

Message Three

**The Believers' Experience of the Grace of God in the Economy of God
Consummating in the Church as the Organic Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: John 1:16; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:2-4; 2 Cor. 13:14;
Gal. 6:18; Eph. 4:7, 29; Phil. 4:23; Rev. 22:21

I. The New Testament believers' living under the grace in God's economy is a total living of experiencing the processed and consummated Triune God as grace—Gal. 6:18; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 22:21:

- A. The Christian living must be the living of grace, the experience of grace; our Christian life is essentially a life of having God as our grace—2 Cor. 1:12.
- B. A total living means that our entire living is a living of the Triune God processed to be grace to us—13:14.
- C. The compound Spirit is moving within us daily as the anointing so that we may enjoy the processed Triune God as grace—1 John 2:20, 27.
- D. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of grace, is with our spirit, which has been regenerated to be the dwelling place and vessel of the Triune God—Heb. 10:29b; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philem. 25; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- E. We are those who have received grace, which is the Triune God—the Father given to us in the Son, and the Son realized as the Spirit dwelling in our spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
- F. Because we are saints, the grace of the Lord must be with each one of us in every aspect of our daily life—Phil. 4:23; Eph. 4:7.

II. A genuine church is based upon the grace given to it in Christ Jesus—1 Cor. 1:2-4:

- A. The grace of God is not given to the church based upon the spirituality or condition of the church.
- B. The grace of God alone is the base of the church—16:23.
- C. Paul's thanks to God in 1 Corinthians 1:4 was based upon the gift of grace which was given to the church in Christ Jesus.
- D. The church is standing on the base of grace in order that it may receive further grace—Rev. 22:21.
- E. We have received grace as our base, and we are standing upon grace, not upon our attributes, virtues, or excellencies; therefore, we are qualified to receive more grace, even grace upon grace—John 1:16.

III. The consummation of the believers' experience of the grace of God in His economy is the church as the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:6-8, 22-23:

- A. Grace is the circulating Triune God dispensing all that He is into us for our enjoyment; the entire church life depends on grace as the circulation of the Divine Trinity within us—1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 4:33; 2 Cor. 8:1; 13:14.
- B. The practical life and building up of the Body of Christ come forth out of the inward enjoyment of the grace of God—1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14.

- C. Every part of the organic Body of Christ is an issue of the grace of God in the economy of God—Rom. 12:4-6a.
- D. In the Body we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us and that are a result of our experience of the grace of Christ—v. 6:
 - 1. This grace is God in Christ as the divine element coming into our being to be our life for our enjoyment—John 1:16; 2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 2. When this grace comes into us, it brings with it the element of certain spiritual skills and abilities, which, accompanying our growth in life, develop into the gifts in life so that we may function in the Body of Christ to serve God—Rom. 12:6-8.
 - 3. In Romans 12:6 the gifts differ according to grace; in Ephesians 4:7 grace was given according to the gift:
 - a. Grace is the divine life that produces and supplies the gifts.
 - b. In Romans 12 it is the grace that produces the gift; thus, the gift is according to grace.
 - c. In Ephesians 4 the grace is according to the gift, according to the measure of the gift.
- E. In the church as the organic Body of Christ, we should let no corrupt word proceed out of our mouth, “but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear”—v. 29:
 - 1. Our word spoken to others should convey grace, Christ as our enjoyment and supply—2 Cor. 13:14; Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 16:23; Gal. 6:18.
 - 2. The word that builds up others always ministers Christ as grace to the hearer—Eph. 4:29.

IV. In Ephesians 3:2 the apostle Paul says that the stewardship of grace was given to him for the members of the Body—5:30:

- A. In Ephesians 3:2 and 9 Paul uses the Greek word *oikonomia*; in verse 9 this word refers to God’s economy, and in verse 2 it refers to the stewardship of the apostle.
- B. The stewardship of the grace of God has been given to us so that we may live and serve for the building up of the Body of Christ—vv. 2-7:
 - 1. The stewardship of the grace is for the dispensing of the grace of God into His chosen people for the producing and building up of the church as the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 4:1-2.
 - 2. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostle, who is a steward in God’s house, ministering Christ as God’s grace to God’s household—9:17.
 - 3. Paul’s ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers for their enjoyment—Eph. 3:8.
 - 4. The economy of God is with God Himself, but the stewardship of grace was given not merely to Paul as one person; this stewardship has been given to all the believers.
 - 5. The stewardship of grace is universal; for the Body of Christ all the saints have the stewardship of grace according to God’s economy—vv. 2, 9.