

Journey Through the Bible

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Message 11: A NEW HEART (6):

Christ Making His Home in Our Heart for the Building Up of the Church

Outline:

- I. **“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”—Matt. 16:18:**
 - A. The Lord’s word concerning the building up of the church in Matthew 16 is the greatest prophecy in the Bible:
 1. God’s eternal purpose is to gain the church; the church is God’s goal, desire, and destination— Eph. 3:9-11; Matt. 13:44-46.
 - B. We Christians must be persons for the church—Hag. 1; Hymns, #1248:
 1. The church should be our goal, and the church should also be our purpose—John 2:17.
- II. **In order for Christ’s word in Matthew 16:18 concerning the building up of the church to be fulfilled, we need to allow Christ to make His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:14-21:**
 - A. The book of Ephesians is the heart of the Bible, and the heart and key of this book is 3:16-19:
 1. Ephesians 3:16-19 are the apostle’s prayer for the church to experience Christ.
 2. These verses reveal that the key to the building up of the church as the Body of Christ is the inner experience of Christ as life.
 - B. In verse 16 Paul prayed that we might be strengthened into our inner man:
 1. The inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God’s life as its life—John 3:6.
 2. We need to learn the secret of exercising our spirit constantly so that our spirit can be strengthened—Eph. 6:18; 1 Thes. 5:17.
 - C. The result of our being strengthened into the inner man is that Christ makes His home in our hearts— Eph. 3:17a:
 1. The Greek word rendered make home in Ephesians 3:17 is the word for house plus a prefix that means down; this indicates that Christ wants to make His home deep down in our being.
 2. In our daily experience, we must allow Christ to make His home in our hearts:
 - a) We may compare our heart to a house with many rooms—the rooms of the mind, the will, the emotion, and the conscience; Christ wants to make His home in all these different rooms.
 - b) We need to give the Lord the permission to spread into our will, our emotion, and our mind; otherwise, He will be confined by us in our spirit and will be unable to make His home in our heart.

Focus: God’s intention and pleasure is that Christ would make His home in our hearts—that is, that He would be wrought, constituted, into all the parts of our heart—for the building up of the church and the fulfillment of His eternal purpose.

READING EXCERPT

Into Our Inner Man

Verse 16 also says that we are strengthened into the inner man. The inner man is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life. It is our spirit regenerated by the Spirit of God (John 3:6), indwelt by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:11, 16), and mingled with the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:17). In order to experience Christ unto all the fullness of God, we need to be strengthened into the inner man. This implies that we need to get into our spirit, where we can be strengthened through the Holy Spirit.

Because human beings are souls, not spirits, our personality or our person is in our soul. This is the reason the Bible refers to men as souls (Exo. 1:5 ; Acts 2:41). Both the body and the spirit are vessels used by the soul. Therefore, as souls, we have an outward vessel, the body, and an inward vessel, the spirit. When we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, the Lord came into us and regenerated us with Himself as our life. Before we were regenerated, there was no life in our spirit; we simply had our human life in our soul. But through regeneration we now have the divine life in our spirit. Therefore, our spirit is no longer merely a vessel; it has become our person with the life of God. But what about our human life and our old person in the soul? The old person, the soul with the human life, has been crucified on the cross, and now our new person is the spirit with the divine life. Our spirit regenerated with the divine life is now our inner man.

The One Making His Home in Their Hearts

The Christ who lives in us and who is being formed in us is now making His home in our hearts. In Ephesians 3:17 Paul says, "That Christ may make His home in your hearts." The heart is the center of our being. In our hearts Christ is now making His home, that is, settling Himself. Therefore, Christ is not only in us, but He is making His home in us.

Our heart is composed of the three parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will—plus our conscience, the main part of our spirit. Through regeneration, Christ came into our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). Now we should allow Him to spread Himself into every part of our hearts. The heart is the totality of all our inward parts and the center of our inward being. Therefore, when Christ makes His home in our hearts, He controls our entire inward being and supplies and strengthens every inward part with Himself.

Christ desires to spread from our spirit to all the parts of our heart. We, however, may not always be willing for Him to spread into our mind, emotion, or will. Therefore, Paul prayed to the Father that He would strengthen us according to His power by His Spirit into our inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts. This indicates that by being strengthened in this way, we shall be willing to let the indwelling Christ spread into all the parts of our being and to take over each part. This is Christ making His home in our hearts.

The Greek word rendered "make home" in Ephesians 3:17 is the word for house plus a prefix that means "down." This indicates that Christ wants to make His home deep down in our being. When we were saved, Christ came into our spirit. Now we must give Him the opportunity to spread Himself throughout all the parts of our inner being. As we are strengthened into the inner man, the door is opened for Christ to spread in us, to spread from our spirit to every part of our mind, emotion, and will. The more Christ spreads within us, the more He settles down in us and makes His home in us. This means that He occupies every part of our inner being, possessing all these parts and saturating them with Himself. As a result, we are filled with Christ.

Questions:

1. Why is the heart so important to the building up of the church?
2. What can we do to cooperate with the Lord in saturating every part of our being?

Scripture Reading:

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

Eph. 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,

Eph. 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,

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

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

Eph. 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are

Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Eph. 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

Eph. 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

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,

1 Thes. 5:17 Unceasingly pray,