

WEEK 8 — OUTLINE

How One Ought to Conduct Himself in the Church in Order to Bring Forth the One New Man

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:13-16; 3:16-21; Col. 3:10-11; 1 Cor.
12:12-13

« DAY 1 »

- I. **First Timothy 3:15** says, “If I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God”:
 - A. *Here conduct refers to administration; Timothy received Paul’s commission to arrange for matters related to the administration of the churches.*
 - B. *When Paul speaks of knowing “how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God,” he is speaking of how to administrate and arrange matters in the church.*
 - C. *It may seem that Paul is speaking only about being delayed himself, but if we have spiritual insight, we will realize that he is actually referring to the Lord being delayed; before the Lord comes back, we must know how to administrate the church, how to conduct ourselves in the church.*
- II. **If we want to clearly know what the church is and what God desires to do in the church, so that we may know how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church, we need to understand Ephesians 2:13-16, Colossians 3:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13:**

A. Ephesians 2 is concerning the Gentiles and the Jews becoming one new man in Christ:

1. The new man does not refer to an individual; the new man is a corporate new man; hence, verse 15 clearly says that Christ created the two (the Jews and the Gentiles) into one new man.
2. Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles by abolishing the law of the commandments in ordinances; when He was crucified on the cross, all the ordinances were nailed there (v. 15; Col. 2:14):
 - a. Ordinances refer to the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship.
 - b. These forms or ways of living and worship create enmity and division; to practice the proper church life, all ordinances should be repudiated and dropped.

« **DAY 2** »

3. “And might reconcile both [the Jews and the Gentiles] in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it” (Eph. 2:16):
 - a. This one Body, the church (1:23), is the one new man mentioned in the previous verse, 2:15; it was in this one Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross.
 - b. We, the believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, were reconciled not only for the Body of Christ but also in the Body of Christ; what a revelation is here!
 - c. We were reconciled to God; we were saved in the Body of Christ.
4. Before we were saved, we were in Adam, the old man; when we were saved, we came out of Adam, put off the old man, and put on Christ, the new man (Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 2:15).

B. “And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col.

3:10):

1. Since Christ is the constituent of the new man (v. 11; 1:27-28), we, who are the new man, are one with Christ; this is the most basic and crucial point in the book of Colossians.
 2. Although we have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27) and Christ is in us (Col. 1:27), the new man has not yet been manifested through us.
 3. Because the new man was created with us, who belong to the old creation (Eph. 2:15), as his constituents, he needs to be renewed; this renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase unto full knowledge in Colossians 3:10.
 4. The new man was created in our spirit and is being renewed in our mind unto full knowledge according to the image of Christ, who is the very expression of God (1:15; Heb. 1:3a).
 5. As we know the Lord more and more (Phil. 3:8, 10), the new man will be renewed more and more, and the image of the Lord will be manifested more for the bringing forth of the one new man.
- C. *Colossians 3:11 indicates that Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free man are on the cross; there cannot be is a strong word indicating that everything has been terminated, that there is no natural person in the new man, and that there cannot be anything in the new man except Christ, who is “all and in all”; if we truly see this light, there will be such a change in our service and work.*

« **DAY 3 & DAY 4** »

- D. *Concerning the Body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, “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. 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. This corresponds to Colossians 3:11; we have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit into one Body, that is, into one new man, into Christ.
 2. By the cross and by our passing through the cross, Christ has reconciled His redeemed ones and created them in Himself into one new man.
 3. This new man, this Body, is Christ Himself; in this new man there are no differences; there is only Christ; Christ is all the members and in all the members.
- E. It is only when we are clear concerning all the points above that we will know how to administrate and serve (how to conduct ourselves) in the church.*

III. We can see ten crucial points in the administration of the church by the pattern of Paul; we should allow the Holy Spirit to inscribe these ten points in the tablets of our heart so that we may live in them (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3):

- A. *First, in Galatians 1:15-16 he says that he served God because it pleased God to reveal His Son in him that he might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles; Paul announced the living Christ whom God had revealed in him, not knowledge or doctrine (cf. Acts 26:16-19).*
- B. *Second, we must clearly see that Christ is “our life” (Col. 3:4); Christ being our life means that He is the life of the Body, of the new man; furthermore, that Christ is our life is a strong indication that we are to take Him as life and live by Him, that we are to live Him in our daily life in order to experience the universally extensive Christ revealed in Colossians, so that all He is and has attained and obtained will not remain objective*

but will become our subjective experience.

