

Message Eight

The Body of Christ—the Means of the Divine Administration

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:12-27

- I. The apostle's dealing with head covering concerns the Head; his dealing with the Lord's supper (the Lord's table) concerns the Body—11:3, 17-34:**
- A. Regarding the headship of Christ, which represents God and is represented by man, we must keep the divine governmental order ordained by God, without any disorder.
 - B. Regarding the Body of Christ, we must be properly regulated by the apostle's instruction, without any confusion or division.
 - C. The Head is Christ, and the Body is the church (v. 3; 1:2; 12:27); these two—Christ and the church—are the controlling and directing factors of the apostle's dealing with the confused and disorderly church:
 - 1. In chapters one through ten Paul deals with the church's problems first by stressing Christ as God's center and our portion.
 - 2. In chapters eleven through sixteen he emphasizes the church as God's goal and our concern.
 - 3. Both Christ and the church are crucial to the carrying out of God's administration in His New Testament economy.
- II. The unique mystical Body of Christ is the means for God to carry out His administration—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 25, 27; 11:29:**
- A. The mystical Body of Christ is thoroughly and absolutely related to God's administration; apart from the mystical Body of Christ, God has no means, no way, to carry out His administration.
 - B. God's eternal purpose is to have a group of saved and regenerated people who have become one to be an organic Body to carry out His administration—Eph. 3:10-11; 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.
 - C. The mystical Body of Christ, the church, is for Christ's move on earth; the Head is now operating God's administration through the Body—11:3; 12:12.
 - D. Divisions damage the mystical Body of Christ with respect to the carrying out of God's administration—1:2, 10-13; 12:25, 27:
 - 1. Satan's subtle device is to cut the Body into pieces.
 - 2. For centuries God has not been able to carry out His administration because the unique means for this—the mystical Body of Christ—has been cut into pieces through division.
 - 3. Because we realize that the carrying out of the divine administration requires the unique Body, the mystical Body, we hate division and are absolutely opposed to it—1:10; 12:25; Acts 20:30; Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10.
 - 4. In order that God's administration may be carried out, we must care for the oneness of the unique mystical Body of Christ (Eph. 4:3, 13; John 17:21-23); having such a concern will preserve us in the Body and keep us from any division.
 - E. We take care of God's administration by discerning the Body—1 Cor. 11:29:

1. To discern the Body is first to realize that Christ has only one mystical Body.
2. If we have the proper understanding of the Lord's supper, we shall not be divided by anything; rather, we shall remain in the unique mystical Body of Christ, the means for Christ to carry out His heavenly ministry for the accomplishment of the divine administration.

III. The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—12:12-13:

- A. In verse 12 *the Christ* refers not to the individual Christ but to the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ:
 1. The corporate Christ is composed of Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as His members.
 2. All the believers in Christ are organically united with Him (Rom. 12:4-5) and constituted with His life and element (Col. 3:4, 11) and have thus become His Body, an organism to express Him; hence, Christ is not only the Head but also the Body.
 3. The Bible considers Christ and the church as one mysterious Christ—Acts 9:4-5:
 - a. Christ is the Head of this mysterious Christ, and the church is the Body of this mysterious Christ; the two have been joined to become the one mysterious Christ—Eph. 5:32.
 - b. All the saved ones in all times and all space added together become the Body of this mysterious Christ.
- B. Because the reality of Christ is the Spirit, the way to be constituted with Christ to be His Body is to drink the Spirit—1 Cor. 12:13:
 1. The baptism into the one Body has positioned us all to drink one Spirit.
 2. By drinking of the Spirit we are constituted to be the Body.

IV. Blending is the most helpful thing in keeping the oneness of the Body—vv. 24-25:

- A. The universal Body of Christ is a blending of all the local churches in the divine life—Col. 4:15-16; Rev. 1:4, 11; 2:7a.
- B. The goal of the universal blending is the reality of the Body of Christ.
- C. Blending requires us to be crossed out and be by the Spirit to dispense Christ and do everything for the sake of His Body.
- D. Blending means that we should always stop to fellowship with others; to have fellowship is to put away our private interests and join with others for a common purpose—the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
- E. In the spiritual element all the churches should be blended together as one.

V. The one Body is the one church of God, manifested in many localities as many local churches—Eph. 1:22; 1 Cor. 10:32b; 1:2; 12:27; Rev. 1:4, 11:

- A. The local churches are many in existence but are still one Body universally in element—Eph. 4:4.
- B. All the local churches are and should be one Body universally, doctrinally, and practically—1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1.