International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

March 2023

GENERAL SUBJECT:
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE

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KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE
(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One
Being Brought Back to Christ Himself
for the Genuine Church Life

Scripture Reading: Eph. 3:8, 14-18; Phil. 3:3-16; Col. 1:15-18; 3:10-11

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the
unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,
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,
Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height
and depth are
Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus
and have no confidence in the flesh,
Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks
that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of
Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.
Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of
Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them
as refuse that I may gain Christ
Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is
through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being
conformed to His death,
Phil 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.
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.
Phil 3:16 Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.
Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the
invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created
through Him and unto Him,
Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that
He Himself might have the first place in all things;
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.
I. We, believers in Christ and children of God, need to be freed from all distractions and brought back to Christ Himself—Eph. 3:8, 14-18; Col. 3:10-11:

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel.
Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,
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,
Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
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. God wants Christ to be the center of all things and to have the first place in all things—Christ being all and in all—1:15-18.

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.
Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

B. Christ is wonderful; He is the wonder of the entire universe, and every item of what Christ is, is wonderful—Isa. 9:6; Judg. 13:18; Eph. 3:8.

Isa 9:6 For a child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.
Judg 13:18 And the Angel of Jehovah said to him, Why do you ask about My name, since it is wonderful?
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.

C. God’s will, which is His eternal purpose and desire in the universe, is that Christ be everything to us and be wrought into us as our life and everything—v. 17a.

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

D. Paul wrote his Epistles because he was clear that many good things, such as doctrines, ethics, morality, teachings, and culture, are distractions from Christ—Phil. 3:4-8:

Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.
Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

1. The apostle Paul shows us that these things are not Christ Himself, and he indicates that if they distract us from Christ, they are versus Christ—1 Cor. 7:35.

1 Cor 7:35 But this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a noose upon you but that you may be comely and may wait on the Lord without distraction.
2. When we turn away from all distractions and turn to Christ, we will be brought back to Christ Himself so that we may know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, express Christ, and be constituted with Christ—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 3:9-10.

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

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

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

E. In Philippians 3:3-16 Christ is presented as the goal of the believers’ pursuit:

Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:

Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Phil 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.

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.

Phil 3:16 Nevertheless whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.

1. On account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul counted all things to be loss—v. 8a.

Phil 3:8a But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, …

2. Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order to gain Christ—vv. 7, 8b.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8b … on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

3. Paul’s earnest desire was to be found in Christ—v. 9.

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

4. The necessary condition of being found in Christ is not having our own righteousness but the righteousness of God through faith in Christ—v. 9.

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
5. Paul aspired to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings—v. 10.
   Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

6. In Philippians 3:10 Paul speaks of being conformed to Christ’s death; this indicates that Paul desired to take Christ’s death as the mold of his life.
   Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

7. Paul experienced Christ as the drink offering and became a drink offering that was poured out upon the sacrifice and service of the saints’ faith—2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6.
   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.
   2 Tim 4:6 For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.

F. We need to see a heavenly vision of God’s intention to make Christ everything to us:
1. If we receive new mercy and grace from the Lord, we will be able to drop all the good things—even the best things—and stretch forward to lay hold of Christ Himself—Phil. 3:7-8, 13.
   Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
   Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
   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,

2. We need to pray that Christ will be everything to us in our daily life—Col. 3:17:
   Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
   a. As we are doing various things, we should apply Christ in what we are doing.
   b. Every day we need to pray for new experiences of Christ—the One who dwells in us to be our life and everything; this is our great need today—Eph. 3:17a.
   Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

II. The issue of our being brought back to Christ Himself is the genuine church life—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rom. 16:1, 4-5, 16, 20:

1. The genuine church life is Christ realized, experienced, and expressed by all the saints in a corporate way—Eph. 3:16-21:
   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,
   Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
Eph 3:19  And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:20  But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us.

Eph 3:21  To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

1. God planned the church for the purpose of expressing Christ; thus, the church is the expression of Christ—vv. 9-11, 21.

   Eph 3:9  And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
   Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
   Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
   Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

2. The church life is nothing other than the all-inclusive Christ with His unsearchable riches experienced and enjoyed by us and expressed through us—vv. 8, 21.

   Eph 3:8  To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
   Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

3. If we would have such a church life, we need to be constituted with Christ until all that we are and have is simply Christ Himself, who is all and in all; this is the essence and the substance of the church life—Col. 1:12; 2:9-10, 16-17; 3:4, 10-11; 4:15-16.

   Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
   Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
   Col 2:10 And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.
   Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
   Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
   Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
   Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
   Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
   Col 4:15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house.
   Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.

B. The genuine church life is the life of Christ, Christ Himself—3:4; John 11:25:

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

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

1. The genuine church life is not a matter of teaching or doctrine; rather, it is a life in which Christ Himself is realized, experienced, enjoyed, expressed, and exhibited by us—Phil. 3:10.

   Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

2. The genuine church life can be realized only by the experience of Christ in our daily life—Rom. 8:9-11, 17.

   Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.
   Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
Rom 8:11  And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Rom 8:17  And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.

C.  The way to realize the genuine church life is to experience Christ as everything to us—Col. 1:27; 2:17; 3:1, 4, 10-11, 15-17:

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 2:17  Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.

Col 3:1  If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

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

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

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

Col 3:15  And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

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.

Col 3:17  And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1.  The genuine church life comes from the genuine inner enjoyment of Christ— Eph. 3:17a.

Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

2.  The development of Christ into our inward being issues in the genuine church life—4:13, 15-16.

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 4:15  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.

3.  In order to have a church life to express Christ according to God’s eternal purpose, our soul must be subdued and saturated with Christ as the Spirit— 1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 3:17a; Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17.

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.

Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

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

1 Cor 15:45b  …the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

2 Cor 3:17  And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

D.  The genuine church life requires us to take up our cross and follow Him—Matt. 10:38:

Matt 10:38  And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

1.  We, His believers, were crucified with Christ, and now we must bear the cross—Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24.

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

Matt 16:24  Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
2. The self must be crossed out so that Christ can come to be the reality of the church life—vv. 23-24; Rom. 6:5.

Matthew 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

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

3. There is no other way to realize the genuine church life but to deny our natural life and the soul-life and follow the Lord in our spirit—Matt. 16:24-27.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Matthew 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Matthew 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

E. The genuine church life is through the inner experience of the indwelling Christ—Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:12, 16; 2:21-22:

Ephesians 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,

Ephesians 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Ephesians 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.

Ephesians 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Ephesians 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

1. The entire New Testament is filled with the revelation of the indwelling Christ—Rom. 5:10, 17; Gal 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 24, 30; Philippians 1:20b-21a; Colossians 1:27.

Romans 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,

Romans 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.

Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Galatians 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,

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

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

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
2. In Ephesians 3:16-21 Paul prayed that we would be strengthened with power into the inner man with the result that Christ could make His home in our hearts and thereby occupy, possess, permeate, and saturate our whole inner being with Himself—vv. 16-17a.

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,
Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
Eph 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,
Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

3. When Christ is able to make His home in our hearts, occupying all the inward parts of our being, we will be able to have the genuine church life—2:21-22; 4:12, 16.

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of 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.

F. In order for us to have the genuine church life, we need to experience and enjoy the riches of Christ—3:8:

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

1. The genuine church life is not an organization; it is in our spirit, which is nourished with the riches of Christ until we are filled unto all the fullness of God—v. 8.

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

2. The genuine church life is a corporate life of seeking believers who are filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God, that is, unto the expression of the Triune God—v. 19.

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

3. It is through the inner experience of the indwelling Christ that we apprehend with all the saints the unlimited measure of Christ and have the genuine church life for the building up of the Body of Christ—vv. 17-18; 2:21-22; 4:16.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
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.

4. If we all experience and enjoy the riches of Christ, the genuine church life as the fullness, the expression, of Christ will be produced spontaneously—3:8, 17a; 2:22.

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

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

G. All the saints need to experience something of Christ in their daily life and come together with the Christ whom they have experienced to exhibit this Christ, to share Him with one another, and to enjoy Him with God the Father for His pleasure; this is the genuine church life—1 Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:25.

1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

Heb 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

BEING RECOVERED BACK TO CHRIST HIMSELF

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17; Phil. 3:7-8

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT OF GOD

In this chapter I have the burden to share something concerning God’s intention. God’s intention is His eternal purpose, which comes out of His heart’s desire (Eph. 1:9-11; 3:9-11). As Christians, we must be very clear concerning God’s eternal purpose, for to know God’s eternal purpose is to know the central thought of God’s intention, which has everything to do with the all-inclusive Christ. In the all-inclusive Christ we have God, man, the Creator, the creature, the Redeemer, redemption, the divine life, the human life, and many other positive matters. God’s intention from His heart’s desire is to work this wonderful all-inclusive Christ into us (Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17).

