



Church in Regina Newsletter

Meeting Place: 3860 Buckingham Drive E, Regina, SK, Canada S4V 3A1

Judges 15:18, "And he was very thirsty, and he called on Jehovah..."

Church Address:

2514 Truesdale Drive,
Regina, SK, S4V 0W4

Contact Numbers:

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Meeting Schedule:

Lord's Table Meeting

Lord's Day
10:00AM to 12:00PM

Prayer Meeting

Tuesdays & Wednesdays
Saints Homes
8:00PM to 9:00PM

YP Meeting

Fridays
7:00PM to 9:00PM
Brother Hedrick's Place

Small/Home Meeting

Friday Evening
Saint's Home

Seven Annual Feasts

1. International Chinese-speaking Conference, Anaheim, CA: February 17-19, 2017
2. International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (Spring) Anaheim, CA, USA: Mar 31 to Apr. 2, 2017
3. Memorial Day Conference New York, NY: May 26-29, 2017
4. Summer Training Anaheim, CA: July 3-8, 2017
5. International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (Fall) Leipzig, Germany: October 5-7, 2017
6. Thanksgiving Conference Phoenix AZ: November 23-26, 2017

SELECTING HYMNS IN A MEETING

After a meeting begins, once we touch the spirit of the meeting, we will begin to function. Let us now speak concerning selecting hymns. Do not consider this to be an ordinary matter. Selecting hymns in a meeting involves many details. In order to select hymns we need knowledge in two aspects. First, we must **know the hymn categories**: some hymns are **for praising**, some **for prayer**, some **for spiritual warfare**, some **for edification**, some **for gospel preaching**, some **for touching the Spirit**, some **for remembering the Lord**, and some **for worshipping the Father**. We must have knowledge of the different categories of the hymns if we want to select proper hymns in a meeting. Otherwise, we are likely to make mistakes in selecting hymns. Second, we must **understand the progression of the meeting**. This may be likened to the four seasons of the year. For each season we wear clothes of different thickness. We dress lightly in summer, warmer in fall, and the warmest in winter. Likewise, the hymns we select in a meeting should be altogether according to the atmosphere and course of the meeting. Therefore, in selecting hymns, we must be clear concerning the different categories of hymns and also know the atmosphere and progression of a meeting.

TURNING THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE MEETING FROM PRAISING THE LORD TO WORSHIPPING THE FATHER

When we worship the Father, we do not need a new beginning; we simply need to make a turn. A hymn for praising the Father is also a hymn for worshipping the Father. Although the worship of the Father is another section, it still needs to be linked to the previous section. For example, in the first section of the table meeting if we have seen the Lord's redemptive love that seeks and brings us back, we should turn to the worship of the Father with this feeling. In such a feeling we can worship God the Father for sending the Lord Jesus to the earth. Hence, our praising and singing will provide a flavor of the Father's sending of the Son.

BRINGING THE WORSHIP OF THE FATHER TO A CLIMAX AND SENDING PEOPLE OFF

If we have seen the Lord's redemptive love, when we turn to worship the Father, the feeling of such worship should be based upon the Father's sending His beloved Son to redeem us. ... We can also **turn from the feeling of the Lord's coming to seek us to the praise of the Father's love**, matching this with prayers that praise the Father's love and then proceed forward.

PRAYER BEING THE BEST WAY TO BEGIN THE WORSHIP OF THE FATHER

Some have asked whether we should first pray or first sing a hymn to begin the worship of the father after breaking the bread at the table meeting. In practice, it is easier to begin with singing and more difficult to begin with prayer. If we are able to have a good beginning with prayer, **it is best to begin with prayer**. If the prayer is strong enough to touch the spirit of the meeting, even to touch this particular section of the meeting, then prayer is the best and the sweetest way to begin this section of the meeting. We should remember that this is **the beginning of a section** and not the beginning of a meeting. Thus, for the sake of spiritual elegance and height, it is best to begin with prayer.

