

Message Five

**The Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:17; 12:12-13, 20, 27

- I. First Corinthians speaks concerning the Body of Christ emphatically and deals with the Body extensively, and 2 Corinthians is a book on the ministry of the new covenant—1 Cor. 12:12-27; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 4:1; 5:18:**
  - A. If we desire to have the Body of Christ, we must have the new covenant ministry—1:3-4; 3:8-9; 4:10-12; 5:20; 6:1; 7:3; 11:2-3; 12:15; 13:11, 14.
  - B. Without the new covenant ministry, there is no possibility to bring forth the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16.
- II. The church of God in Corinth was a local expression of the one unique, universal Body of Christ—1:22-23; 4:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27:**
  - A. The local churches are the many expressions in many localities of the one Body of Christ—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:11:
    1. The local churches, being the existence of the Body for its function, are the many expressions of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4; Rev. 2:1.
    2. If the Body of Christ is to be expressed, it must become the local churches.
  - B. We need to live a proper church life as a local expression of the Body of Christ to be a local testimony of Christ according to God's economy—1:11, 20.
  - C. The building up of a local church is not only for its own building up locally but also for the building up of the entire Body universally—1 Cor. 14:3-4; Eph. 4:12.
- III. First Corinthians emphasizes the word of the cross, and the cross leads us to the Body—1:18; 12:12-13, 27:**
  - A. The cross points us straight to the Body; the knowledge of the cross brings us the knowledge of the Body of Christ—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5.
  - B. The cross leads to the Body, and the cross operates in the sphere of the Body:
    1. The work of the cross goes as far as the Body of Christ and consummates with the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:1-2; 12:12-27.

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2. Not only does the work of the cross bring us into the Body, but also the Body becomes the realm within which the cross works—Col. 1:20; 3:15.
- C. In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross—Eph. 2:16:
1. The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth—Matt. 16:24-26.
  2. Life and work in the Body necessitate drastic dealings with the flesh, and such dealings necessitate a deep knowledge of the cross of Christ—Gal. 5:24.
  3. The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross—Rom. 12:3; 2 Cor. 10:13-15; Eph. 4:7, 16.
  4. All of God’s dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all of His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-8.
  5. If our natural life is dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will have the Spirit’s anointing and enjoy the fellowship of the Body—Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16.
- D. The revelation of the Body is very costly, for it touches the spring of our natural life—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20:
1. We will be broken under the vision of the Body, and we will realize that the only way for us to know the Body and to be built up in the Body is to be broken—Acts 9:3-6.
  2. The revelation of the Body will mean a revolution in our spiritual life; this revelation will cause us to see that it is only Christ in us, not anything of ourselves, who constitutes us the members of the Body—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11.
- IV. “Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread”—1 Cor. 10:17:**
- A. The one bread signifies the one Body of Christ; we are all one Body because we all partake of one bread—5:7-8; 10:3; John 6:35, 51, 56-57; cf. 15:1, 5:

## CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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1. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us His one Body.
  2. When we jointly partake (eat) of the bread, which symbolizes the individual body of Christ, it comes into us to make us one bread, which signifies the corporate Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12.
  - B. As the one grain of wheat, Christ fell into the ground and died and grew up in resurrection to bring forth many believers as the many grains, which are broken, ground, and blended to form one loaf, the Body of Christ—John 12:24.
  - C. The one bread signifies not only our participation in the life of Christ but also the fellowship of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 10:16-17.
- V. **“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”—12:12:**
- A. This reveals that Christ and the church are the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ.
  - B. Christ in Himself is the Head, and Christ in all of us is the Body—Eph. 1:22-23:
    1. The Lord Jesus in Himself is the Head, but when He is constituted into us, He is the Body—Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:4, 10-11, 15.
    2. The Head is individual, but the Body is corporate—1 Cor. 12:12.
    3. Christ is both the Head and the Body, but we are the Body and cannot be the Head, because the Head is a matter related to the Godhead—Col. 2:9-10.
  - C. All the believers of Christ are organically united with Him and constituted with His life and element and have thus become His Body, an organism to express Him—1 Cor. 6:17; John 15:1, 4-5; Col. 3:4, 10-11, 15.
- VI. **“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 Cor. 12:13:**
- A. In one Spirit we were all baptized into one organic entity, the Body of Christ.

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- B. Christ is the life and constituent of the Body, and the Spirit is the reality of Christ—John 14:16-17; 15:26.
- C. To be baptized in the Spirit is to get into the Spirit and to be lost in Him; to drink the Spirit is to take the Spirit in and to have our being saturated with Him; by these two procedures we are mingled with the Spirit and are thereby constituted into the one Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:13, 20, 27.