Christianity as a religion has missed the mark of God’s purpose and has lost sight of the central thought of God. Many Christians know God and have experienced His salvation to some extent, but few know that God’s central purpose is to work Christ into us. This is because not many believers realize that the purpose of God’s salvation involves more than cleansing us from our sins, saving us from hell, and rescuing us from sorrow. As believers in Christ, we realize that God loves us, that we are sinful, and that our destiny apart from Christ is to go to the lake of fire. We also recognize the fact that we need certain things of God, such as peace and joy. However, we may never have realized that God’s intention and the purpose of His salvation is to work the all-inclusive Christ into us as our strength, light, guidance, health, knowledge, wisdom, and everything. It was for this purpose that God created us as vessels in His image to contain Him as our content (Gen. 1:26; 2:7, 9; Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7).

DISTRACTIONS FROM CHRIST AS REVEALED IN PAUL’S EPISTLES

In the years immediately following Christ’s ministry on the earth, many Christians became distracted from Christ and were drawn away to the Old Testament law, Jewish religion and tradition, doctrine, philosophy, and supernatural gifts. Although these things may be good, they are not Christ Himself. Paul wrote his Epistles for the purpose of dealing with these distractions. He wrote the Epistle to the Galatians in order to deal with the problem of the law (1:6; 2:16; 3:2, 18, 24-25; 4:9-10, 21; 5:1-4). Although the law was given by God Himself, Paul had to deal with it strongly because it had
become an element that distracted the Galatian believers from Christ. When the Hebrew believers became distracted by Judaism, Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which he dealt with the Jewish religion (1:4; 3:3; 4:14; 8:6-7). Although Judaism was the best religion, both it and its accompanying regulations, rules, and forms had become factors that distracted people from Christ. Paul also wrote to the Ephesians to warn them against becoming distracted by doctrines and teachings and to exhort them to hold to the truth, which is Christ Himself (4:14-15). He wrote the Epistle to the Colossians to deal with human philosophy, or worldly rudimentary teachings, which distracted the believers from Christ (2:8, 16-18, 20-21). First Corinthians reveals that the Head, Christ, gave the gifts to His Body to bring people to Himself and to build up the church as the Body of Christ (12:1, 4-11, 27-28; 14:4b-5, 12, 26, 31). Nevertheless, these gifts had become factors that distracted the Corinthians from Christ. Paul wrote his Epistles because he was clear that many good things, including the God-given law, the Jewish religion, correct doctrines, human philosophy, and spiritual gifts, had become substitutes for Christ. Although these things are for Christ when they are used properly, the enemy of God utilizes them to distract people from Christ.

The apostle Paul shows in his Epistles that these things are not Christ Himself and indicates that if they distract us from Christ, they are versus Christ. While we should not think that the law is evil, we should realize that it is versus Christ. It is the same with the Jewish religion. It is good—much better than the pagan religions—but it is versus Christ. The same is true with doctrines and human philosophy. I believe that philosophy is mankind’s best invention, but it is nevertheless versus Christ. Spiritual gifts also can be versus Christ. Today all these things are under the hand of God’s enemy, who utilizes them to distract people from God’s eternal purpose and central thought, which is to work Christ into us.

**PAYING ATTENTION TO CHRIST ALONE**

I am concerned that we, like the recipients of Paul’s letters, may pay our attention to many things other than Christ. We need to be clear that God’s intention, purpose, and desire have everything to do with Christ. Christ is the center of all things (Col. 1:17). He is the reality of all positive things (2:16-17). He is the center and circumference, the “hub” and the “rim,” in God’s eternal purpose, having the first place in all things (1:18). For a period of time as a young believer, I paid attention to Bible knowledge. Since that time I passed through several periods in which I focused on other matters. Now I focus on nothing but the all-inclusive Christ, who is subjective to me in my experience.

**Not Paying Attention to Doctrines and Teachings**

I once told a group of believers that doctrines, teachings, and scriptural knowledge, in and of themselves, do Christians little good. I emphasized to them that our need is not these things but the subjective experience of the living Christ. I told them that although I had studied the Scriptures and written many notes in my Bible, I had nothing if I did not have the experience of Christ. Doctrines and knowledge matter little; only Christ matters. The law was given by God for the purpose of conducting people to Christ (Gal. 3:24). However, the enemy of God utilized the law to distract people from Christ. In his subtlety the enemy took something that God gave for the purpose of bringing people to Christ and used it to distract people from Christ.

The doctrines in the Scriptures are descriptions, explanations, and revelations of Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39). Nevertheless, people today are greatly distracted by the enemy through these very doctrines. As a result, they lose sight of Christ. A brother once questioned me concerning my knowledge of absolute grace, eternal security, and Calvinism. I told him that even if he were to know every Christian doctrine but did not have Christ, he would not have grace. No matter how “absolute” his grace was, if he did not have Christ, all he had was an empty doctrine of grace. I also told him that the amount of eternal security he had likewise depended upon how much Christ he had. If he had Christ, he had security, for Christ Himself is the security; conversely, if he did not have Christ, even if
he believed in eternal security, he did not possess genuine security. I concluded by asking him whether he knew about justification by faith. He responded that he had many books by Martin Luther on the subject and knew much about it. Again I told him that if he did not have Christ, no matter how much he believed in justification by faith, he would not possess such justification unless he experienced Christ Himself as his justification. We need to realize that it is not doctrines that matter, but Christ. All our doctrines must be for Christ, because doctrines are definitions, explanations, and revelations of Christ. If we separate biblical doctrines from Christ, we make the doctrines empty. We should never separate doctrine from Christ Himself, for Christ Himself is the reality of every doctrine.

**Not Paying Attention to Philosophy and Ethics**

While Christianity has many good things, it is philosophy in particular that has invaded Christianity. The teachings and ethics found in philosophy may be considered mankind’s best development. Nevertheless, philosophy is not Christ.

We do not realize how much we have been influenced by human philosophy. Whether we were raised in the Far East or in the West, we have been greatly influenced by human philosophy in the realm of ethics. On the day that we received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, our first thought might have been that from that day forward we had to do good deeds. We might also have thought that as a saved one, we needed to please God. Where did we receive such thoughts? We received them from the influence of human philosophy.

Before we were saved, we were influenced greatly by human philosophy and ethics because we were taught these things from our birth. It took more than twenty years after I was saved for the influence of human philosophy to be removed from me. I am concerned that even now many of us have the thought that because we were in the world in the past, we must now be revived, come back to God, and please Him. Certainly we all need to be revived, but the inclination to be revived in order to please God may be due to our ethical concept. Ethics are very much versus Christ and distract us from Christ.

May the Lord open our eyes to see that what we need is not to be good but to have Christ as our life and our everything. We need to turn not so much from evil things to good things but from not living by Christ as our life to living by Christ as our life. We need to see a heavenly vision of God’s intention to make Christ everything to us. Day by day our need is to pay attention to nothing but Christ (Matt. 17:4-5). I believe that one day the Lord will open our eyes so that we will see Christ in this way. When we receive such a vision, we will repent of many good things that are apart from Christ, such as our humility, our zeal for the Christian faith, and even our love for Christ.

**Not Paying Attention to Christian Activities and Movements**

In addition to teachings and philosophy, Christianity today has many activities, programs, and movements. For example, there is the movement of speaking in tongues, the movement of healing, and the so-called evangelical movement. However, the issue is not how many movements and activities we are involved in, but how much of Christ we have. Although we may attend Christian meetings daily, I am concerned that what we are receiving in those meetings is merely doctrines, gifts, ethical teachings, and activities. If we are filled with these things, we will not have much room for Christ.

**BEING RECOVERED TO CHRIST HIMSELF**

If we see today’s situation in this light, we will turn away from these many distractions and turn to Christ. In general, our direction as Christians is away from Christ. We should have only one direction—Christ Himself. Many believers today are for many good things other than Christ. They even pursue these distracting things in Christ’s name. However, although they may have Christ in name, Christ is very distant from their daily experience. Such believers “respect” Christ so much that they exalt Christ to the heavens and do not allow Him to descend into their daily situations. Many even think that by pursuing various good things, they are exalting Christ. In reality, such pursuing in the name of
Christ is devoid of the living reality of Christ’s person. Many believers have doctrines concerning Christ, but they do not have Christ Himself in their experience.

I have been fighting an intense battle concerning this point. In these last days the main item that the Lord is recovering in His recovery is the genuine experience of Christ. The Lord is concerned not mainly with recovering various forms or doctrines. Rather, He as the living One wants to recover our experience of Himself as our life and our everything in our daily life.

PRAYING TO SEE THE PRESENT, LIVING, UP-TO-DATE CHRIST

I simply bring this matter to you and urge you to go to the Lord and open yourself to Him. You may tell Him, “Lord, I have heard something about You and have seen something concerning Your eternal purpose. You want to be everything to me. Lord, expose me in Your light and in Your presence. Show me where and what I am.” If you are open to the Lord in this way, you will see something.

For some time I have been concerned that many of us may know many things as Christians. Everything we know can be utilized by the enemy to blind us, veil us, and inhibit us from seeing Christ. We all need to pray to see the vision of Christ being life and everything to us in our daily life. We need to apprehend the present light, the present revelation, the present vision, and the present seeing of Christ. We should never be satisfied with what we have attained in the past. We must receive new mercy and grace from the Lord so that we may be able to drop all the good things—even the best things—and stretch forward to lay hold of Christ Himself (Phil. 3:7-8, 13).

