General Subject:
Taking the Way of Enjoying Christ
As the Tree of Life

Outline & Scriptures
Key Statements

① Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life.

② The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles—the principle of life and the principle of right and wrong.

③ The Lord's recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus with the first love, the best love, and of eating the Lord Jesus as the tree of life for the building up of the organic Body of Christ, which is the building up of the New Jerusalem as the goal of God's eternal economy.

④ As a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we, the believers in Christ and children of God, not only have eternal life and may experience eternal life, but we also can minister this life to other members of the Body of Christ.
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Introduction

Taking the Way of Enjoying Christ
As the Tree of Life

Crucial Fellowship from Brother Lee


“The one thing we need is to enjoy the Lord as the tree of life”—The Tree of Life, p. 23.

“In May of 1943... I had contracted a serious case of tuberculosis... I saw the tree of life during the two and a half years of my illness. During those two and a half years I saw that in the Lord's recovery and in His work we lacked life. Every kind of problem, regardless of what it may be, is the result of a shortage of life. When I saw this, I was extremely remorseful, I confessed much and had a thorough repentance before the Lord, and I also had many dealings before Him... The messages on the tree of life saved many saints and also released many of the brothers and sisters in Nanking. Because of the four years of turmoil in the church in Shanghai, the saints had been disheartened and depressed for years and were unable to do anything. These messages released their spirit and enlightened their heart... I thank the Lord that through the messages on the tree of life, the church in Shanghai was healed... The messages on the tree of life laid a foundation for the revival of the church in Shanghai”—The History and Revelation of the Lord's Recovery, vol. 1, pp. 130, 133, 135, 138.

“Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life”—Rev. 2:7, footnote 6, para. 4.

“The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord... They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this”—Isa. 57:20, footnote 1.
God's intention for man was to give Himself as the tree of life to man for man to enjoy. “To see that God wants us to enjoy Him and that He does not want us to do anything for Him is to see that the Christian life is a matter of enjoyment... If our concept is changed so that we see these two points, it will be easy for us to live a life of enjoying God”—The Vision of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, p. 60.

“If we want to take the way of enjoying God, we must have a change of concept... If we want to enter into the reality of the enjoyment of God, we must see a controlling vision... It was not until I was forty years of age that the Lord revealed to me the way of enjoying Him. I was disappointed that for twenty years most of my time and energy had been wasted. Most of my prayers were of no value, and the time that I had spent reading the Bible and other spiritual books was also of no value. This is when I realized that our way of working was wrong and that our way of spiritual pursuit was also wrong... Because I suffered a great loss from taking the wrong way, I do not want others to repeat the same mistake. I hope that others can take the way of enjoying God. I implore the saints to no longer take the wrong way. We should consider our former way of pursuit. We must have a drastic change of concept. We need to have a controlling vision”—The Vision of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, p. 51.
Message One

Taking the Way of Enjoying Christ
As the Tree of Life For the Accomplishing of God’s Eternal Economy

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:7; 22:14; John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:35, 57, 63

Gen. 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Gen. 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

I. In Genesis 2 we see two choices before man—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—vv. 7-9:

Gen. 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Gen. 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A. The two trees show that in this universe there are two wills, two sources, and two possibilities for man to choose with his free will—cf. Deut. 30:19-20.
Deut. 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live.

Deut. 30:20 In loving Jehovah your God by listening to His voice and holding fast to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell upon the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

B. The tree of life signifies Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, as life to man in the form of food for man to enjoy Him and be constituted with Him for His glory, His corporate expression, thus accomplishing God's original intention according to His eternal economy—Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7; Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; 22:14; John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:35, 57, 63; Rev. 21:10-11; cf. 4:3:

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Isa. 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Rev. 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

1. The tree of life, the tree of God, the God-tree, is the center of the universe.

2. The Old Testament begins with the tree of life (Gen. 2:9), and the New Testament ends with the tree of life (Rev. 22:2, 14); thus, the thought of God being man's life runs through the entire divine revelation.
Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

3. God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as his life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically, so that God might become the very constituent of man's being—John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Jer. 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."

C. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death to man—Heb. 2:14:

Heb. 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

1. It also signifies all things apart from God, for anything that is not God Himself, including good things and even scriptural things and religious things, can be utilized by Satan, the subtle one, to bring death to man—John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6b.

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.

John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

2 Cor. 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2. Good and evil are not signified by two trees but by one tree, the second tree; thus, seeking good other than God belongs to Satan.

3. The genuine good is God Himself; hence, gaining God equals gaining the genuine good—Matt. 19:17a; Mark 10:17-18; Psa. 16:2.

Matt. 19:17 And He said to him, Why do you ask Me concerning what is good? There is only One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

Mark 10:17 And as He went out into the road, someone ran to Him and kneeling before Him asked Him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One-God.

Psa. 16:2 I say to Jehovah, You are my Lord; / No good have I beyond You;
D. The tree of life causes man to be dependent on God (John 15:5), but the tree of knowledge causes man to rebel against God and be independent from Him (cf. Gen. 3:5):

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Gen. 3:5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.

1. Eating indicates dependence; that God is our food, signified by the tree of life, means that we must depend on God continually.

2. The tree of knowledge indicates independence; in the eyes of God, man's first sin and the greatest sin is independence.

E. The two trees issue in two lines, two ways—the way of life and the way of death—that run through the entire Bible and end in the book of Revelation:

1. Death begins with the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) and ends with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14).

Gen. 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Rev. 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also the beast and the false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev. 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

2. Life begins with the tree of life and ends with the New Jerusalem, the city of the water of life—22:1-2.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

II. We must stay on the way of life, the line of life, in the maintenance of life by enjoying Christ as the tree of life for God's building in life by our growth in life—John 10:10b; Rev. 22:1-2; Eph. 4:16; 2:21-22; Col. 2:19:

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
Eph. 2:21  In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
Eph. 2:22  In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
Col. 2:19  And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

A.  We stay on the way of life by living and serving according to the principle of life, not according to the principle of right and wrong:

1. We must live and act according to the inner sense of life in our spirit, the leading of life, not according to right and wrong—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13.
   Rom. 8:6  For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
   2 Cor. 2:13  I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

2. The standard for Christian living is the presence of the indwelling Christ within us; it is not a question of what is right or wrong but of whether or not the divine life within us agrees with something—Matt. 17:3, 5, 8; cf. Mal. 2:15-16.
   Matt. 17:3  And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with Him.
   Matt. 17:5  While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
   Matt. 17:8  And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.
   Mal. 2:15  But did He not make them one? And the remnant of the Spirit was His. And why the one? He sought the seed of God. Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one be treacherous to the wife of his youth.
   Mal. 2:16  For I hate divorce, says Jehovah the God of Israel; and he who does it behaves in violence, says Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirit, and do not be treacherous.

