### LIVING UNDER THE UNIQUE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST AND IN THE UNIQUE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

#### Message Eight

# The Fellowship and Blending of the Body of Christ unto Glory to the Only Wise God

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 12:24; 10:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rom. 5:17; 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33; 16:1-27

- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has <sup>1</sup>blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,
- 1 Cor 10:16 The <sup>a</sup>cup of blessing which we <sup>b</sup>bless, is it not the <sup>1</sup>fellowship of the <sup>c</sup>blood of Christ? The <sup>d</sup>bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the <sup>b</sup>body of Christ?
- 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is <sup>1a</sup> one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all <sup>2</sup>partake of the one bread.
- 2 Cor 13:14 The <sup>la</sup>grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the <sup>b</sup>love of God and the <sup>c</sup>fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of <sup>2</sup>righteousness will <sup>3</sup>reign in <sup>4</sup>life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him <sup>1</sup>not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for <sup>2</sup>God has received him.
- Rom 15:7 Therefore arceive one another, as Christ also received you to the glory of God.
- Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a <sup>1</sup> servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's <sup>2a</sup> truthfulness, to confirm the <sup>b</sup> promises *given* to the fathers,
- Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* amercy, as it is written, "bTherefore I will extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."
- Rom 15:25 But now I am agoing to Jerusalem, bministering to the saints.
- Rom 15:26 For <sup>a</sup>Macedonia and <sup>b</sup>Achaia have been pleased to make some <sup>1</sup>contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
- Rom 15:27 For they were pleased  $to \, ^1do \, it$ , and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have shared in their aspiritual things, they ought also to do service to them in material things.
- Rom 15:28 When therefore I have finished this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by way of you to aSpain.
- Rom 15:29 And I know that when I acome to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- Rom 15:30 Now I <sup>a</sup>exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the <sup>b</sup>love of the Spirit, to <sup>c</sup>strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- Rom 15:31 That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my <sup>1a</sup>service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- Rom 15:32 So that coming to you in joy through the awill of God, I may brefresh myself and rest with you.
- Rom 15:33 Now the <sup>a</sup>God of peace be with you all. Amen.
- Rom 16:1 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea,
- Rom 16:2 That you areceive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the patroness of many, of myself as well.
- Rom 16:3 Greet <sup>a</sup>Prisca and Aquila, my <sup>b</sup>fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
- Rom 16:4 Who <sup>1</sup>risked their own necks for my <sup>2</sup>life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the <sup>3a</sup>churches of the Gentiles;
- Rom 16:5 And *greet* the <sup>1a</sup>church, which is in their <sup>2</sup>house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.
- Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for us.
- Rom 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my <sup>a</sup>kinsmen and my <sup>b</sup>fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
- Rom 16:8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- Rom 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our <sup>a</sup>fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.
- Rom 16:10 Greet Apelles, <sup>1</sup>approved in Christ. Greet <sup>2</sup>those of the *household of* Aristobulus.
- Rom 16:11 Greet Herodion, my \*kinsman. Greet \*!those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
- Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved *sister*, one who has labored much in the Lord.

- Rom 16:13 Greet <sup>a</sup>Rufus, <sup>b</sup>chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as <sup>1</sup>mine.
- Rom 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.
- Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.
- Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the <sup>1a</sup>churches of Christ greet you.
- Rom 16:17 Now I <sup>a</sup>exhort you, brothers, to <sup>b</sup>mark those who make <sup>c</sup>divisions and causes of <sup>1</sup>stumbling contrary to the <sup>d</sup>teaching which you have learned, and <sup>2e</sup>turn away from them.
- Rom 16:18 For such men do not <sup>1a</sup> serve our Lord Christ, but their own <sup>2b</sup> stomach, and through <sup>c</sup> smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the <sup>3</sup> simple.
- Rom 16:19 For *the report of* your <sup>a</sup>obedience has reached to all; therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil.
- Rom 16:20 Now the <sup>a</sup>God of peace will <sup>1b</sup>crush Satan <sup>c</sup>under your feet shortly. The <sup>2d</sup>grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- Rom 16:21 <sup>a</sup>Timothy, my <sup>b</sup>fellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my <sup>c</sup>kinsmen.
- Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.
- Rom 16:23 <sup>a</sup>Gaius, my host and *host* of the whole church, greets you. <sup>b</sup>Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.
- Rom 16:24 (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)
- Rom 16:25 aNow to Him who is able to bestablish you according to cmy gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages
- Rom 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the aprophetic writings, according to the command of the beternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;
- Rom 16:27 To the annual only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### I. The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the blending of the Body of Christ:

