

Message Five  
**Standing on the Unique Ground of the Church,  
Being under the Limitation of the Body of Christ,  
and Being Body-conscious in One Accord**

RK, EM *Hymns*: 824, 840

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11; Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 10:13;  
Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 12:12-27

- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone 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.
- 2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Cor 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 Cor 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- 1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but many.
- 1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
- 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
- 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
- 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.
- 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,
- 1 Cor 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 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 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 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

**I. We must stand on the unique ground of the church, the genuine ground of oneness:**

- A. First Corinthians 1:2 speaks of the church at Corinth—this shows the locality of Corinth for the existence, expression, and practice of the church; such a locality becomes the local ground of the local churches on which they are built respectively; thus, the church in Corinth was built on the ground of the city of Corinth.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

- B. The practice of the church life in the early days was the practice of having one church for one city, one city with only one church; in no city was there more than one church—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11:

Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

1. This is the local church with the city, not the street or area, as the unit.
2. The jurisdiction of a local church should cover the whole city in which the church is located; it should not be greater or lesser than the boundary of the city.
3. All the believers within that boundary should constitute the one unique local church within that city.
4. There are four characteristics of our meeting on the genuine ground of oneness, the place that God has chosen—cf. Deut. 12:5:

Deut 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.

- a. First, the people of God should always be one; there should be no divisions among them—Psa. 133; John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3-4a.

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!

Psa 133:2 It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments;

Psa 133:3 Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 4:4a One Body and one Spirit, ...

- b. Second, the unique name into which God's people should gather is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the reality of which name is the Spirit; to be designated by any other name is to be denominational, divided; this is spiritual fornication—Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1:12; 12:3b.

Matt 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.

1 Cor 1:12 Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

1 Cor 12:3b ... and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

- c. Third, in the New Testament God's habitation, His dwelling place, is

particularly located in our spirit, that is, in our mingled spirit, our human spirit regenerated and indwelt by the divine Spirit; in our meeting for the worship of God, we must exercise our spirit and do everything in the spirit—John 3:6b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 2:22; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:15.

John 3:6b ... and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

1 Cor 14:15 What then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing also with the mind.

- d. Fourth, in our worship of God we must have a genuine application of the cross of Christ, signified by the altar (Deut. 12:5-6, 27), by rejecting the flesh, the self, and the natural life and by worshipping God with Christ and Christ alone (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20).

Deut 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.

Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

Deut 12:27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah your God, and you shall eat the flesh.

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

## **II. As members of the Body of Christ standing on the genuine ground of oneness, we must be limited by the other members, not going beyond our measure:**

- A. God has placed all the members of the Body, even as He willed—1 Cor. 12:18:

1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.

1. The Head sets us in our special place in the Body and points us to our special function—Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:15-17.

Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?

2. Each one of us members has our own place in the Body of Christ; it is assigned by God and should be accepted by us.

3. Since such an assignment is according to God's will, every member is necessary—vv. 19-22.

1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?

1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.

1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

4. Every member has a definite place, a definite assignment, and a particular portion with which he serves the Body of Christ.
  5. Each member has his own characteristics, and each has his own capability; these characteristics constitute the place, position, or ministry of each member—Rom. 12:4-8; 2 Tim. 4:5.
    - Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
    - Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
    - Rom 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
    - Rom 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
    - Rom 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
    - 2 Tim 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.
- B. A basic requirement for the growth and development of the Body is that we recognize our measure and do not go beyond it—Eph. 4:7, 16:
- Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
  - Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
1. We must be willing to be limited by our measure—Rom. 12:3, 6.
    - Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone 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.
    - Rom 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
  2. As soon as we go beyond our measure, we go beyond the authority of the Head and move out from under the anointing—cf. Psa. 133.
    - Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!
    - Psa 133:2 It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments;
    - Psa 133:3 Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.
  3. When we go beyond our measure, we interfere with the order of the Body.
  4. To think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think without a sober mind is to annul the proper order of the Body life—Rom. 12:3.
    - Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone 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.
- C. Like Paul we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us, staying within the limits of God's ruling, God's measuring—2 Cor. 10:13:
- 2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.
1. When we give a testimony about our work, experience, or enjoyment of the Lord, we must testify within measure, that is, within a certain limit.
  2. Although we expect the work to spread, we must learn how to be under God's restriction; we should not expect a spread that is without measure—vv. 13-15:
    - 2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.
    - 2 Cor 10:14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.

