

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Four : The Organic Body of Christ Building Itself Up in Love

I. Overview:

In His ascension Christ led them captive; that is, He rescued them from Satan's captivity and took them to Himself. In His ascension Christ led them to the heavens as His captives in His train of vanquished foes and made them gifts to His Body. Now God is celebrating Christ's triumph over them, His vanquished foes, and leading them as His captives in a triumphal procession in His move for His ministry to build up His Body. The more Christ ascends and descends within us, capturing and vanquishing us, the more He fills us with Himself to constitute us as gifts to His Body. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them according to the tree of life with the life supply for their growth in life. The gifted persons perfect the saints, according to their measure to do what they do for the direct building up of the Body of Christ. The joints supplying and the parts functioning cause the growth of the Body unto the building up of the Body itself in the divine love.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the words in Ephesians 4:8-10.

We see that Christ is the One who descended into the lower parts of the earth, ascended far above all the heavens to fill all things, and led captive those taken captive. Height refers to Mount Zion, which symbolizes the third heaven, where God dwells. Psalm 68 implies that it was God's move in the tabernacle with the Ark as its center. Wherever the Ark, a type of Christ, went, the victory was won.

B. Explain this universal traffic.

Christ has traveled from the heavens to the earth, from the earth to Hades, from Hades back to earth, and from the earth to the third heaven. It is by this universal traffic that the gifts have been given by Christ to the Body. Psalm 68 unveiled that when Christ ascended to the heavens, He led a train of captives. He presented these captives to His Father, who in turn gave them back to Him as gifts. Then Christ gave all these captives as gifts to men.

Day 2 —

A. Expound the words in Ephesians 4:8, what God's amazing achievement is.

Those in Ephesians 4:8 refers to the redeemed saints, who were taken captive by Satan before being saved by Christ's death and resurrection. In His ascension Christ led them captive; that is, He rescued them from Satan's captivity and took them to Himself. This indicates that He conquered and overcame Satan, who had captured them by sin and death. Now Christ is celebrating His triumph over His vanquished foes.

B. Explain that today Christ is still traveling of ascending and descending.

From our experience we can testify that within us Christ descends and ascends; He goes up and down. It is difficult to say where Christ is. Through His descending and ascending, Christ will fill us with Himself. It is by His descending and ascending that Christ constitutes us gifts to the Body. The more He descends and ascends within us, the more we become gifts.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the ministry in Ephesians 4:12.

Ephesians 4:12 tells us that the gifted ones were given to the Body. The many gifted persons in the preceding verse have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, the church. This is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy. The work of the ministry is the building up of the Body. The perfecting of the saints is for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ.

B. Explain the gifted persons are for the perfecting of the saints.

The gifted persons perfect the saints in the divine dispensing in order that all the saints may be able to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them with the life supply for their growth in life. The gifted persons perfect the saints to do what they do for the direct building up of the Body of Christ.

Day 4 —

A. Expound that all the saints should be building members.

Ephesians 4:11, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers perfect the saints. This means that they build up the saints. Then the perfected saints become the building members. The expression every joint in Ephesians 4:16 refers to the specially gifted persons, and the expression each one part refers to every member of the Body. Every member of the Body of Christ has its own measure which works for the growth of the Body.

B. Explain that shepherding and teaching are the essential functions in the building up of His Body.

Among the four kinds of gifted persons, the ministry of the first three, that is, of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, depends upon shepherding. This is confirmed by the Lord's charge to Peter in John 21:15-17. Without shepherding, the apostles, prophets, and evangelists cannot function. In restoring Peter's love toward Him, the Lord charged him to shepherd and feed His sheep.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the words in Ephesians 4:15 and its spiritual significance.

"Holding to truth" in Ephesians 4:15 is in contrast to the sleight of men and the craftiness in verse 14. Truth here refers to things that are true. The first item of these is God's New Testament economy. The second item is the all-inclusive Christ. The third item is the church as the Body of Christ for expressing Him. These three things are the true things.

B. Testify how to experience growing up into Him the Head, Christ in all things

When we hold to truth in the love of God, we will grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ. This shows that our growth in life with Christ should be the growth of the members in the Body under the Head. In everything big or small, such as the way we dress, the way we comb our hair, the way we shop, and the way we speak, we should take Christ as the Head, submitting under His headship.

Day 6 —

A. State to experience Christ, we need faith and love.

Faith enables us to apprehend Christ, and love enables us to enjoy Him. Neither faith nor love are ours; they are His. His faith becomes our faith, by which we believe in Him, and His love becomes our love, by which we love Him. When we are rooted and grounded in His love, we grow and are built up in His life.

B. Explain in the Body some are joints, and some are parts.

In the Body some are joints, like the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. Others are parts, who operate according to their measure. Through these two categories of members, the Body grows, and this growth is unto the building up of itself in love. If we are not a joint, we must be a part.

III. Conclusion:

Ephesians reveals the building up of the Body of Christ, which building is organic as well as intrinsic. Through Christ's ascension, He gave the gifted persons to the church. These gifted ones perfect the saints to do what they do for the direct building up of the Body of Christ. They must grow in life and become skillful in function. The first thing of growing in life and knowing how to live the church life is to enjoy Christ. Without the normal regular of eating and drinking of enjoying the Lord, we are unable to become vital, and it will be difficult to practice the vital group meetings. The best way for the saints to stir their spiritual function is to go out every week to preach the gospel. He needs to repent and confess his sins, be filled with the Spirit, and experience the economical spirit, then become bold. The small group and home meetings shepherd the new believers, teach them read the Bible and pray to learn prophesying with spiritual experiences and God's words. To preach the truth to be equipped and constituted. On the Lord's day, they need to minister Christ into others in a way of enjoying God's words, fellowship with the Lord in prayer, and experience the Lord in the daily living.