

# **The 2023 International Chinese-speaking Conference**

## **Key Statements**

In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, magnify Him, await His coming, and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living.

In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we must give heed to the prophetic word as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and Christ as the morning star secretly rises and appears in our hearts.

In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to enjoy Him as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, receiving His word by means of all prayer and musing on His word, speaking His word aloud with much reconsideration.

In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to have a revived living of being renewed day by day and a labor of shepherding with the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ.

# The International Chinese-speaking Conference

## February 17-19, 2023

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**Outlines of the Messages  
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference  
February 17-19, 2023**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
MAKING OURSELVES READY FOR THE LORD'S COMING**

**Message One  
Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming  
by Loving His Appearing and Not Loving the Present Age**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:8, 10, 18; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15; 5:19b; Rev. 17:14; 22:20

- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- 2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.
- 2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 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.
- 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
- 1 John 5:19b ... and the whole world lies in the evil one.
- Rev 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, will also overcome them.
- Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

**I. If the Lord's second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing—**

**2 Tim. 4:8:**

- Rev 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings apiece, are full of eyes around and within; and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming.
- A. Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- 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."
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- B. If we are waiting for the Lord to come, we should be those who love His appearing—1 Thes. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- 1 Thes 1:10 And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- C. The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us—vv. 1, 18:
- 2 Tim 4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:
- 2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. We should love the Lord's appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—Rev. 22:20.  
     Rev 22:20   He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
2. We should have a living that loves the Lord's appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end—2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 17:14.  
     2 Tim 4:8   Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.  
     Rev 17:14   These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, will also overcome them.

## II. “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him”—1 John 2:15:

- A. The world is an evil system arranged systematically by Satan—vv. 15-17; James 4:4:
- 1 John 2:15   Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
  - 1 John 2:16   Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.
  - 1 John 2:17   And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
  - James 4:4    Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever determines to be a friend of the world is constituted an enemy of God.
1. God created man to live on the earth for the fulfillment of His purpose, but His enemy, Satan, in order to usurp the God-created man, formed an anti-God world system on this earth by systematizing people with culture, education, industry, commerce, entertainment, and religion—Eph. 3:11; Gen. 1:26-28; 2:8-9; 4:16-24.  
     Eph 3:11    According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,  
     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.  
     Gen 1:27    And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.  
     Gen 1:28    And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.  
     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.  
     Gen 4:16    And Cain went forth from the presence of Jehovah and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.  
     Gen 4:17    And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.  
     Gen 4:18    And Irad was born to Enoch, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.  
     Gen 4:19    And Lamech took two wives for himself: The name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second Zillah.  
     Gen 4:20    And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and raise cattle.  
     Gen 4:21    And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.  
     Gen 4:22    And Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

- Gen 4:23 And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice; / O wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech; / For I have slain a man for wounding me, / Even a young man for striking me.
- Gen 4:24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold, / Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.
2. All the things on the earth, especially those related to mankind, and all the things in the air have been systematized by Satan into his kingdom of darkness to occupy people and frustrate them from accomplishing the purpose of God and to distract them from the enjoyment of God—1 John 2:15-17.
    - 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
    - 1 John 2:16 Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.
    - 1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
  3. The world is against God the Father, the things in the world are against the will of God, and those who love the world are enemies of God—vv. 15-17; James 4:4.
    - 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
    - 1 John 2:16 Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.
    - 1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
    - James 4:4 Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever determines to be a friend of the world is constituted an enemy of God.
- B. “The whole world,” the satanic system, “lies in the evil one”—1 John 5:19b:
- 1 John 5:19b ... and the whole world lies in the evil one.
1. “The whole world” comprises the satanic world system and the people of the world, the fallen human race.
  2. *Lies* means remaining passively in the sphere of the evil one’s usurpation and manipulation; the whole world and the people of the world are lying passively under the usurping and manipulating hand of Satan, the evil one.
  3. The Greek word rendered “evil” in 1 John 5:19 refers to one who is pernicious, harmfully evil, one who affects others, influencing them to be evil and vicious; such an evil one is Satan, the devil, in whom the whole world lies.
    - 1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.
- C. Satan is utilizing the material world and the things that are in the world to eventually head everything up in the kingdom of Antichrist; at that hour the world system will have reached its zenith, and every unit of it will be revealed to be anti-Christian—2 Thes. 2:3-12.
- 2 Thes 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,
- 2 Thes 2:4 Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or an object of worship, so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth, saying that he is God.
- 2 Thes 2:5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I said these things to you?
- 2 Thes 2:6 And now you know that which restrains, so that he might be revealed in his own time.
- 2 Thes 2:7 For it is the mystery of lawlessness that is now operating, but only until the one now restraining goes out of the way.
- 2 Thes 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),
- 2 Thes 2:9 The coming of whom is according to Satan's operation in all power and signs and wonders of a lie
- 2 Thes 2:10 And in all deceit of unrighteousness among those who are perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.
- 2 Thes 2:11 And because of this God sends to them an operation of error that they might believe the lie,

2 Thes 2:12 So that all who have not believed the truth but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness might be judged.

