

#3 Experiencing the Work of the Cross for the Body and Living in the Unique Fellowship of the Body

(The International Chinese-speaking Conference: Living in the Reality of the Body of Christ by Keeping the Principles of the Body) 2019/6/10-16

I. If we would live in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to experience the work of the cross for the Body and in the Body: **A.** The cross leads us to the Body; the knowledge of the cross brings us the knowledge of the Body of Christ.

Rom. 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves; **8:13** For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live. **12:5** So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **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. **Mon**

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. **C.** In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross: **Eph. 2:16** And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it. **1.** The cross will test us and sift away all our mixtures and uncleanness. **Matt. 16:24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. **2.** The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth. **3.** Life and work in the Body necessitate drastic dealings with the flesh, and such dealings necessitate a deep knowledge of the cross of Christ. **4.** The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross. **Tue**

5. All of God's dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body. **6.** 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. **1 Cor. 1:18** For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **D.** The revelation of the Body is very costly, for it touches the spring of our natural life: **1 Cor. 2:2** For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified. **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. **2.** Only after the cross has wrought a deep work within us will we be able to be limited by and coordinate with the other members of the Body. **1 Cor. 12:27** Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually. **3.** 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. **Wed**

II. Since the Body of Christ is uniquely one universally, the fellowship of the Body of Christ is also uniquely one universally: **1 John 1:3** That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with

the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. **7** But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin. **A.** Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a circulation in the Body of Christ—a circulation which the New Testament calls fellowship. **B.** The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the stream of the divine life; as the stream of the divine life flows within us, there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. **C.** The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ; by being restricted in this fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness. **Thu**

D. The unique fellowship of the Body of Christ is related to the unique oneness of the Body of Christ: **1.** The fellowship, the circulation, of the divine life in the Body brings all the members of the Body into oneness. **Eph. 4:3-4** Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **2.** This oneness is the oneness of the Spirit and also the oneness of the Body of Christ. **3.** The unique fellowship is the genuine oneness of the Body of Christ as the unique ground for the believers to be kept one in Christ.

E. The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the Body of Christ: **1.** Because there is one Spirit, there is only one Body, and there is only one circulation of life in the Body; this circulation is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. **2.** A local church is a part of the unique Body of Christ, and the fellowship of the Body is universally one; in fellowship there is no separation. **3.** No church or region should isolate itself from the fellowship of the Body. **4.** The local churches should fellowship with all the genuine local churches on the whole earth to keep the fellowship of the Body of Christ. **5.** Among all the churches that compose the one universal Body of Christ, there is no organization, but there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. **Phil. 1:5** For your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now. **Fri**

F. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we come to practice the unique fellowship of the universal Body of Christ: **1 Cor. 10:16-17** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread. **1.** The Lord's table is a testimony that we who belong to Christ are one. **2.** As we enjoy Christ in partaking of His blood and body and body at His table, we express and practice the fellowship of the Body of Christ, the unique fellowship among the churches. **Sat**

Crucial Point①: In the matters of God, learn not to trust our natural being, put it on the cross, being led to the Body and go on

OL1: The cross leads us to the Body; the knowledge of the cross brings us the knowledge of the Body of Christ. **OL2:** The cross leads to the Body, and the cross operates in the sphere of the Body. **OL3:** In the Body of Christ we cannot go on without the cross.

When man fell, he fell because of his own concepts, choices, and judgments. Therefore, God will not allow anything that issues from the old creation to gain the upper hand. The “backbone” of the natural man must be broken; the hollow of his thigh must be touched. Before he will submit to God, he must be crippled and fall flat on his face. This is what God is doing in the new creation. He is smashing everything of the old creation, and He is constituting us with everything that issues from Christ so that we can become the Body of Christ in practicality...God wants to remove everything in man that is from the flesh. God’s children must first deal with the natural life. If they deal with their natural life, they will be in the Body spontaneously, because the Body of Christ is composed of everything that issues from Christ. Nothing of the old man can remain in the Body.

The work of the cross not only brings us into the Body, but also the Body becomes the very realm within which the cross works. If we were here only as a congregation, we might not need the cross. However, since we are together as the Body, we cannot go on without the cross. The cross will dig away our natural life, our own activities, and any disproportionate growth. The cross is indispensable to the church; it is indispensable among Christians. Whether or not we like it, we have to communicate with other brothers and sisters because we are all in the Body. Because we are in the Body, we have to be restricted and cannot be so free. ...The cross will test us and sift away all our mixture and uncleanness.