It is best to use a hymn, not prayer, at the beginning of a meeting, because at the beginning the spirit is relatively low, and it is difficult to pray. In principle, however, prayer is the best way to begin, because a hymn is not as high as a prayer. But when we are unable to offer suitable prayer, we must use a hymn. After the breaking of bread, if the attendants are high in their spirit and able to follow the Lord Jesus to come before God, then it is not so good to start the worship of the father with a hymn. We should have a prayer of continuity, a prayer that continues the flavor of the preceding section, that follows the Lord Jesus to come before God and to offer up praises to Him. Such praise turns the entire meeting from the first section to the second section, from remembering the Lord to worshipping the Father. It would be very elegant and beautiful for us to sing a hymn after such praise and continue with two more prayers.

Upcoming Activities:

- ▶ February 26, 2016 - Perfecting Meeting (Hymn Singing) & Brother's Meeting
- ▶ March 05, 2017 - Love Feast
- ▶ March 12, 2017 - First Lord's Table Meeting in Lloydminster AB
- ▶ March 19, 2017 - YP conference

PRAYER BURDEN

“..fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”

1. Lord, we want to see You as the **glorious One**, as the **Son of Man** walking in the midst of the churches, we stand in the position of a **slave**, with an **open ears** to hear Your speaking.
2. Lord, make us willing and understand Your ordained **“Patmos”** for us so that we are able to **fellowship freely** with You, and receive fresh **revelation**.
3. Lord, thank You for caring for the us, for **“dressing the lamps”** to make us proper; and for **trimming** the **“wicks** of the lamps of the lampstand” of our flesh, our natural man, and the things that are not according to Your purpose.
4. Lord, we look into Your eyes, that we may be **enlightened** and **infused** with Your element, **watch** us, **observe** us, **search** us and **judge** us, shine upon us that all our living and work will abide the **“fire”** in that day.
5. Lord, we want to be the **“messengers**, as the **stars”** of today, the **spiritual ones** in the church, to **represent** the church, and to **mind** the things of the church, and to **bear** the responsibility of Your testimony.
6. Lord, *“You are living forever and ever,”* these words give us strength and hope, You **abolish death** on the **cross** and **overcame Hades** in **resurrection**, we want to give You all the ground and free way to move and act among us so that both death and Hades will be under Your control.
7. Please pray for the recovery of the **church life** in **Mississauga**, ON, on March 4.
8. Please pray for **Israel** - perfecting meeting **Galilee**, and prayer meeting in **Tiberias**.
9. Lord, remember the church in **Regina**: we look into Your - breast, hair, eyes, feet, hand, and hear Your voice.

This Weeks’s Pursuit: Returning to the Orthodoxy of the Church - Message One

The Vision of the Glorious Christ as the Son of Man Walking in the Midst of the Golden Lampstands

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:10—2:1

I. If we are going to see the vision of the glorious Christ and of the seven churches in Revelation 1—3, we must care for the following things:

We must take the **position of a slave**. Paul says that he was a “slave of Christ Jesus”; his use of this term indicates that he was not a self-appointed apostle or one hired by the Lord; rather, he was one purchased to serve God and minister Christ to His people, not in the natural life but in the regenerated life. **We need to be willing to serve others as a servant, even as a slave, rather than rule over others.** We must **exercise our human spirit** as the organ for us to see, realize, and respond to God’s move; only spirit can respond to Spirit. We must **have an ear to hear** what the Spirit is speaking to the churches: Seeing depends upon hearing; John first heard the voice and then saw the vision; if our ears are heavy and cannot hear, we cannot see.

II. The book of Revelation is the unique and ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ—1:1a:

John was exiled to the island of Patmos because he was **faithful to God’s word** and because he **was for the testimony of Jesus**; under such circumstances the glorious Christ revealed Himself to John and gave him new revelations.

The earth had diminished before John’s eyes, but heaven was opened to him; this brings to mind Joseph who was in prison, Moses who was in the wilderness, David who was in distress, and Paul who was in chains; they all received fresh revelations. John was going down the path that they had trodden; he received visions that he had never received before, and he came to know the enthroned Lord whom he had never known before; it is unfortunate that God’s children often misunderstand God’s ordained “Patmos.”

III. Christ as the Son of Man is the High Priest, “clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle” (v. 13), to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish them in His divinity:

The Son of Man is in His humanity, the golden girdle signifies His divinity, and breasts are a sign of love: Christ was girded at the loins, strengthened for the divine work to produce the churches, but now He is girded about at the breasts, **caring for the churches that He has produced by His love.** The golden girdle signifies Christ’s divinity as His divine energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by and with His love to nourish the churches.