### III. Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age—2 Tim. 4:8, 10:

- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- 2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.
- A. An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose—1 John 5:19; 2:15.
- 1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.  
1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
- B. In 2 Timothy 4:10 *the present age* refers to the world that surrounds, attracts, and tempts us; we cannot contact the world unless we contact the present age of the world.
- 2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.
- C. Demas loved the present age; due to the attraction of the present age, he forsook the apostle Paul—v. 10.
- 2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.
- D. In Romans 12:2 Paul exhorts us to not be fashioned according to this age but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind:
- 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.
1. *This age* in verse 2 denotes the present, practical part of the world, which stands in opposition to the Body life and replaces the Body life—vv. 4-5.
- 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 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
2. To be fashioned according to this age means to adopt the modern fashions of the present age; to be transformed is to allow an organic element to be wrought into our being, thus producing an inward metabolic change—v. 2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- 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.
- 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.
3. Because the present age opposes the church, which is God's will, we must not be fashioned according to it—Rom. 12:2.
- 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.
4. If we are to live in the Body of Christ, we should not follow the present age or be fashioned according to this age or conformed to it—vv. 4-5.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not

have the same function,  
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

E. If we love the present age, we will take sides with the world; if we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him and fight with Him for His interests—2 Tim. 4:1-2, 4-8, 10.

2 Tim 4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Tim 4:2 Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

2 Tim 4:4 And they will turn away their ear from the truth and will be turned aside to myths.

2 Tim 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.

2 Tim 4:6 For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

#### **IV. Those who love the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing will overcome—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:20; 17:14:**

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."

2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Rev 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, will also overcome them.

A. Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.

2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

B. To love the Lord's appearing does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today—Matt. 24:40-42; 2 Thes. 1:10; 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8.

Matt 24:40 At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.

Matt 24:41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.

Matt 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes.

2 Thes 1:10 When He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all those who have believed (because our testimony to you was believed) in that day.

2 Thes 3:6 Now we charge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the things which were handed down to you and which you received from us.

2 Thes 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not disorderly among you;

2 Thes 3:8 Nor did we eat bread as a gift from anyone, but in labor and hardship we worked night and day so that we would not be burdensome to any of you;

2 Thes 3:9 Not because we do not have the right, but in order that we might give ourselves to you as a pattern that you might imitate us.

2 Thes 3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this charge, that if anyone does not

- want to work, neither should he eat.
- 2 Thes 3:11 For we hear of some walking among you disorderly, doing no work at all, but being busybodies.
- 2 Thes 3:12 Now such ones we charge and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work with quietness and eat their own bread.
- 1 Tim 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- C. As those who love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, and magnify Him, we should await His coming and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living as those who hope to enter into His joy, be saved into the Lord's heavenly kingdom, and receive the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- 2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## Message Two

# Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming by Growing in Life unto Maturity

Scripture Reading: Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:27-29; 4:12; Rev. 14:1-5

- Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,
- Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
- Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
- Col 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
- Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
- Rev 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.
- Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harp-singers playing on their harps.
- Rev 14:3 And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth.
- Rev 14:4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.
- Rev 14:5 And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

### I. In his Epistle, James uses the illustration of a farmer awaiting with long-suffering the precious fruit of the earth—5:7:

- James 5:7 Therefore be long-suffering, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer eagerly awaits the precious fruit of the earth, exercising long-suffering over it until it receives the early and late rain.
- A. The Lord Jesus is actually the real Farmer, the unique Farmer—Matt. 13:3.  
Matt 13:3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow.
- B. While we are awaiting with long-suffering the Lord's coming, He, as the real Farmer, is awaiting with patience our maturity in life as the firstfruits and the harvest of the field—Rev. 14:4, 14-15.  
Rev 14:4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.  
Rev 14:14 And I saw, and behold, there was a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.  
Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, Send forth Your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come because the harvest of the earth is ripe.
- C. If we pray, "Lord, come back quickly," the Lord may say, "While you are awaiting My coming back, I am awaiting your maturity; only your maturity can hasten My coming back."
- D. It is a great help for us to realize that if we are serious about awaiting the Lord's coming back, we need to grow in life unto maturity.

### II. To be mature is to have Christ formed in us—Gal. 4:19:

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

A. Christ was born in us when we believed into Him (John 3:6, 15-16), He lives in us in our Christian life (Gal. 2:20b), and He will be formed in us at our maturity (4:19):

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

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

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

Gal 2:20b ... 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,

1. The last stage of transformation is maturity, the fullness of life:

a. God's eternal purpose can be accomplished only through our transformation and maturity—Gen. 1:26; Col. 1:28; 2:19; 4:12.

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.

Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in 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.

Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

b. Maturity is a matter of having the divine life imparted into us again and again until we have the fullness of life—John 10:10b.

John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

2. Maturity is a matter of the enlargement of capacity—Psa. 4:1:

Psa 4:1 When I call out, answer me, / O God of my righteousness; / Make room for me when I am in straits; / Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

a. Maturity in life is the sum total of receiving the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Heb. 12:5-11.

Heb 12:5 And you have completely forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by Him;

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."

Heb 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline?

Heb 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all sons have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected them; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

Heb 12:10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.

Heb 12:11 Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.

b. Others may see a person who has matured in life, but they cannot see the accumulated discipline of the Holy Spirit which that person has received secretly day by day throughout the years—2 Cor. 1:8-10; Gen. 47:7, 10.

2 Cor 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.

2 Cor 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we

- should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;
- 2 Cor 1:10 Who has delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver us; in whom we have hoped that He will also yet deliver us,
- Gen 47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.
- Gen 47:10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went forth from Pharaoh's presence.
3. God will sovereignly use persons, things, and events to empty us of everything that has filled us and to take away every preoccupation so that we may have an increased capacity to be filled with God—Luke 1:53; Matt. 5:6.
- Luke 1:53 The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.
- Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- B. Christ being formed in us is needed that we may mature in the divine sonship and be sons of full age—Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5:
- Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law,
- Gal 4:5 That He might redeem those under law that we might receive the sonship.
- Rom 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
1. Since the time of our regeneration, the Lord has been working in us so that we may have His image—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29.
- 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 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;
2. When the Lord has fully worked His image into us and is fully expressed through us, we will be mature in life—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,
- C. As used in the New Testament, the word *mature* refers to the believers' being full-grown, mature, and perfected in the life of God, which they received at the time of regeneration:
1. We should never be content with ourselves but should pursue growth and maturity in the life of Christ; we need to go on, to be brought on, to maturity by forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, pursuing toward the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom—Phil. 3:12-15.
- Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
- Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
- Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
- Phil 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you.
2. The prerequisite for maturity in the spiritual life is to grow continually in the divine life—Eph. 4:15.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

