

Christ's Body

The Church of the Living God

"And God placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:22-23 "... Stay connected to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God." Colossians 2:19

In God's divine order, everything reproduces after its own kind. Plants reproduce plants, animals reproduce animals and humans reproduce humans. In the same manner, just as earthly seed reproduces the image of the earthly; only heavenly seed can reproduce the image of the heavenly. According to God's plan of redemption, Christ is the heavenly seed that reproduces His church. Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (John 12:24)." Jesus spoke here of His death on the cross by which He would birth His church.

We see two kinds of church today - the false church, which bears the image of the earthly (man) and the true church, which bears the image of the heavenly (Christ). "You have come to... the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem... the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:22-23)." The primary evidence that separates the true church from the false church is life. In Biblical terms, there are three different kinds of life. First, there is physical life. In the New Testament Greek, this is called *bios*, from which we get the word biology, the study of physical life. This is the life Jesus portrayed when He said the Word of God can be "choked with the worries and riches and pleasures of this *life* (Luke 8:14)." Next, there is soul-life or *psyche*, from which we get psychology, the study of soul-life. This is the life Jesus described when He said, "He who has found his *life* will lose it, and he who has lost his *life* for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:39)." And finally, there is spiritual life or *zoe*. Of the three kinds of

life, only *zoe* life is eternal. This is the divine life Jesus described when He said, "I have come that they may have *life*, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10)." This is the life John referred to when he wrote, "He who has the Son has the *life*; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the *life* (1 John 5:12)." Before we were saved, we had no *zoe* life. Jesus said, "You have no *life* within yourselves (John 6:53)... That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6)." Our life before we received Christ consisted of our physical life and soul life, both of which we inherited from our natural parents, and our inward sinful nature, which we spiritually inherited from Adam, the first man. But when Jesus Christ died on the cross, God performed a divine heart transplant and replaced our terminally sinful heart with His Son's divine heart. Now that we have been born of the Spirit, we have God's DNA (Divine Nature from Above) and Christ's *zoe* life.

Therefore, the true church is a divine organism. She is the church of the living God - the body of Christ. "Now you are Christ's body and individually members of it (1 Corinthians 12:27)." In the natural, when any of the body's major organic systems such as the nervous system or cardiovascular system is obstructed, the body quickly loses its vitality. Its immune system is compromised; its members stop functioning; and the body itself can die. Likewise, if the church relies on her natural ability instead of abiding in Christ, she blocks Christ's life from nourishing her. The church must stay connected to Christ's headship in order to be sustained by His life. Jesus emphasized this vital aspect of knowing Him when He said to the churches in the Book of Revelation, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church." When the church fails to hear and obey Christ's voice, her fellowship and connection to Him is lost. The result is spiritual degeneration, death and a form of religion without real *zoe* power. The only way the church can stay united to Christ is to know she has died in Christ and she now lives in Christ. This is the divine order. Death always comes

before resurrection life. When the church does not know she has died, she tries to do in the natural power of her soul what she can only do in the power of Christ's death. Unless the church abides (believes and acts on) on the power of Christ's crucifixion, she cannot express the power of His resurrection life.

Jesus said we would know the true church by its fruit. What is the true fruit of the church with Jesus Christ enthroned as her head? The primary fruit is a love for Jesus Christ and His body. The Bible says, "Though you have not seen Him (Jesus), you love Him (1 Peter 1:8)." And Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35)." The Greek word here for love is *agape*, the only love that is from God. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16)." When the church is disconnected from Christ her head because she does not abide in the truth and tries to live by her own power, she is incapable of producing Christ's life and love. The other prime fruit of a church under the headship of Christ is holiness or sanctification. Jesus Christ will produce a holy church because He is the holy seed. Therefore, the Lord has called us to come out and separate from the world (2 Corinthians 6:17). If you belong to Christ's body, there is no exception to this call. "Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy for I am Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).'" Thus the witness of the true church submitted to Christ is God's life, love and holiness. And the church can only produce this fruit if she abides in Christ - knowing and living in His death and resurrection.

"We will in all things grow up into Him who is the head; that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Ephesians 4:15-16