

**LESSON ELEVEN**

**ORDINANCES AND DOCTRINE  
&  
THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN**

**Scripture Reading:**

Section 1-2:

**Eph. 2:14** For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,

**Eph. 2:15** Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,

**Eph. 2:16** And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

**Eph. 2:18** For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.

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

**Eph. 4:14** That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Section 3-4:

**Eph. 4:22** That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

**Eph. 4:23** And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

**Eph. 4:24** And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

**Eph. 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

**Eph. 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

**Eph. 5:19** Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord,

**Eph. 5:20** Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father,

**Eph. 5:21** Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ:

**Eph. 5:26** That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,

**Eph. 5:27** That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

**Eph. 6:17** And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

**Eph. 6:18** By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,



## **Questions:**

### **Section 1**

1. List the things that Christ dealt with on the cross. What did He need to deal with so that He could gain church as the one new man?
2. Discuss what are ordinances and why they are so damaging to the church. What do we need more of to be set free from our ordinances?

### **Section 2**

1. What does it mean for the Body to be built up in spirit? Share experiences of being built up with other members of His Body.
2. According to Eph. 4:14 what else is a source of damage to the Body? Instead of good doctrine, what should be our focus?
3. How should we read and study the Bible so that we receive it as food to eat?

### **Section 3**

1. What is the complete gospel? What can we see from Eph 2:12-22?
2. What are the negative things that damage the church life? What is Paul dealing with in Eph 4:22?

### **Section 4**

1. What should we do to be free from oldness? Please refer to Paul's example.
2. What are the ways that we may grieve the Spirit?
3. What is the way to experience the washing of the water in the word?

## [Section 1]

### **ORDINANCES AND DOCTRINE**

We have seen that the divine Spirit has been mingled with the human spirit to produce one entity. This oneness of the divine Spirit with the human spirit is the church life. Because the church is produced by the mingling of divinity with humanity, we may say that the church is a hybrid.

The book of Ephesians also deals with certain negative things that damage or hinder the church life. The reason these things are covered in this book is that Ephesians is focused on the church.

#### **ABOLISHING THE ORDINANCES TO CREATE ONE NEW MAN**

Those who have been Christians for years know that on the cross Christ died as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Furthermore, on the cross Christ crucified the old man, destroyed Satan, and dealt with the world. This means that on the cross Christ dealt with sin, with the old man including the old nature, with Satan, and with the world. However, not many Christians realize that on the cross Christ also dealt with the ordinances. Christ dealt with sins and with sin so that we might be saved. He dealt with our old nature in order to set us free from the old man. Moreover, Christ dealt with Satan so that we may be victorious and overcome the evil one. Finally, Christ dealt with the world, so that we may be holy, sanctified, separated from the world. But why did He deal with the ordinances? He dealt with them in order to create one new man. Christians do not see this point because they concentrate on personal salvation, sanctification, or victory, and pay no attention to the church. Even many Bible teachers fail to point out that in Ephesians Christ abolished the ordinances in order that the church might be produced. This is one of the most important revelations the Lord has given to the church in recent days. Christ's death was not only for our salvation, liberation, sanctification, and victory. His death was also to abolish the ordinances in order to create the church as the one new man.

Ordinances, commandments, and the law are in the same category. Apart from the law, we would not have any commandments. These commandments give rise to ordinances. On the cross Christ abolished the law of commandments in ordinances.

Ordinances are related both to religion and to culture and also to human nature. According to our nature, we have a strong tendency toward

ordinances. Our ordinances match our culture. The more cultured we are, the more ordinances we have.

Christ abolished the ordinances in order to create in Himself one new man. He did not abolish them so that we may be holy, spiritual, or victorious. In a sense, He did not abolish the ordinances even that we may be saved. He abolished them so that the church might come into being.

#### **DROPPING THE ORDINANCES FOR THE PROPER CHURCH LIFE**

If we know the church, we shall reject all ordinances. The church is the mingling of the processed God with the proper humanity. Here in this mingling there are no ordinances, commandments, rules, or regulations. The more we are in the mingled spirit, in the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit, the more we shall be set free from ordinances.

