

IN ONE SPIRIT 1

Our goals as ministers and oracles of the Word of God should be: “As much as we can, we want to have a pure Word from the Lord, a pure ministry to the people, and a pure spirit that permeates the whole of the church.”

We are coming into the age of the kingdom; the kingdom of heaven came down and manifested in one man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus never had an old man, his blood was pure. The old man refers to all that we have inherited from the first Adam. Jesus became the last Adam, and in his resurrection became the second man. The head of a new creation of life giving spirits, all members of one body, the Christ that is now on the earth.

What we are looking for is the kingdom of heaven coming down and manifesting in a many member body.

We are in what is called the restoration. The church of today looks nothing like, the church that started at the day of the Pentecost, but the glory of the latter house of God shall be greater than the former.

The problem is that the ministries that are in the public eye, are still operating on a soul level, in which their spirit has

not been separated from their soul, so that the word that is coming forth through them is not pure, but mixed.

There is still too much of the self life manifested in the church at large, the world wants nothing to do with it, unless it minister's to their self life.

Acts 5:12-15 (AMP) ¹² Now by the hands of the apostles (special messengers) numerous and startling signs and wonders were being performed among the people. And by common consent they all met together [at the temple] in the covered porch (walk) called Solomon's. ¹³ And none of those who were not of their number dared to join and associate with them, but the people held them in high regard and praised and made much of them. ¹⁴ More and more there were being added to the Lord those who believed [those who acknowledged Jesus as their Savior and devoted themselves to Him joined and gathered with them], crowds both of men and of women, ¹⁵ So that they [even] kept carrying out the sick into the streets and placing them on couches and sleeping pads, [in the hope] that as Peter passed by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

In the early church no one of the world dared to join and associate with them because of the manifestation of the fear of God, but they highly respected them. But more and more were being added the body of Christ.

The day is coming when the world will highly respect the church.

In order to have a pure spirit that permeates the church, we have to understand something about the realm of spirit.

In the spirit world (or realm of spirit, the realm of the kingdom) there is not as much distinction between individuals as there is in the physical world. It is possible for many individuals to participate in one spirit. This is the whole key of what the Church of Jesus Christ is.

Paul tells us that the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening, life-giving spirit.

If there is a soulish body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is soulish; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. I Corinthians 15:44b–47, ASV.

Adam was able to reproduce after his own kind, as all God's creation was scheduled to do (Genesis 1:24). And so Adam's descendants came forth as living souls. But through the trespasses and sins of Adam and all of his descendants, there was a deadness upon the human spirit. And it has taken the reviving work of what we call the new birth, or regeneration, to make the spirit alive.

For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. That, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:17–19, 21, ASV.

While the new birth leads to the saving of the soul, its initial act is to make alive the spirit; so that “you who were dead in trespasses and sins, you did He make alive.”

And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest:—but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive

together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved). Ephesians 2:1–5, ASV.

When we first became a believer in Christ Jesus, He did not make us to come alive physically; physically and soulishly we were already existing. There are many people in the world who have souls that are very active. Some wicked fellow standing on the street corner will feel very religious and give a Salvation Army person his last five-dollar bill when they make an appeal. People can be serving the devil and be very religious. We need to you realize that? They can be very religious souls even while they are serving the devil; a person does not have to be “born again” to be religious or to have a soulish life. Actually many who claim to be “born again” are not. They are religious souls professing religion without a recreated spirit, or “born again” spirit.

But when we come into Christ, our spirit is made alive to God; and being made alive, we are one in Christ Jesus. As I Corinthians 12:13 says, we were all made to drink of one Spirit. We participated into one Spirit.

This explains why we can believe in the doctrine of the Triune God and still believe in one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit may be individual personalities, but because they are Spirit, they are one. John 4:24 tells us, “God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in

truth.” Without that, there can be no oneness in our communion, because God is a Spirit; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one Spirit. Though they are individual Spirits, the individuality is swallowed up in the oneness of their Spirit.