- C. Third, along with Paul, we need to realize that we need to live in Christ; he says, “I...have died to law that I might live to God...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:19-20).*
- D. Fourth, we need to see that what we are and have has been terminated on the cross; Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (v. 20).*
- E. Fifth, we must not serve according to what we are or what we have in ourselves; in Galatians 6:14 Paul says, “The world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”*
- F. Sixth, Paul’s unique goal, and ours, should be to dispense Christ into others so that Christ could increase in them; in Galatians 4:19 he says, “I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you.”*
- G. Seventh, we should not expect those with whom we serve to change in any way; instead, we should desire only that they gain Christ, be filled with Christ, and be fully gained by Christ; in 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul says, “I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.”*
- H. Eighth, we must clearly see that there should only be one result in our service, work, and administration of the church—Christ must be produced in the church so that everyone has Christ, so that Christ increases in every member, and so that all will arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13); in 2 Corinthians 4:12 Paul says, “Death operates in us, but life in you.”*

- I. Ninth, Paul prayed for all these matters (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:9; 1 Thes. 1:2); we must be men of prayer (Col. 4:2).
- J. Tenth, we must be like the apostle Paul, who had a living faith, believing that God is able “to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us” (Eph. 3:20), especially concerning the points listed above.

« DAY 5 »

IV. Ephesians 3:16-21 reveals the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith that a serving one should have in order to work out the New Jerusalem and bring forth the one new man:

- A. Paul’s spirit and attitude—what he saw, what he was filled with, what he said, and what he cared about in his heart—were related to the vision of God being manifested in the flesh and being mingled with man in order to build the church with Christ so that the church would be filled with Christ; the most precious point in Ephesians 3:16-21 is not Paul’s prayer and faith but his spirit and attitude.
- B. We should cooperate with Christ so that we can work Christ into others and build Christ as the material into others so that they may become a spiritual temple for the expression, the fullness, of the One who fills all in all—this should be our spirit and attitude.
- C. Paul was so burdened that he said, “I bow my knees unto the Father” (v. 14); Paul knelt down to pray because something within forced him to bow his knees unto the Father; because Paul was obsessed with Christ, in Ephesians 3 he could not help but kneel down.
- D. Every elder, deacon, co-worker, and everyone who serves the Lord must see a vision, a revelation, to the point that he is

absolutely obsessed with it and has the same spirit, attitude, and inner mood of Paul.

E. Paul described four aspects of our need to be strengthened into the inner man by the Father:

1. The first aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that it would be “according to the riches of His glory” (v. 16); God expressed is glory (cf. Exo. 40:34; 2 Chron. 7:3; Ezek. 1:28; 10:4):
 - a. What dwells in Christ is the expression of the riches of what God is, and the glory that is expressed is the fullness (Col. 2:9; Eph. 3:19b); this means that God wants to be expressed.
 - b. God’s glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed in the church; hence, to God is the glory in the church (vv. 20-21).
 - c. The glory of the expressed God can enter into the believers and become the strengthening power within them; in turn, they are strengthened to express God’s glory.
2. The second aspect of the strengthening of the believers is “through His Spirit” (v. 16); without the Spirit, God cannot be expressed through man; the Father strengthens us from within through the indwelling Spirit, who has been with us and in us since our regeneration.
3. The third aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that they would be strengthened “with power” (v. 16); this is the power that is referred to in 1:19-22—the power that raised Christ from the dead, seated Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenlies, subjected all things under Christ’s feet, and gave Christ to be Head over all things to the church; such power operates in us (vv. 19-20), and with such power God strengthens us for the church.
4. The fourth aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that they would be strengthened “into the inner man” (3:16); the inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God’s life as its life; this implies that we need to be

strengthened into our spirit through the Holy Spirit.

