

HWMR - Thanksgiving Conference 2018

General Subject: The Reality of the Body of Christ

Message One

The Spirit of Reality Being the Reality of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13-14; 1 John 5:6; Eph. 4:12, 16, 20-21

- 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**.
- John 15: 26 But when the **Comforter** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the **Spirit of reality**, who proceeds from the Father, He will **testify** concerning Me;
- John 16:13 But when He, the **Spirit of reality**, comes, He will **guide** you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will **declare** to you the things that are coming.
- John 16:14 He will **glorify** Me, for He will **receive** of Mine and will **declare** it to you.
- 1 John 5: 6 This is He who **came through water and blood**, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the **Spirit is the reality**.
- Ephesians 4: 12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the **building up of the Body of Christ**,
- Ephesians 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.
- Ephesians 4: 20 But you did not so **learn Christ**,
- Ephesians 4: 21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the **reality is in Jesus**,

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The **Spirit** as the **reality** of the Triune God **is** the **reality** of the **Body of Christ**;
the **Spirit of reality** makes everything of the processed and consummated Triune God
a **reality** in the **Body of Christ**.

The **reality** of the **Body of Christ** is the **corporate living** by the **perfected God-men**,
who are genuine men but are **not** living by their life **but** by the life of the processed God,
whose **attributes** have been expressed through their **virtues**.

If we would have the **reality** of the **Body of Christ**,
we must **allow** Christ to make His home in our hearts,
and if we would **live** in the **reality** of the **Body of Christ**,
we need to **live** in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

The Lord's **recovery** is to build up Zion **as** the **reality** of the **Body of Christ**
by living out and **working out** the New Jerusalem.

I. The writings of John reveal that **the Spirit is the Spirit of reality**—John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6, 20:

- A. In the whole universe only One is real—the Triune God; **only the Triune God is the reality**—John 14:6; 1 John 5:20.
- B. In God's New Testament economy the Spirit has the attribute of reality—John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13:
1. **Reality** is the all-inclusive attribute of the Spirit of God, for it includes the Father, Christ the Son, and all the divine items and entities—1:17.
 2. The Spirit is the all-inclusive reality; reality, therefore, is one of the most marvelous attributes of the Spirit—1 John 5:6.
 3. According to the context, *the reality* in John 16:13 refers to all that the Triune God is and has.
- C. The **Spirit of reality** is the reality of the Triune God; that is, He is the reality of all that the Triune God is, all that He has accomplished, and all that He has attained and obtained—14:17; 15:26.
- D. Apart from the Spirit of reality, in our experience we cannot have the Triune God or any of the divine attributes; the reality of the Triune God and of all His attributes is the **Spirit of reality**—16:13.

The Spirit of Reality

This Spirit, this Comforter, is the Spirit of reality (v. 17). **Why is He the Spirit of reality?** Because whatever the Father in the Son is and whatever the Son is are realized in the Spirit. The Spirit is the realization of what God the Father and God the Son are. **God the Father is light**, and **God the Son is life**. **The reality of this life and light is just the Spirit**. If you do not have the Spirit, you cannot have the **light** of God the Father. If you do not have the Spirit, you cannot have God the Son as your **life**. The reality of all the divine attributes of both God the Father and God the Son is the Spirit. (Life-Study of John, Chapter 31, Section 3)