B.  We stay on the way of life by loving the Lord to the uttermost, drawing others to run after Him—Mark 12:30; S. S. 1:4a:
   Mark 12:30  And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
   S. S. 1:4  Draw me; we will run after you - The king has brought me into his chambers - / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.

1. To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must tell Him all the time, “Lord Jesus, I love You”; if we have a burning love toward the Lord Jesus, giving Him the first place in all things, we will enjoy all that He is—Rev. 2:4-5, 7.
   Rev. 2:4  But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.
   Rev. 2:5  Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.
   Rev. 2:7  He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
2. To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must betroth people to Him, bringing them into the
genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus—2
Cor. 11:2-3.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one
husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your
thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

C. We stay on the way of life by eating Jesus through pray-reading the Word, musing on the
word, and ministering the word as the Spirit into others by the exercise of our spirit of faith—
John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15; Matt. 4:4; 24:45; 1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13:

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats
Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have
spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Jer. 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The
gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of
hosts.

Psa. 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on
every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."

Matt. 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his
household to give them food at the proper time?

1 Cor. 2:4 And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but
in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

1 Cor. 2:5 In order that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of
God.

1 Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words
taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.

1. We must enjoy Him in the Word early in the morning to have a new start of each day, and
we must receive His word with much and careful consideration—Psa. 119:15, 147-148; cf.
Lev. 11:3.

Psa. 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Psa. 119:147 I anticipated the dawn and cried out; / I hoped in Your words.

Psa. 119:148 My eyes anticipated the night watches, / That I might muse upon Your word.

Lev. 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud
among the beasts, that you may eat.

2. We must speak Christ to all kinds of people daily in season and out of season (Acts 5:42;
8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2) and desperately endeavor to build up a habit of speaking in any meeting (1
Cor. 14:26, 4-5, 12, 31).

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease
teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 8:4 Those therefore who were scattered went throughout the land announcing the
word as the gospel.

2 Tim. 4:2 Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort
with all long-suffering and teaching.
1 Cor. 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

1 Cor. 14:4 He who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but he who prophesies builds up the church.

1 Cor. 14:5 I desire that you all speak in tongues, but especially that you would prophesy; and greater is he who prophesies than he who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, that the church may receive building up.

1 Cor. 14:12 So also you, since you are zealous of spirits, seek that you may excel for the building up of the church.

1 Cor. 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

D. We stay on the way of life by enjoying the Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life with its divine capacity—Rom. 8:2; Jer. 32:39:

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Jer. 32:39 And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear Me all the days, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.

1. In the garden of Eden with the two trees, we see life, good, and evil; we are a miniature garden of Eden with the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit, the law of good in our natural, independent mind, and the law of evil in our flesh—Rom. 7:23; 8:2, 16.

Rom. 7:23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2. We must “switch on” the law of the Spirit of life by walking according to the spirit and setting our mind on the spirit for the dispensing of the Triune God as life into our tripartite being—vv. 2, 4, 6, 10-11.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

E. We stay on the way of life by living in resurrection, in the reality of the church as the Body of Christ, signified by the golden lampstand as a tree of resurrection life; this is so that we may bear the glory of God for God's expression as the city of life, the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:22-23; Exo. 25:31-40; Rev. 1:11-12; 21:10-11.
Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
Exo. 25:31 And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand with its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its blossom buds shall be of one piece with it.
Exo. 25:32 And there shall be six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand out of one of its sides, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side;
Exo. 25:33 Three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a calyx and a blossom bud; and three cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a calyx and a blossom bud-so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.
Exo. 25:34 And there shall be on the lampstand four cups made like almond blossoms, its calyxes and its blossom buds;
Exo. 25:35 And a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand.
Exo. 25:36 Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it one beaten work of pure gold.
Exo. 25:37 And you shall make its lamps, seven; and set up its lamps to give light to the area in front of it.
Exo. 25:38 And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold.
Exo. 25:39 It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.
Exo. 25:40 And see that you make them according to their pattern, which was shown to you in the mountain.
Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,
Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
Rev. 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

III. The unique way for us to be overcomers is by eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life so that we can be transformed in life to become the man-child for the display of Christ's victory and for us to become the bride for Christ's satisfaction—2:7, 17; 3:20-21; 12:5-12; 19:7-9; 22:2, 14.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
Rev. 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.
Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.
Rev. 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame.
and sat with My Father on His throne.

Rev. 12:5 And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Rev. 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place there prepared by God so that they might nourish her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Rev. 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels.

Rev. 12:8 And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any longer in heaven.

Rev. 12:9 And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

Rev. 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

Rev. 12:12 Therefore be glad, O heavens and those who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you and has great rage, knowing that he has only a short time.

Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Rev. 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

Rev. 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.
Message Two

The Two Trees

and the Two Principles of Living

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:4, 6; Eph. 4:18-19; 2 Cor. 11:3

I. The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles of living:

A. The two trees show that a Christian can live according to two different principles—the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life—1 Cor. 8:1.

1 Cor. 8:1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

B. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life—1 John 5:11-13, 20.

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
1 John 5:13  I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

1 John 5:20  And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

C. When we received the Lord Jesus and gained a new life, we obtained another principle of living—the principle of life; if we do not know this principle, we will set the principle of life aside and follow the principle of right and wrong.

D. Being a Christian is not a matter of asking whether something is right or wrong; it is a matter of checking with the life inside of us whenever we do something—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19.

Rom. 8:6  For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Eph. 4:18  Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Eph. 4:19  Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.

II. Our Christian life is based on an inner life, not an outward standard of right and wrong; our principle of living is inward instead of outward:

A. If we live by the principle of right and wrong, we are the same as the worldly people—v. 17.

Eph. 4:17  This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

B. Right and wrong are not decided by an outward standard but by the inner life.

C. We should not only avoid all that is evil but also all that is merely good:

1. Christians can do only that which comes from life; there are evil things, good things, and the things of life—John 1:4; 10:10; 1 John 2:25; 5:13.

John 1:4  In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 10:10  The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

1 John 2:25  And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, the eternal life.

1 John 5:13  I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

2. In Genesis 2:9 “good and evil” are put together as one way, whereas “life” is another way.

Gen. 2:9  And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

3. There is a standard that is higher than the standard of good; it is the standard of life—John 11:25; 1 John 5:11-12.

John 11:25  Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

1 John 5:11  And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

4. The standard of Christian living deals not only with evil things but also with good and right things.

5. Many things are right according to human standards, but the divine standard pronounces them wrong because they lack the divine life.

D. Christian living is based on the inner life—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11:

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

1. No Christian should determine anything apart from life—1 John 5:13.

1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

2. Whatever increases the inner life is right, and whatever decreases the inner life is wrong.

3. Our pathway is God's life, not right and wrong; the difference between these two principles is immense, and the contrast here is great.

