

**THE CHURCH FOR OUR LIVING**

***“Christ is our life and the church is our living”***

Message One

**The Church is the Assembly and the Family of God**

*Hymns: 1287, 1236, 1260*

**I. The church is the assembly**

*Matthew 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.*

*Matthew 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.*

*Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

*Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.*

*Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 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.*

*Ephesians 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church.*

*Hebrews 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.*

- A. The word church is *ekklesia* in Greek, “the gathering together of the called-out ones.”
- B. We are called out of the world to gather together into the Lord’s name in the meetings of the proper local church

**II. The church is the household: the family and the dwelling place of God**

*Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are . . . members of the household of God.*

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

*1 Timothy 3:14–15 These things I write to you, hoping to come to you shortly. But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.*

*1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him who has begotten loves him also who has been begotten of Him.*

*John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.*

- A. The church is God’s household, His family, sharing the Father’s life and enjoying all His riches.
- B. In the church as God’s dwelling place, there must be love and oneness among all the members of God’s family.

*Closing Hymn: 852*

Message Two

**The Church is the Body of Christ**

*Hymn: 1226*

**III. The church is the Body of Christ, having Christ as its life to express Him**

A. The church is the Body of Christ, the organism of Christ

*Ephesians 1:22–23* And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

*1 Corinthians 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. 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.

1. The Body of Christ as an organism is constituted to carry on the activities of life, by means of members separate in function but mutually dependent (Eph 1:22–23, note 23<sup>2</sup>)
2. In one Spirit we were all baptized into one organic entity, the Body of Christ at the time of our salvation, being placed as members in the Body by God (1 Cor. 12:18), and joined together in the one life of Christ
3. We need to drink the one Spirit daily, by calling on the name of the Lord, reading and pray-reading His Word, and fellowshiping with Him in prayer with other members, to remain in the flow of life, to remain connected to the Body
4. If we do not drink the Spirit daily, the life flow is cut off, and we become a hindrance to the function of the Body

B. Christ is the life of all the individual members, but His complete expression is corporately through the whole Body as the church

*Galatians 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 in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (see note 3: “...to live Christ is to make Him our center and everything in our life.”)

1. Each member of the Body has the life of Christ, but only when the members are together and functioning do we see the full expression of His life
2. All believers are organically united with Him and constituted with His life and element to be His Body and expression—1 Cor. 12:12–13, note 12<sup>2</sup>
3. The members of the Body are not separate and complete individual units, but parts of a living, functioning, coordinated, corporate whole
4. Although the members have different functions, they are not detached from one another; each member is organically joined to all the others and needs the function of all the others

*Romans 12:4–5* For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (see note 5<sup>2</sup>)

- a. What affects one member of the Body affects the entire Body
- b. There is regulation according to the life of Christ in the Body; whatever does not match this life, does not belong in His Body
- c. There is strength and overcoming power in the Body—2 Tim. 2:22

Message Three

**The Church is the Bride of Christ**

*Hymn: 1229*

**IV. The church is the Bride of Christ, the counterpart of Christ to return love to Christ**

**A. Christ loves the church, His Bride**

*Ephesians 5:25b–27 . . . Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word, 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.*

**1. God's eternal intention as seen in Genesis**

*Genesis 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart.*

**2. Man's fall**

*Romans 3:10–12 Even as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, there is none who seeks out God. All have turned aside; together they have become useless; there is none who does good; there is not so much as one."*

**3. Christ's process to redeem us and make us His Bride**

*Romans 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Philippians. 2:6–8 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.*

*Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.*

*2 Corinthians 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

*1 Peter 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.*

*1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the spirit;*

**B. As the Bride of Christ, we should love Christ as our Bridegroom**

**1. We should be virgins loving the Lord with our first love**

*2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.*

**2. Developing and increasing our love for the Lord**

*Mark 12:30 "And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."*

*Closing Hymn: 1159*

**The Church is One New Man**

*Hymns: 1232, 1230*

**V. The church is the New Man, the man in God's new creation having Christ as his person to fulfill God's intention**

- A. God's intention in creating man was for this corporate man (male & female, Adam & Eve) to express Him (the life, nature, and oneness of the Triune God), and to exercise His dominion to defeat His enemy

*Genesis 1:26a, 27 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion . . . And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

- B. Satan's intention in causing man to fall was to make man useless in carrying out God's purpose by creating division and confusion

1. The oneness between the first couple, Adam & Eve, was broken (Genesis 3:1–13) and man was put out of the Garden of Eden

*Genesis 3:24 So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.*

2. The oneness between the first brothers, Cain & Abel, was broken and Cain went away from the presence of Jehovah

*Genesis 4:8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*

*Genesis 4:14, 16a Now You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground, and from Your face I will be hidden; and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me. . . . And Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah . . .*

