

**THE ONE NEW MAN  
FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATING MAN**

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

**Laboring according to God's Operation  
to Present Every Believer Full-grown in Christ  
for the Function and Consummation of the One New Man**

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:28-29; 3:10; Eph. 4:13-16, 24; Rev. 21:2, 10

**I. For the one new man we all need to arrive at “a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”—Eph. 4:13:**

- A. A full-grown man is a mature man; for this, maturity in life is necessary—v. 13.
- B. The fullness of Christ is the Body of Christ, which has a stature with a measure—1:23:
  - 1. The fullness of Christ is the expression of Christ; as Christ's fullness, the Body is Christ's expression—4:13; 1:23.
  - 2. Christ's fullness, the Body, has a stature, and with this stature there is a certain measure; hence, 4:13 speaks of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
  - 3. To arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is to arrive at the full growth and building up of the Body of Christ; it is to arrive at the full completion of the building up of the Body—v. 16.
- C. To arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is necessary for the practical oneness—the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of Christ—v. 13.
- D. From the oneness in reality (vv. 3-6) we need to proceed to the oneness in practicality until we arrive at the three things mentioned in verse 13—the oneness, a full-grown man, and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**II. In order to arrive at a full-grown man for the fulfillment of God's purpose, we need to grow up into Christ in all things—vv. 15-16, 24:**

- A. To be no longer children (v. 14), we need to grow up into Christ; this is to have Christ increase in us in all things until we arrive at a full-grown man.
- B. Whereas taking Christ as our life is for the increase of the measure of the stature of the Body, taking Christ as our person is for the growth of the one new man—3:17a; 4:24:
  - 1. If we take Christ as our person, we will surely take Him as our life—1 John 5:11-12.
  - 2. If we take Christ as our person, we will be able to grow and mature.
- C. We all need to grow up into Christ in all things, that is, in every single thing, whether big or small—Eph. 4:15:
  - 1. There are still many things in which we have not grown up into Christ; in these things we are not in Christ but are outside of Christ.

2. When we all grow up into Christ in all things, we all will be one in Christ; this is the universal one new man—v. 24.
- D. Ephesians 4:15 says that we grow up into the Head; the word *Head* here indicates that our growth in life by the increase of Christ should be the growth of the members in the Body under the Head.
- E. To grow in life is to grow with the growth of God; this means that true growth is the increase of God, the addition of God—Col. 2:19:
1. God is eternal, perfect, and complete; therefore, with God Himself there can be no growth.
  2. The Body needs to grow with the growth, the increase, of God in us:
    - a. It is necessary for God to grow in us; that is, we all need God to grow, to increase, in us.
    - b. The way to grow spiritually is to have God added to us:
      - 1) The dispensing of the Triune God into us causes us to grow with the increase of God—2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:16-17a.
      - 2) God entered into us when we were regenerated, and now He is increasing within us by adding more of Himself to us.
      - 3) This is to grow with the growth, the increase, of God, by having God added into our being.
    - c. What we absorb of Christ into us—the element of the riches of Christ as the soil—becomes the increase of God in us—Col. 2:6-7.
    - d. We need to be permeated and saturated with Christ and to have Christ wrought into our being; then, in reality and practicality, Christ will be every member, every part, of the one new man—3:10-11.
- F. Ephesians 4 speaks of the perfecting of the new man through the growth of life:
1. In Ephesians 2:15 we see the creation of the new man organically; in 4:13-16 we see the perfecting of the new man in relation to his function.
  2. The organically perfect new man needs to be perfected through the growth of life in order to function in a proper way—vv. 13, 15, 24:
    - a. The more the new man grows through receiving the proper nourishment, the more he will function normally.
    - b. The growth into Christ in verse 15 equals the putting on of the new man in verse 24.
  3. For the growth of the corporate new man, we need to experience the crucified, resurrected, ascended, and descending Christ so that the all-inclusive Christ is wrought into us to be our everything; then the organically perfect new man will become perfect functionally—3:16-17a; 4:13, 24.
- G. Growing up into Christ in all things is for the practical existence of the universal one new man—v. 24.

