

Banner for the 2014 International Chinese-speaking Conference

**The issue of the experience of the Triune God as life
is the church**

**as the Father's house for His dwelling,
as the Son's vine for His spreading,
and as the Spirit's child for His moving;**

**the oneness of the church
is the oneness of the believers in the Triune God,
and the building up of the church
requires that we take the shepherding way
to have a life of ministering Christ
to others in love.**

Outline of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2014

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH**

**Message One
The Father's House**

MC

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-3, 6, 10-11, 20, 23; 1:4, 14, 16; 11:25

- John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe into God, believe also into Me.
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.
John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.
John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.
John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

I. According to the revelation in the Gospel of John, the issue, the divine result, of the experience of the Triune God as life is the church—10:10b; 11:25; 14:2-3; 15:1; 16:20-21.

- John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.
John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.

II. The central thought of John 14 is that we must believe into God and thereby enter into God—v. 1:

- John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe into God, believe also into Me.
A. To believe in God is objective, but to believe into God is subjective; it is the subjective believing that brings us into God.

- B. It is by believing into the Lord that we enter into Him to be one with Him, to partake of Him, and to participate in all that He has accomplished for us—3:15.
John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- C. Through believing into Christ we have an organic union with Him, and our being is merged into His so that we two may be one organically—15:4-5.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

III. The Father's house is a matter of the Triune God—through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection—working Himself into the believers in order to be fully mingled with them so that He may build them up as an organism for His dwelling and expression—14:2-3, 23:

- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
- John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.
- A. In 2:16 "My Father's house" refers to the dwelling place of God on earth, the temple; the temple is a type, or figure, of the body of Jesus, which in resurrection has been enlarged to be the Body of Christ—vv. 19-22.
John 2:16 And to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away from here; do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.
John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
John 2:20 Then the Jews said, This temple was built in forty-six years, and You will raise it up in three days?
John 2:21 But He spoke of the temple of His body.
John 2:22 When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.
- B. "My Father's house" in 14:2 is the Body of Christ, the church as the house of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:21-22.
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- C. The Father's house is a divine and human incorporation of the processed and consummated God constituted with His redeemed, regenerated, and transformed elect—John 14:20.
John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- D. In the Father's house are many abodes—v. 2:
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
1. The many abodes are the many members of the Body of Christ, which is God's temple—Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 3:16-17.
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

- 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
2. All the believers in Christ are the abodes in God's building, the Father's house; this building is the Body of Christ, and all the abodes are members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:27.
 - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
 - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
 - Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
 - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 - Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.
 - 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- E. "I go to prepare a place for you" means that the Lord would prepare a place, accomplish redemption, open up the way, and make a standing for us to enter into God—John 14:2-3, 6:
- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
1. By death and resurrection the Lord Jesus paved the way and prepared the place so that we might be brought into God—v. 20.
 - John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
 2. By His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus prepared a standing for us before God and in God; in this way He prepared a place for us in God—vv. 2-3, 6.
 - John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
 - John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
 - John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
 3. The standing in God, being enlarged, becomes the standing in the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:27:
 - Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
 - Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 - Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.
 - 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 - a. Anyone who does not have a standing, a place, in God does not have a place in the Body of Christ, which is the Father's house, the dwelling place of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22.
 - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
 - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
 - Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
 - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
 - b. As believers in Christ, we all have a place in God and a place in the Body, and now we should live in the place prepared for us through the death and resurrection of Christ—John 14:2-3, 20; 1 Cor. 12:27.
 - John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
 - John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

- F. The Lord's coming brought God into man, and His going brought man into God; by this coming and going, He builds up the house of God by building God into man and man into God—John 1:14; 10:10b; 14:2-3.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.

- G. By the Spirit and through His death and resurrection, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is building an organism, the church, which is His Body and the Father's house, produced by the mingling of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people—vv. 7-24.

John 14:7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and henceforth you know Him and have seen Him.

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father and it is sufficient for us.

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father?

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes into Me, the works which I do he shall do also; and greater than these he shall do because I am going to the Father.

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

John 14:15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.

John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:22 Judas, not Iscariot, said to Him, Lord, and what has happened that You are to manifest Yourself to us and not to the world?

