



# Church in Regina Newsletter

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

*Judges 16:28, "And Samson called on Jehovah and said, O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray; and strengthen me, I pray"*

## 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

## PRACTICAL EXERCISES

### Building Up the Habit of Contacting the Spirit

Many children of God cannot discern the difference between **studying** the Bible and **touching** the Bible. ... To read something is **to study it**, but to contact something is **to touch it so that it may operate in us**. What believers refer to as studying the Bible may be likened to studying the nutritional content of food. What we refer to as contacting the Bible may be compared to eating a meal. Studying the Bible is entirely different from contacting the Bible. **We need to learn to contact the Bible. Whenever we come to the Bible, we must have the concept that we are coming to contact the Spirit of God. We must exercise in this matter.**

### Dropping the Desire to Understand

In order to contact the Bible, we must drop the desire to understand it. ... If we would open the Bible for the sake of contacting it rather than studying it, we would be delivered. For this reason we need to practice. If we can learn this secret and practice it, our Bible-reading will gradually become profitable. **As soon as we contact the Bible, we will also contact the Spirit.** ... If we would practice contacting the Bible, we would realize that, in fact, our understanding of the Bible comes from inspiration. When we read the Bible, we should not focus on understanding it. We must drop this concept.

This fellowship may seem contradictory because reading the Bible helps you to understand it, yet you are being told not to focus on understanding what you read. How do we explain this? Every time we come to the Bible, we should reject the desire to merely understand, because this desire will hinder us from touching the Spirit. We should not fear our inability to understand the Bible. At a certain point in time, we will gain a genuine understanding. We must drop the concept of merely wanting to understand the Bible. When we are invited to a rich feast, we should simply eat and drink and enjoy the food that is set before us. We should not analyze the food. We need to be delivered when we read the Bible. **When we open the Bible, we must have the concept, focus, and desire to contact the Spirit of God.** We must be so foolish that if we understand something when we read the Bible, we would say, "Lord, even though I understand, I still want to contact Your Spirit." If we are willing to spend the time and practice reading the Bible in this way, we will discover that it is very beneficial.

### Coming with the Spirit and Learning to Use the Spirit

When we read the Bible, we must use our spirit more than our mind, because our intention is to contact the Spirit. God is Spirit, and He needs us to touch Him with our spirit. Our heart and mind are also involved with reading the Bible, but the primary matter is to use our spirit. When some brothers read the Bible, they use only their mind but not their heart; that is, they do not love to read the Word of God, nor do they have a heart to receive His words. Hence, they read the Bible like someone who is reading a newspaper. Other brothers use not only their mind but also their heart. They love God's words, take delight in His words, want to hear His words, receive His words, and are willing to pay a price to enjoy His words. However, they do not know how to exercise their spirit. As a result, they do not receive the supply of life from the Bible. Even after reading the Bible many times, these ones can receive only teachings concerning improving their behavior; they cannot touch the words of life.

When we read the Bible, we must learn the lesson of using not only our mind and our heart but also our spirit. In other words, we should contact the Bible with our spirit. When we come to the Word of God, we are coming to Him; hence, we must have a spirit of worship and not merely a sincere heart. God is Spirit, and we must worship Him in spirit. This means that we should not use only our mind or our zeal. God's words are spirit; hence, we must exercise to not rely solely on our ability to comprehend and learn but, instead, contact His words with a spirit of worship. This requires exercise.

If we would exercise our spirit when we come to the Word, then even if we read only half a chapter, our spirit will touch the Spirit in the Word. By contacting God in this way for ten or twenty minutes, our inner being will be refreshed, illuminated, strengthened, and satisfied. This is the result of touching the Spirit of God. As serving ones who desire to receive something from the Bible, we should spend some time to practice so that the Bible becomes our food and our supply. This is the most precious aspect of the Bible. It is also true that the light and truth in the Bible supply our mind. This is another aspect.