« DAY 6 »

F. The issue is Christ making His home in our hearts; hearts in Ephesians 3:17 is an important word, meaning that Christ can be sensed in us and that we respond to Christ dwelling in us; our heart is the organ of our feeling and emotion, and it is where Christ dwells in us:

1. Paul never neglected the need to work Christ into man; he was obsessed with the matter of Christ increasing in us, which was his central concern, and this became his spirit and attitude; when Paul wrote Ephesians 3:16-21, he transcended even the universe.
2. When Christ is in our feeling and is real in our heart, we will be rooted and grounded in His love; in such a condition Paul said that we would apprehend with all the saints the breadth, length, height, and depth; these four words added together equal Christ in His immeasurableness.
3. The result of all this is that we will know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ and be filled unto all the fullness of God (v. 19); we who serve in the church should have this attitude, and our thoughts and prayers should be for this.
4. The responsible brothers should be clear as to what they take as their goal: is it an increase in number or an increase in Christ? They should be like Paul, who was totally obsessed with the increase of Christ within God's people.
5. We should focus on this matter to the extent that we do not know what to pray other than this; this should be the attitude, spirit, and prayer of one who serves the Lord.

G. Because Paul was concerned that the Ephesian saints might think that the prayer in verses 16 through 19 was too difficult, he expressed his faith by immediately following with verses 20 and

21—*“but to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen”*:

1. The full meaning of the phrase to Him be the glory in the church is seen in the New Jerusalem; the New Jerusalem is the complete manifestation of God’s glory (Rev. 21:10-11), and the church today should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem.
2. This is the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith with which we should serve the Lord; in this way our service in the church will be great and glorious, and the brothers and sisters will be filled unto all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19b; cf. Gal. 4:19).

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

Eph. 2:14-15 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition,...that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace.

We must consider the administration of the church with the Scriptures as our basis. [In] 1 Timothy 3:15...conduct refers to administration. Paul wrote to Timothy, and Timothy received Paul's commission to arrange for matters related to the management and administration of the churches. When Paul spoke of knowing "how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God," he was speaking of how to administrate and arrange matters in the church. Paul said this because he knew that he might be absent for a long period of time, that he might be delayed. Therefore, he wanted Timothy to know how to administrate the church and how to conduct himself in the church. It may seem that Paul was speaking only about being delayed himself, but if we have spiritual insight, we will realize that he was actually referring to the Lord being delayed. Before the Lord comes back, we must know how to administrate the church and how to conduct ourselves in the church. This is the only verse in the entire Bible which clearly speaks of administrating the church and conducting ourselves in the church. (How to Administrate the Church, p. 9)

Today's Reading

If we want to clearly know what the church is and what God desires to do in the church, we need to understand Ephesians 2:13-16, Colossians 3:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13....Ephesians 2...concerns the Gentiles and the Jews becoming one new man in Christ.

In Ephesians 2 the apostle shows that these two, who could not come near

and who were far off from one another, have become one new man in Christ. Thus, verse 13 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ.” You who were once far off refers to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were once far off from the Jews, but now through the redemption of Christ with the shedding of His blood, they have come near to the Jews. Verse 14 says, “For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity.”...Christ accomplished redemption on the cross so that both—the Gentiles and the Jews—could become one. He also broke down the middle wall of partition. What is “the middle wall of partition”? Verse 15 says, “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.” The middle wall of partition is the law of the commandments in ordinances. The law does not allow the Jews to have any dealings with the Gentiles, and because of this, there was a middle wall, there was enmity. But Christ crucified the law and abolished the enmity on the cross so that He might create the two in Himself into one new man. Christ has created the two in Himself into one new man.

