

#58 One Vine many branches

1 Wednesday evening we spoke again from paragraph 312 of brother Branham's sermon Christ is the Mystery of God Revealed and we focused on the third statement of the five part statement where brother Branham spoke of the attributes of Christ in Paul.

2 The thought we brought out was where brother Branham said of the apostle Paul (3) he lived the Word so that it expressed It, and we focused on his exact wording, where he was not saying Paul expressed Christ but that Paul lived so that the Word was able to express itself in him.

3 In other words God did not have to compete with Paul for time or space to express Himself in Paul's body. Paul gave him all the time, and all the body to use for his own purpose just as He used the body of His son for his own purpose and plan. And o what a glorious plan that was.

4 Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;

5 Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

6 So Paul became a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul understood perfectly what he meant by claiming to be a prisoner of Christ. This is what he wrote to Philemon, and the brethren at Ephesus.

7 Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer,

8 Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

9 Paul used a certain word to describe this relationship as a prisoner, which was the Greek word Desmios, which means to be chained to, or to be a captive to, and the root word actually means figuratively to be a limb of. In other words, Paul understood his position in the body of Christ, that Christ is the head, and Paul considered himself just to be one of the limbs in the body. In fact that is what he said in Ephesians 3, so let's read it again.

10 Ephesians 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, Notice, not The prisoner for me, for my sake, but for you Gentiles sake. Now, you say, what does that mean? He is a prisoner for our sake. Well, in letting us know that He was not a prisoner of Rome, but a prisoner of Jesus Christ and his becoming a prisoner was not for himself, but it was for you and I. Then he goes on to explain what he means as we see in verse 2 he says, ok, I am going to tell you how this being a prisoner came about.

11 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: Notice here that he speaks of His ministry wherein he has brought to the people the understanding of grace, which is unmerited favor with God. They did not know this, they lived under the law and Paul brought them to the dispensation of Grace through his ministry of preaching and teaching the word of God in order to understand better the new dispensation which we have entered into, a dispensation of Grace.

12 Now in the next verse he tells us 3 How that by revelation he (God had) made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).

13 So we see Paul is telling us here that there had been a great mystery that had been hid from age to age, but now through His teaching ministry God was using Paul to help the people to see that God had changed dispensation from law unto grace, and he used Paul to bring out this great Mystery by showing us how Christ was hid in God, the Life of Christ, hid in God throughout the Old Testament and but expressed here and there in the prophets, but now fully in His son Jesus. and in doing so, God changed the dispensation with man from law to grace.

14 That is what he means when he says, 4 Whereby, when ye read, (read what? Read his letters, that when you read what I am telling you, he says,) ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). My knowledge in the mystery of Christ that has been hid through the ages. and that takes us to verse 5.

15 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, (you see, it was hidden to them) as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

16 So Paul is telling them that what was happening in and through the Holy Spirit in that day was to open up this great mystery to them that had been hidden from age to age.

17 And in verse 6 he tells us that this great mystery has to do with becoming partakers in the fellowship and becoming fellow heirs. 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and (notice how Paul describes how we are fellow heirs, he says) of the same body, Not a different body, but the same body. For you see if Christ is the head of the body, then if I am just a limb in that body, then when the head tells the limbs that are the feet to run, those limbs runs, and when the head tells the arms to lift up the hands the arms lift up the hands. And that is what that word desmios, which was translated from the Greek to the English word prisoner. Paul was not saying I am chained to Christ, as though he was an unwilling prisoner, or Christ is one person and he being another person who is inferior to the one he is prisoner to. No, no sir, no, absolutely not at all.

18 Paul was saying I am the Desmios of the lord Jesus Christ. I am a limb of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when the head says run I run, when the head says lift up your hands I lift up my hands, because I am Him. he is me. we are one for by one spirit we have been all baptized into one body. Those are words the apostle Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

19 Notice, not drink of that one Spirit, but all have been made to drink into one Spirit

20 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and (notice how Paul describes how we are fellow heirs, he says) of the same body, . and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: And there is your key to understanding this, as he said fellow heirs, being of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: So being in Christ is being in the body, the body of Christ,

21 Then Paul says, 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

22 Notice Paul said baptized into one Body and we drink into one spirit. And his own life expressed this drink offering as he said in 2 Timothy 4:6 6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who long for and love his appearing.