The church in Laodicea was satisfied with what it had attained (Rev. 3:17). What the saints in Laodicea possessed became a veil that covered their eyes. For this reason the Lord counseled them to buy eyesalve that they might see (v. 18). The real eyesalve is the dropping of everything that we have. If there is a handkerchief covering my eyes, the best “eyesalve” is simply to drop the handkerchief. Today we have many things that have become veils to us. As a result, many of us are under veil after veil.

Many of the things that we have were originally given to us by God. However, because these things have become old to us, they have become dead in our experience and have become veils to us. These are the things that we must drop. It is not enough to drop the evil and wrong things; we must drop even the good and right things that have become old. We are not for the “good old way.” Even if something is good, it does not benefit us if it has become old and tasteless. For this reason the longer we practice the old way, the more dissatisfied we become.

What we need today is the present, living, up-to-date Christ. There is no change with Christ Himself (Heb. 13:8); however, we need a great change in our experience of Him. We must have an understanding, realization, and experience of Christ that is living, new, fresh, up to date, and present. My burden is not to give the Lord’s children more doctrines and teachings; my burden is that the Lord would open our eyes and bring us into the new experience of Himself. We should not be content with what we have. We need to drop all our old experiences, drop what we have attained in the past, and retain nothing in our hands. We should simply open ourselves to the Lord with empty hands, looking unto Him for a new experience of Him as the living One. This is our great need today.

Prayer: Lord, we cry out to You that in these days You would release us from all teaching, tradition, religion, and even so-called Christianity. Lord, we need Your releasing. We commit ourselves into Your hands. Break through so that we may be set free from all these things. Lord, in these days keep us in Your vision. Eliminate all the things that veil us so that we may see You, the living One, and so that You may be revealed in us. Lord, we claim Your victory in this matter. Cause us to know and experience You in a living way in these days, even at this very moment. Bring us all into the experience of who You are. We pray this in Your prevailing name. (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1964, vol. 2, pp. 81-87)
Message Two

Enjoying Christ as the Reality of the Meal Offering
to Have a Meal-offering Christian Life
and a Meal-offering Church Life,
Consummating in the New Jerusalem
as a Great Meal Offering—
the Ultimate Consummation of the Mingling
of the Triune God with the Tripartite Man

Scripture Reading: Lev. 2:1-16; John 6:57, 63; 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12, 24-25

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.
Lev 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.
Lev 2:3 And what is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.
Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.
Lev 2:6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a meal offering.
Lev 2:7 And if your offering is a meal offering made in a pot, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.
Lev 2:8 And you shall bring to Jehovah the meal offering that is made of these things and present it to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar.
Lev 2:9 And the priest shall take up from the meal offering its memorial portion and shall burn it on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.
Lev 2:10 And that which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.
Lev 2:11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.
Lev 2:12 You may present them to Jehovah, as an offering of firstfruits, but they shall not be offered up for a satisfying fragrance on the altar.
Lev 2:13 And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.
Lev 2:14 And if you present a meal offering of firstfruits to Jehovah, you shall present for the meal offering of your firstfruits new grain roasted with fire, crushed grain of the fresh ear.
Lev 2:15 And you shall put oil on it and place frankincense on it; it is a meal offering.
Lev 2:16 And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of its crushed grain and some of its oil, with all its frankincense, as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

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 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.
1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

I. The meal offering typifies Christ in His God-man living—Lev. 2:1-16:

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

Lev 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev 2:3 And what is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.

Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

Lev 2:6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a meal offering.

Lev 2:7 And if your offering is a meal offering made in a pot, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.

Lev 2:8 And you shall bring to Jehovah the meal offering that is made of these things and present it to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar.

Lev 2:9 And the priest shall take up from the meal offering its memorial portion and shall burn it on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev 2:10 And that which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.

Lev 2:11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

Lev 2:12 You may present them to Jehovah, as an offering of firstfruits, but they shall not be offered up for a satisfying fragrance on the altar.

Lev 2:13 And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.

Lev 2:14 And if you present a meal offering of firstfruits to Jehovah, you shall present for the meal offering of your firstfruits new grain roasted with fire, crushed grain of the fresh ear.

Lev 2:15 And you shall put oil on it and place frankincense on it; it is a meal offering.

Lev 2:16 And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of its crushed grain and some of its oil, with all its frankincense, as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

A. Fine flour, the main element of the meal offering, signifies Christ’s humanity, which is fine, perfect, tender, balanced, and right in every way, with no excess and no deficiency; this signifies the beauty and excellence of Christ’s human living and daily walk—v. 1; John 18:38; 19:4, 6b; Luke 2:40; 23:14; Isa. 53:3.

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

John 18:38 Pilate said to Him, What is truth? And having said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, I find no fault in Him.

John 19:4 And Pilate went outside again and said to them, Behold, I am bringing Him out to you that you may know that I find no fault in Him.

John 19:6b … Pilate said to them, You take Him and crucify Him, for I do not find fault in Him.

Luke 2:40 And the little child grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.

Luke 23:14 Said to them, You have brought this man to me as one who turns the people away, and behold, I have examined Him before you and found no fault in this man regarding the accusations you bring against Him.

Isa 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, / A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; / And like one from whom men hide their faces, / He was despised; and we did not esteem Him.

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God.

Luke 3:22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him. And a voice came out of heaven: You are My Son, the Beloved; in You I have found My delight.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed,

Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";

C. The mingling of fine flour with the oil in the meal offering signifies that Christ’s humanity is mingled with the Holy Spirit and His human nature is mingled with God’s divine nature, making Him a God-man, possessing the divine nature and the human nature distinctly, without a third nature being produced—Lev. 2:4-5; Matt. 1:18, 20.

Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

Matt 1:18 Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother, Mary, after she had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together, was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.

Matt 1:20 But while he pondered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife, for that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.

D. The frankincense in the meal offering signifies the fragrance of Christ in His resurrection; that the frankincense was put on the fine flour signifies that Christ’s humanity bears the aroma of His resurrection—Lev. 2:1-2; cf. Matt. 2:11; 11:20-30; Luke 10:21:

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

Lev 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Matt 11:20 Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His works of power took place, because they did not repent:

Matt 11:21 Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the works of power which took place in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matt 11:22 But I say to you, It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Matt 11:23 And you, Capernaum, who have been exalted to heaven, to Hades you will be brought down. For if the works of power which took place in you had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until today.

Matt 11:24 But I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

Matt 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Matt 11:26 Yes, Father, for thus it has been well-pleasing in Your sight.

Matt 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone fully know the Father except the Son and him to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.
Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
Luke 10:21 In that hour He exulted in the Holy Spirit and said, I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it has been well pleasing in Your sight.

1. As portrayed in the four Gospels, Christ lived a life in His humanity mingled with His divinity and expressing resurrection out from His sufferings—cf. John 18:4-8; 19:26-27a.

   John 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, Whom do you seek?

   John 18:5 They answered Him, Jesus the Nazarene. He said to them, I am. And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

   John 18:6 When therefore He said to them, I am, they drew back and fell to the ground.

   John 18:7 Then again He asked them, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene.

   John 18:8 Jesus answered, I told you that I am; if therefore you seek Me, let these go away.

   John 19:26 Then Jesus, seeing His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, said to His mother, Woman, behold, your son.

   John 19:27a Then He said to the disciple, Behold, your mother....

2. Christ’s Spirit-filled and resurrection-saturated living was a satisfying fragrance to God, giving God rest, peace, joy, enjoyment, and full satisfaction—Lev. 2:2; Luke 4:1; John 11:25; Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

   Lev 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

   Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, while being tempted for forty days by the devil.

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

   Matt 3:17 And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

   Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!

E. Salt, with which the meal offering was seasoned, signifies the death, or the cross, of Christ; salt functions to season, kill germs, and preserve—Lev. 2:13:

   Lev 2:13 And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.


   Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

   John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

   Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!

   Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!

2. Even before He was actually crucified, Christ daily lived a crucified life, denying Himself and His natural life and living the Father’s life in resurrection—John 6:38; 7:6, 16-18; cf. Gal. 2:20.

   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 7:6 Jesus therefore said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.

John 7:16 Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 7:17 If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

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.

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

3. The basic factor of God’s covenant is the cross, the crucifixion of Christ, signified by salt; it is by the cross that God’s covenant is preserved to be an eternal covenant—cf. Heb. 13:20.

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,

F. That the meal offering was without leaven signifies that in Christ there is no sin or any negative thing—Lev. 2:4-5, 11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; Luke 23:14; cf. 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

Lev 2:11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.

1 Pet 2:22 Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;

Luke 23:14 Said to them, You have brought this man to me as one who turns the people away, and behold, I have examined Him before you and found no fault in this man regarding the accusations you bring against Him.

1 Cor 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

1 Cor 5:7 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed.

1 Cor 5:8 So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

G. That the meal offering was without honey signifies that in Christ there is no natural affection or natural goodness—Lev. 2:11; Matt. 10:34-39; 12:46-50; Mark 10:18.