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Deuteronomy 6:4–5.

In the realm of spirit we cannot count things by numbers as we can in the natural realm. In the natural realm we would start counting, “One, two, three, four ...” to determine how many people are in a service. But when we deal with the spirit realm, we ask, “How many spirits are here tonight?” And if the people are all in unity there is just one Spirit. One Body we are. This is a mystery; and if we can grasp this, we have the answer to the thing that has caused theologians to have nervous breakdowns through the centuries, because they have never been able to define how many people with distinct personalities are still actually one in Spirit.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. I Corinthians 12:12–14, 18–20, 26, ASV.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. Ephesians 4:4–6, ASV.

For example, consider a husband and wife. The Bible says of them, “They two shall be one flesh”; and that is true (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31). By the marriage union, in the sight of God and in a very real way, they are one flesh. They are “heirs together of the grace of life,” as Peter puts it (I Peter 3:7).

But what about their spirits? Many husbands and wives may be one flesh, but they are certainly not one spirit. The husband has one spirit and the wife has another; and they clash!

What we are concerned about is having a right spirit. To have a right spirit is most important, because in the oneness of the Body, what affects you affects me. What affects any member of the Body affects the others.

We are able to grow as one Body when we are being fed and ministered to, because something of the Spirit is coming to us. Those Words are Spirit and they are life (John 6:63); and as we are all fed by them, the church seems to grow rapidly. It is amazing what we can experience, what we can come to understand, and how much our dedication can deepen, in only one year's time.

For instance, if we are around someone who is really dedicated to the Lord, our dedication will deepen. If we are around someone who is very prayerful, we find ourselves gravitating to prayer, because the things of the spirit flow; there is not the distinction that there is in the physical realm. On the physical level, we are separated; there is physical distance between one member of the Body and another. And yet there is no limitation of time and space in the oneness of our spirit.

What is spirit? How can we see it? We cannot see it with the naked eye. We may see manifestations or emanations of it; we may see its reactions; we may see the colors that emanate in the aura of an individual. We may see the force of someone's spirit working. We can observe how people get hit as someone sends a forceful thought out. Don't ever think that thoughts are not real things; they are very real! If something of our spirit goes into a thought, it can hit another person like a bullet. We

can think a thought about a person and hurt them “Why is it that people who are out of the will of God can pray against us and we get hit? God is not answering their prayers! Those people are just thinking nasty, destructive thoughts, and the force of their thoughts is so real and so great that it can hit the person they are thinking about. They tune right into that person and hit them.

Are you doubting this? Haven’t you ever had enemies who could bother you day in and day out? Have you had times when you were troubled, when you had headaches and felt pressures on you, and you didn’t know where it was coming from? Have you ever encountered people who had a distaste for you—or they were cranky or crabby or something was wrong with them—and you went away from that encounter feeling just as though somebody had just given you a beating? Then you can see how things of spirit can flow.

What happens within the Body of Christ? How does it really work? How does the Body make increase of itself in love? (Ephesians 4:16.) How is it that we can bite and devour one another, as Galatians 5:15 says, and be consumed one of another? What is this strange power that we have in our spirit to destroy or to create? What is this power that other people in the Body have over us? What is this power that we have over other people in the Body? Perhaps we should not use the term

“over them”; it is the power that we have with them or to them.

Solomon tells us that a threefold cord is not easily broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Therefore the following three passages of Scripture will help us to understand how this oneness of spirit works in the Body.

It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit (Paul's spirit was there with them), with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? I Corinthians 5:1–6, ASV.

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” Notice that, because that is what we will talk about. It only takes a little bit of yeast mixed in with the dough, and all that dough will begin to rise. It doesn't take much; a little will permeate through the whole. Leaven has the capacity to do

that, and so it was with this sin in that church. It was about to destroy the whole church.

Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. I Corinthians 5:7–10, ASV.

