

**TAKING CHRIST AS OUR PERSON
AND LIVING HIM IN AND FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

**How One Ought to Conduct Himself in the Church
in Order to Bring Forth the One New Man**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:13-16; 3:16-21; Col. 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 12:12-13

- I. First Timothy 3:15 says, “If I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God”:**
- A. Here *conduct* refers to administration; Timothy received Paul's commission to arrange for matters related to the administration of the churches.
 - B. When Paul speaks of knowing “how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God,” he is speaking of how to administrate and arrange matters in the church.
 - C. It may seem that Paul is speaking only about being delayed himself, but if we have spiritual insight, we will realize that he is actually referring to the Lord being delayed; before the Lord comes back, we must know how to administrate the church, how to conduct ourselves in the church.
- II. If we want to clearly know what the church is and what God desires to do in the church, so that we may know how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church, we need to understand Ephesians 2:13-16, Colossians 3:10-11, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13:**
- A. Ephesians 2 is concerning the Gentiles and the Jews becoming one new man in Christ:
 - 1. The new man does not refer to an individual; the new man is a corporate new man; hence, verse 15 clearly says that Christ created the two (the Jews and the Gentiles) into one new man.
 - 2. Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles by abolishing the law of the commandments in ordinances; when He was crucified on the cross, all the ordinances were nailed there—v. 15; Col. 2:14:
 - a. Ordinances refer to the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship.
 - b. These forms or ways of living and worship create enmity and division; to practice the proper church life, all ordinances should be repudiated and dropped.
 - 3. “And might reconcile both [the Jews and the Gentiles] in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it”—Eph. 2:16:
 - a. This one Body, the church (1:23), is the one new man mentioned in the previous verse, 2:15; it was in this one Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross.

- b. We, the believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, were reconciled not only *for* the Body of Christ but also *in* the Body of Christ; what a revelation is here!
 - c. We were reconciled to God; we were saved in the Body of Christ.
 - 4. Before we were saved, we were in Adam, the old man; when we were saved, we came out of Adam, put off the old man, and put on Christ, the new man—Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 2:15.
- B. “And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him”—Col. 3:10:
 - 1. Since Christ is the constituent of the new man (v. 11; 1:27-28), we, who are the new man, are one with Christ; this is the most basic and crucial point in the book of Colossians.
 - 2. Although we have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27) and Christ is in us (Col. 1:27), the new man has not yet been manifested through us.
 - 3. Because the new man was created with us, who belong to the old creation (Eph. 2:15), as his constituents, he needs to be renewed; this renewing takes place mainly in our mind, as indicated by the phrase *unto full knowledge* in Colossians 3:10.
 - 4. The new man was created in our spirit and is being renewed in our mind unto full knowledge according to the image of Christ, who is the very expression of God—1:15; Heb. 1:3a.
 - 5. As we know the Lord more and more (Phil. 3:8, 10), the new man will be renewed more and more, and the image of the Lord will be manifested more for the bringing forth of the one new man.
- C. Colossians 3:11 indicates that Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free man are on the cross; *there cannot be* is a strong word indicating that everything has been terminated, that there is no natural person in the new man, and that there cannot be anything in the new man except Christ, who is “all and in all”; if we truly see this light, there will be such a change in our service and work.
- D. Concerning the Body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, “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. For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit”:
 - 1. This corresponds to Colossians 3:11; we have all been baptized in the Holy Spirit into one Body, that is, into one new man, into Christ.
 - 2. By the cross and by our passing through the cross, Christ has reconciled His redeemed ones and created them in Himself into one new man.
 - 3. This new man, this Body, is Christ Himself; in this new man there are no differences; there is only Christ; Christ is all the members and in all the members.
- E. It is only when we are clear concerning all the points above that we will know how to administrate and serve (how to conduct ourselves) in the church.