3. The ultimate issue of the believers' growth and maturity in the life of Christ is the full-grown man—the church as the Body of Christ growing into a mature man—v. 13.  
     Eph 4:13     Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

### **III. The goal of Paul's ministry was to present every man mature, full-grown, in Christ for the one new man—Col. 1:28-29; 3:10-11:**

- Col 1:28     Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
- Col 1:29     For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
- 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.
- A. The Greek word rendered “full-grown” in 1:28 may also be translated “perfect,” “complete,” or “mature.”  
     Col 1:28     Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
  - B. Paul's ministry was to dispense Christ into others so that they would be perfect and complete by maturing in Christ unto full growth—Eph. 4:13.  
     Eph 4:13     Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
  - C. The more we get into Christ, the more He comes into us; and the more He comes into us, the more we get into Him; it is by this cycle that we grow in life—Col. 1:27-28.  
     Col 1:27     To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,  
     Col 1:28     Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
  - D. Our goal in preaching the gospel to sinners and in fellowshiping with the saints is to minister Christ into them so that they may mature in life and be presented full-grown in Him—3:10-11; Eph. 4:13-14.  
     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 4:13     Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,  
     Eph 4:14     That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

### **IV. To be ready for rapture we need the maturity in life—Matt. 24:40-41:**

- Matt 24:40    At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.
- Matt 24:41    Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.
- A. The rapture is the consummating step of God's full salvation in life—the transfiguration, the redemption, of our body—Rom. 5:10; 8:23; Phil. 3:21:  
     Rom 5:10     For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,  
     Rom 8:23     And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.  
     Phil 3:21    Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.
  1. Because of the demand of the divine life that we have received and because of the intensity of our love toward the Lord, we desire to pursue a life that awaits the Lord's

coming—1 Thes. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23.

1 Thes 1:10 And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

1 Thes 2:19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at His coming? Are not even you?

1 Thes 3:13 So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

1 Thes 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep;

1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. As we love the Lord and await His coming, we hope to be raptured to the presence of the Lord—Matt. 24:40-41; Luke 17:31-36; 21:36.

Matt 24:40 At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.

Matt 24:41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.

Luke 17:31 In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind.

Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.

Luke 17:33 Whoever seeks to preserve his soul-life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive.

Luke 17:34 I tell you, In that night there will be two on one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left.

Luke 17:35 There will be two women grinding together; the one will be taken but the other will be left.

Luke 17:36 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.

Luke 21:36 But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

B. To become matured is not an overnight matter; for the Lord's coming, we need to prepare ourselves, love Him, and grow in Him so that at His appearing we may be mature to be raptured—Rev. 14:1-5.

Rev 14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harp-singers playing on their harps.

Rev 14:3 And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth.

Rev 14:4 These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

C. Marks of maturity include the following—Heb. 6:1:

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

1. Being filled with the divine life that changes us—Eph. 3:19.

Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

2. Reigning in life—Rom. 5:17.

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.

3. **Being able to eat solid food—Heb. 5:12-14.**
  - Heb 5:12 For when because of the time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you what the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God are and have become those who have need of milk and not of solid food.
  - Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant;
  - Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.
4. **Being full-grown in understanding—1 Cor. 14:20.**
  - 1 Cor 14:20 Brothers, do not be children in your understanding, but in malice be babes and in your understanding be full-grown.
5. **Being perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect—Matt. 5:48.**
  - Matt 5:48 You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
6. **Seeing the Body, knowing the Body, living in the Body and for the Body, caring for the Body, and honoring the Body—Eph. 4:13-16.**
  - Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
  - Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
  - 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.

Message Three  
**Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming  
by Giving Heed to the Prophetic Word  
as to a Lamp Shining in a Dark Place  
Until the Day Dawns and the Morning Star Rises in Our Hearts**

Scripture Reading: 2 Pet. 1:19; Psa. 119:105, 130; Rev. 2:28; Mal. 4:2; 1 Thes. 5:4-6

- 2 Pet 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.
- Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.
- Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.
- Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.
- 1 Thes 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief;
- 1 Thes 5:5 For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
- 1 Thes 5:6 So then let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober.

**I. It is crucial for believers to give heed to the prophetic word—2 Pet. 1:19a:**

- 2 Pet 1:19a And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, ...
- A. Prophecies are matters that God requires us to know, and believers should give heed to them—1 Pet. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:2; Luke 1:70.
- 1 Pet 1:10 Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently,
- 2 Pet 3:2 So that you would remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior preached by your apostles;
- Luke 1:70 Even as He spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from of old-
- B. The Lord Jesus charged us to understand the prophecies; this clearly shows that the believers must pay attention to the prophecies in the Bible—Matt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 9:24-27.
- Matt 24:15 Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him who reads understand),
- Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are apportioned for your people and for your holy city, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make propitiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.
- Dan 9:25 Know therefore and comprehend: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of Messiah the Prince will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with street and trench, even in distressful times.
- Dan 9:26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah will be cut off and will have nothing; and the people of the prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end of it will be with a flood, and even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.
- Dan 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week; and in the middle of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and will replace the sacrifice and the oblation with abominations of the desolator, even until the complete destruction that has been determined is poured out upon the desolator.
- C. If the church does not pay adequate attention to these prophecies, many believers will inevitably lose faith, be deceived by lies, be destroyed because of a lack of that knowledge, and forget the Lord's coming by not being watchful—Hosea 4:6; 1 Thes. 5:4-6; Matt. 24:42; 1 Pet. 5:8.
- Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed / Because of a lack of that knowledge. / For you have rejected that knowledge, / And I will reject you, so that you will not be a priest to Me; / Since you have forgotten the law of your God, / I also will forget your children.

