

THE CENTRAL LINE OF THE BIBLE

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

The Consciousness of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:26-27; 2 Cor. 11:28-29; Col. 2:19; Rom. 12:4-5, 15; Phil. 1:8

I. According to the teaching of the Bible and our spiritual experience, there is something called the consciousness of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:26-27; 2 Cor. 11:28-29:

- A. As members of the Body of Christ, we need to have the consciousness of the Body and a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:26-27; Phil. 1:8.
- B. In order to live the Body life, we need to be conscious of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5, 15.

II. The consciousness of the Body of Christ is the sense of Christ's life within us—Col. 3:4, 15; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; 12:4-5:

- A. The mystical Body of Christ is formed by Christ as life in each of us, mingled with us—Col. 3:4; 2:19:
 - 1. If we are still living in our own life, we cannot know this life that mingles with us to form the Body of Christ—Matt. 16:24; 1 Cor. 2:14; 3:1-3; 12:12-27; Eph. 4:13-16.
 - 2. The Bible and our experience prove that, although each one of us is a member of the Body of Christ, the life in each one of us is not a *member* life but a *Body* life—1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 12:4-5.
 - 3. In the Body of Christ, when one member is joined to the Body or is having fellowship with the Body, his life is the life of the Body, and the life of the Body is his life—1 John 1:1-3.
 - 4. This life mingles with us to become the Body of Christ—Rom. 8:10; 12:4-5.
- B. Concerning the consciousness of the Body of Christ, we need to begin with the sense of the divine life within us—8:6:
 - 1. This sense originates from the Spirit of God and from God's life in our spirit—vv. 2, 10.
 - 2. The divine life within has feelings, and our regenerated spirit also has feelings—vv. 6, 16; 2 Cor. 2:13.
 - 3. This sense is called the sense of life, and it is also the consciousness of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26-27.
 - 4. If we exercise this sense, it will cause us to be conscious of matters related to the Body—Rom. 12:15.
 - 5. If we cultivate this sense, it will enable us to detect problems in the Body.
 - 6. If we exercise this sense often and if we love the Lord and care for the church, this sense will become the sense, the consciousness, of the Body—2 Cor. 11:28-29.

- C. Because of self-consideration and love for our particular work, our inner sense is suppressed; this shows that our sense of being in the Body is not adequate and that we still remain in ourselves—Phil. 2:21.
- D. If we have the sense of the Body, when others suffer or are blessed, we will identify with them and feel the same hardship or blessing—1 Cor. 12:26-27.

III. The consciousness of the Body of Christ comes from the organic union with Christ, the enjoyment of Christ, and the living in the inward parts of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 2:16-19; Phil. 1:8:

- A. We may cultivate the consciousness of the Body of Christ by living in the organic union with Christ—Rom. 12:4-5:
 - 1. Romans 12 speaks of the Body from the angle of the organic union, from the uniting life, from a life that unites us together, not only with Christ but with all the other members of Christ.
 - 2. We are one Body in Christ, having an organic union with Him; this union makes us one in life with Christ and with all the other members of His Body—vv. 4-5:
 - a. The Body is an organism produced by the union in life that we have in Christ; it is something that is held together in the organic union with Christ, and the actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ—John 15:1; Rom. 12:4-5.
 - b. If we would live in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to live a grafted life; in the grafted life we no longer live by ourselves but allow the pneumatic Christ to live in us, and He causes us to become conscious of the Body of Christ—6:5; 11:17; Gal. 2:20.
- B. We may cultivate the consciousness of the Body of Christ by enjoying the all-inclusive Christ, who is the Head of the Body—Col. 2:16-19:
 - 1. The precious, all-inclusive Christ whom we enjoy is the Head of the Body—1 Cor. 10:3-4; John 20:22; Col. 1:18; 2:19:
 - a. What we enjoy of Christ is actually something of Him as the Head; thus, when we enjoy Christ, we hold Him as the Head—vv. 10, 16-17.
 - b. The enjoyment of Christ causes Him to be our Head subjectively and experientially—Eph. 3:8, 17; 4:15.
 - 2. When we enjoy Christ, He, the Head, causes us to become conscious of the Body—Col. 2:19; 3:15:
 - a. The more we enjoy Christ, the more we will realize experientially that the Christ we enjoy is the Head of the Body.
 - b. This realization will make us conscious of the Body and cause us to love all the members of the Body—vv. 12-14.
 - 3. The Christ we enjoy is the Head who causes us to be conscious of the Body; therefore, the issue of enjoying Christ and holding Him as the Head is that we have the consciousness of the Body of Christ—2:16-19.
- C. We may cultivate the consciousness of the Body of Christ by living in the inward parts of Christ—Phil. 1:8; Col. 3:10-12, 15; Philem. 7, 12, 20:
 - 1. Paul took the inward parts of Christ Jesus as his own inward parts in caring for the church—Phil. 1:8:

- a. Paul took care of the Body of Christ by taking Christ's feeling as his own feeling—cf. Acts 9:4-5.
 - b. Christ's feeling for the Body became Paul's feeling for the Body.
 - c. Like Paul, we should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling.
2. If we are conscious of the Body and care for the Body, we will take the Body as the rule in our thoughts and actions—Eph. 4:15-16.

IV. The consciousness of the Body of Christ is closely related to our frame of mind—Col. 2:18; 3:2; Rom. 12:2-3; Eph. 4:23:

- A. Our frame of mind is our perception of things and is crucial; when there is the proper and thorough perception of matters, the frame of mind is normal.
- B. If we do not have an adequate understanding of the Body of Christ, our frame of mind is not proper, and we will not be able to have the common recognition of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:22-24.

V. The Body of Christ is universal, the divine life within us is universal, and the sense of the Body is also universal—1 Cor. 12:26-27; 2 Cor. 11:28-29:

- A. Once the divine life and the Spirit enter into us, we should have a universal sense—the consciousness of the Body—Rom. 8:2, 10-11; 12:4-5, 15.
- B. The sense of the Body is a universal matter, but this sense has been restricted in us because of our own feelings and views—Prov. 14:10; 2 Cor. 6:11-13.
- C. The more we experience the Lord's breaking and are delivered from ourselves, the more we will discover that the sense of the Body, the consciousness of the Body, is universal, and we will live in the Body and care for the Body in the consciousness of the Body of Christ—11:28-29.