Christ takes care of the churches in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them: He dresses the lamps of the lampstands to make them proper, cherishing us that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable. He trims the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, cutting off all the negative things that frustrate our shining: The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God’s purpose which need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation. He trims away all the differences among the churches (the wrongdoings, shortages, failures, and defects) so that they may be the same in essence, appearance, and expression.

Christ takes care of the churches in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches: He nourishes us with Himself as the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy.

IV. The heavenly ancientness of the Lord is depicted by His head and hair being white as white wool, as snow—1:14; Dan. 7:9; Job 15:10; cf. S. S. 5:11:

The Lord Jesus is God; He is beyond time, and He encompasses time. White hair signifies experience, glory, durability, as well as holiness. Isaiah mentions God’s promise to cleanse man’s sin until it is like wool and as white as snow (1:18); when we consider how our sins have been cleansed and that we are as white as the head and hair of the Lord, we cannot help but marvel at the greatness of the Lord’s grace!

V. The Lord’s seven eyes are as a flame of fire for watching, observing, searching, judging by enlightening, and infusing—Rev. 1:14; 5:6; Dan.10:6:

Christ’s eyes are for God’s move and operation on earth, since seven is the number for completion in God’s move. The Lord’s eyes being like a flame of fire is mainly for His judgment.

VI. The Lord’s feet are like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace, signifying that His perfect and bright walk qualifies Him to exercise divine judgment—Rev. 1:15; Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6; cf. Exo. 30:18; 38:8; Num. 21:8-9.

VII. The Lord’s voice is like the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15; cf. 14:2), which is a tumultuous sound, the sound of the voice of the Almighty God (Ezek. 1:24; 43:2) in its seriousness and solemnity (cf. Rev. 10:3).

WEEK	LORD’S TABLE MEETING	PRAYER MEETING	YP MEETING	HOME MEETING	OFFERING
Feb. 12 - Feb. 18, 2017	23	13	11	5	\$285.00
Feb. 19 - Feb. 25, 2017	19	13	13	7	\$285.00

VIII. Christ is the Holder of the bright messengers of the churches—1:16a, 20:

The messengers are the spiritual ones in the churches, the ones who **bear the responsibility of the testimony of Jesus**. The messengers, who are of the **heavenly nature** and in a **heavenly position** like stars, are those who have a fresh message from the Lord to His people. The messengers' hope and happiness are in the heavens; they have intimate fellowship with Christ; they also have the power and authority of the Lord, because they are in the right hand of the Lord Jesus. If we are willing to submit ourselves totally to the Lord's hand, care for the things of Christ Jesus, and gladly bear the responsibility for His sake, not only will we receive the Lord's reward, but the Lord will also use us to accomplish His great work.

IX. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp two-edged sword, which is His discerning, judging, and slaying word for dealing with negative persons and things—Rev. 1:16b; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17.**X. Christ's face is as the sun shining in its power (Dan. 10:6) for judging enlightenment to bring in the kingdom—Rev. 1:16c; Matt. 17:2; cf. Mal. 4:2; Judg. 5:31; Matt. 13:43.****XI. Christ is the First and the Last, assuring us that He will never leave His work unfinished, and the living One for the churches as the expression of His Body to be living, fresh, and strong—Rev. 1:17-18a:**

By knowing the Lord as the God who lives forever and ever, we can be assured of His presence in our spirit all the time; nothing establishes us more than the assured presence of the Lord. The words *I am living forever and ever* should be our strength and hope; the living God whom Abraham called upon, whom Daniel served, whom Müller trusted, and whom Watchman Nee and Witness Lee knew is the God to whom we also belong and whom we also serve; we should worship Him and praise His name with joy!

XII. Christ has the keys of death and of Hades—Rev. 1:18b:

Death is a collector and Hades is a keeper, but Christ nullified death on the cross and overcame Hades in His resurrection. As long as we give the Lord the ground, the opportunity, and the way to move and act among us by exercising to deny the self, take up the cross, and lose our soul-life, death and Hades will be under His control.

