

The Intrinsic and Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

Message One

The Intrinsic Essence of the Church for Its Organic Existence

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:2; John 1:12-13; 3:29-30;

12:24; Gen. 2:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:12, 28

- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Outline

I. The intrinsic essence of the church is the divine life, which generates the church—1 John 1:2; 5:1:

- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him who has begotten loves him also who has been begotten of Him.

- A. The intrinsic essence of the church is the divine life, the indestructible life, which the processed Triune God has dispensed into us and is now dispensing into us; this divine life is actually the processed and now-dispensing Triune God—John 14:6; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4:

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

2 Cor. 5:4 For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

1. The divine life generates us by the regeneration of the Spirit in our spirit; the divine Spirit begets the human spirit, and these two spirits are mingled as one—John 3:3, 5-6; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

2. When we are regenerated, we are made the children of God as the bride of Christ, who is the Bridegroom, for His increase, as typified by Eve as the counterpart to Adam—John 1:12-13; 3:29-30; Gen. 2:21-23:

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.

Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.

- a. Before Eve came into existence, she was a rib of Adam, a part of Adam; according to this revelation, we can say that before the church came into existence, she was a part of Christ; just as the members of our physical body are parts of us, the members of Christ

are parts of Christ—vv. 21-23; Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:5; cf. Acts 9:5.

- Gen. 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen. 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.
- Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,
- Eph. 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph. 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

b. Just as Adam's rib imparted life into Eve to make her Adam's counterpart, so Christ's eternal, divine, indestructible life imparts life into us to make us His counterpart—Gen. 2:22; Heb. 7:16; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.

- Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Heb. 7:16 Who has been appointed not according to the law of a fleshy commandment but according to the power of an indestructible life.
- 1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

B. Christ became the intrinsic essence of the church through the release of His divine life as the one grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying there for His multiplication—John 12:24; Luke 12:49-50.

- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
- Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!

C. Christ became the intrinsic essence of the church through the impartation of His divine life as the firstborn Son of God in His resurrection, that God may have many sons as the many brothers of Christ—1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11-12.

- 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Heb. 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb. 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."

- D. The many brothers of Christ are His many branches grafted into Him, the true vine in the universe, to bear much fruit for His enlargement in His spreading so that they might express the Triune God as His organism; when the branches of the vine receive a sufficient supply of the life-giving Spirit as the life-juice of Christ, they bear fruit as the overflow of the inner life supply—John 15:1, 4-5, 16, 8; Rom. 11:17, 24.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 15:8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.

Rom. 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a fellow partaker of the root of fatness of the olive tree,

Rom. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!

- E. This organism of the Triune God is the organic Body of Christ, constituted with His many brothers as the many members of His organic Body—Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 12:5.

Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

II. We need to see and experience the organic existence of the church—Eph. 1:17:

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

- A. The church exists in the universe as the one universal church of God for His universal expression, the fullness of God—1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; Eph. 3:19b.

1 Cor. 10:32 Do not become a stumbling block, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

- B. The church is spreading in many localities on the earth as the many local churches to be His local expressions—Rev. 1:4, 11:

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

1. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul puts apostles (who are universal), prophets and teachers (who are both universal and local), and deacons and elders (who are local) all together; this

means that the word church in this verse implies the universal church and all the local churches.

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

2. In the eyes of God the universal church and all the local churches are just “the church”; the processed and now-dispensing Triune God is one, and He is the very essence of the church; therefore, this church, in both its universal and local aspects, is one church.

C. When we come back to the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence, we will not talk wrongly about the erroneous teaching that the local churches could be different from one another; all the churches are the unique, one organism of the processed and dispensing Triune God.

D. According to the Scriptures, the practical, sevenfold oneness is for us to be (1) one in teaching (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 16:1; Acts 2:42; Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3; Eph. 4:13-14), (2) one in practice (1 Cor. 11:16; 14:33b-34), (3) one in thinking (Phil. 2:2, 5-8; 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:10), (4) one in speaking (Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10), and (5), (6), & (7) one in essence, appearance, and expression (Rev. 1:11-12).

1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Cor. 7:17 However as the Lord has apportioned to each one, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.

1 Cor. 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also do.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Rom. 16:17 Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.

1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

1 Cor. 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the churches of God.

1 Cor. 14:33b ...As in all the churches of the saints,

1 Cor. 14:34 The women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they should be subject, even as the law also says.

Phil. 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Phil. 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,

Phil. 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

- Phil. 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
- Phil. 4:2 I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.
- 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.
- Rom. 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.
- Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

III. We must continuously exercise our spirit (1 Tim. 4:7) and turn our heart to the Lord (2 Cor. 3:16-18) in order to stay on the way of life in the reality of the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence:

- 1 Tim. 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- 2 Cor. 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- A. We must walk in the way of life to live by the tree of life according to the spirit, not in the way of death to live by the tree of the knowledge of right and wrong according to the self—Gen. 2:9; Rom. 8:4, 6; 2 Cor. 2:13; Matt. 16:24.
- Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- 2 Cor. 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
- Matt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
- B. We stay on the way of life by loving the Lord to the uttermost; to believe in the Lord is to receive Him as life; to love the Lord is to enjoy Him as life—Mark 12:30; S. S. 1:4a.
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- S.S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you - The king has brought me into his chambers - / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.
- C. The love between us and the Lord depends on our thoughts:
1. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul says that he betrothed us to one husband to present us as a pure virgin to Christ with a proper love toward Him in order to enjoy Him; then in verse 3 Paul tells us that it is possible for our thoughts to be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity

toward Christ.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

2. The following symptoms of problems with man's thoughts are all hindrances to the enjoyment of Christ as life:

a. The first symptom of problems with man's thoughts is having hardened thoughts—3:14.

2 Cor. 3:14 But their thoughts were hardened; for until the present day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant, it not being unveiled to them that the veil is being done away with in Christ.

b. The second symptom of problems with man's thoughts is being blinded by Satan—4:4.

2 Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.

c. The third symptom of problems with man's thoughts is rebellion—10:4-5.

2 Cor. 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds,

2 Cor. 10:5 As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.

d. The fourth symptom of problems with man's thoughts is corruption—11:3.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

3. We should pray, "O Lord, search my thoughts, and rescue my thoughts so that they can focus solely and entirely on You"—Rom. 8:6; Psa. 139:23-24.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Psa. 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;

Psa. 139:24 And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.

4. To enjoy Christ as the intrinsic essence of the church, we must have a burning love toward Him by giving Him the first place in all things—Rev. 2:4-5, 7; Col. 1:18b; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Rom. 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

2 Tim. 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2 Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

D. May we continuously receive the merciful compassions of our God (Heb. 4:16; Luke 1:78-79) so that we may remain on the way of life, the line of life, and in the maintenance of life by enjoying Christ as the tree of life in the flow of life for God's building in life by our growth in life; this is for us to remain in the intrinsic essence of the church for its organic existence (Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2; Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; John 6:57, 63; 7:38-39; 20:22).

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,

Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.