

Message Four

**Practicing the Church Life
under the Ministry of Christ as the Divine High Priest**

Scripture Reading: Heb. 13:1-19

- I. Christ is the divine High Priest constituted with an indestructible life—Heb. 7:16-17; 8:1:**
- A. Christ has been constituted the divine High Priest according to the power of an indestructible life, which nothing can dissolve.
 - B. The indestructible life is an endless life, being the eternal, divine, uncreated life and the resurrection life that has passed through the test of death and Hades—John 11:25; Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:18.
 - C. We need Christ's divine priesthood because of death and the issues, the byproducts, of death:
 - 1. According to the broadest definition of death in the Bible, death includes vanity, corruption, sighing, groaning, and decay.
 - 2. Because of the issues of death, we need the divine priesthood, which is the presence of life and the absence of death.
 - 3. We may participate in the divine priesthood that diminishes and even swallows up all the byproducts of death.
 - 4. As we are enjoying Christ being ministered into us by the divine High Priest, the One who has been processed, we partake of the divine priesthood that conquers death (Heb. 2:24) and that diminishes, eliminates, and swallows up all the issues of death.
- II. Hebrews 13:1-19 speaks of the virtues and the experiences needed for the practice of the church life:**
- A. As indicated by its content, this chapter was written with a view to a proper church life; nearly everything mentioned here, such as brotherly love and hospitality, is for the church life, not only for the Christian life—vv. 1-7, 16-18.
 - B. For a true and steadfast church life, we must hold on to the Christ who is the same yesterday and today, and even forever, and must not be carried away by various strange teachings—vv. 8-9.
 - C. The more we are in our spirit, enjoying the heavenly Christ, the more we will come outside the camp of religion, following the suffering Jesus—vv. 12-14:
 - 1. The church is the tabernacle, or temple, of God (Eph. 2:21-22); however, the church changed in nature from being a tent to a camp—Heb. 13:13.
 - 2. The camp signifies a group of people, in particular, a religious people, who are not faithful to the Lord.
 - 3. At this present time, Christianity is not a tent but a camp:
 - a. This means that the church degraded to become Christianity.
 - b. In principle, Christianity as a religious system comprises a group of religious people, belonging to the Lord in name and honoring the Lord with their mouth but having their hearts set on something other than the Lord—Matt. 15:8-9; 2 Tim. 3:5.

4. According to the history of the church, those who really sought the Lord had to leave organized Christianity, that is, leave the camp and go forth to the Lord outside the camp—Heb. 13:13; 2 Tim. 2:19.
- D. Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices of praise to God—v. 15:
1. In the church we should offer up through Christ a sacrifice of praise to God continually.
 2. In the church He sings in us hymns of praise unto God the Father (2:12), and in the church we too should praise God the Father through Him.
 3. Eventually, in the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled Spirit—2:121; 13:15:
 - a. He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit.
 - b. This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Christ the Son.
 - c. This is greatly needed in the church meetings.