

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2010**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD**

Message Sixteen

**The Church—the Hidden Mystery
in God's Eternal Economy and the Pearl of Great Value**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:4, 9-11; Matt. 13:45-46

- I. The church is the hidden mystery in God's eternal economy—Eph. 3:9-11:**
- A. In this universe there is a hidden mystery, a mystery hidden in God; this hidden mystery is in God's eternal economy—vv. 4, 9.
 - B. The eternal economy of God is of God's eternal purpose, God's determined intent; with a definite and strong determination, God intends to have the church—1:9; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.
 - C. God's purpose, His determined intent, is of God's will; God's will is the source, and the purpose is the outcome—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 3:11:
 - 1. God's will is what God wants, and God wants the church—Rom. 12:2, 4-5.
 - 2. The church is of God's will, for the church is what God wants, and He wants us for the church—Eph. 1:4-5, 22-23; 5:29-30.
 - D. God's will is to have the church, and He has purposed to carry out the desire to have the church, which is what He wants—1:5, 9, 11; 5:25; Matt. 16:18.
 - E. According to Ephesians 3:4, the church has a particular title—*the mystery of Christ*:
 - 1. In God's economy revealed in the New Testament, there are mainly two mysteries—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4:
 - a. The first mystery, revealed in the book of Colossians, is Christ as the mystery of God—God embodied, God defined, God explained, God expressed, God made visible—2:2.
 - b. The second mystery, revealed in the book of Ephesians, especially in chapter 3, is the church as the mystery of Christ—v. 4.
 - 2. The church is a corporate unit produced out of Christ, who is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:30-32.
 - 3. Through the church as the mystery of Christ, God's multifarious wisdom will be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies—3:10.
 - F. The crucial matter that makes the church a mystery is Christ—Col. 1:27:
 - 1. The mysterious Christ, who is the mystery of God, has been ministered into our being, and now we have Him within us—Rom. 8:10; Eph. 3:17a.
 - 2. Christ as the mystery within us makes us all parts of a totality, which is the mystery of Christ, the church; this is the sense in which the church is a mystery—Col. 1:27; 2:2; Eph. 3:4, 9-11.

3. The Christ who is the life-giving Spirit dwelling within us is the essence, element, substance, and factor that make the church mysterious and cause every member of the church to be a mystery—1 Cor. 15:45b.
 4. We are the mysterious members of the mysterious Body of Christ, the church—Eph. 5:30.
- G. The great mystery—Christ and the church—is the meaning of the universe—Rev. 4:11; Eph. 5:32:
1. Christ and the church are the meaning of the universe and of human life.
 2. God's intention in His creation of all things, including man, was that man would be mingled with God to produce the church—Zech. 12:1; Eph. 3:9.
- H. The desire of God's heart is to have the mystery of Christ—the Body of Christ as the increase and expression of Christ—1:5, 9, 11, 22-23:
1. The Body life is the ultimate satisfaction of our spiritual experience; we will be fully satisfied only when we realize that we are part of the mystery of Christ and live as members of the Body of Christ—5:30; Rom. 12:4-5.
 2. In order to know the Christian life, we must know the mystery of Christ—Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:19-21.
 3. The mystery of Christ should be our daily life; without this mystery our life would be merely the life of a human being, not the life of a Christian—Eph. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.

II. The church is the pearl of great value—Matt. 13:45-46:

- A. The merchant seeking fine pearls is Christ, who was seeking the church for His kingdom, and after finding the one pearl of great value, He went to the cross and sold all that He had and bought it for the kingdom—vv. 45-46:
1. The pearl is produced in the death waters (the world filled with death) by the living oyster (the living Christ), wounded by a little rock (the sinner) and secreting its life-juice around the wounding rock (the believer)—v. 46.
 2. Since the pearl comes out of the world corrupted by Satan (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15), it must refer to the church, which is constituted mainly of regenerated believers from the Gentile world and which is of great value—Matt. 13:46.
 3. In the eyes of the Lord, the church is the pearl of great value—16:18.
- B. The parable in Matthew 13:45-46 shows us what Christ wants to have:
1. Ultimately, the Lord's desire is to have the pearl of great value—the church as the consummation of His complete salvation—16:18.
 2. The desire of Christ in accomplishing redemption and carrying out His organic salvation is that He would gain not merely individuals but the church—Isa. 53:10-11; Acts 20:28; Rom. 5:10; Eph. 5:25; Heb. 12:2.
 3. The church, which is the Body of Christ, is the pearl of great value that the Lord desires to have—Matt. 13:45-46; 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:
 - a. We need to know what the Lord, whom we are seeking, wants to have; if we do not know what He wants, we will miss Him—Matt. 16:18.
 - b. What the Lord wants is the pearl of great value produced by His ministry in three stages—incarnation, inclusion, and intensification—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 5:6.