

Foundation - the Divine Order of the Church

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon explores the divine order of the church, emphasizing unity in Christ and the necessity of humility and obedience among its members.

Duration: 47:35

Scripture: Matthew 20:26-28, John 13:14-17, Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Ephesians 4:11-12, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Peter 5:5-6

Topics: "Church Order", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

This sermon focuses on the divine life, divine order, and spiritual authority within the church, emphasizing the unity of believers as one body in Christ. It highlights the importance of humility, obedience, and serving one another, following the divine order set by God. The speaker challenges the congregation to prioritize spiritual growth and understanding God's order in the church, encouraging a shift from seeking authority to embracing humility and service.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 12. For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

And then, verse 27. Now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular. And God has set certain in the assembly, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miraculous powers, Then gifts of healing, helps, governments, kinds of tongue, are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, are all possessing a miraculous power.

Have all gifts of healing, do all speak with tongues, do all interpret, but desire earnestly the greater gifts, and yet show I unto you a way of more surpassing excellence. May we have a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, our hearts are full of gratitude when we partake of thy table.

How we praise and thank thee for loving people such as we are. Thou art willing to give thyself to us so totally, thou hast bought us with thyself. Lord, we are no longer ours, we are yours.

And we gladly put ourselves in thy hands and say, Lord, mold and fashion us according to your will. May thy name be highly exalted, even in us, in people like we are. We commit this time into your hand.

Lord, speak to us, we are listening. We ask in thy name. Amen.

As we all know, we are on basic lessons. My burden is to speak on divine life, divine order, and spiritual authority. Last lost day, we began with divine life.

We thank God, because as we believe in the Lord Jesus, he gave us his own life. And with this divine life, we are not able to communicate with God. But we are able to live by the life that he has given to us.

And this morning, we will go into divine order. God is the God of order. He is the one who set the order in the universe.

We find in 1 Corinthians 12. For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also is the Christ. I wonder when you read this verse, what is your reaction? Because it is said, the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body are one body.

And it says, so also is the Christ. Now probably, we will say, it should be so also is the church, because the church is the one body of Christ. It has many members, and even though there are many members, there is one body.

So also is the church. But the Holy Spirit cannot be wrong. He puts it, so also is the Christ.

And what does it mean? I think it tells us very clearly, that even though we are many, and yet we are one, so also is the Christ. We will say, so also is the church, because that is what the church should be. One body, many members, many members, yet one body.

So also is the church. But the Holy Spirit cannot be wrong. He puts it, so also is the Christ.

So what is the church? The church is the Christ. It means that, the church, we also think it means people, such as we are. We who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we who have His life in us, we who live for Him.

Now that is the church. But the Holy Spirit cannot be wrong. He says, so also is the Christ.

So what does it mean? It means that, so far, we are many, and we are one. One body in Christ. But no, we are more than that.

We are THE Christ. What does it mean? It means that, in the church, you do not see many people. You do not see different ones.

You see Christ. Christ in you. Christ in me.

Christ in every one of us. And they make up THE Christ. A number of years ago, we had the Wabana Conference near Washington, D.C. And the speakers were Brother Sparks, Brother Fonke, and myself.

And once I was going to explain what a church is. I'm thinking of using a formula. But I know Brother Sparks is deadly against formula.

Because he feels you cannot reduce spiritual things into formulas. But for the sake of clarity, helping the brothers and sisters, I feel I have to use a formula. So I ask his permission to allow me to use a formula for this special occasion.

And I say, what is the church? The church is composed of Christians. Suppose there were only three Christians in the world. And these three Christians were the best Christians we ever knew.

I would say it was Peter, John, and Paul. Now suppose in the world there are only these three Christians. Now what is the church? Is the church the Christ in John? Plus the Christ in Peter.

Plus the Christ in Paul. Equal to the church. Now is that so? I think most of you will shake your head.

Now what is the church? The church is Christ in Peter. Plus the Christ in John. Plus the Christ in Paul.

Equal to the church. Yes or no? Nobody seems to dare to say yes or no. Are you sure? This is the church.

If you are not sure, now what is it? Well, let's try. The church is Christ in Peter. Plus Peter.

Plus the Christ in John. Plus John. The Christ in Paul.

Plus Paul. Equal to the church. Now I can see shaking of hands.

We know this is not so. So what is the church? The church is Christ in Peter. Minus Peter.

Plus the church in John. Minus John. The church in Paul.

Minus Paul. Equal to the church. Now is that right? I said not in offence.

So brothers and sisters, what is the church? We often think we are the church. We who believe in the Lord Jesus. Of course, we are the church.

