

THE CHURCH, THE MINISTRY, AND THE WORK

Message Seven

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Being God's Fellow Workers in the One Work of the Lord's Recovery

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:4-6; S. S. 7:11-12; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12-17; 15:58

I. Our work is the work of the Lord's recovery for the building up of the Body of Christ; this work is according to the heavenly vision of the crystallized significance of the Body of Christ—Acts 26:19; 9:1-6:

- A. This crystallized significance is that the Triune God is constituted with His chosen and redeemed people to become a divine-human constitution, a constituted entity of divinity mingled with humanity—Eph. 4:4-6:
 - 1. The Father is embodied in the Son, the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit is mingled with the believers; this mingling is the constitution of the Body of Christ.
 - 2. The Spirit, the Lord, and the Father are doing one work; They are working to mingle Themselves with the Body.
- B. Our work is to dispense the Triune God into people, working together with Him in His unique work to mingle Himself with His chosen and redeemed people for the building up of the Body of Christ—2 Cor. 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:6-12a.
- C. If we all do the work of the Lord's recovery, there will be the one Body; we all must see the Body and do the work of the Body.

II. In the Lord's move in His recovery, there should be only one work, not different works:

- A. Even though Peter and Paul worked in different regions (the Jewish world and the Gentile world), they had only one work to build up the Body of Christ—Gal. 2:7-8.
- B. In the Body there are no regions, and there are no Jews or Gentiles; for such a Body, the Lord has only one work on this earth—Eph. 4:11-16.

III. According to the picture in Song of Songs 7:11, Christ's lover wants to carry out with her Beloved the work that is for the entire world (fields) by sojourning from one place to another (lodging in the villages):

- A. To share in the work of the Lord, we need the maturity in life, we need to be one with the Lord, and our work must be for His Body—2 Cor. 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:9.
- B. The Shulammitte works as Solomon's counterpart, taking care of all the vineyards (S. S. 7:12)—the churches and the believers on the whole earth:
 - 1. This indicates that our work should be for the Body, not simply for one city; we must have a work that is for the entire world—cf. v. 4.
 - 2. This is what Paul did by establishing local churches and then working to bring them into the full realization of the Body of Christ—Rom. 16:1-23.

IV. We need to be God's fellow workers in the one work of the Lord's recovery according to the following principles—2 Cor. 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12-17:

- A. Every local church must bear the testimony of the Body of Christ—Rev. 1:12:
 - 1. A local church should not give people the impression that it bears a particular characteristic with a particular color or a particular flavor.
 - 2. If we would all take care of this, we would never do things that fit only in our local church; we must do things that fit in all the local churches and that would not damage or confuse the testimony of the Body of Christ.
- B. We should do everything under the consideration of all the other churches, trying to be the same as the other churches—1 Thes. 2:14a:
 - 1. The Lord has only one move by one ministry to produce and build up one Body to bear one unique testimony.
 - 2. The children of Israel provide us with a good example of this; more than two million people traveled together, marched together, bore the same Ark, and had the same tabernacle for God's unique testimony—Exo. 16:34; 25:21; 26:33-34; 38:21.
 - 3. We must consider that to be different from the other churches is a shame and an insult to the Lord's recovery; to make a little difference in your local church from all the other churches is a serious thing.
- C. Do not promote your place.
- D. Do not attract people to your place:
 - 1. When you go out to minister or to have fellowship, do not exercise yourself in a way to attract people to you, to your work, or to your place—2 Cor. 4:5.
 - 2. We are not the attracting center, but the Ark and the tabernacle, Christ and the church, should be the attracting center.
- E. Do not say that your way is better—cf. Gal. 5:25-26.
- F. Do not measure the other churches and especially do not measure people by your experience and by your way—cf. Phil. 2:3-4.
- G. Always avoid doing anything or saying anything that would stir up the concern of the saints—cf. 1 Thes. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:12:
 - 1. The faithful saints are not only concerned for the Lord's recovery but also concerned for you because they consider that you are so useful and are a real credit to the Lord's recovery.
 - 2. If you do or say something that may not be for the one testimony, this would become a concern in their heart for you and for the Lord's recovery.
- H. Do not be suspicious of others—6:3-4; cf. John 12:6; 13:29.
- I. Do not work and care only for your church or for the local churches in your territory but for the Lord's entire recovery—cf. Rom. 16:4; 1 Cor. 12:28.
- J. Do not cut yourself off from the Body:
 - 1. We must maintain a good fellowship with all the members in the Body, not stumbling anyone and recovering the backsliding ones—Matt. 18:6-10, 20.
 - 2. Learn to forgive others and seek to be forgiven by others—vv. 21-35; 5:23-24; Eph. 4:31-32.
- K. Minister life wherever you go and build up the churches wherever you are—1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 15:58.

- L. Consider all the churches, all the co-workers, and all the saints the same—Phil. 2:2.
- M. Do not build a special group around you—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10-17.
- N. Do not try to convince others that your way is the best; do not do anything or say anything that would damage the Lord's recovery—cf. 3:17.