

## **God's Master Piece, the Building up of the Body of Christ – Vision and Reality**

*„... for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.“*

(Eph. 4:12-13)

### **I. The Body of Christ – the church** (Eph. 3:1-13)

#### **A. The mystery of Christ** (Eph. 3:3, 5)

1. Hidden in God from all eternity (Eph. 3:5, 9)
2. Revealed in the spirit (Eph. 3:5; Mt. 16:18; 18:17; Col. 1:26)
3. Reading and understanding (Eph. 3:4; Rom. 16:25-26)

#### **B. The body of Christ** (Eph. 2:16; 3:6)

1. The unity of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; 1.Cor. 12:13, 20; Eph. 1:23)
2. Reconciled in one body through the cross (Eph. 2:16)
3. The body is Christ (1.Cor. 12:12; 10:17)
4. The fullness is in the body (Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:13)
5. Being conscious of the body (Eph. 5:30; 3:13; 1.Cor. 12:25-27; Col. 1:24)

#### **C. God's stewardship with the church** (Eph. 3:2, 9)

1. The dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2)
2. The dispensation of the mystery (Eph. 3:9)
  - a. His eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ (Eph. 3:11; 1:9)
  - b. He created all things for His purpose (Eph. 3:9)
  - c. The manifold wisdom of God is now made known unto the principalities and powers through the church (Eph. 3:10)
3. The built up church is able to withstand the wiles of the enemy (Eph. 1:22; 6:10-12)
4. Christ will present the church to himself a glorious church (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7-9)

## **II. Prayer for the Church, that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God** (Eph. 3:14-21)

### **A. Praying and fighting with faith for God's purpose** (Eph. 3:14-15)

1. Drawing near to the Father with boldness (Mt. 6:6;  
Mt. 6:31-33; Eph. 3:12; Hebr. 4:16)
2. Fighting for God's purpose, the church (Eph. 1:15-16;  
Eph. 3:10; Lk. 22:43-44)

### **B. Together we stretch forward for the church to be filled with all the fullness of God** (Eph. 3:16-19)

1. The Spirit strengthening us into our inner man  
(Gal. 5:17; 2.Cor. 4:16-17; 2.Tim. 1:7)
2. Christ living in our hearts through faith (Col. 2:6-7;  
Rom. 8:9; Gal. 2:20)
3. We are being rooted and grounded in His love  
(Rom. 8:35, 38-39; Joh. 15:9, 13; Jud. 20-22; 1.Pet. 1:22)
4. Pressing on together to lay hold of Christ (Eph. 1:16-19;  
1.Cor. 13:2; 1.Cor. 8:1b-3; Phil. 1:9-10; Phil. 3:7-15)
5. The fullness of God – Christ and the church (Eph. 1:10;  
Eph. 1:23; Eph. 4:13; Col. 2:9-10)

### **C. Unto the father be all the glory in the church** (Eph. 3:20-21; Ps. 29:1-2, 9b; Ps. 26:7-8, 12; Ps. 66:1-5)

### **III. Giving diligence to keep the oneness of the Spirit in all lowliness and meekness (Eph. 4:1-6)**

#### **A. In all lowliness**

1. We humble ourselves before God's work (2.Pet. 1:3-4, 10; Deut. 8:11-18; James 4:7-8)
2. The Lord humiliates and liberates from pride (Ps. 119:67, 71, 75; Ez. 28:2, 6-7)
3. It is no longer I who live, but Christ is living in me – he is gentle and lowly in heart (Mt. 11:29; Zec. 9:9)

#### **B. Bearing one another in love (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13)**

1. Being filled with the love of Christ (Joh. 13:1, 4; 15:9; Mt. 5:46)
2. Being focused on the Lord's work in the saints– no room for individualism (Phil. 2:2-3; Rom. 14:4; 1.Cor. 12:21-25)
3. The Lord's dealings make us useful for His work (Acts 7:22; Numbers 12:3; Jona 1:12; 2:7; Rev. 1:9)

#### **C. Keeping the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3-6)**

1. Keeping the oneness brought about by the Spirit (Joh. 17:21-23; Eph. 2:14-16)
2. Laying aside everything that divides – striving diligently for the oneness in every locality (2.Tim. 1:16-17; 1.Pet. 2:1; Acts 2:42-43)
3. The oneness of the church according to the Lord's plan (Deut. 12:5-7, 11, 13-14; Joh. 4:24)

#### **IV. The work of ministry – building up the body of Christ** (Eph. 4:7-12)

##### **A. The ascended Christ has given gifts**

1. He descended into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9-10)
2. He ascended far above all the heavens
3. That He might fill all things (Eph. 4:10; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11)
4. He led captivity captive and gave men as gifts to the church (Ps. 68:19; 2.Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:8)

##### **B. Each one has received a gift**

1. According to our measure (talents: Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-26)
2. All the gifts are for edification (1.Cor. 12:7; 14:3, 26)
3. We should all be good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1.Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12:3-8)

