

Message Six

**The Increase of Christ for God's Building**

Scripture Reading: John 3:29-30; Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:13, 15-16

- I. The universe is for the human race, the human race is for the church, and the church is the increase of Christ—Zech. 12:1; Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 3:9-11; John 3:29-30.**
- II. The greatest prophecy in the Bible is in Matthew 16:18: “I will build My church”:**
  - A. The fulfillment of this prophecy has not been fully realized, so even today the greatest prophecy remains unfulfilled—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:13-16.
  - B. The central and divine thought of the Scriptures is that God desires a building that is the mingling of Himself with humanity; such a building is God's house, His dwelling place—Exo. 25:8; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:21-22.
  - C. Preaching the gospel, establishing churches, and edifying the saints are all part of God's main work—the work of building—Matt. 16:18.
  - D. God's building is the corporate expression of the Triune God—1 Tim. 3:15-16; John 17:22; Eph. 3:19b, 21:
    1. God's intention is to have a group of people built up as a spiritual building to express God and represent God by dealing with His enemy and recovering the earth—Gen. 1:26-28; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
    2. God's desire to be expressed and represented by man on earth can be fulfilled only when we are built up together—Eph. 2:21-22.
  - E. The principle of God's building is that God builds Himself in Christ into man and builds man into Himself; God's mingling Himself with man is God building Himself into man, and man's mingling with God is man being built into God—3:17a.
  - F. For the sake of His coming back, the Lord needs the church to be built up; only the church built up according to the Lord's desire can be the steppingstone into the age of the kingdom—Matt. 16:18, 27-28.
- III. For the building up of the church as the house of God and the Body of Christ, we need to “disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” and to teach them to observe all that the Lord has commanded—28:19-20:**
  - A. To baptize someone into the name of the Triune God is to immerse him into all that the Triune God is, into the sum total of the Divine Being.
  - B. The baptism ordained by the Lord baptizes people into the Body life for the kingdom of the heavens—1 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 5:3; 6:33.
  - C. All those who are transferred into Christ are the increase of Christ—Acts 5:14.
  - D. In order to have the increase of Christ for God's building, we must take four steps in our practice: preaching the gospel to gain an increase, having home meetings to keep the increase, having group meetings to teach and perfect the increase, and having church meetings in which all the saints function by prophesying for the building up of the Body of Christ—v. 14; 1 Cor. 14:3-4.

**IV. Since the church is the Body of Christ, His embodiment, the growth of the church is the growth of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16:**

- A. Only the growth of Christ is the growth of the church—Col. 2:19; 1:18:
  - 1. The growth of the church is not determined by an increase in its strengths or merits but by the increase of Christ—John 3:30.
  - 2. The measure of the growth of the church is not determined by an increase in numbers but by the increase of Christ—Acts 5:14.
  - 3. Only the increase of Christ is the growth of the church—John 3:29-30.
- B. God's desire is for Christ to increase and grow in the church and for Christ to become the content and element of the church so that the church would arrive "at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—Eph. 4:13:
  - 1. God's work is to cause the measure of the stature of Christ to increase in the church—3:16-21; 4:13.
  - 2. God is expecting the church to grow to the full measure of the stature of Christ, because God's desire is for the church to be the Body of Christ, His fullness—1:22-23; 4:16.

**V. The building up of the church as the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the believers, and this increase is their growth in life—vv. 15-16:**

- A. The church as the Body of Christ is an organism, and the building up of the church as an organism is its organic growth—Col. 2:19.
- B. Growth, increase, and building up are not three different things; they are synonyms in relation to the organic Body of Christ—Eph. 4:13, 15-16.
- C. The building up of the Body of Christ is the growth of the Body through the members growing up into Christ, the Head, in all things; the Body grows to build up the Body—vv. 15-16.

**VI. In His resurrection the Lord Jesus is building the temple, the Father's house, in a larger way, making it a corporate temple, the mystical Body of Christ—John 2:19-22:**

- A. Since the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus has been enlarging His Body in His resurrection life; He is still working for the building of His Body under the process of resurrection, working on us through the process of resurrection.
- B. Christ, who is resurrection and life, changes death into life for the building of the house of God; our living as Christians is a life of changing death into life for the building up of the mystical Body of Christ—11:25; 2:1-21.
- C. The Father's house is a matter of the Triune God—through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection—working Himself into the believers in order to be fully mingled with them so that He may build them up as an organism for His dwelling and expression—14:2-3, 23.
- D. By the Spirit and through His death and resurrection, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is building an organism, the church, which is His Body and the Father's house, produced by the mingling of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people for His corporate expression; this is the increase of Christ for the building up of the church—vv. 7-24; 3:29-30.