23 Paul had poured out his own life for the brethren, and thought nothing of putting there needs before his own needs. He poured out his life for the brethren like David had the men who sacrificed life and limb to bring him water, cutting their way through the enemies lines just to bring him some cool water. And David was so humbled by their genuine desire to be of service to him, that they would risk their own lives so that he might not thirst, that there was no way he could drink it, so he poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord. That what these men did he gave it to God, so they would get credit before their God for sacrificing their own lives in the service of their King.

24 Oh, how beautiful to see that selfless attitude of those brethren, who saw the need and risked everything to fulfill that need in the body.

25 And that is what Paul is saying here, is that by looking no further than our own body, we ought to be able to see that our own body has many parts, or limbs, and we have many organs and cells within our own body, and that all those parts of the body function together as one body, for one purpose and that is the edification of the body. Therefore no matter how many parts you can name in your body, and they all have a function in the body and for the body, yet no matter how many parts we have in our body we are still just one body. And that is exactly the same with the body of Christ. By means of His one Holy Spirit, we all can say good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives.

26 In fact that is the sole reason for the five fold members is to edify which means to build up the body of Christ. And yet why is it that the five fold or so called five fold we have today does just the opposite? They tear down the body to build themselves up. That's not what they were called for.

27 Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, (That word perfecting means the maturing or the equipping of the saints) for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (For the building up) of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (a mature) man, unto the measure (the metron, the portion) of the stature (or character) which is the fulfilling of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

28 God is not coming for a bunch of babies, he's coming for a mature bride. What man wants to marry a child bride that he has to raise up to become a mature bride. No, a man wants a real lady that knows her place, and her role in the family, and doesn't act like a child wanting to always have her way in matters that don't even pertain to her role. The virtuous woman knew her role and she performed it well, and she did not try to usurp her husband in his role, or give him advice where he never asked for it. And that would be good advice for the bride of Christ. Don't give out your advice unless you are asked to give it out, then if asked you have a right to express your opinions, out if you do, keep it Scriptural or forget it, because brother Branham said, the bride has thus saith the Lord or she will keep still. That means the bride knows when to talk and when not to talk.)

29 And Paul continues on about the five fold ministry in verse 15 where he says, " But speaking the truth in love, (and if the truth is not given in love then it is not given scripturally, and if done in love then it is so the church) may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

30 Now, notice it did not say grow up unto him, as thought you are growing up unto, but this says that we may grow up into Him in all things, in everything we say or do, or think, because after all He is our head, even Christ. And if he i our head then he does our thinking for us. For it is God who is working in us to will and then to do.

31 Now, notice what Paul says in verse 16. " From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

32 Oh, how beautiful to see the whole body working together as one body tot he building up and maturing of that body and he says it is love for every part of the body that will do it. But in this day, we each are so used to independently calling our own shots, but now that we are part of His body, living by one Spirit, we have entered into a larger and integrated life in which He as the head has the final say in everything.

33 This is what we proclaimed in our words and in our actions when we were baptized into His death and raised in newness of His Life.) Each of us is now a part of His resurrection body, The Body of Christ, and we are all refreshed and sustained at one fountain, by his Spirit, by His Life, where we have all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves, labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free, are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

34 Then in verse 14 Paul says, 14 For the body is not one member, but many. And if we ever will come to this understanding, the bride will go because she will then understand that are not fractious, we are not divided, we are one body, and flesh of his flesh and bone of His bone, just like God made man and wife to be in the beginning.

35 And the lack of this revelation is why there is fussing in the church, and fussing in the homes. Because this is the age that the devil has split up the homes because he has gotten the people to think only of themselves, and not of the home as one unit of Life. And so too in the churches, each thinks only of their own role, and thus as Paul says in verse 15...

36 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

37 Now, in terms of your significance, I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If you Foot said, "I'm not elegant like the Hand, which is embellished with rings and jewelry; I guess I don't belong to this body," now, would that make it so?

38 And what if your ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, I'm kind of just hanging there, odd shaped and droopy, not much to look at. I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it. and so has he placed each one of you right where he wants you. In him and part of His body, to be useful to the whole body to help the body in ways the other members could not help themselves.

39 And then Paul says in verse 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet only one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

40 So how can men who claim to be ministers say to those who are not that we are more important than you. If you are truly a minister you will serve, and not be served. Jesus said, "He that is greatest among you shall be servant of all."