The Spirit of God is located in the words of the Bible. Hence, **our primary purpose in contacting the Bible is to contact the Spirit.** For this reason, when we come to the Bible, we must reject our desire to merely comprehend, and instead, we must use our spirit to contact the words of God. When we use our spirit to touch His words, we contact the Spirit. As a result of this kind of contact, we receive holiness, power, love, and comfort. These can be compared to the fruit produced after a seed is planted in the soil. Such fruit is not the issue of teaching but the result of the growth of life. Such fruit is the result of our spirit touching not only the words of God but also the Spirit of God, because His words are spirit and life. (*The Sufficiency, Pursuit, and Learning of the Lord's Serving Ones, Chapter 8, Section 2*)

### Upcoming Activities:

- ▶ March 12, 2017 - First Lord's Table Meeting in Lloydminster AB
- ▶ March 19, 2017 - YP conference
- ▶ March 10/ 24, 2017 - UofR Campus Work
- ▶ March 26, 2017 - Brother's Meeting

**PRAYER BURDEN**

*“I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His cBody, which is the church”*

1. Lord, we truly want to become your **testimony**, you've suffered afflictions in order to redeem us and to produce the church, now we want to **fill up** and **complete** what is lacking of Your **affliction**, for the building up of Your Body.
2. Lord, deliver us from the religious world and from its systems, keep us in the church to **bear fruit** for Your **manifestation** and to **testify** that Your resurrection life overcame death and enable us to enter into the **riches** of Your life.
3. Lord, we give ourselves to You, You're the **“First and the Last,”** all things are under the limit of Your control, you put us in the **church life** and surely You will accomplish what You have started in us and whatever environment we may be we are in You.
4. Lord, You are **the living One**, and the One living in us, we leave every kind of death and we'll rise up to be Your **living church**, by enjoying more of You that we may become Your testimony.
5. Lord, we praise and worship You, that through Your **devil-destroying death** You made death subject to You, and through Your **death-swallowing resurrection** You made Hades under Your control. We give You all the ground and free way to move and act around us. Our life belongs to You make us **faithful** in our attitude - even unto death and faithful until death.
6. Please pray for the church in **Coquitlam**, release the material **offerings** for the fulfillment of all the terms and conditions of purchase of the meeting hall.
7. Please pray for the **raising up** of the lampstand in **Abbotsford**.
8. Lord, remember the church in **Regina**: to fill up *“that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ”*.

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

**The Church in Smyrna**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 2:8-11; 1:18; 22:13

**I. The church in Smyrna was a church under the suffering of persecution— Rev. 2:8-11:**

In Greek *Smyrna* means “myrrh,” a sweet spice that, in figure, signifies suffering; the church in Smyrna was a suffering church. This persecuted church suffered in the sweetness and fragrance of Christ. This church was in the tribulation in Jesus and was in the fellowship of His sufferings.

The church in Smyrna suffered as Christ Himself did and thereby became a continuation of His suffering. The afflictions of Christ are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which have been completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers. “The afflictions of Christ...for His Body, which is the church” must be completed by His followers both individually and collectively.

In the church in Smyrna we see the collective continuation of the sufferings of Jesus. Because this church was a continuation of Jesus’ suffering, it was truly the testimony of Jesus.

The church in Smyrna suffered “the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan”. The Judaizers slandered the suffering church by evilly criticizing her; they stubbornly insisted on keeping their Judaistic system, consisting of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial rituals, and the material temple, which were all types that had been fulfilled and replaced by Christ. Since the church under the new covenant in God’s economy had no part in their religious practice, the Judaizers slanderously criticized her. In principle, it is the same today, in that religious people slander the churches in the Lord’s recovery, which seek the Lord and follow Him in spirit and in life and do not care for the religious system. According to the Lord’s word in John 15:1, 4-5, and 18-24, the vine and the branches are opposed by the religious world (Judaism); today Christianity is the religious world, the religious system that opposes not only Christ, the true vine, but also the church, the branches of the vine.

The persecution suffered by the church began from the religious synagogue of the Jews instigated by Satan, the adversary, and it was consummated by the Roman Empire used by the devil, the slanderer; the persecution of the suffering church was a cooperation of satanic religion and devilish politics.

To the suffering church the Lord Jesus said, “I know your tribulation”. Tribulation is precious to the church because it tests the life of the church. The Lord’s purpose in allowing the church to suffer tribulation is not only to testify that His resurrection life overcomes death but also to enable the church to enjoy the riches of His life.

**II. In speaking to the church in Smyrna, the Lord said that He is “the First and the Last, who became dead and lived again”—Rev. 2:8:**

The fact that Christ is the First and the Last means that He never changes: In suffering, the church must know that the Lord is the First and the Last, the ever-existing, unchanging One. Whatever the persecuting environment may be, the Lord remains the same; nothing can precede Him, nor can anything exist after Him; all things are within the limits of His control.