However, if we cling to ordinances, we shall be divisive. Christians have been divided mainly because of ordinances. Some denominations have been established because of ordinances. Do you have the confidence to say that you have no ordinances? Few of us can say this. The young people have their particular ordinances, and the older saints have theirs. Most of the problems among the leading ones in the churches are caused by ordinances.

Some Christians have an ordinance, for example, regarding speaking in tongues. After one meeting, a brother came to me very happy because he had not been bothered by a sister who had spoken in tongues in that meeting. I told this brother that even his happiness proved that he still had feelings about speaking in tongues. Hence, his reaction was not altogether positive. If he could be surrounded by those who spoke in tongues without having any feeling about it, that would prove that he had no ordinances concerning this matter.

If we would have the proper church life, we must drop all ordinances and concentrate on the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit. Only in this mingling can we enjoy the genuine church life.

Ordinances are particularly related to religion. Without ordinances, it is impossible to have religion, for religion is composed of ordinances. But Christ does not want a religion. What He wants is the new man. Therefore, He abolished the ordinances on the cross. Some may prefer shouting in the meeting, whereas others prefer silence. But to be either for shouting or for silence

is to have an ordinance. We should not be for either one or the other, but for the Spirit. However, according to our nature and upbringing, we are prone to have ordinances of one kind or another. But as long as there are ordinances, we do not have the reality of the church life. The church life does not consist of ordinances, but of the living Spirit.

### **THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ORDINANCES AND THE SPIRIT**

In 2:13-22 we see a contrast between ordinances and the Spirit. Christ on the cross abolished the ordinances in order to produce the church. Now that the ordinances have been abolished, the Spirit comes in to replace them. If we have ordinances, we do not have the Spirit. But if we have the Spirit, we shall not have ordinances. The cross abolished the ordinances in order to give place to the Spirit in whom we have access unto the Father. Hence, the Spirit is the replacement of all ordinances. In the meetings we should not have an ordinance regarding shouting or quietness. As long as we are not in the Spirit, anything we do is an ordinance.

The church is neither an organization nor a religion, but the Body of Christ produced by the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit. In the meetings we should not have rules and regulations; we should simply care to be in the Spirit. Do not be concerned about the arrangement of the chairs or about whether or not the sisters wear a head covering. To arrange the chairs in a particular way or to wear a head covering may be fine when done in the spirit. But to insist on these things is to make them ordinances. Anything we do in the meetings becomes an ordinance if we are not in the Spirit.

When Christ abolished the ordinances, He broke down the middle wall of partition (2:14). Now the separating wall of ordinances no longer exists. When I was young, I was strong in the matter of ordinances. But today I realize that God cares only for the divine Spirit in our human spirit. In 2:18 Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit and in verse 22, of the human spirit.

#### **[Section 2]**

### **CARING FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY**

Ephesians 2:22 says that God's dwelling place is in our spirit. For God to have such a dwelling place, there must be the practical building up of the Body. But if we still hold to certain ordinances, we cannot be built up with other believers. Ordinances are always divisive. If

some sisters make an ordinance out of head coverings, they will be divided from the sisters who do not wear a head covering. Those who advocate head covering may be very strong, using 1 Corinthians 11 as their scriptural ground. But if they are strong in the way of ordinances, they will be divided from other sisters. However, if all the sisters are in the Spirit, not caring for ordinances about head covering, they will be built up together.

In today's Christianity seldom is a message given on the building. What most Christians care for is individual edification, not the building up of the Body. To edify someone usually means to educate him, to give him a spiritual education. Although many care for such education, they are not concerned about the building up of the Body of Christ. In the Lord's recovery we are not for personal edification, but for corporate building up. In 2:22 Paul says, "In Whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit." How can we be built up together in our locality if we still hold on to ordinances? It is impossible. Just as we all have different faces, so we all have different ordinances. We praise the Lord that no matter how different our background may be, we have one life and one Spirit! Therefore, in the church life today we do not care for ordinances, but we focus on the mingled spirit.

