

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Eight: Growing into a Holy Temple in the Lord

I. Overview:

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. 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. 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". In God's New Testament economy Christ as the cornerstone, first makes us living stones for the building up of God's spiritual house and then, in the process of His transforming us, builds us up into a dwelling place of God. In Christ, who is the cornerstone, "all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord. 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. The holy temple is in the Lord, and the dwelling place of God is in our spirit. Our spirit is where the building of the dwelling place of God takes place.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain what kind of salvation we need as we are sinners and dead persons.

As sinners we need God's forgiveness and justification, as revealed in the book of Romans. But as dead persons we need to be made alive. Forgiveness and justification bring us back to God's presence to enjoy His grace and participate in His life, whereas making us alive enables us, as the living members of the Body of Christ, to express Him. By such grace we have been saved from our wretched position of death into the marvelous realm of life.

B. Expound how we were reconciled to God to have access unto the Father.

Positionally we were reconciled to God; experientially we have access unto the Father. To be reconciled to God is to be saved; to have access unto the Father is to enjoy God, who, as the source of life, has regenerated us to be His sons. In the one Body we have been reconciled to God through the cross. This is a fact, and we have access unto the Father experientially for enjoyment.

Day 2 —

A. Expound in considering the church as God's building, the foundation is crucial.

Christ is the only foundation. Nevertheless, Ephesians 2:20 speaks of the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Since the mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles, the revelation they received is considered the foundation upon which the church is built. This corresponds to the rock in Matthew 16:18, which is not only Christ Himself but also the revelation concerning Christ.

B. Why do we need to build the church upon the revelation received by the apostles and prophets?

The churches in the Lord's recovery are built according to the revelation received by the apostles and prophets. This revelation embraces believers of all races and nationalities; it includes those who speak in tongues and those who do not. If you have the vision of the proper foundation of the church, you will realize that only the churches in the Lord's recovery are built upon the proper foundation.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the building of the church is by the growth in life of the believers.

The actual building of the church as the house of God is by the growth in life of the believers. Today the church is growing. However, it is not growing in our natural life, but in the divine life, the spiritual life. As the house of God, the church is being built. Actually, the building of the house is the growth of the Body. If the Body does not grow, the house cannot be built.

B. State in the Scriptures the growth and building being linked together.

As God's cultivated land, we need to grow; as God's building, we need to be built up. Hence, Ephesians 2 says that this spiritual house, this dwelling place of God, is built up by growing, just as our body reaches its full stature by growing. The more we grow, the more we are built up.

Day 4 —

A. Explain all the building is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

All the building is growing into a holy temple. It is in the Lord that the building is growing into a holy temple. This means that the entire building of God's house as His sanctuary is in Christ the Lord. The fact that the temple is still growing indicates that the temple of God is not complete. The phrase all the building refers to the universal church. The universal building is still growing. The growth of the building is nonetheless taking place.

B. Expound how to be holy.

To be holy is first to be separated to God; second, to be taken over by God; third, to be possessed by God; and fourth, to be saturated with God and one with God. Eventually, the issue of this in the Bible is the New Jerusalem, which is called the holy city, a city that not only belongs to God and is for God, but a city possessed by God, saturated with God, and one with God.

Day 5 —

A. Expound Revelation 21:22, that in New Jerusalem there will be no temple.

Revelation 21:22 clearly says that in New Jerusalem there will be no temple. The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. In the Old Testament the tabernacle of God was the precursor of the temple of God. New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God will be the temple of God. This indicates that in the new heaven and new earth the temple of God will be enlarged into a city; the whole city will be the Holy of Holies. Hence, there will be no temple in it.

B. Why is the whole city called the tabernacle?

The tabernacle is the precursor of the temple. Before the temple appears, there is the tabernacle. But when the tabernacle comes into its fullness, it becomes the temple. Therefore, we need to keep three points before us: that the whole city is the Holy of Holies; that the temple is God Himself and the Lamb; and that the whole city is the tabernacle. When we put all three points together, we see that God Himself is the whole city of New Jerusalem.

Day 6 —

A. Explain that the reality of the church life is in our spirit.

If you are not in your spirit, although you may be in the meeting, you are not in the church in a practical way. The church life is in our human spirit. We must always turn to our spirit, exercise our spirit, and walk according to our spirit. When we exercise our spirit in this way, we are in the church. This is for God's dispensing of Himself into us as life so that we may grow in the church.

B. Compare the words in Ephesians 2:21 and 22.

The word you in Ephesians 2:22, which refers to the local saints, indicates that the building in verse 21 is universal and the building in verse 22 is local. In this verse Paul was saying that the local saints, the saints in Ephesus, were being built together in Christ into a dwelling place of God. Therefore, in these verses Paul covered both the universal aspect and the local aspect of the church.

III. Conclusion:

The church life today is in our spirit. In reality, when you are not in your spirit, you are not in the church. If you are not in your spirit, although you may be in the meeting, you are not in the church in a practical way. We must always turn to our spirit, exercise our spirit, and walk according to our spirit. We should not be out of our spirit or have our being apart from our spirit. When we exercise our spirit in this way, we are in the church. This is for God's dispensing of Himself into us as life so that we may grow in the church. Both God's dispensing and our growing are in the spirit. The universal building can be accomplished only by the building of the localities. Unless there is a proper local church life, there can be no real and practical building up among us.