Lev 2:11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.

Matt 10:34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Matt 10:35 For I have come to set men at variance: a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

Matt 10:36 And a man's enemies will be those of his household.

Matt 10:37 He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me;

Matt 10:38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Matt 10:39 He who finds his soul-life shall lose it, and he who loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Matt 12:46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and His brothers stood outside seeking to speak to Him.

Matt 12:47 And someone said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.
Matt 12:48  But He answered and said to him who spoke to Him, Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?
Matt 12:49  And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, Behold, My mother and My brothers!
Matt 12:50  For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
Mark 10:18  And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One-God.

II. The meal offering typifies our Christian life as a duplication of Christ’s God-man living—Lev. 2:4; Psa. 92:10; 1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:2-3, 11, 13:

Lev 2:4  And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
Psa 92:10  But You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; / I am anointed with fresh oil.
1 Pet 2:21  For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
Rom 8:2  For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
Rom 8:3  For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
Rom 8:11  And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
Rom 8:13  For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

A. We need to enjoy Christ as our meal offering day by day for our priestly diet so that He can live again on the earth through us in His divinely enriched humanity; if we eat Christ as the meal offering, we will become what we eat and live by what we eat—Lev. 2:3; John 6:57, 63; cf. Psa. 92:10; 1 Cor. 10:17; Phil. 1:19-21a.
Lev 2:3  And what is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.
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.
Psa 92:10  But You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; / I am anointed with fresh oil.
1 Cor 10:17  Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.
Phil 1:19  For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
Phil 1:20  According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
Phil 1:21a  For to me, to live is Christ …

B. By exercising our spirit to touch the Spirit consolidated in the Word, we eat the human life and living of Jesus, we are constituted with Jesus, and the human living of Jesus becomes our human living (Eph. 6:17-18; Jer. 15:16; Gal. 6:17) with the following characteristics of His divinely enriched humanity:
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,
Jer 15:16  Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.
Gal 6:17  Henceforth let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus.

Matt 3:13  Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.
Matt 3:14  But John tried to prevent Him, saying, It is I who have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me?
Matt 3:15  But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him.

2. The humanity of Jesus has no resting place—8:20.
Matt 8:20 And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

3. The humanity of Jesus is lowly in heart—11:29.
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matt 12:19 He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
Matt 12:20 A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench until He brings forth justice unto victory.

5. The humanity of Jesus is flexible—17:27.
Matt 17:27 But that we do not stumble them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. And when you open its mouth, you will find a stater; take that and give it to them for Me and you.

6. The humanity of Jesus serves others—Mark 10:45; see footnote 1 on 1:10.
Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.
Mark 1:10 And 1immediately, coming out of the water, He saw the heavens being parted and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him.

note 1 Mark's record of a Slave reflects not the splendor of the status of this Slave's person but the diligence of His service. The word immediately is used in his record forty-two times, and one more time in alternate MSS.

Luke 4:16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and according to His custom He entered on the Sabbath day into the synagogue and stood up to read.
Luke 4:17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,
Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed,
Luke 4:19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of jubilee."
Luke 4:20 And when He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, He sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.
Luke 4:21 And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.
Luke 4:22 And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth, and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?
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.
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.

8.  The humanity of Jesus is orderly, not sloppy—Mark 6:39-40; John 6:12.

Mark 6:39  And He ordered them to have all recline by companies on the green grass.
Mark 6:40  And they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.
John 6:12  And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, Gather the broken pieces left over that nothing may be lost.

9.  The humanity of Jesus is limited by time—7:6.

John 7:6  Jesus therefore said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.

10.  The humanity of Jesus is unique—7:46.

John 7:46  The attendants answered, Never has a man spoken as this man has.

11.  The humanity of Jesus knows when to weep—11:33, 35.

John 11:33  Then Jesus, when He saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, was moved with indignation in His spirit and was troubled,
John 11:35  Jesus wept.

12.  The humanity of Jesus is humble—13:4-5.

John 13:4  Rose from supper and laid aside His outer garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself;
John 13:5  Then He poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

III.  Christ's life and our individual Christian life issue in a totality—the church life as a corporate meal offering—Lev. 2:1-2, 4-5; 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12, 24-25:

Lev 2:1  And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

Lev 2:2  Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev 2:4  And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

Lev 2:5  And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.

1 Cor 10:17  Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

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

1 Cor 12:24  But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

1 Cor 12:25  That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

A.  Such a life is a life of humanity mingled with the Holy Spirit and that has the Holy Spirit poured upon it, a life with salt and frankincense, but with no leaven or honey; both forms of the meal offering—the individual Christ and the corporate Christ, the church life—are food for God's satisfaction and our nourishment.

B.  The meal offering is a type of blending to bring us into the reality of the Body of Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy:

1.  “In 1 Corinthians 10:17 Paul says, ‘Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.’ Paul's thought of the church being one bread was...taken from the Old Testament. The meal offering in Leviticus 2:4 consisted of cakes made of fine flour mingled with oil. Every part of the fine flour was mixed, or mingled, with the oil. That is blending” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997, vol. 1, “The Practical Points concerning Blending,” p. 112).

1 Cor 10:17  Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all
partake of the one bread.

Lev 2:4  And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

2. The reality of the Body of Christ realized through our being blended together, as typified by the meal offering, is the corporate living by the perfected God-men, who are genuine men but are not living by their life but by the life of the processed God, whose attributes have been expressed through their human virtues; to be perfected is to be matured by continually exercising our spirit to reject the self and live by another life, which is Christ as the life of God—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10; 1:19-21a.

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

Phil 3:10  To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

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

Phil 1:20  According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21a  For to me, to live is Christ ...

3. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the Greek word for blended implies the losing of distinctions; it also means “harmonized,” “adjusted,” “mingled,” and “tempered.”

1 Cor 12:24  But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

4. In order to be blended in the Body life, the meal-offering church life, we have to go through the cross and do everything by the Spirit, dispensing Christ to one another for the building up of the Body of Christ.

5. All these points mean that we should fellowship; fellowship blends us; that is, it tempers, adjusts, harmonizes, and mingles us, causing us to lose our distinctions and saving us from leaving the impress of our personality upon the church’s life and work, so that Christ can truly be all and in all—Col. 3:10-11.

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.

6. “We should not do anything without fellowshipping with the other saints who are coordinating with us. Fellowship requires us to stop when we are about to do something. In our coordination in the church life and in the Lord’s work, we all have to learn not to do anything without fellowship...Blending means that we should always stop to fellowship with others” (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997, vol. 4, “The Divine and Mystical Realm,” p. 160).

C. The meal-offering church life is seen in 1 Corinthians:

1. Christ is the man given to us by God—1:2, 9, 30.

1 Cor 1:2  To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

1 Cor 1:9  God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:30  But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

2. Paul’s charge to the Corinthians—“be a man” (16:13, lit.)—means that we should have the high, uplifted humanity of Jesus (9:26-27; 13:4-7) with the highest virtues,
such as extraordinary love, boundless forbearance, unparalleled faithfulness, absolute humility, utmost purity, supreme holiness and righteousness, and brightness and uprightness.

1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand firm in the faith, be full-grown men, be strong.
1 Cor 9:26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;
1 Cor 9:27 But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself may become disapproved.
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.

3. If we love the Lord and love His appearing, looking forward to His coming (Gk. parousia, meaning “presence”), we will be kept in the realm of having Christ as our humanity; the humanity of those who serve the Lord is safeguarded by their praying in the Holy Spirit to keep themselves in the love of God in order to love the Lord to the uttermost and by their daily offering themselves willingly to the Lord in the splendor, the beauty, of their consecration to be conceived as the dew to water Christ—Jude 19-21; 2 Tim. 4:8; Matt. 24:3, 37, 39; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Cor. 2:9-10; Psa. 110:3.

Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulisb, having no spirit.
Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

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.

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.
Matt 24:39 And they did not know that judgment was coming until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

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.
1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
1 Cor 2:10 But to us God has revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
Psa 110:3 Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.

4. The church life is a mingling living of humanity oiled by and with the Spirit and joined to the Spirit—1 Cor. 2:4, 12; 3:16; 6:17.
1 Cor 2:4 And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
1 Cor 2:12 But we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God;
1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
5. The grace of God that we are enjoying today is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—15:10, 45b:

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

1 Cor 15:45b the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

a. We must die with Christ to self daily so that we may live with Christ to God daily—v. 31, 36; John 12:24-26.

1 Cor 15:31 I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

1 Cor 15:36 Foolish man, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies;

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

John 12:25 He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.

John 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

b. We must demonstrate the reality of resurrection by being one with God and having God with us in the status in which we were called—1 Cor. 7:24, 21-22a, 10-13.

1 Cor 7:24 Each one, brothers, in what status he was called, in this let him remain with God.

1 Cor 7:21 Were you called as a slave? Let it not concern you; but even if you are able to become free, use your status as a slave rather.

