

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY**

Message Three

The Reality of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading:

- Eph. 1:22-23 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph. 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- John 14:17 *Even* the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.
- Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and [through] the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Pet. 2:5, 9 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

I. The direction of the Lord's move today is—Eph. 1:22-23:

- A. To build up the Body of Christ (4:11-12) as the organism of the processed and dispensing God in His Divine Trinity for His full expression—Eph. 1:22-23.
- B. To prepare the bride as the counterpart of the Bridegroom for the eternal marriage of the redeeming God with His redeemed—John 3:29; Rev. 22:17.
- C. To bring in the kingdom of God as the spreading of the divine life for God's eternal administration in the fulfillment of His economy—Mark 4:26-29.
- D. "There is no other way to accomplish this but the God-ordained Way. This is my burden, this is my desire, and this is what I am promoting. I hope that you will pick up this burden and this desire and endeavor to practice the God-ordained Way." (*Elders' Training, Book 10: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (2), p. 31*)

II. God's economy is God becoming man that man may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead to produce the Body of Christ, which will consummate the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:9, 1:10; Rom. 12:4-5; Rev. 21:2:

- A. God's intention in His economy is to make Himself man that man may become God; then God and man will be united and mingled together to live a corporate life—1 Cor. 12:12.
- B. God's economy is His arrangement to gain a Body for Christ, built up with human beings mingled with the divinity of God—v. 16.

III. God needs a corporate people to be raised up by His grace through the high peak of the divine revelation to live a life according to this revelation—1 Cor. 15:10:

- A. A revival is the practice, the practicality, of the vision we have seen.
- B. If we practice living the life of a God-man, which is the reality of the Body of Christ, spontaneously a corporate model will be built up, a model living in the economy of God; this model will be the greatest revival in the history of the church to bring the Lord back.

IV. The reality of the Body of Christ is a corporate living of conformity to the death of Christ by the power of the resurrection of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:16-19; Phil. 3:10:

- A. The reality of the Body of Christ is a corporate living, which is the aggregate of many saints who have been redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, and transformed by the processed and consummated God within them.
- B. The Body of Christ consummates in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth as God's increase and expression for eternity.

V. The Spirit is the reality of the Triune God, the reality of resurrection, and the reality of the Body of Christ—John 16:13-15, 14:17:

- A. The reality of the processed Triune God is the consummated Spirit of reality—John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6.
- B. The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- C. The Spirit of reality makes everything of the processed Triune God a reality in the Body of Christ—John 16:13-15.
- D. Without the Spirit there is no Body of Christ, no church—Eph. 4:4.

VI. In order to be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to be absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ—Eph. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:3:

- A. The church is absolutely of the element of Christ, absolutely in resurrection, and absolutely in the heavenlies—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6; cf. Gen. 2:21-24.
- B. When we do not live by our natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of this is the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11.

VII. If we would live the life of a God-man, we need to be conformed to the death of Christ by the power of His resurrection—Phil. 3:10:

- A. To be conformed to Christ's death is to take Christ's death as the mold of one's life—John 6:57; 5:19; 4:34; 5:30; 7:18; 17:4; 1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:29; Luke 9:23; John 12:25-26.
- B. Paul lived a crucified life continually, a life under the cross, just as Christ did in His human living—1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10-12, note 1, Gal. 6:17, Acts 28:9.
- C. The death of Christ is the mold, and we are the "dough"—Lev. 2:1; John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 6:3-4.
- D. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are conformed to the mold of Christ's death—Phil. 3:10; John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20; 3:16; S. S. 2:8-13.

VIII. The God-ordained way is for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16; Rev. 1:4a, 11:

- A. The goal of the God-ordained way is to gain material for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:8-16:
 - 1. The regular procedures of the work of the church consist of four steps: begetting, nourishing, teaching (perfecting), and building up—1 Cor. 4:15b; Matt. 28:19; 1 Thes. 2:7; John 21:15-17.
 - 2. If we walk in the God-ordained way, we will function to shepherd and perfect people for the organic Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:20
- B. The practice of the scriptural way at any cost will issue in the organic building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-12; 5:16; Rev. 21:2
- C. The God-ordained way is the most effective way for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Pet. 2:5,9:
 - 1. The service of the Body of Christ is the corporate priesthood of the gospel (vv. 5,9).
 - 2. The goal of the New Testament priesthood of the gospel is the building up of the Body of Christ—Rom. 15:16.
 - 3. If we take the Body as the means, every member can serve in the coordination of the Body—12:4-5.