

BLENDING IN THE VITAL GROUPS—THE REALITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Message 2

Dealing with Individualism by Blending the Vital Group through the Cross and by the Spirit

I. Individualism frustrates the blending

We know that part of the Adamic life is sinful and natural, and we have to deal with both of these things. However, we also have to deal with the individualistic life. What is the individualistic life? It is the life that exists independently, lives independently, and acts independently. It is the life which lives as if it is the only life on this earth. This individualistic life frustrates us from being blended into the Body of Christ. We must realize that the opposite of the Body is individualism. In order to be blended into the Body, we have to be delivered from our individualism...

Before we enter the Body of Christ, we are saturated with individualism; even our spiritual pursuit is based on our individualism. Why do we want to be holy? We want to be holy for ourselves. Why do we want power? We want power for ourselves. Why do we want fruit for our work? We want fruit for ourselves. Why do we pursue the kingdom? We pursue it because we ourselves want to gain it. Why are we seeking? We are seeking for ourselves. Everything is centered around "ourselves." But this is not the Body. This is individualism.

Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 38, Chapter 64, pp.499-500

Mark 14:29, 31

29 But Peter said to Him, Even if all will be stumbled, yet I will not!

31 But he went on speaking more intensely, *Even* if I must die with You, I will by no means deny You! And they all said similarly.

II. In the vital group, the cross dealing with individualism for the blending

A. The cross typified by the salt in the meal offering for the producing of the dough

Leviticus 2:13

And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with ¹salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.

Salt functions to season, kill germs, and preserve. In typology salt signifies the death, or the cross, of Christ. The Lord Jesus always lived a life of being salted, a life under the cross (Mark 10:38; John 12:24). Even before He was actually crucified, Christ daily lived a crucified life, denying Himself and His natural life and living the Father's life in resurrection (John 6:38; 7:6, 16-18; cf. Gal. 2:20).

Recovery Version, footnote 13¹

B. The cross killing the germs of individualism and the individualistic life

Galatians 2:20a

I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me...

C. The cross killing our preference and taste

Philippians 2:2a

Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love...

1 Corinthians 12:25

That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another.

We must learn to be related to persons who are not of our choosing according to our taste. If we have the choice to be related according to our taste, we eventually will be related to no one but ourselves. We will take ourselves as the best choice. We must learn to sacrifice, to crucify, our taste and to submit to others. If the Lord sovereignly brings together a number of brothers, they need to submit to one another. No one should say, "I don't like to be with these brothers. I will join myself to someone else." This does not work. We need to believe that the Lord is sovereign and learn to submit ourselves under His sovereignty.

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, Vol. 4, 1964, p. 96

D. The cross dealing with arguments over small matters that damage the oneness

Matthew 25:21a

His master said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things...

In serving the Lord, we will encounter severe tests, particularly in regard to small things; Satan always hides himself in small matters in order to tempt us. Many times it is because of small things that the brothers are not in one accord....

We should use all our strength and even be willing to be martyred in order to guard the matters of the Lord's person and the basic truths related to Him. Besides this, we are all brothers and sisters, and there is nothing worth arguing about in regard to our service.

The Ground of the Church and the Service of the Body, pp. 100-101

E. The cross dealing with offenses

1 Corinthians 6:7

Already then it is altogether a defeat to you that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

III. The application of the cross by receiving the word as the Spirit

Ephesians 6:10-13, 17

10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,

12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of evil in the heavenlies.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God

A. Killing our offended emotion directly and killing the evil power in the air indirectly

This is something I have learned through many years of experience. I am not a “marble” person who cannot be offended. I have often been offended by others in the church life or in my family life. How have I been able to get through all the offenses? I get through by receiving the word as the Spirit. The word I receive as the Spirit then becomes the sword to slay the enemy. Apparently the sword of the Spirit kills my emotion; actually it kills the evil spirit in the air who takes advantage of my emotion. Whereas my emotion is killed directly, the evil spirit is killed indirectly. In this way I have been able to get through the offenses.

Teachers' Training, p. 22

B. A spiritual antibiotic killing the germs within us

We may compare this kind of killing to the effect of an antibiotic on the germs that cause illness in our body. In order for our body to be saved, the germs need to be killed by an antibiotic. The word that we receive in a living way as the Spirit is a spiritual antibiotic that kills the “germs” within us. When the germs are killed, the evil forces in the air have no way to take advantage of us. Then we can live a healthy Body life, a healthy church life.

Teachers' Training, pp. 23-24

C. Preserving us in the church life

This is the way I have been preserved in the church life and in my ministry for so many years. Apart from the killing through the word as the Spirit, my ministry would have been terminated. Once again I would emphasize that we need to receive the word of God in a living way, so that in our experience the Spirit becomes the killing sword. When the word becomes the Spirit, the Spirit becomes the sword—the sword of the Spirit that kills the germs in us and the evil spirits in the air. In this way the Body, the church life, and our ministry are saved. This will enable our ministry to have a long life.

Teachers' Training, p. 24

IV. The practicality of blending

A. Stopping to fellowship

Fellowship implies the fact that we are limited, inadequate, and willing to accept what comes from others and take it as our own.

Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 37, Chapter 5, p. 28

Fellowship is to acknowledge that we are short, that we are inadequate, and that we need the Body. Fellowship is the acknowledgment of our own limitations and of the possibility of making mistakes by ourselves; it is receiving help from those who have spiritual discernment before the Lord. (This does not mean to ask for help only from those who are affectionate towards us.) I cannot go on by myself; I need the help of other brothers and sisters.

Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 37, Chapter 36, p. 246

I have discovered that the biggest shortage among us is fellowship. Our problem is that we do not have the habit to fellowship, and many of us do not like to fellowship. We must realize that when we fellowship, the Lord is involved. When we turn away from fellowship or stop our fellowship with our fellow believers, the Lord is kept away.

The Triune God being Life to the Tripartite Man, Chapter 17, p. 141

Philippians 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,

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly *of himself* than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.

Philippians 2:3-4

3 *Doing* nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves;

4 Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also.

Philemon 14

But without your mind I did not want to do anything, that your goodness would not be as of necessity, but voluntary.

B. Not doing things for our interest or according to our taste but for the church

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.

Fellowship here indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose. Hence, to have fellowship with the apostles, to be in the fellowship of the apostles, and to have fellowship with the Triune God in the apostles' fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose....

Recovery Version, Footnote 3³

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