II. The Spirit of reality guides us into all the reality—vv. 13-14:

- A. Only that which is **in the Spirit of reality** is spiritual reality—14:17; 15:26:
1. All spiritual things must be **in the Spirit of reality** before they can be real, living, and organic—1 John 5:6.
 2. The **Spirit of reality** is the **Executor** of all spiritual things—John 16:13-14.
- B. The **Spirit of reality guides** the believers into all the reality of the Triune God and of all divine matters—2 Cor. 13:14.
- C. In John 16:13 *the reality* refers to what **the Father has**, what **the Son has**, and what **the Spirit receives** of the Son and of what the Father has:
1. What the Father has is reality, what the Son has is reality, and what the Spirit receives is also reality—14:6, 17.
 2. What the Father has **becomes** the Son's, what the Son has is **received** by the Spirit, and what the Spirit receives is **disclosed** to us—15:26.
 3. The Father is **embodied** in the Son, the Son is **transfigured** to be the Spirit, and the Spirit is the **reaching** of the Divine Trinity to us—2 Cor. 13:14.
- D. Through the Spirit, the reality of the Triune God is **transmitted** into us; thus, the reality into which the Spirit **guides** us is the reality of the Triune God—1 John 4:13-14; 5:6.
- E. As the **Spirit of reality** guides us into the divine reality by **transmitting** this reality into us, the divine reality—the processed and consummated Triune God—becomes the **constituent of our being**—Eph. 3:14-17a.
- F. The **Spirit of reality**—the **full realization of the Son**—guides us into all the reality of Christ, including all that He is and has and all that He has attained and obtained—John 16:13-14.
- G. The **Spirit of reality guides** us into the **reality of the Body of Christ**—Eph. 4:4.

Guiding Them into All the Reality

The Father, who is the source, the origin, has many riches. All that the **Father has becomes the Son's**. The Son has unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8). Whatever the Father **has is the Son's**, and what the **Son has is received by the Spirit**. Since what the Spirit receives is **disclosed** or **transmitted** to us, **we become the destination**. The Father is **embodied** in the Son, the Son is **transfigured** to be the Spirit, and the Spirit is the **reaching** of the divine Trinity to us. All the riches of the Triune God reach us in the Spirit. Therefore, we are the destination of the Triune God. All that the Triune God is and has has been disclosed, conveyed, transmitted, to us. Because we are organically united to the Spirit, that is, organically united to the processed Triune God, whatever He is and has now is our portion as our reality.

The reality into which the Spirit **guides** us is the reality of the divine Trinity. Actually, **the reality of the divine Trinity is the indwelling Spirit**. It is the Spirit who **dwells** within us, not the Spirit who rests upon us, who is this reality. The Spirit is the reality of all that the Father and the Son are. Without the Spirit, there is the essence of what the Father and the Son are, but there is no realization. **The Spirit is the application of all that the Father and the Son are**.

Through the Spirit the reality of the divine Trinity is transmitted into us. Through this transmission all the riches of what the processed Triune God is and has are dispensed into us. Now whatever the processed Triune God is and has **becomes our element**. This makes **the processed Triune God the very essence of our being**. In this way the Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God **becomes our portion**. This is the Spirit as the reality of the Triune God for our experience and enjoyment. (Conclusion of the New Testament, The (Msgs. 079-098), Chapter 11, Section 5)

III. The Spirit as the reality of the Triune God is also the reality of the Body of Christ — John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13;

Eph. 4:4:

- A. The **Body of Christ** is the church, and all its reality is the **Spirit of the reality** of the processed and consummated Triune God; if there were no **Spirit of reality**, there would be no Body of Christ, no church—John 16:13.
- B. The reality of the Body of Christ is the Spirit whom we have received, experienced, and enjoyed in many aspects—7:37-39; 20:22.
- C. The **Spirit of reality** makes everything of the processed and consummated Triune God a reality in the Body of Christ—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27.
- D. The All-sufficient God (Gen. 17:1; Phil. 1:19), as the **Spirit of reality dwelling** in our spirit to be joined as one mingled spirit (Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 6:17), is the secret to all that the processed and consummated Triune God is to the Body of Christ.
- E. All that the processed and consummated Triune God experienced, including incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, is realized by the **Spirit of reality** to be the attributes and experiences of the Body of Christ in reality—Eph. 4:4-6.
- F. Only when we touch reality through the **Spirit of reality** can we live out the Body life— 1 John 5:6; John 16:13-14; Eph. 4:4, 12, 15-16.

In John 14 the Lord said that when He went away, He would send the Holy Spirit. What does the Holy Spirit do when He comes? When He comes, the Holy Spirit guides us into all the reality. When we tell people that there is God, they may ask, “Where is God?” To man, God is not real. But we have to remember that in the Holy Spirit God is real. When a person touches the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit brings him into the reality where he is able to touch God. When we tell people that Jesus was crucified, this is merely a doctrine to them. To them the cross is not real. But in the Holy Spirit the cross becomes real, and in the Holy Spirit man can touch and experience the cross. In the same principle, when we tell the children of God that they are of Christ and that they have been resurrected with Christ, this may be vague to them. When they touch the Holy Spirit, however, this spiritual reality will be in them, and resurrection will become real to them.

