

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CHURCH LIFE, THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE,
AND THE COMING OF THE LORD, Week 6**

**Entering into the Intrinsic Significance of the Reality of the Body of Christ-
the Highest Peak in God's Economy and the Top Revelation of the Bible**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:17, 22-23; 3:3-5, 9; 1 Cor. 12:12, 24-27; 2 Cor. 11:28-29; Rom. 12:3-5

- Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a **spirit of wisdom** and **revelation** in the full knowledge of Him,
- Ephesians 1:22 And He **subjected all things under His feet** and gave Him to be **Head over all things to the church**,
- Ephesians 1:23 Which is His **Body**, the fullness of the **One who fills all in all**.
- Ephesians 3:3 That by **revelation** the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,
- Ephesians 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Ephesians 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- Ephesians 3:9 And to **enlighten all** that they may see what the **economy of the mystery** is, which throughout the ages has been chidden in God, who created all things,
- 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 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has **blended the body together**, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
- 1 Corinthians 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the **same care for one another**.
- 1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the **Body of Christ**, and members individually.
- 2 Corinthians 11:28 Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.
- 2 Corinthians 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?
- Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to every one who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has **apportioned to each a measure of faith**.
- 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**.

Day 1

I. The reality of the Body of Christ is the highest peak in God's economy and the top revelation of the Bible, revealed through a spirit of wisdom and revelation- Eph. 1:17, 22-23:

- A. We need **revelation** to know the reality of the Body of Christ and to enter into the realm and intrinsic significance of the reality of the Body of Christ as God's heart's desire and His ultimate purpose-vv. 5, 9-11, 22-23; Rom. 12:1-2.
- B. Only a **revelation from God** will usher us into the realm of the reality of the Body of Christ, and only then will the Body become our experience-Acts 9:1-5, 15; 26:18-19; Eph. 1:17-23; 3:3-5, 9; 1 Cor. 12:12.
- C. The secret of seeing the heavenly vision of God's ultimate purpose is our **willingness to pay the price** for it-Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:22; Psa. 25:9, 14; Rev. 3:18.

Day 2

II. The overcomers typified by Zion are the reality of the Body of Christ and consummate the building up of the Body in the local churches to bring in the consummated holy city, New Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies as God's dwelling place in eternity; in the new heaven and new earth, the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion, with all the believers as the overcomers-21:1-3, 7, 16, 22:

- A. The **overcomers** typified by Zion as the reality of the Body of Christ are the **high peak**, the **center**, the **uplifting**, the **strengthening**, the **enriching**, the **beauty**, and the **reality** of the church-Psa. 48:2, 11-12; 50:2; 20:2; 53:6a.
- B. The characteristics, the life, the blessing, and the establishment of Jerusalem (the church) come from Zion (the overcomers):
 1. In 1 Kings 8:1 the **elders** were in **Jerusalem**, and the **Ark of the Covenant** was in **Zion**.
 2. Psalm 51:18 says that God did His **good pleasure** unto **Zion** and **built** the walls of **Jerusalem**.
 3. Psalm 102:21 says that the **name** of Jehovah was declared in **Zion** and that His **praise** was declared in **Jerusalem**.
 4. Psalm 128:5 says that Jehovah **blessed** from **Zion** and that the **prosperity** was seen in **Jerusalem**.
 5. Psalm 135:21 says that Jehovah **dwelt** in **Jerusalem** but that He was to be **blessed** from **Zion**.
 6. In Isaiah 41:27 the word was first **announced** to **Zion** and then **preached** to **Jerusalem**.
 7. Joel 3:17 says that when God **dwelt** in **Zion**, **Jerusalem** would be **holy**.
 8. Today God is looking for the one hundred and **forty-four thousand** amidst the defeated church, those who will **stand on Mount Zion**-Rev. 14:1-5.