Paul was saying, “This is not a rule that applies to the people outside the church.” If we could not have any company with those outside the church, how would we live? We could not buy gas; we could not buy food. We would have to just go out of the world someplace, in order to not be dealing with anyone in this world.

But as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? (We have nothing to do with judging the world; that is God’s business.) Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the

wicked man from among yourselves. I Corinthians 5:11–13, ASV.

There is a way in which we must judge things within the Body—not to judge on an individual, personal level, but to judge the thing that comes in spirit from an individual, in order to help them.

I Corinthians 12 tells us more along this same line: *God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. Verses 24b–25, ASV.*

What is the reason for this oneness, for this being tempered together, welded together in spirit? That is literally what we are—we flow together in spirit, welded together, tempered together in spirit. The purpose of it is not so that we hurt one another, or that the sin of one would be the “leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.” The purpose is rather that we can have the same care one for another. It enables us to be effective in our ministry to one another and in our love for one another; we have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the church, first

apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Verses 26–28.

Are we beginning to grasp why God tempered the members of the Body together? Whatever happens, there is no such thing as a high-ranking member or a low-ranking one. In our thinking about the Body we have a lot of individuality to lose yet. We have to come to the place where we do not think that one person's ministry is great and another's is not so important. Forget that. There is no such thing as "my ministry"; there is only our ministry, Christ's ministry. It is Christ's ministry; it is His endowment. We differ in individuality by virtue of the endowments of the Holy Spirit that vary from one to another, but that is where the difference ends. No ministry functions by itself.

There is a difference in the reception of the same teaching in the various churches. We could go to the first church and battle to bring the Word, while the second church would not for a moment be touched by that battle. The second church was one distinct spiritual body; the first was another. Everyone in the first church was participating together in one common battle which belonged to that church and its future. We could preach the very same text and the same sermon to the two churches, and it would be different—with a different force, a

different acceptance, a different reaction—in each church. How is that possible? It is the things of spirit that are responsible for the difference.

If all are believing—if there is the backing by the elders and the believing of those in the church—it is possible to produce a very effective ministry, no matter who is standing behind the pulpit. We can do it because we all participate together. When one member is honored, they are all honored; when one member suffers, they all suffer (I Corinthians 12:26).

The way that we can tell that a demonically influenced person is in the Body is if the rest of the people are disturbed with that demonic thing. If the time comes when that person is severed from the Body, that person will no longer be touching individuals; then it will be purely satanic assault that would come from an individual who is set outside the Body of Christ.

But as long as one member is suffering, it is like a poison that just seems to go through the whole church. On the other hand, if one man breaks through to an anointing in God—a real anointing that is unusual—the whole church will break through to that. They will come into it in a measure.

Hebrews 12:15, ASV: Looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled.

Can bitterness do that? Yes. Bitterness in only one person's heart can result in many people within the church being defiled. That is why people have had such a difficult time under the teaching of legalism. How can a legalistic preacher who is beating the people down produce anything else but a bunch of sour, vicious people? As good as they might be in their hearts, and as much as they might want something else, they are defiled by that legalism and that judgment which comes forth.

Now that we have seen the negative aspect of this, let's dwell on the positive. What can we do? If I am one with a brother, then I can identify myself with him. There is an identification because of this oneness. We are one with Christ. We are one in Christ. We are one Body. As the Body is not one member but many, so also is Christ. Christ is a many-membered Body (I Corinthians 12:12, 14).

Basically, technically, doctrinally, we are not so much serving Christ as we are living out Christ in obedience to Him. Do you understand the difference? It is not just a matter of determining: "Let's all go work for the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, we're working for You!" That is not enough. It is God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). The apostles went everywhere, the Lord working with

them with signs following (Mark 16:20). We are laborers together with Christ (I Corinthians 3:9, KJV).