1 Cor 7:22a For the slave who has been called in the Lord is the Lord's freedman; …

1 Cor 7:10 But to the married I charge, not I but the Lord, A wife must not be separated from her husband

1 Cor 7:11 (But if indeed she is separated, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband), and a husband must not leave his wife.

1 Cor 7:12 But to the rest I say, I, not the Lord, If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she consents to dwell with him, he must not leave her;

1 Cor 7:13 And a wife who has an unbelieving husband, and if he consents to dwell with her, must not leave her husband.

c. We must labor not by our natural life and natural ability but by the Lord as our resurrection life and power—15:10, 58.

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

6. We must enjoy the crucified Christ as the solution to all the problems in the church—1:9, 18, 22-23a; cf. Mark 15:31-32a.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Cor 1:22 For indeed Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

1 Cor 1:23a But we preach Christ crucified, …

Mark 15:31 Likewise also the chief priests with the scribes mocked Him with one another and said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save.

Mark 15:32a Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe. …

7. We must enjoy Christ as our unleavened banquet—the life supply of sincerity and truth—who is absolutely pure, without mixture, and full of reality—1 Cor. 5:6b-8.

1 Cor 5:6b … Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
1 Cor 5:7   Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed.

1 Cor 5:8   So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

8. In the church life, the natural life must be killed by the salt, by the cross of Christ—15:10; 12:31; 13:8a; 2 Cor. 5:16.

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

1 Cor 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.

1 Cor 13:8a Love never falls away. …

2 Cor 5:16 So then we, from now on, know no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer.

9. God desires that every local church be a meal offering to satisfy Him and fully supply the saints day by day; this means that we will eat our church life, for the church life will be our daily supply.

IV. As the mingling of the Triune God with the tripartite man, the New Jerusalem will be a great meal offering, the ultimate consummation of the mingling of the Triune God with the tripartite man—Lev. 2:4; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Thes. 5:23:

Lev 2:4   And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

2 Cor 13:14   The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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.

A. The number twelve, which represents the New Jerusalem, indicates that the New Jerusalem is the mingling of the Triune God (three) with His creature man (four)—Rev. 21:12, 14, 21; 22:2.

Rev 21:12   It had a great and high wall and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel:

Rev 21:14   And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Rev 21:21   And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

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

B. The New Jerusalem is the mingling of the processed and consummated Triune God with the processed and consummated tripartite church—v. 17a.

Rev 22:17a   And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! …

C. Eventually, the triune, eternal God becomes the New Jerusalem united, mingled, and incorporated with all of us—21:3, 22.

Rev 21:3   And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:22   And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE MEAL-OFFERING CHURCH LIFE

The book of 1 Corinthians shows us a particular kind of church life. Since the church life revealed here has so many aspects, it is difficult for us to summarize this church life in a phrase or a clause or
even a sentence. If we are enlightened concerning the meal offering, which describes the life of the Lord Jesus on earth, we will be able to see that the church life described in 1 Corinthians corresponds to the life of the Lord Jesus. This life was the formation of the meal offering, and the church life presented in 1 Corinthians may be called the meal-offering church life.

We have seen that the meal offering contains four elements: fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt. The fine flour signifies Christ’s fine humanity, the oil signifies the Spirit of God, the frankincense signifies the fragrance of Christ’s resurrection, and the salt signifies the cross of Christ, which, in a subjective way, deals with all the negative things in our life.

We have also seen that the meal offering does not have either leaven or honey. Leaven signifies sin and all the negative things. Honey signifies the natural life in its good aspects, including natural affection.

If we read the four Gospels, we will see that the four elements of the meal offering were the components of Christ’s life on earth and caused Him to be the real meal offering. As Christians, we should live the same kind of life the Lord Jesus lived. This means that, strictly speaking, the Christian life should be a meal offering.

A LIFE WITH THE HIGHEST HUMANITY

In order for our Christian life to be a meal offering, it must be a life with the highest humanity. This is the reason Paul charged the Corinthians, saying, “Be a man” (1 Cor. 16:13). According to the context of 1 Corinthians, to be a man means that we should have a high, uplifted humanity.

If we have such a humanity, we will exercise self-control. This is indicated by Paul’s word in 9:26 and 27. “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so I box, not as beating the air; but I buffet my body and lead it as a slave.” These verses reveal that Paul had a high humanity and that he had a strong, excellent character. He did not run uncertainly or beat the air but exercised control over himself. He was a real man with a high standard of morality in his human living.

First Corinthians 13:4-7 is a description of love. This description actually shows us a fine humanity. Verse 4 says, “Love suffers long, and is kind; love is not jealous; love does not brag, is not puffed up.” In our weak humanity, we have only limited patience, but love suffers long. Also, it is easy for us to be jealous and covetous, but love is not jealous. Furthermore, love does not behave unbecomingly, does not seek its own things, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, and does not rejoice over unrighteousness (vv. 5-6a). On the contrary, love rejoices with the truth, covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things (vv. 6b-7). Here we have a description of a fine humanity and of a high human character. This indicates that 1 Corinthians is a book concerned with the uplifting of humanity.

In 16:13 Paul does not say, “Be a hero”; he says, “Be a man.” From every angle and from every side, we should be a man. From the angle of ethics, we should be a man. From the angle of self-control, we should be a man. From the angles of wisdom and love, we should be a man. This is to have an uplifted humanity. In the book of 1 Corinthians, we can see the genuine fine flour. This book surely presents the meal-offering church life.

In the meal-offering church life, the first item is a fine, uplifted humanity. If we would have the proper church life, we all need to have a strong character. This strong character, however, should be balanced, for an unbalanced humanity is a biased humanity. Therefore, we should be strong and also soft. If in the church life we are strong without also being soft, we will offend others. Although we need to be soft as well as strong, we should not be too soft. Those who are too soft are like noodles. There is a proverb which says that we can lift up bamboo but we cannot lift up a noodle. We cannot have a proper church life if the saints are either too strong or too soft. We need to be balanced. For the church life, we need to be a man with a fine, balanced, uplifted humanity.

CHRIST—THE MAN GIVEN TO US BY GOD
Chapter one of 1 Corinthians reveals that Christ is the man given to us by God. Verse 2 says that the Lord Jesus Christ is “theirs and ours.” Christ is yours and mine. As John 3:16 tells us, God loved the world—fallen mankind—and gave His only begotten Son to us. Now Christ is ours, and we have been called into the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). We may now enjoy Him, participate in Him, and share Him with one another.

Furthermore, 1:30 says, “Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” It is of God that we are in Christ Jesus, and Christ has become wisdom to us. Such a Christ has been given to us.

Christ is God’s present, God’s gift, to us. This present is a person; He is the Son of God and also the God-man. God has also called us into the enjoyment of this gift and has made this gift to be wisdom to us, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. This is Christ as a man revealed in 1 Corinthians 1.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The second element in the meal offering is the oil, which signifies the Spirit of God. First Corinthians has a great deal to say about the Spirit. Paul speaks of the Spirit of God in chapters two and three. In 2:4 he says that his speech and preaching were “in demonstration of the Spirit,” and in verse 12 he tells us that we have received “the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us by God.” Then in 3:16 he goes on to say, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Many Christians do not realize that they are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in them. Do you know that in your daily life there is One who indwells you? Do you realize that the Spirit of God takes you as His dwelling place? The Spirit has been given to us, and now He dwells in us.

In 6:17 Paul says, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” This indicates the mingling of the Lord as the Spirit with our spirit. Since we are one spirit with the Lord, we are part of Him. This does not mean that we are part of God as an object of worship; it means that we are a part of the Lord in our life experience. In our spirit we are one with the divine Spirit. We have been oiled with the Spirit, and we have even been joined to the Spirit. Not only have we received the Holy Spirit—we are one with Him.

If we were not one with the Spirit, we could not have the church life. The church life is a life of humanity oiled by the Holy Spirit and with the Holy Spirit. We are one with the Holy Spirit, and we need to remain in this oneness.

CHRIST IN RESURRECTION

In 1 Corinthians we also have the frankincense, that is, Christ in resurrection. In fact, one entire chapter, chapter fifteen, is devoted to the matter of resurrection. Therefore, in this book we surely have the fragrance of the resurrected Christ.

Some of the Corinthians had been deceived by the Devil to say that there would be no resurrection of the dead. Paul argued with them, saying, “If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain; and we are found also false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if indeed the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised” (15:13-16).

In 15:9 and 10 Paul speaks concerning his experience of the resurrected Christ. First, in verse 9 he refers to himself as “the least of the apostles.” Then in verse 10 he says, “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” In this verse the grace of God equals resurrection; it equals the resurrected Christ. The grace of which we are enjoying today is Christ in resurrection. With Paul we can say that it is not I but the grace of God, not I but Christ in resurrection.
In verse 58 Paul gives us a word of encouragement. “Wherefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Our labor is not in vain because we are laboring not in our natural life but in the resurrection of Christ. Our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life will never be in vain.