THE HOLY SPIRIT BEING THE SPIRIT OF REALITY

All spiritual reality is in the Holy Spirit, so the Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of reality**. In the Holy Spirit, the **Spirit of reality**, God is real. In addition, incarnation, the cross, resurrection, ascension, the throne, authority, blessing, and the glory in the heavens are all real. If all these things were not in the Holy Spirit, there would be no spiritual reality. This is why many unbelievers ask: “Is there God in this universe?” “Is there the cross?” “Is there resurrection?” “Is there ascension?” Although there is truly a spiritual reality of all these matters, for finite man all these matters are too far away. To those who believe in God, however, these things are very close, even intimately close, because all these things are in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is in those who believe. Whenever we touch the Holy Spirit, all these matters become real to us, because all these matters are real in the Holy Spirit. Whenever we touch the Holy Spirit, we touch death, resurrection, ascension, and the throne. To those who have never touched the Holy Spirit, all these things seem not to exist. (Spiritual Reality, Chapter 6, Section 2)

IV. If we would be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to have the Spirit of reality constituted into our being—John 14:16-20:

- A. The **Spirit of reality** has come into the believers to be the reality of Christ within them—15:26; 16:13-14.
- B. The all-inclusive Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God, is fully realized as the **Spirit of reality** who dwells within us; the indwelling **Spirit of reality** is the reality of Christ—14:10-11, 16-20.
- C. To be in the reality of the Body of Christ is to have the **Spirit of reality** wrought into us and constituted into our being—Eph. 3:16-21; 4:4-6, 12, 16.

THE LIVING TOGETHER OF GOD AND MAN

Simply, the reality of the **Body of Christ** is the living of a God-man life by a group of God-redeemed people together with the God-man Christ. Before the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, in the universe there was God in heaven and man on the earth. But in the universe there was not one human being who was both God and man. Furthermore, this One who was to be God yet man did not become a man in the twinkling of an eye. Rather, according to man's natural law, He was conceived in His mother's womb for nine months, and then He was born to be a man. He lived on this earth for thirty-three and a half years, beginning as a child. In the past I had a question concerning this matter: Why did the Lord have to live on the earth for such a long time? He lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years, ... He used those thirty-three and a half years to live out the model of a God-man living.

After His death and resurrection He produced many brothers who, with Him as the oldest Brother, become the one great man in the universe. What is this great, universal man? This is a God-man, one who is God yet man and man yet God. First, He lived on the earth to live out a model. ... Not only was He like a man, but He was a man. However, as a man, He lived not by the human life but by the divine life within Him. He lived, yet He did not live alone. He lived not by His own life but by the divine life. He told us clearly that He spoke and did things not by Himself but by the One who sent Him (John 5:19; 8:28). In John 6:57 He said, “The living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father.” But for what purpose did the living Father send Him? ...the Father sent Him to be our Savior and to accomplish redemption for us. ... He came to bring God's life to us. ... God sent Him to be a man and to live a God-man life by the divine life. This kind of living issues in a universal great man that is exactly the same as He is—a man living a God-man life by the divine life. (The High Peak of the Vision and the Reality of the Body of Christ, Chapter 4, Section 1)

V. The reality of the Body of Christ is “the reality...in Jesus”—v. 21:

- A. The **reality in Jesus** is the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels— v. 21.
- B. The **essence of the life** of Jesus is reality—John 1:14, 17; 14:6.
- C. “The reality” in Ephesians 4:24 is the personification of God:
 1. This reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus.
 2. The **human living of Jesus** was according to the reality, that is, according to God Himself.
 3. God was with Him, and He was one with God and expressed God; this is the meaning of **the reality is in Jesus**.
- D. **The way that the Lord Jesus lived on earth is the way that the members of the Body of Christ should live today**—vv. 17, 20-21; 5:1-2, 8:
 1. Our **standard of living** must be according to the reality in Jesus, the reality lived out by the Lord Jesus when He was on earth—4:20-21.
 2. We need to learn Christ and be taught in Him to live a life of reality—vv. 20-21; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24.
 3. As members of the Body of Christ, we should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God—Eph. 5:30; 4:20-21.
 4. The reality in Jesus should be duplicated in His many members so that they may live corporately in the reality of the Body of Christ—John 14:19.