"One Life-Study a Day Makes One Holy"

LIFE-STUDY OF EPHESIANS

February 20, 2017, Monday

Message Nineteen -

THE TRIUNE GOD DISPENSED INTO US AND WROUGHT INTO OUR BEING

On the day we repented, the divine power was installed in us. Now it is no longer merely the power from on high; it is the power within us. When we open ourselves, this power comes into function to saturate us with the divine essence transmitted into us from the heavens. Today this transmission is moving within us like the blood that circulates throughout our body. Because we are not always open or because we may have problems in our conscience, mind, emotion, or will, the transmission may temporarily be restricted. If we would experience a continual transmission, we need to repent, confess, and make a clearance of all hindrances. Then the transmission will be restored and will continue to saturate our being.

It is in the dispensing of the Triune God into us and His working of Himself into our being that we are the church. Now we can understand why the church is mentioned at the end of chapter one. The church is not produced by forming the saints into an organization. On the contrary, the church is produced by the transmission from the ascended Christ. The church produced in this way is the Body. The so-called churches are not the Body. They are not an organism; rather they are somewhat like an artificial body, an organization. The church is the organism that comes out of the transmission of the all-inclusive Christ. This church, the Body of Christ, is the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

What a great matter it is to see that chapter one of Ephesians issues in the Body! The church as the Body of Christ is produced by God's well-speaking, and the basic factor of this well-speaking is that the divine life is dispensed into us and wrought into our being. The church is the issue of God's well-speaking, the basic factor of which is the Triune God dispensed and wrought into us. God's dispensation began in eternity past; passed through creation, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; and now reaches His chosen ones to make them His holy people, the sons of God, the sealed ones, and the Body as the fullness of Christ.

The Body comes from the transmission of the all-inclusive Christ. This transmission is the sum total of God's well-speaking. To enjoy the transmission we need a sober mind, a fervent emotion, a submissive will, and a pure conscience. Through the experience of this transmission, we become the Body. What we need today is more of this all-inclusive transmission. Hallelujah, the Triune God is being transmitted into us! Therefore, we do not have mere teachings—we have dispensation, transmission, and saturation. This is the basic concept in Ephesians 1.

February 21, 2017, Tuesday

Message Twenty -

DEAD IN OFFENSES AND SINS

When we were dead in our offenses and sins, we were not only active in following the age of this world; we also walked "according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit who is now operating in the sons of disobedience." The ruler here refers to Satan, the prince of the aerial authority mentioned in 6:12. The spirit, in apposition with "the authority of the air," refers to the aggregate power, a personal aggregate of all the evil angelic authorities, over which Satan is the ruler. This aggregate spirit is now operating in the sons of disobedience. But we, who once were sons of disobedience, have been saved to be the church.

Above us there is the sphere ruled by Satan, the ruler of the authority of the air. Not many Christians have an adequate understanding of this evil power in the air. The entire earth is under the domination of this spirit in the air. This evil spirit, this evil atmosphere, is the cause of crimes, murders, and even suicides. It influences people to do evil things which, as humans, they would not normally do. The source of this evil is in the spirit, the atmosphere, which dominates them. This spirit is now operating in the sons of disobedience, in those who are disobedient to God.

We have considered two of the realms in which we were active when we were dead in our offenses and sins—the realm of the world and the realm of the aerial authority. Now we need to consider the third realm—the realm of the lusts of our flesh. Verse 3 says, “Among whom also we all behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” The word “whom” in this verse refers to the sons of disobedience, and the word “we” refers to all believers, both Jewish and Gentile. When we were dead in our offenses and sins, we also behaved according to the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires not only of the flesh but also of the thoughts. Three evil things, the age of this world outside of us, the ruler of the aerial authority above and within us, and the lusts of our flesh in our fallen nature, dominated our life. From these evil things we have been saved to become the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-3 gives a clear description of our condition according to our fallen nature. When we were in that condition, we were dead in offenses and sins, yet very active in the age of the world, under the domination of the atmosphere of the air, and in the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts. This is the black background over against which we see the church. The church has been brought forth out of such a miserable source. Hallelujah, although we were dead and in such a deplorable condition, we have been saved to become the Body of Christ! What a salvation!

February 22, 2017, Wednesday

Message Twenty-One -

SAVED BY GRACE TO BE THE MASTERPIECE OF GOD

Eph. 2:7 says, “*That He might display in the ages which are coming the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” The church is produced in the present age; the ages which are coming are the ages of the millennium and eternity future. To display the riches of God’s grace is to exhibit them to the whole universe publicly. The riches of God’s grace surpass every limit. These are the riches of God Himself for our enjoyment. They will be publicly displayed for eternity.

