

HWMR - Thanksgiving Conference 2018

General Subject:

The Reality of the Body of Christ

Message Three

**Being in the Reality of the Body of Christ
by Living in the Organic Union and in the Mingled Spirit
and by Being Conformed to Christ's Death**

Scripture Reading: John 15:4-5; Rom. 12:4-5; 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12-13, 27; Phil. 3:10

- John 15: 4 **Abide in Me** and I bin you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15: 5 I am the vine; **you are the branches**. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- Romans 12: 4 For just as in one body we have **many members**, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Romans 12: 5 So we who are many are **one Body in Christ**, and individually members one of another.
- Romans 8: 4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the **spirit**.
- 1 Corinthians 6:17 **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit**.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12 For even as the body is one and has **many members**, yet all the members of the body, being many, are **one body**, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 12:13 For also in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one Body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now **you are the Body of Christ**, and members individually.
- Philippians 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship** of His sufferings, being **conformed to His death**,

The most wonderful **reality** in the Christian experience is that all the believers in Christ are **united** with Him in the **way of life**. The union of the believers with Christ is **not** by organization **but** by life; hence, this union is **organic**. The word organic denotes that this union is absolutely a matter of life. (The Secret of Experiencing Christ, Chapter 5, Section 1)

I. We enter into the reality of the Body of Christ by living in the organic union with Christ—John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 12:4-5:

- A. The relationship that God desires to have with man is that He and man be **grafted** together and thus become one in an **organic union**—6:3-5:
1. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together to **become one life**; this oneness is an **organic union**, a union in life—a grafted life— vv. 3-5; 11:17-24.
 2. To believe into Christ is to receive Him as the **divine life into us** that we may have an **organic union** with Him in the divine life—John 3:15; 15:4-5.
- B. Romans 12 speaks of the Body from the angle of the **organic union**, from the uniting life, from a life that unites us together, not only with Christ but with all the other members of Christ—vv. 4-5:
1. The **focus**, the **center**, of the Christian life is **the Body**, which is the high point of God's revelation and the ultimate item of God's continual working—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30; Col. 2:19.
 2. We are one Body in Christ, having an **organic union** with Him—Rom. 12:4-5:
 - a. *In Christ* always implies the fact of being **organically one with Christ**.
 - b. This union makes us one in life with Christ and with all the other members of His Body.
 - c. The Body is not an organization or a society but is altogether an **organism** produced by the union in life that we have with Christ—1 Cor. 6:17; 12:27.
 3. To be properly organic in the Body is to be organically united with Christ— Rom. 12:4-5:
 - a. The Body is something that is held together in the **organic union** with Christ.
 - b. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the **organic union** with Christ—John 15:4-5.

II. We live in the reality of the Body of Christ by living in the mingled Spirit— Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17:

- A. 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.
- B. 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:
1. We need to understand the Body of Christ from the perspective of the mingling of God and man—1 Cor. 6:17.
 2. 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—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16.
 3. The processed and consummated Triune God mingles Himself with His chosen people in their humanity, and **the mingling is the genuineness of the Body of Christ**—v. 3; John 17:21-23.
 4. 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.
 5. 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.
- C. 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:
1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. The implications of 1 Corinthians 6:17 are marvelous and far-reaching.
 4. **To be one spirit with the Lord implies that we are in Him and that He is in us**—John 15:4-5.
 5. 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.
 6. The divine Spirit and the human spirit are mingled as one within us so that we can live the life of a God-man, a life that is **God yet man and man yet God**; this is the reality of the Body of Christ—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a.

A GREAT MYSTERY

We the believers are joined to the Lord as one spirit. This is a great mystery, perhaps the most mysterious matter revealed in the Bible. Who can explain such a mystery? Can you explain how it is possible for us to be one spirit with the Lord? Although we cannot explain it, we can surely experience it. Often I pray in the morning, "*Lord, thank You for another day in which to practice being one spirit with You.*" What a wonder that sinners such as we can be one spirit with the Lord! The more we consider this matter, the more we realize how wonderful it is.

In 6:17 Paul plainly declares the **fact** that **we are one spirit with the Lord**. But few of us have paid adequate attention to this. We need much time to study this verse and explore it in an experiential way. **We need to experiment and learn how to be one spirit with the Lord in our speaking and in all that we do.** As we do various things, we need to consider whether or not we are one spirit with the Lord.