- 1 Thes 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief;
- 1 Thes 5:5 For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
- 1 Thes 5:6 So then let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober.
- Matt 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes.
- 1 Pet 5:8 Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.

D. If the believers do not have the prophecies in the Bible, they will fall into darkness—Acts 26:18; John 12:35-36; Eph. 5:8-9:

- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- John 12:35 Jesus then said to them, The light is still among you a little while. Walk while you have the light so that darkness may not overcome you; and he who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.
- 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.
- 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),

1. The present age is the nighttime—Rom. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:4-8.

- Rom 13:12 The night is far advanced, and the day has drawn near. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons of light.
- 1 Thes 5:4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief;
- 1 Thes 5:5 For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
- 1 Thes 5:6 So then let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober.
- 1 Thes 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep during the night, and those who get drunk are drunk during the night;
- 1 Thes 5:8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and a helmet, the hope of salvation.

2. When the Lord Jesus comes, the day will dawn (2 Pet. 1:19c), and the next age, the kingdom age, will be the daytime.

- 2 Pet 1:19c ... until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

## II. Peter likens the word of prophecy in the Scripture to a lamp shining in a dark place—v. 19b:

2 Pet 1:19b ... to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

A. This indicates that this age is a dark place in the dark night (Rom. 13:12), and all the people of this world are moving and acting in darkness (cf. Acts 26:18).

- Rom 13:12 The night is far advanced, and the day has drawn near. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons of light.
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

B. The prophetic word of the Scriptures, as the shining lamp to the believers, conveys spiritual light that shines in their darkness (not merely knowledge in letters for their mental apprehension), guiding them into a bright day, even to pass through the dark night until the day of the Lord's appearing dawns—2 Pet. 1:19b; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1:12.

- 2 Pet 1:19b ...to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
- 2 Tim 1:12 For which cause also I suffer these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit unto that day.

- C. Before the Lord as the sunlight appears, we need this word as light to shine over our footsteps—Mal. 4:2; Psa. 119:105, 130.  
 Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.  
 Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.  
 Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.
- D. If we give heed to the prophetic word in the Bible, which shines as a lamp in a dark place, we will have Christ rising in our hearts to shine in the darkness—2 Pet. 1:19b.  
 2 Pet 1:19b ... to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

### III. We need to give heed to the lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts—v. 19c:

- 2 Pet 1:19c ... to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- A. The Greek words rendered “dark place” may also be translated “murky place,” a place that is squalid, dry, and neglected.
- B. *The day* is a metaphor illustrating a time coming that will be full of light, as a bright day dawning, with the morning star rising, before its dawning, in the hearts of the believers, who are illuminated and enlightened by giving heed to the shining word of prophecy in the Scripture:
- This will cause and encourage the believers to earnestly seek the Lord’s presence and be watchful so that they will not miss the Lord in the secret part of His coming (parousia), when He will come as a thief—Matt. 24:27, 42-43; 2 Thes. 2:8.  
 Matt 24:27 For just as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.  
 Matt 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes.  
 Matt 24:43 But know this, that if the householder had known in which watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.  
 2 Thes 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),
  - This metaphor must allude to the coming age, the day of the kingdom, as a day that will dawn at the appearing (the coming) of the Lord as the Sun of righteousness, whose light will shine to break through the gloom of the dark night of this age—Mal. 4:2.  
 Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.
- C. The morning star appears in the darkest hour, prior to dawn—Rev. 22:16b; cf. Num. 24:17; Matt. 2:2, 9-10:  
 Rev 22:16b ... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.  
 Num 24:17 I see Him, but not now; / I behold Him, but not near. / There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob, / And a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, / And He shall crush the corners of Moab / And break down all the sons of Sheth.  
 Matt 2:2 Saying, Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star at its rising and have come to worship Him.  
 Matt 2:9 And after they heard the king, they went their way, and behold, the star which they saw at its rising led them until it came and stood over the place where the child was.  
 Matt 2:10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.
- This indicates that Christ will appear as the bright morning star in the darkest time, prior to the end of this age—Rev. 22:16b.  
 Rev 22:16b ... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
  - The Lord’s appearing as the morning star and His appearing as the Sun of

righteousness will not be at the same time—2:28; Mal. 4:2:

Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.

Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.

- a. The morning star appears before dawn, and the appearing of the sun occurs after the dawning of the day.
  - b. As the Sun of righteousness after the dawning of the day, Christ will appear publicly to all the people on the earth—v. 2.  
Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.
  - c. As the bright morning star before the dawning of the day, He will appear privately to the overcomers who are watching, preparing, and waiting for Him—Rev. 22:16b.  
Rev 22:16b ... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
  - d. He will secretly give Himself as the morning star to those who love Him and who watch and wait for Him that they may have the priority to taste the freshness of His presence at His coming back after a long absence—2:28.  
Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.
- D. When we give heed to the word of the Scriptures as to a lamp shining in a dark place, the condition within us will be like the day dawning and the morning star rising in our hearts—2 Pet. 1:19c:  
2 Pet 1:19c ... until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
1. Figuratively, *the day dawns* refers to the coming age of the kingdom as a bright day dawning—cf. Matt. 13:43.  
Matt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
  2. Concerning the types of Christ, the entire Bible begins with Him as light and ends with Him as the morning star—Gen. 1:3; Rev. 2:28; 22:16b.  
Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.  
Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.  
Rev 22:16b ... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
  3. *The morning star* refers to Christ who, in the darkest hour of the night, prior to the dawning of the kingdom age, will secretly rise in the hearts of those who love His appearing—v. 16b.  
Rev 22:16b ... I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
  4. If we continually give heed to the shining word of the Scriptures, we will have the kingdom as the day dawning in us and Christ as the morning star rising in our hearts before His actual appearing as the bright morning star—2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28.  
2 Pet 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;  
Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.
  5. Christ as the morning star will be given to the overcomers as their first reward; we need to make ourselves ready for the secret appearing of the Lord as the morning star—vv. 28-29.  
Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.  
Rev 2:29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