Verse 7 says that the surpassing riches of God’s grace are in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Kindness is a benevolent goodness which issues out of mercy and love. It is in such kindness that the grace of God is given to us.

Verse 8 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith.” The word “for” at the beginning of this verse gives the occasion for God to display His grace (v. 7). Because we have been saved by His grace, God may display it.

In Ephesians grace denotes God dispensed into us. Therefore, to be saved by grace means to be saved by having God dispensed into us. Most Christians regard grace as a thing, not as a person. To them, grace is merely a gift freely given to them. According to this concept of grace, we were sinners who did not deserve God’s salvation, but God saved us freely by giving us His unmerited favor. This, however, is a superficial understanding of what it means to be saved by grace.

In verse 8 Paul says that by grace we have been saved through faith. Faith is the substantiating of invisible things. It is by faith that we substantiate all the things Christ has accomplished for us. Through such substantiating ability, we have been saved by grace. The free action of God’s grace saved us through our substantiating faith.

We have been saved by grace through faith to be God’s masterpiece. Verse 10 says, “*We are His workmanship.*” This word may also be rendered “masterpiece.” The Greek word *poiema* means something which has been made, a handiwork, or something which has been written or composed as a poem. Poetry does not consist only of poetic writing; any work of art that expresses the maker’s wisdom and design may be considered a poem. We, the church, the masterpiece of God’s work, are the highest poetry, expressing God’s infinite wisdom and divine design.

Finally, we are God’s **masterpiece** created in Christ Jesus “for good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them” (v. 10). The good works for which God created us are not the good things according to our general concept, but the definite good doings which God pre-planned and previously ordained for us to walk in. These good things must be the doing of His will to live the church life and bear the testimony of Jesus, as revealed in the following chapters of this book. Therefore, we need to do God’s will, live the church life, and bear the testimony of Jesus. These are the good works prepared beforehand by God for us, His masterpiece, to walk in. Therefore, 2:4-10 reveals that we have been saved by grace to be God’s masterpiece that we may walk in the good works prepared before by God.

February 23, 2017, Thursday

Message Twenty-Two -

ONCE FAR OFF, BUT NOW NEAR

The man God created to fulfill His purpose was pure, without sin or any kind of negative mixture. However, sin, the evil nature of Satan, entered into man through the fall. When the evil nature of Satan entered into man, it firstly caused man’s body to become the flesh, full of lusts, and eventually caused the whole being of man to become the flesh. In a very real sense, God created only the body of man, not the flesh. But when sin came into man’s body, the body was changed in nature and became the flesh. The body was the pure vessel created by God; the flesh is the corrupted body. God did not create the lusts in man’s body. The lusts came from sin. According to the Bible, eventually fallen man in his entirety became the flesh. Fallen people live according to the flesh, not according to the spirit, the conscience, or reason. Because in the eyes of God fallen man has become flesh, the Bible says, “By the works of law no flesh shall be justified before Him” (Rom. 3:20). The word “flesh” in this verse denotes a fallen person who lives according to the flesh and has become flesh.

Because his whole being had become the flesh, man was damaged and thus prevented from fulfilling God’s purpose. Since mankind as a whole could not fulfill His purpose, God came in to call out of fallen mankind a race—Abraham and his descendants—for the accomplishment of His purpose. God then commanded Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised, that is, to put away the flesh. Thus, circumcision indicates that God’s chosen people must put aside their flesh. The fact that the called race was circumcised meant that they were separated from fallen mankind and delivered out of the

fallen condition. Circumcision made a tremendous distinction between them and the rest of mankind. They are called the circumcision, those who are separated from the fallen situation. The rest of mankind are called the uncircumcision, those who remain in the fallen condition. Because Abraham and his descendants, the called race, were circumcised, those who remained in the fallen estate became the nations in the flesh, the Gentiles. We were in this category before we were in Christ.

Eventually, God's promise became the binding covenant because it had been legalized by the necessary procedures. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament God's words of promise have been legalized to become a binding covenant. You may wonder what procedure was necessary to legalize God's promise into a covenant. The best illustration concerns the death of the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord promised that He would shed His blood on the cross so that we might receive the forgiveness of sins. The promise of forgiveness was legalized by the shedding of His blood. Through this procedure, His promise became a covenant.