Application: For the serving ones

Please pray-read the outline of chapter 16 “**The Importance of Our Natural Being in The Things of God**” of **The Basic Lessons on Service**. (1)Our spirit having been deadened.(2)Our soul neither receiving the things of the Spirit of God nor being able to know them.(3)Our heart being deceitful above all things and being incurable. **Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, And it is incurable; Who can know it?** (4)Our mind being filled with vanity and darkened in understanding. **Eph. 4:17...that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, 18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;**(5)Our will being hard.(6)Our flesh being unable to be subject to God and to please God.(7)Our self needing to be denied. (8)Our body being of sin and of death.(9)Learning to have no trust in our natural being in the things of God. **Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,**

As we can see from this outline, no other way for your natural being to go except being put to the cross. But by putting the natural life on to the cross, you will be led to the mingled spirit and the Body of Christ. May you get the cross as the secret of the service and experience it subjectively.

The testimony of the gospel propagation: Through the gospel propagation last week, 5 people got baptized. Thank the Lord. But during the first half, not only any got saved, but also we could not take almost anyone to the meeting hall and there was locked up feeling. On Wednesday night, we confessed our sin that we were not one with the Holy Spirit and fellowshiped the situation. Then we learnt that

it was the mid-term exam week at Kobe University, etc. Then we immediately changed our main target from college students to young working people and we changed the place accordingly. From next day we could baptize people every day. Because the gospel is the work of the Holy Spirit, we need to act according to the analysis of the outward situation and the inward of the feeling of life. Again, we learnt that our natural power and passion could not be useful at all in the gospel propagation.

Prayer: “Oh, Lord Jesus, I want to serve the Lord. But when I serve the Lord, I have to see that my natural being is totally powerless and incapable in service. Oh Lord Jesus. Let me learn to serve by the Spirit of God, putting natural being on the cross, not relying on self. The cross leads me to the Body. Only we go through the cross, would we serve to build up the Body in the coordination of the Body. Amen!”

Crucial Point②:Under the restriction of your measure, perform effectively and receive God’s blessing

OL1:The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross.

OL2: All of God’s dealings with us have been with a view to prepare us for the Body; all His work in us is a process of elimination so that we can become functioning members of the Body.

Have you asked God to show you the measure He has given you? You should walk in the measure that God has given you. You can only walk within your measure; you cannot walk beyond that measure. Hence, you have to find out where the boundary of your measure is and accept this boundary. If you do this, you will not be covetous, ambitious, or restless to do many other things. Paul said, “**But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you...We are not boasting beyond our measure in others’ labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance, so that we may announce the gospel unto those parts beyond you, not so that we may boast in another man’s rule in things already prepared**” (2 Cor. 10:13, 15-16). To go beyond one’s measure is to overstep others; it is to intrude upon others and to push others out. We must remember that consecration leads to submission to Christ, whereas humility leads to submission to the Body. The psalmist said, “**Nor do I go about in things too great / Or too wondrous for me**” (Psa. 131:1).

Application: For Young Working Saints/Graduate students

In your business life, you should learn not to overstep your authority. Since this is a very important point, you should understand this point well. Many business persons work without understanding this point and as a result they are working extremely inefficiently and because it is against God’s principle, they can not receive any blessing.

For example, suppose you are promoting one project with other people. And you came to a conclusion that you need to reinforce the members who promote this project. Then you talked with the project members and checked with the finance department and learnt that it was possible to do that in the budget for this project. However, neither you nor other project members who work with you have authority to decide how to allocate the budget. Then you went to talk with your

manager who had authority in this matter, but he rejected. In this matter, you should have gone to this manager for the first place. The managers decide where to invest according to their consideration on many other factors by overall optimization. So your not talking to this manager is a waste of time (the discussion itself became unnecessarily) to make research and talk and complain when the manager doesn't agree. So please work by allocating your time strategically with the understanding of who has authority to decide. God is the God of order and all the deputy authority is set by God. If you do not submit to the deputy authority, it is considered as the rebellion toward God and you cannot receive God's blessing.

To serve in the order of the Body in the church life is in the same principle of working in the order of the organization of the company. The restriction in the Body is for you to function in the Body and reach the building up of the Body and for you to be blessed. For your growth, for you to become an overcomer, please learn to be restricted.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, I call upon your precious name more than 50 times a day. My natural life hates to be restricted. But without being restricted, there is only chaos and we cannot partake of God's blessing. I would stay within the restriction of God's measurement. I am one member of the Body of Christ. Each member has different function, but we function by being blended together for the building up of the Body. To function properly as a member of the Body of Christ, I will learn to stay under the restriction."

Crucial Point (3): The fellowship is the circulation of blood of the Body of Christ that can make us spiritually healthy.