4. The one question we must ask is whether the divine life within us rises or falls; this is what must determine the path we take.

5. God requires us to satisfy the divine life; we must do things in a way that satisfies the life God has given us—John 1:4; 3:15.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

6. As Christians, we should not only repent before God for the sins we have committed; often, we need to repent before God for the good things we have done.

7. The principle of our living is not one that differentiates between good and evil; we must come before God to determine what is of life and what is of death—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 3:14.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

III. If we would live according to the principle of life, we need to discern the spirit from the soul and know the spirit—Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14-15:

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to
discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1 Cor. 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

1 Cor. 2:15 But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

A. The Lord who is the Spirit is living, dwelling, working, moving, and acting in our spirit, and we are one spirit with Him—2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17:

2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1. If we desire to know the Lord in a practical way and experience Him in our daily life, we must learn to discern our spirit—2:14-15.

1 Cor. 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

1 Cor. 2:15 But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

2. If we do not know our human spirit, we cannot understand God's moving within us and cannot follow the Lord, because the Lord is the Spirit living within our spirit—1 John 2:27; 2 Tim. 4:22.

1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.

2 Tim. 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

B. We need to know the difference between our spirit and our other inward parts—Psa. 51:6; Ezek. 36:26; 1 Pet. 3:4.

Psa. 51:6 Behold, You delight in truth in the inward parts; / And in the hidden part You would make known wisdom to me.
Ezek. 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.
1 Pet. 3:4 But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

C. To do anything in our soul, whether it is right or wrong, is to live in the old man; thus, we need to deny our soul-life, our self—Matt. 16:24-26.

Matt. 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
Matt. 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
Matt. 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

D. When we follow our spirit, we follow the Lord Himself, because the Lord is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17.

2 Tim. 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
IV. In order to live according to the principle of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19; Isa. 40:31:

Rom. 8:6  For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
Eph. 4:18  Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
Eph. 4:19  Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.
Isa. 40:31  Yet those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not faint; / They will walk and will not become weary.

A. The sense of life is subjective, personal, and practical:

1. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death—Rom. 8:6a.
   - Rom. 8:6a  For the mind set on the flesh is death, …

2. The sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace, with a consciousness of strength, satisfaction, rest, brightness, and comfort—v. 6b.
   - Rom. 8:6b  …but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

B. The source of the sense of life is the divine life (Eph. 4:18-19), the law of life (Rom. 8:2), the Holy Spirit (v. 11; 1 John 2:27), Christ abiding in us (John 15:4-5), and God operating in us (Phil. 2:13).

Eph. 4:18  Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
Eph. 4:19  Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.
Rom. 8:2  For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
Rom. 8:11  And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
1 John 2:27  And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.
John 15:4  Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
John 15:5  I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
Phil. 2:13  For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

C. The function of the sense of life is to make us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life and whether we are living in the flesh or in the Spirit—1 Cor. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:8-9; Gal. 5:16-17.
1 Cor. 2:14  But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are
foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned
spiritually.

1 Cor. 2:15  But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

Rom. 8:8    And those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rom. 8:9    But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in
you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.

Gal. 5:16  But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal. 5:17  For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these
oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire.

D. A believer's growth in life depends on how he deals with the inner sense of life—Eph. 4:15;
Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:6-7.

Eph. 4:15  But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the
Head, Christ,

Col. 2:19  And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and
knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

1 Cor. 3:6  I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor. 3:7  So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes
the growth.

E. We need to pray ourselves into the sense of life and live under its controlling, guiding, and
directing element day by day—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19; 1 John 2:27.

Rom. 8:6   For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Eph. 4:18  Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the
ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Eph. 4:19  Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all
uncleanness in greediness.

1 John 2:27  And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and
you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you
concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide
in Him.

F. The more we walk according to the spirit and follow the sense of life, the more we will live
according to the principle of life—Rom. 8:4, 6.

Rom. 8:4   That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk
according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Rom. 8:6   For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

V. If we live according to the principle of life, we will discern matters not
according to right and wrong but according to life and death—2 Cor. 11:3:

2 Cor. 11:3  But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts
would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

A. The Gospel of John emphasizes the fact that the tree of life is versus the tree of the
knowledge of good and evil and that we should care not for good or evil but for life—4:10-
John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.

John 4:11 The woman said to Him, Sir, You have no bucket, and the well is deep; where then do You get this living water?

John 4:12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank of it himself, as well as his sons and his cattle?

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again,

John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

John 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, yet you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men must worship.

John 4:21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst,

John 8:4 They said to Him, Teacher, this woman has been caught committing adultery, in the very act.

John 8:5 Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do You say?

John 8:6 But they said this to tempt Him, so that they might have reason to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground.

John 8:7 But when they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.

John 8:8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

John 8:9 And when they heard that, they went out one by one, beginning with the older ones. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman stood where she was, in the midst.

John 9:1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?

John 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but he was born so, that the works of God might be manifested in him.

John 11:20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary sat in the house.

John 11:21 Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

John 11:22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.

John 11:23 Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again.

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

John 11:26 And everyone who lives and believes into Me shall by no means die forever. Do you believe this?

John 11:27 She said to Him, Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who comes into the world.
B. The best way to discern a matter—the secret of discernment—is to discern according to life or death; we must learn to discern, to differentiate, matters by life and death, rejecting any speaking that deprives us of the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply but receiving the genuine ministry of the Lord, which always strengthens us in the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 11:3.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
Message Three

Loving the Lord with the First Love,
Enjoying the Lord as the Tree of Life,
and Being the Golden Lampstand
as the Testimony of Jesus
for the Building Up of the New Jerusalem
as the Goal of God’s Eternal Economy

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Rev. 2:1-7; Eph. 6:24; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; John 14:21, 23; 21:15-17

Rev. 2:1 To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

Rev. 2:2 I know your works and your labor and your endurance and that you cannot bear evil men; and you have tried those who call themselves apostles and are not, and have found them to be false;

Rev. 2:3 And you have endurance and have borne all things because of My name and have not grown weary.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Eph. 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

2 Tim. 1:15 This you know, that all who are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

I. In Revelation 2:7 the tree of life signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—1 Pet. 2:24) and resurrected (implied in the life of God—John 11:25) Christ, who today is in the church, the consummation of which will be the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the nourishment and enjoyment of all God's redeemed people for eternity (Rev. 22:2, 14; cf. Exo. 15:25-26).

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

1 Pet. 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

Exo. 15:25 And he cried out to Jehovah, and Jehovah showed him a tree; and he cast it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them.

Exo. 15:26 And He said, If you will listen carefully to the voice of Jehovah your God and do what is right in His eyes and give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah who heals you.