### **III. For the practical existence of the one new man, we need to labor and struggle to present all the saints full-grown in Christ—Col. 1:28-29:**

- A. Paul's ministry was to dispense Christ into others so that they would be perfect and complete by maturing in Christ unto full growth.
- B. Our goal in preaching the gospel to sinners and in fellowshiping with the saints is to minister Christ into them so that they may mature in Him and be presented full-grown in Him; this is for the growth of the new man—v. 28.

- C. Presenting others full-grown in Christ is a very difficult task; this task can be accomplished only by labor in which we struggle according to the operation of God—v. 29.
- D. What Paul did in struggling to present others full-grown in Christ is an example of laboring to perfect the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16:
  - 1. In His recovery the Lord desires to recover the perfecting of all the members of the Body of Christ—vv. 11-16.
  - 2. Paul’s thought concerning the perfecting of the saints is that God’s intention is to have every believer able to do the things that the gifted persons do—v. 11.
  - 3. The Lord wants to recover the perfecting of the saints so that each one part of the Body of Christ may do the work of the ministry by operating in its measure for the building up of the organic Body of Christ—vv. 12, 16.

**IV. When the one new man was created in our spirit through regeneration, it was complete as far as organs are concerned; however, because the new man has not yet been completed in function, there is the need for growth and renewing—Col. 2:19; 3:10; Eph. 4:11-16, 23-24:**

- A. The growth of the new man results in the function of the new man.
- B. As long as the new man is short of growth and renewing, it will be lacking in function.
- C. The one new man needs to grow and develop; as a result, the one new man will be perfect in function.

**V. The New Jerusalem will be the final consummation of the universal one new man—Rev. 21:2, 10:**

- A. God’s goal is to have the universal one new man, which ultimately will consummate in the New Jerusalem.
- B. When we are in the New Jerusalem, we will enjoy the life of the universal one new man.
- C. Today we may have a foretaste of the consummation of the one new man by setting our mind on the things above and by giving a free way for the new man in our spirit to spread into our whole being—Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 4:23-24.

**Excerpts from the Ministry:**

**PRESENTING EVERY MAN FULL-GROWN IN CHRIST**

Speaking of Christ who dwells in us as the hope of glory, Paul says in Colossians 1:28, “Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man full-grown in Christ.” The Greek word rendered “full-grown” may also be translated “mature,” “complete,” or “perfect.” Paul’s ministry was to impart Christ to others so that they may be perfect and complete by maturing in Christ unto full growth. However, many Christian workers today do not have any concept of presenting every man full-grown in Christ. The goal of their work is something other than this. But we must have the same goal that Paul had.

Even in preaching the gospel, our aim should be to impart life in order to present others mature, full-grown, in Christ. As we preach the gospel to unbelievers, minister Christ to them,

and help them to receive the Lord, our goal is not merely that they should be saved from the lake of fire and from God's condemnation. Our goal is not only for them to experience God's forgiveness; it is to minister Christ into them so that they may eventually be presented full-grown in Christ. If we fail to impart Christ to others as we preach the gospel, our gospel preaching will fall short of God's standard. Christ must be infused into all those to whom we speak. Imparting Christ should be our aim in our gospel preaching.

We should have the same goal in our fellowship with the saints. As we contact the saints, our goal should be to minister Christ into them so that they may mature in Him.

Let us now consider several matters related to presenting others mature in Christ.

#### **BY MINISTERING CHRIST AS THE PORTION OF THE SAINTS**

If we would present others full-grown in Christ, we must minister Christ to them as the portion of the saints (v. 12). The Christ we minister must be the all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God's economy (vv. 15, 18-19, 27; 2:4, 9, 16-17; 3:4, 11). If we do not experience Christ in a full way, we shall find it difficult to minister Christ to others. For example, if we do not experience living by Christ, we cannot help anyone else to live by Christ. But if in our daily living we live Christ, grow Christ, and produce Christ, we shall spontaneously infuse Christ into others as we contact them. The more we take Christ as our life and our person, the more we shall be able to minister Christ to others. Having become those who experience Christ and live by Him, we shall influence others to do the same. We need to enjoy Christ as our good land, labor on Him, live in Him, walk in Him, and have our being in Him. If we are such persons, we shall transfuse into others the very Christ whom we experience and by whom we live. In the Lord's recovery what we need is not simply more labor to bring others into the church life. We need to minister the riches of Christ into others so that they may grow and mature. For this we ourselves need to experience more of Christ as the portion of the saints.

