

The Glorious Church

The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ

The Relationship Between the Body and the Bride

- In the Lord's eyes, the church has **two positions**.
 - As to her **life**, the church is the **Body of Christ**.
 - As to her **future**, she is the **bride of Christ**.
 - As to the **union** of Christ with the church, the church is His Body.
 - Regarding the **intimate relationship** of Christ with the church, the church is His bride.
- Whenever God's Word speaks of the **oneness** between Christ and the church, we see **Christ as the Head and the church as His Body**.
- Whenever the Word shows the **distinction** between Christ and the church, we see the **church as the bride to Christ**.
- **Today** the church is the **Body of Christ**.
 - For the purpose of manifesting the life of Christ.
- In the **future** the church will be the **bride of Christ**.
- In the church only one thing is recognized—that which comes out of Christ.
 - Only that which is out of Christ can return to Christ. The **material** for the building of such a bride is Christ Himself.
- Every Christian must **pursue** the life of the Body.
 - If we do not **seek** the life of the Body, we cannot seek the life of the Bride.
 - If we have the life of the Body **today**, we will have the life of the Bride in the **future**.

Christ Loves the Church

- Husbands should **love** their wives, because loving their wives is loving their own bodies.
 - Men always nourish and cherish their own bodies, and Christ also **nourishes** and **cherishes** the church.
 - Christ is working **step by step** in the church until that day when He **presents her to Himself**.
- God's highest revelation of the church is seen in the book of Ephesians.

- The outstanding feature of this book is that it does not start with sinners being saved but with our having been chosen in eternity.
- **Ephesians** reveals two lines: one is from eternity to eternity, and the other is from man's fall to his redemption.
- **Chapter 5** says that Christ will **cleanse** us by the washing of water in the word **until we are sanctified**.
- On the one hand, we need the vision to see that the church has never failed, sinned, or fallen.
- On the other hand, we need to see that we are just a group of sinners **saved by grace**; therefore, we need the **washing of the water in the word**.

The Cleansing of the Church by the Washing of the Water in the Word

- In the New Testament two Greek words are used to denote *word*.
 - *Logos* – the word in a **general sense**. Refers both to things which have been eternally determined and to things used in an **objective** way.
 - *Rhema* – Refers to words which are **spoken**. This is more **subjective** than *logos*.
- *Logos*—the Word of God recorded in the Bible—is of **no use** to us **by itself**.
- Both *logos* and *rhema* are the Word of God, but the former is God's Word **objectively recorded** in the Bible, while the latter is the word of God spoken to us at a **specific occasion**.
- *Logos* has its definite use, for without *logos*, we could never have *rhema*.
- The *rhema* reveals something to us **personally and directly**; it shows us what we need to deal with and what we need to be cleansed from.
 - We must specifically seek after this very matter because our Christian life is based on this *rhema*.
- Christ is using His life in His word, His *rhema*, to **cleanse** us.
- Before the Lord, the meaning of the church being cleansed by the washing of water is that **the life of Christ deals with every part that is not out of Christ**.
- The **growth** of the church also depends upon the word which the Lord speaks.
 - The central point of our prayers should be our **longing** for the Lord's speaking.
- When God speaks to us through His word, we are enlightened; through His word we are sanctified; and through His word we are made to grow.

(The Glorious Church – Chapter 3)