41 In Mark 9:35 Jesus sat down, and called the twelve, and said unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

42 And in Mark 10:44 He said, whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

43 So get out of your mind once and for all how significant you are in the kingdom of God, for if you think about how dying to self, will keep make you insignificant and keep you away from getting blown up into self-importance, because your role is not the eye, or the lips, or a role that seems to get more notice. For no matter how significant your role in the body is, it is only because of what you are a part of to begin with. You are part of the body of Christ. And an enormous eye wouldn't be a body, but a monster. And John 14:12 representing just one man (a gigantic hand) would not be a very useful body, now would it? So if you make the Body of Christ just one big Eye which is represented in the prophet who is a seer, or one big hand, wouldn't that be a strange kind or body to be representing the actual body of Christ?

44 When we looked deeply into the doctrine of Christ and understanding the Godhead, we showed you that God Himself has a head and a mouth and eyes, and He has feet and legs, and hands and arms, and even a back side and loins, and nostrils and hair white like wool. And he has bowels, and lungs and breath and you name it, it's all there. But can you image claiming to believe that the body of Christ which was fashioned in the Image of God who has all of the body parts, has just one hand, and if that hand does it the body does it? Now, I have searched high and low in the quotes of our prophet and have never come across anywhere where he said "if the hand does it the body does it". That's not to say that when your hand does something it is not attributed to the body doing it, but if you confess that with wrong understanding you do away with the body of Christ except for the hand, and that is contrary to what the apostle Paul was saying here. And that is what they have done to what brother Vayle said.

45 Brother Vayle never meant by saying "if the hand does it the body does it so there is nothing for the body to do". That is totally contrary to what he taught. He is telling us that the hand is just one part of one body, and that body is the body of Christ.

46 He was not telling us that there was no ministry outside that prophet or he would not have stepped into his own ministry as a teacher. Paul tells us here that the hand has a role but so does the intestines, and so does the feet, and all the other parts of the body internal, the part of the body that is hidden from public view yet is very significant to the whole body functioning together. And just because your role is not one that is as public as some other part of the body makes it no less valuable.

47 So Paul says in verse 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

48 Therefore, what we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot,

"You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way, the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

49 And then Paul tells us how that the whole body ought to work together for the benefit of the entire body. Look what he says in verse 25. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

50 The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

51 That is why brother Branham said Way to have fellowship 55-1009 P:18 I'd rather have a church... Listen, just a moment. I would rather have a church that knows nothing about any spiritual gift, and just be so in love with each other and with Christ, I'd rather have that than every spiritual gift operating in the church.

52 Getting in the spirit 61-0428 P:47 I don't care if the man's wrong. If he's wrong and sincere in his heart and you're right in your belief and you're wrong in the acting the way you're acting. I'd rather be in his place than be in yours. That's right. I'd rather be wrong in my doctrine and right in my heart. God will respect it more. So if a man is wrong, what of it? Help him. He needs help. Love him. If you can't love your enemy the same as you love those who love you, you're no better off than the publicans. That's right. That's what the Church has failed to get. I hope you get it tonight. I hope you see what I'm talking about.

53 8-0927 Why we are not a Denomination V-11 N-7 "People come here to the church, and this becomes their home church, if they wish to come as long as they live. 17 And they can come here and disagree with everything that we preach. That's perfectly all right. You still, as long as you are a Christian, you've got fellowship and a hand out just the same as the rest of them. See? If I said I believe in baptizing by immersing by water, and you believed in sprinkling, and stayed right on it, we'd still be just the same as we was if we both agreed. We might not be able to see eye to eye alike, but as long as you are a Christian brother or sister, you're perfectly welcome (See?), everybody.

54 So if brother Branham was open enough to accept people in his church who disagreed with everything he taught, then who are we to do others wise? I am not saying that we should invite a bunch of unbelievers to the church to fill it. That would be ridiculous, but any person that would come and sit and listen is either eventually going to have their eyes open or they will not stay for very long, because what they are hearing will eventually either cause them to come in or go out. But if you will notice he is not even talking about the other person here, what he's talking about is our own attitudes being in check with the Holy Spirit's nature of a dove. Let me read to you something brother Branham said in Questions and answers that has guided my ministry for the past 31 years here as pastor. And after you here this testimony you will see why I never believed in having a strong deacon board or a bunch of men acting like policemen around here.