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

John 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

- H. The Father's house is built up by the constant visitation to the redeemed elect of the Father and the Son with the Spirit—v. 23.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

- I. The Father's house is in three stages: the stage of God incarnate, the stage of Christ resurrected with His believers to be built up as the church, and the consummate stage—the New Jerusalem—2:19-21; Rev. 21:2-3, 9-10.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

- John 2:20 Then the Jews said, This temple was built in forty-six years, and You will raise it up in three days?
- John 2:21 But He spoke of the temple of His body.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

IV. We need to see the intrinsic significance of the living in the church as the Father's house—John 14:2-3, 23:

- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.
- John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.
- A. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in the Triune God as life—1:4; 5:26; 6:53; 11:25; 14:6.
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to the Son to also have life in Himself;
- John 6:53 Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within yourselves.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- B. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in the light—1:4; 8:12.
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- C. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in resurrection—11:25.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
- D. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in grace and reality—1:14, 16-17; 14:6; 16:13.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
- John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- E. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in the divine glory—17:22-23.
- John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
- John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
- F. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in a house of prayer and worship—

- 14:13; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24; 4:23-24.
- John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
- John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
- John 16:23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Truly, truly, I say to you, Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give to you.
- John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full.
- John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- G. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live a life of shepherding—10:10-11, 15-17; 21:15-17.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- H. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in and for God's building—2:19-21; 14:23.
- John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
- John 2:20 Then the Jews said, This temple was built in forty-six years, and You will raise it up in three days?
- John 2:21 But He spoke of the temple of His body.
- John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.
- I. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in the divine and mystical realm of the consummated Spirit for the keeping of oneness—7:39; 14:16-20; 16:33; 17:11, 21, 23.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
- John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.
- John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.
- John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.
- John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.
- John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You.

Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

J. To live in the church as the Father's house is to live in the divine and human incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the redeemed and regenerated tripartite believers—14:10-11, 20.

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Outline of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2014

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH**

**Message Two
The Son's Vine**

AY 501, 925

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-17

- John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 15:2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.
John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
John 15:6 If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
John 15:8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.
John 15:9 As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.
John 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.
John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.
John 15:13 No one has greater love than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
John 15:14 You are My friends if you do what I command you.
John 15:15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all the things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.
John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
John 15:17 These things I command you that you may love one another.

I. The Son's vine is the organism of the Triune God in the divine economy to grow with His riches and express His life through the bearing of fruit—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9; John 15:1, 5a:

- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 15:5a I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; ...
- A. The function of the true vine as a sign of the Son is for the Triune God to have an organism in the Son for His multiplication, spreading, and glorification in His divine life—vv. 8, 16.
John 15:8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.
John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
- B. God the Father as the husbandman is the source and the founder; God the Son is the center, the embodiment, and the manifestation; God the Spirit is the reality and realization; and the

branches are the Body, the corporate expression—vv. 1, 4-5, 26:

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

1. All that the Father is and has is embodied in Christ the Son and then realized in the Spirit as the reality—16:13-15.

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.

John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.

John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.

2. All that the Spirit has is wrought into us, the branches, to be expressed and testified through us; in this way the processed Triune God is expressed, manifested, and glorified in the church—Eph. 3:16-21.

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.

II. As the branches of the true vine, we are the multiplication of Christ, the duplication of Christ, the spreading of Christ, and the enlargement of Christ—John 15:4-5, 16:

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

A. When we believed into the Lord Jesus, He branched into us, and we became branches in Him—3:15.

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

B. The vine is everything to the branches; from the vine and through the vine, we receive everything that we need to live as branches—15:4.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

C. Christ as the vine does everything through the branches; without Him we can do nothing, and without us He can do nothing—v. 5.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

D. The branches are for the bearing of fruit to express the riches of the Father's life in the divine dispensing—vv. 8, 16.

John 15:8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

- E. By practicing the God-ordained way to carry out the divine economy, we fulfill our destiny as branches to go forth and bear fruit—v. 16.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

III. As branches of the Son's vine, we need to abide in the vine—vv. 4-5:

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

- A. Our abiding in Christ as the vine depends on seeing a clear vision that we are branches in the vine; once we see that we are branches in the vine, we need to maintain the fellowship between us and the Lord—v. 2.

John 15:2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.

- B. Apart from the vine, we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing—v. 5b.

John 15:5b ... for apart from Me you can do nothing.

- C. Only when the branches abide in the vine can the vine be everything to them.

- D. To abide in the Lord is to be one spirit with Him, that is, to live in the mingled spirit—1 Cor. 6:17:

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1. The essence of the New Testament is the two spirits—the divine Spirit and the human spirit—mingled together as one spirit—v. 17; Rom. 8:4.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

2. The union of God and man is a union of the two spirits, the Spirit of God and the spirit of man; the union of these two spirits is the deepest mystery in the Bible—1 Cor. 2:11-14.

1 Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God.

1 Cor 2:12 But we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God;

1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.

