

Message Three

**Experiencing the Work of the Cross for the Body
and
Living in the Unique Fellowship of the Body**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 12:27; 10:16-17; Rom. 6:6; 12:4-5; Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3

I. If we would live in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to experience the work of the cross for the Body and in the Body—1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 12:12-13, 27; Col. 1:20; 3:15:

- A. The cross leads us to the Body; the knowledge of the cross brings us the knowledge of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:18; 12:12-13, 27; Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5.
- B. The cross leads to the Body, and the cross operates in the sphere of the Body:
 - 1. The work of the cross goes as far as the Body of Christ and consummates with the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2; 12:12-27.
 - 2. Not only does the work of the cross bring us into the Body, but also the Body becomes the realm within which the cross works—Col. 1:20; 3:15.
- C. In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross—Eph. 2:16:
 - 1. The cross will test us and sift away all our mixtures and uncleanness—Matt. 16:24; Luke 22:31-32.
 - 2. The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth—Matt. 16:24-26.
 - 3. Life and work in the Body necessitate drastic dealings with the flesh, and such dealings necessitate a deep knowledge of the cross of Christ—Gal. 5:24.
 - 4. The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross—Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 10:13-15; Eph. 4:7, 16.
 - 5. All of God's dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-8.
 - 6. If our natural life is dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will have the Spirit's anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body—Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16.
- D. The revelation of the Body is very costly, for it touches the spring of our natural life—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20:
 - 1. We will be broken under the vision of the Body, and we will realize that the only way for us to know the Body and to be built up in the Body is to be broken—Acts 9:3-6.
 - 2. Only after the cross has wrought a deep work within us will we be able to be limited by and coordinate with the other members of the Body—1 Cor. 12:14-20.
 - 3. The revelation of the Body will mean a revolution in our spiritual life; this revelation will cause us to see that it is only Christ in us, not anything of ourselves, who constitutes us the members of the Body—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11.

II. Since the Body of Christ is uniquely one universally, the fellowship of the Body of Christ is also uniquely one universally—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7; 1 Cor. 10:16-17:

- A. Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a circulation in the Body of Christ—a circulation which the New Testament calls fellowship—1 John 1:3, 7.
- B. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the stream of the divine life; as the stream of the divine life flows within us, there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7.
- C. The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ; by being restricted in this fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness—1 Cor. 1:9; 12:12-13, 27.
- D. The unique fellowship of the Body of Christ is related to the unique oneness of the Body of Christ—6:17; 10:16-17; 12:20:
 - 1. The fellowship, the circulation, of the divine life in the Body brings all the members of the Body into oneness—Eph. 4:3-6.
 - 2. This oneness is the oneness of the Spirit and also the oneness of the Body of Christ—vv. 3-4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13.
 - 3. The unique fellowship is the genuine oneness of the Body of Christ as the unique ground for the believers to be kept one in Christ—Eph. 4:3-6.
- E. The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17:
 - 1. Because there is one Spirit, there is only one Body, and there is only one circulation of life in the Body; this circulation is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4; 1 John 1:3, 7.
 - 2. A local church is a part of the unique Body of Christ, and the fellowship of the Body is universally one; in fellowship there is no separation—Rev. 1:11; 2:7a.
 - 3. No church or region should isolate itself from the fellowship of the Body.
 - 4. The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Col. 4:16.
 - 5. Among all the churches that compose the one universal Body of Christ, there is no organization, but there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Phil. 1:5.
- F. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we come to practice the unique fellowship of the universal Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:24-26:
 - 1. The Lord's table is a testimony that we who belong to Christ are one.
 - 2. As we enjoy Christ in partaking of His blood and body at His table, we express and practice the fellowship of the Body of Christ, the unique fellowship among the churches—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7; Phil. 1:5; 2:1.