In the New Testament the new man does not refer to an individual; there is no individual new man. The new man is a corporate new man. In other words, in the New Testament there is only one new man, not many new men, just as there is only one old man, not many old men (cf. Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 15:47)....Hence, Ephesians 2:15 clearly says that Christ created “the two in Himself into one new man.” The two refers to the Gentiles and the Jews. Formerly, they were separated by the law, but now the middle wall of partition has been broken down through the crucifixion of Christ. Thus, the two were created in Christ into one new man. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 103-104)

Further Reading: How to Administrate the Church, ch. 1; CWWN, vol. 44, “The Mystery of Christ,” ch. 1

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

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

Col. 3:10-11 And 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.

Ephesians 2:16...clearly shows that through the cross Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles in the old creation and created the two in Himself into one new man; as a result, the two are one Body. Formerly there were Jews and Gentiles, but now the two have been created in Christ into one new man. (How to Administrate the Church, p. 104)

This one Body, the church (Eph. 1:23), is the one new man mentioned in 2:15. It was in this one Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross. We, the believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, were reconciled not only for the Body of Christ but also in the Body of Christ. What a revelation here! We were reconciled to God; we were saved in the Body of Christ. (Eph. 2:16, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

[Verses 9 and 10 of Colossians 3] are not a charge that we put off the old man and put on the new man; rather, they refer to an accomplished fact. In Christ, we have put off the old man and put on the new man. We must read Colossians 3:10 with Ephesians 2:15, which says that Christ has created the Gentiles and the Jews in Himself into one new man; Colossians says that in Christ the old man has been put off, and the new man has been put on.

To put on the new man does not mean that you put on a new man, I put on a new man, and millions of believers put on millions of new men....There is only one new man. The old man is Adam; the new man is Christ. Before we were saved, we

were in Adam, the old man; when we were saved, we came out of Adam, put off the old man, and put on Christ, the new man. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 104-105)

Since Christ is the constituent of the new man, we, who are the new man, are one with Christ. This is the most basic and crucial point in Colossians. (Col. 3:10, footnote 2)

Because the new man was created with us, who belong to the old creation (Eph. 2:15), as his constituents, he needs to be renewed. This renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase unto full knowledge. The new man was created in our spirit and is being renewed in our mind unto full knowledge according to the image of Christ. (Col. 3:10, footnote 3)

Although we have put on Christ and Christ is in us, the new man has not yet been manifested through us. According to Colossians 3:10, the new man “is being renewed unto full knowledge.” When we are saved, Christ enters into us and we put Him on (Gal. 3:27). However, we do not have sufficient knowledge of Christ. Thus, from the day of our salvation, we are being renewed unto full knowledge. The more we believe, the more knowledge we receive; the more we believe, the more thorough our knowledge becomes; and the more we believe, the fuller our knowledge will be.

Colossians 3:11 indicates that Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free man are on the cross. Everyone is on the cross. You are on the cross, and I am on the cross. There is no natural person in the new man. There cannot be is a strong word indicating that everything has been terminated. There cannot be anything in the new man except Christ, who is “all and in all.” There cannot be Southerners and Northerners, educated and uneducated, in the church; there is only Christ. There cannot be you or me, and there cannot be slave or free, but Christ is all.

In the church there is only Christ; in the church Christ is all and in all. If we truly see this light, there will be such a change in our service and work! (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 105-106)

Further Reading: How to Administrate the Church, ch. 8

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 12:12-13 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. 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.

[In 1 Corinthians 12:12, a verse concerning the Body of Christ], the clause so also is the Christ indicates that the church is Christ. Verse 13 continues, “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.” This corresponds to Colossians 3:11. Whether we are Jews or Greeks, whether we are slaves or free, we have all been baptized in one Spirit into one Body, and this Body is Christ. We have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit into one Body, that is, into one new man, into Christ.

