

Message Four

One Goal—the Church as the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:15; 4:15-16

I. Christ is the Head of the Body, the church—Col. 1:18a:

- A. We must see that the church is the Body of Christ, which is an entity constituted with the Triune God and His chosen and redeemed ones—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6.
- B. The Body is the intrinsic significance of the church; if there were no Body, the church would make so sense and have no meaning—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; 1:2.
- C. It is crucial for us to realize that Christ is the Head and that we are the members of His Body—Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16:
 - 1. To live in the Body is to live corporately with the members under the Head.
 - 2. To live the Body life, we must be under the Head and take the Head as our life, the principal object, and the center of our whole being—Col. 1:18; 2:19.
 - 3. The first principle of living in the Body of Christ is to obey the authority of the Head—Eph. 4:15:
 - i. Christ is the Head of the Body, and life can flow freely only when He is in full control—v. 16.
 - ii. The Body's only duty toward the Head is obedience and submission without any opinion, idea, or proposal—John 21:20-22; Acts 13:1-4a.

II. The Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19:

- A. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Eph. 4:16.
- B. God gives the growth by giving Himself to us in a subjective way—3:16-17a.
 - 1. For God to give us growth actually means that He gives us Himself—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 2. The more God is added to us, the more growth He gives—Eph. 4:15-16.

III. In the one Body of Christ we were called to the peace of Christ, which is Christ Himself—Col. 3:15:

- A. By Christ's abolishing in His flesh the separating ordinances, that is, His slaying the enmity, and by His creating the Jewish and Gentile believers into one new man, peace was made between all the believers—Eph. 2:15.
- B. For the Body life we should let the peace of Christ decide all things in our heart in our relationship with the members of His Body—Col. 3:15.

IV. As members of the Body, we need to have the consciousness of the Body and have a feeling for the Body—1 Cor. 12:25-26; Rom. 12:15:

- A. Like Paul, we should take the feeling of the Head as our own feeling; this is most necessary for our living the Body life—Phil. 1:8.
- B. Whatever we do involves the Body; thus, in all that we do, we should care for the Body, taking the Body as the rule in our mind, thoughts, words, and actions—1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2 Cor. 8:21.

V. The unique Body of Christ is expressed in many localities as the local churches—Col. 4:15-16; Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11:

- A. The one Body is the one church of God, manifested in many localities as many local churches—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- B. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a certain locality—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32b, 17; 12:12-13, 20, 27.