##### **C. We are being equipped for the work of ministry**

1. God has given different gifts (Eph. 4:8-11)
2. For the equipping of the saints (Eph. 4:12)
  - a. for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ
  - b. The church is God's work in the present age (Eph. 2:10; 3:10)
  - c. Our service is for building up the body (1.Pet. 2:4-5; Col. 1:24-25; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:12)
  - d. Equipping and being equipped (willingness) (1.Cor. 14:31; learning and being encouraged)
  - e. Presenting our body a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2)

**V. Arriving at the oneness of the faith** (Eph. 4:13-14)

**A. Oneness of faith**

1. All shall arrive (1.Cor. 14:26, 31)
2. Foundation of the oneness – the accomplished work of the Lord (Eph. 4:1-6)
3. Faith – making things not seen real (Hebr. 11:1; 2.Pet. 1:1-11)

**B. Growing unto a full-grown man**

1. To know the son of God in fellowship (1.John 1:1-3; Lk. 24:30-34)
2. The measure of the faith (Rom. 12:3; 1.Cor. 12:15, 21)
3. Not being infants (Gal. 3:24; 1.Cor. 3:1-7)
4. Growing to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23)

**C. What prevents the oneness of the faith** (Eph. 4:14)

1. Not being tossed and carried about (Col. 1:23)
2. Wind of teaching in the sleight of men (2.Cor. 11:3-4; Rev. 2:20)
3. In craftiness with a view to a system of error

**D. Become established through grace**

(Acts 13:43; 1.Cor. 15:58; 2.Cor. 1:21)

## **VI. Let us hold to truth in love for the building up of the body of Christ!**

(Eph. 4:15-16)

### **A. To know the truth and live in it**

1. To know Jesus Christ as the One who is the truth (Joh. 14:6)
2. Letting the word of truth dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16)
3. Knowing the truth will set us free (Joh. 8:31, 32)

### **B. Love and truth belong together**

(1.Cor. 13:6; 1.Pet. 1:22)

1. Love is the bond of perfection (Col. 3:14)
2. Truth is the testimony of the church (1.Tim. 3:15)

### **C. Growing into Jesus Christ**

1. Beholding the Lord, reflecting Him as a mirror and being transformed (2.Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:8-11)
2. Holding Jesus Christ as our Head (Col.2:19)

### **D. Out of Him supplying bountifully, being fitted and knit together**

1. Everything in the church coming out of Jesus Christ
2. We are the receiving and the supplying ones (2.Pet. 1:5-7)
3. Being perfected into one (Phil. 2:1-2; John 17:22-23)

### **E. The body growing and being built up**

1. According to the measure of each one part
2. Every member being necessary and sharing in the building up

## **VII. Learning Christ** (Eph. 4:17-24)

### **A. By the renewing of our mind**

(Eph. 4:17-19, 23)

1. Our origin (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)
2. Now, as believers (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:1-2; Rom. 12:2; Hebr. 8:11)

### **B. Hearing and learning Christ** (Eph. 4:20-21)

1. Speaking with the Lord in an open and sincere way (Lk. 6:47-48)
2. The Lord wants us to grow. For that he assists and supports us (Mt. 11:28-29; 1.Cor. 15:10)
3. God's goal with us individually and with the church (1.John 3:2; Eph. 4:15-16)

### **C. A continuous exercise: putting off and putting on**

(Eph. 4:22-24)

1. We have been crucified together with Christ and have been made alive together with Him (Rom. 6:11; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-17)
2. The new man is in Christ (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 2:15)
3. Practicing diligently (2.Pet. 1:5, 10; 1.John 2:1; Hebr. 12:1-2)
4. Receiving the reward (Hebr. 11:24-26; 12:16-17; 1.Sam. 15:14-23; Mt. 25:1-13)

## **VIII. Walking in the new man for the building up**

(Eph. 4:22 - 5:1)

### **A. Putting off the old man**

1. Clearing up the past (Lk. 19:1-9; Acts 19:18-19)
2. The word giving us light and leading us to repentance  
(John 1:1, 4; Rom. 2:4)

### **B. Putting on the new man**

1. Living according to Christ by following the sensation of life (Rom. 8:6, 14)
2. In line with the word and the spirit
  - a. Being led by the Spirit
  - b. Being led by the word to stay on the path of the Lord  
(2.Tim. 3:15-17; Ps. 32:8-10; Ps. 119:105)
3. Forgiving one another (Eph. 4:32; 2.Cor. 2:10-11;  
Lk. 17:3-4)
4. Imitators of God as beloved children (Eph. 5:1)

### **C. Bearing the building up in mind**

1. Pursuing the building up (Rom. 14:19)
2. Pleasing the neighbour unto what is good for building  
(Rom. 15:2)
3. The church needing to be built up through each ministry  
and service (1.Cor. 14:5, 12, 26)
4. All gifts being for the building up (Eph. 4:11-12)