- C. God always uses a small number of believers to pass on the flow of life to the church and to revive the church; on behalf of the church, the overcomers take the stand of Christ's victory in the midst of sufferings; we need to ask God to **operate in us the willingness** to let ourselves be **conquered, captured, and defeated** by Christ so that He can be the Victor in our experience-Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 2:12-14.

Day 3

- D. In typology the **overcomers**, the perfected and matured God-men, are **today's Zion within today's Jerusalem** (the church life)-Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1-5:
1. Within the church life there must be a group of **overcomers**, and these overcomers are today's Zion.
 2. Without Zion (the overcomers), Jerusalem (the church life) cannot be kept and maintained; if there are no overcomers in a local church, that church is like Jerusalem without Zion; it will become like a flat tire.
- E. The Lord's recovery is to build up Zion-the overcomers as the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem; in the church life we must **endeavor to reach today's Zion**-Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rev. 14:1; 21:2; Psa. 84:5.
- F. The reality of the Body of Christ is the **corporate living** by the perfected God-men, the overcomers, who are genuine men not living by their life but by the **life of the processed God**, whose attributes have been expressed through their virtues-Phil. 4:5-9:
1. The Lord **urgently needs the overcomers with their God-man living** as the reality of the Body of Christ to be expressed in the local churches; unless there is a substantial expression of the Body, the Lord Jesus will not return-Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:27, 30; Rev. 19:7.
 2. The Lord needs the overcomers to carry out the economy of God in order to **have the Body of Christ** and to **destroy His enemy**; without the overcomers, the Body of Christ cannot be built up, and unless the Body of Christ is built up, Christ cannot come back for His bride-Eph. 1:10; 3:10; Rev. 12:11; 19:7-9.

Day 4

III. In order to live together with other members in the reality of the Body of Christ, we all need to have the **consciousness of the Body of Christ**-1 Cor. 12:24-27; 2 Cor. 11:28-29:

- A. "When Brother Nee taught about the Body, he said that with whatever we do, we have to **consider how the churches would feel about it**"-The Problems Causing the Turmoils in the Church Life, pp. 28-29.
- B. In the Body there can be **no independence or individualism**, for we are members, and members cannot live in detachment from the Body-1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 5:30.
- C. Our living with all that we have is **in** the Body, **through** the Body, and **for** the Body; this is the kind of person God is looking for today; may the Lord **deliver us from individualism**.
- D. Those who see that they are members of the Body treasure the Body and honor the other members; **in the Body of Christ everyone is a member and nothing more than a member**; hence, no member can live without the other members, much less despise them-1 Cor. 12:15, 21, 23-24; Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:29; 1 Cor. 16:18; Judg. 9:9.
- E. Every member has a **function**, and all the functions are for the Body; the function of one member is the **function of the whole Body**; for this reason we should not imitate other members or be covetous of other members (1 Cor. 12:15); at the same time we should not despise other members, thinking that we are better and more useful (v. 21); every believer is a member in the Body of Christ, and every believer is indispensable.

Day 5

- F. All the names mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:7-17 indicate that with him there was a **sense, a consciousness**, of the Body as the one new man:
1. All the names also show that there should be **no differences among the churches**- what Paul wrote to the Colossians was also for the Laodiceans, and what he wrote to the Laodiceans was for the Colossians; what fellowship, oneness, harmony, and intimate contact this implies!
 2. Paul charged Tychicus to make known to the Colossians all that concerned him because of his **consciousness** of the Body as the one new man.
- G. It is essential for the growth and development of the Body that we each **recognize our measure** and not go beyond it; we should learn to be **blended** with other brothers and sisters-1 Cor. 12:15-18; 2 Cor. 10:13-14.
- H. Every member should know his **own capacity** and not consider himself more highly than he ought; if everyone does this, there will be no jealousy, ambition, or craving to do what others can do-Phil. 2:2-4; Rom. 12:1-5.
- I. Wherever there is **Body-revelation**, there is **Body-consciousness**, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individualistic thought and action are ruled out:
1. If we want to know the Body, we need **deliverance** not only from our sinful life and our natural life but also from our **individualistic life**.
 2. **Seeing Christ** results in deliverance from sin; seeing the Body results in deliverance from individualism; we cannot enter into the realm of the Body by anything other than seeing.
 3. What we do not know, another member of the Body will know; what we cannot see, another member of the Body will see; what we cannot do, another member of the Body will do-1 Cor. 12:17-22.
 4. If we refuse the help of our fellow members, we are refusing the help of Christ; sooner or later all individualistic Christians will dry up; the whole Body is built up through the **interdependence among the members**-v. 12.
 5. Many of us have the experience that when we are dry and have no way to go on, we need other brothers and sisters to **intercede** for us before we can get through-Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:9; Phil. 1:19; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Col. 4:3; Heb. 13:18.