The Reality in Jesus

Verse 21 says, “*If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus.*” Here Paul does not say that the reality is in Christ; rather, he says that **the reality is in Jesus**. The reason for this is that when the Lord Jesus lived on earth as a man, in Him there was always the reality. In Jesus, that is, **in His human living and His daily walk**—whether He worked as a carpenter or carried out His ministry—there was the reality at all times. In order to understand the reality expressed in the living of Jesus as a man on earth, we need to read verse 17, where Paul exhorts the believers no longer to “*walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind.*” Here we see a contrast between **the reality in Jesus** and **the vanity of the Gentiles' mind**. **In the human living of Jesus there was no vanity but only the reality**; however, in our godless society there is nothing but vanity of vanities. Using a phrase from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we may say that, as a whole, today's world is a “*vanity fair.*” **Wealth, fame, position, entertainment, and material possessions** in today's world are all vanities, but **everything in the daily living of the man Jesus is the reality**. Whatever He did in His human living is the reality; not one of His words was vain (cf. 1 Pet. 2:22).

Christ is not only life to us but also an **example** (John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21). In His life on earth He set up a **pattern**, as revealed in the Gospels. Then He was **crucified and resurrected** to become the **life-giving Spirit** that He might **enter into us to be our life**. We **learn** from Him (Matt. 11:29) according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection. **To learn Christ is simply to be molded into the pattern of Christ, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ** (Rom. 8:29).

The expression **the reality is in Jesus** refers to **the actual condition of the life of Jesus** as recorded in the four Gospels. In the **godless** walk of the nations, the fallen people, there is vanity, but in the **godly life** of Jesus **there is the reality**. **Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God. God was in His living, and He was one with God**. This is what is meant by **the reality is in Jesus**. We, the believers, who are regenerated with Christ as our life and are **taught** in Him, **learn** from Him as the reality is in Jesus.

In His daily walk the man Jesus was not only **great** but also very **fine**. For example, when He fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, He was not so ecstatic over this miracle that He forgot the broken pieces which were left over after the people had eaten. Rather, He instructed His disciples to **gather the broken pieces left over** that nothing may be lost, which amounted to twelve handbaskets full (John 6:12-13). The four Gospels reveal that in **every detail of the Lord's daily living, there is no vanity but only the reality**. Moreover, in nearly every page of the four Gospels, we see a striking contrast between **the reality in the godly living of Jesus** and **the vanity in the living of others** around Him, such as His opposers as well as His disciples.

In His thirty-three and a half years on earth, the Lord Jesus **formed** the **mold**, the **pattern**, to which all those who believe in Him are to be **conformed**. According to the record of the four Gospels, **the life of the Lord Jesus was a life of reality**. **Reality is the shining of light. Light is the source, and reality is its expression**. As Hebrews 1:3 says, **the Lord Jesus is the effulgence of God's glory**. This means that **He is the shining of God who is light**. Because in every aspect of the Lord's living on earth there was the shining of light, His life was a **life of reality**, a life of the shining of God Himself. That life of reality was the expression of God. For this reason Paul says that we **learn** Christ as the reality is in Jesus. In other words, we learn Christ according to the mold of the life of Jesus, which is the reality.

After Christ established this **mold**, He passed through death and resurrection, and in resurrection He **became** the **life-giving Spirit**. As such a Spirit, He **comes into us to be our life**. When we **believed** in Christ and were **baptized**, God **put us into Him** as the mold, just as dough is placed into a mold. By being put into the mold we learn the mold. This means that **by being put into Christ, we learn Christ**. On the one hand, **God put us into Christ**; on the other hand, **Christ has come into us to be our life**. Now we may live by Him according to the mold in which we have been placed by God. **We are in Christ as the mold, and He is in us as our life**. In this way **we learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus**. (Conclusion of the New Testament, The (Msgs. 323-345), Chapter 19, Section 1)