1 Cor 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

3. The focus of God's economy is the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled with the human spirit; whatever God intends to do or accomplish is related to this focus—Eph. 3:9, 5; 1:17; 2:22; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18:

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

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

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

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

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,

- a. By being one spirit with the Lord, we can experience Him as the all-inclusive One, taking Him as everything to us—1 Cor. 1:2, 24, 30; 2:7, 10; 3:11; 5:7-8; 10:3-4; 11:3; 12:12; 15:20, 47, 45.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
1 Cor 2:7 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory,
1 Cor 2:10 But to us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
1 Cor 3:11 For another foundation no one is able to lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
1 Cor 5:7 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed.
1 Cor 5:8 So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
1 Cor 10:3 And all ate the same spiritual food,
1 Cor 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.
1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.
1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
1 Cor 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
1 Cor 15:47 The first man is out of the earth, earthy; the second man is out of heaven.
1 Cor 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

- b. When we are one spirit with the Lord, we enjoy the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord—1:9.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. To be proper Christians, we must know that the Lord Jesus today as the embodiment of the Triune God is the Spirit indwelling our spirit and mingled with our spirit as one spirit—2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.

2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

IV. When we abide in Christ as the true vine, we have the church life—1:2, 9, 30; 6:17; 12:27:

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

- A. We can have the church life only by living in the mingled spirit—in Christ as the life-giving Spirit mingled with our spirit; we should remain in this mingled spirit for the church life—

15:45b; 6:17; 1:2; 12:27.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

B. The branches are one with the vine and with one another—John 17:11, 21-23.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

C. The church life is a life of loving one another in the life of Christ, in the love of Christ, and in the commission of Christ—15:12, 16-17; Eph. 4:16; 5:2.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 15:17 These things I command you that you may love one another.

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 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

D. When we abide in Christ as the true vine, we participate in the wonderful fellowship among the co-branches—John 15:4-5; 1 John 1:3-7:

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

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.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 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.

1. The inner life of all the branches is one, and this life should continually circulate through all the branches—vv. 2-3.

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

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.

2. Such a fellowship must be unique because Christ is unique; it forbids any division among the members of His unique Body—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 12:27:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

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.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- a. This fellowship involves not only the oneness between us and the Triune God but also the oneness among all the believers—John 17:21-23; Eph. 4:3.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
 - b. The church life is the fellowship, the communion, the co-participation, the mutual enjoyment of Christ—1 Cor. 1:9.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
3. In the New Testament, fellowship describes the flowing both between us and the Lord and between us and one another—1 John 1:3; Phil. 2:1:
- 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.
- Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- a. The flow, the current, that we have in our spiritual fellowship involves both oneness and life; our fellowship is a flow of oneness.
 - b. This fellowship is the reality of the church life—1 Cor. 1:9, 2.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
4. All the local churches are one Body, and within this Body there is the circulation of the divine life—v. 2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1; 12:27; Eph. 4:4.
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
- 1 Cor 7:17 However as the Lord has apportioned to each one, as God has called each one, so let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.
- 1 Cor 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the churches of God.
- 1 Cor 14:33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,
- 1 Cor 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also do.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
5. The one circulation, the universal fellowship, of the divine life in the Body brings all the members of the Body into oneness; all the local churches should remain in this unique fellowship—Col. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 10:16.

- Col 4:15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house.
- Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.
- 1 Cor 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?

Outline of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2014

GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH

Message Three
The Spirit's Child

JL 243

Scripture Reading: John 16:21-22, 8-11, 13-16

- John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
- John 16:22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:16 A little while and you no longer behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me.

I. The first aspect of the incorporation of the consummated God with the regenerated believers is the Father's house, the second aspect is the Son's vine, and the third aspect is the Spirit's child; the Father needs a house for His dwelling, the Son needs a vine for His spreading, and the Spirit needs a child for His moving—John 14:2; 15:1; 16:21.

- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
- John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.

II. "A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world"—v. 21:

- A. The child here refers to Christ as the firstborn Son of God, who was born, begotten, in His resurrection—20:17; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6:
- John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Heb 1:6 And when He brings again the Firstborn into the inhabited earth, He says, "And let all

the angels of God worship Him."

1. This woman is the whole group of disciples, the child is Christ, and the birth is His resurrection—John 16:21.
John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
 2. The bringing forth in verse 21 is the begetting in Acts 13:33, which reveals that the Lord Jesus was born, begotten, in resurrection to be the Son of God with respect to His humanity:
John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
Acts 13:33 That God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."
 - a. Although Christ was already the only begotten Son of God in eternity, it was still necessary for Him to be born in resurrection as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:29.
Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - b. The human part of Jesus as the Son of Man had nothing to do with His being the only begotten Son of God, and it was necessary for this human part of Him to be born into the divine sonship through resurrection; hence, Christ's resurrection was a new birth for Him—1:3-4.
Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
 - c. After His resurrection He was the "child" with both divinity glorified and humanity "sonized"—Acts 13:23, 33; Rom. 1:3-4.
Acts 13:23 From this man's seed, God, according to promise, brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,
Acts 13:33 That God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."
Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
 - d. The Christ who returned to the disciples in His resurrection was the newborn child, and the disciples as the mother rejoiced at the birth of this wonderful child—John 16:21-22; 20:20.
John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
John 16:22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
John 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced at seeing the Lord.
- B. The child in John 16:21 is not only Christ Himself but Christ with His believers to be His many brothers—20:17; Rom. 8:29:
John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.