Day 6

- IV. For the reality of the Body of Christ, God has **blended** the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word blended means "adjusted," "harmonized," "tempered," and "mingled," implying the losing of distinctions; the purpose of the blending is **to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ**:
- A. We need to be in the **local churches** as the procedure to be brought into the reality of the Body of Christ as the goal.
 - B. The highest peak of the Lord's recovery that can really, practically, and actually carry out God's economy is for God to produce not many local churches in a physical way but an **organic Body to be His organism**.
 - C. Paul's thought of the church being one bread (10:17) was not his own invention; rather, it was taken from the Old Testament with the meal offering (Lev. 2:4); every part of the flour of the meal offering was **mingled** with the oil-that is the blending.
 - D. Hardly anyone speaks about blending because this is not only very high and deep but also very mysterious; it is not a physical matter; the significance of our blending is the **reality of the Body of Christ**.
 - E. In order to be blended for the reality of the Body of Christ, we have to **go through the cross** and **be by the Spirit** to dispense Christ to others for the building up of the Body of Christ.
 - F. Blending means that we should always stop in order to fellowship with others; if we have the consciousness of the Body of Christ and are in the blending and reality of the Body of Christ, we will not do anything without fellowshipping with the other saints who are coordinating with us, because fellowship **tempers** us, fellowship **adjusts** us, fellowship **harmonizes** us, and fellowship **mingles** us.
 - G. Before a co-worker does anything, he should fellowship with the other co-workers; an elder should fellowship with the other elders; in our coordination in the church life, in the Lord's work, we all have to **learn not to do anything without fellowship**.
 - H. A group of responsible brothers may meet together often without being blended; to be blended means that we are touched by others and that we are touching others by **going through the cross, doing things by the Spirit**, and doing everything to dispense Christ for His Body's sake.
 - I. Such a blending is not social but the **blending of the very Christ** whom the individual members, the district churches, the co-workers, and the elders enjoy, experience, and partake of.
 - J. Blending is the **Body**, blending is the **oneness**, and blending is the **one accord**.
 - K. The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to **consummate the New Jerusalem** (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

Material Offering and the Lord's Move Today
Material Offerings and Full-time Service

Week 3 – Day 1

Phil. 4:18 But I have received in full all things and abound; I have been filled, receiving from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling savor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

Handing ourselves over
(2 Cor 8:5)
(full-time service)

Today, when we speak of **handing ourselves over**, we are not talking about what we have to do to take care of our money. Rather, we are saying that a person has to **offer himself up for the Lord** and for the gospel.

First, **He wants us; then He wants what is ours**. We ourselves have to come to Him first before we can bring what we have to Him. If we do not come, God will not accept what we have. All the brothers and sisters have to see that **everything is for the lord** and that **everything has to center around the Lord**. We must have the same center. Although some function in **money-making ministry** while other function is their **ministry of the word**, the center for both must be the same.

The fragrant odor [in **Philippians 4:18**] refers to the sweet savor of the burnt offering (**Gen. 8:20-21; Lev. 1:9**). The offering we give to God's servants is not only a sacrifice to God, but also a **fragrant odor of a burnt offering that is well-pleasing** to Him.