REMAINING IN THE STATE IN WHICH WE WERE CALLED

In chapter seven Paul charges the believers to remain in the state in which they were called. “Each one, brothers, in what state he was called, in this let him remain with God” (v. 24). He uses the slaves as an example. “Were you a slave when called? Let it not concern you; but, if even you are able to become free, use it rather. For he who was called in the Lord when a slave is the Lord’s freedman” (vv. 21-22a). Instead of doing a work of emancipation, Paul encouraged the believers who were slaves to remain in slavery, the state in which they were called, and live a life that can endure slavery and overcome it. The slaves have a particular opportunity to demonstrate the reality of resurrection and to glorify Christ by living a life that overcomes slavery. What a testimony such a living would be!

The principle is the same with married life. Paul says, “A wife should not be separated from her husband” (v. 10). In verses 12 and 13 he goes on to say, “If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she consents to dwell with him, let him not leave her; and a wife who has an unbelieving husband and he consents to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband.” This requires a high humanity. The reason there are so many divorces today is that people’s humanity is too weak. To stay with a husband or wife who is difficult to live with and whom we may not like requires that we “be a man” and have an uplifted humanity.

I knew a married couple who, before they were saved, decided to get a divorce. They did not love each other, and they were determined to be divorced. However, they heard the gospel, received the Lord Jesus, and were saved. From that time on, they had Christ as another person living in them, and He uplifted their humanity and changed their character. They dropped the idea of divorce and began to live together in sweetness, in the fragrance of Christ’s resurrection. Those who contacted them could sense the fragrance of the resurrection life of Christ.

Paul’s way in 1 Corinthians 7 is very unusual and also very wise. He did not force a brother to stay with his wife. Rather, he charged the saints to remain with God in the state in which they were called. Those who are married should not leave their wife or husband, for to leave one’s spouse is actually to leave God. Married believers are to remain with their spouse in the presence of God.

The point here is that the saints should not expect to have a change in their status. Concerning this, we may take Paul as an example. He, a Jew, was born under Roman imperialism. However, he never encouraged the Jews to emancipate themselves from the Romans. On the contrary, in Romans 13 he charged the saints to be subject to the authorities of the Roman empire. This indicates that he encouraged them not to change their status but to remain in the state in which they were called.

The worse this state is, the more opportunity one has to live Christ. Those in slavery can live Christ in resurrection while they are in slavery. This is to be a man. We all can be men oiled with the Spirit and joined to the Spirit to be one spirit, and we can be fully in resurrection, manifesting the fragrance of the resurrected Christ.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The salt—the fourth element of the meal offering—can also be found in 1 Corinthians. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul spoke regarding the cross of Christ and the crucified Christ. “Jews indeed ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified” (1:22-23a). Paul did not say that he preached Christ glorified; he said that he preached Christ crucified. Paul did not preach miracles or wisdom—he preached Christ crucified.

The crucified Christ is a Christ who does nothing to save Himself. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, “the chief priests with the scribes, mocking with one another, said, He saved others; himself
he cannot save! Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe!” (Mark 15:31-32a). No matter how much He was challenged, the Lord Jesus remained on the cross, doing nothing to save Himself.

To the Corinthians Paul preached such a crucified Christ. To the Greeks, who were proud of their culture and wisdom, this was foolishness. The situation is the same today. People are still proud of their culture and wisdom, and we need to preach the crucified Christ to them.

First Corinthians 1:18 says, “The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” Through the preaching of the gospel, the word of the cross can save people. If we would have power in preaching the gospel, we need to live a crucified life. We must learn to live a crucified life, being crossed out every day. We may experience this in our married life, for every wife is a cross to her husband and every husband is a cross to his wife. This arrangement, which is for our salting, is of the Lord’s sovereignty.

We are salted not only in our married life but also in the church life. There is such a thing as being salted in the church life. On the one hand, in the church life we have happiness. On the other hand, we also have the unpleasantness that comes from being salted. Deep within, the brothers may feel that they are being salted, crossed out, by the sisters. The sisters may have the same feeling about the brothers. In the church life a great deal of salting takes place.

In 1 Corinthians Paul does not teach us to be glorified. He teaches us to be crucified. Without the cross, there is no church life. If there is no salt, there is no meal offering. The meal offering must be salted.

DEALING WITH LEAVEN—THE SINFUL AND NEGATIVE THINGS

We have pointed out that in the meal offering there is neither leaven nor honey. In 1 Corinthians both leaven—the sinful and negative things—and honey—the natural life—are dealt with.

In 5:6b-8 we have the dealing with leaven. “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Here we see that leaven is not tolerated in the church life.

DEALING WITH HONEY—THE NATURAL LIFE

First Corinthians 15:10 indicates that in Paul’s experience the honey, the natural life, was dealt with. Recall that in this verse he says, “I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God.” Paul’s labor was not by the I, not by the natural life, not by honey.

Paul certainly was not a person with a weak character. Before he was saved, he was very strong in character, taking the lead to persecute the saints. But after he was saved, he was made an apostle and he labored more than the other apostles. However, his labor was not in the natural life.

In the church life the natural life and the natural affection should be dealt with. This means that there should be no honey in the church life. We all like to be natural and live a natural life, but in the church life the natural life is not permitted. It must be put to death. The honey of the natural life must be killed by the salt, by the cross of Christ.

We should not put any leaven or honey in the meal offering. This means that in the church life we should not have the negative things or the natural life.

ONE BREAD

The church life is a corporate meal offering signified by the one bread in 10:17. “Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.” This bread, or cake, signifies the corporate life.

We enjoy this corporate life when we partake of the Lord’s table. Do you take the bread and the
cup by yourself? Of course not! You partake of the bread and the cup with the saints. This is a matter of fellowship. This is the reason 10:16 says, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a fellowship of the body of Christ?” Because this is a matter of fellowship, we partake of the bread and of the cup in a corporate way. This corporate partaking is a sign of the church life; it is also a testimony of the church life.

All the points covered in 1 Corinthians are related to the church life, to the corporate life. According to this book, for this corporate life we need to be a man who is oiled with the Holy Spirit, who lives a life under the cross with the resurrection of Christ as the frankincense, and who does not have leaven or honey. This is the church life as a meal offering.

The whole church life is a meal offering. In this meal offering the top portion is for God’s enjoyment, and the remainder is for us to take as our daily food in our service to God. We, therefore, are a meal offering as food for God’s satisfaction and for the nourishment of others.

God wants to have a meal offering in every locality. He desires that every local church be a meal offering that satisfies Him and that fully supplies the saints day by day.

Our hunger is satisfied not only by Christ but also by the church life. The church life satisfies us because the church life is a corporate meal offering, with the top portion for God and the remainder for us. Therefore, we are fed by and with the church life. The church life is the meal offering to be our daily supply. Hallelujah for the meal-offering church life! (Life-study of Leviticus, pp. 143-152)
I. We need to take Christ as our person; this is the highest and richest experience of Christ—Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17a:

A. God’s intention in His economy is to work Himself into us not only as our life but also as our person—Gal. 4:19.

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

B. The Gospel of John reveals that in His human living, the Lord Jesus took the Father as His person and lived by the Father as His person—5:19, 30; 14:10; 6:57:

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 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 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.

1. Although the Lord as the Son of God was almighty, He declared that He could do nothing from Himself, because instead of living by Himself, He lived by the Father as His person—5:19, 30.

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.
2. Just as the Lord lived because of the Father by taking the Father as His person, so also we should live because of the Lord by taking Him as our person—6:57.

   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.

C. Our regenerated spirit is the inner man with the indwelling Christ as its person—3:6; Eph. 3:17a:

   John 3:6  That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
   Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

   1. If we would take Christ as our person, we must see that our regenerated spirit is no longer merely an organ for us to contact God but is our person—v. 17a.

   Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

   2. In our inner man we have Christ not only as our life but also as our person—1 John 5:11-12; Col. 3:4; Eph. 3:17a.

   1 John 5:11  And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
   1 John 5:12  He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
   Col 3:4  When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
   Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

3. Our inner man consists of our renewed soul as its organ and our regenerated spirit indwelt by Christ, the person, as its life and person—Rom. 12:2; 8:10; Eph. 4:23; 2 Cor. 4:16.

   Rom 12:2  And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
   Rom 8:10  But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
   Eph 4:23  And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
   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.

4. We should live in our spirit as the inner man by taking Christ as our person—Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17a.

   Rom 8:4  That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
   1 Cor 6:17  But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
   Gal 2:20  I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
   Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

D. We need to deny our former person, our soul, and take Christ in our spirit as our new person—Gal. 2:20:

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

   1. According to Galatians 2:20, as regenerated believers we have both the “I,” our former person who has been crucified, and Christ Himself, our new person.

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

   2. Our former person has been crucified with Christ, and Christ is living in us as our new person; consequently, it will be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.

   Rom 6:6  Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

3. To take Christ as our person is not to force ourselves to submit to Him but to live according to His preferences because of our love for Him—1 John 4:19.

1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

E. What is first is not taking Christ as our life but taking Christ as our person:

1. If we take Christ as our person, we will surely take Him as our life—5:11-12; Col. 3:4.

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

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

2. If we take Christ as our person, we will be able to grow and mature—2:19; Eph. 3:17a; 4:13, 15.

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.

