

LIVING AND SERVING IN THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY

Message Eight

The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity in Building Up the Church as the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:1-16

Eph. 4:1-16 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, **3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: **4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. **8** Therefore *the Scripture* says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." **9** (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.) **11** And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, **13** Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error, **15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, **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.

I. Ephesians 4:1-6 reveals the divine dispensing and mingling of the Triune God with the Body of Christ:

Eph. 4:1-6 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, **3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: **4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

A. We need to be mingled with God to realize the oneness of the Body—vv. 4-6:

Eph. 4:4-6 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1. The mingling of God with man and the oneness of the Body of Christ are the central matter in the Bible and in our Christian life—Lev. 2:4-5.

Lev. 2:4-5 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. **5** And if your offering is a meal offering *baked* on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

2. The extent to which the Lord values us depends on how much of the divine mingling we have and how much we are in the oneness of the Body.
3. The intrinsic content of the Body of Christ is the Spirit of life; Christ as the Spirit is our oneness, and the law of the Spirit of life is the life-law of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:3-4; Rom. 8:2; Col. 2:19.

Eph. 4:3-4 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: **4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

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.

- B. The oneness of the Body of Christ is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity (the Father as the Originator and source of the Body, the Son as the Creator and element of the Body, and the Spirit as the Executor and essence of the Body) into our human trinity (spirit and soul and body)—Eph. 2:10, 15; 4:4-6; 1 Thes. 5:23; cf. Gen. 1:26; 2:9.

Eph. 2:10 For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.

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. 4:4-6 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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.

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

C. The Spirit's mingling with the Body of Christ is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity—"One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling"—Eph. 4:4:

Eph. 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

1. The Spirit is the essence of the Body of Christ—1:13; 4:30.

Eph. 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise,

Eph. 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

2. The Spirit brings in the hope of glory, which is Christ in the believers as the hope of God's calling—Col. 1:27; Eph. 1:18.

Col. 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

Eph. 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

D. The Son's (the Lord's) mingling with the Body of Christ is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism"—4:5:

Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

1. Christ is the element of His Body.

2. Through the one faith in Christ we are organically united with the Son and with one another to become a living organism—John 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:30a; 12:12-13.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

1 Cor. 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

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. **13** 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.

3. Through the one baptism of the Lord, we have been separated from Adam and the adamic world—Rom. 6:3-4.

Rom. 6:3-4 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

- E. The one God and Father's mingling with the Body of Christ is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity—"One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all"—Eph. 4:6:

Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1. The Father is over all the believers to overshadow them as the Father, the source of the divine dispensing.
 2. The Father is through all the believers to take care of them as the Son, the course of the divine dispensing.
 3. The Father is in all the believers to indwell them as the Spirit, the reaching of the divine dispensing.
- F. Psalm 133 is equivalent to Ephesians 4; in order for us to receive the anointing and dispensing Spirit, we must submit to the Head and live in the Body by being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit:

Psa. 133:1-4 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity! **2** It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments; **3** Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.

Eph. 4:1-32 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, **3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: **4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. **8** Therefore *the Scripture* says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." **9** (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.) **11** And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, **13** Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error, **15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, **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. **17** This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, **18** Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19** Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness. **20** But you did not so learn Christ, **21** If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus, **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, **23** And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind **24** And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality. **25** Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26** Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation, **27** Neither give place to the devil. **28** He who steals should steal no more, but rather should labor, working with his own hands in that which is respectable, that he may have *something* to share with him who has need. **29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be removed from you, with all malice. **32** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.

1. The genuine oneness is constituted with the spreading ointment of the Spirit, the descending dew of the Son, and the commanded-life-blessing of the Father for the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity—Psa. 133:1-3; cf. Eph. 4:4-6.

Psa. 133:1-3 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity! **2** It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments; **3** Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.

Eph. 4:4-6 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2. The ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God applied to our being; the anointing of the compound, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is the element of our oneness—vv. 3-4; cf. John 4:24; Exo. 30:22-25; 1 John 2:20, 27.