III. We can see ten crucial points in the administration of the church by the pattern of Paul; we should allow the Holy Spirit to inscribe these ten points in the tablets of our heart so that we may live in them—cf. 2 Cor. 3:3:

- A. First, in Galatians 1:15-16 he says that he served God because it pleased God to reveal His Son in him that he might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles; Paul announced the living Christ whom God had revealed in him, not knowledge or doctrine—cf. Acts 26:16-19.
- B. Second, we must clearly see that Christ is “our life” (Col. 3:4); Christ being our life means that He is the life of the Body, of the new man; furthermore, that Christ is our life is a strong indication that we are to take Him as life and live by Him, that we are to live Him in our daily life in order to experience the universally extensive Christ revealed in Colossians, so that all He is and has attained and obtained will not remain objective but will become our subjective experience.
- C. Third, along with Paul, we need to realize that we need to live in Christ; he says, “I...have died to law that I might live to God...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”—Gal. 2:19-20.
- D. Fourth, we need to see that what we are and have has been terminated on the cross; Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me”—v. 20.
- E. Fifth, we must not serve according to what we are or what we have in ourselves; in Galatians 6:14 Paul says, “The world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”
- F. Sixth, Paul’s unique goal, and ours, should be to dispense Christ into others so that Christ could increase in them; in Galatians 4:19 he says, “I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you.”
- G. Seventh, we should not expect those with whom we serve to change in any way; instead, we should desire only that they gain Christ, be filled with Christ, and be fully gained by Christ; in 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul says, “I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.”
- H. Eighth, we must clearly see that there should only be one result in our service, work, and administration of the church—Christ must be produced in the church so that everyone has Christ, so that Christ increases in every member, and so that all will arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13); in 2 Corinthians 4:12 Paul says, “Death operates in us, but life in you.”
- I. Ninth, Paul prayed for all these matters (Rom. 1:9; Eph. 1:16; Col. 1:9; 1 Thes. 1:2); we must be men of prayer (Col. 4:2).
- J. Tenth, we must be like the apostle Paul, who had a living faith, believing that God is able “to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us” (Eph. 3:20), especially concerning the points listed above.

IV. Ephesians 3:16-21 reveals the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith that a serving one should have in order to work out the New Jerusalem and bring forth the one new man:

- A. Paul’s spirit and attitude—what he saw, what he was filled with, what he said, and what he cared about in his heart—were related to the vision of God being manifested in the flesh and being mingled with man in order to build the church

with Christ so that the church would be filled with Christ; the most precious point in Ephesians 3:16-21 is not Paul's prayer and faith but his spirit and attitude.

- B. We should cooperate with Christ so that we can work Christ into others and build Christ as the material into others so that they may become a spiritual temple for the expression, the fullness, of the One who fills all in all—this should be our spirit and attitude.
- C. Paul was so burdened that he said, "I bow my knees unto the Father" (v. 14); Paul knelt down to pray because something within forced him to bow his knees unto the Father; because Paul was obsessed with Christ, in Ephesians 3 he could not help but kneel down.
- D. Every elder, deacon, co-worker, and everyone who serves the Lord must see a vision, a revelation, to the point that he is absolutely obsessed with it and has the same spirit, attitude, and inner mood of Paul.
- E. Paul described four aspects of our need to be strengthened into the inner man by the Father:
 - 1. The first aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that it would be "according to the riches of His glory" (v. 16); God expressed is glory—cf. Exo. 40:34; 2 Chron. 7:3; Ezek. 1:28; 10:4:
 - a. What dwells in Christ is the expression of the riches of what God is, and the glory that is expressed is the fullness (Col. 2:9; Eph. 3:19b); this means that God wants to be expressed.
 - b. God's glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed in the church; hence, to God is the glory in the church—vv. 20-21.
 - c. The glory of the expressed God can enter into the believers and become the strengthening power within them; in turn, they are strengthened to express God's glory.
 - 2. The second aspect of the strengthening of the believers is "through His Spirit" (v. 16); without the Spirit, God cannot be expressed through man; the Father strengthens us from within through the indwelling Spirit, who has been with us and in us since our regeneration.
 - 3. The third aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that they would be strengthened "with power" (v. 16); this is the power that is referred to in 1:19-22—the power that raised Christ from the dead, seated Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenlies, subjected all things under Christ's feet, and gave Christ to be Head over all things to the church; such power operates in us (vv. 19-20), and with such power God strengthens us for the church.
 - 4. The fourth aspect of the strengthening of the believers is that they would be strengthened "into the inner man" (3:16); the inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God's life as its life; this implies that we need to be strengthened into our spirit through the Holy Spirit.
- F. The issue is Christ making His home in our hearts; *hearts* in Ephesians 3:17 is an important word, meaning that Christ can be sensed in us and that we respond to Christ dwelling in us; our heart is the organ of our feeling and emotion, and it is where Christ dwells in us:

