

THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

The Status of the Church—the New Man

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:15-16; 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-11

- I. The church, the Body of Christ, is the one new man to accomplish God's eternal purpose—Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11; 2:15-16; 4:22-24; Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9:**
 - A. God's intention in His creation of man was to have a corporate man to express Him and to represent Him—Gen. 1:26.
 - B. God's creation of man in Genesis 1 is a picture of the new man in God's new creation; this means that the old creation is a figure, a type, of the new creation—Eph. 2:15; 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17.
 - C. Eventually, the church as the one new man is the corporate man in God's intention; the one new man fulfills the twofold purpose of expressing God and dealing with God's enemy—Gen. 1:26.
- II. The one new man was created through Christ's death on the cross—Eph. 2:15-16:**
 - A. The one new man was created by Christ with two kinds of material—the redeemed created man and the divine element; on the cross Christ put these two materials together to produce a new man.
 - B. In the creating of the new man, first our natural man was crucified by Christ, and then through the crossing out of the old man, Christ imparted the divine element into us, causing us to become a new entity—Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:17.
 - C. Apart from being in Christ, we could not have been created into one new man, because in ourselves we do not have the divine essence, which is the element of the new man—Eph. 2:15:
 1. Only in the divine essence and with the divine essence were we created into the one new man; it is possible to have this essence only in Christ.
 2. Christ Himself is the essence of the new man; hence, in Himself He created the two, the Jews and the Gentiles, into one new man.
 3. In the one new man Christ is all because He is the essence with which the new man was created; therefore, the one new man is Christ—Col. 3:11.
- III. The church is the one new man, and in this new man Christ is all and in all; we have no place—vv. 10-11:**
 - A. God's intention in His economy is that Christ be everything; therefore, it is crucial for us to see that God wants nothing but Christ and that in the eyes of God nothing counts except Christ—Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:18; 2:2, 17; 3:4, 10-11:
 1. God's intention is to make Christ His Son the center of His economy and also to make Him everything to the believers—1:18; 2:17.
 2. God's economy is to work the all-inclusive Christ into us—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:11.

- B. There is no natural person in the one new man, and there is no possibility, no room, for any natural person—vv. 10-11:
 - 1. In the one new man there is only one person—the all-inclusive Christ—2:17; 3:4, 11.
 - 2. The one new man is just Christ—Christ spreading and Christ enlarged.
- C. The new man is uniquely one—one in Christ and one with Christ; we are one by Christ and through Christ—Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:11:
 - 1. If we are not in Christ, we have no share, no part, in the new man; rather, we are through with the new man.
 - 2. If we are in Christ but do not live Christ, we have a problem related to the new man.
- D. The one new man comes into being as we are saturated, filled, and permeated with Christ and replaced by Him through an organic process—2 Cor. 3:18:
 - 1. The new man is Christ in all the saints permeating us and replacing us until all natural distinctions have been removed and everyone is constituted of Christ—Col. 3:11.
 - 2. The all-inclusive Christ must be wrought into us organically until He replaces our natural being with Himself—Eph. 3:17a; Gal. 4:19.
- E. In the one new man, Christ is all the members and is in all the members—Col. 3:11:
 - 1. The Christ who dwells in us is the constituent of the one new man—1:27; 3:11.
 - 2. Because Christ is all the members of the new man, there is no room in the new man for any race, nationality, culture, or social status—vv. 10-11.
 - 3. In order for us to experience the reality of Christ being all the members of the new man, we need to take Christ as our life and person and live Him, not ourselves—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20-21a.
 - 4. It is very significant that Paul said both that Christ is all and that He is in all—Col. 3:11:
 - a. We should not think that because Christ is all the members of the one new man, we are nothing and are not needed.
 - b. The fact that Christ is in all the members of the new man indicates that the members continue to exist—v. 11.

IV. We need to see that all the local churches in the different countries are one new man—vv. 10-11; 4:15-16:

- A. All the churches are not merely individual local churches but are the one new man—Eph. 2:15-16:
 - 1. We cannot say that each local church is a new man; rather, all the local churches on earth are the one new man—4:24.
 - 2. The one new man is a matter not merely of individual localities and individual churches but of all the churches on earth corporately.
- B. Among the churches in the Lord’s recovery, there should be no “nations”—Matt. 16:18; 1 Thes. 1:1; Rom. 16:16b; 3 John 9-10:
 - 1. We do not care to have a little “nation,” an empire, in which we can be a king; rather, we care to be in the one new man—Matt. 20:25-26a.

