems—Matt. 20:25-28:
 1. The goal of the papal and clergy-laity systems is to annul the Body of Christ and to replace it with religion.
 2. The recovery according to the Lord's mind is to bring His believers out of the papal system and the clergy-laity system and to replace these systems with the God-ordained way for the building up of the Body of Christ.
 - C. The begetting, nourishing, and perfecting are for God's building—16:18.
- 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; Phil. 1:8:**

- A. 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.
- B. Whenever we are about to do something in the church life, we need to consider how the Body might feel about what we intend to do—2 Cor. 8:21.

VI. The blending of all the local churches should be as much as practicality allows, without boundaries of states or nations—1 Cor. 12:23-27:

- A. None of the churches of the Body of Christ can be autonomous in relation to the other churches—Col. 4:15-16; Rev. 2:1a, 7a.
- B. In the church life we should not be divided by any kind of boundary; rather, all the local churches throughout the earth should be one—John 17:11, 21-23.
- C. If we would have the Lord's blessing, we must be one in all parts of the recovery—Psa. 133:3.
- D. In the spiritual element all the churches should be blended with one another for the manifestation of the reality of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12-13.
- E. In this age God is working to obtain the Body of Christ, not merely the church in a locality or the church in a country; He wants to obtain the church in the entire universe—Eph. 1:22-23:
 - 1. We need to be universal Christians with a universal view for the universal Body—vv. 17-23.
 - 2. Whoever cannot be blended with others will eventually be disqualified by the age.
 - 3. We need to see the light, be broadened in our view, realize that we are in God's eternal economy, and allow God to have the Body of Christ on earth—4:16.

VII. One of the tests of a genuine local church is that it should have fellowship with all the other local churches—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3:

- A. In a proper local church, the administration of the church is local, but the fellowship of the church is universal—2 Cor. 13:14.
- B. The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the Body of Christ.
- C. Every church should be open to the other churches; if a church isolates itself from the other churches, it becomes a local sect—Col. 4:15-16.
- D. The local churches should fellowship with all the local churches on the whole earth to keep the universal fellowship of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16:
 - 1. Any local church that does not keep this universal fellowship of the Body of Christ is divisive and becomes a sect.
 - 2. A genuine church remains in the Body; a sect is a group of believers who divide themselves from the Body.

VIII. As members of the Body, we must allow ourselves to be limited by the other members and not go beyond our measure—2 Cor. 10:13:

- A. A basic requirement for the growth and development of the Body is that we recognize our measure and not go beyond it—Rom. 12:3, 6a; Eph. 4:7, 16.
- B. When we go beyond our measure, we go beyond the authority of the Head and interfere with the order of the Body.

C. We all should move and act according to how much God has measured to us, staying within the limits of God's ruling, God's measuring—2 Cor. 10:13.

IX. Whatever we do in our locality or universally for the other countries should be done in a full realization that we are building up the Body of Christ; thus, we should always keep a view of the Body—Eph. 4:16.