#### **BY MINISTERING THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH**

Secondly, to present every man full-grown in Christ, we need to minister the unsearchable riches of Christ for the building up of the church to fulfill God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). It is possible to be what everyone would consider a good brother or sister but still be short of the riches of Christ. In my contact with saints as I have traveled, I have met many who lacked the riches of Christ in their daily living, although everyone would consider them very good brothers and sisters. May the Lord awaken within us the aspiration to be rich in Christ. We need to pray, "Lord, I don't want to be one who seems to be good but who is poor as far as the riches of Christ are concerned. Lord, for the building up of the church, cause me to be filled with the riches of Christ."

I thank the Lord for those saints whose living is characterized by the riches of Christ. Such brothers and sisters are transparent. Those who are short of the riches of Christ, on the contrary, are opaque, altogether lacking in transparency. But those who have the riches of Christ are crystal clear. Whenever you bring something to them in fellowship, the matter becomes clear to you because they themselves are so transparent. Those who enjoy the riches of Christ become clear as crystal. The more we experience the riches of Christ, the more transparent we shall become. May we all desire to be those who are rich in Christ and fully transparent! May we pray, "Lord, make me a member of the Body who is rich in Your life and who is transparent. Save me from being a member who is good but who is short of Christ."

Only those who are rich in Christ can build up the Body for the fulfillment of God's

eternal purpose. We must admit that we still do not have very much building among us. We may be more concerned about our individual spirituality and growth than about the building up of the church. If we are short of Christ and lacking in transparency, we shall have little concern for the building up of the church. But if we are filled with the riches of Christ and thereby become transparent, we shall be deeply concerned for the building up of the church so that God's purpose may be fulfilled.

#### **BY COMPLETING THE WORD OF GOD**

We present others full-grown in Christ by completing the word of God with the full revelation of Christ and the church (Col. 1:25-27). To present others mature in Christ we must help them to have the completion of the word of God concerning Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ. However, if we consider our situation, we shall realize that not many of us are able to complete the word in this way. For this reason I am burdened that we would be stirred up to pursue the Lord. We need to hunger and thirst after Him, to pursue Him until we are filled with His riches. We need to pray, "Lord Jesus, we don't want to be indifferent or lukewarm. We long to be absolute with You and to seek You to the uttermost." If we pursue the Lord in such a way, we shall see more regarding Christ and the church. But if we continue to be short of the riches of Christ, we shall not have in our own experience the completion of the word of God. Hence, there is the desperate need for us to pray and to labor on Christ for the completing of the word of God concerning Christ and the church.

#### **BY MINISTERING CHRIST AS THE MYSTERY OF GOD**

Fourthly, we need to minister Christ as the mystery of God, that is, as the embodiment of God (2:2, 9). We need to share with others from our experience how Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God. We need to be able to testify how we daily experience Christ as the Father, Son, and Spirit. Because we have Christ, we also have the Father. Because we are in Christ, we are also in the Spirit. The Spirit who moves within us actually is Christ Himself. Day by day we should be one spirit with the Lord and experience His being one with us (1 Cor. 6:17). More and more our experience must be that in every aspect of our daily living, wherever we may be, we are one spirit with the Lord. This should not be a doctrine or theory; it must be our practical Christian living.

Concerning my ministry, I often pray like this: "Lord, give me the grace to be one spirit with You as I speak. Lord, I pray that You will speak in my speaking. I believe, Lord, that You are one Spirit with me. But I ask that as I minister the Word, I shall be one spirit with You." Whatever impact this ministry has comes from such a oneness with the Lord.

The Lord is the embodiment of the Triune God. This means that all the riches of the Father are embodied in the Son. Furthermore, the Son is realized in a full way as the Spirit, who is now one spirit with us. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:17, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The matter of being one spirit with the Lord should not be a mere doctrine to us. On the contrary, it must be our daily, practical experience. In our experience we must know what it is to be one spirit with the Lord, who is the embodiment of the Triune God. If we experience Christ as the embodiment of God, we shall be able to minister Christ to others for their nourishment and enrichment. As we minister Christ to others in this way, they will grow in Him. Growth comes by eating. If others feed on the Christ we minister to them as the mystery of God, they will be perfected and mature in Christ.