1. Paul never neglected the need to work Christ into man; he was obsessed with the matter of Christ increasing in us, which was his central concern, and this became his spirit and attitude; when Paul wrote Ephesians 3:16-21, he transcended even the universe.
 2. When Christ is in our feeling and is real in our heart, we will be rooted and grounded in His love; in such a condition Paul said that we would apprehend with all the saints the breadth, length, height, and depth; these four words added together equal Christ in His immeasurableness.
 3. The result of all this is that we will know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ and be filled unto all the fullness of God (v. 19); we who serve in the church should have this attitude, and our thoughts and prayers should be for this.
 4. The responsible brothers should be clear as to what they take as their goal: is it an increase in number or an increase in Christ? They should be like Paul, who was totally obsessed with the increase of Christ within God's people.
 5. We should focus on this matter to the extent that we do not know what to pray other than this; this should be the attitude, spirit, and prayer of one who serves the Lord.
- G. Because Paul was concerned that the Ephesian saints might think that the prayer in verses 16 through 19 was too difficult, he expressed his faith by immediately following with verses 20 and 21—"but to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen":
1. The full meaning of the phrase *to Him be the glory in the church* is seen in the New Jerusalem; the New Jerusalem is the complete manifestation of God's glory (Rev. 21:10-11), and the church today should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem.
 2. This is the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith with which we should serve the Lord; in this way our service in the church will be great and glorious, and the brothers and sisters will be filled unto all the fullness of God—Eph. 3:19b; cf. Gal. 4:19.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE PRAYER AND FAITH THAT A SERVING ONE SHOULD HAVE

Regarding our service to God in the church, the point of emphasis is on the kind of material we use in our service and the result of our service. We who serve in the church must see that the New Jerusalem is what God intends to work out throughout the ages. But what does God work out through the New Jerusalem? The Bible shows that God works out His own life, nature, and image through the New Jerusalem.

Therefore, whether we administrate or serve in the church, we must do it with God's life and nature; in this way our service will produce a result that is the mingling of God with man. In other words, we must build the church with Christ, building Christ into man so that our inward life and nature may be exactly the same as Christ's life and nature.

EPHESIANS 3:16-21

Ephesians 3:16-21 says, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.” This word helps us know how to serve God in the church and shows Paul’s spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith. We should have this spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith when we serve God in the church. If we have truly seen the church and the materials that build the church, we will have this kind of spirit and attitude, and we will also have this kind of prayer and faith.

PAUL’S SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE

Why do we say that Ephesians 3:16-21 shows Paul’s spirit and attitude? For example, when a brother buys a piece of land to build a meeting hall, his spirit and attitude are manifested in the whole matter related to the building of the meeting hall. If two young saints are planning to be married soon, their spirit and attitude will be filled with marriage between now and that day. Their spirit is a spirit of marriage; their attitude is an attitude of marriage. Whoever contacts them will sense the spirit that emanates from them. What they see, what they speak, and what their heart is filled with are altogether related to the matter of marriage. This is their spirit and attitude. They have a certain matter within them so that what they see, what they speak, and what their heart cares about are related to this matter. Because their entire being is filled with this matter, it becomes their spirit and attitude.

