

## HWMR - THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE, Week 01

### Banners for 2017 Thanksgiving Conference

In the real church life the **service** to the Lord is **rendered**,  
the **testimony** of the Lord is **seen**, and the **love** toward the Lord is **poured out**;  
this is the real expression of the Body of the Lord,  
which is a **vessel** to contain the Lord and to express Him.

**Fellowship**—the circulation of the divine life in the Body of Christ—  
is the **reality of the church life**, and this circulation of the divine life  
brings all the members of the Body of Christ into **oneness**.

In order to practice the **scriptural way** to meet and to serve  
for the building up of the Body of Christ,  
we need a **revived** living and a **labor** in shepherding  
that flow out from our love of the Lord.

The **goal** of the Lord's recovery is to bring forth the **one new man**,  
and this requires that we **practice** the church life in the **consciousness of the one new man**  
by taking Christ as our **person**, being constituted with Christ,  
and being **renewed** in the spirit of the mind.

### Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 10-13; 3:3-4; Eph. 4:3-6; 1 John 2:27; Rom. 14:1; Psa. 119:140

- 1 Cor. 1: 2      To the **church of God** which is **in Corinth**, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the **called saints**, with all those who **call** upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is **theirs and ours**:
- 1 Cor. 1:10-13      Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all **speak the same thing** and that there be no divisions among you, but that you **be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion**. For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of the household of Chloe, that there are strifes among you. Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?
- 1 Cor 3:3-4      For you are still fleshly. For if there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and do you not walk according to the manner of man? For when someone says, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are you not men of flesh?
- 1 John 2:27      And as for you, the **anointing** which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, **abide in Him**.
- Roman 14:1      Now him who is weak in faith receive, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his considerations.
- Psalms 119:140      Your **word** is very pure, And Your servant loves it.

**I. We must see and stand on the **unique ground** of the local churches of God—the practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, **one city with only one church**—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11:**

- A. “To the **church of God** which is **in Corinth**, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the **called saints**, with all those who **call** upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is **theirs and ours**”—1 Cor. 1:2:
1. The church being “**of God**” refers to the content of the church in its essence.
  2. The church “**in Corinth**” shows the locality of Corinth for the **existence**, **expression**, and **practice** of the church; such a locality becomes the local ground of the local churches on which they are built respectively; thus, the locality spontaneously becomes the church ground.

3. “Those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the **called saints**” are the constituents as the **framework** of the church.
4. “With all those **who call** upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place” indicates that this Epistle has been and will be read by people in thousands of places throughout the generations; even today we are the recipients of this book.
5. Christ being “**theirs and ours**” means that Christ is the portion of the local saints in Corinth and of all the saints in whatever place, who **participate in the fellowship** (enjoyment) of Christ, into which all the believers have been called by the faithful God—v. 9.

B. **Divisions** among the saints are condemned by the apostle as the deputy authority of Christ the Head—vv. 10-13.

C. Christ is not divided—Christ is unique, not divisible nor divided—v. 13.

D. Division is of the **flesh**, according to the manner of man—3:3-4.

E. We need to see our practice under today’s divisive and confusing degradation of Christianity:

1. **We do not and should not participate** in the Catholic heresy, the Protestant denominations, and any kind of free groups of Christians.
2. But we recognize and receive the individual believers in Christ who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are redeemed by His blood and regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and who are not factious (Titus 3:10), not making divisions (Rom. 16:17), not worshipping idols (1 John 5:21), nor living in sin (1 Cor. 5:11), even if they are still related to any of the above-listed divisions.
3. **We are one with all the believers who are in the Lord’s recovery** throughout the world, and in the **principle of Philadelphia**, we choose to love all the brothers—Rev. 3:7.
4. We do not have any creed; we have only the unique Bible properly translated and interpreted by and according to the Bible itself.

## II. We must see and **keep the unique oneness** of the universal Body of Christ—Eph. 4:3-6:

A. The **unique oneness** of the universal Body of Christ is of the Spirit, which oneness believers should not break but **keep diligently** in the uniting bond of peace—v. 3.

B. In the whole universe there is only one **unique Body of Christ**, with the Triune God as its **contents**—vv. 4-6:

1. The one Spirit is the **essence** of its contents.
2. The one Lord is the **element** of its contents.
3. God the Father is the **source** of its contents, as the One who is over all and through all and in all triunely.

C. We must see and practice the **blending** of the universal Body of Christ:

1. **God has blended the Body together** (1 Cor. 12:24); this is the blending of all the individual **members** of the Body of Christ, the blending of all the **churches** in certain districts, the blending of all the **co-workers**, and the blending of all the **elders**.
2. 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.
3. This 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).