II. The churches in Asia, including the church in Ephesus, had turned away from the apostle Paul's betrothing ministry (2 Tim. 1:15; 2 Cor. 11:2-3); thus, we see that approximately twenty-six years later, when the apostle John wrote the epistle to the church in Ephesus, they had left their first love and lost the genuine enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life (Rev. 2:4-5, 7):

2 Tim. 1:15 This you know, that all who are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if
not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

**Rev. 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

**A.** The genuine ministry of the New Testament always stirs us up to love the Lord Jesus with the first love, strengthening us in the simplicity of eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life for our life supply—2 Cor. 11:2-3; 3:3-6.

- **2 Cor. 11:2** For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
- **2 Cor. 11:3** But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
- **2 Cor. 3:3** Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.
- **2 Cor. 3:4** And such confidence we have through Christ toward God,
- **2 Cor. 3:5** Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God,
- **2 Cor. 3:6** Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**B.** To love the Lord with the first love is to give Him the preeminence, the first place, in all things, being constrained by His love to regard and take Him as everything in our life—Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:18b; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Mark 12:30; Psa. 73:25-26.

- **Rev. 2:4** But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.
- **Rev. 2:5** Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.
- **Col. 1:18** And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- **2 Cor. 5:14** For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
- **2 Cor. 5:15** And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.
- **Mark 12:30** And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- **Psa. 73:25** Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.
- **Psa. 73:26** My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.

**C.** Paul's concluding word in the Epistle to the Ephesians is a blessing of grace to “all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility” (6:24); in the book of Ephesians the phrase in love, which is rich in feeling, is used repeatedly (1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2).

- **Eph. 6:24** Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.
- **Eph. 1:4** Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- **Eph. 3:17** That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Eph. 4:2  With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,
Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
Eph. 5:2  And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

D. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love, God's inner substance, that we may enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did—1:15; 2:4; 3:19; 5:2, 25; 6:23; cf. 1 John 4:16-19.
Eph. 1:15 Therefore I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you and your love to all the saints,
Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
Eph. 6:23 Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.
1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

E. The church in Ephesus failed in the matter of loving the Lord; such a failure became the main reason for the failure of the church throughout the ages—Matt. 24:12; Mark 12:30-31; cf. Dan. 7:25.
Matt. 24:12 And because lawlessness will be multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold.
Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
Mark 12:31 The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.
Dan. 7:25 And he will speak things against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High; and his intention will be to change the times and the law; and they will be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

F. There are four main points in the Lord's epistle to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7; these four main points are four words that begin with the letter l—love, life, light, and lampstand:
Rev. 2:1 To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
Rev. 2:2 I know your works and your labor and your endurance and that you cannot bear evil
men; and you have tried those who call themselves apostles and are not, and have
found them to be false;

Rev. 2:3 And you have endurance and have borne all things because of My name and have
not grown weary.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works;
but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place,
unless you repent.

Rev. 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who
overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of
God.

1. We must give the Lord Jesus the preeminence in every way and in everything to recover
the first love; then we will enjoy Him as the tree of life, and this life will become the light
of life—John 8:12; Eph. 5:8-9, 13.

John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who
follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of
light

Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

Eph. 5:13 But all things which are reproved are made manifest by the light; for everything
that makes manifest is light.

2. Then we will be shining as the golden lampstand, as the testimony of Jesus; otherwise, the
lampstand will be removed from us—Rev. 1:9-12, 20:

Rev. 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and
endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God
and the testimony of Jesus.

Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord’s Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to
Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to
Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven
golden lampstands,

Rev. 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven
golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches,
and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

a. The golden lampstand symbolizes the Triune God—the Father as the substance is
embodied in the Son, the Son as the embodiment is expressed through the Spirit, the
Spirit is fully realized and expressed as the churches, and the churches are the testimony
of Jesus—Exo. 25:31-40; Zech. 4:2-10; Rev. 1:10-12.

Exo. 25:31 And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand with its base
and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its
blossom buds shall be of one piece with it.
Exo. 25:32 And there shall be six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand out of one of its sides, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side;

Exo. 25:33 Three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a calyx and a blossom bud; and three cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a calyx and a blossom bud-so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.

Exo. 25:34 And there shall be on the lampstand four cups made like almond blossoms, its calyxes and its blossom buds;

Exo. 25:35 And a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand.

Exo. 25:36 Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it one beaten work of pure gold.

Exo. 25:37 And you shall make its lamps, seven; and set up its lamps to give light to the area in front of it.

Exo. 25:38 And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold.

Exo. 25:39 It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.

Exo. 25:40 And see that you make them according to their pattern, which was shown to you in the mountain.

Zech. 4:2 And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and its seven lamps upon it, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it;

Zech. 4:3 And there are two olive trees beside it, one to the right of the bowl and one to the left.

Zech. 4:4 And I answered and spoke to the angel who spoke with me, saying, What are these, sir?

Zech. 4:5 And the angel who spoke with me answered and said to me, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir.

Zech. 4:6 And he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts.

Zech. 4:7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain, and he will bring forth the topstone with shouts of Grace, grace to it.

Zech. 4:8 Moreover the word of Jehovah came to me, saying,

Zech. 4:9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it; and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you.

Zech. 4:10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; they are the eyes of Jehovah running to and fro on the whole earth.

Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

Rev. 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

b. In the divine thought the golden lampstand is actually a living and growing tree with calyxes and almond blossoms; thus, the lampstand portrays the Triune God embodied in
Christ as a living, golden tree of resurrection—growing, branching, budding, and blossoming in us, with us, by us, and out of us as the fruit of the light (the fruit of the Spirit), which is good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression, that God may be expressed as reality in our daily walk—Exo. 25:31, 35; Eph. 5:8-9; Gal. 5:22-23; John 12:36.

Exo. 25:31 And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand with its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyces, and its blossom buds shall be of one piece with it.
Exo. 25:35 And a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand.
Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
Gal. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness,
Gal. 5:23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
John 12:36 While you have the light, believe into the light, so that you may become sons of light. Jesus said these things, and He went away and was hidden from them.

G. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life; Christ as the tree of life is “good for food” (Gen. 2:9) so that we may eat Him for our enjoyment and be constituted with Him for God's expression (1:26; John 6:57, 63):

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

1. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ—the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be; but to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love.

2. If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us—Rev. 2:1-7.

Rev. 2:1 To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, He who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstads:
Rev. 2:2 I know your works and your labor and your endurance and that you cannot bear evil men; and you have tried those who call themselves apostles and are not, and have found them to be false;

Rev. 2:3 And you have endurance and have borne all things because of My name and have not grown weary.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

3. These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

III. The Lord’s recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus with the first love, the best love, and of eating the Lord Jesus as the tree of life for the building up of the organic Body of Christ, which is the building up of the New Jerusalem as the goal of God's eternal economy—Eph. 4:15-16; Rev. 22:14:

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

A. To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must tell Him all the time, “Lord Jesus, I love You”; if we have a burning love toward the Lord Jesus, giving Him the first place in all things, we will enjoy all that He is—2:4-5, 7; 1 Cor. 2:9.