OL1: Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a circulation in the Body of Christ—a circulation which the New Testament calls fellowship.

OL2: The fellowship of the Body of Christ is the stream of the divine life; as the stream of the divine life flows within us, there is the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

OL3: The fellowship among the churches is the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

The Lord is rich to all who call on Him. To call is not merely to pray. The Greek word for call means "to cry out," even loudly. In certain situations, it would not be appropriate for us to call on the Lord loudly. However, when we are in a proper situation to do so, we should call loudly, "O Lord Jesus! Amen!" By calling on the Lord in this way, we will enjoy the riches of Christ, and we will be strengthened. This is because our calling on the name of the Lord causes the Spirit to circulate within us. This circulating Spirit is the compound Spirit, who includes divinity, humanity, Christ's person, Christ's death, and Christ's resurrection....When this Spirit circulates within us, we enjoy all of Christ's riches. This circulation is the fellowship of the Body of Christ.

No part of my physical body can be separate from the other parts since all the parts must participate in the one blood circulation. Some may think that they are wise to keep themselves separate. But if any part of the Body of Christ 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. Then we will save ourselves and promote the healing of the Body. In some places there has been no peace because of a lack of fellowship. The more fellowship we have, the more peace we have.

The reason many people are weak physically is that

they sit too much. They do not move. It is the same spiritually. We are sick and weak because we remain with ourselves, in ourselves, and for ourselves....We need to get out of ourselves by fellowshipping with the other churches. If we want to get helped, the secret is to go to see some brothers in another locality.

Application: For Young ones and College Student saints

The best sales product area for pharmaceutical and medical device products is cardiovascular (circulatory system). This shows us that major causes of human diseases are circulation problem. This is the same in the Body of Christ. The circulation of blood of the Body of Christ is fellowship. Fellowship includes the vertical fellowship between the Lord and a believer, as well as the horizontal fellowship among the believers. The horizontal fellowship also includes blending with the nearby churches. The more having this kind of fellowship, the more you become spiritually healthy. But once you lack this fellowship, you will become unhealthy.

Early this year brother Yoshida was called to the Lord. He has had a fellowship with brother Lee about very detail matters to lead churches in Japan. Brother Yoshida is our pattern. You need to open to your spiritual partner or the brother/sister who are leading you, and have a fellowship and pray with them about your future education, your future career, your performance or relationship in your class, a variety of your future plans, and your services in the church. The more fellowship with the Lord and the other members of the Body of Christ, the better your spiritual blood circulation become so that anything unnecessary for you will be taken away and spiritual nutrition and oxygen you need will be supplied to you. In the fellowship you can be blessed, and you can grow up.

This principle of fellowship can be applied to your club activities or communication with your teacher. Communicating with your classmates or teacher is not exactly the same as spiritual fellowship, but its principle is similar to it in the aspects that better communication makes relationship better.

In these recent years, as more scientific aspects have been introduced to improved school study and office work, importance of communication skill gathers more attentions. It is learned that in order to achieve success, not only IQ, intelligence quotient, but also EQ, emotional quotient, telling ability to recognize and control one's own emotion, ability to understand others empathetically.

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus, I cry out your name loudly. O Lord, Amen, Hallelujah! By calling on the name of the Lord loudly, I feel circulation of divine blood inwardly. Praise the Lord. I practice blending with young junior saints and college student saints of other district and of nearby churches. Through such blendings, I can participate in the horizontal fellowship and the vertical fellowship richly. In the fellowship I can be healed and proceed forward."

Crucial Point (4): The fellowship at the Lord's Table testifies and practice the unique fellowship of the universal Body of Christ.

OL1: The Lord's table is a testimony that we who belong to Christ are one. As we enjoy Christ in partaking of His blood and body at His table, we express and practice the fellowship of the Body of Christ, the unique fellowship among the churches.

1Cor.10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?

17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are

one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16 fellowship...makes us, the participants of the Lord's blood and body, one not only with one another but also with the Lord. We, the participants, make ourselves identified with the Lord in the fellowship of His blood and body. In verse 17 Paul speaks a strong word concerning the one bread and the one Body, saying that we are one bread, one Body, because we all partake of the one bread. Our joint partaking of the one bread makes us all one. This indicates that our partaking of Christ makes us all His one Body. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us into His one Body.