This portion of Ephesians shows that Paul saw the mystery of Christ (vv. 3-4). Thus, his spirit and attitude—what he saw, what he was filled with, what he said, and what he cared about in his heart—were related to the vision of God being manifested in the flesh and being mingled with man in order to build the church with Christ so that the church would be filled with Christ. This matter filled Paul’s entire being; hence, what he saw, what he spoke, and what he cared about in his heart were related to this matter. The most precious point in this portion of the Scriptures is not Paul’s prayer and faith but his spirit and attitude. After attending several meetings and seeing the church and the building material of the church, we should become so captivated and enthralled that we are eager to return to our locality. We should return so that we can work Christ into others and build Christ as the material into others so that they may become a spiritual temple for the expression of the fullness of the One who fills all in all. This should be our spirit and attitude.

The prayer in Ephesians 3 shows that Paul was fully captured by Christ. This matter, this vision, this revelation, this seeing, became his spirit and attitude. Consequently, in Ephesians 3 he had such a prayer. Based on the context of Ephesians, this prayer is not necessary. Paul prayed in chapter 1 because he was concerned that the saints in Ephesus might not understand his words; therefore, he asked God to grant them a spirit of wisdom and revelation. This is understandable. However, when he came to chapter 3, he offered another prayer. He not only prayed, but he also said, “I bow my knees unto the Father” (v. 14). Paul knelt down to pray because he was so burdened; something heavy within forced him to bow his knees unto the Father. His vision, his revelation, and his seeing became his spirit, his attitude, and his inner mood. This can be compared to a couple who will be married soon; they are preoccupied and cannot wait to be married. This is also like the people who watch ball

games because they are obsessed with sports. Because Paul was obsessed with Christ, in Ephesians 3 he could not help but kneel down.

If we have seen this vision, we will be obsessed with it, and we will bow our knees unto the Father. Hence, every elder, deacon, co-worker, and everyone who serves the Lord must see a vision, a revelation, to the point that he is absolutely obsessed with it and has the same spirit, attitude, and mood of Paul. Because Paul had such a spirit, attitude, and mood, he spontaneously had this kind of prayer; he also believed that God is able to do superabundantly. All those who serve God in the church must have this kind of spirit and attitude and this kind of prayer. All of our prayers must take this kind of prayer as the center, and we should have the faith for such prayer.

PAUL'S PRAYER

In Paul's prayer, he asked that God would grant the Ephesian believers to be strengthened. His prayer was not an ordinary prayer; he described four aspects of this strengthening. First, he prayed that it would be "according to the riches of His glory" (v. 16). What is glory? Glory is the expression of the mystery, the content within God. In the Bible, *glory* refers to God being expressed. God expressed is glory. The children of Israel built the tabernacle at Mount Sinai. When the tabernacle was erected, the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle, and the children of Israel saw glory (Exo. 40:34). Solomon built the temple, and when the building was completed, the glory of Jehovah filled the temple. When the children of Israel saw glory, they saw God (2 Chron. 7:3). Ezekiel 1 and 10 show that God moved in the cherubim and walked through the cherubim. When Ezekiel described what he saw, he did not speak of seeing God; instead, he spoke of seeing the glory of God (1:28; 10:4). Therefore, glory is God expressed; God expressed is glory.

Since glory is God expressed, "the riches of His glory" must refer to the expression of the riches of God's life and nature, the riches of His excellent attributes, the riches of the Godhead. All that is in the Godhead is rich, and the expression of the Godhead is full. Colossians 2:9 speaks of all the fullness of the Godhead, which refers to the expression of God's riches. The Godhead refers to what is within God, and God's glory refers to God's expression without. The expression of the Godhead is glory. For example, electricity is the intrinsic matter within an electric lamp. The expression of the intrinsic nature of electricity in the light of the electric lamp is the "glory" of electricity. When we turn on the switch, the electricity in the lamp is expressed. Therefore, the outward expression of the Godhead is glory. Colossians shows that the inward content in the Godhead is the riches, and the glory that is expressed is the fullness.