## Message Four

### Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming by Being a Faithful and Prudent Slave

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:45-51

- 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.
- Matt 24:48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays,
- Matt 24:49 And begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken,
- Matt 24:50 The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know,
- Matt 24:51 And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

#### I. “Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions”—Matt. 24:45-47:

- A. God's economy in faith is His “household” economy, His household administration, which is to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 2:19.
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- B. The faithful and prudent slave is a steward in God's house, a household administrator, dispensing Christ as “food” to His believers—1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10:
- 1 Cor 9:17 If I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship.
- Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
- 1 Cor 4:1 A man should account us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
- 1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
1. Faithfulness is shown toward the Lord (1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25), whereas prudence is exercised toward the believers (cf. Col. 1:28; 2 Chron. 1:10; Phil. 4:5).

1 Cor 4:2 Here, furthermore, it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful.

1 Cor 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who has been shown mercy by the Lord to be faithful.

Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;

2 Chron 1:10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?

Phil 4:5 Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.
  2. In the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord will set the faithful slave over all His possessions; this will be a reward to His slave—Matt. 25:21, 23.

Matt 25:21 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

Matt 25:23 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

- C. *Give them food* refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church; Christ as the life-giving Spirit is our food, embodied and realized in the word of life—24:45; John 6:57, 63, 68:

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?

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.

John 6:68 Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life,

1. In order to enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, we need to receive His word by means of all prayer and by musing on His word, speaking His word aloud with much reconsideration—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15 (see footnote), 48, 148; Josh. 1:8; Lev. 11:2-3; Ezek. 3:1-4; Col. 3:16.

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 <sup>1</sup>muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

note 1 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.

Psa 119:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes.

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

Josh 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall muse upon it day and night so that you may be certain to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success.

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.

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.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

2. We need to continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word—Acts 6:4; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2.

Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
3. We need to prophesy to build up the church—speaking what we see with the living words of this life under the instant and fresh inspiration, anointing, and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit through the exercise of our spirit—1 Cor. 14:4b; Acts 5:20; 4:20; 22:15.
- 1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.
- Acts 5:20 Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.
- Acts 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
- Acts 22:15 For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.
4. We need to pray ourselves into God to receive the life-giving Spirit as our supply, our spiritual food, to feed ourselves and those under our care—Luke 11:1-13.
- Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.
- Luke 11:2 And He said to them, When you pray, say, Father, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come.
- Luke 11:3 Give us each day our daily bread.
- Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us into temptation.
- Luke 11:5 And He said to them, Who among you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,
- Luke 11:6 Since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him;
- Luke 11:7 And that one, from inside, will answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?
- Luke 11:8 I say to you, Even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his shameless persistence he will rise and give him what he needs.
- Luke 11:9 And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.
- Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.
- Luke 11:11 But what father among you whose son shall ask for a fish will instead of a fish hand him a snake?
- Luke 11:12 Or if he shall also ask for an egg will hand him a scorpion?
- Luke 11:13 If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!
5. We need to be life-giving “askers,” channels of the life-giving Spirit who can give life to others—1 John 5:16.
- 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.
6. We need to be “sons of fresh oil,” those who are continually being filled with the fresh, present, and consummated Spirit as the oil of gladness, to flow out the Spirit into the lampstand for its shining testimony, the testimony of Jesus—Zech. 4:6, 12-14; Phil. 1:25; Rev. 3:18; Matt. 25:9:
- 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 4:12 And I answered a second time and said to him, What are the two olive branches that are by the side of the two golden spouts, which empty the gold from themselves?
- Zech 4:13 And he spoke to me, saying, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir.

- Zech 4:14 And he said, These are the two sons of oil, who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.
- 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,
- Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
- Matt 25:9 But the prudent answered, saying, Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.
- a. Day by day we need to pay the price to gain more of God as the golden oil in His divine nature so that we can become a pure golden lampstand for the building of the golden New Jerusalem—2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:18; 1:20; 21:18; Matt. 25:8-9.
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
- 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.
- Rev 21:18 And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- Matt 25:8 And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.
- Matt 25:9 But the prudent answered, saying, Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.
- b. As we apply this matter to our experience today, we see that the Spirit who flows out of us is God, and God is gold; thus, when we minister Christ to others, supplying them with oil, we are actually supplying them with God; God is flowing out from us into them—Zech. 4:12-14; John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8; Luke 10:34.
- Zech 4:12 And I answered a second time and said to him, What are the two olive branches that are by the side of the two golden spouts, which empty the gold from themselves?
- Zech 4:13 And he spoke to me, saying, Do you not know what these are? And I said, No, sir.
- Zech 4:14 And he said, These are the two sons of oil, who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.
- 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.
- 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 3:6 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 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
- Luke 10:34 And he came to him and bound up his wounds and poured oil and wine on them. And placing him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him.

**II. “But if that evil slave says in his heart, My master delays, and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”—Matt. 24:48-51:**

A. To say in our heart that our Master delays is to love the present evil age and not to love the Lord’s appearing—2 Tim. 4:8, 10:

2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

1. The Greek word for *coming* is *parousia*, which means “presence”; to love the Lord’s appearing, His coming, we must love His appearing, His presence, today—Matt. 24:3, 37; Acts 26:16; 2 Cor. 2:10; *Hymns*, #389.