The Lord’s declaration in verse 8 implies the creation—the First—and the completion—the Last—and it also implies Christ’s incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection: This is a declaration to strengthen the suffering church in Smyrna, which was experiencing and suffering martyrdom. The only thing that can support the saints in their martyrdom is seeing the One who created and will complete the entire universe and who was incarnated, lived on earth, was crucified, and resurrected; such a vision sustains the martyrs to stand in their sufferings.

All the local churches need to believe that the Lord Jesus is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End; He will accomplish what He has begun in His recovery. As the One who became dead and lived again, Christ is the living One. The Lord Jesus suffered death and lived again; He entered into death, but death could not hold Him, because He is the resurrection.

“I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever”—Rev. 1:18: Resurrection is a life that passes through death and still remains living. Christ’s resurrection is the lengthening of His days; He will exist forever and ever in His resurrection. The resurrected Christ, the living One, is living in us and among us; therefore, all the churches should be living as He is, full of life and overcoming death. The Lord’s living forever is His testimony; the more living we are, the more we are the testimony of the living Jesus. For us to be living, we must have not only life but the life supply; as the living One, Christ cares for the churches by giving us Himself not only as life but also as the life supply.

WEEK	LORD’S TABLE MEETING	PRAYER MEETING	YP MEETING	HOME MEETING	OFFERING
Feb. 26 - March 4, 2017	19	13	9	8	\$221.00
March 5 - March 11, 2017	21	12	8	11	\$292.00

As the One who became dead and lived again, Christ has the keys of death and of Hades. The Lord Jesus overcame death and destroyed the devil, the keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand, and He is victorious over the grave. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus took away the authority of death and of Hades; death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control. In the church life today, we are no longer subject to death and Hades, for Christ abolished death and overcame Hades in His resurrection. Christ not only defeated death—He nullified it; 2 Timothy 1:10 reveals that Christ nullified death, making it of none effect, through His devil-destroying death and death-swallowing resurrection.

### III. “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”—Rev. 2:10:

“Be faithful unto death”: The Lord insists that the life of all those who serve Him belongs to Him; this is why we must be faithful even unto death. Being faithful unto death is a matter both of attitude and of time: As to our attitude, we must be faithful even unto death. As to time, we must be faithful until death.

“I will give you the crown of life”: The crown of life, as a prize to those who are faithful unto death in overcoming persecution, denotes the overcoming strength that is the power of the resurrection life (Phil. 3:10); it also denotes that these overcomers have attained to the out-resurrection from the dead (v. 11), the outstanding resurrection. Not only the tree of life but the crown of life will be a reward to the suffering church. The eating of the tree of life is inward for supply, and the crown of life is outward for glory. The promises concerning the tree of life and the crown of life are wrapped up with the divine life (John 1:4; 10:10; 11:25; 1 John 5:11-13); this life must be our food, and then it will be our expression and our glorification as the crown of life.

**“One Life-Study a Day Makes One Holy”**

## LIFE-STUDY OF EPHESIANS

**March 06, 2017, Monday**

Message Thirty-One

### THE CHURCH FOR GOD’S WISDOM ACCORDING TO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE

Verse 10 says that through the church the multifarious wisdom of God is made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies. These rulers and authorities are the angelic rulers and authorities, both good and evil. The passage here especially refers to the evil ones—Satan and his angels. According to the New Testament, Satan has his kingdom, his angels, and his sphere of rule. Satan’s sphere of rule is in the air and on the earth. The book of Daniel indicates that all nations on earth are under the rule of Satan in the air. Therefore, through the church God makes His wisdom known not mainly to human beings but to those rebellious angels who are the followers of God’s enemy.

Verse 8 reveals that the church is produced from the unsearchable riches of Christ. When God’s chosen people partake of and enjoy the riches of Christ, these riches constitute them the church, through which God’s multifarious wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies. Hence, the church is God’s wise exhibition of all that Christ is.

Even the rebellion of Satan is within the realm of God’s wisdom. If it were not for Satan’s rebellion, God’s wisdom could not be made known in a full way. If you are a person full of wisdom, the more troubles and difficulties you have, the more wisdom you will express. But if everything related to you is peaceful and without problems, you will have no opportunity to express your wisdom. Actually, when everything is going well, there is little need of wisdom. You need trouble in order to display your wisdom.

