

Message Two

The Function of the Church

(1)

The House of the Living God

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15;

John 14:2; Eph. 2:19, 21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5; 2 Tim. 2:20

- I. As saved ones and members of the church, we need to know the church—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:15, 19-22; 3:4, 10-11; 4:16; 5:32; 6:11.**
- II. The desire of the Lord’s heart is to gain the church; thus, we should treasure the church and love the church, even as the Lord does and as Paul did—Matt. 16:18; 13:44-46; Eph. 1:5, 9; 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 12:14-15:**
 - A. God obtained the church “through His own blood,” and the church is under the care of the Holy Spirit; this indicates the precious love of God for the church and the preciousness of the church in the eyes of God—Acts 20:28.
 - B. Because Paul’s heart was fully for the church and on the church, he was willing to spend and be utterly spent for the church and to minister life to the church by dying—2 Cor. 12:14-15; 11:28; 4:10-12.
- III. The church is the church of God—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:**
 - A. The expression *the church of God* indicates that the church is possessed by God and that the church has the nature of God and is constituted with the element of God—Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13.
 - B. The church is *of* God because it is produced of God as its source and has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, universal, and eternal—1 Cor. 10:32:
 1. God is the nature and essence of the church; therefore, the church is divine—Rev. 1:12, 20.
 2. The content of the church essentially is God Himself—1 Cor. 3:16-17.
- IV. The church of God is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:**
 - A. To Christ, the church is the Body; to God, the church is the house—Eph. 1:22-23; John 14:2.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Two (continuation)

- B. The house of God is the household of God—Eph. 2:19:
 - 1. The dwelling place—the house—and the family—the household—are one entity—a group of called, regenerated ones indwelt by God Himself—1 Pet. 1:3; 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 2. The household of God is composed of the many sons of God as the many brothers of Christ, the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10-12:
 - a. The church is composed of those who have been born of God and have the life and nature of God—John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - b. God dispensed Himself in Christ into us, begetting us as His children; in this way we have become His household—1 Pet. 1:3; John 1:12-13.
 - c. The Father is God, and the many sons are God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—Heb. 2:10.
 - 3. Just as Christ is not separate from the members of His Body but dwells in them, the Father is not a separate member of His household but is in all His children—Rom. 8:10; 12:4-5; 2 Cor. 6:16.
 - 4. The house of God is organic in the divine life, organic in the divine nature, and organic in the Triune God; because the church is organic, the church grows—Eph. 2:21.
- C. In speaking of the church as the house of God, Paul refers to God as the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:
 - 1. The living God, who lives in the church, must be subjective to the church and not merely objective—1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 2. Because God is living, the church as the house of God is also living in Him, by Him, and with Him; a living God and a living church live, move, and work together.
 - 3. The house of the living God is living in the Father's name and in the Father's life, that is, living in the Father's reality—John 14:6; 17:2-3, 11-12.
- D. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—the place where God can have His rest and put His trust—Eph. 2:22:

Message Two (continuation)

1. In this dwelling place God lives and moves to accomplish His will and to satisfy the desire of His heart—1:5, 9, 11; Phil. 2:13.
 2. In the church as His dwelling place, God expresses Himself; all that He is and all that He is doing are expressed in the church—1 Cor. 3:16; 14:24-25.
 3. The dwelling place of God is in our spirit; thus, our spirit is the place of His habitation—Eph. 2:22; Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2.
 4. We need to grow in the divine life for the building up of God's house—1 Cor. 3:6, 16-17; Eph. 2:21; 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:2, 5.
- E. The church as the house of God—the Father's house—is the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation as the issue of Christ's being glorified by the Father with the divine glory—John 12:23; 13:31-32; 14:2:
1. The Father's house is for the processed and consummated Triune God to have a mutual abode with the believers in Christ—vv. 2-3, 23.
 2. The Father's house is for Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God, to make His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:16-17a.
 3. The Father's house is for the invisible and mysterious Triune God to have a visible and solid household constituted by the children of God, the species of God, with His divine life for their growth in life and for His rest, satisfaction, and manifestation—2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- F. The house of the living God is the genuine church in its divine nature and essential character, whereas the great house (2 Tim. 2:20) refers to the deteriorated church in its mixed character, as illustrated by the abnormally big tree in Matthew 13:31-32:
1. In the great house there are not only precious vessels but also base ones; hence, the great house cannot be the house of the living God—2 Tim. 2:20.
 2. The great house is apostate Christendom, but the house of the living God is the genuine church of God—the household of God, the pillar and base of the truth, and the manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16.