Matt 24:3 And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the consummation of the age?

Matt 24:37 For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;

*Hymns* #389

- 1 Lord Jesus, I long in Thy presence to live,  
From morning to evening my one world Thou art;  
O let not my heart be contented or rest  
When loving or seeking what with Thee doth part.  
Each moment, each day, throughout suffering and pain,  
When nought in the world can give comfort or cheer,  
When sighing and weeping encompasses me,  
Lord, still all my sighing and wipe every tear.
- 2 Each time when I dream of the goodness of life,  
I pray Thee, dear Lord, that Thou in it may be;  
O do not allow me to choose by myself,  
Nor seek any pleasure that’s other than Thee.  
Each night when alone in the stillness I lie,  
I pray Thee, Lord Jesus, that Thou wilt be near;  
Each morning ere dawn comes, while still in my sleep,  
Then whispering call me and open my ear.
- 3 Each time, Lord, when reading in Thy holy Word,  
I pray that Thy glory may shine on each line,  
That clearly I’ll see what a Savior I have  
And how great salvation that Thou hast made mine.  
When helpless I come, Lord, to kneel at Thy throne,  
I pray Thee to hear me and grant me Thy grace;  
If thru my shortcomings Thou hear not my prayer,  
Withdraw not Thy presence, O hide not Thy face.
- 4 Each time when of heavenly blessings I think,  
O let my heart long to be raptured to Thee;  
My only hope here is Thy coming again,  
My only joy there, Lord, Thy presence will be.  
Lord, teach me each day in Thy presence to live,  
From morning to evening my one world Thou art;  
O let not my heart be contented or rest  
When loving or seeking what with Thee doth part.

2. As long as we have today, we should love the Lord and His appearing, awaiting His coming and taking His coming as a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive—2 Tim. 4:8; Phil. 3:20; Rev. 22:12.
  - 2 Tim 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.
  - Phil 3:20 For our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
  - Rev 22:12 Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is.
3. We need to watch and be ready for His coming—Matt. 25:13; 24:44; Rev. 19:7.
  - Matt 25:13 Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
  - Matt 24:44 For this reason you also be ready, because at an hour when you do not expect it, the Son of Man is coming.
  - 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.
4. We need to beware of covetousness, not storing up treasure for ourselves but being rich toward God—Luke 12:16-20; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:8.
  - Luke 12:16 And He told them a parable, saying, The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly.
  - Luke 12:17 And he reasoned in himself, saying, What shall I do, for I have no place where I may gather my crops?
  - Luke 12:18 And he said, I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and I will gather there all my wheat and my goods.
  - Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; rest, eat, drink, be merry.
  - Luke 12:20 But God said to him, Foolish one, this night they are requiring your soul from you; and the things which you have prepared, whose will they be?
  - 2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
  - 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
5. We need to remember Lot's wife, not loving and treasuring the evil world that God is going to judge and utterly destroy—Luke 17:28-32.
  - Luke 17:28 Likewise, even as it happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;
  - Luke 17:29 But on the day in which Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.
  - Luke 17:30 It will be in the same way on the day in which the Son of Man is revealed.
  - Luke 17:31 In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind.
  - Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.
6. We need to be watchful and beseeching so that the day of the Lord's coming would not come upon us suddenly as a snare—21:34-36; cf. Matt. 2:3.
  - Luke 21:34 But take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare.
  - Luke 21:35 For it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth.
  - Luke 21:36 But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.
  - Matt 2:3 And when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.
7. "Come, Lord Jesus!"—this should be the longing, cry, and constant prayer of those who love the Lord and His appearing—Rev. 22:20; Titus 2:12-13.
  - Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Titus 2:12 Training us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in the present age,  
Titus 2:13 Awaiting the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

B. To beat our fellow slaves is to mistreat fellow believers—cf. Acts 9:4:

Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

1. We should not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving them even as God in Christ forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32.

Luke 6:37 And do not judge, and you shall by no means be judged; and do not condemn, and you shall by no means be condemned; release, and you will be released;

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be removed from you, with all malice.

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.

2. We should not revile or criticize our brothers but consider them more excellent than ourselves—1 Cor. 6:10-11; Phil. 2:3, 29.

1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Phil 2:3 Doing nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves;

Phil 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,

3. We should not lord it over our fellow believers (such as making decisions for them) but serve them as a slave to feed them with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-28; cf. Num. 17:8.

1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.

Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,

Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;

Matt 20:28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Num 17:8 And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds.

C. To eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things:

1. Because of their divine nature and holy standing, the believers should not be yoked together with the unbelievers; this should be applied to all intimate relationships between believers and unbelievers, not only to marriage and business—2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:20.

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?

1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.

Prov 13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, / But the companion of fools will be troubled.

2. We need to flee youthful lusts and pursue the all-inclusive Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.

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.

D. The faithful and prudent slave will be rewarded with the authority to rule in the manifestation of the kingdom, whereas the evil slave will be cut off from the glorious Christ, from the glory of His kingdom, and from His glorious presence in His kingdom—Matt. 24:47, 51:

Matt 24:47 Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.

Matt 24:51 And will cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

1. To be cut off from the manifestation of the kingdom is to be cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth:

a. The outer darkness is the darkness outside the bright glory in the manifestation of the kingdom—16:28; 25:30.

Matt 16:28 Truly I say to you, There are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Matt 25:30 And cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

b. Weeping indicates regret, and gnashing of teeth indicates self blame.