Whatever the enemy of God does gives God the opportunity to show forth His wisdom. If we had never been poisoned and corrupted, we would not have needed God very much, and there would have been no need for God’s salvation. The more sinful, corrupt, and damaged we are, the greater is our need for God and the more opportunity there is for God to do something for us.

After God had created man and had put him into the garden, Satan came in to intervene, convinced that the best way to ruin the man created by God for Himself was to inject his own evil nature into him. At the time of the fall, Satan as sin entered into man and, in many respects, caused man to be the same as he is. For this reason the Bible refers to fallen men as the offspring of vipers. Having come into man as sin, Satan has made himself one with man and has transmuted man’s body into the flesh. But one day God became flesh (John 1:14). Eventually, Satan caused this One who had become flesh to be crucified. Firstly Satan instigated Judas to betray the Lord Jesus, and secondly he stirred up the Jews and the Gentiles to cooperate in crucifying Him. What Satan did not realize, however, was that in putting this One on the cross, he was actually crucifying himself. As Hebrews 2:14 says, “Since therefore the children have partaken of blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the Devil.” Through His own death on the cross, the Lord Jesus destroyed Satan. What a display of God’s marvelous wisdom! This is one aspect of God’s wisdom.

The church through which God’s wisdom is so marvelously displayed is God’s masterpiece. In the eyes of God the most wonderful thing in the universe is the church, for through the church God’s multifarious wisdom is made known to Satan and his angels. The day is coming when Satan and his angels will be put to shame. They will realize that everything they have done has given God the opportunity to manifest His wisdom. In the same principle, our failures, mistakes, defeats, and wrongdoings have also given God opportunities to display His wisdom. None of us likes to be mistaken; on the contrary, we all want to be right. Although I have always intended to do the right thing, I have nevertheless made many mistakes, even some big mistakes. I certainly hate these mistakes, but I can testify that they have afforded God the opportunity to show forth His wisdom. Therefore, I can thank the Lord for all my mistakes.

**March 07, 2017, Tuesday**

Message Thirty-Two

### TO BE STRENGTHENED INTO THE INNER MAN THAT CHRIST MAY MAKE HIS HOME IN OUR HEARTS

In verse 16 we have the subject of Paul’s prayer: “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man.” In contrast to the prayer in chapter one, which is a prayer for revelation, this is a prayer for experience. The need in chapter one is for us to see the things related to the Body of Christ, to see how the Body comes into existence and how it is constituted. But it is inadequate simply to see the revelation; we also need the experience of what we see. Because we need to experience Christ in a subjective way, Paul prayed that we would be strengthened with power into the inner man.

In verse 16 the word “strengthened” is modified by four phrases: “according to the riches of His glory,” “with power,” “through His Spirit,” and “into the inner man.” Firstly, we are strengthened according to the riches of the Father’s glory. Glory is the expression of God. John 1:18 says, “No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” In this declaration of God there is glory, for the declaration of God is the manifestation of God, which is glory. When the Lord Jesus expressed God on earth, God’s glory was manifested.

We are also strengthened with power. This power is the resurrection power referred to in 1:19-20; it is this power which operates in us (3:20). This power raised Christ up from among the dead, uplifted Him to the heavens, and put everything under His feet. With such a power God is strengthening us. It is through the Spirit that the Father strengthens us. He strengthens us by the indwelling Spirit. This does not mean that the Spirit is not with us or that the Spirit will come down from the heavens to strengthen us. The strengthening Spirit has been with us since He regenerated us. He is still within us now. Through this indwelling Spirit, the Father strengthens us from within.

Verse 16 also says that we are strengthened into the inner man. The inner man is our regenerated spirit with God’s life as its life. It is our spirit regenerated by the Spirit of God (John 3:6), indwelt by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:11, 16), and mingled with the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:17). In order to experience Christ unto all the fullness of God, we need to be strengthened into the inner man. This implies that we need to get into our spirit, where we can be strengthened through the Holy Spirit.

