

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

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

## Called into the Fellowship of God's Son and Experiencing the Cross for the Deepening of the Divine Fellowship

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 30; 10:16-17; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24

### I. God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord— 1 Cor. 1:9:

- A. The word *fellowship* implies communion, sharing something in common; such communion is a co-enjoyment of Christ and a co-participation in Christ—v. 2.
- B. This fellowship, this communion and co-participation in and the co-enjoyment of Christ, is the reality of the church life—v. 2; 10:3-4, 17, 21.
- C. The Christ into whose fellowship God has called us is all-inclusive; thus, in 1:9 *fellowship* denotes the partaking of, the participation in, and the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ—vv. 24, 30; 2:8, 10; 3:11; 5:7-8; 10:3-4; 11:3; 12:12; 15:20, 23, 45, 47.
- D. God has called us into the fellowship of His Son so that we may partake of Christ, participate in Him, and enjoy Him as our God-given portion—1:2, 9.
- E. Christ Himself is actually the fellowship into which God has called us—v. 30:
  1. To say that we have been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ means that we have been called into Christ Himself as the unique fellowship; this is the fellowship of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ, the One who in resurrection is the life-giving Spirit—15:3-4, 45b.
  2. God's intention is to make Christ His Son the center of His economy and to make Him everything to all the believers; this is why Paul says that we have been called into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord—1:9.
- F. Fellowship also means that we and Christ have become one and that we enjoy Him and He enjoys us—6:17:
  1. We have been called into a mutuality in which all that Christ is becomes ours and all that we are in Christ becomes His; in fellowship we are one with Him, and He is one with us—12:12-13; 6:17; John 14:20.
  2. Such a fellowship is a matter of enjoyment—our enjoyment of the Triune God, the Triune God's enjoyment of us, and also the enjoyment which the believers have with one another; this is a wonderful, universal, mutual enjoyment—1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3-4, 7.
- G. The fellowship of God's Son is carried out by the Spirit, for in our experience the fellowship of the Son becomes the fellowship of the Spirit and our regenerated spirit—2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:22:
  1. Experientially, our being one spirit with the Lord follows our being called by God into the fellowship of His Son—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.

2. The word *joined* in 6:17 is a synonym for *fellowship* in 1:9, for the joining is the fellowship; whenever we are one spirit with the Lord, we participate in the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- H. The fellowship of God's Son has become the fellowship that the apostles shared with the believers in His Body, the church, and should be the fellowship that we enjoy in the partaking of His blood and body at His table; such a fellowship is unique because the all-inclusive Christ is unique; it forbids any division among the members of His unique Body—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:10-13a; 12:13.
- I. In 1:9 the fellowship is of the Son of God, but in 10:16 this fellowship becomes the fellowship of the Lord's body and blood:
  1. This indicates that Christ has passed through death and resurrection for our participation and enjoyment—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 45b.
  2. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has been processed, "cooked," to become the body and blood on the table; now "the cup of blessing which we bless" is "the fellowship of the blood of Christ," and "the bread which we break" is "the fellowship of the body of Christ"—10:16.

**II. The experience of the cross deepens both the vertical and the horizontal fellowship and enables us to know the life of the Body and live in the fellowship of the Body—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24; 1 Cor. 12:27:**

- A. We need the experience of the cross to deepen our experience of the divine fellowship—1:9, 24; 2:2:
  1. Without the cross, our fellowship is superficial; only the cross can remove the many obstacles to the divine fellowship and deepen our fellowship with the Lord and with one another—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24.
  2. Fellowship frees us from our sinful self through the cross; without the cross, there is no release, freedom, or liberty from the self and no genuine fellowship—1 Cor. 1:9, 24; 2:2; Gal. 2:20.
  3. In Matthew 16:24 the Lord used the term *his cross*, indicating that there is a particular portion of the cross for each one of us in order to cross each one of us out:
    - a. To bear the cross is to deny the self, to put the self to death, to apply the cross of Christ to the self all the time—Luke 9:23-25.
    - b. We are easily offended by others because we are so sensitive about ourselves; if we did not have such a strong self, we would not be offended by others.
    - c. If we have a strong self and are offended by everything and everyone, we cannot have real fellowship; in order for us to have horizontal fellowship, we need to deny ourselves—Matt. 16:24.
- B. The experience of the cross brings us into the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24; 2:2; 12:12-14, 27:
  1. The cross deals with our flesh, self, and natural life so that we may know the life of the Body in reality—Matt. 16:24-26.

2. If our flesh, self, and natural life are dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will enjoy the fellowship of the Body—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:3; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16.
3. Our relationship with the Head is that of obedience, whereas our relationship with the Body is that of fellowship—Col. 2:19; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 10:16-17:
  - a. Fellowship implies the fact that we are limited and inadequate and that we are willing to accept what comes from others and take it as our own.
  - b. Fellowship is to acknowledge that we need the Body—Rom. 12:4-5.
  - c. We can live in the Body and have fellowship in the Body only when our flesh, self, and natural life have been dealt with; otherwise, we will not see the importance of fellowship—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:3.
  - d. God must bring us to the point where we cannot go on without fellowship—1 Cor. 12:14-27; John 15:4-6; 1 Thes. 3:8.
4. Once the flesh, the self, and the natural life have been dealt with by the cross, we will know the life of the Body, we will see the importance of fellowship, and we will not be able to live apart from this fellowship—Rom. 6:6; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2:2; 10:16-17; 12:14-27; 1 John 1:3, 7.