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

B. To believe in the Lord is to receive Him as life, and to love the Lord is to enjoy Him as life, to enjoy the very person whom we have received; faith is given to us by God so that by it we may receive Christ as our life; love issues out of such a wonderful faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God in Christ as our life—2 Pet. 1:1; Heb. 12:1-2a; 2 Cor. 4:13; Gal. 5:6; John 1:12-13; 21:15-17; Col. 3:4.
Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us.

Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith avails, operating through love.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

The very life that we received when we believed in the Lord Jesus is a person, and the only way to apply and enjoy this person is by loving Him with the first love; since the Lord Jesus as our life is a person, we need a new contact with Him to enjoy His present presence at this very moment and day by day—John 11:25; 14:5-6; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rev. 2:4-7; Col. 1:18b; Rom. 6:4; 7:6.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going; how can we know the way?

Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.
Rev. 2:6  But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
Rev. 2:7  He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
Col. 1:18  And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
Rom. 6:4  We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
Rom. 7:6  But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

D.  “Give yourself to love the Lord. No other way is so prevailing, and no other way is so safe, so rich, and so full of enjoyment. Just love Him. Do not care for anything else”—Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs, pp. 23-24.

E.  When we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us, and He and the Father will come to us and make Their abode with us (John 14:21, 23); thus, we need to pray prayers such as, “Lord, show me Your love, and constrain me with Your love that I may love You and live to You”; “Lord, keep me loving You all the time”; we must continually tell the Lord, “Lord Jesus, I love You; Lord, keep me in Your love! Attract me with Yourself! Keep me all the time in Your loving and present presence.”

John 14:21  He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.
John 14:23  Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

F.  The more we love Him, the more we will have His presence in our fellowship with Him; for us to be in the Lord's recovery in an intrinsic way is for us to love the Lord Jesus; if we do not love Him, we are finished with His recovery—S. S. 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 2:9; 16:22.

S.S. 1:1  The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.
S.S. 1:2  Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
S.S. 1:3  Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
S.S. 1:4  Draw me; we will run after you - The king has brought me into his chambers - / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.
1 Cor. 2:9  But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
1 Cor. 16:22  If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed! The Lord comes!

G.  Based upon this, we should sing and pray, “I love my Lord, but with no love of mine, / For I have none to give; / I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine, / For by Thy love I live” (Hymns, #546, stanza 1); “Something every heart is loving: / If not Jesus, none can rest; / Lord, my heart to Thee is given; / Take it, for it loves Thee best” (Hymns, #547, stanza 1).
Message Four

Grafted into Christ
to Become Part of the Tree of Life

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 11:17, 24; John 15:1, 4-5

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Rom. 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a fellow partaker of the root of fatness of the olive tree,

Rom. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

I. The Bible reveals that the relationship God desires to have with man is that He and man become one—1 Cor. 6:17:

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

A. Whenever we come to the Bible, we need to exercise one principle—the principle that God desires to be one with His chosen people—John 14:20.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

B. God's main purpose is to make Himself one with man and to make man one with Him—Eph. 4:4-6.

Eph. 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

C. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined to become one life.

D. The central line of God's economy is to make God and man, man and God, one entity, with the two having one living by one life with one nature—Rev. 22:17.

Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wils take the water of life freely.

E. In His incarnation Christ brought God into man, and in His resurrection He brought man into God; by this, He accomplished the mingling of God and man into one—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4:
Rom. 8:3  For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

Rom. 1:3  Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,

Rom. 1:4  Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

1. We are in Christ, and He is in us; He and we have become one person—1 Cor. 12:12.

1 Cor. 12:12  For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

2. Christ has become us, and we have become Him—Heb. 2:14, 11.

Heb. 2:14  Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

Heb. 2:11  For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

II. The relationship God desires to have with man is that He and man be grafted together and thus become one in an organic union—Rom. 6:3-5; John 15:4-5:

Rom. 6:3  Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

Rom. 6:4  We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

Rom. 6:5  For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

John 15:4  Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5  I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

A. The grafted life is not an exchanged life—it is the mingling of the human life with the divine life—1 Cor. 6:17.

1 Cor. 6:17  But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

B. In grafting, two similar lives are joined and then grow together organically—Rom. 11:24:

Rom. 11:24  For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!

1. Because our human life was made in the image of God and according to the likeness of God, it can be joined to the divine life—Gen. 1:26.

Gen. 1:26  And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
2. Our human life resembles the divine life; therefore, the divine life and the human life can be grafted together and live together.

C. In order for us to be grafted into Christ, He had to pass through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 2:2; 15:45.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

1 Cor. 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

D. We have been grafted into Christ as the tree of life, and this grafting has made us one with Him—Rom. 11:24:

Rom. 11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into the cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree!

1. Christ and the believers are one tree; He is the vine, and we are the branches—John 15:1, 5a, 4a.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

2. Christ becomes our life, nature, and person—Col. 3:4, 10-11; Eph. 3:17a.

Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
Col. 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

E. As regenerated ones who have been grafted into Christ, we should live a grafted life, a life in which two parties are joined to grow organically:

1. Since we have been grafted into Christ, we should no longer live by ourselves; rather, we should allow the pneumatic Christ to live in us—Gal. 2:20.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

2. We should no longer live by our flesh or by our natural being; rather, we should live a grafted life by the mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled with the regenerated human spirit—1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:4.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

F. In the grafted life the human life is not eliminated but is strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine life—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a:

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal. 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

1. In the grafted life the branch retains its same essential characteristics but is strengthened, uplifted, and transformed by being grafted into a higher life—John 15:4-5; Rom. 11:17.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Rom. 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a fellow partaker of the root of fatness of the olive tree,

2. In the grafted life the divine life works within us to discharge the negative elements:

   a. The divine life works in a gradual way to eliminate whatever is natural.

   b. The divine life swallows up our defects and infirmities.

   c. The negative element of our disposition is killed, and then, instead of casting away our disposition, the Lord uplifts and uses it.

3. In the grafted life the divine life resurrects God's original creation and uplifts our faculties—John 11:25; Eph. 4:23:

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Eph. 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

   a. As the divine life discharges the negative things, it works to resurrect God's original creation.

   b. In this way our original functions—the functions given to us at creation—are restored, strengthened, and uplifted—Gal. 2:20.

   Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

4. In the grafted life the divine life supplies the riches of Christ to our inward parts and saturates our whole being—Rom. 12:2; 8:29-30.
Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

Rom. 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.

