

VITAL FACTORS FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH LIFE

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

The Factor of Blending for the Reality of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:24, 31b; 13:1-8a; 10:17; Lev. 2:4; Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:16

I. The highest peak in God's economy is the reality of the Body of Christ; the reality of the Body of Christ is absolutely organic—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; 12:4-5:

- A. The completing ministry of the apostle Paul is altogether focused on the Body of Christ—in particular, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians; the Body is the ultimate item of God's continual working, so the Body is the top point of God's entire revelation—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 18-22; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 15-16; 5:23, 30; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15.
- B. Romans 12 speaks of the Body from the angle of the organic union; verse 5 says, "We who are many are one Body in Christ":
 1. Two words from this verse indicate the organic union—*in Christ*; "in Christ" is a matter of the organic union—cf. John 3:16; Rom. 6:3-6; 11:17, 19; 16:7-10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 2:17; 5:17; 12:2; Gal. 3:27.
 2. We are one Body in Christ, having an organic union with Him; this union makes us one in life with Him and with all the other members of His Body; when we remain in this organic union, we are actually living in the Body of Christ—Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:4-6.
 3. The actuality of the Body of Christ is in our remaining in the organic union with Christ; John 15:1-11 reveals that Christ is the true vine and that we are His branches; as the branches of Christ, we must abide in Him, which simply means to remain in our organic union with Christ—vv. 4-5; cf. 8:31; 15:7.

II. The Lord's recovery is for the building up of the Body of Christ; thus, to know the Body is the proper recovery of the Lord—1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:16; Col. 3:15:

- A. The church takes the Body of Christ as its organic factor; without the Body of Christ, the church is lifeless and is a mere human organization—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.
- B. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church; without the Body, the church makes no sense and has no meaning—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 4, 16.
- C. Love covers and builds up, so love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 8:1b; 12:31b; 13:1-8a, 13.
- D. The elders should shepherd one another and love one another to be a model of the Body life; the elders need to love one another, their wives need to love one another, and they need to love one another's children—John 21:15-17; 1 Cor. 13:4-8a.
- E. If we would have the reality of the Body of Christ, we must allow Christ to make His home in our hearts; the reality of the Body is the inner experience of the indwelling Christ—Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:16; Col. 1:27; 3:4, 15.
- F. The Lord urgently needs the reality of the Body of Christ to be expressed in the local churches; unless there is a substantial expression of the Body, the Lord Jesus will not return—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:27, 30; Rev. 19:7.
- G. The Lord needs the overcomers to carry out the economy of God to have the Body of Christ and to destroy His enemy; without the overcomers the Body of Christ cannot be built up, and unless the Body of Christ is built up, Christ cannot come back for His bride—Eph. 1:10; 3:10; Rev. 12:11; 19:7-9.

III. The Lord's recovery is to build up Zion—the overcomers as the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem; in the church life we must endeavor to reach today's Zion—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rev. 14:1; 21:2:

- A. As the highlight and beauty of the holy city, Jerusalem, Zion typifies the overcomers as the high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, the beauty, and the reality of the church—Psa. 48:2, 11-12; 50:2; 20:2; 53:6a; 87:2.
- B. Jerusalem typifies the whole body of the church, while Zion typifies the overcomers of the church; every time the Old Testament speaks of the relationship between Zion and Jerusalem, it shows us that the characteristics, the life, the blessing, and the establishment of Jerusalem come from Zion—1 Kings 8:1; Psa. 51:18; 102:21; 128:5; 135:21; Isa. 41:27; Joel 3:17.
- C. The New Jerusalem is the totality of the overcomers; a remnant of the Lord's believers, the earlier overcomers, will be the bride of Christ for one thousand years (Rev. 19:7-9; 20:4-6); then they will join the rest of the Lord's believers, the later overcomers, to be the wife of Christ for eternity (21:2-3, 7):
 - 1. The earlier overcomers, as the reality of Zion within Jerusalem, the reality of the Body of Christ within the church, have highways to Zion in their heart; they take the way of the church internally by being incorporated into God as their dwelling place through the crucified Christ, typified by the bronze altar as their nest for their refuge, and through the resurrected Christ in ascension, typified by the incense altar as their home for their rest—Psa. 48:2; 84:3-5; cf. Prov. 27:8.
 - 2. To overcome means that we love the Lord more than our self, more than our soul-life; an overcomer knows and loves only Christ for the reality of the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10; 4:12; Rev. 2:4-5, 7; 12:11.
 - 3. The Lord is waiting for a group of overcomers to live out the reality of the Body of Christ in resurrection to become the bride of Christ to bring Him back and to usher in His kingdom age; for this we need to pray, "Lord, may I receive Your mercy and grace to be one of Your overcomers."