We have seen that in chapter six Paul covers **three vital matters**. These matters are so great that it takes much exercise of the spirit for us to assimilate them adequately. How marvelous that **our bodies are members of Christ**, that **we are one spirit with the Lord**, and that **our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit!** The vision concerning this is becoming so clear that sometimes I can hardly contain myself. The burden of this vision is so heavy that I can hardly bear it. I cannot bear to think that some churches and some saints may go on in an old way, carrying on a Christian work but neglecting the central vision of Paul's completing ministry. **We urgently need to see the vision that our bodies are members of Christ, that we are one spirit with the Lord, and that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.** (Life-Study of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 39, Section 3)

III. The reality of the Body of Christ is a corporate living of conformity to the death of Christ—3:10; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27:

- A. To be **conformed** to Christ's death is to take Christ's death as a mold—Phil. 3:10:
1. The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's experience of continually putting to death His human life that He might live by the life of the Father—John 6:57; 5:19; 4:34; 5:30; 7:18; 17:4.
 2. The life of Jesus is a model for us, and we should be the mass reproduction of this model—1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:29.
 3. Our life should be conformed to the mold of Christ's death by **our dying daily to our human life to live the divine life**—Luke 9:23; John 12:25-26.
- B. In order to be in the reality of the Body of Christ, **we need to be conformed to the death of Christ through the cross**—Phil. 3:10:
1. The **cross**—the death of Christ—is the centrality and universality of our way to live the Christian life in order to fulfill God's purpose.
 2. In our experience the turning point in living a life with Christ is the cross.
 3. As Christ's continuation, **we should live a crucified life every day**—1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
- C. Such a life of dying to ourselves and living to God is for Christ, the first God-man, to be formed in His many members, the many God-men, for the building up of His organic Body—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:12, 16.

D. We must be those who **live a crucified life by continually taking Christ's death as the mold of our life**; it is only by this kind of **corporate living** that we can have the reality of the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 2:2; 12:27.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN THE POWER OF RESURRECTION

In verse 10 Paul says, *“To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering?, being conformed to His death.”* According to this verse, Paul aspired not only to know Christ, but also to know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. The **power of Christ's resurrection** is His resurrection life which raised Him from among the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). **The reality of the power of Christ's resurrection is the Spirit** (Rom. 1:4). To know, to experience, this power requires identification with Christ's death and conformity to it. Death is the base of resurrection. To experience the power of Christ's resurrection, **we need to live a crucified life according to the pattern of His life**. Our conformity to His death affords a base for the power of His resurrection to rise up that His divine life may be expressed in us.

The **participation** in Christ's suffering—*“the fellowship of His sufferings”*—(Matt. 20:22-23; Col. 1:24) is **a necessary condition** for the experience of the power of His resurrection (2 Tim. 2:11) by being conformed to His death. Paul was pursuing to know and experience not only the excellency of Christ Himself, but also the **life power of His resurrection** and the **participation in His sufferings**. **With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection. With us, the power of His resurrection comes first, then the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death.** We first receive the **power** of His resurrection. Then by this power we are enabled to **participate** in His sufferings and **live** a crucified life in conformity to His death. Such sufferings are mainly **for producing and building up the Body of Christ**.

Being **conformed** to Christ's death is the very base of the experience of Christ. If we are not **conformed** to the death of Christ, we do not have the **base for the experience of Christ**. In order to experience Christ, **we must be conformed to His death**. But to be conformed to the death of Christ, we **must have the fellowship of His sufferings**. By participating in Christ's sufferings, we are **ushered** into a position to experience the power of His resurrection. Then, when we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, we know Him.

In Philippians 3 the sequence is **knowing Christ, knowing the power of Christ's resurrection, knowing the fellowship of His sufferings, and being conformed to His death**. But in our spiritual experience, the sequence is reversed. **Daily we are conformed to Christ's death; then we participate in His sufferings, know the power of His resurrection, and, by knowing the power of resurrection, we know Christ Himself**. According to Paul's sequence, **first** we **receive** the excellency of the knowledge of Christ **by** seeing the vision of Christ; **second**, we **count** all things to be refuse; **third**, we **gain** Christ and are found in Him; and **fourth**, we **know** Christ, experience Him.

In order to experience Christ, we must be **in the power of resurrection**. We cannot be in our natural life. The more we know the power of Christ's resurrection, the more we shall participate in the sufferings of Christ and thereby have the fellowship of His sufferings. If we experience the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, we shall then be conformed to His death. As we are **conformed to the death of Christ**, we are **ushered into the power of His resurrection**. It is by this resurrection power that we know Christ and experience Him. (Life-Study of Philippians, Chapter 21, Section 2)