Formerly, we were outside of the cross and in the old man, in Adam. In Adam, in our old man, there are many differences. There are Gentiles and Jews, Southerners and Northerners, educated and uneducated, slaves and free. Nevertheless, the cross has dealt with all these differences. On the cross all things in the universe have been terminated. The cross can abolish enmity and every kind of difference because the cross abolished all of the old creation and everything in it. By the cross and by our passing through the cross, Christ has reconciled His redeemed ones and created them in Himself into one new man. (How to Administrate the Church, p. 107)

Today’s Reading

In this new man there is only Christ; He is all and in all. Although there are many members in this new man, there is only one Body. In 1 Corinthians 12 those who are Jews, Gentiles, slaves, or free have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit into one Body, into the one new man. This new man, this Body, is Christ Himself; in

this new man there are no differences; there is only Christ. Christ is all and in all.

From the various portions of the Word above, we can see what the church is. All of the serving ones in the church must see what the church is, what the nature of the church is, what God intends to build, and with what God builds the church. Only when we are clear concerning all these points can we administrate and serve in the church.

First, in order to administrate in the church, we must have Christ revealed in us. Second, we must clearly see that Christ is our life. Third, we should realize that we must live in Christ. Fourth, we must see that what we are and what we have in ourselves has been terminated on the cross. Fifth, we must not serve or work according to what we are and what we have in ourselves. Sixth, we should not dispense anything other than Christ in our service and work in the church. Seventh, we should not expect those with whom we serve to change in any way; instead, we should desire only that they gain Christ, be filled with Christ, and be fully gained by Christ. Eighth, we must clearly see that there should be only one result in our service, work, and administration of the church. Christ must be produced in the church so that everyone has Christ, so that Christ increases in every member, and so that all will arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ninth, in order to administrate the church, we must pray for the above eight points; we must be men of prayer. Tenth, we must be like the apostle Paul who had a living faith, believing that God can accomplish these points. The first eight points constitute proper service in the administration of the church; the last two points state that we must pray and have faith, praying for the above eight points every day, believing that God is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think. The power of God is not outside of us but inside of us. Through the operation of the power within us, God can fulfill all these things. This is the administration of the church. If we do not see this, our service in the church will be null and void. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 107-108)

Further Reading: How to Administrate the Church, ch. 9

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Gal. 1:15-16 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood.

In his fourteen Epistles, Paul clearly speaks of these [following] ten points.

First, in Galatians 1:15-16 he says that he...served God in such a way because God revealed His Son in him so that he might announce Christ among the Gentiles. He announced the Son of God...Paul announced the living Christ whom God had revealed in him, not knowledge or doctrine.

Second, in Colossians 3:4 Paul speaks of "Christ our life," indicating that he lived in God together with Christ. Third, to those who tried to work out the law by themselves, he says, "I...have died to law that I might live to God,...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). He realized that he needed to live in Christ. Fourth, Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (v. 20). This means that he realized that all that he had was terminated on the cross. Fifth, in Galatians 6:14 he says, "The world has been crucified to me and I to the world." This means that he knew that he was terminated and that he lived in Christ. With respect to the cross, Paul was finished; he no longer lived according to his former self. Not only did Paul feel this way, but even those in the world saw him in this way. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 108-110)

Today's Reading

Sixth, in Galatians 4:19 he says, "I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you." Paul's unique goal was to dispense Christ into others so that Christ could increase in them.

Seventh, in 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul says, “I did not...know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.” At that time there were many problems in the church in Corinth;

some of the saints were fleshy, some were fleshly, and some had sinned. Paul did not expect those who were cold to become more fervent or those who were wrong to improve; rather, he had only one hope, the hope that Christ would increase in them. Among the believers in Corinth, some were fervent toward the Jewish religion, some sought signs, some sought philosophical knowledge, and some even sought spiritual gifts, but Paul preached Christ crucified. He did not care about gifts and signs; he hoped only for the increase of Christ in them.

