

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE REALITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Message One

Knowing the Mystical Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 16; Col. 2:19

- I. **God's economy is to produce a Body for His Son; this Body fulfills God's desire for His expression and the destruction of Satan—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 16; Col. 1:18; 2:19; Gen. 1:26-28.**
- II. **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—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Eph. 1:23; 4:16; 5:27, 30; Rev. 19:7.**
- III. **The work of the Triune God in us is to produce and build up the Body of Christ—Eph. 3:16-21; Rom. 8:11; 12:4-5.**
- IV. **The ministry of the new covenant is for the producing of the Body of Christ; without the new covenant ministry, there is no possibility to bring forth the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8-9; 4:1; 5:18.**
- V. **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; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.**
- VI. **We need to touch the reality of the Body and realize the glorious fact that the church is the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23.**
- VII. **The Body is the governing law of the life and work of the children of God—4:4, 16; 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 12-13, 27.**
- VIII. **Christ in Himself is the Head, and Christ in all of us is the Body—Rom. 8:10; 12:4-5; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 3:17; 4:15-16; Col. 1:18, 27; 2:19.**
- IX. **All the problems of the church today are due to ignorance concerning the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:17-23:**
 - A. **The biggest problem is not knowing the Body and not caring for the Body—vv. 17-23.**
 - B. **The way we behave ourselves in the church, the ministry, and the work depends upon the degree of our seeing the Body—Acts 22:10; 26:18-19.**
- X. **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—Eph. 4:4-6, 16.**

Message Two

Knowing the Body in Life and Practice

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:27

- I. We need to know the Body in life—1 John 5:11-12; Col. 3:4; 2:19; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; 12:4-5:**
- A. The Body of Christ is formed by Christ as life in us; this life mingles with us to become the Body of Christ—1 John 5:11-12; Col. 3:4; 1:18; 2:19:
 - 1. The life in us is not a *member* life—it is a *Body* life.
 - 2. We are all one in this life; this oneness in life is the mystical Body of Christ—Eph. 5:30.
 - B. Knowing the Body in life is the result of our experience of life and spiritual growth—1 John 2:12-14:
 - 1. In order to know the Body and touch the reality of the Body, we must progress in the experience of life and the growth of life—1 Cor. 3:1-2; 14:20.
 - 2. Only after we have reached the fourth stage in the spiritual life can we know the mystery of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12-13, 15-16.
 - 3. In order to know the Body and live in the Body, we need to deal with the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Matt. 16:24:
 - a. If we still live according to the flesh and in ourselves and serve in our natural ability, the life of the Body, which is Christ Himself in us, cannot be manifested, and we cannot know the Body.
 - b. Only when the flesh has been dealt with, the self has been abandoned, and the natural constitution has been broken can we touch the reality of the Body—1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4-6.
 - C. Knowing the Body is a dealing with individualism; all those who do not know the Body are individualists—1 Cor. 12:14-22.
 - D. The proofs that we know the Body are that we are unable to be individualistic, we can discern those who are not in the Body, and we recognize the authority of Christ the Head revealed in the order of the Body—v. 18.
- II. We need to know the Body in practice—vv. 20, 27; 15:58:**
- A. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a particular locality—1:2; 10:32b; 12:12-13, 20, 27:
 - 1. The one universal church—the Body of Christ—becomes the many local churches—the local expressions of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1.
 - 2. The unique Body of Christ is expressed as the local churches—Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11.
 - 3. Every local church is part of the unique, universal Body of Christ, a local expression of the Body—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
 - 4. If we know the Body, in our consideration the Body will be first and the local churches will be second—Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 4, 16.
 - B. In the Lord's recovery there is only one work—the work of the Body; what we are doing today is not our personal work but the work of the economy of God—the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:4, 12, 16.

Message Three

Living in the Reality of the Body of Christ through the Experience of the Cross

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Matt. 16:18, 23-24; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:15; 4:16

I. The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ—1 Cor. 12:12-13:

- A. In 1 Corinthians 12:12 *the Christ* refers not to the individual Christ but to the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ.
- B. The corporate Christ is composed of Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as His members—Eph. 1:22-23; 5:30.
- C. All the believers in Christ are organically united with Him and constituted with His life and element and have thus become His Body, an organism to express Him—Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 3:4, 11.
- D. Christ is both the Head and the Body; Christ in Himself is the Head, and Christ constituted into all of us is the Body—1:18a; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22.
- E. The Bible regards Christ and the church as one mysterious Christ—Acts 9:4-5:
 1. 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.
 2. All the saved ones in all times and all space added together become the Body of this mysterious Christ—v. 30; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
- F. 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:
 1. Apart from the mystical Body of Christ, God has no way to carry out His administration.
 2. The mystical Body of Christ is for Christ's move on earth; the Head is now operating God's administration through the Body—v. 3; 12:12.
- G. The revelation of the Body of Christ will cause a revolution in our spiritual life—Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16; 26:12-19:
 1. This revelation will cause us to see that it is only Christ in us, not anything of ourselves, who constitutes us the members of the Body—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11.
 2. We will be broken under the vision of the Body, and we will realize that the only way for us to be in the reality of the Body is to be broken—Acts 9:3-6.