Ephesians 2:13 says, "*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near in the blood of Christ.*" Verse 4 begins with the words "*But God,*" whereas this verse begins with the words "**But now.**"

In order to appreciate verse 13, we need to review the main points in verses 11 and 12. Before we were saved, we were the nations in the flesh, those who were called uncircumcision. The man whom God created to fulfill His purpose was pure, without sin or any negative mixture. However, sin, the evil nature of Satan, entered into man through the fall, firstly causing man's body to become the flesh, full of lusts, and eventually causing man's whole being to become the flesh. Hence, man was damaged and could not fulfill God's purpose. Then God came in to call out of fallen mankind a race—Abraham and his descendants. For the accomplishment of His purpose, God commanded them to be circumcised, that is, to put away their flesh. This separated God's people from fallen mankind and delivered them out of the fallen condition. Circumcision made a tremendous distinction between them and the rest of mankind, who were henceforth regarded as the uncircumcision, those who remain in the fallen condition. We were in that category before we were brought into Christ.

February 24, 2017, Friday

Message Twenty-Three -

THE BREAKING DOWN OF THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION

Mph 2:14 speaks of the middle wall of partition. This middle wall of partition is "the law of the commandments in ordinances" (v. 15), which was given because of man's flesh. The first of these ordinances was circumcision to cut off man's flesh. Circumcision became the middle wall of partition because it made the main distinction between the Jews, the circumcision, and the Gentiles, the uncircumcision. Thus, the middle wall of partition, this distinction, became the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles.

In the law of Moses there were two kinds of commandments: moral commandments, such as the commandments concerning stealing and the honoring of parents, and ritual commandments, such as the commandment concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. The commandments regarding circumcision and the eating regulations were ritual commandments, not moral commandments. In Leviticus 11 there are a number of commandments dealing with eating. These commandments surely have nothing to do with morality. A person's morality is not affected by whether or not he eats something that is regarded as unclean.

The three main ordinances in Judaism were circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, and the dietary regulations. Every Israelite male had to be circumcised on the eighth day. Furthermore, the Jews were required to keep the Sabbath and to observe numerous regulations concerning their diet. These ordinances were the three main columns supporting Judaism. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He broke down the column of Sabbath keeping. During the years of His ministry, He purposely broke the Sabbath by healing people on the Sabbath day. The Jews were very much offended by this. Then Peter took the lead to break the dietary regulations, although he did it in a rather weak way. Because he received the vision in Acts 10, Peter was forced to give up these regulations. However, in Galatians 2, Peter withdrew from eating with the Gentiles when certain men came down from Jerusalem. Nevertheless, through the breaking of the dietary regulations, another supporting column of Judaism was brought down. The Apostle Paul broke down the column of circumcision. In Philippians 3 he even used a new derogatory term, the "concision," to replace the honorable term, "circumcision." Furthermore, he referred to those of the circumcision as "dogs" and told the Philippians to "beware of dogs." No wonder the Jews tried to kill him! In a sense he was even worse in their eyes than Jesus, for circumcision was the leading ordinance in Judaism; it meant more to them than the Sabbath or the dietary regulations. Therefore, through the work of the Apostle Paul, the remaining structure of Judaism collapsed.

We need to keep in mind the difference between moral laws and ritual laws. The moral laws will never be abolished, not in this age nor in the millennium nor in eternity. The ritual commandments, on the contrary, are not permanent. Whether a person is allowed to eat pork or is required to keep the Sabbath or practice circumcision depends upon the age in which he lives. Any Jewish male born after Abraham and before John the Baptist was obligated to practice circumcision. Likewise, the commandments regarding the Sabbath and diet were in force during a particular time.

By the middle wall of partition Paul meant the law of commandments in ordinances, the ritual commandments related to circumcision, the Sabbath, and diet. The law of ritual commandments was a middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. As we shall see, any ordinance or ritual is a middle wall of partition.