Eighth, in 2 Corinthians 4:12, Paul says, “Death operates in us, but life in you.” Paul saw that the result of his work could only be Christ and life. If he saw that the result of others’ work was not Christ, he would write to admonish and adjust them (1 Cor. 4:14). The unique purpose of his fourteen Epistles was to bring man into Christ and to cause the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ to grow in the church (Eph. 4:13). This was his only expectation. Ninth, Paul prayed for all these matters (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:9; 1 Thes. 1:2). Tenth, he believed that God was able to do above all that he asked or thought (Eph. 3:20).

These ten points can be summed up in one point—Christ. Paul saw Christ. He announced Christ. His work was Christ. He prayed Christ. His faith was Christ. And the result of his work, all the more, was Christ. From beginning to end, Christ was central. Christ passed through Paul and reached all those whom he served; that is, Christ was produced in them.

We should be people of the New Testament, allowing the Holy Spirit to inscribe these ten points onto the tablets of our heart so that we may live in them. This is the administration of the church, the service in the church; this is the purpose of our visiting people, preaching the gospel, and edifying others. All the elders, deacons, and those who serve in the church should follow this pattern. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 110-111)

Further Reading: The Way to Build Up the Church (booklet); Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 32

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 3:16-18 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are.

Ephesians 3:16-21...helps us know how to serve God in the church and shows Paul's spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith. We should have this spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith when we serve God in the church.

Paul's spirit and attitude—what he saw, what he was filled with, what he said, and what he cared about in his heart—were related to the vision of God being manifested in the flesh and being mingled with man in order to build the church with Christ so that the church would be filled with Christ....The most precious point in this portion of the Scriptures is not Paul's prayer and faith but his spirit and attitude. After...seeing the church and the building material of the church, we should become so captivated and enthralled that we are eager to return to our locality. We should return so that we can work Christ into others and build Christ as the material into others so that they may become a spiritual temple for the expression of the fullness of the One who fills all in all. This should be our spirit and attitude. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 117-119)

Today's Reading

Paul knelt down to pray because he was so burdened; something heavy within forced him to bow his knees unto the Father. His vision, his revelation, and his seeing became his spirit, his attitude, and his inner mood....Because Paul was "obsessed" with Christ, in Ephesians 3 he could not help but kneel down.

Every elder, deacon, co-worker, and everyone who serves the Lord must see a vision, a revelation, to the point that he is absolutely obsessed with it and has the

same spirit, attitude, and mood of Paul. Because Paul had such a spirit, attitude, and mood, he spontaneously had this kind of prayer; he also believed that God is able to do superabundantly. All those who serve God in the church must have this kind of spirit and attitude and this kind of prayer. All of our prayers must take this kind of prayer as the center, and we should have the faith for such prayer.

In Paul's prayer, he asked that God would grant the Ephesian believers to be strengthened....He described four aspects of this strengthening. First, he prayed that it would be "according to the riches of His glory" (v. 16). What is glory? Glory is the expression of the mystery, the content within God. In the Bible, glory refers to God being expressed. God expressed is glory.

Since glory is God expressed, "the riches of His glory" must refer to the expression of the riches of God's life and nature, the riches of His excellent attributes, the riches of the Godhead....Colossians 2:9 speaks of all the fullness of the Godhead, which refers to the expression of God's riches.

Paul...prayed that the riches of God's glory would enter into the believers so that they would be strengthened to an extent that others could sense God's expression. The glory of the expressed God can enter into the believers and become the strengthening power within them. In turn, they are strengthened to express God's glory.