The first part of verse 17 says, “*That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith.*” Our heart is composed of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will—plus our conscience, the main part of our spirit. These are the inward parts of our being. Through regeneration, Christ came into our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). Subsequently, we should allow Him to spread Himself into every part of our heart. Our heart is the totality of all our inward parts and the center of our inward being; therefore, when Christ makes His home in our heart, He controls our entire inward being and supplies and strengthens every inward part with Himself.

When we are strengthened into our inner man and Christ makes His home in our hearts, we are able to see the revelation. We need to receive the same revelation given to the leading apostles and prophets. Paul could not receive this revelation for us; we must receive it ourselves personally and subjectively by being strengthened into our inner man. This revelation concerning Christ and the church is the economy of God, the hidden mystery. Whether or not we are today’s apostles and prophets depends on whether or not we have seen the revelation. If we do not have the revelation, then we cannot be apostles and prophets. If I had come to this country without this revelation, all my speaking would have been in vain. But I did come with a revelation, and I have spoken according to this revelation. This made me a follower of the apostles and prophets in God’s New Testament ministry. Today all the saints, including the young people, can be such followers.

When we were saved, Christ came into our spirit. Now we must give Him the opportunity to spread Himself throughout all the parts of our inner being. As we are strengthened into the inner man, the door is opened for Christ to spread in us, to spread from our spirit to every part of our mind, emotion, and will. The more Christ spreads within us, the more He settles down in us and makes His home in us. This means that He occupies every part of our inner being, possessing all these parts and saturating them with Himself. As a result, not only do we receive the revelation, but we also are filled with Christ. Then wherever we may go, we shall be the apostles, the sent ones, and the prophets, those who speak for Christ.

### March 08, 2017, Wednesday

Message Thirty-Three

#### TO APPREHEND THE DIMENSIONS OF CHRIST AND TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST

The fullness of God is the expression of God. We have pointed out that the Body is not the riches of Christ, but the fullness of Christ (1:23). As the riches of Christ are being digested and assimilated into us, they are metabolized. By this process of metabolism we become the fullness of Christ as His expression. Many Christians regard the riches and the fullness as synonymous. The riches of Christ are the various aspects of Christ for our enjoyment, whereas the fullness is the result, the issue, of the enjoyment of these riches. For example, when we eat and digest the riches of American foodstuffs, we become the fullness of America. As the fullness of America, we are the expression of America. Ephesians 3:19 does not say that we are filled with the riches of God, but that we are filled unto the fullness of God. This means that we are filled with the result that we become the expression of God. The expression of God today is the church, which is the Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Hence, the fullness of God in 3:19 is the fullness of Christ, which is the Body, in 1:23. The Body is constituted through our enjoyment of the riches of Christ.

The dimensions of Christ are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. These dimensions are the dimensions of the universe. Only God Himself knows the measurements of the universe. We can measure the distance from one point in the universe to another, for example, from the earth to the moon, but we cannot measure the universe itself. Now the very dimensions of the universe are also the dimensions of Christ.

In our experience of Christ, we firstly experience the breadth of what He is, and then we experience the length. This is horizontal. When we advance in Christ, we experience the height and depth of His riches. This is vertical. Firstly we experience Christ spreading as the breadth and the length. Later we experience Him rising up as the height and finally descending as the depth. As we shall see, our experience of Christ must eventually become three-dimensional, like a cube.

If we have only the length of Christ, without any breadth, our experience will be a “line,” that is, an experience that is long and narrow to an extreme. Our experience of Christ, however, should not have only one dimension, like a line, but it should have two dimensions, like a square, and then three dimensions, like a cube. It is of great importance that we all have a two-dimensional, or a “square,” experience of Christ. If we have only a “line” experience of Him, this “line” will eventually continue until it reaches an extreme. All extremists are “one-liners,” those whose experience of Christ is on a single “line.” If you experience Christ properly and normally as the breadth and the length, you will be kept from going to an extreme. Do not go too far out on the “line” of a narrow and long experience of Christ. Rather, experience Him in a “square” way as the breadth and as the length. By experiencing Christ continually as the breadth and length, our experience will be like a solidly woven “carpet,” not a long, single “thread.”

In order to experience Christ in His universal dimensions, we need the church life. We need to experience Christ with all the members of the Body. In particular, we need the church meetings, for in the meetings we are balanced. Through messages and the testimonies of the saints, we are balanced. If we experience the dimensions of Christ in the church life, we shall gradually be woven into a “carpet.” We shall not be thin lines of “thread.” What is needed today is not lines of “thread,” but a “carpet” woven through the balanced experience of Christ in the church.