IV. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word *blended* means "adjusted," "harmonized," "tempered," and "mingled," implying the losing of distinctions:

- A. In order to be blended for the reality of the Body of Christ, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit to dispense Christ to others for the building up of the Body of Christ.
- B. Blending means that we should always stop in order to fellowship with others; we should not do anything without fellowshiping with the other saints who are coordinating with us, because fellowship adjusts us, harmonizes us, tempers us, and mingles us—cf. Ezek. 1:12 and footnote 1.
- C. A group of responsible brothers may meet together often without being blended; to be blended means that we are touched by others and that we are touching others by going through the cross, doing things by the Spirit, and doing everything to dispense Christ for His Body's sake.
- D. Such a blending is not social but the blending of the very Christ whom the individual members, the district churches, the co-workers, and the elders enjoy, experience, and partake of—cf. 1 Cor. 1:9.
- E. We need to follow in the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ; the apostle brought us into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ by recommendations and greetings in order that the God of peace may crush Satan under our feet, and we may enjoy the rich grace of Christ—Rom. 16:1-16, 21-23, 20:

1. The purpose of the blending is to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ; we need to be in the local churches as the procedure to be brought into the reality of the Body of Christ as the goal.
2. The highest peak of the Lord's recovery that can really, practically, and actually carry out God's economy is for God to produce not many local churches in a physical way but an organic Body to be His organism.
3. Paul's thought of the church being one bread (1 Cor. 10:17) was not his own invention; rather, it was taken from the Old Testament with the meal offering (Lev. 2:4); every part of the flour of the meal offering was mingled with the oil—that is the blending.
4. Hardly anyone speaks about blending because this is not only very high and deep but also very mysterious; it is not a physical matter; the significance of our blending is the reality of the Body of Christ.
5. The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

V. The desire of God's heart is that the reality in Jesus, the God-man living of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, would be duplicated in the many members of Christ's Body by the Spirit of reality to become the reality of the Body of Christ, the highest peak in God's economy—Eph. 4:20-24, 3-4:

- A. The reality of the Body of Christ is the Spirit of reality, who is the Spirit of Jesus, mingled with our spirit; the Spirit of Jesus includes the reality in Jesus, the God-man living of Jesus—John 16:13; Acts 16:7; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- B. When we live in the mingled spirit, we are learning Christ according to the reality in Jesus by the Spirit of reality according to His model in the four Gospels so that His biography becomes our history; the living of the Body of Christ as the new man should be exactly the same as the living of Jesus revealed in the four Gospels—Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18; Gal. 6:17-18; Rom. 1:1, 9; Phil. 2:5.
- C. The reality of the Body of Christ is the corporate living by the perfected God-men, who are genuine men but are not living by their life but by the life of the processed God, whose attributes have been expressed through their virtues—4:5-9.
- D. The reality of the Body of Christ is the mingling living in the eternal union of the regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite God-men with the Triune God in the resurrection of Christ—Lev. 2:4-5; Psa. 92:10; 1 Cor. 12:12; 10:17:
 1. We use the word *mingling* because this living is still going on.
 2. Such a mingling living is in the resurrection of Christ, and the reality of this resurrection is the Spirit; this resurrection imparts the consummated God and releases the death-overcoming life into the believers.
- E. This corporate and mingling living by the perfected God-men consummates ultimately in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth as God's increase and expression for eternity—Rev. 21:2-3, 9b-11, 22.