III. Christ as the tree of life is the embodiment of God as life to us, and having been grafted into Christ, we are united to Him organically, and thus we are part of the tree of life—Col. 2:9; John 15:1, 4-5:

Col. 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

A. We not only eat Christ as the tree of life—we are united to Him and are part of Him—1 Cor. 6:17.

1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

B. The tree of life is for the dispensing of the divine life into us; as we, the branches, abide in the vine, we receive the dispensing of life from the tree of life and live as part of the tree of life—John 15:5; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; cf. Phil. 4:13.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Phil. 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

C. Christ as the tree of life is for the divine economy to dispense Himself into us; as the branches of the vine, we are abiding in Him, and He is abiding in us.

D. As we abide in the vine, there is a dispensing of God into us, a dispensing of life from the tree of life into the branches; this dispensing makes us God-men—Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.

Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
Rom. 8:11  And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

E.  To abide in Christ as the vine is to take Him as our dwelling place, which is the highest and fullest experience of God; to dwell in Christ is to have our living in Christ, taking Him as our everything—Psa. 90:1; 91:1, 9.

Psa. 90:1  O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations.
Psa. 91:1  He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
Psa. 91:9  For You have made Jehovah, who is my refuge, / Even the Most High, Your habitation;

F.  If we live as part of the tree of life, we will care not for good and evil but for life, and we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:3.

Gen. 2:9  And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Gen. 2:16  And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely,
Gen. 2:17  But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.
2 Cor. 11:3  But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
Message Five

The Secret of Living the Christian Life to Be an Overcomer—Taking the Way of Eating and Enjoying Christ as the Tree of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4

I. The secret of living the Christian life to be an overcomer is for us to take the way of eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life; God does not intend for us to do anything for Him; His only desire is to give Himself to us as food for our enjoyment; only those who take the way of enjoying Christ as the tree of life will see their life and work remaining in the New Jerusalem—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
II. We can eat the Lord Jesus as our spiritual food for our enjoyment, receiving Him as the Spirit who gives life through eating His words of spirit and life by means of all prayer and by musing upon His words—John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16 and footnote; Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15 and footnote; Matt. 4:4; Psa. 119:103:

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
Jer. 15:16 Your words were found and I ate\(^1\) them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

Footnote: According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God's words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3). God's word is the divine supply as food to nourish us. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element. This is a crucial aspect of God's economy. When we eat God's words, His word becomes our heart's gladness and joy.

Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
Psa. 119:15 I will muse\(^1\) upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Footnote: Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for muse (often translated meditate in the KJV) implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word. To muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."

Psa. 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

A. When we eat the Lord Jesus by eating His words of spirit and life, we live because of Him (John 6:57, 63); we live not by Christ but because of Christ as our energizing element and supplying factor; we live Christ in His resurrection, and we live Christ by eating Him (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a).

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
Phil. 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
Phil. 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil. 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

B. As we eat the Lord Jesus by eating His words, we need to have proper spiritual digestion—Ezek. 3:1-4; Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9-10:

Ezek. 3:1 Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.

Ezek. 3:2 So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat.

Ezek. 3:3 And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate it, and it was like honey in my mouth in its sweetness.

Ezek. 3:4 Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

Jer. 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

Rev. 10:9 And I went to the Angel and told Him to give me the little scroll. And He said to me, Take it and devour it, and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.

Rev. 10:10 And I took the little scroll out of the hand of the Angel and devoured it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth; and when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

1. If we have good digestion, there will be a thoroughfare for the food to get into every part of our inward being; by eating we have digesting, by digesting we have assimilation, and by assimilation we get the practical nourishment of the riches of Christ into our being—Eph. 3:8, 16-17a.

Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

2. Indigestion means that there is no way for the Lord as the spiritual food to get through into our inward parts; when there is no free course for the food to get into our inward parts, we will have indigestion—Heb. 3:12, 15; 4:2.

Heb. 3:12 Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.

Heb. 3:15 While it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation."

Heb. 4:2 For indeed we have had the good news announced to us, even as they also; but the word heard did not profit them, not being mixed together with faith in those who heard.

3. We need to keep our whole being, with all our inward parts, open to the Lord so that the spiritual food will have a thoroughfare within us; if we do this, we will have proper digestion and assimilation, we will absorb Christ as spiritual nourishment, and Christ will
become our constituent for the expression of God—Eph. 3:16-17a; Col. 3:4, 10-11.

Eph. 3:16  That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
Eph. 3:17  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Col. 3:4   When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
Col. 3:10  And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
Col. 3:11  Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

III. We can eat Him by doing the will of the Father to satisfy the hungry and thirsty ones and by glorifying the Father on earth in living the life of a God-man for the glory of the processed Triune God—Matt. 24:45-47; Phil. 1:19-21a:

Matt. 24:45  Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?
Matt. 24:46  Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.
Matt. 24:47  Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.
Phil. 1:19  For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
Phil. 1:20  According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
Phil. 1:21  For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
A.  “I have food to eat that you do not know about… My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work”—John 4:32, 34.

John 4:32  But He said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about.
John 4:34  Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

B.  “I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4); to glorify God is to express God in all things (cf. Col. 1:9-11).

John 17:4  I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
Col. 1:9   Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
Col. 1:10  To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,
Col. 1:11  Being empowered with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy,

C.  In His human living the Lord ate butter (the richest grace) and honey (the sweetest love), which gave Him the power to always choose the Father's will—Isa. 7:14-15, ASV 1901.

Isa. 7:14  Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.
Isa. 7:15 He will eat curds and honey until he knows how to refuse evil and choose good. 
(IsV, 1901)
Isa. 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
Isa. 7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

D. We are those who are learning Christ as “the reality is in Jesus”; the reality is in Jesus refers to the actual condition of the life of the Lord Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, a life in which He glorified the Father on earth to set up a pattern for His believers—Eph. 4:20-21:

**Eph. 4:20** But you did not so learn Christ,
**Eph. 4:21** If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

1. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God in order to glorify God; God was in His living, and He was one with God; in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit so that He might enter into us to be our life; we learn from Him (Matt. 11:29) according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection (Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 2:21).

**Matt. 11:29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
**Col. 3:4** When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
**1 Pet. 2:21** For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

2. The Lord Jesus never did anything out of Himself (John 5:19); He did not do His own work (4:34; 17:4), He did not speak His own word (14:10, 24), He did not do His own will (5:30), and He did not seek His own glory (7:18).

**John 5:19** Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.
**John 4:34** Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
**John 17:4** I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
**John 14:10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.
**John 14:24** He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.
**John 5:30** I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.
**John 7:18** He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.

3. To learn Christ is simply to be molded into the pattern of Christ, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ; He Himself as the indwelling Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life, with all the riches of His life, reproduces Himself in us—Rom. 8:2, 28-29.
Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

E. Isaiah 43:7 says, “Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory”; the highest service we can render to God is to express His glory—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 9:23.

