

Outline of the Messages for the Memorial Day Conference

May 23-26, 2014

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE HEAVENLY VISION

Message Three

The Vision of the Church, the Body of Christ

MC Hymns 824

Scripture Reading: Eph.1:17-18, 22-23; 4:16; Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13

- 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,
- Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- 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.
- 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.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- 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 12:13 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.

I. The church is the heart's desire of God; the desire of God in this age is to have the church—Eph. 1:5, 9, 22-23:

- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- 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.
- A. The church is the hidden mystery in God's eternal economy—vv. 11, 22-23; 3:4, 9-11; Col. 2:2.
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- 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.
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,
- B. According to Ephesians 3:9, there is a relationship between creation and the church; God's intention in His creation of all things, including man, was that man would be mingled with God to produce the church—Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:2.
- Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.

- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- C. Concerning God's purpose for the church in the economy of God, there are three main items:
1. God's purpose for the church is that the church would have the sonship and that God would be expressed through many matured sons—Eph. 1:5:

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

 - a. God's eternal purpose is to work Himself in Christ into us so that He may be thoroughly mingled with us and expressed through us—3:16-17, 21.

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.
 - b. We were predestinated, marked out, by God to be sons of God before we were created; hence, as God's creatures, we need to be regenerated by Him that we may have His life to be His sons—1:5; John 3:3, 6.

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

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 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 - c. Sonship implies having not only the life of a son but also the position of a son; God's marked-out ones have the life to be His sons and the position to inherit Him—Rom. 8:14-15, 17, 29; Heb. 2:10.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Rom 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!

Rom 8:17 And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.

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 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
 2. God's purpose for the church is to make His wisdom known to the enemy and to deal with His enemy through the church—Eph. 3:10; Gen. 1:26:

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

 - a. The church is the means through which God's multifarious wisdom is made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies—Eph. 3:9.

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
 - b. The church in the economy of God is God's greatest boast in making known His multifarious wisdom for the shame and defeat of His enemy—v. 10; Rom. 16:20.

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

- Rom 16:20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- c. We need a vision of how the Lord will use the church to defeat His enemy and recover the earth—Gen. 1:26-27; Rev. 11:15; 12:10.
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- Gen 1:27 And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
- Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.
3. God's purpose for the church is to head up all things in Christ through the church—Eph. 1:10, 22:
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- a. Verse 22 reveals that this heading up is to the church so that the church may share in all that is of Christ as the Head.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- b. The church is for the heading up of all things in Christ through the working of Himself into us as life that we may be full of light—vv. 10, 22-23.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- 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.
- c. The church is built up by this life, and we are under the control of the light of life under Christ's headship—4:15-16; John 8:12; Col. 1:13.
- 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.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Col 1:13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
- D. The church is both universal and local—Matt. 16:18; 18:17.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- E. We need to be captured by the vision of the church and pay the price to be governed by this vision and live according to it—Acts 26:18a; Rom. 12:2.
- Acts 26:18a To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, ...

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

II. After we have seen the vision of the church, we need to see the vision of the Body—Eph. 1:17-18, 22-23; 4:16; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13, 27:

- 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,
- Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- 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.
- 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.
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- 1 Cor 12:13 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 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- A. The Body of Christ is the intrinsic significance of the church—Eph. 1:22-23:
- 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.
1. The church of God is the frame, and the Body of Christ is the organism:
 - a. If there were no Body, the church would have no meaning.
 - b. Without the Body, the church makes no sense, but with the Body, there is the intrinsic significance of the church.
 2. If we consider ourselves as individual churches or as individual believers, we are through; we should consider ourselves as one Body—Rom. 12:4-5.

Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- B. The Body of Christ is a divine constitution of the Triune God with the believers in Christ—Eph. 4:4-6:
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
1. The Father, the Son, the Spirit, and man are blended and built together to become the Body of Christ, a four-in-one corporate organic entity—vv. 4-6.

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
 2. The building up of the Body of Christ is the constitution of the Triune God and the tripartite man in the Spirit of God and the spirit of man—1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:16.

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

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
 3. The Body of Christ is an organism, both divine and human, to express Christ—Eph. 1:23.

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- C. The Body of Christ is the means for God to carry out His administration—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 25, 27:
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- 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.
- 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 12:13 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 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
1. The Body of Christ is thoroughly and absolutely related to God's administration; apart from the Body of Christ, God has no means, no way, to carry out His administration.
 2. God's eternal purpose is to have a group of saved and regenerated people who have become one to be an organic Body to carry out His administration—Eph. 3:10-11; 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

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.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

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 12:13 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 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 3. The Body of Christ, the church, is for Christ's move on earth; the Head is now operating God's administration through the Body—11:3; 12:12.

1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.

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.
- D. The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—vv. 12-13:
- 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 12:13 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. In verse 12 *the Christ* refers not to the individual Christ but to the corporate Christ, the Body-Christ.

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.
 2. The corporate Christ is composed of Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body with all the believers as His members—Acts 9:4.

Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
 3. All the believers in Christ are organically united with Him (Rom. 12:4-5) and constituted with His life and element (Col. 3:4, 11) and have thus become His Body, an organism to express Him; hence, Christ is not only the Head but also the Body—the corporate Christ—1 Cor. 12:12.

Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- 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.
- E. The unique Body of Christ, the universal church, is expressed in many localities as the local churches—Col. 4:15-16; Eph. 4:4; Rev. 1:4, 11:
- Col 4:15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house.
- Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- 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. The one Body is the one church of God, manifested as many local churches—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.

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.

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
 2. A local church is an expression of the Body of Christ in a certain locality—v. 2; 10:32b, 17; 12:12-13, 20, 27.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor 10:32b ... both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;

1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

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 12:13 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 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 3. The local churches are many in existence but are still one Body universally in element; the local churches are and should be one Body universally, doctrinally, and practically—Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1.

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

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 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 14:34 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.
- 1 Cor 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also do.