

Message Four

The Increase of Christ for the Increase and Spread of the Church through the One Accord with Prayer, the Spirit, the Word, and the Homes

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 4:2

I. In order to have the increase of Christ for the increase and spread of the church, we must have the one accord; the Greek word for *one accord* is *homothumadon* from *homo*, “same,” and *thumos*, “mind, will, purpose (soul, heart)”:

- A. The one accord is the master key to every blessing in the New Testament; to apply the oneness is to keep it, and to keep it is to practice the one accord—Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 1:3; Rom. 15:29.
- B. In order to have the one accord, we need to care for one thing; the one thing, the unique thing, in the Lord’s recovery is God’s eternal economy with Christ as the centrality and universality—Col. 3:10-11:
1. The one thing that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord’s recovery is the eternal economy of God—1 Tim. 1:3-4.
 2. The content of God’s eternal economy is Christ; actually, Christ Himself in His full ministry of three stages is the divine economy—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6.
 3. God’s desire is to have a recovery purely and wholly of the person of Christ—Col. 1:17b, 18b; 2 Cor. 12:2; 2:10; 3:3.
- C. The *one thing* in Philippians refers to the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ; the *one thing* is the pursuing of Christ to gain Him, lay hold of Him, and possess Him—1:20-21; 2:5; 3:7-14; 4:13:
1. Christ and Christ alone should be the centrality and universality of our entire being—Col. 1:17b, 18b.
 2. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge and experience of Christ; focusing on anything else causes us to think differently, thus creating dissensions among us—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 4:2:
 - a. “Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the *one thing*”—2:2.
 - b. “Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but *one thing*: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward”—3:12-14 (lit.).
 - c. “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of *one thing*, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her”—Luke 10:41b-42.
 - d. “*One thing* I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple”—Psa. 27:4.
- D. We need to consider *one new man* in Ephesians 2:15 together with *one mouth* in Romans 15:6 and *speak the same thing* in 1 Corinthians 1:10:
1. For the church as the one new man, we all need to take Christ as our person in the matter of speaking—Matt. 12:34-37; Eph. 3:17a; John 7:16-18; 8:28, 38a; 12:49-50; 14:10.

2. The entire Bible has one mouth and speaks the same thing—Heb. 1:1-2a.
3. In today's Christianity there are many mouths, each speaking a different thing; this is the pitiful situation of every preacher wanting to speak his own thing and thinking it a shame to speak what others have spoken—Gen. 11:7, 9.
4. In the past there were too many mouths because there were too many persons.
5. In the one new man there is one mouth to speak the same thing—Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.
6. There is only one new man, and the one new man has only one person, so the one new man speaks with one mouth and says the same thing.
7. *With one accord* and *with one mouth* (Rom. 15:6) mean that even though we are many and all are speaking, we all *speak the same thing*—1 Cor. 1:10:
 - a. The church is the one new man with only one person—Christ—and this person controls our speaking; thus, whatever He speaks is surely the same thing.
 - b. When we are about to speak, we need to resolve a basic question: in this matter of speaking, am I the person or is Christ the person?
 - c. If in our speaking we do not take ourselves as the person but allow Christ to be the person, then there will be one mouth, and everyone will speak the same thing.
8. In the one new man there is only one person, and only this person has the freedom to speak—Matt. 17:5:
 - a. In the one new man there is no freedom for us to speak our own things.
 - b. The Lord Jesus has the absolute freedom to speak, and our natural man has absolutely no freedom to speak.
9. Although we are many and come from many places, we all have one mouth and we all speak the same thing; this is because we all are the one new man having only one person—Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; 3:17a; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10.
10. Only one kind of ministry builds up and never divides—this is the unique ministry of God's economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4:
 - a. "Human pride always likes to make the self different from others. You may speak one thing, but I would never speak what you speak because of my pride. I want to speak something different from what you speak, something new and something better. This is the self, and this is fleshly pride" (*The Divine Economy*, p. 124).
 - b. The only way that we can be preserved in the eternal oneness for the one new man is to teach the same thing, the economy of God—Rom. 15:6.