- John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
1. The incarnated Christ, including all His believers, was begotten in His resurrection to be the Son of God; thus, He has become the firstborn Son of God, and all His believers have become God's many sons as His brothers to constitute His church as His multiplication, His increase, and His Body, which is His fullness, His expression—1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:29; John 20:17; Heb. 2:10-12; John 12:24; 3:29-30; Eph. 1:23.
 - 1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.
 - Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
 - Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
 - Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."
 - John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
 - John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
 - John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
 - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
 2. The birth that took place through Christ's resurrection involved the birth not only of an individual but of a group that includes the firstborn Son and the many sons of God—Heb. 1:6; 2:10-12.
 - Heb 1:6 And when He brings again the Firstborn into the inhabited earth, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."
 - Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
 - Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
 - Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."
 3. This birth was a universal delivery of a corporate child, which included the firstborn Son of God as the Head and His many brothers as the Body—Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5.
 - Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
 - Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

4. The birth of a new corporate child, comprising Christ and His believers, was the birth of the corporate new man as the increased Christ—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10-11; John 3:30.
 - Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
 - Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 - Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 - John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
5. This corporate child, the new man, was born by the consummated Spirit (16:14-15, 21); the new man was created by Christ on the cross (Eph. 2:15), regenerated by the Father with the resurrected Christ in His resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3), and born by the Spirit in the believers' spirit (John 3:6b).
 - John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
 - John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
 - John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
 - 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,
 - 1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
 - John 3:6b ... and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
6. The function of the new man as the Spirit's child is to carry out God's eternal economy through the move and work of the consummated life-giving Spirit in building up the Body of Christ for the consummation of the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
 - 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
 - 1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
 - 1 Cor 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
 - 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 - 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.
 - Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

III. The accomplished fact of the birth of Christ and His believers as the corporate child, the new man, is applied to us in our experience by the work of the Spirit of reality so that we may become the many brothers of Christ, the members of Christ—John 16:8-11, 13-16; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 5:30:

- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.

- John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:16 A little while and you no longer behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.
- A. This accomplished fact is applied by the conviction of the Holy Spirit—John 16:8-11:
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
1. The Spirit works to convict the world in the preaching of the gospel and to transfer people out of Adam into Christ—vv. 8-11.
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
2. The first category of the Spirit's work is to convict the world—mankind—concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (v. 8); sin entered through Adam (Rom. 5:12), righteousness is the resurrected Christ (John 16:10; 1 Cor. 1:30), and judgment is for Satan (John 16:11), the source of sin (8:44).
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- Rom 5:12 Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned-
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- 1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
- John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks the lie, he speaks it out of his own possessions; for he is a liar and the father of it.
3. The only way to be freed from sin is to believe into Christ, the Son of God (16:9); if we believe into Him, He is righteousness to us, and we are justified in Him (Rom. 3:24; 4:25).
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
- Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.
- B. The accomplished fact is applied through the transmission of the Holy Spirit—John 16:13-16:
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
- John 16:16 A little while and you no longer behold Me, and again a little while and you will see Me.

1. The second category of the Spirit's work is to edify the believers and to build them up by revealing to them the Son with the fullness of the Father—vv. 12-15.
 - John 16:12 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
 - John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
 - John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
 - John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
2. The Spirit of reality dwells in the regenerated believers to reveal Christ, to glorify Christ, and to make Christ real in the believers—v. 14.
 - John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
3. For the Spirit of reality to declare what the Father and the Son have is to transmit the riches of the processed Triune God into our being—vv. 14-15:
 - John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you.
 - John 16:15 All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.
 - a. Now whatever the processed Triune God is and has may become our element, our essence, our being, making the processed Triune God the essence of our being—Eph. 3:16-17a.
 - 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 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
 - b. In this way we become God-men, the many brothers of Christ, living a life of truthfulness in the divine reality that has been revealed to us and constituted into us and putting on the new man, “which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality”—Eph. 4:24; Rom. 8:29; John 4:23-24; 2 John 1; 3 John 1.
 - Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
 - John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
 - 2 John 1 The elder to the chosen lady and to her children, whom I love in truthfulness, and not only I but also all those who know the truth,
 - 3 John 1 The elder to Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truthfulness.