After we experience the breadth and length of Christ, we begin to experience the height of Christ and then the depth. Do not think that we firstly experience the depth of Christ. No, firstly we ascend and then we descend. Before we can have the depth, we must have the height. The spiritual experiences of the depth of Christ come from the experiences of the height of Christ. This means that firstly we grow upward and then we are rooted. Therefore, the proper understanding of the experience of the height and depth of Christ is contrary to our natural concept, which places depth before height.

In verse 17 Paul speaks of “having been rooted and grounded in love.” We are God’s farm and God’s building (1 Cor. 3:9). As God’s farm we need to be rooted for growth, and as God’s building we need to be grounded for building up. Thus, in verse 17 Paul has in mind the matters of life and building. In speaking of our having been rooted and grounded, Paul indicates that the experience of Christ is for life and building. As those who have Christ making His home in our hearts and who are strong to apprehend the dimensions of Christ and to know His knowledge-surpassing love, we must have both the life and the building. All that we experience of Christ must be for this.

The love of Christ is Christ Himself. Just as Christ is immeasurable, so His love is also immeasurable. Do not regard the love of Christ as something belonging to Christ. This love is Christ. Because Christ is immeasurable, His love is knowledge-surpassing; yet we can know it in our spirit, not by knowledge but by experience. If we compare what we have so far experienced of the immeasurable love of Christ to all there is to experience, it is like comparing a raindrop to the ocean. Christ in His universal dimensions and in His immeasurable love is like a vast, limitless ocean for us to experience.

### March 09, 2017, Thursday

Message Thirty-Four

#### TO BE FILLED UNTO ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD

The highest definition of the church is that the church is the fullness of God. Some may be troubled at such a statement and may wonder how this claim can be substantiated. In verse 21 Paul says, "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus." According to the context, the church in verse 21 is the very fullness of God in verse 19. When in our experience we are filled unto all the fullness of God, the church comes into being in a practical way. It is at such a time that Paul says, "To Him be the glory in the church." This glory is the expression of God. Hence, in the fullness of God there is the expression of God. Therefore, the fullness of God is the church as God's expression.

When I first began to speak on the difference between the riches of Christ and the fullness of Christ, some tried to argue with me by quoting John 1:16, "For of His fullness we all received, and grace upon grace." They said, "John 1:16 declares that of His fullness we have all received. Isn't this fullness the riches of Christ? How then can you make a distinction between the riches of Christ and the fullness of Christ?" When Christ was on earth with His disciples, would you say that the riches of God were there with Him or that the fullness of God was there with Him? If the riches had been with Him but the fullness had not, something would have been lacking; there would have been no completion. For example, suppose a glass jar contains just a few pieces of delicious candies. The jar contains some riches of the candies but not the fullness. However, after the jar is filled with the candies, it will have not only the riches but also the fullness. If the jar remains only partly filled, there will not be in the jar the expression of the candies. Because the fullness is the expression, without the fullness there can be no expression. Only when the candies fill the jar to the brim will there be the fullness as the expression of the riches.

In the New Testament the fullness is the expression through the completeness of the riches. This is the reason that in 3:8 Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ and then in 1:23 and 4:13 speaks of the fullness of Christ. The riches of Christ are the various aspects of what Christ is, and the fullness of Christ is the result, the issue, of our enjoyment of these riches. As we enjoy the riches of Christ, these riches are assimilated into our being metabolically. Then they constitute us into the fullness of Christ, into the Body of Christ, the church, as His expression. Therefore, the fullness of Christ in 1:23 is the very fullness of God in 3:19. The fullness of God is the issue of the believers' being constituted metabolically through their experience of the riches of Christ.

In order to assimilate Christ metabolically, we need to be strengthened into our inner man. We also need Christ to make His home in our heart, that is, to occupy, possess, and metabolically saturate every part of our inward being with all that He is. Then we shall be rooted for the growth in life and grounded for the building. Furthermore, we shall become strong to grasp Christ experientially in all His universal dimensions. Along with this, we shall know through our experience the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. When we have experienced Christ to such an extent, we shall be filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God. All this is for the constituting of the church in a practical way as the Body of Christ for His expression.

