

Message Four

The Supply of the Body, the Members of the Body, and the Limitation of the Body

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19; 1 Cor. 12:15, 21, 27; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:7; 2 Cor. 10:13

I. The supply of the Body is the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, typified by the compound ointment, the holy anointing oil—Phil. 1:19-21a; Exo. 30:23-25:

- A. The compound Spirit is in and for the Body and for the priestly service that builds up the Body—vv. 26-31; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
- B. According to Psalm 133, the inestimable goodness and incalculable pleasantness of brothers dwelling together in oneness is likened to the compound precious ointment—Eph. 4:3.
- C. We receive the supply of the Spirit by the intercession and fellowship of the members:
 1. When we are dry and have no way to go on, we need other brothers and sisters to intercede for us before we can get through—Phil. 1:19; 1 Thes. 5:25; Job 42:8-10.
 2. We need to pray ourselves into God to receive the life-giving Spirit as our supply to feed ourselves and all those under our care for the building up of the Body—Luke 11:1-13.
 3. We cannot live without the supply of the Body; therefore, we must constantly avail ourselves of the fellowship of the Body—1 Thes. 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:16b; 1 John 1:3.
 4. As long as we live in the Body, we will receive the supply of the Body, no matter what our condition is.
 5. If a man wants to see light, he has to enter the church, the sanctuary—Psa. 73:16-17; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
 6. The whole Body is built up through the interdependence among the members—1 Cor. 16:18; Eph. 4:16.

II. In the Body there can be no independence or individualism, for we are members, and members cannot live in detachment from the Body—1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 5:30:

- A. Every believer is a member of the Body of Christ, and every member is indispensable—1 Cor. 12:15, 21; Rom. 12:3.
- B. “If we truly see our position in the Body, it will be as though we were saved a second time” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ*, p. 16)—John 1:50-51; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- C. Those who see that they are members of the Body will surely treasure the Body and honor the other members—1 Cor. 12:23-24; Phil. 2:29; 1 Cor. 16:18; Judg. 9:9.
- D. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individualistic thought and action are ruled out:
 1. If we want to know the Body, we need deliverance not only from our sinful life and our natural life but also from our individualistic life.

2. Just as the Father is versus the world, the Spirit is versus the flesh, and the Lord is versus the devil, so also the Body is versus the individual.
3. Just as we cannot be independent from the Head, we cannot be independent from the Body.
4. Individualism is hateful in the sight of God:
 - a. The enemy of the Body is the self, the independent “I,” the independent “me”—Matt. 16:21-26.
 - b. If we would be built up in the Body, the self must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced.
 - c. We should be dependent not only on God but also on the Body, on the brothers and sisters—Exo. 17:11-13; Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33.
5. What I do not know, another member of the Body will know; what I cannot see, another member of the Body will see; what I cannot do, another member of the Body will do.
6. If we refuse the help of our fellow members, we are refusing the help of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12.
7. Sooner or later all individualistic Christians will dry up.

III. As members of the Body, we must allow ourselves to be limited by the other members, not going beyond our measure:

- A. A basic requirement for the growth and development of the Body is that we recognize our measure and not go beyond it—Eph. 4:7, 16.
- B. The Head sets us in our special place in the Body and points us to our special function—1 Cor. 12:18.
- C. When we give a testimony about our work, experience, or enjoyment of the Lord, we must testify within measure, that is, within a certain limit.
- D. Although we expect the work to spread, we must learn how to be under God’s restriction; we should not expect a spread that is without measure—2 Cor. 10:13-15:
 1. If we spread the work according to the Spirit, there will always be a certain limit—cf. 2:12-14.
 2. Inwardly, we shall have the consciousness that the Lord intends to spread the work only to a certain extent; inwardly, we do not have the peace to spread the work beyond a certain point.
 3. Outwardly, in the environment, the Lord may cause certain matters to restrict the spread of the work; the environment does not allow us to go beyond a particular boundary line—cf. Rom. 15:24.
 4. Like Paul we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us, staying within the limits of God’s ruling, God’s measuring—2 Cor. 10:13.
 5. In the church service we need to realize that God has measured out only so much to us, and we should not overstretch ourselves—Rom. 12:3-4, 6a.