

Message Five

The Way Christ Builds the Church as the Temple of God

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17a; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:6-7; John 14:2, 20, 23

I. Christ builds the church as the temple of God by building Himself into us—Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17a:

- A. At the beginning of the New Testament, Christ is introduced first as the Son of David to fulfill God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7—Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45.
- B. David wanted to build God a house, but God wanted to build Himself into David—2 Sam. 7:2-3, 5, 12-14a, 16.
- C. The intrinsic significance of 2 Samuel 7:12-14a is that the Triune God is working Himself in His processed and consummated Trinity into His chosen people; therefore, 2 Samuel 7:12-14a is on the Triune God working Himself into us to make us His dwelling place:
 1. We need to let God work Christ as the Spirit into every part of our being so that we will be constituted with Christ—1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 3:16-17a.
 2. God will have a temple, a dwelling place, not by our doing or working but by His building—Matt. 16:18:
 - a. Christ builds the church as the temple of God by coming into our spirit and spreading Himself into our mind, emotion, and will—Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17a.
 - b. God in Christ is within us to build Himself into our being and to build us into His being; this is the way that Christ builds the temple of God—Matt. 16:18; John 2:19-21; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17a.
 - c. The Christ who is built into us is both God's house and our house; this house is a mutual abode, where God and we, we and God, become a mutual dwelling place—John 14:2, 23; 15:4a.

II. Christ builds the church as the temple of God by the mingling of divinity with humanity—Matt. 12:23, 42; 16:18; John 2:19-21; 14:2-3, 20, 23:

- A. The true meaning of building is that God is building Himself into man and building man into Himself; this is the mingling of God and man—Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-17a.
- B. God's unique purpose is to mingle Himself with us so that He becomes our life, our nature, and our content, and we become His corporate expression—John 14:20; 15:4-5; Eph. 3:16-21; 4:4-6, 16.
- C. The mingling of God and man is an intrinsic union of the elements of divinity and humanity to form one organic entity, yet the elements remain distinct in the union.
- D. The Body of Christ is the enlargement of Christ, the enlargement of the One who is the mingling of God and man—1:22-23; 4:4-6, 16:
 1. In the Gospels the mingling of God and man produced the Head—Eph. 1:22-23.
 2. In Acts the enlargement of the mingling of God and man produces the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16.

3. The Body of Christ is absolutely a matter in the mingled spirit; to be in the reality of the Body of Christ is to be in the mingled spirit and to live in the mingled spirit—Rom. 8:4-5; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12-13, 27.
 4. The church as the Body of Christ is a group of people who allow Christ to be mingled with them and who are mingled with God—Eph. 3:16-21; 4:16.
- E. Eventually, the Triune God and redeemed humanity will be mingled and built up as one entity—the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 10:
1. The New Jerusalem is built by God's constituting of Himself into man to make man the same as God in life, nature, and constitution so that God and man may become one corporate entity—vv. 18-21.
 2. The New Jerusalem is a composition of divinity and humanity mingled together as one entity—vv. 3, 22:
 - a. All the components have the same life, nature, and constitution and thus are a corporate person.
 - b. God and man, man and God, are built up together; this is the consummation of Christ's building.

III. Christ builds the church as the temple of God through the believers' growth in life and their being joined together in the divine life—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19:

- A. In Christ, who is the cornerstone, all the building is fitted together and growing into a holy temple in the Lord—Eph. 2:20-21:
1. To be fitted together is to be made suitable for the condition and situation of the building.
 2. Since the building is living (1 Pet. 2:5), it is growing; it grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
 3. The actual building up of the church is by the believers' growth in life—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21; 4:15-16:
 - a. The building of the church as the temple of God is by the believers' growth in life; the growth in life is the building—1 Cor. 3:9, 16-17; Eph. 4:15-16.
 - b. When we grow in the divine life and when we are joined together in the divine life, we are the building, the temple of God—2:21.
- B. Ephesians 4:16 and Colossians 2:19 speak of the growth of the Body:
1. To grow is to have Christ added into us—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Gal. 4:19.
 2. The growth of the Body depends on what comes out of Christ as the Head—Eph. 4:15-16:
 - a. When the Body is supplied by holding the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God—Col. 2:19.
 - b. The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head—Eph. 4:15-16.
 3. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—Col. 2:19.
 4. The more that God is added into us, the more growth He gives to us; this is the way that God gives the growth, which is the building up of the church as the temple of God—1 Cor. 3:6-7, 16-17.