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56 190 But I believe just like a fellow say, "Well, now, he's this, that." Pray for him. I never will forget, in

Stockholm, Sweden, Brother Lewi Pethrus, a great man of God. We was setting at the table, just a few hours before coming back to America. We had great meetings there. And he said, Gordon Lindsay said, "Who's the overseer of this great body?" Boy, it's got the Assemblies of God beat by hundreds of miles. You see? Said, "Who is the overseer?" And Lewi Pethrus is gentlemen-like, and he said, "Jesus." He said, "Who's your presbyters?" He said, "Jesus." He said, "I know that's right." Said, "We believe the same thing about our Assemblies of God." He said, "That's right." But said, "Say, for instance, a--a brother gets out of line," said, "who has the say so of putting him out?" Said, "We don't put him out." Well, said, "What do you do?" Said, "We pray for him." I thought that was so sweet. That sounded Christian-like to me. "We pray for him." Nobody puts him out; they pray for him.

57 191 Said, "Well, then, what if some of the brothers agree," he said, "and some of them don't want to fellowship with him anymore? Bring him in, like it's a pastor (You see?) that's beginning to be a lady's man among the... You know what I mean, and things like that, and some of the pastors won't have him in their churches. What do you all do, throw him out of your organization?" "No." Said, "We just let him alone and pray for him." Said, "We never lost one yet. They always come back, somehow." He said, "Well," said, "now, what if..." Said, "What if some of them say that they want him and others don't want him? Now, what about that?" Said, "Well, the ones that want him, take him; the ones that don't want him, don't have to." So, so I think that's a good way to have it, don't you, brethren? And that way we are brethren.

58 And when I saw that brother Branham thought that was a good way to have it, I said, I want that too. And when a couple brothers who were friends of Br. Vayle's were fussing with each other, one brother didn't call brother Vayle for 3 years because brother Vayle was still in contact with the other brother, and so he thought if he is going to be in contact with that brother then I won't bother, because if he was my friend he would not fellowship with that other brother. And that bothered Br. Vayle a lot, and he said to me, "Brian, one of the things I like about you is that you don't make your enemies be my enemies." And how could I. Sure there were guys he talked with that I didn't see eye to eye with, but you don't get between friends, the bible condemns that.

59 Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

60 Proverbs 16:28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

61 So Paul tells us we are one body, not divided into many parts, but we are one body living by one spirit, one motive, one objective, for by one spirit we are all baptized into the death of one man and are with one spirit raised up to be part of His body.

62 And so Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

63 Brothers and sisters, you are Christ's body. That's who you are! You must never forget that! And only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body": apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, those who pray in the back ground for what God is doing in the for ground. But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, one-dimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts. But now I want to lay out a far better way for you. And then Paul spends another whole chapter, chapter 13 teaching on the importance of love being the main motive and

objective for whatever role we have in the body of Christ.

64 Paul told us in Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

65 The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (So listen brothers, in closing, there is a fellowship that wraps itself around this great Mystery of Christ) which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

66 Notice the words, to the place where he was completely captive to the Life of Christ and Paul was so willing to die, and crucify himself that His life was hid with Christ in God.

67 And that brings us to point number four in paragraph 312 of Christ is the Mystery of God, where brother Branham said of Paul (4) "He lived so godly until they seen Jesus Christ in him so much, till they wanted his handkerchief to take it and lay it upon the sick."

68 And that my brothers and sisters is the whole body working together for the building up of the church. Paul being just one limb as he said of himself, I Paul a limb of the body of Christ.

69 And Jesus said, in John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: I am the body and you are the limbs: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing, because I am the head of the body.

70 For it is the mind that makes the whole body to work together for the good of the entire body. That is why He said, "Let this mind that was in Christ be in you." Why, because if any limb or part of the body has been disconnected from the mind, it becomes paralyzes and can not do what it was made to do.

71 In closing, brother Branham said in his sermon, Oneness 62-0211 P: 9 Now, Jesus prayed in John the 17th chapter and the 11th verse, to you who put down these Sunday school texts. I have many of them this morning. John 17:11, Jesus prayed that the church and He would be one like He and the Father were one. That the church, we as members of the Body of Christ, would be one together just like He and the Father are one. And at that day we would know that He was in the Father, or Father in Him, and He in us, that together we were one. What a union, a oneness that would be to see God in His church, till every member is just perfectly in harmony with each other and God. That's the church that Jesus is coming for. That's when His prayer will be answered, that we will be one.

72 Let us bow our heads and our hearts in prayer