

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2018**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
ENJOYING THE RICHES OF CHRIST
FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Message Thirteen

**Experiencing, Enjoying, Proclaiming, and Ministering
the Riches of Christ for the Corporate Christ**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 3:8; 4:12; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8-9; 4:1-2, 10-12

- I. “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. 12:12:**
- A. In Greek *Christ* here is “the Christ,” referring to the corporate Christ, composed of Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as its members—v. 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16.
 - B. All the believers of Christ are organically united with Him and constituted with His life and element to become His Body, an organism, to express Him; hence, He is not only the Head but also the Body—Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 1:18, 27; 3:4, 10-11.
 - C. As our physical body has many members yet is one, so is this Christ—1 Cor. 12:12.
 - D. The corporate Christ, the Body-Christ, includes not only Christ Himself but also all the believers who are members of Christ’s Body, the members of Christ, parts of Christ—vv. 14-27:
 - 1. According to our natural constitution, we cannot be members of Christ’s Body.
 - 2. Christ Himself is the constituent that makes us parts of Him—Col. 3:10-11.
 - 3. In order to be parts of Christ as members of His Body, we must have Christ wrought into our being—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17.
 - 4. Intrinsically, the church is altogether Christ Himself, for He is the constituent, the being, of the church, whereas we are simply the extrinsic form of the church.
 - 5. As the intrinsic content of the church, Christ is the Head and also the Body and even every member of the Body and in every member—Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:4, 10-11.
 - E. The Christ who is the intrinsic constituent of the Body of Christ is the embodiment of the processed Triune God, with His unsearchable riches—2:9; Eph. 3:8:
 - 1. *The fullness* in Colossians 2:9 refers to the expression of the riches of God.
 - 2. The unsearchable riches of Christ are actually the fullness of the Godhead:
 - a. With the Godhead there is the fullness; with Christ the fullness becomes the unsearchable riches—v. 9; Eph. 3:8.
 - b. The fullness of the Godhead has become the unsearchable riches of Christ to be dispensed into us for our experience and enjoyment.

- F. As the embodiment of the processed Triune God, Christ is the all-inclusive One with the unsearchable riches—v. 8:
 - 1. The riches of Christ are what He is to us; there are countless aspects of the riches of Christ, for He is the reality of every positive thing in the universe—Col. 2:16-17.
 - 2. The riches of Christ include both human virtues and divine attributes.
- G. We need to know, experience, and enjoy the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are for the producing of the church as His expression—Eph. 3:8, 10:
 - 1. This takes place through the dispensing of Christ into the believers.
 - 2. The church is produced not by teaching or organizing but by the dispensing of Christ.
 - 3. The more Christ is dispensed into us, the more uplifted the church is.
 - 4. By absorbing the riches of Christ, we become the Body of Christ as His fullness to express Him—v. 8; 1:22-23.
 - 5. The Body of Christ is constituted with the riches of Christ that we have experienced, enjoyed, and assimilated—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:16-21; 4:16.

II. For the corporate Christ we need to announce the riches of Christ as the gospel—Eph. 3:8:

- A. The apostle Paul enjoyed and announced the person of Christ with His unsearchable riches as the gospel to produce the church as the fullness of Christ, the expression and overflow of Christ—vv. 8-11; 1:22-23.
- B. The unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel are revealed in all twenty-seven books of the New Testament; this wonderful, heavenly Christ is the embodiment of the processed Triune God, reaching us as the consummated life-giving Spirit so that we can continually receive Him as grace upon grace to be renewed day by day for serving our God in newness of spirit in the gospel of His Son—John 1:14, 16; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 1:9; 7:6:
 - 1. In the Gospels is the Christ who lived on the earth and died on the cross for the accomplishment of redemption.
 - 2. In the Acts is the resurrected and ascended Christ propagated and ministered to men.
 - 3. In Romans is the Christ who is our righteousness for justification and our life for sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and building up.
 - 4. In Galatians is the Christ who enables us to live a life that is versus the law, religion, tradition, and forms.
 - 5. In Philippians is the Christ who is lived out of His members.
 - 6. In Ephesians and Colossians is the Christ who is the life, the content, and the Head of the Body, the church.
 - 7. In 1 and 2 Corinthians is the Christ who is everything in the practical church life.
 - 8. In 1 and 2 Thessalonians is the Christ who is our holiness for His coming back.
 - 9. In 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus is the Christ who is God's economy, enabling us to know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God.

10. In Hebrews is the present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister and our High Priest, ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth.
11. In the Epistles of Peter is the Christ who enables us to take God's governmental dealings administered through sufferings.
12. In the Epistles of John is the Christ who is the life and fellowship of the children of God in God's family.
13. In Revelation is the Christ who is walking among the churches in this age, ruling over the world in the kingdom in the coming age, and expressing God in full glory in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.
14. Such a wonderful, all-inclusive, all-extensive, and universally rich Christ is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply—Heb. 8:2; 4:14-16; 7:26; Rom. 5:10.

III. For the corporate Christ we need to minister the riches of Christ by participating in the genuine ministry—2 Cor. 3:6, 8-9; 4:1, 10-12; Eph. 4:12:

- A. In 1 Corinthians the gifts are covered as a major subject, but in 2 Corinthians the gifts are replaced by the ministry—4:1:
 1. The ministry is to minister the Christ whom we have experienced (1:3-4); the church needs the ministry much more than the gifts.
 2. The ministry is constituted with, and produced and formed by, the experiences of the riches of Christ through sufferings, consuming pressures, and the killing work of the cross—vv. 3-8; 4:8-12.
 3. Second Corinthians gives us a pattern, an example, of how the killing of the cross works, how Christ is wrought into our being, and how we become the expression of Christ; these processes constitute the ministers of Christ and produce the ministry for God's new covenant.
 4. The ministry comes out by the working of the cross; it is by the way of the cross that we have the riches of Christ to minister to others—v. 12.
 5. Ministry is a matter of being constituted with grace through experiences of suffering—v. 12; 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:1.
- B. Ministry is produced by revelation plus suffering—2 Cor. 12:1, 7; 1:3-5, 8-10:
 1. In the Epistles of Paul we see three things—revelation, suffering, and ministry—Eph. 3:5; Rom. 16:25; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 4:1.
 2. The revelation we receive is burned into our being through suffering.
 3. How much life and how much reality of the riches of Christ we can minister depends upon two elements—how much revelation we have received and how much we have suffered for what has been revealed to us.
- C. A ministry is the expression of what we are—vv. 1, 5; 2:17; 4:10-12:
 1. Paul himself was what he ministered because what he had seen was wrought into his being; thus, he ministered what he was—1 Cor. 15:10.
 2. What Paul had was a ministry, and that ministry was what he was—2 Cor. 4:1-2.