Outline of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2014

GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH

Message Four

The Lord's Prayer in John 17

for His Glorification and for the Oneness of the Church as the Body of Christ

MC 1081

Scripture Reading: John 17:1-24

- John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;
- John 17:2 Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.
- John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.
- John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
- John 17:5 And now, glorify Me along with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
- John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.
- John 17:7 Now they have come to know that all that You have given Me is from You,
- John 17:8 For the words which You gave Me I have given to them, and they received them and knew truly that I came forth from You, and they have believed that You sent Me.
- John 17:9 I ask concerning them; I do not ask concerning the world, but concerning those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours;
- John 17:10 And all that is Mine is Yours, and Yours Mine; and I have been glorified in them.
- John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.
- John 17:12 When I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given to Me, and I guarded them; and not one of them perished, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.
- John 17:13 But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy made full in themselves.
- John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.
- John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.
- John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
- John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
- John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
- John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
- John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

I. The Lord's prayer in John 17 was for the glorification, the manifestation, the expression, of the Triune God; God's eternal purpose is to manifest, to express, Himself—vv. 1-5; Gen. 1:26; Eph. 3:8-11:

- John 17 (be omitted.)
John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;
John 17:2 Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.
John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.
John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
John 17:5 And now, glorify Me along with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
A. Christ was the unique grain of wheat containing the divine life with the divine glory; when the shell of His humanity was broken through His crucifixion, all the elements of His divinity—His divine life and His divine glory—were released—John 12:24:
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
1. The release of the glory of Christ's divinity was to release Himself into man as the fire of life to burn on the earth—Luke 12:49-50.
Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!
2. Christ as the sevenfold intensified, life-giving Spirit today is a burning fire within us; we have been brought together by this fire, and now we are burdened that this fire would burn many others—Rev. 4:5; 5:6; cf. 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Rom. 12:11.
Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
Rev 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
B. The release of the glory of Christ's divinity was His being glorified by the Father with the divine glory in His resurrection through His death—John 12:23-24; Luke 24:46.
John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

- Luke 24:46 And He said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise up from the dead on the third day,
- C. Christ prayed that His Father would glorify Him, and the Father answered His prayer by resurrecting Him; for Christ to be glorified was for Him to be resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit—John 17:1; Acts 3:13-15; John 7:39b; Luke 24:46; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;
- Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.
- Acts 3:14 But you denied the holy and righteous One and asked that a man who was a murderer be granted to you;
- Acts 3:15 And the Author of life you killed, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.
- John 7:39b ... for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- Luke 24:46 And He said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise up from the dead on the third day,
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- D. The issue of Christ's glorification was the producing of a universal incorporation for the expression of the Triune God, whose unique attribute is oneness, the oneness of coinherence—John 14:10-11, 20; 17:21:
- John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.
- John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.
- John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
1. The three of the Triune God were incorporated from eternity; this means that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit mutually indwell one another, that is, They coinhere—14:10-11.

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.
 2. The consummated Triune God and the regenerated believers became an incorporation in the resurrection of Christ; this means that the Son is in the Father, we are in the Son, and the Son as the Spirit is in us to make us an enlarged, divine-human incorporation who are coinhering with the coinhering Triune God in His oneness for His glory—vv. 20, 17; 17:11, 21.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
- E. In the Lord's last words to the believers in John 14—16, there are three concrete expressions of this glory: the Father's house (the church) in 14:2, the branches of the vine (the constituents of the Body of Christ) in 15:1-5, and a newborn corporate man (the new man) in 16:21:
- John 14—16 (be omitted.)

- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
- John 15:2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.
- John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
- John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- John 16:21 A woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the little child, she no longer remembers the affliction because of the joy that a man has been born into the world.
1. All three denote the church, showing that the church is the glorious increase produced by Christ through His death and resurrection—12:23-24.

John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
 2. In this glorious increase Christ, the Son of God, is glorified, causing God the Father also to be glorified in Christ's glorification, that is, to be fully expressed through the church—Eph. 3:19-21.

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.
 3. This expression needs to be maintained in the oneness of the Triune God; therefore, the Lord prayed in particular for this matter in His concluding prayer in John 17.

John 17 (be omitted.)

II. The Lord's prayer in John 17 was for the oneness of church as the Body of Christ, the oneness of the believers in the Triune God:

John 17 (be omitted.)

- A. The first level of oneness is the oneness in the Father's name and by the Father's divine life—vv. 6-13:

- John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.
- John 17:7 Now they have come to know that all that You have given Me is from You,
- John 17:8 For the words which You gave Me I have given to them, and they received them and knew truly that I came forth from You, and they have believed that You sent Me.
- John 17:9 I ask concerning them; I do not ask concerning the world, but concerning those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours;
- John 17:10 And all that is Mine is Yours, and Yours Mine; and I have been glorified in them.
- John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.
- John 17:12 When I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given to Me, and I guarded them; and not one of them perished, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.
- John 17:13 But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

1. The Father's name denotes the person of the Father, the Father Himself as the source of life, the source of oneness—vv. 6, 11; 5:26, 43:

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world.