### **DOCTRINE AS A DAMAGE TO THE CHURCH LIFE**

In 4:14 Paul speaks of a second negative thing that causes damage to the church life: "That we may be no longer babes tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error." Here Paul speaks of teaching or doctrine. In any religion there are not only ordinances, but also doctrines. Notice that in verse 14 Paul does not speak of heresy, but of doctrine, of teaching. Although doctrine seems good, it can cause us to be carried away from Christ and the church. No matter how positive a particular doctrine may seem to be, if it distracts you from Christ and the church, you must be careful about it and not take it in. Do not accept even the best doctrine if it distracts you from Christ and the church. It is the Spirit, not doctrine, that produces the church. Nevertheless, in today's Christianity there is doctrine upon doctrine. There sermon upon sermon is given on doctrine. However, the mere doctrine without life in the Spirit damages the church life.

In chapter four of Ephesians there is a contrast between doctrine and the reality of Christ. The

reality of Christ is the Spirit of reality. If you cling to doctrine, you will automatically let go of the Spirit of reality. But if you take care of the Spirit of reality, you will let go of doctrine.

Christians today are divided either by ordinances or by doctrines. The denominations are established according to ordinances or doctrines. Without ordinances or doctrines, there would be no divisions. If ordinances and doctrines were removed, all genuine Christians would be one. We thank the Lord that no matter how diverse our backgrounds may be, we in the Lord's recovery are truly one. Even the evil angels recognize our oneness. The divisive elements of our backgrounds have been set aside, and we have come together to be one in the Lord.

Throughout the years we have learned to drop our opinions in order to keep the oneness. A number of times we have held different opinions, but by the Lord's mercy we have been willing to drop them for the sake of the oneness. The Body comes out of the Spirit. Certainly doctrinal dissension could never build up the Body. When we hold on to our doctrinal opinion, we are through with the reality of Christ, which is nothing less than the life-giving Spirit.

### **TAKING THE WORD AS NOURISHMENT**

Since we emphasize the need to set aside doctrine for the building up of the church, you may wonder what we do with the Bible. We should not approach the Scriptures mainly for the purpose of gaining knowledge. On the contrary, we should use the Bible for spiritual nourishment. According to 6:17 and 18, we should take the Word of God by means of all prayer. In Matthew 4:4 the Lord Jesus said to the Devil who was tempting Him, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God." This indicates that the Lord Jesus took the word of God in the Scriptures as His bread and lived on it. The word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is for nourishment, not primarily for knowledge. Therefore, when we contact the Word, we should exercise not only our mind but especially our spirit to take in the Word as nourishment.

Recently I turned once again to the book of Isaiah. In the past I acquired a good deal of knowledge of this book. But as I read Isaiah this time, I did not do so mainly for knowledge, but for nourishment. Isaiah 1:3 says, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." The fact that a crib is related to eating indicates that the book of Isaiah has the concept of nourishment. Once again I say that we should not

take the Word of God just as knowledge; we should take it as food to nourish us. The best way to take the Word as nourishment is by pray-reading.

### **CARING FOR THE REALITY OF CHRIST**

If we care for doctrine, we shall be divided. We in the Lord's recovery need to be clear that we are not for ordinances or for doctrine, but for the living Spirit, who is the reality of Christ. If we are faithful to care for the reality of Christ and not for doctrines or ordinances, we shall not be divided.

When we say that we are for the living Spirit and not for doctrine, this does not mean that we do not believe in the Bible. We believe the Bible at least as much as other Christians do, if not more. But we do not take the Bible as dead letters. To us, the Word is living. If through 1 Corinthians 11 some sisters are touched by the Lord to put on a head covering, we are thankful and appreciative, but we would not make this into a doctrine of head covering. In the same principle, if certain brothers and sisters feel that they are old and desire to be buried, we are willing to accommodate them. But we do not make a doctrine of being baptized more than once. The same holds true regarding the burning of things that are worldly or improper. If some are led of the Lord to burn certain articles, they are free to do so. But they should not make this matter of burning into a doctrine. In fact, not even Christ and the church are mere doctrines to us. Rather, Christ and the church are a marvelous reality.