The ritual commandments were given firstly because of man's flesh. Circumcision, for example, was required because man had become fleshly. Therefore, God commanded man to cut off the flesh. The ritual commandments concerning diet were given so that God's chosen people would be careful to keep themselves clean. Animals that did not have cloven hoofs and that did not chew the cud were unclean. The cloven hoof symbolizes discernment in walking; it indicates that we should not walk in any place that is defiled. God's people need to have a keen discernment in their daily walk. Furthermore, they need to learn to "chew the cud" by taking in God's word and considering it again and again. Because fallen people do not have the necessary discernment and do not consider God's word, these commandments were given to God's chosen people. However, these ordinances became the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Moreover, this distinction and separation became the cause of enmity between the circumcision, the Jews, and the uncircumcision, the Gentiles.

Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles by abolishing the law of the commandments in ordinances. When He was crucified on the cross, all the ordinances were nailed there. The law spoken of in 2:15 is not the law of the moral commandments, but the law of the ritual commandments, such as the ordinances of circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and eating certain foods.

Ordinances are the forms or ways of living and worship. Every people has its own way of living. We need to be careful not to make our way of living or worship an ordinance. At the same time, we should not regard what others do as ordinances. If we all practice this, there will be no problems.

Ephesians 2:15 says that Christ abolished "in His flesh" the law of commandments in ordinances. Because mankind became flesh (Gen. 6:3) and was thus kept from God and His purpose, God ordained His chosen people to be circumcised from the flesh. This ordinance was given because of man's flesh. It was in the flesh that Christ was

crucified. When he was crucified, His flesh, which was typified by the separating veil in the temple, was rent (Heb. 10:20). By breaking down the middle wall of partition on the cross, Christ has made peace.

We have seen that, according to the Bible, the basic ordinances are those regarding circumcision, the Sabbath, and diet. But even these ordinances, which were ordained by God, have been abolished. If the basic ordinances have been abolished, how much more should the minor ones be abolished also. We should not keep any ordinances, and we should not create new ones. By the Lord's grace, we must learn to be flexible and to drop all differences for the sake of the church life. No matter where we may go, we must learn to be the same as others. Then we shall enjoy the church life as the new man, the commonwealth of God, the household of God, and the dwelling place of God.

February 25, 2017, Saturday

Message Twenty-Four -

THE TWO CREATED INTO ONE NEW MAN

The relationship among Christians in an assembly, a gathering, is not very close. It is much closer and more intimate among those in the family, the household. However, we are not only members of God's family, but also members of the Body of Christ, where the relationship among the members is still closer. Those in the assembly and the members of a family may be separated from one another, but the members of the Body cannot be separated from the Body unless they are amputated. Wherever the Body goes, the members must go also; they have no choice. However, in the one new man the fellowship is even more intimate than in the Body. The new man is corporate and universal. There are many believers, but there is only one new man in the universe. All the believers are components of this one corporate and universal new man. May the Lord show us more light concerning the new man! We must admit that as yet we have not seen very much of this aspect of the church. The aspect of the church as the new man is a new discovery opened up in recent years. I believe that in the days to come the Lord will reveal more concerning the one new man.

The family is more intimate than the assembly, the Body is much higher than the family, and the new man is higher than the Body. Thus, with the new man we come to the highest aspect of the church. Although Christian teachers have spoken a great deal about the assembly, the family, and the Body, hardly any have touched the matter of the one new man. This lack is evident in the deplorable translation of Ephesians 4:22 and 24 in the New American Standard Bible. Instead of using the word "man" in these two verses, this version says in verse 22 to "lay aside the old self" and in verse 24 to "put on the new self." What a serious mistake this is in translation! The Revised Standard Version is also greatly in error by adopting the renderings, "put off your old nature" and "put on the new nature." These errors came in because the translators responsible for them did not have the proper concept or knowledge. W. E. Vine, however, had some understanding of this matter. In his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, he says that the new man in 4:24 is the church because it is the very new man mentioned in 2:15. Because the new man is created of two peoples, the Jewish and Gentile believers, it must be a corporate entity.