The second aspect of the strengthening of the Ephesian believers is "through His Spirit." Without the Spirit, God cannot be expressed through man. The third aspect is that the Ephesian believers would be strengthened "with power" into the inner man. This means that God's power enters into man and becomes a motivating power to strengthen man. The fourth aspect is that they would be strengthened "into the inner man."...The purpose of this strengthening is that we may express God's glory, which is God Himself. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 119-122)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1970, vol. 2, "The Two Greatest Prayers of the Apostle Paul," chs. 3-4

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 3:19-21 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

Paul did not speak of Christ earlier; he only spoke of glory and the Spirit, but the issue is Christ making His home in our hearts [Eph. 3:17]...[Galatians 4:19] says, “Until Christ is formed in you.” This refers to Christ’s making His home in our hearts. Hearts in Ephesians 3:17 is an important word, meaning that Christ can be sensed in us. He not only dwells in us, but He dwells in our heart,...the organ of our feeling and emotion. (How to Administrate the Church, p. 122)

Today’s Reading

Paul never neglected the need to work Christ into man....It seemed that Paul was “obsessed” with the matter of Christ in us, and this became his spirit and attitude. Paul knew that Christ was not in the hearts of the Ephesian believers, even though He was in them....Paul’s central concern was related to Christ’s being in the believers. In our work and service of administrating the church, we should have this kind of spirit, expecting that the believers will have Christ in them and that Christ will enter into them.

When he was writing [Ephesians 3], Paul transcended even the universe...When Christ is in our feeling and is real in our heart, we will be rooted and grounded in His love. In such a condition, Paul said that we would know the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth....What are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth? These four words added together equal immeasurableness....If we know Christ inwardly, live in Him, and are rooted and grounded in His love, we will see that the One who dwells in us is the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth.

Paul continued in 3:19, “And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ,” the result of which is “that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” Paul was entirely captivated by this matter, and it became his spirit and attitude. When Christ has made His home in our hearts, we can apprehend His immeasurableness, and the result is that we are filled unto all the fullness of God. We who serve in the church should have this attitude, and our thoughts and prayers should be for this.

In administrating the church, all the responsible brothers must take this as their spirit, their attitude, and their hope. They should not hope merely that all the saints will come to the meetings, be zealous, preach the gospel, and bring people to salvation. The responsible brothers should be clear as to what they take as their goal: is it an increase in numbers or an increase in Christ? They should be like Paul, who was totally “obsessed” with this matter.

We should focus on this matter to the extent that we do not know what to pray other than this....This should be the attitude, spirit, and prayer of one who serves God.

Because Paul was concerned that the Ephesian saints might think that the prayer in verses 16 through 19 was too difficult, he immediately followed with verse 20, saying, God is “able” and “above all that we ask or think.” In the end, he praised God for being glorified in the church and in Christ Jesus. Glory in verse 21 means that God is greatly released and expressed in the church; this is glory....The full meaning of the phrase to Him be the glory in the church is seen in the New Jerusalem. On that day, God will shine forth all of His fullness....The New Jerusalem is the complete expression of God’s glory; the church today should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem. This is the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith with which we should serve the Lord....Our spirit and attitude should be that the brothers and sisters will have Christ inwardly, that Christ will make His home in their hearts, and that they will be filled unto all the fullness of God. (How to Administrate the Church, pp. 122-127)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msgs. 33-35

WEEK 8 — HYMN

Once by nature we were dead in sin

The Church — As the One New Man

1232

1. Once by na - ture we were dead in sin, In a world of ut - ter dis-cord;
But to - geth - er God has quickened us, Raised us up to sit togeth - er with the Lord.
Chorus
(C) Je - sus is get - ting us to-geth - er, Come and see the saints in one ac-cord.
His love is knit-ting us to-geth - er, To the sta- ture of the full-ness of the Lord.

2. Thus with all saints we can apprehend
All the vast dimensions of God.
Knowing Christ's love passes all we know,
We're together filled to fullness with our God.
3. Now we know the purpose of our God,
Visible the mystery became:
Christ, the church, together now we see,
And together put the enemy to shame.
4. For this cause we pray the Father God—
Strengthen Thou with might our inner man;
Make Yourself at home in all our hearts,
Root us, ground us in Your love and for Your plan.
5. In the Body we'll be fitly framed
As the many members Christ supply;
Working in the measure of each part,
All by growth in love the Body edify.
6. Now we're one His purpose to fulfill,
As the one new man of His plan.
Unto Him be glory in the church,
And in Jesus Christ forevermore—Amen!