By **being offered to God for God's use** by us who are of God, what was considered by God as "mammon of **unrighteousness**" (**Luke 16:9**), that is, as **deceitful riches** (**Matt. 13:22**) and **uncertain riches** (**1 Tim. 6:17**) which **will fail** (**Luke 16:9**), can actually **become** our "**fellowship**" with the saints, our "**righteousness**" toward men before God, an **acceptable "sacrifice"** to God, and a **well-pleasing "sweet-smelling savor"** to Him. Riches that deceive men, corrupt men, and destroy men can actually become such transparent blessings that we have before God! This all depends on our offering of material riches

Week 3 – Day 2

2Cor. 5:13 For whether we were beside ourselves, it was to God; or whether we are sober-minded, it is for you.

"where your treasure is, there is your heart, also"
(Matt 6:21)

The Bible also tells us about many people who were **beside themselves in offering up** their possessions and houses..., all those who have **truly consecrated** themselves to the Lord were men who **risked everything** to offer up themselves. The more a person loves the Lord, the more he consecrates. "If you give your money to the Lord, you will love Him. The Lord said that **where your treasure is, there is your heart also.**" If you want your heart to follow the Lord, your money must first go to the Lord.

...I am **not exhorting you to give everything to the Lord**, but you must **be a person who is fully consecrated to the Lord**.

...Today we want all the young people to **offer their time** to the Lord. At the same time, we want them to **offer themselves fully** to the Lord. Some may have to give themselves to **make money** for the Lord. Such ones have to do their best to earn and offer.... Some may have to offer themselves to **serve** the Lord **full-time**. We need both kinds of people.

... We have to **recalibrate the focus of our living**. Formerly, we earned money for ourselves. Today everything has to be for the Lord.... We have to rise up and be beside ourselves. We have to be beside ourselves in the preaching of the gospel and in offering up our all.

Week 3 - Day 3

*Mal 3:10 Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and **pour out blessing** for you until there is no room for it.*

Heb 13:15-16 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name. But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The infinitely rich promise of God
(Malachi 3:10)

..., keeping things in one's hand is the very cause for poverty, while offering things to God is the very cause for blessing.

The "tithe" [in **Malachi 3:10**] is the legal amount of offering which God required from the harvest of the Israelites.... This word superabundantly displays the infinitely rich promise of God.... If we will fully offer to God what belongs to Him that the church may be richly supplied, God will open the windows of heaven for us and pour out a blessing to us, which there will not be enough room to contain.

Two sacrifice are spoken on [in **Hebrews 13:15-16**]. The **first** is the sacrifice of praise, and the **second** is that of doing good and sharing with others. A sacrifice is something that is a loss to oneself and a gain to God. A **sacrifice of praise** is a praise that is rendered to God at one's **own loss**. A **sacrifice of sharing** or giving is giving something to God at one's **own expense**.

..., we have to give to the extent that we can **sense the loss**. Only this kind of offering can be considered a sacrifice. When we do this, we will spontaneously offer up the **sacrifice of praise**.... In addition to the sacrifice of praise, there is still something that follows. The phrase "**do not forget**" refers to the fact that it is most easy for men to forget.... We should not forget **doing good and sharing** with others.

Week 3 - Day 4

Rom 12:1-2 *I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to **present your bodies** a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may **prove what the will of God is**, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.*

“prove what the will of God is”

... The consecration there [in Romans 12] is for service. This service is a service in the Body of Christ. It is not individual service, but service in the Body. If a man is not in the Body, it is difficult for him to understand God's will. ... [If you think] we are rallying a fund-raising campaign. ..., you are off. We have received God's grace to serve Him in this age. In order to do that, we have to offer up everything and put everything in the Body.

Why do we have to touch the matter of riches? It is because the Lord says, **“For where your treasure is there will your heart be also”** (Matt. 6:21). Where your heart is, there will be your very person also.