Who else can be? But brothers and sisters, if you think more carefully, you will say that's the trouble the church has today. Even though we have Christ, but unfortunately we have you and me. And that's the problem.

So what is the church? The church is Christ in Peter. Minus Peter. Plus the Christ in John.

Minus John. Plus the Christ in Paul. Minus Paul.

Equal to the church. Now is that correct? I say not in offence. So brothers and sisters, even though the church includes you and me, and yet at the same time it excludes all of us, what remains is Christ himself.

So that is what a church is. So it is called the Christ. You do not come to the church to meet Paul or Peter or John.

You come to the church to meet Christ. He is the church in a corporate sense. Now if that is the case, how strictly the Holy Spirit has to deal with each and every one of us.

Thank God we have Christ in us. But unfortunately we are also there. Our old man is still there.

And that is all the problem we have in the church. The old man has to be dealt with. So what remains will be Christ and Christ alone.

And that is what a church really is. Now if that is the case, how the Holy Spirit has to work all the time in order to bring us to this reality. There is so much of ourselves there.

Even the good self. But as long as we remain there, you find the church suffer for us. So dear brothers and sisters, when we think of the church, we have to remember it is Christ and Christ alone.

If you want to make this a reality, you have to expect the Holy Spirit to deal drastically with you. Everything that is of you must be dealt with. So what is left is Christ.

Now this may sound theoretical, but brothers and sisters, this is the truth you will find in the Bible. The church is THE Christ. Anything that is not of Christ does not belong to the church.

That is the reason why we have to learn to let the Holy Spirit deal deeply in each and every one of our lives. In order that the church according to God may be manifested. Now in the church you have many members and because of this you find there is a divine order.

God is the God of order. So in the church there is a divine order. When you come to the church, what are you looking for? Are you looking for someone or someones to be under you that you may exercise authority over them? Or do you come to the church to find who is above you? That you may give obedience.

I think this is a tremendous question. When you come to the church, what are you looking for? You are looking for someone or ones to be under you. You want to be the authority to rule over others.

Or do you come to the church to find who are above you that you may give yourself to obedience. I think we need to have the right attitude. The problem with the church today is when people come to the church they are looking for people to be under them.

Listen to them. Obey them. Follow them.

Instead of looking for people who are above them, rule over them that they may learn how to follow. Brothers and sisters, to be very frank, when you come here, what are you looking for? Are you looking for people who will be under you? Who will listen to you and will do what they ask you to do? Or do you come with a deep humility? You are looking for people to whom you should give obedience. What is your attitude when you come to the church? We say God is a God of order.

So in the church you find this divine order is to be manifested. And it only can come when we all have the spirit of humility. We come to the church to look for people who are above us that we may give them our due obedience.

We learn obedience in this way. So to me I feel the attitude of God's people in going to the church needs to be adjusted. Do you know who are below you? Or rather, do you know who are above you? If you think you are more than equal to many brothers and sisters, they should listen to you.

Instead of you seeing that, you should learn to obey and to follow. I think this is a very practical question. When you come to the church, don't look for people to be under you.

But when you come to the church, you look to whom you should give your obedience. So Brother Nee used to say, when you come to the church, you are looking for people to whom you should give your obedience. And that is the way that we should begin with.

Now of course, God is the God of order. And because He is the God of order, so in the church He has His divine order. And before you come to anything technical, I think spiritually the first thing you should learn is

to find out who are those to whom I will listen.

That gives you the right spirit and that will start you on the right way. I think the problem with the church is everybody wants to be at the top. Nobody wants to be at the bottom.

Just like when our Lord was on earth, you will find the disciples, twelve of them. None of them come from nobility. None of them very learned.

They were simple people, fishermen, tax collectors and so forth. And yet you find among them, there is always that discussion going on. Who is the greatest? There is always that tendency of being the top instead of the bottom.

They are quarreling all the time. They know that it was not too good. So when the Lord said, what are you talking about? They didn't want to say it because they knew that it wasn't the right thing to do.

Because the Lord among them is the lowest of all. You remember during the Last Supper. Our Lord Jesus used a family he knew well.

Their living room for the Last Supper. Everything was ready. So when the disciples came, at the front there was six tanks of water.

Now the Jewish people at that time, they did not wear shoes like we are. They wear sandals. And the roads at that time were not paved.

Dirt roads. So when you come from our side, your feet were dirty. And you all know when your feet are dirty, you cannot appreciate the food as well.

So the custom was, a maid will be there to wash your feet when you came in. And here you find in that family that provided that house for our Lord Jesus. Surely they would provide a maid.