Isa. 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.
2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
Rom. 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

F. First Corinthians 6:20 says, “You have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body”; this is to allow God, who dwells in us (1 John 4:13), to occupy and saturate our body and express Himself through our body as His temple (1 Cor. 6:19); 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

1 Cor. 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.
1 John 4:13 In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.
1 Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
1 Cor. 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

IV. We can eat Him by contacting the proper people—Lev. 11:1-3, 9, 13, 21:

Lev. 11:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,
Lev. 11:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.
Lev. 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.
Lev. 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.
Lev. 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture
Lev. 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;

A. To eat is to contact things outside of us and to receive them into us, with the result that they eventually become our inner constitution; in Leviticus 11 all the animals signify different kinds of people, and eating signifies our contacting of people (Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29); for God's people to live a holy life as required by the holy God, they must be careful about the kind of people they contact (Lev. 11:46-47; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:22).
Lev. 11:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,
Lev. 11:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.
Lev. 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.
Lev. 11:4 However these you shall not eat: of those that only chew the cud or of those that only have a divided hoof: the camel, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:5 And the hyrax, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:6 And the hare, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:7 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, that is, it has its hoof split in two, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:8 You shall not eat of their flesh, nor shall you touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.
Lev. 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.
Lev. 11:10 But anything that does not have fins and scales in the seas and in the rivers, of anything that swarms in the waters and of any living animal which is in the waters, they are an abomination to you,
Lev. 11:11 And they shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall regard as an abomination.
Lev. 11:12 Anything in the water that does not have fins or scales is an abomination to you.
Lev. 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture
Lev. 11:14 And the kite and the falcon of every kind,
Lev. 11:15 Every raven of every kind,
Lev. 11:16 And the ostrich and the nighthawk and the sea gull and the hawk of every kind,
Lev. 11:17 And the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl
Lev. 11:18 And the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture
Lev. 11:19 And the stork; the heron of every kind and the hoopoe and the bat;
Lev. 11:20 All flying insects that go on all fours are an abomination to you.
Lev. 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;
Lev. 11:22 These of them you may eat: the swarming locust of every kind and the swallowing locust of every kind and the cricket of every kind and the grasshopper of every kind.
Lev. 11:23 But all the other flying insects which have four feet are an abomination to you.
Lev. 11:24 And by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening,
Lev. 11:25 And whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:26 For every beast which has a divided hoof but does not have its hoof split in two or chew the cud is unclean to you; everyone who touches them shall be unclean.
Lev. 11:27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all beasts that go on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:28 And the one who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.
Lev. 11:29 And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the earth: the weasel and the mouse and the great lizard of every kind,
Lev. 11:30 And the gecko and the land crocodile and the lizard and the sand lizard and the chameleon.
Lev. 11:31 These are unclean to you among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:32 And anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any article of wood or clothing or skin or sackcloth; any article which is used for any work must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean.
Lev. 11:33 And any earthen vessel into which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be unclean, and the vessel you shall break.
Lev. 11:34 Any food that could be eaten shall be unclean if water from such a vessel comes upon it, and any liquid that may be drunk shall be unclean if it was in any such vessel.
Lev. 11:35 And everything on which part of their carcass falls shall be unclean-an oven or a stove shall be broken in pieces; they are unclean and shall continue to be unclean to you.
Lev. 11:36 Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, but whatever touches their carcass shall be unclean.
Lev. 11:37 And if any part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing, which is to be sown, it is clean.
Lev. 11:38 But if water is put on the seed, and any part of their carcass fall on it, it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:39 And if any beast which you have for food dies, the one who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:40 And he who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; the one who carries its carcass shall also wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:41 Now every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth is an abomination; it shall not be eaten.
Lev. 11:42 Whatever goes on its stomach and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, even all the swarming things that swarm on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are an abomination.
Lev. 11:43 You shall not make yourselves abominable with any swarming thing that swarms, nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, and so become defiled by them.
Lev. 11:44 For I am Jehovah your God. Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not defile yourselves with any of the swarming things that move upon the earth.
Lev. 11:45 For I am Jehovah, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.
Lev. 11:46 This is the law of the beast and of the bird, and of every living animal that moves in the waters, and of every creature that swarms upon the earth;
Lev. 11:47 To make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.
Acts 10:9 And on the next day as they were journeying and drawing near to the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray around the sixth hour.
Acts 10:10 And he became very hungry and wanted to eat. And while they were preparing, a trance came upon him;
Acts 10:11 And he beheld heaven opened, and a certain vessel like a great sheet descending, being let down by four corners onto the earth,
Acts 10:12 In which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of heaven.
Acts 10:13 And a voice came to him: Rise up, Peter; slay and eat!
Acts 10:14 But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common and unclean.
Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he entered and found many who had come together.
Acts 10:28 And he said to them, You understand that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to join himself to or come near one of another race; yet God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.
Acts 10:29 Hence, even without objection I came when I had been sent for. I ask therefore, For what reason have you sent for me?
1 Cor. 15:33 Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.
2 Cor. 6:14 Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?
2 Cor. 6:15 And what concord does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?
2 Cor. 6:16 And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."
2 Cor. 6:17 Therefore "come out from their midst and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you";
2 Cor. 6:18 "And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty."
2 Tim. 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

B. Animals that divide the hoof and chew the cud (Lev. 11:3; cf. vv. 4-8, 26-28) signify persons who have discernment in their activities (Phil. 1:9-10) and who receive the word of God with much reconsideration (Psa. 119:15).

Lev. 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.
Lev. 11:4 However these you shall not eat: of those that only chew the cud or of those that only have a divided hoof: the camel, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:5 And the hyrax, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:6 And the hare, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:7 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, that is, it has its hoof split in two, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you.
Lev. 11:8 You shall not eat of their flesh, nor shall you touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.
Lev. 11:26 For every beast which has a divided hoof but does not have its hoof split in two or chew the cud is unclean to you; everyone who touches them shall be unclean.
Lev. 11:27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all beasts that go on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening.
Lev. 11:28 And the one who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.
Phil. 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment,
Phil. 1:10 So that you may approve by testing the things which differ and are more excellent, that you may be pure and without offense unto the day of Christ,
Psa. 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

C. Aquatic animals that have fins and scales signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence (fins helping fish to move, to act, in water according to their wishes, and scales protecting and keeping those fish that live in the sea from being salted)—Lev. 11:9.
Lev. 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.

D. Birds that have wings for flying and that eat seeds of life as their food supply signify persons who can live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and who take things of life as their life supply—v. 13.
Lev. 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture

E. Insects that have wings and have legs above their feet for leaping on the ground signify persons who can live and move in a life that is above the world and who can keep themselves from the world—vv. 21-22.
Lev. 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;
Lev. 11:22 These of them you may eat: the swarming locust of every kind and the swallowing locust of every kind and the cricket of every kind and the grasshopper of every kind.