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …
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 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

F. Christ desires to make His home in our hearts—3:17a:

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

1. We take Christ as our person by allowing Him to make His home in our heart—v. 17a.

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

2. When Christ makes His home in our heart, we will take Him as our person in an adequate way; His mind will become our mind, His emotion will become our emotion, and His will will become our will—1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5.

1 Cor 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord and will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

G. The apostle Paul is a pattern to us of taking Christ as our person—1 Tim. 1:16; Gal. 1:16a; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:17a; Phil. 1:8; 2:5; 2 Cor. 2:10.

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.

Gal 1:16a To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, …
Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

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

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …
Phil 1:8 For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.
Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

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;

II. We need to take Christ as our person for the church as the one new man— Eph. 3:17a; 4:24; Col. 3:4, 10-11:

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

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

A. The church, the Body of Christ, is the one new man to accomplish God’s eternal purpose—Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:9; Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:15-16; 4:22-24.

- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- 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 Tim 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages
- Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,
- Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.
- Eph 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,
- Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

B. The emphasis on the church being the Body of Christ is on life, whereas the emphasis on the church being the one new man is on the person.

C. The Bible reveals that the one new man is a corporate, universal man—Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11:

- Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,
- Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
- 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.

1. We, the believers in Christ, are all one with Christ to be the new man; thus, we all are parts, components, of the corporate one new man—Eph. 4:24.
   - Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

2. The one new man is a corporate God-man, the aggregate of all the God-men; when we put all the God-men together, we have the one new man—Col. 3:10-11.
   - 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.

D. Christ is both the life of the Body and the person of the new man—v. 4; Eph. 3:17a:

- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, …

1. In the one new man the natural man has no place; we all have no place in the new man, for here Christ is all and in all—Col. 3:10-11.
   - 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.

2.  Christ is in all of us, so we all have only one person—1:27; Eph. 3:17a.
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,
Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

3.  What God cares for is whether or not we take Christ as our person— John 6:57b; Phil. 1:21a; Col. 3:4; Eph. 3:17a.
John 6:57b  ... so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
Phil 1:21a  For to me, to live is Christ ...
Col 3:4  When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

E.  For the new man we all need to take Christ as our person—2:15; 3:17a:
Eph 2:15  Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,
Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

1.  In the one new man, there is only one person—Christ—v. 17a; 4:24.
Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
Eph 4:24  And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

2.  The new man is not about members (Rom. 12:4-5) but about the person; therefore, we all need to ask, “Who is my person—is it I or the Lord Jesus?”
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.

F.  For the practical existence of the one new man, the total person of the old man must be put away, and we must live by our new person, Christ—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:22, 24; 3:17a:
Rom 6:6  Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
Gal 2:20  I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
Eph 4:22  That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,
Eph 4:24  And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
Eph 3:17a  That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

1.  Realizing that our former person has been crucified, we should no longer live in that person, by that person, and with that person—Rom. 6:6.
Rom 6:6  Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

2.  Our standard for being a Christian should not be right or wrong, good or bad, but a person; the crucial matter is not what we are doing but who is doing it.

G.  When we live our daily life by taking Christ as our person, especially in making decisions, our living will be the living of the new man— John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 17:4; Rom. 15:32; James 4:13-15:
John 4:34  Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
John 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 17:4  I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
So that coming to you in joy through the will of God, I may refresh myself and rest with you.

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit;

James 4:14 Whereas you do not know the matter of tomorrow, what your life will be; for you are a vapor, which appears for a little while and then disappears.

James 4:15 Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will both live and do this or that.

1. In the new man we take Christ as our person to make plans and to decide how we should live—Rom. 15:32.

2. If we take Christ as our person, we will not decide anything in our life by ourselves, for we all are a part of the one new man—Philem. 14.

H. If we are unveiled and enlightened, we will see that today in the Lord’s recovery we need to rise up together to take Christ as our person for the one new man—Eph. 3:17a; 4:24, 11-13:

1. The saints in every locality need to be perfected so that they may enter into a situation where they take Christ as their person for the one new man— vv. 11-13.

2. If all the saints in the Lord’s recovery take Christ as their person, then spontaneously, we all will be the one new man—3:17a; 4:24.

3. When the one new man is perfected, that will be the time for the Lord’s coming, and the perfected new man will be the bride—Rev. 19:7.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**TAKING CHRIST AS OUR PERSON FOR THE PROPER CHURCH LIFE**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:22-23; 3:17-18; Col. 3:10-11

**THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE NEW MAN**

Ephesians 1:22-23 says that the church is the Body of Christ, His fullness, and 2:15-16 reveals that the church is the new man. Many Christians know that the church is the Body of Christ, but few realize that the church is also the new man. In verse 15 Paul says that Christ created “the two,” the Jews
and the Gentiles, “in Himself into one new man.” Since the new man was created of two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, the new man is not individual but corporate. Furthermore, after speaking of “one new man” in verse 15, Paul goes on to speak of “one Body” in verse 16. Thus, the new man is the Body of Christ.

However, we need to see the distinction between the Body of Christ and the new man. A body is a matter of life, whereas a man involves both a life and a person. A tree has life, but it does not have a person. In contrast, a man has not only a life but also a person. Likewise, the Body of Christ needs Christ as its life, and the new man needs Christ as its person. We need to see that the church is not only the Body but also the new man; therefore, the church needs Christ not only as its life but also as its person.

**OUR REGENERATED SPIRIT BECOMING OUR PERSON**

In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul offered two great prayers. These two prayers are related to each other. In his first prayer, recorded in 1:17-23, he prayed that the Father would grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation, which is our regenerated human spirit, the proper organ for substantiating God and spiritual things. The church is not physical but spiritual. Hence, in order for us to see the church, we should exercise our spirit. Just as we must use the proper organs to see, hear, and smell, so also we must use the right organ—our spirit—in order to substantiate the church.

When we turn to our spirit, we meet with Christ. As we fellowship with Christ in our spirit, we realize, experience, and enjoy the power that God caused to operate in Christ—the power that raised Christ from the dead, seated Him at the right hand of God, subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church (vv. 19-22). As a result, we are liberated from many negative things, and the issue of this liberation is the reality of the church.

If we are spiritually dead and do not experience the power that God caused to operate in Christ, we will be unable to have the reality of the church as the Body of Christ. But if we experience and enjoy the power of God that releases us from all that binds us, we will realize the church as the Body of Christ, for the Body comes out of the experience and enjoyment of the power of God. However, realizing the church as the Body is only the beginning of the church life. In order for us to be grounded in the church life, we need to see that the church is not only the Body of Christ but also the new man. For this reason, in his first prayer in Ephesians, Paul prayed that we would have a spirit of wisdom and revelation (v. 17), and in his second prayer he prayed that we would be strengthened into our inner man (3:16). In his first prayer our spirit is revealed as an organ; in his second prayer our spirit is revealed as a person, our inner man.

First Thessalonians 5:23 says, “May your spirit and soul and body be preserved.” This verse reveals that man is of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Our being, that is, our self or our person, is in the soul. In Matthew 16:26 the Lord Jesus said, “What shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life?” The Greek word translated “soul-life” in this verse is psuche, which is translated “life” in other portions of the New Testament (Luke 12:22-23; John 12:25). Because our being, or person, is in our soul, a human being is a soul. Our soul is our self, our being, and our person. In the Bible, people are often referred to as souls. For example, Acts 7:14 says, “Joseph sent word and called for Jacob his father and all his family, seventy-five souls in all.” Genesis 2:7 says, “Man became a living soul.” This proves that our person, our being, is in our soul.

Man in his created state has two organs: a body and a spirit. Our body is not our being, our person; it is only an organ. When a human being dies, his person leaves his body. Although his body remains, his person is gone. Hence, the body is an organ, not a person. Like the body, the spirit also is an organ. Whereas the body is an outward organ to contact the physical world, the spirit is an inward organ to contact God and the spiritual realm. Man in his created state has a body as his outward organ, a spirit as his inward organ, and a soul as his person.

However, we the believers differ from man in his created state. Through God’s salvation we have
been regenerated, re-created, and remade by God. When we first opened our being to the Lord and called upon His name, He entered into our spirit, and once He enters into someone’s spirit, He will abide forever in his spirit to be his life. Now that we have the Lord as our life in our spirit, our spirit is no longer merely an organ but has become a person, a man. For this reason, the Bible speaks of our outer man and our inner man (2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:4). The outer man is the soul, and the inner man is the regenerated spirit, which has God’s life as its life. Before our regeneration, our spirit was only an organ because it did not have the life of God. But through regeneration, Christ as life entered into our spirit, and our spirit became our inner man, our person. On the one hand, our spirit is an organ to contact God in the spiritual realm; on the other hand, our spirit is our inner man.

There are two men within us, the outer man and the inner man. Before we were saved, we only had an outer man, but now after being saved, we have another man living in us—the inner man. There are many struggles between these two men in our daily life. This is because the outer man desires to do things that the inner man opposes. For example, while the outer man in us may desire to engage in a particular kind of worldly entertainment, the inner man forbids us from doing it. After being saved, we have two men living in us. We should no longer live by our soul, the outer man, but by our spirit, the inner man.