Eph. 4:3-4 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: **4** One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Exo. 30:22-25 Moreover Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, **23** You also take the finest spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred fifty *shekels*, and of fragrant calamus two hundred fifty *shekels*, **24** And of cassia five hundred *shekels*, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. **25** And you shall make it a holy anointing oil, a fragrant ointment compounded according to the work of a compounder; it shall be a holy anointing oil.

1 John 2:20 And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know.

1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.

3. The descending dew signifies the descending, refreshing, watering, saturating, and blessing grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7, 9b), the Triune God as our life supply for our enjoyment (2 Cor. 13:14):

1 Pet. 3:7 Husbands, in like manner dwell together with *them* according to knowledge, as with the weaker, female vessel, assigning honor to *them* as also to fellow heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Pet. 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing *one another*, because you were called to this, that you might inherit blessing.

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. In typology Hermon signifies the heavens, the highest place in the universe, and the mountains of Zion typify the local churches; there is one Zion, one Body, but many mountains, many local churches—Matt. 17:1-2; Rev. 1:11-12.

Matt. 17:1-2 And after six days Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain privately. **2** And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as the light.

Rev. 1:11-12 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. **12** And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

- b. Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit experienced, received, enjoyed, and gained by us—John 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 5:2, 17, 21.

John 1:16-17 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; 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.

Rom. 5:2 Through whom also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and boast because of the hope of the glory of God.

Rom. 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- c. By the grace we receive on the mountains of Zion, we can live a life that is impossible for people in the world to live—Acts 4:33; 11:23; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;

2 Cor. 12:7-9 And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. **8** Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

4. In the church life we are daily anointed and graced; the anointing of the Spirit and the supply of grace make it possible for us to live in oneness—Eph. 1:13, 6.

Eph. 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise,

Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;

5. The more we experience Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the more our natural constitution and disposition are reduced; as they are reduced through our experience of the Triune God with His divine attributes, we are perfected into one—John 17:23; Eph. 4:1-3.

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Eph. 4:1-3 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, **3** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

II. Ephesians 4:7-16 reveals that the divine dispensing and mingling of the Triune God with the Body of Christ are for the organic building up of the church by the functioning of the gifts and the growth and building up of the Body:

Eph. 4:7-16 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. **8** Therefore *the Scripture* says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." **9** (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.) **11** And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, **13** Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error, **15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, **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.

- A. The building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the giving, the dispensing, of the divine grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ—v. 7:

Eph. 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1. The gift of Christ is a person constituted with Christ's life and element dispensed into him by the Divine Trinity.
2. Each gifted person has a measure, and the divine grace is given, dispensed, to him according to that measure—v. 16; cf. Rom. 12:3.

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.

Rom. 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of *himself* than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.

- B. The building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the giving of the gifted persons (the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers) to the Body of Christ; these gifts are constituted in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity by Christ as the Head in His ascension (including His resurrection), and they perfect the saints in the local churches—Eph. 4:8-12; 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1; 2:24, 27; 1:9.

Eph. 4:8-12 Therefore *the Scripture* says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men." **9** (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.) **11** And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 2:24 Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Acts 2:27 Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will You permit Your Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.

- C. The building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the gifted persons' perfecting of the saints in the divine dispensing so that all the saints may be able to do the work of the ministry, that is, to build up the organic Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-12:

Eph. 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

1. The result of this perfecting is that all the members of the Body of Christ arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—v. 13.

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

2. This perfecting causes us to be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a satanic system of error—v. 14.

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

- D. The perfecting by the gifted persons is for the direct building up of the organic Body of Christ by the members of the Body—vv. 15-16:

Eph. 4:15-16 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, **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.

1. By holding to truth in love, we grow up into the Head, Christ, in all things.
 2. Out from the Head, in the divine dispensing, all the Body is joined closely together through every joint of the rich supply and knit together, interwoven, through the operation in measure of each one part in the divine dispensing.
- E. The joints supplying and the different parts functioning cause the growth of the Body, in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, unto the building up of the Body itself in love.