Because the waters were there. Six tanks of water. Quite a lot.

But there was no maid. I think it was the Lord's arrangement. He let the disciples come in.

He wanted to see how they reacted. I think everyone came in. So there was no maid there washing their feet.

Everybody felt dirty. But nobody ever thought of being the maid to wash the feet of the other disciples. They all reluctantly went to their seats.

And you must remember, they did not sit as we did. As we do. When we sit, our feet are not seen.

Because they are below the table. But during the old days, when they sit, they lie down. And their feet will all jerk out.

Should be seen by everybody. But nobody thought of washing the feet of another one. So I think the Lord had a sense.

He watched them. He saw nobody did it. Everybody was seated.

Even though nobody felt happy about it. So the Lord rose up. Took off his robe.

Put on the maid's thing. And began to wash the disciples' feet. The Lord wanted to teach them an object lesson.

Brothers and sisters, today as we read the story, we will say now, these disciples hadn't learned. Everybody wanted to be the head. Nobody wanted to serve.

But our Lord Jesus took off his robe and began to wash his disciples' feet. None of them said anything. Except Peter.

Peter said, Lord, how could you do that? He didn't think of, why should I not do it? But he had a good sense. How could the Lord wash the feet of the disciples? That was not right. But the Lord said, may it be so.

Because if I do not wash your feet, you have no part with me. So you know, Peter said, not only my feet, my hands, my head, everything, you know about it. The Lord said, you don't need that.

So brothers and sisters, we must remember that the house of God there is a divine order. It is not arranged by man. No man can arrange it.

It is arranged by God. When you come to the meeting, whom do you look forward to? What are you looking for? You're looking to have your feet washed or you're looking to wash others' feet. If the Lord washed the feet of his disciples, do you think we should do likewise? We come here not to be served, but to serve.

Are we willing to do the lowest thing you can ever think of to your brothers and sisters? The work of a maid. Are you willing to do that? And I think this is the trouble in the church today. So, the Bible shows us that in the church there is a divine order.

And this divine order is to be practiced. When you come to the church, you do not look for people to be under you. Rather, you look to whom you shall obey and learn spiritual lessons.

Well, the Lord has his order in the church. We have here nine items. The Lord tells us the order in the church.

He said, first, apostles. Secondly, prophets. Thirdly, teachers.

Then, miraculous powers. Then, gifts of healing. Helps.

Governments. Kinds of tongues. You know, to every believer God has given a gift.

If you read the Bible carefully, read the parables, you will find none of it tells us that any servant of the Lord is without gift. If you do not have five talents, you will have two talents. If you do not have two talents, you have one talent.

At least, you have one talent. As a matter of fact, the church is full of one talents. And if you only use the five talents and the two talents and let all the one talent go without being used, do you know what loss you suffer? Because there are more people with one talent than the fives and the twos.

But of course, with people of one talent probably are the most difficult people because they have only one talent. But their demands are tremendous. Those with greater talents usually learn how to give.

But those with less talents always thinking of what is going to be given to them. So, brothers and sisters, when you come to the meeting, look to whom you should obey, not to whom you should rule. That is right attitude.

If you begin from the very end, in due time, God will raise you up higher. If you try to begin at the top, you will discover that you will be going downward. So here you find the Apostle Paul tells us, in the church there is an order.

But that order is not man-made. That order is the order of God. And if it is the order of God, we should learn to follow that divine order.

It is interesting to know that all these things are spiritual in nature. It is not a rigid order. God, by His Spirit, wants to teach every one of us to learn how to find the right order of God.

And it is only with the Spirit of humility we are able to do that. So dear brothers and sisters, just remember, there is a divine order in the church. Not man-made.

And if we know how to follow that divine order, we will be blessed. If we try to be against that divine order, we will suffer loss. And this is what the Apostle Paul is trying to teach the Corinthian believers.

Do you not think that we are better than the Corinthians? There are lessons that we need to learn. So this morning, this is the only thing in my heart. Learn to find out the divine order of God in the church.

And as we do that, the Lord will say, come up higher. Let's pray. Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for these basic lessons.

Thou want us to learn from the very beginning how should we behave in Thy church. Lord, give us the spirit of humility that we are not looking to be great, but we are looking to be lower, smaller, serving instead of being served. May the spirit of God guide and lead each and every one of us.

Lord, this is not something man made. It is something of God. And may Thy spirit guide and lead every one of us.

Give us the spirit of humility that we may find in our brothers and sisters, people to whom we will give our obedience, that Thy church may be built and Thou may be glorified. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

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