We all need to see the vision of how the church is constituted. How we need to be strengthened into our inner man! Every fiber of our being needs to be strengthened into our inner man. Not one part of our inward being should remain in a weak condition. We need to be strengthened so that the indwelling Christ can spread Himself throughout our being and make His home in our inward parts. As Christ spreads within us, He saturates every area of our inner being metabolically with all that He is. Then we are rooted and grounded in love, we lay hold of the dimensions of Christ, and we know His love that surpasses knowledge. Then, ultimately, we are filled unto the fullness of God which is the church. What a high revelation of the church this is!

According to Ephesians 3, the Triune God is not to be the object of doctrinal debate; He is for the dispensing of Himself into the believers so that they may be filled unto the fullness, not only of the Father, nor only of the Son, nor only of the Spirit, but of God. Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us through His Spirit so that Christ might make His home in our hearts and thereby fully occupy our inward being with the result that we might be filled unto the expression of the Triune God. How glorious and how marvelous! This is God's economy, God's dispensation. This is also God's New Testament revelation, our ministry, and the Lord's recovery.

We have seen that the fullness of God is the expression of God. According to John 1:16, the fullness of God came with Christ who is the embodiment of God's fullness (Col. 2:9; 1:19). With Christ, the expression was an individual matter. This expression, therefore, needed to be enlarged, to be expanded, from an individual matter to a corporate matter. The church today is to be the fullness of God in a corporate way. In the church God is not expressed through an individual; He is expressed corporately through the Body, through the believers who have together been filled to the brim with the riches of Christ. Therefore, the fullness of God is embodied in the church. The church as the embodiment of the fullness of God is the expression of the Triune God. This is the church in the Lord's recovery today

### March 10, 2017, Friday

Message Thirty-Five

#### GOD GLORIFIED IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST

The words "but to Him" in verse 20 convey the thought that something has initially gone forth from God and is now returning to Him. In his prayer Paul asked that the Father would strengthen the saints according to the riches of His glory. This implies that the glory of God is wrought into the saints. In the doxology Paul said, "To Him be the glory" (v. 21). This implies that the glory of God returns to God after it has been wrought into the saints. Firstly, the glory of God is wrought into us; then it returns to God for His glorification. As an illustration, Isaac's wealth was firstly given to Rebekah for her beautification; then when Rebekah came to Isaac, all the wealth came back to Isaac with Rebekah for his glorification (Gen. 24:47, 53, 61-67). The apostle prayed that God would strengthen the saints according to His glory, but eventually God's glory, after being wrought into them, returns to Him along with the strengthened saints. This is the way God is glorified in the church.

In verse 20 Paul speaks of “Him Who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think.” Strictly speaking, “ask or think” here refers to the spiritual things related to the church, not to material things. For these spiritual things, we need not only to ask, but also to think. We may think more than we ask. God fulfills not only what we ask for the church, but also what we think concerning the church, and God is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think for the church through the power which operates in us.

God’s ability to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, as revealed in verse 20, is different from His ability in creation. Verse 20 refers not to creation, but to the church. A number of times I have heard the saints quote verse 20 in testifying concerning their experience of God’s material blessing. To quote this verse for such a purpose is to misapply it. Paul’s concept here is related not to what God does outside of us, but to what He does inside of us. He specifically mentions “the power which operates in us.” This is the inward power, the resurrection power, as mentioned in 1:19 and 20.

God’s creating power is the origin of the material things in our environment (Rom. 8:28), whereas God’s resurrection power accomplishes the spiritual things for the church within our inward being. In order for God to give us a good job, there is no need for resurrection power to operate in us. God’s being able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think is related not to His acts in our environment, but to His working organically and metabolically within us. As far as the environment is concerned, there may be times when God apparently does nothing for you. You may pray for a promotion, but He allows you to be laid off from your present job. During this time of unemployment, God may operate within you to enable Christ to make His home in you. When we are in a favorable environment, there may be very little opportunity for Christ to spread Himself in our hearts. But when we are placed in a difficult environment, the Lord may have more of an opportunity to spread within our inward being. From our side, it may seem beneficial for us to be in a good environment, but from the Lord’s side, it may be better for us to be in a difficult environment, for then He may have greater opportunity to work within us.

Verse 21 says, “To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.” God’s glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed in the church. Hence, the glory in the church is to God; that is, God is glorified in the church.