... **Roman 12** speaks of two bodies. One is our own body, and the other is the Body of Christ. We offer up our bodies for the **Body of Christ**. If a man has not been delivered from riches, he cannot offer up his body to God.

... One of the greatest obstacles to our consecration is the matter of riches. And one of the greatest enemies in the Body of Christ is individualism.... The strongest manifestation of individualism is in the matter money.

Our way, our work, and our testimony in the future lie with the Body. If the question of money is not settled, we cannot expect to have good coordination, and we cannot expect that we can serve God.

Week 3 - Day 5

Rom 14:7-9 *For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; For whether we live, we **live to the Lord**, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's. For Christ died and lived again for this, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

“whether we live, we live to the Lord.”

..., how could your body be free to be presented to God as a living sacrifice? Our entire **being is contained** in our **body**, and our body is **confined** in **time**. Therefore, the **body** is the center of these two things, the center of our being and the center of our time. The **being** is **what we are**, and the **time** is **where we exist**. We can change the places where we live, but we cannot move ourselves out of time. You always remain in time. To present your body to God means you give yourself to God. This is to be full-time. We Christians should all be full-timers. We have to give ourselves to Him. We do not give ourselves to anything else, only to our saving God.

... Every saved one must be a full-timer, presenting his body to God.... To present your body is just to present yourself to God. As a saved one, you have to present yourself to God. Having presented yourself to God, **you will be led** by the Lord to either **do a job** to make money or **to preach the gospel** without making any money. Whether you do a job or preach the gospel depends upon the Lord's leading.

The **real meaning of being full-time** is **to live to Him**. To go full-time does not mean to drop your job and become a preacher. It does not mean that you give up your business and become one who preaches the gospel or who labors in the word all the time. A full-timer is one who lives **to** the Lord.... We have to live **to** Him because He is ours and we are His. To live **to** Him is based upon the fact that we are His. Not only is He ours, but we also are His.... To **live to the Lord** includes living for, by, with, and in Him. This is one being two and two in one. There is not only no separation between us and the Lord but also no distinction when we are living to Him.

To be full-time means that you live **to** the Lord. You do **not** live for Him **but to** Him.... There is no distinction in anything. He does not need your permission to use you, nor do you need his permission to use Him.

Week 3 - Day 6

2 Cor. 5:15 *And He died for all that those who live may **no longer live to themselves** but to Him who died for them and has been raised.*
Matt. 24:45 *Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to **give them food** at the proper time?*
Matt. 24:46 *Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.*

Today's Reading

... To be **for** the Lord means that you still could be away from the Lord. If you are **to** the Lord, you could never be away from Him. To be **to** the Lord means that you are one with Him. It means that we breathe to the Lord, eat to the Lord, walk to Him, and even exercise to Him. If you are practicing the real ownership of the Lord, you will do everything to Him.

I hope we all can realized the proper denotation of the spiritual term **full-time**. To be full-time does not mean that you need to give up your job. To be a full-timer means that whatever you do, you do **to** the Lord; whatever you are, you are **to** the Lord; and whatever you have, you have **to** the Lord. If you remain in a job, you remain **to** the Lord. If you leave your job, you leave it **to** the Lord. As long as you are to the Lord you are a full-timer.

... Thus, there is no problem concerning whether we live a longer life or whether we die today. If we live, we live **to** the Lord, if we die, we die **to** the Lord. There is no difference. Whatever I do and whatever happens to me, I am **to** the Lord because I am one with Him. To think that only those who give up their jobs to do the Lord's work are full-timer is a wrong understanding. This is still the understanding under the influence of degrade Christianity.... When you say that you are a full-timer, it means that you are **to** the Lord.

... Let, us all be full-timers! If we are led to drop our jobs, then we drop them **to** Him and go out to serve the precious truths.... We will gain much increase. I care for the spreading of the truths so that they can get into the needy hearts. If we spread these truths, we will become the faithful servants to serve food to the Lord's people at the appointed time (Matt. 24:45). Then we will fulfill the commission of the Lord's recovery.