- They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.
- John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.
- John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to the Son to also have life in Himself;
- John 5:43 I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
- a. We must take the Father as the source of life and blessing—cf. Matt. 14:19; Rom. 11:36.

Matt 14:19 And after commanding the crowds to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds.

Rom 11:36 Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
 - b. We must not live by our human life but by the Father’s divine life in our spirit to enjoy our all-inclusive sonship—John 6:57; Rom. 8:15-16.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

Rom 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
2. The Father’s life with His nature is the element of the oneness—John 17:2; cf. Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 17:2 Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- B. The second level of oneness is the oneness in the reality of the sanctifying word—John 17:14-21:
- John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.
- John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.
- John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
- John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
- John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
- John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
1. The word is the truth (v. 17), and the truth is the Triune God (14:6; 1 John 5:6b); to be sanctified by the reality of the word is to be sanctified by the Triune God Himself.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

1 John 5:6b and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

2. The word, which is the truth, sanctifies God's people from the world (John 17:17) and keeps them from the ruler of the world, the evil one (v. 15):
 - John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
 - John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.
 - a. The Father's word of reality sanctifies us and makes us pure, delivering us from the mixed-up world to separate us unto our God, the God of purity—cf. Psa. 12:6.
 - Psa 12:6 The words of Jehovah are pure words, / Silver refined in a furnace on the earth, / Purified seven times.
 - b. The more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—119:140.
 - Psa 119:140 Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it.
 3. The Father's sanctifying word is the means of our oneness, bringing us into the sphere of oneness—John 17:21; Eph. 5:26.
 - John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
 - Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- C. The third level of oneness is the oneness in the divine glory for the expression of the processed, mingled, and incorporated Triune God—John 17:22-24:
- John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
 - John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
 - John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
1. The oneness of all the believers in the divine glory is the oneness in the expressed sonship with the Father's life and nature—v. 22; 5:26.
 - John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
 - John 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to the Son to also have life in Himself;
 2. The glory of God is the expression of God; this splendid expression of divinity delivers us from ourselves and makes us fully one—cf. Rev. 21:11.
 - Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
 3. In this stage of the oneness the self is fully denied:
 - a. We must be saved from our self, including ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts—John 17:21-24; Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3 John 9.
 - John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
 - John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
 - John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
 - John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
 - Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,
 - 1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

- 1 Cor 1:11 For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of the household of Chloe, that there are strifes among you.
- 1 Cor 1:12 Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.
- 1 Cor 1:13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?
- 3 John 9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.
- b. If we would give up the self, lose the self, and turn to the spirit, right away we will be in the reality of the Body—Eph. 2:22; John 16:13.
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- c. If we live by our life with our nature to express ourselves, there will be no glory of God; in the expression of ourselves there is division.
- d. To live and act in the Father’s life with the Father’s nature to express the Father is glory, and it is in this glory that we all are one.
4. Our Christian life should be a life of “glory to glory”—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

III. We need to emphasize the oneness that the Lord has given us and preserve the oneness of the Spirit by being mingled constantly with the Triune God (thus nullifying the natural man, the world with Satan, and the self) to satisfy the Lord’s desire—Eph. 4:1-6.

- Eph 4:1 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,
- Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,
- Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Outline of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2014

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH**

Message Five
**Taking the Shepherding Way in John 21
for the Building Up of the Church**

AY —

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:31-33; Mark 16:7; John 21:15-19; 2 Cor. 7:2-7; 12:15-16

- Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat.
- Luke 22:32 But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.
- Luke 22:33 And he said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.
- Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
- John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.
- 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
- 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
- 2 Cor 7:4 Great is my boldness toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.
- 2 Cor 7:5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in everything; without were fightings, within were fears.
- 2 Cor 7:6 But He who comforts those who are downcast, that is, God, comforted us by the coming of Titus;
- 2 Cor 7:7 And not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted because of you, declaring to us your longing, your lamentation, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced the more.
- 2 Cor 12:15 But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?
- 2 Cor 12:16 But let it be so! I did not burden you; but, as some of you say, being crafty, I took you by guile.

I. John 21, a chapter on shepherding, is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John; shepherding is the key to the Gospel of John:

John 21 (be omitted.)