#### **BY MINISTERING THE CHURCH AS THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST**

If we would present others mature in Christ, we must minister the church as the mystery



of Christ, as the expression of Christ (Eph. 3:4; 1:23). In his subtlety, Satan has caused many seeking Christians to avoid the matter of the church.

My experience with Brother T. Austin-Sparks illustrates how persistently some avoid the church matter. At our invitation, he came to Taiwan in 1955. We had a wonderful time together as he ministered on Christ. He could clearly echo what we had seen about Christ. In 1957 he came to Taiwan a second time. On this visit he touched the church ground, the standing of the church, in a negative way. In 1958 I accepted his invitation to visit him in England. During the days we were together, we had many long conversations about the church. However, he could not change my mind, and I could not change his concept. He tried his best to avoid the subject of the church, but my concept was that we must labor for the building up of the churches. His intention was to convince us that we should give up the ground of the church. But I pointed out to him that it was impossible for us to have the church practically without the ground of the church. Brother Sparks tried to assure me that he was not opposed to the church. He went on to tell me that during the early years of his ministry, he was invited to speak in Edinburgh. When he spoke about Christ, the meeting hall was crowded, and the audience was responsive. But when he spoke about the church, the number of people decreased. This caused him to feel that it was not profitable for him to speak on the church.

I went on to ask Brother Sparks how we could practice the principles we both had seen concerning the Lord's Body. He admitted that these principles could not be put into practice in the denominations. But he would not admit that they could be put into practice only on the proper ground of the church. Instead, he emphasized the fact that the church can be produced only by much prayer and through the Spirit. Then I said to him, "Do you think that so many churches on the island of Taiwan did not all come into existence by prayer and through the Spirit?" I asked him what a group of saints should do after they had prayed regarding the church. Still he would not admit that they should take the standing of the church on the ground of oneness. He simply said that they needed to be assured that any move they made was of the Spirit. This was the conclusion of our conversation about the church.

I tried my best to convince him concerning the church, and he tried his best to avoid the church. Eventually, neither of us would change our position.

Today a battle is raging over the church as the expression of Christ. Due to the subtlety of the enemy, most Christian bookstores will sell Brother Nee's books on spirituality but not his books on the church. Christians, however, cannot become full-grown without the church life. Brother Nee's books related to spiritual matters have been popular with Christians around the world for many years. But the popularity of these books has not caused the condition of Christianity to improve very much. Without the church life, the help people received from Brother Nee's books would eventually leak away because the church life is the only proper vessel to preserve this help. For some, the spiritual books by Brother Nee for the most part supply new doctrinal concepts. Not much is gained for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Does the Lord want people who only seek after spirituality but who do not participate in the proper church life? Certainly not! Apart from the church, God's purpose cannot be fulfilled. Because we realize this, the Lord's burden concerning the church presses heavily upon us. We need to practice the church life for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. We also need to be faithful to minister the church as the mystery of Christ, as the very expression of Christ.

The Lord's desire is to have the Body, the church. He does not want the church in terminology—He wants the church in practicality. In order for the church life to be practical, there must be local churches. This is made clear in *The Practical Expression of the Church*. Today

the practical expression of the church can only be in the local churches. Oh, may we all learn to minister the church as the mystery of Christ, as His expression, in order that others may be presented full-grown in Christ!

Some have claimed that the ministry concerning the church has no future because the opposition against it is so widespread and intense. Certainly if this ministry is simply the work of man, it has no future. But if this ministry is the ministry in the Lord's recovery, the future will be bright. The more others advise us not to minister on the church, the more we must be faithful to minister regarding it. We must be bold and faithful to speak not only of Christ, the Head, but also of the church, His Body. We must not follow today's Christianity. On the contrary, we must follow the pure Word to minister the church as the mystery of Christ.

#### **BY MINISTERING CHRIST AS LIFE TO HIS MEMBERS**

Finally, we need to minister Christ as life to His members so that they may live by Him and grow with Him unto maturity. Colossians 3:4 says that Christ is our life; and in John 6:57; 14:19; and Galatians 2:20 we see that we need to live by Him. Then we shall grow with Him unto maturity (Eph. 4:15, 13).

If we desire to present others full-grown in Christ, we must minister to them all the matters we have considered in this message. What a great need there is for the believers to be infused with all the things related to God's economy! If we are faithful to minister these crucial points, we shall be able to present others full-grown in Christ. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 129-136)