3. In the days of Noah mankind became flesh, living without God and without any consciousness of God, "past feeling" (Eph. 4:18–19)

*Genesis 6:3a And Jehovah said, My Spirit will not strive with man forever, for he indeed is flesh . . .*

4. At Babel man joined Satan's rebellion and mankind became completely divided and scattered (Gen. 11:5–9)

*Genesis 11:9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there Jehovah confounded the language of all the earth, and from there Jehovah scattered them over the surface of all the earth.*

- C. On the cross Christ abolished all the dividing factors among men and created the church as One New Man

*Galatians 3:27 For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

*Ephesians 2:11–15 11 Therefore remember that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, those who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands, 12 That you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, 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.*

*Colossians 3:10–11* And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

1. On the cross all the factors of division were abolished—all natural distinctions of race, class, gender, culture, language, etc. are gone in Christ
2. In the redeeming blood of Christ we have been brought into oneness with God and with one another (Eph. 2:13)
3. Then on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5–12) and in the Home of Cornelius (Acts 10:44), the Spirit was poured out and the church came into existence in oneness as One New Man

*1 Corinthians 12:13a* For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free

4. In the One New Man Christ is “all and in all”—only Christ is the person of the One New Man—Colossians 3:11 (see footnotes 9 & 10)

- D. We must all cooperate by taking Christ as our person in putting off the old man and putting on the new man for our living in the church life as the One New Man

*Ephesians 4:22–24* **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.

1. By drinking of the one Spirit (*versus* the spirit of disobedience, Eph. 2:2)

*1 Corinthians 12:13b* . . . and were all given to drink one Spirit.

2. By feeding on the Word (*versus* the world, 1 John 2:15–17)

*John 6:63* It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

3. By being renewed in the spirit of our mind (*versus* being fashioned according to this age, Rom. 12:2)—Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10

*Romans 12:2* And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

- E. “Everything the Lord is doing in this present age is to usher in the practical existence of the church as the One New Man,” *Witness Lee*

Message Five

**The Church is the Warrior and the Kingdom of God**

*Hymns: 1172, 885, 1296*

**VI. There are three wills in the universe**

A. The divine will

*Ephesians 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.*

*Mark 4:11a And He said to them, To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, . . .*

B. The Satanic will seeks to overthrow the divine will

*Isaiah 14:13-14 But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north. / I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High.*

*Luke 4:5-6 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because to me it has been delivered, and to whomever I want I give it.*

*John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.*

C. The crucial issue is whether the human will would choose the divine will or the Satanic will

*Mark 3:35 For whoever does the will of God, this one is My brother and sister and mother.*

*1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

*Ephesians 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.*

**VII. The church is the Warrior, the corporate fighter to defeat God's enemy in this age**

*Ephesians 6:11, 13 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil. . . . Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.*

*John 14:30 I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;*

*Ephesians 6:17b-18a . . . which Spirit is the word of God, By means of all prayer and petition, . . .*

*Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death*

A. All warfare has its source in the conflict between the divine will and the satanic will

B. We are under assault by the forces of Satan

C. We maintain our corporate standing in Christ through praying the word

**VIII. The church is the Kingdom, the life and sphere of God's ruling to bring the rule of the heavenly kingdom to the earth, and a matter of exercise and discipline to us in this age**

*Ephesians 2:19* So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints . . .

*Matthew 6:10* Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

*Matthew 4:17* From that time Jesus began to proclaim and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.

*Colossians 1:13* Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

*Romans 14:17* For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (See notes 17<sup>1&2</sup>)

- A. The kingdom is the realm in which God's unique will is expressed
- B. We must repent for the kingdom and choose to live and function in the church life
- C. Our future enjoyment in the kingdom depends upon our exercise to choose the divine will today

Message Six  
**The Church is Our Living**

*Hymns: 1233, 1238, 1248*

**IX. To fulfill the purpose of God's salvation, the church must be our living**

*1 Corinthians 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have come.*

*Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

*Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.*

*Hebrews 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.*

**X. To have the church as our living, we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice, function in the church life, and be burning in spirit to serve the Lord**

**A. We must present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God for the church life**

*Romans 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.*

**B. We must function in the church life according to the grace which has been given to us**

*Romans 12:6–8 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching; Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.*

*1 Corinthians 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.*

*1 Corinthians 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*

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

*Ephesians 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. We must not be lazy, but burning in spirit, serving the Lord as a slave in the church life**

*Romans 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.*

*2 Timothy 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

*Closing Hymn: 853*

Scripture verses taken from *Holy Bible—Recovery Version*  
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