- A. If we do not know what shepherding is, the entire Gospel of John will be in vain to us; it is only when we shepherd others that we can know John in an intrinsic way—3:16; 4:10, 14; 10:9-18; 21:15-17.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 10:9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 10:12 He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.
- John 10:13 He flees because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep.
- John 10:14 I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,
- John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- John 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.
- John 10:18 No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

B. The Gospel of John is a book on Christ coming to be our life by cherishing and nourishing us; to cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant, and comfortable (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34), and to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ (Matt. 24:45-47):

- Matt 9:10 And as He was reclining at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and reclined together with Jesus and His disciples.
- Luke 7:34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.
- Matt 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?
- Matt 24:46 Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.
- Matt 24:47 Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.

1. When Christ as the God-Savior was recognized by Nathanael as the Son of God, He answered him that he would see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on Him as the Son of Man, like the heavenly ladder seen by Jacob in his dream, as a kind of cherishing to encourage Nathanael to follow Him that he might participate in His nourishment with all the divine benefits as revealed in the entire Gospel of John—1:45-51.

- John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.
- John 1:46 And Nathanael said to him, Can anything good be from Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see.
- John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and said concerning him, Behold, truly an Israelite, in whom there is no guile!
- John 1:48 Nathanael said to Him, How do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

- John 1:49 Nathanael answered Him, Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.
- John 1:50 Jesus answered and said to him, Is it because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree that you believe? You shall see greater things than these.
- John 1:51 And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
2. When Christ as the God-Savior wanted to save an immoral woman of Samaria, He had to travel from Judea to Galilee through Samaria and detoured from the main way of Samaria to the city of Sychar, and He waited at the well of Jacob, near Sychar, for His object to come that He might cherish her by asking her to give Him something to drink so that He might nourish her with the water of life, which is the flowing Triune God Himself—4:1-14.
- John 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John
(Although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but rather His disciples),
- John 4:2 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.
- John 4:3 And He had to pass through Samaria.
- John 4:4 So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the piece of land that Jacob gave to Joseph his son;
- John 4:5 And Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from the journey, sat thus by the well; it was about the sixth hour.
- John 4:6 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give Me something to drink.
- John 4:7 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.
- John 4:8 The Samaritan woman then said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)
- John 4:9 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:10 The woman said to Him, Sir, You have no bucket, and the well is deep; where then do You get this living water?
- John 4:11 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank of it himself, as well as his sons and his cattle?
- John 4:12 Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again,
- John 4:13 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
3. When none of the accusing Pharisees could condemn the adulterous woman, Christ as the God-Savior, in His humanity, said to her, “Neither do I condemn you,” to cherish her that He, as the great I Am, might nourish her with the freedom from sin and enable her to “sin no more”—8:3-11, 24, 34-36.
- John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst,
- John 8:4 They said to Him, Teacher, this woman has been caught committing adultery, in the very act.
- John 8:5 Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do You say?
- John 8:6 But they said this to tempt Him, so that they might have reason to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground.
- John 8:7 But when they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.
- John 8:8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.
- John 8:9 And when they heard that, they went out one by one, beginning with the older ones. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman stood where she was, in the midst.

John 8:10 And Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?
 John 8:11 And she said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.
 John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.
 John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.
 John 8:35 And the slave does not abide in the house forever; the son does abide forever.
 John 8:36 If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

II. After His resurrection the Lord shepherded Peter and commissioned him to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep; this is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, the church that issues in the Body of Christ—21:15-17:

John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
 John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
 John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

A. Peter was self-confident in his natural strength and ability, even to the point of thinking that he would follow the Lord both to prison and to death—Luke 22:33.
 Luke 22:33 And he said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.

B. Peter was tested, and he denied the Lord three times, even before a little maid—John 18:15-18, 25-27.
 John 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, as well as another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest;
 John 18:16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door and brought Peter in.
 John 18:17 Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, Are you not also one of this man's disciples? He said, I am not.
 John 18:18 Now the slaves and the attendants were standing there, having made a fire of coals, for it was cold, and they were warming themselves; and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.
 John 18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. Then they said to him, Are you not also one of His disciples? He denied and said, I am not.
 John 18:26 One of the slaves of the high priest, who was a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, said, Did I not see you in the garden with Him?
 John 18:27 Then Peter denied again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

C. Peter was absolutely defeated and became a complete failure so that he might realize that he was absolutely untrustworthy and should no longer have any confidence in himself—Matt. 26:69-75; Phil. 3:3.
 Matt 26:69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him and said, You also were with Jesus the Galilean.
 Matt 26:70 But he denied it before all, saying, I do not know what you are talking about!
 Matt 26:71 And after he had gone out to the porch, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.
 Matt 26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man!
 Matt 26:73 And after a little while those who were standing there came to Peter and said, Surely you also are one of them, for your speech also makes it clear that you are.
 Matt 26:74 Then he began to curse and to swear: I do not know the man! And immediately a rooster crowed.
 Matt 26:75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before a rooster crows, you