2. The building of the church depends on the existence of the one new man—16:18; Eph. 2:21-22.
- C. Today is the day to have a new man constituted of all the local churches, including all the saints as one in Christ, who is all in all; this will be the ultimate church life—a universal new man living out Christ—Col. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:24; Phil. 1:20-21a.
- V. The goal of the Lord’s recovery is to bring forth the one new man—Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-11:**
- A. What was divided and scattered in the old man is recovered in the new man; to put off the old man is to put off the divided and scattered man; to put on the new man is to put on the gathered and one new man—Gen. 11:5-9; Acts 2:5-12; Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:10-11.
- B. What the Lord has been doing and is now doing in His recovery is bringing forth the one new man with Himself as the life and the person for God’s expression—Eph. 3:17-19; Col. 3:4, 10-11.
- C. The requirement that everyone be only one man is exceedingly high; for the practical existence of the one new man, we need to rise up together to take Christ as our person—Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:15; 3:17a.
- D. The one new man will conclude this age, usher in the kingdom of God, and bring Christ, the King, back to this earth—Rev. 11:15.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE NEW MAN

The book of Ephesians reveals that the church is the Body of Christ (1:22-23), the kingdom of God, the household of God (2:19), and the temple, the dwelling place of God (2:21-22). In 2:15 and 4:24 we see that the church is the new man. Ephesians 2:15 says, “Having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace.” Ephesians 4:24 says, “And have put on the new man, which according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Furthermore, Colossians 3:10 says, “And having put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.” The Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, means those called out for a gathering; hence, an assembly. This is the initial aspect of the church. From this aspect we need to go on to the aspects of the house of God and the kingdom of God. These are higher than the initial aspect but not as high as the aspect of the church as the Body of Christ. Yet the new man is still higher than the Body of Christ. Thus, the church is not just an assembly of believers, a kingdom of heavenly citizens, a household of God’s children, nor even a Body for Christ. In an even higher aspect, the church is the new man to accomplish God’s eternal purpose. The emphasis on the church being the Body of Christ is on life, whereas the emphasis on the church being the new man is on the person. As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life. As the new man, the church needs Christ as its person. The body without life is not a body but a corpse. However, when the body makes a move, it is decided not by life but by the person. Hence, in the new man we need to take Christ as our person. The new man as a corporate person should live a life as Jesus lived on earth, that is, a life of truth, expressing God and causing God to be realized as reality by man.

God’s creation of man in Genesis 1 is a picture of the new man in God’s new creation.

This means that the old creation is a figure, a type, of the new creation. In God's old creation the central character is man. It is the same in God's new creation. Therefore, in both the old creation and the new creation man is the center.

God created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26) and then gave man His dominion. Image is for expression. God wants man to be His expression. Dominion, however, is a matter not of expression but of representation. God wants man to represent Him in His authority for His dominion. In the old creation man was created to have God's image to express Him and also to have His dominion to represent Him.

The image refers to God's positive intention, and dominion to God's negative intention. God's positive intention is that man would express Him, whereas God's negative intention is that man would deal with God's enemy, Satan, the Devil. In the universe God has a problem, the problem of dealing with His enemy. Since God's enemy, the Devil, is a creature, God will not deal with him directly Himself; instead, He will deal with him by man, a creature of His creation. God deals with His enemy through man. Hence, in God's creation of man there were two intentions. The positive intention is that man would bear God's image for His expression; the negative intention is that man would have God's dominion to represent Him to deal with His enemy.

In the old creation the dominion given to man was limited to the earth. This means that in the old creation the dealing with God's enemy was restricted to the earth. However, in God's new creation the dominion has been enlarged to the entire universe.

Eventually, the church as the new man is the man in God's intention. God wanted a man, and in the old creation He created a figure, a type, not the real man. The real man is the man Christ created on the cross through His all-inclusive death. This man is called the new man.

The term "the new man" reminds us of the old man. The old man did not fulfill God's dual purpose. However, the new man in God's new creation does fulfill the twofold purpose of expressing God and dealing with God's enemy.

Created by Christ

Ephesians 2:15 reveals that the church as the new man was created by Christ. Christ created the one new man with God's nature wrought into humanity. This action was something new. In the old creation God did not work His nature into any of His creatures, not even into man. In the creation of the one new man, however, God's nature has been wrought into man to make His nature one entity with humanity.

The new creation, like the old creation, is not something individual but something corporate. In the old creation God did not create millions of men; on the contrary, He created one man, Adam, who includes all men. The principle is the same with God's new creation. In the new creation we are all parts of the new man, the church, composed of the many sons of God.

There is a basic difference between the new creation and the old creation. God's life and nature are not wrought into the old creation, but the new creation does possess the divine life and the divine nature. Although the old creation came into being through the work of the mighty God, He Himself does not reside in it. Hence, the first creation has no divine content. The divine nature does not dwell in the old creation, and that is why it has become old. Adam did not have the life of God or the nature of God. We can receive the divine life and the divine nature only by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and being regenerated by the Spirit. When we believed in Christ, God's life and nature were imparted to us and made us a new creation.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.” Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old things of the flesh have passed away through the death of Christ, and all has become new in Christ’s resurrection. To be in Christ is to be one with Him in life and in nature. This is of God through our faith in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:26-28).

The words, “Behold, they have become new,” are a call to watch the marvelous change of the new creation. The word “they” refers to the old things. The old creation does not have the divine life and nature; however, the new creation, composed of the believers born again of God, does have the divine life and nature (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). Hence, the believers are a new creation, not according to the old nature of the flesh but according to the new nature of the divine life.

