

Visions and Revelations:
Message 14 — The Apostle Peter (5)

After hearing and considering the word that was spoken, a group of brothers and sisters were inspired by some of the verses that were shared. We felt that it was helpful to reconsider these verses again to dig deeper into the burden of the message and to discover how rich it could be to us. We compiled these verses into six sections, one for each day of the week until the next message, in hopes that many other saints could spend a bit of time every day to reconsider the burden of our brother in a new light. If anyone considers some of these verses or questions and feels enriched by them, we ask you to please leave a comment on the Church in Cleveland site under the message to share your thoughts! Thanks! Grace and peace be to all the saints!

Note: These six sections are not comprehensive of the content of the message! This is just designed to be a help to get into a portion throughout the days.

DAY 1

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Last week we mentioned that the church, or *ekklesia*, is an universal entity. In this entity, there are spiritual leaders such as John Calvin, Martin Luther, Hudson Taylor, Madame Guyon, and the list goes on. These important leaders are a part of the church, but the church is not only composed of these people. Who else is included in the church? You and me. The church includes everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He died on the cross to forgive our sins. When we look at very spiritual people, it is easy to appreciate how much of a blessing they are to the church. But let us not forget that you and I are also important members of the Body of Christ! Martin Luther may have been a great figure in the church, but you have a portion that is just as valuable as his portion. I pray we can all see this picture of the church and how every member is needed for the Body to operate properly.

DAY 2

Ephesians 2:22

In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit

1 Peter 2:5

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to be “built together” or “built up”? To build something means to

bring unrelated objects into relation with each other -- for example, random pieces of stone may be shaped and cohered together to form a stone wall. The stones were originally isolated and with little value, but after they are built, they together form something that has value and purpose.

So it also is with us. We are members of a spiritual Body that are being built up to be a testimony. In other words, we are members to be builded up *together*. Everyone has to rely on others, depend on others. Each one has his or her value, but no one has all the value. We are each a supporting element to the testimony of the Lord.

This is a precious realization of what the Lord is after regarding His Body. However, this process of being builded together with the other members is not easy; the only One who can really accomplish it is the Lord. Spend some time in these verses and with Him. How is He building you together with the other members of the Body today?

DAY 3

Matthew 16:18

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

1 Corinthians 10:4

And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

John 19:30

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit

There are four elements in the building up of the church. First, you need the revelation of the Father to see Christ. Second, you need the revelation of Christ to see the church. Third, Christ, as the rock, needs to be broken to become a spiritual rock. It is not enough for Jesus to be a rock, but He must be a rock that can flow waters, that can flow out blessings. When the children of Israel complained of thirst in the wilderness, God commanded Moses to strike a rock that water would flow out. When Christ was on the cross, He said, "It is finished!" meaning that in that action, all that was needed to fulfill God's eternal plan was accomplished. Now, through the blood and the water that flowed from His side when the Roman soldier pierced Him, there can firstly be cleansing for our sin and secondly, a spiritual rock that is with us, follows us, blesses us, brings us into a life relationship with Him, and was broken for the church to be built on. Only through this breaking work could we experience the fourth element of the building up of the church: our transformation to match Christ in life, in nature, in operation, in constitution, and in purpose. Praise the Lord! May we drink from the rivers flowing from this spiritual rock!

DAY 4

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation.

Ephesians 1:17

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

In the building up of the church, each saint has to grow individually to love the Word of God. We need to long for the Word because the Word brings us to Christ. It allows us to focus on Him, enjoy Him, and be supplied by Him. The Word is Christ. When we come to the Word, sometimes it may be overwhelming or difficult to understand. Instead of being turned away, we need to pray that the Lord gives us a “spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Only He knows our spiritual needs, and only He can supply us with the nourishment that helps us grow. Let us have a desire to spend time in the Word, appreciate the Word, and be built up in the Word, so that we can become a strong functioning member in the body!

DAY 5

Ephesians 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 [portion], causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

In the body, every member has a function, just as in the church, every brother and sister has a function. And more than that, we are all connected in this spiritual body, so when we each can operate according to our part or portion, the body is able to build itself up in love. It is so important for every brother and sister to exercise and carry out their function. We enjoy hymns, we may enjoy reading the word, we may enjoy sharing our experiences of the Lord with others, and enjoy designing the church website, we may enjoy cooking for the saints, we may enjoy being an usher and welcoming all the saints! No matter what our portion is though, we need to further develop our portion by knowing the salvation of Christ, by knowing the love of Christ, by knowing the redemptive work of Christ, by knowing God’s purpose, God’s economy, God’s operating, by knowing what the Lord is doing every day with us. In this way, our part or portion won’t just be merely doing something, but it will be doing these many different things with a view of Christ, His body, and what the Lord is doing today!

Too many brothers and sisters unknowingly bury their talents, and may think, “I can’t do much.” However, the Lord does not ask us to do much or little but to operate according to what he has given us. When every brother and sister is functioning in the church, what a blessing! The saints can be so full of joy! When people come to our gatherings they see our love for one another and our oneness! In this way the Lord is able to pour out his blessing among us and we are able to build the church!

DAY 6

Ephesians 4:15

But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ

In all our growth as a Christian, whether it’s in the Word or with our brothers and sisters, we need to grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. If you sleep with your arm under your head, the next morning you’ll find that your arm doesn’t respond to your commands, despite still being there and being healthy. This is what it looks like to not “grow up into the Head.”

Christ, our real Head, must be so frustrated with us. Almost all the members of His body are disobedient. If He says, “do this,” we say, “no!” If He says, “go here,” we say, “how about here instead?”

So what can be done? Do you see how the headship of the Lord can be quite limited if we do not all treasure our own growth with our own portion? But think about the illustration again. In that case, do you cut off your arm? Absolutely not! You begin to stretch your arm, to exercise your arm, so that it can regain full operation. In the same way, can we allow the Lord to stretch us, exercise us, massage us, and grow in us, so that we can grow up into the Head properly?