It is a uniting because of our oneness with Christ; we are His hands and His feet, His many-membered Body (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12–14). We are the functional part of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ as an individual is the Head and Lord of the Church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22–23), but we are the functional members of the Christ. So we are not working for Him so much as we are working with Him. We are the manifestation of His working. We are His workmanship, walking in the works which He has before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10, KJV).

We are one with Him. Each of us is identified with Him, and He identifies Himself with each one of us. The judgment of the future is based on that, according to Matthew 25. When the Lord judges, He separates the sheep from the goats. He says, “You goats, go that way, to the left. You sheep, come over here on My right.”

“Why are some of us sheep and others goats?”

“The ones over here on the left, the goats, did not minister to Me. I was in prison, I was hungry, I was naked, and no one took care of Me. No one ministered to Me.”

What this is talking about is the ministry of the Spirit. We set the Christ in our brothers and sisters free because they are in captivity. We feed the Christ in our sister and brother. We clothe our brother and sister with the Spirit of the Lord, this is body ministry.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 3:17a, KJV.

We do all of it for the glory of God. Everything that we do, we do unto Jesus, because we are ministering. we are the functional, ministering Body of Christ. This means that when there is a oneness between two, three, four, or any number of people, any one person in that can identify themselves with any other one person, or several, or all, and can effectively pray for them.

I think Job must have been one of the first to understand the principle of identification. The book of Job may be one of the oldest books in the Bible, as old or even older than the book of Genesis. As the book of Job opens, he was interceding and making sacrifices, but not for his own sin; for he said, "Maybe my children have cursed God in their hearts" (Job 1:5). He identified himself with his children. He could do that. Because of the authority, the place, the oneness that he had with his children, he could do it.

Do not ever minimize the efficiency or efficacy of a pastor's prayer, or the prayer of a people for their pastor. There is a oneness that exists between the shepherd and the sheep, and any one of the sheep can take on himself the battle of the shepherd, and can identify himself with him and stand with him. If you think the shepherd has done wrong, stand there and repent for him. If you think he is in battle, stand there and believe for him. I believe that vicariously we can bear the guilt or the battle of one another.

Why? Because Paul told the Corinthian church, "You have not mourned, you have not wept over this thing." In other words, "You have not borne the guilt of this one man in the church who is in sin, and it is defiling the whole church. A little leaven leavens the whole lump." The guilt was resting on everyone because it was like a poison that goes through the whole body. If someone's hand is bitten by a rattlesnake, there is no way to stop that poison from going all the way down to the feet. It will hit the heart; it will hit everywhere.

And so whenever some sin comes, we all bear the guilt for one another, and we start praying. God will do one of two things: Either He will remove that infection—cut it out of the Body in judgment—if the individual does not repent; or He will see to it that he is healed if he does repent. But the Body must be maintained on a healthy level.

Now let's take this a little further. If we have vicarious guilt, vicarious defilement (by "vicarious" we mean "one bearing it for another"), what about vicarious faith? Can we believe for one another? Some of the greatest stories of the New Testament are wrapped around instances of someone taking faith for another person.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. James 5:14–15, KJV.

Now here is some fellow who is sick, and he calls for the elders to come. You say, "Probably he got what he deserved." Maybe he did; maybe he sinned. So here he is—a sinner, and a sick man on top of that. But he calls for the elders, and they pray over him and anoint him with oil, and God heals him and forgives him right there. You say, "What about him? Isn't he praying?" It was evidently enough that he called the elders. They were identified with him. They were one with him.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. James 5:16a, KJV.

There is a communal action because of the oneness of spirit. Mark 2:3–5 tells us about a paralytic borne of four men who opened up the roof and let him down to where Jesus was.

Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy, “Your sins are forgiven you.” How do you like that? That is vicarious faith! You can believe!