2. To reign with Christ over the nations in the millennial kingdom will be a prize to His faithful and prudent slaves—Rev. 2:26; Luke 19:17-19.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

Luke 19:17 And he said to him, Well done, good slave. Because you have become faithful in the least, have authority over ten cities.

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas.

Luke 19:19 And he said to this one as well, And you, be over five cities.

Message Five  
**Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming  
by Having a Revived Living and a Labor of Shepherding**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:16-18; John 21:15-17

- 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.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- 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.
- John 21:16 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 order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to maintain our victory by having a revived living, a living of being renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16-18); this renewal has to be refreshed every morning (Matt. 13:43; Luke 1:78-79; Prov. 4:18; Judg. 5:31):**

- 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.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- Matt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,
- Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
- Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.
- Judg 5:31 May all Your enemies so perish, O Jehovah. / But may those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might. And the land had rest forty years.
- A. We must enjoy the Lord early in the morning to have a new start of each day—Psa. 119:147-148.  
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.
- B. Every morning we should allow the Lord Jesus, our Sun, to rise up in us so that we can be renewed—Luke 1:78-79; Mal. 4:2; Judg. 5:31:  
Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,  
Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
Mal 4:2 But unto you who fear My name will the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves.  
Judg 5:31 May all Your enemies so perish, O Jehovah. / But may those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might. And the land had rest forty years.
1. We should rise up early in the morning to fellowship with the Lord, and we can pray,

“Thank You, Lord, for a new beginning; may this day be a memorable day in my life”; this is what we call a morning-by-morning revival.

2. Every morning we should offer up Christ as our burnt offering and peace offering, based upon His being our sin offering, so that we may have a new beginning; not only must we do this every day, but we must also do it with sweetness and depth—Lev. 6:12-13.

Lev 6:12 And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.

Lev 6:13 Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.

3. To take Christ as our burnt offering every morning is to take Him as the One who lived a life absolutely for God’s satisfaction and as the life that enables us to have such a living—1:9; 6:12-13; John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29.

Lev 1:9 But its inward parts and its legs he shall wash with water. Then the priest shall burn the whole on the altar, as a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev 6:12 And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.

Lev 6:13 Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.

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 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 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do 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.

John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

- C. In order to have a revived living, we must be those who love the Lord to the uttermost and live to Him with the daily goal of having the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Phil. 3:14.

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."

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.

Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.

- D. We must be those who live the life of the altar and the tent—Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18:

Gen 12:7 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land. And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him.

Gen 12:8 And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Gen 13:3 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

Gen 13:4 To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Gen 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

1. God’s appearing to us issues in our consecration, causing us to build an altar; an altar

is for worshipping God by offering all that we are and have to God for His purpose; building an altar means that our life is for God, that God is our life, and that the meaning of our life is God—8:20-21a; Exo. 29:18-22.

Gen 8:20 And Noah built an altar to Jehovah and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Gen 8:21a And Jehovah smelled the satisfying fragrance; ...

Exo 29:18 And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to Jehovah; it is a satisfying fragrance, an offering by fire to Jehovah.

Exo 29:19 And you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram.

Exo 29:20 Then you shall slaughter the ram and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobe of the right ear of his sons and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the rest of the blood on and around the altar.

Exo 29:21 And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; and he and his garments shall be sanctified, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him.

Exo 29:22 You shall also take the fat from the ram, that is, the fat tail and the fat that covers the inward parts, and the appendage of the liver and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration),

2. To live the life of the tent is our declaration that we are strangers and sojourners on the earth who are seeking a better country and eagerly waiting for the God-built city, the New Jerusalem—Heb. 11:9-10, 13, 16.

Heb 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign land, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;

Heb 11:10 For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.

Heb 11:13 All these died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar and joyfully greeting them and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.

Heb 11:16 But as it is, they long after a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

- E. To have a revival that is renewed daily is to have a transformation that is fresh daily; if we remain in this transformation our whole life, we will grow in the life of the Lord until we are matured—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1a.

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.

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.

Heb 6:1a Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, ...

- F. We are renewed day by day through four items: the cross (2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18); the Holy Spirit by which we are reconditioned, remade, and remodeled with the divine life (Titus 3:5); our mingled spirit (Eph. 4:23); and the holy word of God (5:26).

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.

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.

2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,

- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,
- Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- G. We need to come to the Lord's table in newness (Matt. 26:29); the Lord never takes an old table; we need to be renewed by learning to say, "I'm sorry; forgive me."
- Matt 26:29 But I say to you, I shall by no means drink of this product of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father.
- H. While we are in the midst of suffering, we need to receive the Lord's new compassions every morning so that we may experience His renewing; otherwise, we will remain the same, and the suffering we pass through will be in vain—Lam. 3:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
- Lam 3:22 It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, / For His compassions do not fail;
- Lam 3:23 They are new every morning; / Great is Your faithfulness.
- Lam 3:24 Jehovah is my portion, says my soul; / Therefore I hope in Him.
- 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.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**II. In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to maintain our victory by participating in Christ's heavenly ministry to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in order to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ—John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-4; Heb. 13:20-21:**

- 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.
- John 21:16 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.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- 1 Pet 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,
- Heb 13:21 Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- A. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the Lord Jesus in His ministry for carrying out God's eternal economy—Matt. 9:36; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4:
- Matt 9:36 And seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and cast away like sheep not having a shepherd.
- John 10:11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

- Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
1. Our not having the Father's loving and forgiving heart and the Savior's shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness—Luke 15:1-24.
- Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him.
- Luke 15:2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among themselves, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.
- Luke 15:3 And He told them this parable, saying,
- Luke 15:4 Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
- Luke 15:5 And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- Luke 15:6 And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.
- Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.
- Luke 15:8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?
- Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost.
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.
- Luke 15:11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.
- Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.
- Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.
- Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.
- Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.
- Luke 15:16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.
- Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!
- Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.
- Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.
- Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
- Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
- Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.
- Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,
- Luke 15:24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.
2. We need to cherish people (to make them happy and to make them feel pleasant and comfortable) in the humanity of Jesus (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34); we need to nourish people (to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His ministry of three stages) in the divinity of Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).
- Matt 9:10 And as He was reclining at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and reclined together with Jesus and His disciples.

