

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (2)

The Cross—the Center of the Universe (Message 19)

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 43:13-18; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Col. 1:20; 2:14-15

- I. According to the record in Ezekiel, the altar is the center of the compound, the center of the premises of the temple—43:13-18:
 - A. The altar is the center not only of the inner court but also of the whole premises of the temple.
 - B. The altar, which signifies the cross, is actually the center of the universe:
 1. The altar is the center of the temple compound; the temple compound is the center of Jerusalem; the city of Jerusalem is the center of the good land; the good land is the center of the inhabited earth; and, as far as the relationship of God and man is concerned, the earth is the center of the universe; thus, ultimately the altar is the center of the universe.
 2. Since the altar signifies the cross, the cross is the center of the universe.
 3. The death of the Lord Jesus on the cross was not the death merely of one person; it was an all-inclusive death involving God, man, and all the creatures—Rom. 6:6; Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:14.
- II. The principle of the cross is that by the cross everything of the old creation and all things related to us have been terminated, put to death—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15; Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 2:14; John 12:31; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 2:14-16.
- III. The crucified Christ was the unique subject, the center, the content, and the substance of the apostle's ministry—1 Cor. 2:2:
 - A. The death of Christ has become God's power to eliminate all the problems in the universe; thus, Christ crucified is God's power to abolish all negative things and carry out His plan—1:23-24: [172]
 1. The human way of solving problems is to negotiate, but God's way is to terminate; the best way to solve problems among

people is to terminate everyone involved—Gal. 2:20; cf. 1 Cor. 6:7-8.

2. The crucifixion of Christ has silenced the entire universe and simplified the extremely complicated situation in the universe—cf. 2 Cor. 11:2-3.

B. When we experience the crucified Christ, all that we are, all that we have, and all that we can do are completely terminated, and His resurrection life is imparted through us into others—John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:10-12.

IV. In His economy God gives us one person—Christ—and one way—the cross—1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:14:

A. The one person—Christ—is the center of God’s economy, and the one way—the cross—is the center of God’s government—1 Cor. 2:2; 1:17-18, 23; Gal. 6:14:

1. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.

2. By the cross God has dealt with all the negative things in the universe, and He is still governing everything through the cross—Eph. 2:14-16.

3. In the church life Christ must be all and in all; everything that is not Christ must go to the cross—Col. 1:18; 3:10-11.

4. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23.

B. In the book of Colossians we see a clear vision of the cross as God’s way in His administration—1:20-22; 2:11-15:

1. “Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens”—1:20:

a. To reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things; this was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ.

b. Because we were sinners, we needed redemption, and because we were also enemies of God, we needed reconciliation—vv. 14, 21-22. [173]

2. “Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross”—2:14:

- a. *Ordinances* refers to the ordinances of the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship—[Eph. 2:15](#).
 - b. *Nailing it to the cross* means to abolish the law of the commandments in ordinances.
 - C. “Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it”—[Col. 2:15](#):
 - 1. This verse portrays the fighting that took place at the time of Christ’s crucifixion:
 - a. Activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic rulers and authorities were brought to a focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God’s eternal, central, and unique way—[vv. 14-15](#).
 - b. At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in close to God and Christ; thus, a warfare was raging at the cross.
 - 2. God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame—[v. 15](#).
- V. In [Matthew 27:51-53](#) we see the effect of Christ’s crucifixion:
 - A. “The veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom” ([v. 51a](#)), which signifies that the separation between God and man had been abolished because the flesh of sin taken by Christ had been crucified.
 - B. “The earth was shaken” ([v. 51b](#)), which signifies that the base of Satan’s rebellion was shaken.
 - C. “The rocks were split” ([v. 51c](#)), which signifies that the strongholds of Satan’s earthly kingdom were broken.
 - D. “The tombs were opened” ([v. 52a](#)), which signifies that the power of death and Hades was conquered and subdued.
 - E. “Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” ([v. 52b](#)), which signifies the releasing power of the death of Christ.
- VI. In the Gospel of John we see the life-releasing aspect of Christ’s crucifixion—[19:34, 36; 12:24](#): ^[174]
 - A. The water that flowed out of the Lord’s pierced side is for imparting life, dealing with death, and producing the church—[19:34; 3:14-15; Eph. 5:29-30](#).
 - B. As a grain of wheat, the Lord Jesus fell into the ground and died in

- order to produce many grains for the church—[John 12:24](#).
- C. The bone is a symbol of the Lord’s resurrection life, which nothing can break; this is the life with which the church is produced and built—[19:36](#).
- VII. The cross leads us to the Body of Christ—[1 Cor. 1:18; 12:12-13, 27](#):
- A. The cross operates in the sphere of the Body—[Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5](#):
1. The work of the cross goes as far as the Body of Christ and consummates with the Body of Christ—[1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2; 12:12-27](#).
 2. Not only does the work of the cross bring us into the Body, but also the Body becomes the realm within which the cross works—[Col. 1:20; 3:15](#).
- B. In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross—[Eph. 2:16](#):
1. The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth—[Matt. 16:24-26](#).
 2. Life and work in the Body necessitate drastic dealings with the flesh, and such dealings necessitate a deep knowledge of the cross of Christ—[Gal. 5:24](#).
 3. The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross—[Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 10:13-15; Eph. 4:7, 16](#).
 4. All of God’s dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body—[Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-8](#).
 5. If our natural life is dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will have the Spirit’s anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body—[Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16](#).
- VIII. Although we meet the cross everywhere in our Christian life, we experience the cross in a particular way when we come to the altar at the center of God’s building—[Ezek. 43:13-18](#): [175]
- A. To come to the altar at the center is to realize that all that we are and all that we have, have been terminated at the cross—[Rom. 6:6](#).
- B. In our fellowship with the Lord, we are brought to the point where we touch the cross in a definite way and sense that God will no longer allow us to live in our natural man—[Gal. 2:20](#).
- C. As we pass through the cross, our flesh, our old creation, our self,

and our natural man with the natural life will all be dealt with—6:14.

- D. This is the experience of the cross—the center of the universe—Matt. 16:24.

[176]

MESSAGE NINETEEN

THE CROSS—THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

In Message 17 we presented many of the features of the temple. Now in this message, we will consider a very important item of the temple furnishings—the altar. The altar of burnt offering signifies the cross; thus, the title of this message is “The Cross—the Center of the Universe.” As lovers of Christ, we need to be impressed with how crucial the cross is in our Christian life. Any believer who has some seeking of the Lord, some desire to love Him and to follow Him, may know that we need to learn the lessons of the cross. However, even though many seeking Christians know the importance of the cross, according to my observation, they do not know much concerning the meaning of the cross and the principle of the cross. Many believers have in fact read biographies of various spiritual persons, especially those of the mystics and the inner-life people, who had certain experiences of the cross. However, they did not receive genuine help according to their need. Although these readers may have received some positive help from these writings, most also took in some improper and unhealthy concepts concerning the cross.

In this crystallization-study training on the book of Ezekiel, we come to the crystal of the altar of burnt offering. We need to see this altar, a type of the cross, in relation to God’s building. Most Christians understand the cross in a personal and individual way, that is, how they should suffer for the Lord and be dealt with by Him. Although such an understanding is not wrong, it is an understanding without a view of the building. Hence, many of the so-called experiences of the cross by these Christians resulted in their becoming somewhat strange and peculiar. It is not until we know that God’s eternal purpose is to gain a building, His temple, that our knowledge of the cross begins to be adjusted and brought to the proper perspective. In other words, our experience of the cross must be adjusted by the vision of God’s building.

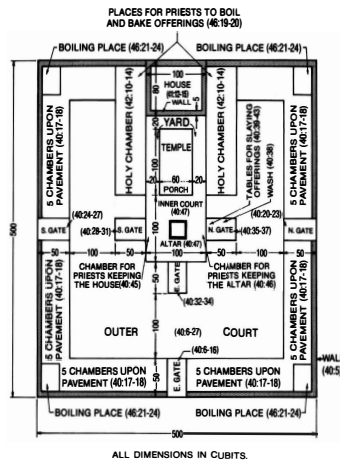
This message, which presents a comprehensive view concerning what the cross is, will cover mainly four points: (1) the centrality of the cross, [177] (2)

the principle of the cross, (3) God’s administration by the cross, and (4) the relationship of the cross to the Body of Christ. After covering these four points, the message will conclude with a brief word of application.

**ACCORDING TO THE RECORD IN EZEKIEL,
THE ALTAR BEING THE CENTER OF THE COMPOUND,
THE CENTER OF THE PREMISES OF THE TEMPLE**

According to the record in Ezekiel, the altar is the center of the compound, the center of the premises of the temple (43:13-18). Reading only the description in these verses may not give a sufficient sense

PLOT PLAN — TEMPLE AND INNER AND OUTER COURTS



[178]

of how the altar is the center of the premises of the temple. However, figure 1, a diagram taken from the *Life-study of Ezekiel* and showing the plot plan, or layout, of the temple compound based on the description in Ezekiel, should help us see the importance of the strategic location of the cross.

In this diagram the square in the center is the altar, showing clearly that the altar is the center of the entire temple compound. The diagram also shows the outer and inner gates on the north, south, and east sides of the compound. As we pointed out in Message 17, the gates imply Christ’s work on the cross as the crucified Christ. The width of the entrance of each gate was ten cubits, implying the Ten Commandments, indicating that the Lord Jesus as the perfect man fulfilled all the requirements of the Ten Commandments and became our entrance into God’s building. This reality is also seen in the pearl gates of the

New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21:21](#)), which signify the redemptive death of the crucified Christ for our regeneration and entrance.

The layout of the temple is such that anyone entering the compound by passing through the gates will arrive at the altar. No matter which direction we enter from, we are brought to the altar. Moreover, when God, who is in the temple, comes out to meet man, He comes first to the altar. Thus, the altar is not only the center of the building but also the meeting place of God and man. God comes out of the temple and arrives at the altar, and we come into the temple through the gates and arrive at the altar. The altar is the place where God and man meet together.

We also saw from Message 17 that the squares at the four corners are the boiling places, where the common people boiled their offerings, and that the two chambers next to the temple are the holy chambers. In these holy chambers the priests boiled the trespass offering and the sin offering and baked the meal offering ([Ezek. 46:20](#)). Because all the offerings are related to the altar, even though the altar is in the center of the compound, it is implied throughout the entire compound: in all the eating places, where the sacrifices were eaten; in all the boiling places, where the sacrifices were cooked; and in all the chambers and pavements. Thus, the entire area, the whole of the temple compound, is filled with the death of Christ. No matter from what direction we enter into the temple, we encounter the altar of burnt offering, a type of the cross, and everywhere else in this compound, we encounter the cross either directly or indirectly. [179]

The Altar Being the Center Not Only of the Inner Court but Also of the Whole Premises of the Temple

The altar is the center not only of the inner court but also of the whole premises of the temple.

The Altar, Which Signifies the Cross, Actually Being the Center of the Universe

*The Altar Being the Center of the Temple Compound;
the Temple Compound Being the Center of Jerusalem;
the City of Jerusalem Being the Center of the Good Land;
the Good Land Being the Center of the Inhabited Earth;
and, as Far as the Relationship of God and Man Is Concerned,*

***the Earth Being the Center of the Universe;
Thus, Ultimately the Altar Being the Center of the Universe***

The altar, which signifies the cross, is actually the center of the universe. The altar is the center of the temple compound; the temple compound is the center of Jerusalem; the city of Jerusalem is the center of the good land; the good land is the center of the inhabited earth; and, as far as the relationship of God and man is concerned, the earth is the center of the universe; thus, ultimately the altar is the center of the universe.

Hallelujah! God has a center to His building, and this center is the cross as typified by the altar. The cross is the center of the universe. However, we must ask ourselves, "What is our center?" We may know that the cross is important in our Christian life, but can we say in truth that the cross is the center of our Christian life, the center of our daily living? Actually, if we carefully consider the temple compound, we will realize that the cross pervades the entire compound. Similarly, the cross should pervade every aspect of our living. We need the Lord's light to consider this matter. We may know that the cross is important, and we may have some experiences and may have learned some of the lessons of the cross; however, it is one thing to learn some lessons of the cross, but it is another thing to take the cross as the center of our living. In God's universe the cross is the center, but is the cross the center of our personal universe? From the moment when we rise in the morning, are we at the cross? When we lay down to go to bed, is the cross our center?

We may consider that it is only when we encounter some hardship or dealings from the Lord that we need to learn some lessons of the cross. In this sense, we may consider the cross to be a series of isolated [180] incidents, whereby we need to learn some lessons and be dealt with by the Lord, but do we consider the cross to be the center of our universe? The cross should pervade every aspect, every area, of our Christian living.

***Since the Altar Signifies the Cross,
the Cross Being the Center of the Universe***

Since the altar signifies the cross, the cross is the center of the universe. Some may respond to this statement, saying, "What about Christ? Isn't He the center of the universe?" Yes, Christ is the center of the universe, yet anyone who knows Christ in a subjective way will also know that without the cross we cannot have Christ. To say that Christ is the center of our universe may be a mere doctrine. If, however, we can declare experientially that Christ is the

center of the universe, we will also be able to acknowledge that the cross is the center of the universe.

In *Christ and the Cross* Brother Lee says,

Other than Christ Himself, nothing in God's plan has a higher place than the cross. Christ and the cross are at the center of God's plan. Christ is the center of God's purpose, and the cross is the center of God's procedure. Christ is the purpose of God's plan, and the cross is the procedure of God's plan. Everything in God's plan takes Christ as its purpose and is carried out for Christ, and everything in God's plan takes the cross as its procedure and is carried out through the cross. Hence, Christ is the center of God's purpose in His plan, and the cross is the center of the procedure in God's plan. God has determined to do everything in His plan in Christ, and God has determined to do everything in His plan through the cross. Without Christ, God's plan has no purpose, and without the cross, God's plan has no procedure. (pp. 89-90)

Christ and the cross cannot be separated. Christ is the center of God's purpose, and the cross is the procedure for God to carry out that purpose.

***The Death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross
Not Being the Death Merely of One Person;
Its Being an All-inclusive Death Involving God, Man,
and All the Creatures***

The death of the Lord Jesus on the cross was not the death merely of one person; it was an all-inclusive death involving God, man, and all [181] the creatures (Rom. 6:6; Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:14). The One who died on the cross for us was not merely a good man, a hero, or a religious leader; He was an all-inclusive man. He was the Son of God hanging on the cross, and upon Him was laid the entire universe—God, man, the creation, and everything. Charles Wesley in one of his hymns marvels at the fact that God was there on the cross; the second stanza of *Hymns*, #296 says, “‘Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies! / Who can explore His strange design?” God is the immortal One, and the immortal One cannot die, for death cannot overcome life. Nevertheless, while this immortal One was hanging on the cross, death helped to break down the shell that concealed the divine life within Him. Death to this immortal One was not a termination but the breaking down of a shell, allowing the divine life within Him to be released. Praise the Lord that God was on the

cross and man was on the cross! Every human being, including you and me, all the creatures, Satan, sin, our sins, the flesh, the self, and the old man were included on the cross by this wonderful God-man. All things were included in this all-inclusive man hanging on the cross. The death of our wonderful Lord Jesus on the cross was an all-inclusive death, involving many elements.

The cross is not only central and pervasive but also eternal. The cross was not an afterthought or something that needed to be added because man had become fallen and had problems that needed to be dealt with, thus causing God to have to arrange the cross in order to address these matters. No, according to [1 Peter 1:18-20](#), we were redeemed “with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ; who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake.” Before the foundation of the world, God had determined and planned the cross, and He had prepared the Lamb to be sacrificed for us. Thus, the cross was not an afterthought. Rather, the cross was part of God’s eternal plan, which was determined in eternity past.

In eternity future there will still be the cross. We may consider that when we become the New Jerusalem, drinking the water of life and eating the tree of life, there will be no more cross. However, we must not forget that at the center of the holy city is the throne of God and of the Lamb ([Rev. 22:1, 3](#)). This indicates that even in eternity the Lamb is present as a symbol of the cross. Our enjoyment of God in eternity as the shining forth of the light with all its blessings will be enjoyed in the Lamb. Through the Lamb as the lamp, God shines forth as the light [\[182\] \(Rev. 21:23\)](#). Thus, for eternity we will still have the cross. The cross is eternal.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS BEING THAT BY THE CROSS
EVERYTHING OF THE OLD CREATION
AND ALL THINGS RELATED TO US
HAVE BEEN TERMINATED, PUT TO DEATH**

The principle of the cross is that by the cross everything of the old creation and all things related to us have been terminated, put to death ([Col. 1:20](#); [2:14-15](#); [Rom. 6:6](#); [2 Cor. 5:21](#); [1 Pet. 2:24](#); [Gal. 2:20](#); [Heb. 2:14](#); [John 12:31](#); [Gal. 6:14](#); [Eph. 2:14-16](#)). Christians who have some knowledge about the cross may consider that the cross is a kind of suffering or dealing. However, suffering is not the principle of the cross. In fact, the purpose of the cross is not to inflict sufferings; the principle of the cross is that by the cross everything of the old creation and all things related to us have been terminated,

put to death. The cross is not for us to have sufferings inflicted upon us or for us merely to be dealt with by God; the cross is for us to be terminated. Actually, the cross terminates everything of the old creation.

In order to understand the principle of the cross, we must realize that in this universe God has two creations—the old creation and the new creation. Moreover, the new creation comes about by the termination of the old creation. When the old creation is terminated and put to an end, the new creation can arise. God desires to have the new creation, but in order to have the new creation, the old creation must be terminated.

The old creation consists of at least twelve items: the angelic life ([Col. 1:20](#)), the human life ([Gal. 2:20](#)), Satan ([Heb. 2:14](#); [John 12:31](#)), the kingdom of Satan ([Col. 2:15](#); [John 12:31](#)), sin ([2 Cor. 5:21](#); [Rom. 8:3](#)), sins ([1 Pet. 2:24](#); [Isa. 53:6](#)), the world ([Gal. 6:14](#); [John 12:31](#)), death ([Heb. 2:14](#)), the flesh ([Gal. 5:24](#)), the old man ([Rom. 6:6](#)), the self ([Gal. 2:20](#)), and all things, including the entire old creation ([Col. 1:20](#)). The old creation includes the angelic life, as indicated in [Colossians 1:20](#), which says, “Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.” It includes the human life, as referred to in [Galatians 2:20](#), which says, “I am crucified with Christ.” It includes Satan as the one who has the might of death, the devil, mentioned in [Hebrews 2:14](#); thus, Satan also is crucified as part ^[183] of the old creation. It includes the kingdom of Satan ([Col. 2:15](#)). It includes sin, as mentioned in [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), which says, “Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Sins also are included, as mentioned in [1 Peter 2:24](#), which says, “Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree.” The old creation includes the world, for according to [Galatians 6:14](#), the world was crucified on the cross. According to [Hebrews 2:14](#), death also is included in the old creation. Also included are the flesh ([Gal. 5:24](#)), the old man ([Rom. 6:6](#)), the self—the “I” ([Gal. 2:20](#)), and, last, all things, or the entire old creation ([Col. 1:20](#)). All these items included in the old creation have been terminated on the cross. Hallelujah!

The main one of the twelve items included in the old creation is man, fallen man. Actually, we may say that fallen man is all-inclusive in a negative sense, for he is related to all the items in the old creation. If we wish to find death, we do not need to search for it; we need only find the fallen man. The same is true regarding Satan, sin, and the flesh. Christ is all-inclusive in a positive sense, but fallen man is all-inclusive in a negative sense.

[John 1:14](#) says that “the Word became flesh.” It is wonderful that God Himself became one of these men. He became such a man, took all of these items of the old creation upon Himself, and went to the cross with all these items so that they all were crucified together with Him as He was crucified. This is the principle of the cross—to terminate all things of the old creation. I hope that the Lord will enlighten our eyes so that when we consider the cross, we have the realization that it is not about suffering or merely about passing through dealings. Rather, we need to see that the cross is where the God-man terminated everything of the old creation. Then through the termination of the old creation, the new creation could come forth. Hallelujah for the cross and the principle of the cross! Hallelujah for the termination of the entire old creation and for the germination of the new creation!

**THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST
BEING THE UNIQUE SUBJECT,
THE CENTER, THE CONTENT, AND THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE APOSTLE’S MINISTRY**

The crucified Christ was the unique subject, the center, the content, and the substance of the apostle’s ministry ([1 Cor. 2:2](#)). The cross is the [184] center in God’s universe. Just as God has the cross as the center, so the apostle Paul also had the cross as his center—both in his personal life and in his ministry. When Paul visited the church in Corinth, he knew that the church was full of problems. The church there was full of those who exalted excellent speech and pursued wisdom. When he came among such a group of believers, how was he to behave and carry out his ministry? In [1 Corinthians 2:1-2](#) he says, “I, when I came to you, brothers, came not according to excellence of speech or of wisdom, announcing to you the mystery of God. For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.” The apostle was not at all bothered or distracted by the exaltation of excellent speech and the wisdom-seeking kind of mind. When he came among them, he did not try to appeal to their intellect, to please them, or to impress them. Rather, he determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

**The Death of Christ Having Become God’s Power
to Eliminate All the Problems in the Universe;
Thus, Christ Crucified Being God’s Power
to Abolish All Negative Things**

and Carry Out His Plan

The death of Christ has become God's power to eliminate all the problems in the universe; thus, Christ crucified is God's power to abolish all negative things and carry out His plan (1:23-24). The apostle Paul was not concerned about the intellectuals or whether or not his speaking was sufficiently attractive or eloquent. He desired only to minister the crucified Christ. According to [1 Corinthians 1:23](#), "Christ crucified [was] to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness." The Jews sought for miracles, yet Paul presented Christ, who went to the cross to be terminated. They may have thought, "What kind of miracle is this?" This is seen in the Jews' attitude toward Christ in [Matthew 27:39 through 42](#):

Those who were passing by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, You who destroy the temple and build it up in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross! Likewise also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked Him and said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. He is King of Israel; let ^[185] Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe on Him.

We thank the Lord Jesus that He did not come down from the cross but remained on it. As He remained there hanging on the cross, God's power was manifested through Him, the crucified Christ. Upon this One were laid all the sins of mankind, and through Him the flesh, the old man, Satan, and everything of the old creation was terminated. Thus, the crucified Christ was God's power and God's wisdom.

To the Greeks, the unbelieving Gentiles, such a Christ was foolishness. The Greeks were looking for something of human wisdom. They may have thought that Christ needed to find a way out, that He did not need to be crucified, and that if He were the Son of God, He would have had many ways to get around the death of the cross. Thus, they considered it foolishness for Christ to allow men to crucify Him. Such a crucified Christ is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but "to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24). If these Jews and Greeks knew the principle of the cross, they would be amazed, for they would realize that it does not concern human wisdom or cleverness, nor is it about miracles. Instead, they would see that the cross concerns God's wisdom and God's power. Through Christ's crucifixion God terminated everything of the old creation.

***The Human Way of Solving Problems Being to Negotiate,
but God's Way Being to Terminate;
the Best Way to Solve Problems among People
Being to Terminate Everyone Involved***

The human way of solving problems is to negotiate, but God's way is to terminate; the best way to solve problems among people is to terminate everyone involved (Gal. 2:20; cf. 1 Cor. 6:7-8). God does not negotiate. The human way is to negotiate. Actually, the entire world situation with its political arena today is a matter of negotiation. The politicians may negotiate, but none of their negotiations lead to anything. For this reason the whole world remains in turmoil. God's way is not negotiation but termination. To have genuine peace, everyone must be terminated. When everything is terminated, the world will see the real peace. In this sense, the best way to solve problems among people is to terminate everyone involved; it is the quickest and surest way. [186]

***The Crucifixion of Christ
Having Silenced the Entire Universe and Simplified
the Extremely Complicated Situation in the Universe***

The crucifixion of Christ has silenced the entire universe and simplified the extremely complicated situation in the universe (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2-3). Christ's death silenced everything. When we go to a cemetery, everything is quiet. Whether or not we kick or shout at the tombstones, the dead people will not respond, and the atmosphere still remains quiet; this is because everyone in a cemetery has been terminated. However, in the courthouses, in Congress, and in the United Nations there is much shouting, noise, and debate.

Our problems are not simple. Through my years of serving in the churches, I have learned two things. The first is that no problem in the church is simple. All the problems in the church are complicated, because many things are not easily discerned as being black and white. For instance, a saint may say, based on some messages concerning prophesying, that we all should prophesy by practicing to have an opening word and a closing word. However, that saint may insist that the practice must immediately be carried out in a certain way, and he may question the leading brothers as to why they are not doing so. Whereas that saint's proposal of the practice of prophesying may be right, the way it is presented and insisted upon may not be right. Thus, such a matter,

even when originating from a good heart with a good intention, may lead to competition, rivalry, struggles, and sometimes big problems.

The second item that I have learned is that I cannot solve problems. Brother Lee once taught us to learn to say, “I do not know.” When we all are terminated, that will be wonderful, because all the problems will be solved. However, if we are not terminated, we will continue to have all our arguments. There may be conflicts, rivalries, and disagreements in the family, between husbands and wives, between parents and children, or in the church among the saints. How can all of these problems be solved? These problems are not simple, because everyone has their own case and point. If we attempt to negotiate, we may be able to delay the issue temporarily. In this sense, negotiation is a Band-Aid that will never solve the real issue. The real issue is not the actions carried out or the words spoken; the real problem is that the persons must be terminated. We praise the Lord that the crucifixion of Christ has silenced the entire universe. It shuts everyone up, causing all to be quiet.

[187]

**When We Experience the Crucified Christ,
All That We Are, All That We Have, and All That We Can Do
Being Completely Terminated, and His Resurrection Life
Being Imparted through Us into Others**

When we experience the crucified Christ, all that we are, all that we have, and all that we can do are completely terminated, and His resurrection life is imparted through us into others ([John 12:24-26](#); [2 Cor. 4:10-12](#)). Footnote 6, on *the tree of life*, in [Revelation 2:7](#) says,

In Greek the word for *tree* here, as in [1 Peter 2:24](#), means *wood*; it is not the word usually used for *tree*. In the Bible the tree of life always signifies Christ as the embodiment of all the riches of God ([Col. 2:9](#)) for our food ([Gen. 2:9](#); [3:22, 24](#); [Rev. 22:2, 14, 19](#)). Here it signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—[1 Pet. 2:24](#)) and resurrected (implied in the life of God—[John 11:25](#)) Christ, who today is in the church, the consummation of which will be the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the nourishment of all God’s redeemed people for eternity ([Rev. 22:2, 14](#)).

This word for *tree* indicates that as we are enjoying life, we are also being crossed out. The tree of life includes the cross. Thus, we should not consider

that as we eat the tree of life, we will always be happy with everything working out in a wonderfully sweet and enjoyable manner. The fact that the tree of life in [Revelation 2:7](#) signifies both the crucified and resurrected Christ indicates that the tree of life is also the “cross of life.” In Genesis the tree of life is presented in contrast to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ([2:9](#)). Whereas we may reject the knowledge of evil, we may promote and even emphasize the knowledge of good. We must realize that all the good things that we promote or stress still belong to the tree of knowledge. God desires that we enjoy the tree of life, which tree is also the wood of the cross. When we come to enjoy the tree of life, God will say, “Go to the cross.” It is through the cross that life will be ministered to us. This is how the apostle Paul carried out his ministry to minister the crucified Christ so that His resurrection life may be released and imparted into others.

IN HIS ECONOMY GOD GIVING US ONE PERSON— CHRIST—AND ONE WAY—THE CROSS

In His economy God gives us one person—Christ—and one way—^[188] the cross ([1 Cor. 2:2](#); [Phil. 2:5-11](#); [Gal. 6:14](#)). The book of Colossians reveals that in His economy, God has only one person, the all-inclusive Christ. God intends that this person would become everything to us. Christ is the reality of every positive thing, including every person, every matter, and everything in the universe. It is as if there is only one word in God’s dictionary—*Christ*. Christ is the Savior and our salvation. Patience is Christ. Love is Christ. Christ is endurance. In God’s eternal purpose He has only one person in mind, Christ, and it is this One who fills all and in all. God desires that Christ would be everyone and everything in the universe. He wants this Christ to fill the entire universe. Everything other than Christ is a substitute that needs to be terminated, to be crossed out. Everything else is a shadow; the reality is Christ Himself ([2:17](#)).

In [Colossians 1](#) we see that Christ has the first place, the preeminence, in all things ([v. 18](#)). In our daily Christian life and church life, Christ must be the preeminent One. We must give Him the preeminence in everything, including our prayer, our prophesying, and our singing. Then in [chapter 2](#) Paul reveals that in order for Christ to be all in all, to be everything, we need to be circumcised, crucified, and buried. [Colossians 2:11-12](#) says, “In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with Him through the

faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Hence, in Colossians we clearly see that God’s eternal purpose involves one person and one way. The one person is Christ, and the one way is the cross.

**The One Person—Christ—
Being the Center of God’s Economy, and the One Way—
the Cross—Being the Center of God’s Government**

***God Governing Everything by the Cross
and Dealing with Everything by the Cross***

The one person—Christ—is the center of God’s economy, and the one way—the cross—is the center of God’s government (1 Cor. 2:2; 1:17-18, 23; Gal. 6:14). God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross (Col. 1:20; 2:14-15). We need to be impressed with God’s way of governing and of dealing with everything. God does not negotiate or compromise in order to make things work. [189] His way is very simple—anything other than Christ has been terminated. He governs and deals with everything by the cross.

***By the Cross God Having Dealt With
All the Negative Things in the Universe,
and His Still Governing Everything through the Cross***

By the cross God has dealt with all the negative things in the universe, and He is still governing everything through the cross (Eph. 2:14-16). When the Lord was crucified at Golgotha two thousand years ago, the entire old creation was brought to an end. All the problems of mankind were solved on the cross. Today God is still governing everything in our daily church life, Christian life, and family life through the cross. All our sins and all our problems with God were dealt with on the cross two thousand years ago, but today God continues to govern everything, including all our relationships with one another, by the cross. Ephesians 2:14-16 says,

He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace, and might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the

enmity by it.

Today, in the church life and in our Christian life, we still face difficulties in our human relationships because of various ordinances, practices, and preferences. Such things may not be sinful; they may actually be good, positive, and even for God. However, anything that is not Christ will be terminated. God is not for anything good but only for Christ. On the cross Christ not only terminated all the problems of sin, sins, and the flesh but also nullified all the ordinances and the laws of commandments so that we may live a church life in oneness for the building up of the Body of Christ.

***In the Church Life Christ Having to Be All and in All;
Everything That Is Not Christ Having to Go to the Cross***

In the church life Christ must be all and in all; everything that is not Christ must go to the cross (Col. 1:18; 3:10-11). To God it is not a matter of good versus bad or positive versus negative; God has regard only for Christ. In God's view anything that is not Christ needs to be [190] terminated. Colossians 3:10-11 says that we "have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." In the Lord's recovery we should never boast of our diversity, of having Chinese, Koreans, Americans, and other nationalities. In the one new man there cannot be Jew, Greek, Chinese, American, or African, but Christ is all and in all.

***Through the Cross Our Needing to Become Nothing,
to Have Nothing, and to Be Able to Do Nothing;
Otherwise, What We Are, What We Have,
and What We Can Do Becoming a Substitute for Christ***

Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ (1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23).

***In the Book of Colossians Our Seeing a Clear Vision
of the Cross as God's Way in His Administration***

In the book of Colossians we see a clear vision of the cross as God's way in His administration (1:20-22; 2:11-15). In Colossians we are shown a

wonderful picture of how God administrates when He encounters problems. After God created the heavens and the earth, an archangel rebelled against Him and led one-third of the angels to follow in his rebellion. Then God created man in His image. However, shortly after being created, man was seduced by Satan and became fallen. Now God has to deal with a rebellious angel, Satan, and fallen man. God has an eternal purpose and plan, but now He is faced with the rebellion of His enemy and fallen man.

In order to solve this problem, God did not negotiate with Satan or compromise with fallen man. Instead, God took the wonderful way of becoming man Himself. Of course, He did not become a fallen man but came in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3). He became a man but without the nature of sin. He was like a bronze serpent without the poison of the serpent. This is God's marvelous way of solving this problem and of administrating through this difficult situation. As a man, Christ lived a human life for thirty-three and a half years, and then He went to the cross. All negative things were nailed with Him to the cross, and through His crucifixion all of God's problems were solved. [191] God did not negotiate with anyone in order to solve the problem; He simply terminated everything in Christ. Then, through the cross the divine life was released to produce the Body of Christ, the one new man.

***“Through Him to Reconcile All Things to Himself,
Having Made Peace through the Blood of His Cross—
through Him, Whether the Things on the Earth
or the Things in the Heavens”***

“Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens” (Col. 1:20). To reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things; this was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ. Because we were sinners, we needed redemption, and because we were also enemies of God, we needed reconciliation (vv. 14, 21-22).

We were created in God's image to express and represent Him, but we became fallen, transgressed against His law, became defiled with sins, and became God's enemies. Praise the Lord that through His death on the cross, Christ met all of God's requirements. All the offenses have been dealt with, peace has been made, and we have been reconciled to God through the death

of Christ.

***“Wiping Out the Handwriting in Ordinances,
Which Was against Us, Which Was Contrary to Us;
and He Has Taken It out of the Way, Nailing It to the Cross”***

[Colossians 2:14](#) says, “Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” *Ordinances* refers to the ordinances of the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship ([Eph. 2:15](#)). *Nailing it to the cross* means to abolish the law of the commandments in ordinances.

The ordinances were commandments given by God to preserve His people. When the Son of God came, there was no longer the need for the law with its ordinances, because He is the reality. These ordinances are actually against, contrary, to us. We could never meet the law’s demands, because God’s law is high and holy and we are not holy. We could never meet the requirements of God’s law. This is why the law in ordinances is contrary to us.

We praise the Lord that God nailed all the ordinances to the cross. [192] The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God, but by nailing all the ordinances to the cross, God wiped out the handwriting in ordinances. This means that the law, the commandments in ordinances, is no longer in effect. It makes no difference whether one has been circumcised or not circumcised. No one can claim that he is higher because he has been circumcised. God has nailed the ordinances on the cross and made the law of no effect.

***“Stripping Off the Rulers and the Authorities,
He Made a Display of Them Openly,
Triumphing over Them in It”***

[Colossians 2:15](#) says, “Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” This was another of God’s problems—the cohorts of Satan, which are the fallen angels who became the rulers and authorities.

***This Verse Portraying the Fighting
That Took Place at the Time of Christ’s Crucifixion***

This verse portrays the fighting that took place at the time of Christ’s

crucifixion. Activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic rulers and authorities were brought to a focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God's eternal, central, and unique way (vv. 14-15). At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in close to God and Christ; thus, a warfare was raging at the cross.

Verse 15 describes the spiritual scene of a struggle that took place while Christ was on the cross. Christ was there bearing our sins, the flesh, the old creation, and all negative things. Christ was accomplishing redemption by being the sacrifice. God was working there to judge sin and to wipe out the handwriting in ordinances by nailing to the cross all the law, including the Sabbath, circumcision, and the holy diet. Simultaneously, the evil angels were trying to frustrate what God was doing, so God stripped off the rulers and authorities and made an open display of them, thereby declaring Christ's victory over them. Based on Christ's victory, we can say to His enemy, "Satan, shame on you! Christ has accomplished an all-inclusive death on the cross to terminate the old creation, sin, sins, the flesh, and all negative things. You have been defeated. God made an open display of your evil angels, stripping them off in your defeat." Related to the stripping off, footnote 1 on [verse 15 \[193\]](#) points out that God put off the evil angelic powers, stripping them off like a garment. God defeated and triumphed over the angelic rulers and authorities in the cross.

***God Openly Making a Display
of the Evil Angelic Rulers and Authorities
on the Cross and Triumphant over Them in It,
Putting Them to Shame***

God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame (v. 15). We need to remember this scene when Satan comes to trouble us with his evil thoughts. We can declare to him, "Satan, you and your helpers have been stripped off and put to shame. You have been openly made a display of. You have been stripped off from Christ. Do not bother me anymore!"

**IN MATTHEW 27:51-53
OUR SEEING THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION**

**“The Veil of the Temple
Was Split in Two from Top to Bottom,”
Signifying That the Separation
between God and Man Has Been Abolished
Because the Flesh of Sin Taken by Christ
Had Been Crucified**

In [Matthew 27:51-53](#) we see the effect of Christ’s crucifixion. “The veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom” ([v. 51a](#)), which signifies that the separation between God and man has been abolished because the flesh of sin taken by Christ had been crucified.

**“The Earth Was Shaken,”
Signifying That the Base of Satan’s Rebellion Was Shaken**

“The earth was shaken” ([v. 51b](#)), which signifies that the base of Satan’s rebellion was shaken.

**“The Rocks Were Split,”
Signifying That the Strongholds
of Satan’s Earthly Kingdom Were Broken**

“The rocks were split” ([v. 51c](#)), which signifies that the strongholds of Satan’s earthly kingdom were broken. [194]

**“The Tombs Were Opened,”
Signifying That the Power of Death and Hades
Was Conquered and Subdued**

“The tombs were opened” ([v. 52a](#)), which signifies that the power of death and Hades was conquered and subdued.

**“Many Bodies of the Saints
Who Had Fallen Asleep Were Raised,”
Signifying the Releasing Power of the Death of Christ**

“Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” ([v. 52b](#)), which signifies the releasing power of the death of Christ. Praise the Lord for

the death of Christ!

**IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
OUR SEEING THE LIFE-RELEASING ASPECT
OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION**

**The Water That Flowed out of the Lord's Pierced Side
Being for Imparting Life, Dealing with Death,
and Producing the Church**

In the Gospel of John we see the life-releasing aspect of Christ's crucifixion (19:34, 36; 12:24). The water that flowed out of the Lord's pierced side is for imparting life, dealing with death, and producing the church (19:34; 3:14-15; Eph. 5:29-30).

**As a Grain of Wheat, the Lord Jesus Falling into the Ground
and Dying in Order to Produce Many Grains for the Church**

As a grain of wheat, the Lord Jesus fell into the ground and died in order to produce many grains for the church (John 12:24).

**The Bone Being a Symbol of the Lord's Resurrection Life,
Which Nothing Can Break; This Being the Life
with Which the Church Is Produced and Built**

The bone is a symbol of the Lord's resurrection life, which nothing can break; this is the life with which the church is produced and built (19:36). This is the positive effect of the death of Christ. Christ's death not only nullified all the negative things but also released the resurrection life of Christ. Out from the Lord's pierced side flowed not only blood but also water, signifying the divine life to regenerate us. John 12:24 indicates that He fell into the ground as a grain of wheat to produce [195] many grains. Luke 12:49-50 says, "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!" The Lord was pressed not out of fear but because the life of God was concealed within Him. He longed for His death on the cross to break down the shell of His humanity for the release of the divine life within Him. The release of His divine life produced the church.

THE CROSS LEADING US TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

The cross leads us to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18; 12:12-13, 27). Although we have seen the centrality of the cross, it is not an end in itself. The cross is the divine means to arrive at the divine goal. When the cross has carried out its specific work in us, we will spontaneously be in the Body. The cross leads us to the Body. We must remember that our salvation and our living a holy and sanctified life is not for us to become individual holy Christians. God's goal is the building. His goal is to gain the Body of Christ as a corporate vessel for His expression. All our spiritual experiences, even those of the cross, are not for ourselves but for the producing of the Body of Christ.

The Cross Operating in the Sphere of the Body

The Work of the Cross Going as Far as the Body of Christ and Consummating with the Body of Christ

The cross operates in the sphere of the Body (Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5). The work of the cross goes as far as the Body of Christ and consummates with the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2; 12:12-27).

The Work of the Cross Not Only Bringing Us into the Body, but Also the Body Becoming the Realm within Which the Cross Works

Not only does the work of the cross bring us into the Body, but also the Body becomes the realm within which the cross works (Col. 1:20; 3:15). Most of the Christian mystics experienced the cross in an individual way. They had little concept of the Body becoming the realm within which the cross works. The goal of the cross is not to produce us as spiritual individuals but to produce the Body. The Body becomes a realm in which the cross works. A good illustration of this is the metabolism in our physical body, which is a process of destruction and building, of dying and resurrecting. In 2 Corinthians 4:12 Paul says, "Death [196] operates in us, but life in you." For a long time I did not understand what this verse meant. I did not know how death could work in me while life worked in others. We are not individual Christians but members of the organic Body of Christ. In the organic Body of Christ, death and life are at work. As death is operating, life is also operating.

In the Body of Christ, as one member experiences the death of Christ, life is simultaneously and spontaneously released to the other parts of the Body. The cross works in the realm of the Body. Thus, experiencing the cross in the Body is not an isolated event. By this metabolic process, as one member experiences death, life is generated in other members, causing this organism of the Triune God to thrive.

**In the Body of Christ
Our Not Being Able to Go On without the Cross**

***The Cross Digging Away Our Natural Life,
Our Own Activities, and Any Disproportionate Growth***

In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross (Eph. 2:16). The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth (Matt. 16:24-26). If our so-called experience of the cross is for our self, our growth will be disproportionate, and we will become strange and unable to blend, because no one would be able to match our individual spirituality. We may know certain experiences of the cross and know how to suffer with Christ, yet we may not be able to blend with the other members of the Body. Our experience of the cross must be governed, controlled, and measured by the Body; otherwise, any disproportionate growth will result in a monstrous Body.

***Life and Work in the Body
Necessitating Drastic Dealings with the Flesh,
and Such Dealings Necessitating a Deep Knowledge
of the Cross of Christ***

Life and work in the Body necessitate drastic dealings with the flesh, and such dealings necessitate a deep knowledge of the cross of Christ (Gal. 5:24).

***The Restriction of the Body Taking Away Our Freedom
and Driving Us to the Cross***

The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us [197] to the cross (Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 10:13-15; Eph. 4:7, 16). Every member of the Body is always restricted. When our arm moves, our shoulder and our hand move along with it. In *The Assembly Life* Brother Nee says,

Many times, we think that if we could have our choice, we would change our place of meeting all the time. But there is no such thing as this. In the meetings, we have the greatest blessings, but we also bear the greatest responsibilities and have the greatest restrictions...Do not think that the denominations bind people. Our fellowship binds people even more than the denominations bind people. What others have is an organization according to law. What we have is an organism in the Body. I am afraid that no denominations bind men as much as the principle of the organism of the Body, which we recognize. None of the members in our body can move freely for a day. Even a finger cannot have a day of freedom. The bondage we have is the bondage of the Body. As such, we have no personal freedom. Therefore, brothers, may we truly see the Body of Christ. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 22, pp. 61-62)

The restrictions in the Body of Christ and in our practices in the local churches are much higher than those in the denominations. In the Body everything is measured. God is a God of measure, and we need to live within our measure. We are not unlimited or all-inclusive. God has measured to each member a certain portion, and when we live within our measure, we can be fitted for the Body.

***All of God's Dealings with Us
Having Been with a View to Prepare Us for the Body;
All His Work in Us Being a Process of Elimination
So That We Can Become Functioning Members of the Body***

All of God's dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body ([Rom. 6:6](#); [8:13](#); [12:4-8](#)). Brother Nee says, "We do not need to get anything or do anything in order to get into the Body. We only need to be stripped of all we are and have. This is where the cross comes in" (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 46, p. 1192). After some years of seeking the Lord and trying to gain the Lord, especially as a result of being exposed, we may feel that we are becoming worse. Actually, we are not becoming [198] worse; we were already that way. God wants to strip away all that we are. We do not need to add more to ourselves; what we need is to be stripped of all the things that are not of Christ. Then

spontaneously we will find ourselves in the Body of Christ.

***If Our Natural Life Is Dealt With by the Cross
and If We Submit to the Headship of Christ
and Live the Body Life, Our Having the Spirit's Anointing
and Enjoying the Fellowship of the Body***

If our natural life is dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will have the Spirit's anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16). When we are in the Body, we are all members under the headship of Christ. Here the anointing and the fellowship are spontaneous. As the Head is anointed, the anointing flows to the entire Body.

**ALTHOUGH WE MEET THE CROSS
EVERYWHERE IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE,
OUR EXPERIENCING THE CROSS IN A PARTICULAR WAY
WHEN WE COME TO THE ALTAR
AT THE CENTER OF GOD'S BUILDING**

Although we meet the cross everywhere in our Christian life, we experience the cross in a particular way when we come to the altar at the center of God's building (Ezek. 43:13-18). The cross is neither the suffering of the cross that many Christians talk about nor is it the cross experienced by the mystics for spirituality. Rather, the cross is for us to be built into God's building.

**To Come to the Altar at the Center
Being to Realize That All That We Are and All That We Have,
Have Been Terminated at the Cross**

To come to the altar at the center is to realize that all that we are and all that we have, have been terminated at the cross (Rom. 6:6).

**In Our Fellowship with the Lord,
Our Being Brought to the Point Where We Touch the Cross
in a Definite Way and Sense That God
Will No Longer Allow Us to Live in Our Natural Man**

In our fellowship with the Lord, we are brought to the point where [199] we

touch the cross in a definite way and sense that God will no longer allow us to live in our natural man ([Gal. 2:20](#)).

**As We Pass through the Cross,
Our Flesh, Our Old Creation, Our Self,
and Our Natural Man with the Natural Life
All Being Dealt With**

As we pass through the cross, our flesh, our old creation, our self, and our natural man with the natural life will all be dealt with ([6:14](#)).

**This Being the Experience of the Cross—
the Center of the Universe**

This is the experience of the cross—the center of the universe ([Matt. 16:24](#)). May this cross as the center of the universe become our center.

EXPERIENCING THE CROSS

How do we experience the cross? We need to see three ways of experiencing the cross.

Needing to See the Fact of the Cross

First, we need to see the fact of the cross. It is a fact that Christ was crucified on the cross. Our old man was crucified with Him. This is an accomplished fact.

Needing to Accept the Fact of the Cross

Second, we need to accept the fact of the cross. [Romans 6:11](#) says, “Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus.” Reckoning is a spontaneous believing, a spontaneous consideration upon seeing.

Needing to Apply the Cross

Third, we need to apply the cross. [Galatians 5:24](#) says, “They who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.” We need to subjectively apply what God has done and what we have acknowledged. We can apply this in our daily experience in the following ways.

Applying the Cross Joyfully

First, we need to apply the cross not begrudgingly but joyfully. [200] [Hebrews 12:2](#) says, “Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.” Because of the joy set before the Lord, He endured the cross. Likewise, bearing and experiencing the cross should be not a painful matter but a joyful matter.

Applying the Cross by Exercising Our Spirit to Live in the Spirit

Second, we apply the cross by exercising our spirit. We need to exercise to live in the spirit.

Applying the Cross by Standing upon the Word of God

Third, we need to apply the cross by standing upon the word of God. [Hebrews 4:12](#) says, “The word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Applying the Cross by Staying Connected to the Body

Finally, we need to apply the cross by staying connected to the Body. We should never try to experience the cross individually. The cross leads us to the Body and operates in the realm of the Body.—J. L.