II. The Body is versus the self; the enemy of the Body is the self—Col. 2:18-19, 23:

- A. The self is the soul being independent of God; the self is the independent "I."
- B. The hindrance to seeing the vision of the Body and to practicing the Body is the self—Col. 2:18-19, 23:
 1. The greatest problem, the greatest frustration and opposition, to the Body is the self; the self is the real division, the real sect—Matt. 16:18, 21-26.
 2. When we have the self, we do not have the Body; when we have the Body, we do not have the self—vv. 18, 24.
 3. Only when the self is renounced will we have the reality of the Body and be genuine members of the Body—Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:16.

**III. We need to see a vision of the cross and understand the significance of the cross—
Matt. 27:33-56; Col. 1:20-22; 2:11-15; Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 6:14:**

- A. In His economy God gives us one person—the all-inclusive Christ—and one way—the cross—1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:14.
- B. The cross is the center of God's government and His way to accomplish His economy—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.
- C. In the New Testament the primary meaning of the cross is not to suffer but to be terminated—Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.
- D. In order to progress spiritually and have the proper church life, we need to experience the cross—Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27; Col. 3:12-15.

IV. The cross leads us to the Body, consummates with the Body, and operates within the sphere of the Body—Eph. 2:15; 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:18; 12:12-13, 27:

- A. The knowledge of the cross brings us the knowledge of the Body of Christ—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2; 12:12-27.
- B. The Body of Christ is the realm within which the cross works—Col. 1:20; 3:15.
- C. All of God's dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all of His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-8.

Message Four

Being in the Reality of the Body of Christ by Living in the Mingled Spirit

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:4; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 2:22; 4:16, 23

- I. **God's unique purpose is to mingle Himself with us so that He becomes our life, our nature, and our content, and we become His expression—John 14:20; 15:4-5; Eph. 3:16-21; 4:4-6:**
 - A. In His economy God mingles Himself with us to become one entity with us—1 Cor. 6:17.
 - B. We may be saved to the extent that we and God are completely mingled as one, having one life and one living—John 15:4-5; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- II. **The Body of Christ is the enlargement of Christ, the God-man, the One who is the mingling of God and man—Luke 1:31-35; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:**
 - A. We need to understand the Body of Christ from the perspective of the mingling of God and man.
 - B. In the Gospels the mingling of God and man produced the Head; in Acts the enlargement of the mingling of God and man produced the Body of Christ—1:22-23; 4:15-16.
 - C. In Ephesians 4:4-6 four persons—the Body, the Spirit, the Lord, and God the Father—are actively mingled together:
 1. The Father is embodied in the Son, the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit is mingled with the believers.
 2. This mingling is the constitution of the Body of Christ.
 - D. The processed and consummated Triune God mingles Himself with His chosen people in their humanity, and the mingling is the genuine oneness of the Body of Christ—v. 3; John 17:21-23.
 - E. The church as the Body of Christ is a group of people who allow God to be mingled with them and who are mingled with God—Eph. 3:16-21.
 - F. The reality of the Body of Christ is a living by the God-men, who are united, mingled, and constituted together with God by the mingling of humanity with divinity and divinity with humanity—4:1-6, 15-16.
- III. **The Body of Christ is absolutely a matter in the mingled spirit; thus, to be in the reality of the Body of Christ is to live in the mingled spirit—Rom. 8:4; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 2:22; 4:16, 23:**
 - A. The union of God and man is a union of the two spirits, the Spirit of God and the spirit of man (1 Cor. 2:11-16); the union of these two spirits is the deepest mystery in the Bible.

- B. The focus of God's economy is the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled with the human spirit; whatever God intends to do or accomplish is related to this focus—Eph. 3:9, 5; 1:17; 2:22; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
- C. The implications of 1 Corinthians 6:17 are marvelous and far-reaching:
 - 1. To be one spirit with the Lord implies that we are in Him and that He is in us—John 15:4-5.
 - 2. We and He have been organically mingled, blended, to become one in life; we and Christ are one wonderful, living entity—1 Cor. 12:12.
 - 3. We, the complete and entire person—our entire being—and the Lord are one spirit.
- D. To be proper Christians, we must know that the Lord Jesus today, as the embodiment of the Triune God, is the Spirit indwelling our spirit and is mingled with our spirit as one spirit—2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
- E. All genuine spiritual experiences are in the mingled spirit—Rom. 8:4.