In Ephesians 3 Paul did not pray for the expression of the Godhead; rather, he prayed that God would grant the Ephesian believers to be strengthened into their inner man. The phrase *according to the riches of His glory* means that God wants to be expressed. However, because He is restricted in the believers, He must strengthen them into their inner man. God does not want to remain only in Himself; He wants to be expressed, and glory is God expressed. The Lord Jesus is God, the expression of God, the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1:3). When we speak of the glory of God, we are also speaking of the God of glory. Hence, *the riches* in Ephesians 3:16 are the riches of the Godhead, and the glory as the expression of the riches of the Godhead is the fullness.

Paul asked God to grant the believers to be strengthened into their inner man "according to the riches of His glory." This means that he prayed that the riches of God's glory would enter into the believers so that they would be strengthened to an extent that others could sense God's expression. The glory of the expressed God can enter into the believers

and become the strengthening power within them. In turn, they are strengthened to express God's glory. In other words, if our strength does not express God's glory, it is not the strength that is spoken of here. Some brothers are very strong; however, their strength does not express God's glory but Adam's. In the same way, some sisters are very strong, but their strength shows the flesh and their being full of will and opinions. This kind of strength is not according to the riches of God but according to the riches of their flesh.

We need to pray, "Lord, cause us not to be strong according to the flesh." Many brothers and sisters are strong in a way that shows people the riches of the flesh; on the other hand, some brothers and sisters are strong in a way that truly shows people the riches of God's glory. Hence, Paul said, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened...into the inner man." This strengthening is for the believers to express God's glory, that is, for God to express Himself in the believers. This prayer is exceedingly great.

The second aspect of the strengthening of the Ephesian believers is "through His Spirit." Without the Spirit, God cannot be expressed through man. The third aspect is that the Ephesian believers would be strengthened "with power" into the inner man. This means that God's power enters into man and becomes a motivating power to strengthen man. The fourth aspect is that they would be strengthened "into the inner man." This strengthening is not a strengthening of the physical body but of "the inner man." The purpose of this strengthening is that we may express God's glory, which is God Himself.

Verse 17 says, "That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith." This result is brought about by the inner man being strengthened. Paul did not speak of Christ earlier; he only spoke of glory and the Spirit, but the issue is Christ making His home in our hearts. Throughout the entire New Testament, in speaking of Christ living in us, there is not another verse like Ephesians 3:17: "Christ may make His home in your hearts." In Galatians, for example, 4:19 says, "Until Christ is formed in you." This refers to Christ's making His home in our hearts. *Hearts* in Ephesians 3:17 is an important word, meaning that Christ can be sensed in us. He not only dwells in us, but He dwells in our heart, which has feeling and emotion. Our heart is where our feeling and emotion lie. The heart is the organ of our feeling and emotion, and it is where Christ dwells in us. The phrase *may make His home in your hearts through faith* means that when we first pursue God's glory for our strengthening, we may not sense that Christ dwells in us; therefore, we need to allow Christ to make His home in our hearts "through faith."

NOT AN OUTWARD IMPROVEMENT BUT THE INWARD INCREASE OF CHRIST

Paul never neglected the need to work Christ into man. He was worried that even though the Ephesian believers had received Christ, they did not have a deep sense of Christ dwelling in their hearts, as far as their feelings and emotions were concerned. Hence, Paul prayed that God would grant them, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man so that Christ could make His home in their hearts through faith.

It seemed that Paul was "obsessed" with the matter of Christ in us, and this became his spirit and attitude. Paul knew that Christ was not in the hearts of the Ephesian believers, even though He was in them. If someone asks us if we have Christ in us, we will answer yes. But do we truly love Him with our heart? Consider the matter of marriage. If we could see inside a couple who are about to be married, we would find that their emotions and feelings are altogether filled with marriage. Paul's prayer is not for anything other than the glory of God to work in the believers so that they, by believing into Christ and confessing Christ, will

sense Christ, love Christ, and be filled with Christ, and thus Christ would make His home in their hearts.