If we isolate ourselves from the fellowship of the Body, we are not qualified to partake of the Lord's body, because the loaf on the table in the Lord's supper signifies the entire Body of Christ. To be sure, the loaf signifies the Lord's physical body sacrificed for us on the cross. This is one aspect of the significance of the bread. Another aspect of this significance is that the bread signifies the one Body. Hence, when we come together to partake of the Lord's table, we need to realize that the bread, the loaf, signifies all the churches. If the church in our locality or the churches in a particular region are isolated from the fellowship of the Body of Christ, we lose the ground and also the right to partake of this loaf. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we come to practice the fellowship of the Body.

Application: for New Believers

New believers who baptized recently, please recognize that you have a right to join the Lord's table meeting in the Lord's Day. Separation of the bread and the cup is showing that Christ died on the cross for our redemption. The bread signifies the body of the Lord, and the cup signifies the blood of the Lord. By eating the Lord's bread to receive the Lord as life, you become a member of the Body of Christ. In addition, this bread also signifies the mysterious Body of Christ, the church. As one bread is made from many grains of wheat blended, we are many but one Body of Christ. Therefore, this bread is first signifying the personal body of Christ that was offered to God for us, and then signifying the mysterious Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is universal and includes every local church. All local churches on the earth are one in the fellowship of the Lord's Table. Anywhere in the world we testify one bread, universal one Body, to put Satan into shame and glorify God.

222 Praise the Lord — Remembrance of Him (JP 185)

1 Dear Lord, we thank Thee for this bread, /It is a sign divine;
In it we see the mysteries /Of God's unique design.

2 This bread Thy body signifies, /Which Thou hast giv'n for us,
That we may share Thy life divine, /Partaking of Thee thus.

3 For us Thy body Thou didst break /That Thou may thus impart
Thyself as life to us that we /May be Thy counterpart.

4 This bread thus also signifies /Thy body mystical,
Of which we living members are, /With Thee identical.

5 Though we are many grains of wheat, /Yet all one loaf, one bread;
Remembering Thee in such a way, /With Thee we all are fed.

6 As of this bread we all commune, /Thou, Lord, dost satisfy;
With all the saints we fellowship, /And Thee we testify.

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus, You have shed your blood on the cross and accomplished God's redemption for us. Now my sin has been forgiven and I have been spared from perishing. Not only that, on the ground of Your redeeming blood, I became able to eat Christ as the bread of life. Hallelujah, Praise the Lord. As I now eat this bread of life, I became a

member of the Body of Christ. One bread is a fellowship of the mysterious Body of Christ that can testify all the local churches on the earth are one. Amen!"

The High Gospel Topic 12 The Loving Father

Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately. **21** And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. **22** But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry, **24** Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.

MAN DEPARTING AND GOING FAR AWAY FROM GOD

The parable in Luke 15:11-24 likens the relationship between man and God to that of a son and his father. This indicates that man is from God. Man is made by God. Although man did not receive God's life, man's life today comes from God. Thus, from the aspect of creation, man is God's son. One day the younger of two sons took his portion of his father's substance, left his father, and went to a far country. This is a picture showing that man goes far away from God even after he has received all his natural ability from God. In a country far away from his father, this younger son wasted all his substance with riotous living. As a result he became poor and had to make a living by feeding swine. This shows that when man leaves God, he begins to live a sinful life. Wasting all that he has, he falls into sin. Feeding the swine symbolizes living the sinful life because swine are dirty. When you go to the movie theaters or when you go dancing, you are going to the swine pens.

MAN TURNING TO GOD AND WANTING TO WORK FOR GOD

While he was in his poverty the son woke up. He came to himself and began to remember the goodness of his father's house. This shows that a man in sin, who is living in sins, remembers God and His blessing when he comes to his end. Poverty helps man to wake up. It is hard for some to wake up until they have sinned to the uttermost. When they have reached the end of dancing or gambling, then they wake up. When the younger son came to himself and remembered his father, he decided to return to him. This shows that when a man wakes up from sin, it is natural for him to remember God and turn to Him.

When the son was about to return, he remembered his sins and felt that he was no more worthy to be his father's son. He was willing to be a servant instead and was going to ask his father to hire him. So he prepared four sentences for meeting his father: first, "I have sinned against heaven;" second, "I have sinned...in thy sight;" third, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son;" and fourth, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." This shows that when a sinner wakes up and turns to God, it is natural for him to feel that he has sinned against God and is unworthy of God's blessing. In other words, he feels unworthy of receiving anything from God freely. Because of this, he depends upon trading his work and good behavior for God's goodness. He thus hopes to improve himself before God. This is the wrong concept of every repenting sinner, to think he should be a servant instead of a son. Because of this concept, man always tries to establish his own merit in order to exchange it for God's goodness. But when he had just finished his first three sentences, the father interrupted him, received him and blessed him. When you return to God, take away your concept, just return to God and enjoy the blessing.