V. We can eat Him by feasting on Him in the meetings on the ground of oneness:
A. The children of Israel could enjoy the produce of the good land in two ways: the common, private way was to enjoy it as a common portion at any time, in any place, and with anyone (Deut. 12:15); the special, corporate way was to enjoy the top portion, the firstfruits and the firstlings, with all the Israelites at the appointed feasts and in the unique place chosen by God (vv. 5-7, 17-18).
Deut. 12:15 Yet you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, in all that your soul desires, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat it as the gazelle and the deer are eaten.
Deut. 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.
Deut. 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;
Deut. 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.

Deut. 12:17 You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your fresh oil, nor the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vows which you vow or of your freewill offerings or of the heave offering of your hand;

Deut. 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.

B. Likewise, the enjoyment of Christ by the New Testament believers is of two aspects: the common, private aspect of enjoying Christ at any time and at any place, and the special, corporate aspect of enjoying the top portion of Christ in the meetings of the proper church life on the unique ground of oneness, the place chosen by God.

VI. God's intention for man was to give Himself as the tree of life to man for him to enjoy; to see that God wants us to enjoy Him and that He does not want us to do anything for Him is to see that the Christian life is a matter of enjoying Christ as the tree of life; if our concept is changed so that we see these two points, it will be easy for us to live a life of enjoying God.
Message Six

Becoming a Reproduction of Christ
as the Tree of Life for the Ministry of Life

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: John 1:4; 12:24; 15:1, 4-5; 1 John 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:12

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.
2 Cor. 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

I. In God's economy we are not only eaters of the tree of life, but we are also branches of this tree, and we may eventually become a small tree of life, a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life—1 Pet. 2:21; John 1:4; 12:24; 15:1, 4-5:

1 Pet. 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

A. God's intention is that all the believers in Christ become a reproduction of Christ, the God-man—12:24; Rom. 8:29:

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

1. Becoming a reproduction of Christ requires that we be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit and then be gradually transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul—John
3:6; 2 Cor. 3:18.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2. We become Christ's reproduction by a process that involves the riches of the divine life being dispensed into us and experienced by us—Eph. 3:8; Col. 3:4, 10-11.

Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel.

Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

Col. 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

3. In order to become a reproduction of Christ as our model, we need to experience Christ as the One living in us, being formed in us, and making His home in our hearts—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal. 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you.

Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man.

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

4. As we become a reproduction of Christ, spontaneously we will live Christ by the bountiful supply of His Spirit—Phil. 1:19, 21.

Phil. 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Phil. 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

B. In Genesis 2:9 the tree of life was unique, but the tree of life has been planted into us and is growing in us, causing us to become a small tree of life.

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

II. As a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we have the ministry of life—1 John 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:12:

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.
2 Cor. 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

A. Because we are believers in Christ and children of God, we not only have eternal life and may experience eternal life, but we also can minister this life to other members of the Body of Christ—1 John 5:11-16.

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.
1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

B. To minister life is to impart life; when we have a surplus of life, we can minister from this supply to others—1:1-2; 2:25; 5:11-13, 16.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life
1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
1 John 2:25 And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, the eternal life.
1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.
1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

C. The service in the church is a life-ministering service—a service of supplying others with the divine life—2 Cor. 4:12:

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life
1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
1 John 2:25 And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, the eternal life.
1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.
1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

2 Cor. 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

1. We need to be impressed with this point and look to the Lord that our service would become an outlet for His life—John 11:25; 1 John 1:2.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

2. The life that we supply to others is in the Spirit, the Spirit is mingled with our spirit, and the life of God is located, abides, and grows in the mingled spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Rom. 8:4:

1 Cor. 15:45b ...the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
1 Cor. 6:17  But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
Rom. 8:4    That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

a. If we would supply the saints with life, we must release our spirit, for the divine life is in our mingled spirit—7:6; 1:9.

Rom. 7:6   But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
Rom. 1:9   For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

b. If our spirit cannot be released, the divine life has no way to be released—8:10.

Rom. 8:10  But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

D. If we would live as a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we need to be deeply impressed with the necessity of being able to minister life—1 John 5:11-16:

1 John 5:11  And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12  He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
1 John 5:13  I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.
1 John 5:14  And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
1 John 5:15  And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
1 John 5:16  If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

1. The service that God wants from us does not focus on doing a work but on ministering life—v. 16.

1 John 5:16  If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

2. In order to minister life to others, we need to be joined to Christ, abide in Christ, and give Him the ground in us to fill us so that His life, nature, likes, and inclination become our life, nature, likes, and inclination—2:27; Eph. 3:16-17.

1 John 2:27  And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.
Eph. 3:16  That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
Eph. 3:17  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
E. To minister life is to have the outflow of life; our service is God's flowing out to supply others with the divine life—John 19:34; 7:37-39:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

1. Life is the content of God and the flowing out of God; God's content is God's being, and God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us—Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1.

Eph. 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

2. In order for life to be released from our spirit, our outer man must be dealt with and broken—2 Cor. 4:16; Heb. 4:12:

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

a. If our outer man is not broken, there cannot be a pure flow of the divine life—John 7:38.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

b. If we want the divine life to be released from within us, we must be subdued in our soul and let our spirit dominate and rule over every matter; then the Lord's life will be able to flow out—Eph. 3:16-17.

Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

3. Having the outflow of life requires that we be one with Christ in His life-releasing death; this is to be identified with the smitten Christ typified by the smitten rock—John 19:34; Exo. 17:6:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

Exo. 17:6 I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

a. When we are one with Christ as the smitten rock, the divine life as the living water flows...
out of us—v. 6; John 7:38.

Exo. 17:6 I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

b. Our human life, our natural life, must be smitten so that the living water may flow out from within us—2 Cor. 4:10-11, 16.

2 Cor. 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Cor. 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

c. If we are one with the smitten Christ, we will experience the crucifixion of our natural life, and then as Christ's divine life flowed out as living water through the smiting of His human life, we also will experience the flow of the water of life through the smiting of our natural life—vv. 10-12.

2 Cor. 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Cor. 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Cor. 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.

F. If we would minister life to others, we need to be aware of the attack upon the church by death, the gates of Hades—Matt. 16:18; Rom. 5:17:

Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Rom. 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

1. What is of God is characterized by life, and what is of Satan, by death; in the church everything that issues from God is life, and everything that issues from Satan is death—John 11:25; Heb. 2:14.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Heb. 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

2. Satan's greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—2 Tim. 1:10.

2 Tim. 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,
3. The eternal life within us can overcome death both in ourselves and in other members of the church—1 John 5:11-13, 16.

   1 John 5:11  And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.

   1 John 5:12  He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

   1 John 5:13  I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

   1 John 5:16  If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

4. As a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we need to experience eternal life and minister this life to others by being a channel through which eternal life can flow—John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:24-25.

   John 7:37  Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

   John 7:38  He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

   John 7:39  But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

   Phil. 1:24  But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

   Phil. 1:25  And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,