Paul's central concern was related to Christ's being in the believers. In our work and service of administrating the church, we should have this kind of spirit, expecting that the believers will have Christ in them and that Christ will enter into them. For example, a brother may always murmur and lose his temper in the fellowship meeting. What kind of spirit and attitude should we have toward this brother? If we desire that this brother control his temper, this desire will be our spirit and attitude toward him.

In the church where we serve, there may be a brother who likes to speak and who has a bad temper, and the brothers and sisters may hardly be able to tolerate him. As a responsible brother, you may hope that he will control his temper, but if he has not changed after a few years, you may hope that he will not come to the meetings anymore lest he affect others. If he keeps coming, you may even begin to dislike him. Even though you dare not admit it, this may become your inward spirit and attitude. If a brother loses his temper in the church and you can only hope that he will control his temper, you have not seen what it is to serve in the church. Instead of hoping that he will control his temper, you should hope that he will sense Christ within. This means that he will sense Christ within and respond to Christ dwelling within him. If all the serving ones in the church are like Paul, being "obsessed" with this matter, they will not hope that such a brother would control his temper but rather that Christ would increase in him.

CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN OUR HEARTS

Being Strengthened into the Inner Man

The purpose of God granting us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened into our inner man is for Christ to be expressed in the feeling of our heart, that is, for Him to appear to us inwardly. This requires prayer like Paul's. In our service in the church, we should not hope that people will improve or change; we should hope only that Christ in them will become so precious, sweet, and lovely and that they will sense Christ in their hearts so that Christ may make His home in their hearts through faith. The believers' being strengthened according to God's glory enables Christ to make His home in their hearts.

Being Rooted and Grounded in Love

Christ's making His home in our hearts has a result—we are rooted and grounded in love (v. 17). When Christ is touched by us we can sense His love inwardly. We can be rooted and grounded in God's love. To be rooted and grounded in love is to hold to truth in love (4:15). Being rooted and grounded in love refers to Christ's love, not our love, because He lives in us and causes us to be rooted and grounded in His love. Being rooted and grounded enables us to apprehend with all the saints what are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. When we are rooted and grounded in Christ, we will know the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth.

Some people say that when Paul came to this point in his writing, he was so motivated and touched by the Lord's love that his speaking was not complete. This is the view of some Bible expositors, but this is not the case. When he was writing this, Paul transcended even the universe. If we have seen how great Christ is, we will not quarrel with the brothers and sisters, much less with our wives and husbands. When Christ is in our feeling and is real in our heart, we will be rooted and grounded in His love. In such a condition, Paul said that we would know the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. We will realize that just as

God is immeasurable, the glory expressed through Him is immeasurable, and just as Christ is immeasurable, the love of Christ is also immeasurable.

What are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth? These four words added together equal immeasurableness. Paul said that when we know Christ inwardly and when Christ is sensed in us, we will be rooted and grounded in His love, and we will know the breadth, which is Christ. On that day, we will also know the length, which is Christ; the height, which is Christ; and the depth, which is Christ. The breadth, the length, the height, and the depth are Christ Himself. If we know Christ inwardly, live in Him, and are rooted and grounded in His love, we will see that the One who dwells in us is the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. On that day we will apprehend with all the saints the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. The breadth, the length, the height, and the depth are simply Christ.

Becoming the Fullness of God

Paul continued in 3:19, “And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ,” the result of which is “that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” Paul was entirely captivated by this matter, and it became his spirit and attitude. When Christ has made His home in our hearts, we can apprehend His immeasurableness, and the result is that we are filled unto all the fullness of God. We who serve in the church should have this attitude, and our thoughts and prayers should be for this.

In administrating the church, all the responsible brothers must take this as their spirit, their attitude, and their hope. They should not hope merely that all the saints will come to the meetings, be zealous, preach the gospel, and bring people to salvation. The responsible brothers should be clear as to what they take as their goal: is it an increase in numbers or an increase in Christ? They should be like Paul, who was totally “obsessed” with this matter. We need to receive mercy not to think that it is sufficient for the brothers and sisters only to be zealous and come to the meetings. Even if all the people in Taiwan came to the meetings and were zealous, it would mean nothing if they did not know Christ inwardly.