In order to see the one new man, we need to have a proper understanding of the old man. Before exhorting us to put on the new man, Paul tells us to put off the old man (4:22). After creating heaven and earth, God created man, not merely as an individual, but as a collective entity. Genesis 1:26 speaks of man both in the singular and in the plural: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...." This reveals that God's intention has always been to have one collective man. The corporate man created by God was damaged through the fall, and there is now the need for God to have a new man. In order to produce this new man, Christ had to deal not only with sin, the fallen nature of the old man, Satan, and the world, but as we have pointed out, He also had to abolish the ordinances. What most frustrates God from gaining the new man is ordinances. When Christ was crucified on the cross, our sins, our old man, Satan, and the world were not the only things crucified; all the ordinances were crucified also. The crucifixion of the ordinances was not for forgiveness, holiness, victory over Satan, or the imparting of life; rather, it was absolutely for the creation of the one new man.

Christ **abolished in His flesh the law of commandments in ordinances**; but He did not create the new man in His flesh. No, in the flesh He terminated the negative things so that He **might create** the two, the Jews and the Gentiles, **into one new man in Himself**. The negative things were terminated in Christ's flesh, whereas the new man, which, of course, is positive, was germinated in Christ Himself. We need to pay careful attention to two phrases in verse 15: "in His flesh" and "in Himself." If I were to ask you where you are today, you should say, "Firstly, I was in Christ's flesh; now I am in Christ Himself. In His flesh I was terminated on the cross, but in Christ Himself I was created as part of the one new man."

As those who have been saved and regenerated, we now must put off the old man and put on the new man. Although the new man has already been created, we still need to put him on. Hardly any Christians know how to put off the old man, much less how to put on the new man. Most Christians think that to put off the old man is to put off the old nature or the old self and that to put on the new man is to put on the new nature. Those who hold this concept are utterly mistaken. Since the new man in 2:15 is a corporate man, the new man in 4:24 must also be corporate. According to 4:24, we need to put on the very new man that has already been created in Christ.

The way to put on the new man is found in 4:23: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This word indicates that to be renewed in the spirit of our mind is to put on the new man. Now we must see what it means to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Admittedly, this is a strange expression. If I had been the writer of this Epistle, I would have said "the mind of the spirit" instead of "the spirit of the mind." To me, that would have been more logical. Nevertheless, Paul spoke here of the spirit of the mind.

The way to put on the new man is for our spirit (which is mingled with the Spirit), in which are found God, God's dwelling place, and the new man, to become the spirit of our mind. Our mind dominates and directs our whole being. For the spirit to become the spirit of our mind means that the spirit directs, controls, dominates, and possesses our mind. Instead of our mind being the mind of our spirit, our spirit should be the spirit of our mind. If the mind is the mind of our spirit, it means that our mind dominates, controls, and directs our spirit. But if our spirit is the spirit of our mind, it means that our spirit dominates, controls, and directs our mind. When the spirit directs our mind, it governs our whole being. When this is the case, our being is under the control of our spirit, in which are found God, the dwelling place of God, and the new man. It is in this spirit of our mind that we are renewed. By means of this spirit we put on the new man.

How much we put on the new man depends on how much our spirit directs our being. When our spirit dominates and directs us, there is no ground for opinions or ordinances. There is no room for our way, because our whole being is dominated, controlled, governed, and directed by our spirit.

Putting on the new man does not take place once for all. On the contrary, it is a lifelong matter, a gradual process that goes on throughout our Christian life. We have pointed out again and again that the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ. In 2:15, the Greek word rendered "in" has an instrumental significance; it also means "with." Thus, in Himself actually means with Himself. The new man has already been created with Christ as the divine essence. When we were regenerated, this new man was put into our spirit. Now day by day we need to put on this new man by permitting the spirit to control our being and renew our mind. Every time part of our being is renewed, we put on a little more of the new man. Hence, the more we are renewed through the spirit controlling our mind, the more of the new man we put on. Eventually, this process of putting on the new man will be completed.

In the one new man there are none of the national and cultural distinctions between the peoples. Here there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bondman nor freeman, cultured nor uncultured (Col. 3:10-11). Likewise, there is no American, nor British, nor Japanese, nor Chinese, nor German, nor French. In this new man Christ is all because He is the very essence with which the new man is created. Hence, the new man is just Christ.

Because the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ according to God, the new man bears the image of God. In contrast to Genesis 1:26, which says that man was made in the image of God, Ephesians 4:24 says that the new man is created directly according to God. Eventually, the new man will bear the image of God in holiness and righteousness of the reality. By being renewed in the governing spirit of our mind, we put on this new man that has been created in Christ Jesus.