## III. We must practice the church life by **submitting to the headship** of the Lord and by being **balanced by the Body**:

A. We must learn from the book of Acts and from the experience of the apostles and elders in Acts 15 **never to make decisions on our own**; furthermore, we should not make suggestions to others or give instructions to them; none of us is qualified to do this:

1. We are not the Lord or the Master, and we are not the Lord of the harvest (Luke 10:2; John 4:35); only the Lord Jesus is the **Lord** of the harvest, the **Master**, and the **Head** of the Body, and **we must honor Him by not making decisions in ourselves**.
2. If we tell others where to go, there would be no need for them to pray; instead, they would simply act on our word; to do this is to usurp the position of the Lord and to make ourselves the Lord; this is the greatest insult to the Lord.
3. **Everyone must pray until he is clear about the Lord’s leading; everyone must be brought into the presence of the Lord to contact Him**.

B. For the Lord’s move we also need to **be balanced by the Body**:

1. Suppose the leading ones, after much prayer, are truly burdened about a certain matter; what they should do then is through **fellowship** pass on their burden to the saints and ask the saints to pray.
2. Eventually, the saints will receive a personal leading from the Lord, and they may move accordingly; in this way no one will be individualistic or rebellious.

## IV. We must practice the **spiritual charter** (spiritual rules and regulations) of the church, which is the **cross**, Christ as **life**, the **Holy Spirit**, the **headship** of Christ, the **Body**, a general **attitude** toward our fellow believers, and the **Word** of God:

A. The **altar** in the temple (Ezek. 40:47) signifies **the cross of Christ**, and it is the center not only of the inner court but also of the entire premises of the temple; this altar, typifying the cross, is actually the center of the universe:

1. As the center of the universe, the cross points to the all-inclusive death of Christ, which involved God, man, and all the creatures; the death on the cross was the **release of God** (Luke 12:49-50; John 12:24) and the **termination of man and all negative things** (Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14; 9:26-28; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 2:14-15).

2. In Christ's death God passed through death in man to be **released**, and man died in God to be **terminated**; the death of the Lord was His release; **the more we pass through the cross, the more Christ as life is released into others**—2 Cor. 4:12.
  3. The cross spreads in every direction and to every corner of God's building; thus, if we wish to contact God and enjoy His riches in His house, we must pass through the cross.
- B. If we do not have **Christ as life**, we do not have the church life; the church life is simply Christ as life realized by us in a corporate way—John 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:6.
- C. If we check ourselves with the cross, and we honor, magnify, exalt, and respect the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the right position to experience the **Holy Spirit** in our spirit; the Spirit is our charter; if we do not have the inner anointing of the Spirit while we are speaking, we should stop—v. 16; 1 John 2:20, 27.
- D. In His ascension Christ was inaugurated into the full **headship** of the entire universe (Eph. 1:20-22; Acts 2:36); in the third heaven Christ was given to be **Head over all things to the church**, and He is also the head of every man (1 Cor. 11:3a):
1. The headship of Christ does not allow for there to be any other heads or subheads; any other head is an insult to Christ—Col. 2:19; Matt. 23:8-12.
  2. In order to know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), **we first must be careful not to insult the headship of Christ in anything that we do**.
  3. Many brothers often unconsciously insult the headship of Christ by telling a saint what to do instead of encouraging him to learn how to contact the Lord.
- E. We must be **regulated, restricted, and limited** by the **Body of Christ**; on the one hand, we must **stay within our measure** as members of the Body (Eph. 4:16); on the other hand, we must "fully accomplish," fill up the full measure, of our ministry in and to the Body (2 Tim. 4:5); **all that we say and do must be in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body**.
- F. Christians are divided because they lack a spirit of generality; they may talk about the Body in Romans 12, but without Romans 14 we can never have the **Body life**:
1. In order to practice the Body life revealed in Romans 12, we must learn the practical lessons of **receiving the believers**, as revealed in Romans 14, so that the church life may be all-inclusive, able to include all kinds of genuine Christians.
  2. Such receiving requires the **transformation** mentioned in Romans 12:2; if we remain natural, we will be unable to receive those whose views are different from ours in doctrine or in practice.
  3. **As long as one is a genuine Christian and has the fundamental faith of the New Testament, we should not exclude him, even though he may differ from us with respect to doctrine; rather, we should receive him in the same one Lord**—14:1.
- G. *"Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it"*—Psa. 119:140:
1. The Scripture, the **word of God**, is the very breathing out of God; God's speaking is God's breathing out; hence, His word is spirit, or breath; thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit—2 Tim. 3:16; John 6:63.
  2. The Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches; we must strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire.