

Message Seven

The Cross—the Center of the Universe

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

- Ezek 43:13 Now these are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth). The bottom shall be a cubit in height, a cubit in depth, and its surrounding border on its edge, a span. Now this is the base of the altar.
- Ezek 43:14 And from the top of the bottom upon the ground to the top of the lower ledge shall be two cubits, and one cubit in depth; and from the lesser ledge to the greater ledge shall be four cubits, and a cubit in depth.
- Ezek 43:15 And the altar hearth shall be four cubits in height; and from the altar hearth there shall also be four horns projecting upward.
- Ezek 43:16 And the altar hearth shall be twelve cubits long by twelve cubits wide, square on its four sides.
- Ezek 43:17 And the greater ledge shall be fourteen cubits long by fourteen cubits wide on its four sides, and its surrounding border shall be half a cubit, and its bottom shall be a cubit all around, and its steps shall face east.
- Ezek 43:18 And He said to me, Son of man, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, These are the statutes of the altar to be observed on the day when they make it, for offering up burnt offerings on it and for sprinkling blood upon it.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- 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.
- Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.
- Col 1:20 And 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 2:14 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.
- Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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:

- Ezek 43:13 Now these are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth). The bottom shall be a cubit in height, a cubit in depth, and its surrounding border on its edge, a span. Now this is the base of the altar.
- Ezek 43:14 And from the top of the bottom upon the ground to the top of the lower ledge shall be two cubits, and one cubit in depth; and from the lesser ledge to the greater ledge shall be four cubits, and a cubit in depth.
- Ezek 43:15 And the altar hearth shall be four cubits in height; and from the altar hearth there shall also be four horns projecting upward.
- Ezek 43:16 And the altar hearth shall be twelve cubits long by twelve cubits wide, square on its four sides.
- Ezek 43:17 And the greater ledge shall be fourteen cubits long by fourteen cubits wide on its four sides, and its surrounding border shall be half a cubit, and its bottom shall be a cubit all around, and its steps shall face east.
- Ezek 43:18 And He said to me, Son of man, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, These are the statutes of the altar to be observed on the day when they make it, for offering up burnt offerings on it and for sprinkling blood upon it.

- 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.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Col 1:20 And 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.

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

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.

Col 1:20 And 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 2:14 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.

Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

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.

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,

Eph 2:15 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,

Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

III. The crucified Christ was the unique subject, the center, the content, and the substance of the apostle's ministry—1 Cor. 2:2:

1 Cor 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

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:

1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,

1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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.

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.

1 Cor 6:7 Already then it is altogether a defeat to you that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

1 Cor 6:8 But you wrong and defraud, and this your brothers.

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.

2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

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.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

John 12:25 He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.

John 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

2 Cor 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Cor 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Cor 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

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:

1 Cor 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Phil 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,
 Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
 Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
 Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
 Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

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 Cor 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.
 1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to announce the gospel, not in wisdom of speech that the cross of Christ may not be made void.
 1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,
 Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

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

Col 1:20 And 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 2:14 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.
 Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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.

Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,
 Eph 2:15 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,
 Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

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.

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
 Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

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.

1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to announce the gospel, not in wisdom of speech that the cross of Christ may not be made void.

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,

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:

Col 1:20 And 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 1:21 And you, though once alienated and enemies in your mind because of your evil works,
Col 1:22 He now has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and without reproach before Him;

Col 2:11 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,

Col 2:12 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.

Col 2:13 And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

Col 2:14 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.

Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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:

Col 1:20 And 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.

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.

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins;

Col 1:21 And you, though once alienated and enemies in your mind because of your evil works,

Col 1:22 He now has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and without reproach before Him;

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:

Col 2:14 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.

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.

Eph 2:15 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,

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:

Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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.

Col 2:14 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.

Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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.

Eph 2:15 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,

V. In Matthew 27:51-53 we see the effect of Christ’s crucifixion:

Matt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken and the rocks were split,

Matt 27:52 And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

Matt 27:53 And they came out of the tombs after His resurrection and entered into the holy city and appeared to many.

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.

Matt 27:51a And behold, the veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom,...

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

Matt 27:51b ...and the earth was shaken ...

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

Matt 27:51c ...the rocks were split,

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

Matt 27:52a And the tombs were opened,...

E. “Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (v. 52b), which signifies the

releasing power of the death of Christ.

Matt 27:52b ... many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

VI. In the Gospel of John we see the life-releasing aspect of Christ's crucifixion—19:34, 36; 12:24:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

John 19:36 For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "No bone of His shall be broken."

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

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.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,

Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.

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.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

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.

John 19:36 For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "No bone of His shall be broken."

VII. The cross leads us to the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:18; 12:12-13, 27:

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

A. The cross operates in the sphere of the Body—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5:

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

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.

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.

- 1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- 1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,
- 1 Cor 2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, came not according to excellence of speech or of wisdom, announcing to you the mystery of God.
- 1 Cor 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.
- 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.

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.

Col 1:20 And 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 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

B. In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross—Eph. 2:16:

Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

1. The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth—Matt. 16:24-26.

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. 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.
- Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.
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.
- 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.
- 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,
- 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.
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.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.
- 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.
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.
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- 1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

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:

- Ezek 43:13 Now these are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth). The bottom shall be a cubit in height, a cubit in depth, and its surrounding border on its edge, a span. Now this is the base of the altar.
- Ezek 43:14 And from the top of the bottom upon the ground to the top of the lower ledge shall be two cubits, and one cubit in depth; and from the lesser ledge to the greater ledge shall be four cubits, and a cubit in depth.
- Ezek 43:15 And the altar hearth shall be four cubits in height; and from the altar hearth there shall also be four horns projecting upward.
- Ezek 43:16 And the altar hearth shall be twelve cubits long by twelve cubits wide, square on its four sides.
- Ezek 43:17 And the greater ledge shall be fourteen cubits long by fourteen cubits wide on its four sides, and its surrounding border shall be half a cubit, and its bottom shall be a cubit all around, and its steps shall face east.
- Ezek 43:18 And He said to me, Son of man, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, These are the statutes of the altar to be observed on the day when they make it, for offering up burnt offerings on it and for sprinkling blood upon it.

- 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.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

- 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.

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.

- 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.

Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

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

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.