

Message Nine

Practicing the Church Life, Speaking the Same Thing, and Doing the One Work in the Consciousness of the One New Man

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:10-11; 4:7-17

- 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.
- Col 4:7 All the things concerning me, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you,
- Col 4:8 Whom I have sent to you for this very thing, that you might know the things concerning us and that he might comfort your hearts;
- Col 4:9 With Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all the things here.
- Col 4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, as well as Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, (concerning whom you received commandments, If he comes to you, receive him),
- Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.
- Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
- Col 4:13 For I testify of him that he labors much for you and for those in Laodicea and for those in Hierapolis.
- Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as well as Demas.
- Col 4:15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house.
- Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.
- Col 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.

Outline

I. In Colossians 4:7-17 we have a practical illustration of the revelation of the one new man and of the consciousness of the one new man:

- Col 4:7 All the things concerning me, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you,
- Col 4:8 Whom I have sent to you for this very thing, that you might know the things concerning us and that he might comfort your hearts;
- Col 4:9 With Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all the things here.
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- Col 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.

- A. Both the saints in Colossae and Paul and those with him were members of the one new man in actuality and had the consciousness of the one new man.
- B. Paul's word regarding the reading of the letters proves that there was no difference between the church in Laodicea and the church in Colossae; his word implies fellowship, oneness, harmony, and intimate contact—v. 16.

Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.

- C. In spite of all the differences among nationalities, races, and classes, there was on earth in a practical way the one new man created in Christ Jesus; there were not merely local churches in various cities—there was the one new man in a real and practical way.
- D. "It is shameful for the church in any locality to isolate itself from other churches... This is utterly contrary to the consciousness of the new man. Any church that holds such an attitude has a consciousness only of itself, not of the totality of the new man. Those who insist on this attitude cause the new man to be fragmented, to be broken into pieces... Those who have this attitude lack the sense, the consciousness, of the one new man" (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 260-261).

II. All the local churches in the different countries are one new man; thus, they need to practice the church life in the consciousness of the new man—Eph. 2:15, 21-22:

- 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 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

- A. All the churches are not merely individual local churches but are the one new man—Col. 3:10-11; 4:15-16:

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.

Col 4:15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house.

Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.

1. We cannot say that each local church is a new man; rather, all the local churches on earth are the one new man.
 2. The one new man is a matter not merely of individual localities and individual churches but of all the churches on earth corporately.
- B. When the one new man has been brought into full existence, we will not speak of the differences between the churches or of the jurisdiction and autonomy of the local churches—1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; Rev. 2:1, 7a; 22:16a:
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
- Rev 2:1 To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
1. At that time we all will be taking Christ as our person and living Christ; thus, only Christ will be among us, and only Christ will be manifested—Phil. 1:20-21a.

Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
 2. If we take Christ as our person and as our life, spontaneously we all will speak the same thing; then in a practical way we will be the one new man.
- C. Since the local churches are one new man, in deciding a matter in our local church, we need to consider the churches throughout the whole earth—Rev. 22:16a; 1 Thes. 2:14; Rom. 16:4; 2 Cor. 11:28.
- Rev 22:16 I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
- 1 Thes 2:14 For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, for you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they also from the Jews,
- Rom 16:4 Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;
- 2 Cor 11:28 Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.
- D. The churches will progress in the divine life to such an extent that eventually they all will be absolutely the same—Rev. 1:4, 11-12; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 14:33b:
- Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,
- 1 Cor 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
- 1 Cor 7:17 However as the Lord has apportioned to each one, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.
- 1 Cor 14:34 The women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they should be subject, even as the law also says.

1. “We may not want to be the same as the other churches because of our pride, but according to the divine economy, the more that we are the same, the more glorious we are. It is glorious to imitate others, to follow others, and to be one with others in the spirit. We must learn from one another, be adjusted by one another, and receive grace from one another” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984, vol. 3, “The Divine Economy,” pp. 105-106).
2. “I do expect that the day will come when all the local churches look alike, and I believe that when that day comes, the Lord will return” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1975-1976, vol. 2, “The Church—the Reprint of the Spirit,” p. 459).