- 2 Cor 10:15 We are not boasting beyond our measure in others' labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance,
- a. If we spread the work according to the Spirit, there will always be a certain limit—cf. 2:12-14.
 

2 Cor 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and a door was open to me in the Lord,

2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.
  - b. Inwardly, we will have the consciousness that the Lord intends to spread the work only to a certain extent; inwardly, we do not have the peace to spread the work beyond a certain point.
  - c. Outwardly, in the environment the Lord may cause certain matters to restrict the spread of the work; the environment does not allow us to go beyond a particular boundary line—cf. Rom. 15:24.
 

Rom 15:24 Whenever I may go to Spain, for I hope to see you in passing and be sent forward there by you, if first I am filled, at least in part, by your company.
3. In the church service, we need to realize that God has measured out only so much to us, and we should not overstretch ourselves—12:3-4, 6a.
- Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone 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.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:6a And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, ...

### **III. For the Lord's move in His recovery both locally and universally, we must be Body-conscious in one accord—Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 15:25; Rom. 15:6:**

- Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,
- Acts 4:24 And when they heard this, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God and said, Sovereign Master, You are the One who has made heaven and earth and the sea and all things in them,
- Acts 15:25 It seemed good to us, having become of one accord, to choose men to send to you together with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
- Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- A. We should always consider the Body, care for the Body, honor the Body, and do what is best for the Body—1 Cor. 12:12-27.
 

1 Cor 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 Cor 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but many.

1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?

1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.

- 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?  
 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.  
 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.  
 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.  
 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,  
 1 Cor 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 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.  
 1 Cor 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 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- B. “When Brother Nee taught about the Body, he said that 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.
- C. 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:  
 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.  
 Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.  
 Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.
1. Those who see that they are members of the Body treasure the Body and honor the other members, each of whom is indispensable—1 Cor. 12:15, 21, 23-24; Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:29; 1 Cor. 16:18; Judg. 9:9:
    - 1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
    - 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
    - 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,
    - 1 Cor 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,
    - Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone 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.
    - Phil 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,
    - 1 Cor 16:18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones.
    - Judg 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my fatness, because of which God and men are honored by me, and go to wave over the trees?
    - a. Since we are members of the Body of Christ, we should have a feeling for the Body, taking the feeling of the Head as our own feeling—Phil. 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:25b-26.
      - Phil 1:8 For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.
      - 1 Cor 12:25b ... but that the members would have the same care for one another.
      - 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.
    - b. We need to be like-souled in the Body life, genuinely caring for the things of Christ Jesus, the things concerning the church with all the saints—Phil. 2:2, 20-21; 1:8.
      - Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

Phil 2:20 For I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you;  
 Phil 2:21 For all seek their own things, not the things of Christ Jesus.  
 Phil 1:8 For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

2. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individualistic thought and action are ruled out:

a. 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.

b. Just as the Father is versus the world (1 John 2:15), the Spirit is versus the flesh (Gal. 5:17), and the Lord is versus the devil (1 John 3:8), so also the Body is versus the individual.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire.

1 John 3:8 He who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

c. Just as we cannot be independent from the Head, we cannot be independent from the Body.

d. Individualism is hateful in the sight of God:

(1) The enemy of the Body is the self, the independent “I,” the independent “me”; if we would be built up in the Body, the self must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced—Matt. 16:21-26.

Matt 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You!

Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

(2) We should be dependent not only on God but also on the Body, on the brothers and sisters—Exo. 17:11-13; Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33.

Exo 17:11 And when Moses lifted his hand up, Israel prevailed; and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

Exo 17:12 But Moses' hands were heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Exo 17:13 And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Acts 9:25 But his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

2 Cor 11:33 And in a basket I was lowered through a window, through the wall, and escaped his hands.

- e. What I do not know, another member of the Body will know; what I cannot see, another member of the Body will see; what I cannot do, another member of the Body will do—1 Cor. 12:17-22.
  - 1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
  - 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
  - 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
  - 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.
  - 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
  - 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- f. 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—v. 12.
  - 1 Cor 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.