The new creation is actually the old creation transformed by the divine life, by the processed Triune God. The old creation was old because God was not part of it; the new creation is new because God is in it. We who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God are still God’s creation, but we are now His new creation. However, this is real only when we live and walk by the Spirit. Whenever we live and walk by the flesh, we are in the old creation, not in the new creation. Anything in our daily life that does not have God in it is the old creation, but what has God in it is part of the new creation.

If we would be in the new creation, we must enter into an organic union with the Triune God. Apart from such a union we shall remain in the old creation. But now, by the organic union with the Triune God, we are in the new creation. As believers in Christ, we are the new creation through an organic union with the Triune God.

In Adam we were born into the old creation, but in Christ we were regenerated into the new creation. Here in the new creation we are not only God’s assembly, God’s house, and God’s kingdom and not only Christ’s Body and counterpart—we are also the new man. God’s intention is to have a corporate, universal man. God wants such a man for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. On the one hand, we were created in God’s old creation and became the old man; on the other hand, we have been re-created in God’s new creation and have become the new man.

In Himself

In Ephesians 2:15 we see that the new man was created by Christ in Himself. The phrase “in Himself” here is very significant. It indicates that Christ was not only the Creator of the one new man, the church, but also the sphere in which and the essence with which the one new man was created.

Christ is the element of the new man. Nothing of our old man was good for the creation of the new man, for our former essence was sinful. But in Christ there is a wonderful essence, in which the one new man has been created. This new man, created by Christ in Himself, is corporate and universal. There are many believers, but there is only one new man in the universe. All the believers are components of this one corporate and universal new man.

On the Cross

The new man was created by Christ in Himself in a particular way. This particular way was Christ’s death, for Christ created the new man when He was on the cross. While Christ was being put to death, He was working to create the one new man. In His death He created the different peoples into the new man. His death, therefore, was a tool used to work out the new creation.

The new man, unlike the old, was not created out of nothing. On the contrary, the new

man was created out of the old man. This is indicated by the fact that, according to Ephesians 2:15, Christ brought the Jews and the Gentiles to the cross and there, through His death, created them into the one new man. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2301-2306)

According to God

Ephesians 4:24 says, "And have put on the new man, which according to God was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." The old man was created according to the image of God outwardly without God's life and nature (Gen. 1:26-27). But the new man was created according to God Himself inwardly, with God's life and nature.

Actually, for the new man to be created according to God is for the new man to be created according to God's image. To be created "according to God" means to be created according to the image of God.

Because the new man has been created in Christ and with Christ according to God, the new man bears the image of God. Eventually, the new man will bear the image of God in holiness and righteousness of the reality.

In Righteousness and Holiness of the Truth

Ephesians 4:24 tells us that the new man was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Righteousness is being right with God and with man according to God's righteous way; the denotation of the word "holiness" here in Greek, different from that of the word "holy" in Romans 1:2, is being godly and devout before God. Righteousness is mainly toward men, and holiness mainly toward God.

Righteousness and holiness here refer to the two main characteristics of the life of Jesus in His humanity as indicated in Ephesians 4:21. The new man is created according to God in both of these aspects.

The righteousness and holiness of the new man are of "the truth." The article before "truth" in verse 24 is emphatic. As the deceit in verse 22, related to the old man, is the personification of Satan, so truth here, related to the new man, is the personification of God. This truth was exhibited in the life of Jesus, as mentioned in verse 21. In the life of Jesus righteousness and holiness of truth were always being manifested. It was in the righteousness and holiness of this truth, which is God realized and expressed, that the new man was created.

Dean Alford says that in 4:24 truth denotes the essence of God, for God is truth. This is in contrast to the lusts of the deceit mentioned in verse 22. Deceit is the essence of Satan, who is a liar, but truth is the essence of God, who is truth. Thus, the lusts are of Satan, who is the deceit, whereas righteousness and holiness are of God, who is the truth. M. R. Vincent points out that in these verses deceit and truth should be personified. The new man is created according to God in righteousness and holiness, two aspects of God's essence.

Righteousness, holiness, and the truth in 4:24 are actually God Himself. All these are embodied in Christ. Therefore, righteousness is Christ, holiness is Christ, and the truth is Christ. When Christ created the new man on the cross through His death, He did this according to God in Himself as righteousness, holiness, and the truth. This is marvelous. In the present age we cannot exhaust the experience of Christ as righteousness, holiness, and the truth. When we are in the New Jerusalem, however, we shall realize and understand how Christ created us into the new man through His cross according to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth. We shall understand that all these are attributes of Christ. Christ created us according to God in Himself as all these attributes. He is the model, the mold. In His work of creation on the cross, He molded us in Himself. As a result, we shall bear His image; that is, we shall bear His righteousness, holiness, and the truth.

Whereas Ephesians 4:24 says that the new man was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth, Colossians 3:10 says that the new man is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. The image of Christ in Colossians 3:10 is the righteousness and holiness of the truth in Ephesians 4:24. Christ is the image of God and the embodiment of God (Col. 1:15; 2:9). When He was on earth, He was a man who was righteous and holy and full of love and light. This was God's image expressed in the man Jesus. Today the church as the new man bears the image of God; that is, the new man bears God's righteousness and holiness and also His love and light. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2309-2311)