

# LIVING UNDER THE UNIQUE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST AND IN THE UNIQUE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

## Practicing the Church Life under the Unique Headship of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:4; Phil. 1:1; Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16

### **I. The unique headship of Christ is closely related to the constitution of the church—the way in which the church is formed and arranged—Col. 1:18; Phil. 1:1:**

- A. The constitution of the church is according to the truth that Christ is the unique Head; the church is constituted absolutely with Christ as life and with Christ as the unique Head—Col. 1:18; 3:4, 11.
- B. The concept of organization related to the church cannot be found in the New Testament; organization leads to a hierarchy, and any kind of hierarchy is an insult to the unique headship of Christ—1:18; 2:19.
- C. In the New Testament, among God's people there is no unique, definite, official, or permanent leadership; such a leadership would be an insult to the unique headship of Christ—Matt. 23:8-11; Acts 5:31; Heb. 13:7, 17, 21.
- D. The scriptural principle with regard to eldership is plurality; this plurality keeps any elder from being an official or permanent leader—Acts 14:23:
  1. With the plurality of the eldership, there is no definite leader, and the unique headship of Christ is regarded, preserved, and respected—Titus 1:5.
  2. The practice of making an arrangement as to who is first among the elders is contrary to the truth regarding the plurality of the eldership under the unique headship of Christ—1 Pet. 5:1.
  3. "God has ordained that several elders together share the work of the church, so that no one individual should be able to run things according to his own pleasure, treating the church as his own special property and leaving the impress of his personality upon all its life and work...As they honor one another and trust one another to the leading of the Spirit, none taking the place of the Head, but each regarding the others as fellow members, the element of mutuality, which is the distinctive feature of the church, will be preserved" (Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, pp. 49-50).
- E. We should not regard certain persons as intermediaries between us and the Lord; we must never be an intermediary between God's people and the Lord Himself, and we must never take someone else as an intermediary between us and the Lord—Matt. 23:8-11.

### **II. The order of the church comes out of the authority in the church—the honoring of the unique headship of Christ—Col. 1:18; Phil. 1:1:**

- A. In the church there is no human organization, but there is a spiritual order—v. 1; 1 Cor. 14:40; 11:34b:

1. The genuine church practice depends on the proper order under the Holy Spirit; without this order we cannot have the real practice of the church life—Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:4-11.
2. The Head of the church is Christ the Lord, and the authority in the church is the headship of Christ—Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18:
  - a. In the church there must be order, but this order comes from the headship of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23.
  - b. If we would keep a right order in the church and among the saints, we must learn to submit to the unique headship of Christ—1 Cor. 11:3.
- B. We can have the real practice of the church life only by submitting to the unique headship of Christ—Col. 1:18; 2:19:
  1. If we intend to practice the church life, we must learn to always submit to the headship of Christ—v. 10.
  2. When we are right with the Head, we are right with all the members and with the Body—1:18; 2:19; 3:15.
  3. If we all honor the unique headship of Christ, there will spontaneously be a wonderful spiritual order among us in the church life—1 Cor. 14:40.
- C. The order in the church comes from the headship of Christ being realized by us in a practical way—11:3, 16; Eph. 1:22:
  1. If we try to practice the church life without realizing the unique headship of Christ, we may meet together, but we will not have the reality of the church—1 Cor. 11:17.
  2. If we do not have the spiritual order in the church that comes from realizing the headship of Christ in a practical way, there is no possibility for us to practice the real church life—v. 3; 14:40.
- D. We need to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, who is the unique Head—Eph. 5:21, 23:
  1. If we are not subject to one another, we offend Christ as the Head and have no fear of Christ in His unique headship—v. 23; 1:22.
  2. Only the Head is unique and different from the Body; none of the members is in a special or superior class—5:30; Rom. 12:4-5.

**III. If we honor the unique headship of Christ, then in the Lord's recovery the church as the enlargement of Christ will be not only the house but also the city—Ezra 1:2-3; Neh. 1:9; 2:5, 17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:14:**

- A. The church as the house is mainly with Christ as life, and the church as the city is mainly with Christ as the Head—1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 5:14; Col. 3:4; 1:18:
  1. When we experience and enjoy Christ as life, we have the church as the house; when we realize the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged as the city, which signifies the kingdom of God—Matt. 16:18-19.
  2. The church as the city is built not only with Christ as life but also with the headship of Christ; thus, Christ must be not only our life but also our Head, not only our enjoyment but also our authority—Col. 3:4; 1:18; 2:19.
- B. For the church as the city, our will must be exercised, renewed, and transformed so that it will be subdued under the unique headship of Christ—S. S. 4:1b, 4; 6:4.

- C. We need to see that a local church is an expression of the Body of Christ, that the Body is under the headship of Christ, and that we all must be under the authority of Christ; if we see this and honor the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged from the house to the city for the King and His kingdom—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Rev. 11:15.

**IV. The church life is a life of being headed up under the unique headship of Christ—Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16:**

- A. God is heading up His chosen ones to be the Body of Christ with Christ as the Head—1:4, 22-23:
  - 1. The first step in the heading up of all things in Christ is for God to place His sons under the unique headship of Christ—vv. 5, 10.
  - 2. When the church takes the lead to be headed up under the headship of Christ, God has a way to head up all other things—vv. 22-23, 10.
- B. In the proper church life we are being headed up in Christ—1 Cor. 11:3:
  - 1. If we do not know what it is to be headed up in Christ, we cannot know the church—Eph. 1:10, 22-23.
  - 2. In the church life we are taking the lead to be headed up in Christ; for this we need to grow up into the Head, Christ, in all things—4:15-16.