- A. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word *blended* also means adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled.
  - 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has <sup>1</sup>blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,
- B. Fellowship adjusts us, fellowship harmonizes us, fellowship tempers us, and fellowship mingles us (cf. 10:16-17).
  - 1 Cor 10:16 The <sup>a</sup>cup of blessing which we <sup>b</sup>bless, is it not the <sup>1</sup>fellowship of the <sup>c</sup>blood of Christ? The <sup>d</sup>bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the <sup>e</sup>body of Christ?
  - 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is <sup>1a</sup> one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all <sup>2</sup> partake of the one bread.
- C. In order to be adjusted, harmonized, tempered, and mingled in the Body life, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit, dispensing Christ to others for the sake of the Body of Christ.
- D. We should not do anything without fellowshipping with the other saints who are coordinating with us; in our coordination in the church life, in the Lord's work, we all have to learn not to do anything without fellowship.
- E. Blending means that when we are about to do something, we always stop to fellowship with others.
- F. Such a blending is not social but the blending of the very Christ whom the individual members, the district churches, the co-workers, and the elders enjoy, experience, and partake of.
- G. The meal offering is a type of blending for the fulfillment of God's economy:
  - 1. This type of blending is strongly referred to by the apostle Paul when he says that the church as the one Body is "one bread"—v. 17.
    - 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is <sup>1a</sup> one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all <sup>2</sup> partake of the one bread.
  - 2. The meal offering in Leviticus 2:4 consisted of cakes made of fine flour mingled with oil; every part of the fine flour was mixed, or mingled, with the oil; that is blending.
    - Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
  - 3. The purpose of the blending is to usher us all into the reality of the Body of Christ.

- The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).
  - Which is His <sup>1a</sup>Body, the <sup>2b</sup>fullness of the One who <sup>3c</sup>fills all in all. Eph 1:23
  - And I saw the aholy city, 1bNew Jerusalem, 2coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:2 <sup>c</sup>prepared as a <sup>3d</sup>bride adorned for her <sup>e</sup>husband.
  - Eph 3:8 To me, <sup>1</sup>less than the <sup>a</sup>least of all saints, was this <sup>b</sup>grace given to announce to the <sup>c</sup>Gentiles the <sup>2</sup>unsearchable <sup>3d</sup>riches of Christ as the gospel
  - And to enlighten all that they may see what the <sup>1a</sup>economy of the <sup>2b</sup>mystery is, which Eph 3:9 <sup>3</sup>throughout the ages has been <sup>c</sup>hidden in God, who created all things,
  - In order that now to the <sup>la</sup>rulers and the authorities in the <sup>b</sup>heavenlies the multifarious Eph 3:10 <sup>2c</sup>wisdom of God might be made known through the <sup>3d</sup>church,
  - <sup>1</sup>Making known to us the <sup>2a</sup>mystery of His <sup>b</sup>will <sup>3</sup>according to His <sup>c</sup>good pleasure, which He Eph 1:9 <sup>4d</sup>purposed in Himself,
  - Unto the <sup>1a</sup>economy of the <sup>2</sup>fullness of the times, to <sup>3b</sup>head up all <sup>c</sup>things in <sup>4</sup>Christ, the things Eph 1:10 in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

### II. There is the need today for the fellowship among the churches; this fellowship is to keep the universal oneness of the Body of Christ—4:3-6:

- Eph 4:3
- Being diligent to <sup>1</sup>keep the <sup>2a</sup>oneness of the Spirit in the uniting <sup>3b</sup>bond of <sup>c</sup>peace: <sup>1</sup>One <sup>a</sup>Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one <sup>2b</sup>hope of your <sup>c</sup>calling; Eph 4:4
- Eph 4:5 One <sup>1a</sup>Lord, one <sup>2b</sup>faith, one <sup>c</sup>baptism;
- One <sup>1a</sup>God and <sup>b</sup>Father of <sup>2</sup>all, who is <sup>3</sup>over all and through all and in all. Eph 4:6
- Just as the health of our physical body depends on the circulation of our blood, so the health of the Body of Christ depends on the fellowship of the Spirit—2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1.
  - 2 Cor 13:14 The <sup>la</sup>grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the <sup>b</sup>love of God and the <sup>c</sup>fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
  - <sup>1</sup>If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any <sup>2a</sup>consolation of love, if any Phil 2:1 <sup>b</sup>fellowship of spirit, if any <sup>3c</sup>tenderheartedness and <sup>d</sup>compassions,
- The fellowship of the Body of Christ is simply the circulation, the current, of the Spirit; the Spirit today is the "blood" in Christ's Body; if Christ's Body did not have the Spirit, it would be like a corpse—Eph. 4:4a:
  - Eph 4:4a One Body and one Spirit, ...
  - When the all-inclusive Spirit is circulating within the Body of Christ, divinity, humanity, Christ's person, Christ's death, and Christ's resurrection are all circulating—Phil. 1:19.
    - For I know that for me this will turn out to <sup>1a</sup>salvation through <sup>2</sup>your <sup>b</sup>petition and *the* Phil 1:19 <sup>3</sup>bountiful <sup>c</sup>supply of the <sup>4d</sup>Spirit of Jesus Christ,
  - Calling on the name of the Lord causes the Spirit to circulate within us so that we enjoy all Christ's riches—Rom. 10:12; Neh. 8:10.
    - Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between <sup>a</sup>Jew and Greek, for the same <sup>b</sup>Lord is Lord of all and <sup>1c</sup>rich to all who <sup>d</sup>call upon Him;
    - Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way; eat the fat, and drink the sweet wine, and send portions to him for whom nothing has been prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.
- The trouble in the churches today is due to the shortage of fellowship, the circulation of blood; this lack of fellowship gives the enemy an opportunity to come in.
- If any part of the Body is separate, that part will eventually die; the best way to stay healthy is to "receive more blood" and to "give more blood," that is, to stay in the fellowship, the circulation of life:
  - The circulation of blood within our body carries nourishment to every part of our body and also causes our body to be cherished; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body nourishes us with the riches of Christ and cherishes us with the presence of Christ as the Spirit.