### **A CHARGE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE**

I realize that more and more the going on of the Lord in His recovery will be with the young people. No doubt the spread of the recovery in this country and elsewhere will be mainly with them. Therefore, in the presence of the Lord, I would charge the young people with the importance of realizing that in the recovery we are not for ordinances or for doctrine, but only for the life-giving Spirit as the reality of Christ. We do not take the Bible as a book of doctrine in letters. Rather, we take the Word as spirit and life. In Ephesians 2 there is the contrast between ordinances and the Spirit, and in chapter four there is the contrast between doctrine and the reality of Christ that produces the growth in life for the building up of the Body. Ordinances are a wall that separates, whereas doctrine is a wind that carries people away from the building up of the Body. In both chapter two and chapter four Paul is concerned with the building up of the church. When we are for the Spirit, we shall be built up as God's habitation in our spirit. In like

manner, if we are for the reality of Christ, we shall have the growth in life for the building up of the Body in love. Therefore, we in the Lord's recovery must proclaim that we do not care for ordinances or for doctrine. We take the Word as revelation and nourishment, but we do not care for doctrine. We know that through the past several centuries God's people have been divided and even denominated by doctrine and ordinances. Therefore, we care only for the Spirit and for the reality of Christ.

### **[Section 3]**

#### **THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN**

Before we consider the matter of putting off the old man and putting on the new man, the church (4:22-24), we need to see that the abolishing of the ordinances for the creation of the new man is part of the gospel. Not many Christians realize that this matter must be proclaimed as part of the gospel. Speaking of Christ, 2:17 says, "He preached the gospel of peace." This indicates that what is covered by Paul in 2:12-22 is related to the gospel.

#### **THE WHOLE GOSPEL**

According to verse 12, we once were apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope, and without God in the world. But in Christ Jesus we have become near in the blood of Christ (v. 13). The context proves that we have been brought near to one another. The Gentiles were far off from the Jews, and the Jews were far off from the Gentiles. But on the cross Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between them. Therefore, now in the blood of Christ the Jews and the Gentiles are made near to one another. It is true that the blood has brought us to God. But in verse 13 Paul is not saying that we are brought near to God; he is saying that we are brought near to one another. This is part of the gospel.

Verse 14 says that Christ is our peace. The peace here is not that between us and God, but that between us and other believers. In particular, it is the peace between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers. Christ, our peace, has made the Jews and the Gentiles one, having broken down the middle wall of partition that separated them. In His flesh He abolished the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances, in order to create the two in Himself into one new man (vv. 14-15). In this way He made peace between the Gentiles and the Jews.

In verse 16 Paul goes on to say, "And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity by it." Christ reconciled the Jews and the Gentiles to God in one Body. This indicates that reconciliation is a corporate matter.

Verse 17 continues, "And coming, He preached the gospel of peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near." The subject of this verse is Christ. On the day we heard the gospel, Christ came as the Spirit to preach to us the good news of the peace which He had accomplished on the cross.

In verses 18 through 22 we see that we now have access unto the Father, that we are fellow-citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, that we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, that the whole building is growing together into a holy temple in the Lord, and that we also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit. All these verses indicate that the abolishing of the ordinances for the producing of the church is part of the gospel.

Many of us can testify that without the church life our human life has no meaning. Although we have been saved and regenerated to become children of God, our daily life is meaningless without the church. Can you be satisfied simply with eating, sleeping, working, spending some time to pray and read the Bible, and then sometimes telling others about Christ? From my experience I can testify that if I do not have the church life, I have no desire to live. This indicates that even though we may be saved, we are lacking something vital if we do not have the church life in a practical way. The whole gospel, the perfect and ultimate gospel, must include the church life. Most Christians, however, do not have a complete gospel because they do not see that the gospel includes the abolishing of the ordinances for the creation of the new man. Today we in the Lord's recovery must preach not a partial gospel, but one that is complete, a whole gospel.

