

CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS

Session 2 - Arriving at the Three Things

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:7-13

Eph. 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Eph. 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, “Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men.”

Eph. 4:9 (Now this, “He ascended,” what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph. 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Today's Reading

Ephesians 4:13 says, “Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” This verse is the direct continuation of verses 11 and 12, which say that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers have been given for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministry. We have pointed out that the gifted ones in verse 11 perfect the saints to do the same things that they themselves do. Hence, all the saints can do the work of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers.

Paul did not say, “until *you* all arrive”; he said, “until *we* all arrive.” This indicates that Paul included himself with all the saints. It is not good for a few to arrive at the destination and to leave so many others behind. On the contrary, we all should arrive together. Arriving at the three things spoken of in verse 13 is not a matter of a race; it is a matter of all arriving at the destination at the same time.

The oneness of the Spirit in verse 3 is the oneness of the divine life in reality, whereas the oneness in verse 13 is the oneness of our living in practicality. We already have the oneness of the divine life in reality. We only need to keep it. But we need to go on until we arrive at the oneness of our living in practicality. This aspect of oneness is of two things: the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God. The faith does not refer to the act of our believing but refers to what we believe in, such as the divine person of Christ and His redemptive work for our salvation. The full knowledge of the Son of God is the realization of the revelation concerning the Son of God for our experience.

Verse 13 also says that we need to arrive at a full-grown man. A full-grown man is a mature man. Through regeneration the saints have become babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1). Now the saints need to grow into maturity (1 Cor. 3:6, Gk.; Heb. 6:1). Such maturity in life is needed for the practical oneness. If we are divided by doctrinal differences, it is an indication that we are childish. Such divisive doctrines are “toys.” During the early stages of our Christian life, we may be fond of playing with such “toys.” The more childish the saints are, the more “toys” they have. But as children grow up, they gradually lay aside their toys.

According to verse 13, we also are to arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ is the Body of Christ (1:23), which has a stature with a measure. The fullness of Christ is simply the expression of Christ. As Christ’s fullness, the Body is Christ’s expression. Christ’s fullness, the Body, has a stature, and with this stature there is a certain measure. Hence, verse 13 speaks of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. To arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is to arrive at the full building up of the Body of Christ. It is to arrive at the full completion of the building up of the Body.

We have seen that we need to arrive at the practical oneness, at the full growth, and at the complete building up of the Body. If we would arrive at these three things, we need to do the work of ministry. As verse 12 indicates, the work of ministry is equal to building up the Body of Christ. Among us there is just one ministry. Although thousands of us may participate in the work of ministry, the ministry itself is unique. This ministry is strictly for the building up of the Body of Christ. No matter who we may be, leaders or followers, we all are working to carry out the ministry in the New Testament economy to build up the Body of Christ. We are not here to go on alone, but to go on with others, even to bring others on. As we ourselves go on, we need to bring others on. We take others on by speaking for Christ, by teaching, and by shepherding. These verses reveal that all those who have been captured by the Lord have been presented to the Body as gifts for the perfecting of the saints, so that the work of ministry may be carried out and that the building up of the Body of Christ may be accomplished. Then we shall all arrive together at our destination—at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This is our goal, and we must diligently press toward it until we all reach it together.