

Message Eight

Growing into a Holy Temple in the Lord

MC Hymns: 839

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:5-6, 8, 18-22; 3:4-5; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:17

- Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
- Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,
- Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;
- Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- 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.
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- 1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

I. Our being saved by grace, being raised up together with Christ and seated together with Him in the heavenlies, and having access to the Father are for the building up of the church, His Body, through growing into a holy temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:5-6, 8, 18, 21-22:

- Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
- Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,
- Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;
- Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
- 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. God enlivened us together when He enlivened the crucified Jesus; therefore, He made us alive together with Christ—v. 5.
Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
- B. By grace we have been saved out of our wretched position of death into the marvelous realm of life—v. 5.
Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
- C. Through God the Son, who is the Accomplisher, the means, and in God the Spirit, who is the Executor, the application, we have access unto God the Father, who is the Originator, the unique source—v. 18:
Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
1. Positionally, we were reconciled to God; experientially, we have access unto the Father—vv. 16, 18:
Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.
Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.

- a. To be reconciled to God is to be saved; to have access unto the Father is to enjoy God.
 - b. When we contact God, we come to Him through Christ in the Spirit unto the Father; this is the Triune God in our experience and for our enjoyment—v. 18.
Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
2. The Father came to us through the Son in the Spirit, and now the Spirit brings us back to the Father through the Son; through this wonderful two-way traffic, we enjoy the dispensing of the Triune God—2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:16-17a.
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
 3. Through the Son is through the Triune God, in the Spirit is in the Triune God, and unto the Father is unto the Triune God; this is how we experience the Triune God and the way that we can be built up—2:18, 21-22.
Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
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.

II. As believers in Christ and as members of the Body of Christ, we are “being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone”—v. 20:

- A. Since the mystery of Christ, the church, has been revealed to the apostles, the revelation that they received is considered the foundation upon which the church is built—3:4-5; 2:20:
Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

 1. This corresponds to the rock in Matthew 16:18, which is not only Christ Himself but also the revelation concerning Christ, on which He will build His church.
Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 2. We need to build the church upon the apostles and prophets—Eph. 2:20.
Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

- B. In Ephesians 2:20 Christ is referred to as the cornerstone:
Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

 1. Christ as the cornerstone joins together the Jewish believers and Gentile believers into a holy temple in the Lord—Psa. 118:22-26; Eph. 2:20-22.
Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the head of the corner.
Psa 118:23 This is from Jehovah; / It is wonderful in our sight.
Psa 118:24 This is the day that Jehovah has made; / Let us exult and rejoice in it.
Psa 118:25 O Jehovah, do save, we pray! / O Jehovah, do send prosperity, we pray!
Psa 118:26 Blessed is He who comes in the name of Jehovah; / We bless you from the house of Jehovah.
Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
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.

2. Christ, the cornerstone, is for the building up of the church in the New Testament age—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5:
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- 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.
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- a. For the building up of the church as the temple of God, we need to experience Christ as the cornerstone—vv. 6-7.
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- b. In Christ as the cornerstone, all the building is growing into a holy temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:20-22.
- Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
- 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.
3. In God's New Testament economy Christ as the cornerstone, in His saving us (Acts 4:10-12), first makes us living stones for the building up of God's spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; John 1:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-7) and then, in the process of His transforming us (Rom. 12:2a; 2 Cor. 3:18), builds us up into a dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:19-22) so that He may carry out God's eternal economy for God's good pleasure (1:9; 3:9-11).
- Acts 4:10 Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- John 1:42 He led him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."
- 1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"
- Rom 12:2a And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;
 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.
 Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
 Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
 Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
 Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

III. In Christ, who is the cornerstone, “all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord”—2:21:

- A. The phrase *all the building* denotes the universal building, the church throughout the universe—v. 21.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- B. The word *fitted* means being made suitable for the condition and situation of the building—v. 21:
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
1. To be fitted together is for all parts of the frame of the Body to be fitted together to form one structure—4:16.
 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.
 2. In the building all the materials are fitted together; this is not merely to pile up but to build up—2:21.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- C. Since the building is living, it is growing because it is organic—1 Pet. 2:5:
 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
1. This building is growing into a holy temple, a holy dwelling place of God; this indicates that the holy temple is a living building—Eph. 2:21.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
 2. Apparently, growth and building are separate things; actually, the building of the house is the growth of the Body—4:15-16.
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, 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.
 3. The building of the church as the temple, the house of God, is by the believers’ growth in life—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:2.
 1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
 1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, 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.

- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
4. The Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19:
 Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- a. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Eph. 4:16.
 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.
- b. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way—3:16-17a:
 Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
- 1) For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
 1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
- 2) The more God is added to us, the more growth He gives—Eph. 4:15-16.
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, 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.
5. The church grows by life dispensing, the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity—2 Cor. 13:14:
 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- a. The threefold God—God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is dispensing Himself into us as life and as our life supply—Eph. 3:16-17.
 Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- b. As long as the processed and consummated Triune God is dispensing Himself into us as life, we are nourished and we grow—4:15-16.
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, 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.
- c. In the churches we should care for the genuine growth through the dispensing of the divine life—1 Cor. 3:6-7; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.
 1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
 1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.
 2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;

- 2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- D. All the building is becoming holy—Eph. 2:21:
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
1. God makes us holy by imparting Himself, the Holy One, into our being so that our whole being may be permeated and saturated with His holy nature—1:4; 1 Thes. 5:23.
 Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. For us, God’s chosen ones, to be holy is to partake of God’s divine nature and have our whole being permeated with God Himself; this makes our being holy in God’s nature and character, just like God Himself—2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22.
 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
 Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
 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;
- E. All the building is growing into a temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:21:
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
1. The Greek word rendered “temple” in verse 21 means the sanctuary, the inner part of the temple.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
 2. The church is the temple of God; as such, it is the sanctuary of the holy God, the temple in which the Spirit of God dwells—1 Cor. 3:16-17:
 1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
 - a. *The temple of God* in verse 16 refers to the believers collectively in a certain locality, whereas *the temple of God* in verse 17 refers to all the believers universally.
 1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
 - b. The unique spiritual temple of God in the universe has its expression in many localities on earth; each expression is the temple of God in that locality—Eph. 2:21-22.
 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.
 3. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple—Rev. 21:22:
 Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
 - a. The holy city Jerusalem as a whole will be the Holy of Holies; hence, there will be no temple in it—v. 16.
 Rev 21:16 And the city lies square, and its length is as great as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed to a length of twelve thousand stadia; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

- b. This inner temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb—v. 22.
 Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb
 are its temple.
- 4. The entire building of God’s house, His sanctuary, is in Christ the Lord—Eph. 2:21.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in
 the Lord;

IV. Referring to the local saints in Ephesus, Paul says, “In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit”—v. 22:

- A. The temple and the dwelling place refer to two aspects of the same thing—vv. 21-22:
 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.
 - 1. The temple is the place where God’s people contact God, worship God, and hear His oracle—v. 21.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in
 the Lord;
 - 2. The dwelling place of God is a place of rest; God rests in His dwelling place—v. 22.
 Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 - 3. The temple and the dwelling place are not two distinct places; rather, they are two aspects, two functions or usages, of the same building.
- B. The word *also* in verse 22 indicates that the building in verse 21 is universal and that the building in verse 22 is local:
 Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
 - 1. According to the context, in verse 21 the holy temple is universal, and in verse 22 the dwelling place of God is local.
 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.
 - 2. Universally, the church is uniquely one and is growing universally; locally, the church in a particular locality is also one, and the local saints are being built up together in their particular locality—vv. 21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16-17.
 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.
 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 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God
 dwells in you?
 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of
 God is holy, and such are you.
- C. The dwelling place of God is in our spirit—Eph. 2:22:
 Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 - 1. Verse 21 says that the holy temple is in the Lord, and verse 22, that the dwelling place of God is in spirit.
 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.
 - 2. This indicates that for the building of God’s dwelling place, the Lord is one with our spirit, and our spirit is one with the Lord—1 Cor. 6:17.
 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
 - 3. Our spirit is where the building of the dwelling place of God takes place.