God’s glorification is not only in the church, but also in Christ. Hence, the word “and” is used here to emphasize this point. In the church the sphere of God’s glorification is narrow, limited to the household of faith. But in Christ the sphere is much broader, because Christ is the Head of all the families in the heavens and on earth (1:22; 3:15). Hence, God’s glorification in Christ is in the realm of all the families created by God, not only on earth but also in the heavens. Not only is the sphere in Christ much broader than that in the church, but the scope in Christ is eternal, as indicated by the phrase, “unto all the generations of the age of the ages.” All the generations of the age of the ages constitute eternity. God’s glorification in the church is mainly in this age, whereas God’s glorification in Christ is for eternity.

As the household of the believers, the church, we take the lead to give the glory to God the Father by having God’s glory wrought into our being. In order for the glory of God to be wrought into us, we need to be strengthened into our inner man according to the riches of God’s glory. Then this glory will come to us with God and, after being worked into us, will return to God with us. By means of this two-way traffic the church takes the lead to give the glory to God. In this universe, as the believers, we are the firstfruit. If we take the lead to give glory to God, all the other families both in heaven and on earth will follow us to glorify Him.

### March 11, 2017, Saturday

Message Thirty-Six

## KEEPING THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT

To walk worthily of God’s calling, to have the proper Body life, we need firstly to care for the matter of oneness. We must keep the oneness of the Spirit. This is crucial and vital to the Body of Christ.

Oneness, strictly speaking, differs from unity. Unity is formed by many people uniting together, whereas oneness is the one entity of the Spirit within the believers making them all one. Some Christians may have a certain kind of unity, but we in the Lord’s recovery appreciate oneness much more than unity. In the Lord’s recovery, we are not united—that is, we have not formed a certain kind of union—but we are one. Our oneness is a Person, even the Lord Jesus Himself realized as the life-giving Spirit. Today the Lord is the life-giving Spirit within us, and this Spirit is our oneness. Therefore, our oneness is not an objective Person far away in the heavens; it is a subjective Person indwelling us as our life.

In 4:3 this oneness is called “the oneness of the Spirit.” The oneness of the Spirit is actually the Spirit Himself. In the illustration of the electricity and the lights, the oneness of the electricity is the electricity itself. There is not another element, apart from the electricity, that is the oneness of the electricity. The oneness of the electricity is simply the electricity itself. In the same principle, the oneness of the Spirit is not something apart from the Spirit. On the contrary, it is the Spirit Himself. The oneness within us and among us is the very life-giving Spirit. Therefore, to keep the oneness is to keep the life-giving Spirit.

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit implies that we already have the Spirit. If we did not have Him, how could we keep Him? However, most Christians live apart from the Spirit most of the time. Any action taken apart from the life-giving Spirit is divisive. When we are one with the Spirit, living according to Him and doing all things in Him, we keep the oneness without making any conscious effort to do so. But whenever we act apart from the Spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness. Therefore, instead of charging you to talk about oneness, I would encourage you to take care of the life-giving Spirit, who is the Lord Himself as life within you.

Verse 2 says, “With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love.” To have lowliness is to remain in a low estate, and to have meekness is to not fight for ourselves. We should have these two virtues in dealing with ourselves. Long-suffering is to endure mistreatment. We should have this virtue in dealing with others. By these virtues we bear one another; that is, we do not forsake the troublesome ones but bear them in love. This is the expression of life.

Keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. For this reason, we should not expect a new believer to be able to keep the oneness of the Spirit. It is useless to charge the new ones to keep the oneness, because keeping the oneness of the Spirit requires transformation. If you have not been transformed, you will not have the lowliness nor the meekness necessary to keep the oneness. The more we have been transformed, the more we spontaneously inherit lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering. All these virtues are our heritage by transformation.

The uniting bond of peace is actually the working of the cross. By our experience we know that whenever we go to the cross, there are no differences between us and others. However, as soon as we come down from the cross, differences appear. This is true not only in the church life but also in our family life. Often the love between a husband and wife is buried beneath the differences that emerge when they come down from the cross. The only way to get rid of the differences is to go to the cross. When we go to the cross and remain there, the differences disappear, and we have peace. As we remain on the cross, this peace becomes the uniting bond in which we keep the oneness of the Spirit. Therefore, in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit we need both transformation and the cross.