- Luke 7:34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.
- 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.
3. Christ had to pass through Samaria, purposely detouring to Sychar to gain one immoral woman, cherishing her by asking her to give Him something to drink in order to nourish her with the flowing Triune God as the river of water of life—John 4:3-14.
- John 4:3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.
- John 4:4 And He had to pass through Samaria.
- John 4:5 So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the piece of land that Jacob gave to Joseph his son;
- John 4:6 And Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from the journey, sat thus by the well; it was about the sixth hour.
- John 4:7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give Me something to drink.
- John 4:8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.
- John 4:9 The Samaritan woman then said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)
- 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 spring of water springing up into eternal life.
4. As the One without sin, He did not condemn the adulterous woman but cherished her for the forgiveness of her sins judicially and for the setting free from her sins organically (8:1-11, 32, 36); it is also significant that the first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was a robber sentenced to death (Luke 23:42-43).
- John 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
- John 8:2 And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them.
- 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 8:10 And Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?
- John 8:11 And she said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.

- John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.  
 John 8:36 If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.  
 Luke 23:42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.  
 Luke 23:43 And He said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.
5. The Lord went to Jericho just to visit and gain one person, a chief tax collector, and His preaching was a shepherding (19:1-10); He also cherished the parents by laying His hands on their children (Matt. 19:13-15).
- Luke 19:1 And He entered and was passing through Jericho.  
 Luke 19:2 And behold, there was a man whose name was called Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.  
 Luke 19:3 And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He was, and could not because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.  
 Luke 19:4 And he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.  
 Luke 19:5 And as He came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay in your house.  
 Luke 19:6 And he hurried and came down, and received Him, rejoicing.  
 Luke 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man.  
 Luke 19:8 And Zaccheus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four times as much.  
 Luke 19:9 And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.  
 Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.  
 Matt 19:13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.  
 Matt 19:14 But Jesus said, Allow the little children and do not prevent them from coming to Me, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens.  
 Matt 19:15 And after He laid His hands on them, He went on from there.
6. In His caring for the churches as the golden lampstands, the ascended Lord is the “walking Christ” and the “speaking Spirit”; by His walking in the midst of the churches, He gets to know the condition of each church, and then according to what He sees, He speaks to us so that all the saints in the churches might be metabolically and organically transformed with the aim of making them His overcomers—Rev. 1:12-13; 2:1, 7.
- Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,  
 Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.  
 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 2:7 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.
- B. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the apostle Paul, who shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father in order to take care of God’s flock—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; 1 Tim. 1:16; Acts 20:28:
- 1 Thes 2:7 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.  
 1 Thes 2:8 Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.  
 1 Thes 2:11 Just as you know how we were to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling you and testifying,  
 1 Thes 2:12 So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

- 1 Tim 1:16 But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
1. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them “publicly and from house to house” (v. 20) and by admonishing each one of the saints with tears for three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).
    - Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house,
    - Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.
    - Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews;
    - Acts 20:27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you all the counsel of God.
  2. Paul had an intimate concern for the believers (2 Cor. 7:2-7; Philem. 7, 12), and he came down to the weak ones’ level so that he could gain them (2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20).
    - 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
    - 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
    - 2 Cor 7:4 Great is my boldness toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.
    - 2 Cor 7:5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted in everything; without were fightings, within were fears.
    - 2 Cor 7:6 But He who comforts those who are downcast, that is, God, comforted us by the coming of Titus;
    - 2 Cor 7:7 And not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted because of you, declaring to us your longing, your lamentation, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced the more.
    - Philem 7 For I had much joy and encouragement over your love, because the inward parts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.
    - Philem 12 Him I have sent back to you-him, that is, my very heart-
    - 2 Cor 11:28 Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.
    - 2 Cor 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?
    - 1 Cor 9:22 To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. To all men I have become all things that I might by all means save some.
    - Matt 12:20 A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench until He brings forth justice unto victory.
  3. Paul was willing to spend what he had, referring to his possessions, and to spend what he was, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints (2 Cor. 12:15); he was a drink offering, one with Christ as the wine producer, sacrificing himself for others’ enjoyment of Christ (Phil. 2:17; Judg. 9:13; Eph. 3:2).
    - 2 Cor 12:15 But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?
    - Phil 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.
    - Judg 9:13 But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?
    - Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
  4. Paul walked by the Spirit to honor God so that he could minister the Spirit to honor man—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8; Gal. 5:16, 25; Judg. 9:9.
    - 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 3:6 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 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
- Gal 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
- Judg 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my fatness, because of which God and men are honored by me, and go to wave over the trees?
5. Paul indicated in his teaching that the church is a home to raise up people, a hospital to heal and recover them, and a school to teach and edify them—Eph. 2:19; 1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Cor. 14:31.
- Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- 1 Thes 5:14 And we exhort you, brothers, Admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, sustain the weak, be long-suffering toward all.
- 1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.
6. Paul revealed that love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ; love prevails—8:1; 12:31; 13:4-8a; Eph. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2; 6:24; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:18b; 1 Thes. 1:3.
- 1 Cor 8:1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
- 1 Cor 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
- 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
- 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
- 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
- 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 1 Cor 13:8a Love never falls away. ...
- 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.
- Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.
- 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 1:18b ...He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- 1 Thes 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;