Many Christians preach only the first aspect of the gospel, redemption by the blood of Christ. Some also preach the second aspect, the matter of being saved by Christ's life (Rom. 5:10). Another aspect of the gospel is the enjoyment of the riches of Christ. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul said that grace had been given to him "to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel." The final aspect of the gospel is what we have seen in Ephesians 2—the abolishing of the ordinances for the creation of the one new man, the church. Redemption, life, and the enjoyment of the riches of Christ are all for the church. Thus,

the ultimate goal of the gospel is the church, the new man. We praise the Lord for showing us that, according to the book of Ephesians, the gospel includes the creation of the new man.

### **PUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN**

We have considered two negative things that damage the church life: ordinances and doctrine. Now we come to a third negative thing—the old man. Some Christians interpret the old man in 4:22 as the old nature. It is true that the old man includes the old nature, but it also includes a great deal more. Ephesians 4:22 indicates that the old man is all-inclusive: “That you have put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit.” Here Paul speaks of putting off, as regards our former manner of life, the old man. The former manner of life includes everything related to us: what we are, what we have, our family life, and our social life. Paul’s meaning here is that we must put off whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have. We are to put off our very way of living.

The old man with all it includes is a damage to the church life. Wherever the old man is, there can be no church. This means that what we are, what we have, and what we do make the church life an impossibility.

Ordinances, doctrine, and the old man are the three main negative things that damage the church life. If we have ordinances, the church life is gone. If we are occupied with doctrine, it will not be possible to have the proper church life. In addition, if we continue to live according to the old man, the church life will be seriously damaged, even terminated. However, if we have no ordinances or doctrines and if we put off the old man with his former manner of life, we shall have a marvelous church life, a church life that will be a miniature of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. In such a church life it is impossible to have division.

I wish to say once again that in the Lord’s recovery we are not for ordinances or for doctrine. However, we have deep respect for the Word of God. By the Lord’s mercy, we would never break His Word. But we do not take the Bible as mere doctrine. To keep the Word in a living way is one thing, but to turn the revelations in the Word into doctrine is another. We need to take the Word as nourishment for growth in life. We should not take it as a book of doctrine and ordinances. Although I prefer to kneel down when I pray, I do not make this a formality or an

ordinance that others are expected to follow. Rather, when I kneel to pray, I do so in spirit.

### **[Section 4]**

### **FLEXIBILITY FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

For the church life, we must have no ordinances, we must not be occupied with doctrine, and we must not have any oldness. If we would be free from oldness, we must lay aside what we are, what we do, and the way we live. Those who are released from oldness in this way are very flexible. When Paul was on the way to Damascus, he was altogether in the old man. He had strongly opposed Stephen and consented to his death. Being strong in the old man, Paul was for the temple, the priests, and for the religion of Judaism. He strongly reacted against those who opposed these things. However, after he came to the Lord and had been dealt with by Him, he became flexible, seemingly without opinion. In 1 Corinthians 9 he said that he could be all things to all men (v. 22). He could be flexible because he had put aside his old man.

During the early years of my ministry, I had much to say to those who came to me for advice. For example, if a brother consulted me about marriage, I had many points to share with him concerning married life. But now when the saints come to me for counsel, I do not have much to say. Mainly, I encourage them to contact the Lord in prayer. My desire is to be like Paul, to be one who has given up the old man and who has become flexible in dealing with people.

If we have truly put off the old man, others will have a difficult time describing us. However, if we can be described easily, we probably have not put off the old man. We should not be proud, and we should not be humble. Actually, we should be nothing. Then we shall be useful in the church life.

### **PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN**

For the church life, we must not only put off the old man, but also put on the new man. The new man is the practical church life, which is Christ as the life-giving Spirit mingled with our spirit in a corporate way. To put on the church life as the new man is to put on this entity produced by the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit. In this marvelous entity, the new man, there are no ordinances and there is nothing of the old man. There is only Christ as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit mingled with our spirit.