2. The circulation of blood within our body is like a river that always carries away the waste in our being so that it can be discharged; in like manner, the fellowship in the Body carries away all the negative things.

### III. We need to reign in life in imitating the apostle to bring the local churches into the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Rom. 5:17; 14:3; 15:7-9, 25-33:

- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of <sup>2</sup>righteousness will <sup>3</sup>reign in <sup>4</sup>life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him <sup>1</sup>not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for <sup>2</sup>God has received him.
- Rom 15:7 Therefore <sup>a</sup>receive one another, as <sup>1</sup>Christ also received you to the glory of God.
- Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a <sup>1</sup> servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's <sup>2a</sup> truthfulness, to confirm the <sup>b</sup> promises *given* to the fathers,
- Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* amercy, as it is written, "bTherefore I will extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."
- Rom 15:25 But now I am agoing to Jerusalem, bministering to the saints.
- Rom 15:26 For <sup>a</sup>Macedonia and <sup>b</sup>Achaia have been pleased to make some <sup>1</sup>contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
- Rom 15:27 For they were pleased *to* <sup>1</sup>*do it*, and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have shared in their <sup>a</sup>spiritual things, they ought also to do service to them in material things.
- Rom 15:28 When therefore I have finished this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by way of you to <sup>a</sup>Spain.
- Rom 15:29 And I know that when I <sup>a</sup>come to you, I will come in the <sup>1</sup>fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- Rom 15:30 Now I <sup>a</sup>exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the <sup>b</sup>love of the Spirit, to <sup>c</sup>strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- Rom 15:31 That I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my <sup>1a</sup>service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
- Rom 15:32 So that coming to you in joy through the awill of God, I may brefresh myself and rest with you.
- Rom 15:33 Now the <sup>a</sup>God of peace be with you all. Amen.
- A. We must learn not to despise or judge others in their doctrines or practices according to doctrinal concepts, religious practices, and anything that is unrelated to our basic faith—cf. Jude 3; Titus 1:4.
  - Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our <sup>1</sup>common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you *and* exhort *you* to earnestly <sup>2a</sup>contend for the <sup>3</sup>faith once for all delivered to the <sup>b</sup>saints.
  - Titus 1:4 To <sup>a</sup>Titus, genuine <sup>b</sup>child <sup>c</sup>according to the <sup>1</sup>common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.
- B. We should receive people according to God's receiving, not being more narrow than God, thereby demonstrating and maintaining the oneness of the Body of Christ:
  - 1. We should receive people according to the Son of God, according to God, not according to doctrine or practice, thus maintaining a condition of absolute peace, smoothness, and order, without any deviation and discord, in the fellowship of the Body of Christ to the glory of God—Rom. 14:3; 15:7.
    - Rom 14:3 He who eats, let him <sup>1</sup>not despise him who does not eat; and he who does not eat, let him not judge him who eats, for <sup>2</sup>God has received him.
    - Rom 15:7 Therefore <sup>a</sup>receive one another, as <sup>1</sup>Christ also received you to the glory of God.
  - 2. To receive others according to the Son of God is to receive them in His being unbiased and balanced in taking care of both the Jews and the Gentiles; Christ is a servant of the circumcision to fulf ill and confirm all the promises God gave to their fathers, and He is a servant of the Gentiles so that they may glorify God for His mercy—vv. 8-9.
    - Rom 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a <sup>1</sup> servant of the circumcision for the sake of God's <sup>2a</sup> truthfulness, to confirm the <sup>b</sup> promises *given* to the fathers,
    - Rom 15:9 And that the Gentiles should glorify God for *His* amercy, as it is written, "Therefore I will extol You among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name."