E. What is here in the Lord’s recovery is nothing but Christ, and this Christ is all and in all; this vision will rescue us from all things other than Christ—Col. 1:18b; 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.

F. The Lord intends to raise up His believers throughout all the world to seek Him, and when we seek Him, we will see that what He wants is the one new man expressed in the local churches—Phil. 3:7-16; Eph. 4:24.

- Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
- Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Phil 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.
- Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- Phil 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.

Phil 3:16 Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.
Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

III. For the church as the universal one new man, we all need to take Christ as our person in the matter of speaking; we need to consider one new man in Ephesians 2:15 together with one mouth in Romans 15:6 and speak the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

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,

Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

A. In the one new man there is one person with one mouth to speak the same thing—Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.

Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

B. There is only one new man, and the one new man has only one person, so the one new man speaks with one mouth and says the same thing.

C. In the past there were too many mouths because there were too many persons.

D. With one accord and with one mouth (Rom. 15:6) mean that even though we are many and all are speaking, we all “speak the same thing” (1 Cor. 1:10):

Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

1. The church is the one new man with only one person—Christ—and this person controls our speaking; thus, whatever He speaks is surely “the same thing.”

2. When we are about to speak, we need to resolve a basic question: In this matter of speaking, am I the person, or is Christ the person?

3. If in our speaking we do not take ourselves as the person but allow Christ to be the person, then there will be one mouth, and everyone will speak the same thing.

E. In the one new man there is only one person, and only this person has the freedom to speak; the Lord Jesus has the absolute freedom to speak, and our natural man has absolutely no freedom to speak—Matt. 17:5.

Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!

F. Although we are many and come from many places, we all have one mouth and we all speak the same thing; this is because we all are the one new man having only one person—Eph.

2:15; 4:22-24; 3:17a; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.

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 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

- G. If we take Christ as our person and as our life, spontaneously we all will speak the same thing; then we will be the one new man in reality and practicality.

IV. There should not be several works in the Lord's recovery; all the co-workers in all the regions should do the same one work for the unique Body, the universal one new man—Col. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; Phil. 2:30:

Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear; for he is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.

Phil 2:30 Because for the work of Christ he drew near unto death, risking his life, that he might fill up your lack of service toward me.

- A. "I hope that we will consider our present situation before the Lord. Are we doing the same one work for the recovery? If not, we should let the Lord have the freedom to adjust us" (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992, vol. 1, "Elders' Training, Book 11: The Eldership and the God-ordained Way (3)," p. 239).

- B. "In the Lord's move in His recovery, there should be only one work, not different works. Our situation is different from this. We have different works without any consciousness. This is dangerous" (pp. 239-240).

- C. As God's fellow workers, working together with Him, we should do only one work—the work of the Lord—2 Cor. 6:1a; 1 Cor. 3:9a; 15:58; 16:10:

2 Cor 6:1 And working together with Him, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;

1 Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear; for he is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.

1. Although Paul and Peter worked in different regions, they did not carry out two works; instead, they had only one work; the regions of the work should not divide the churches.

2. Concerning the work, the New Testament does not have the consideration of geographical

regions; to bear a regional flavor is not scriptural, because all the members of the Body of Christ should bear the same flavor.

- D. “You must have the assurance that, wherever you are and whatever you do, you are building up the center, the reality, and the goal of the eternal economy of God, which will attain the New Jerusalem” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997, vol. 2, “The Practical Way to Live a Life according to the High Peak of the Divine Revelation in the Holy Scriptures,” p. 81).
- E. “Today on this earth...God wants to have another man, the new man...He wants to gain the one new man on earth...So we all need to rise up to take Christ as our corporate person. If we want to make a decision or live a certain kind of life, we cannot decide merely in ourselves; instead, we must take Christ as our person in the new man and with the new man. This requirement is great and high. In this way the new man grows and matures, and we will arrive at a full-grown man” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977, vol. 3, “One Body, One Spirit, and One New Man,” p. 325).
- F. This will be the ultimate church life—a universal new man taking Christ as his person and living out Christ; this will conclude this age, usher in the kingdom, and bring the Lord back—Eph. 4:24; Phil. 1:20-21a; Rev. 11:15.

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.