### **NOT GRIEVING THE SPIRIT**



In 4:30 Paul charges us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Not caring for the church life is one of the main ways we grieve the Spirit. For example, if you do not attend the meetings of the church, you may grieve the Spirit. Many grieve the Spirit by refusing to function in the meetings. Often they have the sense in their spirit to speak or to call on the name of the Lord, but they refuse to do so. At such times they grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Furthermore, we may grieve the Spirit in many ways in our daily life. Our daily living should be part of the new man, part of the church life. We are not to pretend that we are humble or well-behaved, but to put on the church life in a practical way. How marvelous it would be if day by day we all experienced Christ as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit mingling Himself with our spirit in a corporate way!

### **THE OVERFLOW OF THE INNER FILLING**

In 5:18 Paul says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled in spirit.” In our regenerated spirit we need to be filled with the Triune God unto all the fullness of God. This will cause us to overflow with speaking, singing, praising, and submitting. This will not be the result of our efforts; it will come as the spontaneous overflow of the inner filling. If we are filled in spirit with all that God is, we shall certainly experience such an overflow.

### **THE WASHING OF WATER IN THE WORD**

In 5:26 Paul goes on to speak of the cleansing that is by the washing of the water in the Word. Today the Lord Jesus is cleansing, purging, and purifying His church by the water in the Word. The water in the Word is the living Word with the divine life energized by the Spirit. The water in the Word is actually the life-giving Spirit Himself. In our experience the Word of God must not be letters, but spirit and life. In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.” The Word as spirit and life is the water that cleanses us.

This cleansing does not wash away uncleanness; rather, it washes away all the spots and wrinkles. Wrinkles come from oldness, and spots come from wounds. The church needs to be washed both from oldness and from wounds. For this washing what is effective is not the blood of Christ, but the water in the Word. The blood deals with sin and uncleanness, whereas the water in the Word deals with wrinkles and spots, with oldness and hurts.

The way to have the washing of the water in the Word is presented in 6:17 and 18. In these verses Paul tells us to receive “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit.” This indicates that we need to pray-read the Word. We need to take the living Word into the depths of our being by praying in spirit. This is to exercise our spirit to pray the Word into us. If we do this, the Word will not only be food to nourish us, but also water to wash us and to cleanse us from all oldness and wounds.

In the church life it is necessary to have frequent contact with one another. However, the more we contact one another, the more we hurt one another. If a brother would stay with me for several days, no doubt he would be hurt by me, and I would be hurt by him. The only way to remove the spots caused by this mutual wounding is to experience the washing of the water in the Word. If you are not cleansed of your wounds by the water in the Word, you may be offended and discouraged and even consider giving up the church life. However, if you exercise your spirit to pray-read the Word and thereby take the Word into the depths of your being, you will experience the washing of the water in the Word and you will be cleansed of all spots. Furthermore, the washing of water in the Word will cause you to grow, and by this growth you will be built up with others.

The entire book of Ephesians reveals in a consistent way that the church is the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit. Today the divine Spirit is the Triune God in the holy Word. The Triune God is the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, and this Spirit is within the Word. Therefore, we should not only exercise our mind to study the Word, but also exercise our spirit to pray the Word. By pray-reading, we touch not only the Word, but also the Spirit. Then the Spirit will nourish us, water us, and wash us so that we may be purged of all wrinkles and spots. Eventually, through this washing, we shall be fully sanctified in a practical way. This is what the Lord is doing in the church today.

### **THE LIVING CHRIST WITH THE LIVING WORD**

We are here only for the living Christ with the living Word. Our way to approach the Word is not just to exercise our mind to study it and to gain knowledge of it, but also to exercise our spirit to pray the Word and to take it in as the life-giving Spirit for nourishment and washing. In this way we shall grow in a corporate way and be built up together. It is by this process that the Lord

Jesus will fulfill the prophecy He uttered in Matthew 16:18: "I will build My church." Then we shall have the reality and the enjoyment of the full gospel, the gospel of Christ and the church.

#### References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 70 & 71