There is a great deal to be said against backbiting, gossiping, criticizing, and judging, because all of that is a sin against the oneness of the Body. Whenever you see something wrong in the Body, don’t criticize. Don’t gossip. Don’t backbite about it. Instead, go before God and say, “Lord, I take that brother’s sin upon myself. I’m going to pray for him. I’m going to talk to him. Give me favor in his sight. Lord, give me compassion for him. Give me faith. I want to believe for him.” Start ministering to him. The next thing you see, he will be pulling out of it.

Many of the problems we see are problems that we can heal or work around. When we see a brother or sister in the church stumbling and having trouble, we identify ourselves with that person and we just keep ministering some of the blessing that is flowing to us, because he or she may be in a spiritual position where the blessings are all shut off. That is one of the great purposes of blessing—that even when an individual may be clouded spiritually, the oneness can flow from the rest of the Body to him. We have so much to understand yet about Body ministry. Paul says, “There should

be no schism in the Body; but that we should have the same care one for another” (I Corinthians 12:25).

God help us to repent of our independence of one another, and to come to love one another and to pray for one another. One of the greatest sins that we can ever commit against the Body is to have a withdrawing spirit, or to feel that we are isolated, or that nobody loves us and nobody can help us. We are sinning against the Body, because God has made us one (John 17:18–26; I Corinthians 12:12). If there is any distinction, it is some wall or some distinction that we have allowed; and by faith we can overcome that, because God intends for the oneness of the Body to be the greatest fact that we know. By this everyone is to know that we are His disciples, that we have love one for another (John 13:34–35). Ephesians 4:16 talks about how the Body makes increase of itself through love, through that which every joint supplies, through love flowing right down through the many-membered Body of Jesus Christ.

We need to realize that we have to love each other. The worst thing that can happen to people, especially young people, is that they divide off in pairs or cliques. We will be much better off if most of our fellowship and communion is done with a number of people included. Then we will learn to have the fellowship with the whole of the Body.

Very few in the church today really understand how those in the early Church continued in the apostles' doctrine and in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42). Do you realize that this was a key of the early Church?

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. Acts 2:42, 44–45, ASV.

They had even lost their sense of individual possessiveness. Some say, "Oh, that's going too far!" It shouldn't be going too far—Jesus laid down His life for us, and John tells us that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (I John 3:16). We ought to live for nothing greater than the brethren. If you say, "Well, I'm going to live for myself," then live for yourself. But we will please Christ, and we will be far more effective in our lives, if we live for one another instead of each living for himself or herself alone.

And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. Acts 2:46–47, ASV.

Notice that: “with one accord.” What a beautiful thing! And that was the spirit of the early Church. That was a far cry from what we read in I Corinthians 5. There a little leaven, a little evil, was leavening the whole lump. Malice and wickedness were just going right through the church, so they had to stop for drastic surgery. Paul cut out the cancerous member so that God could save that spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus, but the physical body would be destroyed (verses 5–6). That may seem very grievous, but it had to be so because there had been an abuse of a good thing that God had created. God had created the Body to have such a sweet flow in the Spirit that they could strengthen one another. That is why the early Church was so strong. They were able to minister to one another, to flow together.

In the final analysis, in everything we are doing, it is the participation of every member which does something almost unbelievable for the individual that we are ministering to. Everyone in the church focuses on him in the hour of his or her need, and the whole Body begins to pray. We do not know yet how wonderful and powerful it is that the whole Body is one with that individual, taking their load, taking their need, dissipating all the infection. Whether it be a physical thing or whether it be a spiritual thing, they are dissipating it, and health is flowing through the Body because of the spirituality of all the people who are concerned.

We want to be more and more one with the people we minister to. We need to be more and more one with one another. Become one with one another; pray for one another; bless one another.

What is the real basis by which we walk together? It is this: We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ over His many-membered Body, and we believe in any appropriate, legitimate means by which that Lordship can be fostered. There may be some who do not minister just as we do. Maybe they have a different way of ministering than we do, but as long as they are believing in God to meet the need of His people and wanting to see Jesus Christ glorified, isn't that the essential thing?