- will deny Me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly.
- 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,
- D. The trials through which we pass are used by the Lord to sift and destroy our natural disposition and habits and to bring in the constitution of the Holy Spirit in maturity and sweetness—Rom. 8:28; Luke 22:31-32; cf. Jer. 48:11.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat.
- Luke 22:32 But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.
- Jer 48:11 Moab has been at ease from his youth; / And he is settled on his lees / And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; / Nor has he gone into exile. / Therefore his taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed.
- E. The angel's message to the three sisters who discovered the resurrection of the Slave-Savior was for them to "go, tell His disciples and Peter"—Mark 16:7:
- Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.
1. The phrase and Peter indicates that although Peter had failed, stumbled, and fell, the Lord had not forsaken him; and Peter also means and you—you who have failed like Peter.
 2. May we all see what kind of heart the Lord has toward us; it is impossible for Him not to love us, for Him to forget us, or for Him to forsake us—Rom. 5:6-10; Zech. 2:8; Isa. 49:15-16.
- Rom 5:6 For while we were yet weak, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
- Rom 5:7 For scarcely for a righteous man will anyone die, though perhaps for the good man someone would even dare to die.
- Rom 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- Rom 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified in His blood, we will be saved through Him from the wrath.
- Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,
- Zech 2:8 For thus says Jehovah of hosts, After the glory He has sent Me against the nations who plunder you; for he who touches you touches the pupil of His eye.
- Isa 49:15 Can a woman forget her nursing child, / That she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? / Even though they may forget, / Yet I will not forget you.
- Isa 49:16 Indeed, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; / Your walls are continually before Me.
- F. The Lord came to restore Peter's love toward Him, to charge him with the shepherding of His church, and to prepare him for his martyrdom so that he would not follow Him with any confidence in his natural strength—John 21:15-19.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
- John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

- G. To bear fruit and feed others, we need to enjoy and flow out the riches of the divine life; this requires that we love Him—vv. 15-17; 7:38.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- H. Through Peter's failure, he learned to serve the brothers by faith in the Lord and with humility, shepherding the flock of God—Luke 22:31-32; 1 Pet. 5:2-6.
- Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat.
- Luke 22:32 But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet 5:5 In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,

III. Taking the shepherding way to preach the gospel and revive the church is a life of ministering Christ to others in love for the building up of the church; this life is a fruitful life—Acts 20:20, 31; 1 Cor. 8:1; John 15:5:

- Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house,
- Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.
- 1 Cor 8:1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- A. In taking care of the churches and in shepherding the saints, what is needed is the intimate concern of a ministering life—2 Cor. 7:2-7; 12:15-16; Philem. 7, 12:
- 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
- 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
- 2 Cor 7:4 Great is my boldness toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.
- 2 Cor 7:5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in everything; without were fightings, within were fears.
- 2 Cor 7:6 But He who comforts those who are downcast, that is, God, comforted us by the coming of Titus;
- 2 Cor 7:7 And not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted because of you, declaring to us your longing, your lamentation, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced the more.
- 2 Cor 12:15 But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?
- 2 Cor 12:16 But let it be so! I did not burden you; but, as some of you say, being crafty, I took you by guile.

- Philem 7 For I had much joy and encouragement over your love, because the inward parts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.
- Philem 12 Him I have sent back to you—him, that is, my very heart—
1. In the shepherding of the saints, it is possible that we may kill others; the reason for this killing, this fruitlessness, is the lack of intimate concern—cf. 2 Cor. 3:6:

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

 - a. The milk of the word of God, the life supply of Christ, should be used to nourish the new believers in Christ, not to “boil” them—Exo. 23:19b.

Exo 23:19b ... You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.
 - b. If we have the ability to carry on a work but lack an intimate concern, our work will be fruitless; our heart must be enlarged to embrace all believers, regardless of their condition—2 Cor. 6:10-11.

2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.
 2. How fruitful we are, how much fruit we bear, does not depend on what we are able to do; it depends on whether we have an intimate concern.
 3. A ministering life is a life that warms up others; if we would minister life to the saints, we must have a genuine concern for them, a concern that is emotional, deep, and intimate.
- B. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Cor. 12:31b; 13:4-8, 13:
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
- 1 Cor 12:31b ... And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
- 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
- 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
- 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
- 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
- 1 Cor 13:13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.
1. We must have the kind of love to go and tell the dormant ones who think that the church condemns them that the church does not condemn anyone; rather, the church wants to see all the dormant ones come back.
 2. Without the Lord's mercy, we would be the same as the dormant ones; therefore, we must love them.
 3. It all depends upon love, as the wise king Solomon said, “Love covers all transgressions”—Prov. 10:12b.
 4. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”—1 Cor. 8:1b.