We should hope that Christ will make His home in the believers through faith, that they will be rooted and grounded in the Lord’s love, and that they will come out of their small and finite beings and see the immeasurableness of the Lord. Our hope also is that the believers will know the Lord as the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth so that they may be filled unto all the fullness of God. Then they will reach the glorious and rich goal of God to be glorified and expressed in the church. This is the apostle’s prayer, which represents his spirit and attitude.

THE PRAYER THAT A SERVING ONE OF GOD SHOULD HAVE

We should focus on this matter to the extent that we do not know what to pray other than this. We cannot pray in a habitual way, saying, “O Lord, Brother So-and-so is cold. Please make him fervent. O Lord, Sister So-and-so is backslidden; please restore her to the meetings. Sister So-and-so has a poor temper; please cause her to change.” Paul did not pray this way; instead, he prayed, “God, grant the believers, according to the riches of Your glory, to be strengthened into their inner man, that they may know and experience Christ inwardly, that Christ may make His home in their hearts, that they may be rooted and grounded in His love, that they may see the immeasurable Christ living in them, and that they may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” This should be the attitude, spirit, and prayer of one who serves God.

PAUL’S FAITH

Perhaps some may say, “It is not easy to pray that the brothers and sisters would be

fervent and rise up to meet. How much harder will it be to pray for them to be filled unto all the fullness of God? This is too ideal, too difficult.” Hence, verse 20 shows Paul’s faith. He spoke of “Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us.” *Power* is a great word in the Bible. This power is not objective, far from us and vague; this power is subjective. When we are saved, the power in us is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think.

This verse is not concerned with outward material blessings. For example, if I ask God to prepare a three hundred square foot house for me, and He gives me a four hundred square foot house, this is seemingly above what I ask or think. A sister, who does not have any children, may pray, “O God, have mercy on me. I do not have any children. You are the God who answers prayer; please give me a son.” When God answers her prayer and she not only has a son but twin boys, this is seemingly above what she asked or thought. If a brother needs \$400 and the Lord gives him \$600, this also is seemingly above what he asked or thought. But this is not the meaning of this verse.

Because Paul was concerned that the Ephesian saints might think that the prayer in verses 16 through 19 was too difficult, he immediately followed with verse 20, saying, God is “able” and “above all that we ask or think.” In the end, he praised God for being glorified in the church and in Christ Jesus. *Glory* in verse 21 means that God is greatly released and expressed in the church; this is glory. God being glorified in the church means that He is fully expressed in the church. No matter what our present condition is, we should have the faith that the New Jerusalem will eventually be manifested. At that time, we will see that the glory of God illumines the city, and the lamp of the city is the Lamb; light shines forth from the lamp to illumine the entire city (Rev. 21:23).

The full meaning of the phrase *to Him be the glory in the church* is seen in the New Jerusalem. On that day, God will shine forth all of His fullness. In the New Jerusalem, nothing is opaque; even the gold is like clear glass (v. 18). Christ is the lamp of the city, and God in Christ shines forth from the New Jerusalem to all the nations. The New Jerusalem is the complete expression of God’s glory; the church today should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem. This is the spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith with which we should serve the Lord. We should have such a prayer and faith. Our spirit and attitude should be that the brothers and sisters will have Christ inwardly, that Christ will make His home in their hearts, and that they will be filled unto all the fullness of God. At the same time, based on this spirit and attitude, we should pray, bow our knees, and have faith before God.

In this way, our service in the church will be great and glorious. Although this service is great and glorious, we still need to keep in mind that it depends on the God who is able, and it is God who works day after day. Galatians 4:19 says, “Until Christ is formed in you.” The word *until* does not mean that God is not working but that God has been working and is working continually until the work is done—until Christ is fully formed in us. If we have such a strong seeing, it will become our spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith. If all of our spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith are for this one thing, the brothers and sisters will be filled unto all the fullness of God. (*How to Administrate the Church*, pp. 117-128)