II. The book of Acts shows that the God-ordained way to carry out God's move to fulfill His New Testament economy is entirely by three main substances—prayer, the Spirit, and the Word:

- A. Prayer, the Spirit, and the Word are the three substances of the power in the Lord's recovery—1:8, 14; 4:31; 6:4, 7; 12:24; 19:20.
- B. We must pray that we might have the Spirit as the power to spread the Word—6:7; 12:24; 19:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-4, 8; Eph. 6:17-18; cf. 1 Tim. 5:17-18:
 1. We must get ourselves saturated, constituted, and even soaked with the holy Word; if we are burdened to preach the gospel, we must get into the Word and be persons who know the Word—Col. 3:16.
 2. We should ask the Lord to bring our entire being into the light and be dealt with by Him to become persons of power, who are full of the Spirit within and without, essentially and economically—Eph. 5:18; Acts 2:38; 5:32b; 4:8, 31; 13:9, 52.
- C. The early disciples could not have maintained the one accord if they had different ways, means, agents, or substances for them to carry out the Lord's move on the earth; in

order to maintain the unique one accord, we all have to learn to do the same thing by the same way—1:14; 4:31.

- D. We must not think of taking a way other than prayer, the Spirit, and the Word; any other way will cause dissension and division.
- E. The book of Acts shows that the apostles never initiated any work without prayer; whenever they wanted to do something, they stopped themselves by their prayer, giving God a way to come into them, to fill them up, and to saturate their entire being so that all their activities would be the activities of the acting God—1:14; 2:1-4, 16-17a; 4:24-31; 10:9-16; 12:4-14; 13:1-4; 16:23-26; 22:17-21:
 - 1. In order to be one with the Lord in His work, we need to pray ourselves into God and pray God into us so that we are mingled with God—Matt. 6:6.
 - 2. To pray means to stop ourselves from doing anything apart from the Lord, so that He can do His work through us—14:22-23.
 - 3. To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and can do nothing; prayer is the real denial of the self—Gal. 6:3; cf. Mark 9:28-29.
 - 4. To pray by calling on the name of the Lord is to deny ourselves and to declare, “No longer I...but...Christ”—Gal. 2:20a.

III. Meeting together in homes as the Christian way of meeting together is fitting to God’s New Testament economy:

- A. This way differs from the Judaic way of meeting in the synagogues:
 - 1. The believers broke bread and prayed together from house to house—Acts 2:46.
 - 2. They also announced the gospel and taught Jesus as the Christ from house to house; the gospel can be and should be preached in every home—5:42.
 - 3. Paul spoke of teaching and admonishing the believers from house to house—20:20.
- B. This became a continual and general practice in the churches—cf. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2.
- C. The base for the increase and spread of the church is the establishing of small, vital group meetings in the homes:
 - 1. Small groups in the homes are able to retain people.
 - 2. Small groups in the homes are in the nature of home nurturing, whereas joint meetings of the church and the ministry are in the nature of school education; in order for a church to go on in a good way, we must have small group meetings for home nurturing, and we must also have joint meetings to educate in the truth—cf. 1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 19:9 and footnote 2; 20:7-9; 28:30-31:
 - a. We need to be balanced, because a large meeting hall can help us gain better results; even though we continually beget those who can be nurtured in the homes, there must be a large meeting hall as a “university” to teach and perfect them.
 - b. The principle of houses still applies today, but this does not mean that the church will always meet separately; in fact, *it is important and of great profit* for all the believers to gather quite regularly in one place—1 Cor. 14:23a.
 - 3. The “defensive” function of the small groups is to uphold and restore the saints.
 - 4. The “offensive” function of the small groups is to preach the gospel.
- D. Every believer should be a witness, a martyr, of the Lord (Acts 1:8), sharing with and testifying to others the Christ whom he has “seen and heard” (4:20; 22:15; 1 John 1:1-3).