### IV. We need to reign in life in following the apostle's footsteps to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—Rom. 16:

Rom 1 be omitted.

- A. This is to follow in the apostle's footsteps to bring us into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ by recommendations and greetings so that the God of peace may crush Satan under our feet and so that we may enjoy the rich grace of Christ—vv. 1-16, 21-24, 20.
  - Rom 16:1 I <sup>1</sup>commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a <sup>a</sup>deaconess of the <sup>2</sup>church which is in <sup>b</sup>Cenchrea
  - Rom 16:2 That you areceive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the patroness of many, of myself as well.
  - Rom 16:3 Greet <sup>a</sup>Prisca and Aquila, my <sup>b</sup>fellow workers in Christ Jesus,
  - Rom 16:4 Who <sup>1</sup>risked their own necks for my <sup>2</sup>life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the <sup>3a</sup>churches of the Gentiles;
  - Rom 16:5 And *greet* the <sup>1a</sup>church, which is in their <sup>2</sup>house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.
  - Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, one who has labored much for us.
  - Rom 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my <sup>a</sup>kinsmen and my <sup>b</sup>fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
  - Rom 16:8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
  - Rom 16:9 Greet Urbanus, our <sup>a</sup>fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.
  - Rom 16:10 Greet Apelles, <sup>1</sup>approved in Christ. Greet <sup>2</sup>those of the *household of* Aristobulus.
  - Rom 16:11 Greet Herodion, my akinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
  - Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved *sister*, one who has labored much in the Lord.
  - Rom 16:13 Greet <sup>a</sup>Rufus, <sup>b</sup>chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as <sup>1</sup>mine.
  - Rom 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.
  - Rom 16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.
  - Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the <sup>1a</sup>churches of Christ greet you.
  - Rom 16:21 <sup>a</sup>Timothy, my <sup>b</sup>fellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my <sup>c</sup>kinsmen.
  - Rom 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord.
  - Rom 16:23 <sup>a</sup>Gaius, my host and *host* of the whole church, greets you. <sup>b</sup>Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Ouartus the brother.
  - Rom 16:24 (Some ancient MSS add v. 24, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.)
  - Rom 16:20 Now the <sup>a</sup>God of peace will <sup>1b</sup>crush Satan <sup>c</sup>under your feet shortly. The <sup>2d</sup>grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- B. Through the fellowship in the Body, the crushing of Satan, and the enjoyment of grace, we can carry out the mystery kept in silence in the times of the ages concerning the complete salvation of God in the fulfillment of the eternal economy of God for the Gentiles to have the obedience of faith unto glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ—vv. 25-27.
  - Rom 16:25 aNow to Him who is able to bestablish you according to charge my gospel, that is, the dproclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages
  - Rom 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the <sup>a</sup>prophetic writings, according to the command of the <sup>1b</sup>eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the <sup>c</sup>obedience of faith;
  - Rom 16:27 To the annual leaves Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- C. This glory is the New Jerusalem, the universal incorporation of the union and mingling of divinity with humanity, in which God will be completely glorified and His economy will be fully accomplished.

## V. In its conclusion, Romans, which gives a general discussion of the Christian life and the church life, gives glory to the wise God—v. 27:

Rom 16:27 To the annual only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- A. This unveils that all the matters discussed in Romans (such as how God selects us, how He saves us from sin and death, how He redeems us and justifies us, how He makes us, sinners who were dead through and through, His divine sons, how He transfers us out of Adam into Christ, how He sanctifies and transforms us in Christ, how He makes us the members of Christ for the constituting of the Body of Christ, and how He causes us to be the local churches appearing in different localities as the expressions of the Body of Christ on the earth in this age) are planned, managed, and accomplished by God's wisdom, in order that He, the immeasurably rich Triune God, may be glorified, that is, that His incomparable glory may be completely and fully expressed through us who have been perfected eternally by Him and who have become His Body and have been joined to Him as one.
- B. The focus of God's wisdom is the working of His Divine Trinity into the three parts—spirit, soul, and body—of our redeemed being that in His redemption, sanctification, and transformation we may have a full union in the divine life with Him, that His desire for the mingling of divinity and humanity, the joining of humanity to divinity, may be fulfilled in eternity.
- C. This truly is worthy of our appreciation and worship! How blessed and how glorious it is that we can participate in this! This is worthy of our unceasing singing and praise for eternity!
- D. Both our Christian life and our church life should have this as our center and goal; may God bless in this way everyone who has been chosen and perfected by Him.