**TAKING CHRIST AS OUR PERSON**

We need to deny our soul, our former person, and take Christ in our spirit as our new person. In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” According to this verse, as regenerated believers, we have both the “I,” our former person who has been crucified (Rom. 6:6), and Christ Himself, our new person. Our former person has been crucified with Christ, and Christ is living in us as our new person. It is no longer “I,” the old person, but Christ, the new person. Hence, we need to take Christ not only as our life but also as our person. As we have pointed out, our regenerated spirit is our inner man, and Christ is the person of this inner man. Our former person, our self, is in our soul, but our new person, Christ, is in our spirit. Therefore, we need to deny our self, the old person, and take Christ as our new person.

To take Christ as our person is not to force ourselves to submit to Him but to live according to His preference because of our love for Him. For example, a sister may want to wear a certain dress, yet upon realizing that Christ wants her to wear another dress, she wears that dress in order to please Him. In doing so, she is denying her old person and taking Christ as her new person because she loves Him.

The Gospel of John reveals that in His human living, the Lord Jesus took the Father as His person. In 5:19 the Lord said, “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,” and in verse 30 He said, “I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge.” The Father was the Lord’s person, and He lived by the Father as His person. Although the Lord as the Son of God was almighty, He declared that He could do nothing from Himself, because instead of living by Himself, He lived by the Father as His person. In 14:10 the Lord said, “The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.” The Lord spoke every word by taking the Father as His person. In 6:57 the Lord said, “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.” Just as the Lord lived because of the Father by taking the Father as His person, so also we should live because of the Lord by taking Him as our person.

**CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN OUR HEART**

According to Ephesians 1, we need to experience the power that God caused to operate in Christ, and according to Ephesians 3, we need to take Christ as our person. The latter is revealed in verse 17, which says, “That Christ may make His home in your hearts.” Just as a person desires a home, Christ desires to make His home in our hearts. The Christ who desires to make His home in our hearts is a person. For Christ to make His home in our hearts is for Him to settle down in us. For example, you
may be invited to a brother’s house, but you are unable to make your home there, because you are there as a guest. Unless that brother empties his house and hands over its ownership to you, you do not have the liberty or the right to fully settle down there. In the same principle, Christ is in us, but He may not be able to make His home in us because He is merely a guest in our heart, not the host; our heart may be our home, not His home.

The New Testament reveals that Christ is in our spirit (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philem. 25). Specifically, 2 Timothy 4:22 says, “The Lord be with your spirit.” Yet Ephesians 3 says that Christ desires to make His home in our heart. Our heart is composed of the conscience, the leading part of our spirit, and all the parts of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will. Although Christ is in our spirit, He may not have spread into all the parts of our heart, because we have not given Him the full liberty to spread into our mind, emotion, and will. As a result, we imprison Christ in our spirit. When we set our mind on the things of the flesh (Rom. 8:5), the Lord wants to redirect our thoughts. We, however, may tell Him to stay in our spirit and not to come into our mind to bother us. For example, we may go shopping according to our natural mind, not caring for Christ. If Christ tells us not to buy certain items, we may limit Him to our spirit and not allow Him to enter into our mind. If we do not allow Christ to touch our mind, emotion, and will, although He is in our spirit, He will not be able to make His home in our heart.

BEING STRENGTHENED INTO OUR INNER MAN

In order to let Christ settle down in us, we need to be strengthened into our inner man, our regenerated spirit. In the hearts of many believers, Christ has made His home only to a small extent because those believers are strong in their mind, emotion, and will but weak in their spirit. For example, a believer may be so strong in his will that if he makes a certain decision, he will not allow Christ to change that decision. He may also be very weak in his spirit; therefore, Christ is unable to spread within him and is confined to his spirit. In order for us to be strengthened into our inner man, we need to call on the name of the Lord, confess our sins, and ask Him to forgive us of our failures and cleanse us with His precious blood (1 John 1:7, 9). The more we call on the name of the Lord, the more we will be filled with Him and the more we will be strengthened into our inner man (Rom. 10:12-13). When we are strengthened into our inner man, the Lord will spread from our spirit into every part of our heart, saturating our mind, filling our emotion, and occupying our will with Himself. As a result, He will take over our entire inner being and fully settle down in us and thus make His home in our heart.

When Christ makes His home in our heart, we will take Him as our person in an adequate way. His mind will become our mind, His emotion will become our emotion, and His will will become our will. Christ Himself will become our mind, emotion, and will; He will become everything to us and will be our person in reality. Then our living will be the issue of Christ working within us. Consequently, it will no longer be we who live but Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

LIVING BY CHRIST FOR THE PROPER CHURCH LIFE

A great many Christians fail to practice the proper church life not only because they are defeated by negative things but also because they fail to take Christ as their person. We may try to live for Christ, but we may not live by Him as our person. No matter how much we profess to love Christ or live for Him, unless we take Him as our person, we cannot have the proper church life.

Colossians 3:10 and 11 say that in the new man “there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.” In the church as the one new man, there cannot be any natural person, for in the new man there is only one person—Christ. If we all live by our self, when we come together, there will be many natural persons. However, if we all deny our soul, our former person—no matter what our race or nationality may be—and take Christ as our person instead, we will have the reality of the church as the new man. In a local church
there may be many people, but there should be no natural persons; there should be only one person—Christ. This is because the church is the new man, where Christ is the unique person. Christ is not only the Head of the Body but also the person of the new man. In the new man there cannot be American, Chinese, British, or French, but Christ is all and in all. Only by taking Christ as our life and person can we have the proper church life.

As the believers take Christ as their person, Christ will make His home in their hearts and settle down in them, and they will be grounded in the church (Eph. 3:17). As a result, they will have the proper church life; that is, they will live in the reality of the church, and the church will be their living. Unless Christ settles down in them, they cannot be grounded in the church.

In Ephesians 1 we see our entering into the church, and in Ephesians 3 we see our being grounded in the church. When we experience the power that God caused to operate in Christ, we enter into the church. However, at that stage our experience of the church may not be stable. In other words, we may come into the church life but also leave the church life. However, if we take Christ as our person, thereby allowing Christ to make His home in our heart, we will be grounded in the church, and the church will become our living. Consequently, we will have the proper church life. At that point we will experience the reality of Ephesians 3:21, which says, “To Him be the glory in the church.” God will be glorified when we experience the power that God caused to operate in Christ, enjoy Christ as our life, and take Him as our person. This is the real church life.

To be delivered from negative things, we need to experience the power that God caused to operate in Christ. In order that He may make His home in our heart, we need to take Christ as our person. The reality of the church life is in Christ, the unique person of the new man. As we live in the reality of the church life, Christ will settle down in our heart, and we will be grounded in the church. Then God will be glorified in the church. (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1971, vol. 1, pp. 273-279)
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE
(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four
Taking Christ as Our Living for His Magnification
and Dealing with the Self for Our Oneness in the Divine Glory
in the Genuine Church Life

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19-26; 4:22; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36; John 17:22

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Phil 1:22 But if I am to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for my work, then I do not know what I will choose.
Phil 1:23 But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better;
Phil 1:24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.
Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,
Phil 1:26 That your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you.
Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.
1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
Rom 11:36 Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

I. “I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ”—Phil. 1:19-21a:

A. To live Christ for His magnification is to participate in Christ’s salvation in life, in which we are saved from the failure of not living Christ and from the defeat of not magnifying Christ—Rom. 5:10.
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,

B. Salvation in Philippians 1:19 means to be sustained and strengthened to live and magnify Christ; this requires the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

C. Paul said that his salvation was “through your petition”; this is the supply of the Body of Christ, the church; imprisonment did not isolate Paul from the Body of Christ or cut him off from the supply of the Body.
D. The key to Paul’s experience of salvation was the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; when we enjoy the all-inclusive and bountifully supplying Spirit of Jesus Christ and are filled with Him, Christ is magnified and becomes our expression—Heb. 1:9b; 3:14a; 6:4b; 1 Cor. 12:3b.

Heb 1:9b  ... therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";

Heb 3:14a  For we have become partners of Christ, ...

Heb 6:4b  ... who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit

1 Cor 12:3b  ... and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

E. We need to be in the Body life and remain in the priestly service that builds up the Body so that we can maintain our enjoyment of the bountiful supply of the Spirit, the supply of the Body, in order to live Christ for magnifying Christ—Psa. 133:2; Exo. 30:26-31; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.

Psa 133:2  It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments:

Exo 30:26  And with it you shall anoint the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Testimony,

Exo 30:27  And the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense,

Exo 30:28  And the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base.

Exo 30:29  Thus you shall sanctify them that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy.

Exo 30:30  And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons and sanctify them that they may serve Me as priests.

Exo 30:31  And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations.

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

Rom 15:16  That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

1 Pet 2:5  You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 2:9  But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

II. In the apostle’s suffering in his body, Christ was magnified; that is, He was shown or declared to be great (without limitation), exalted, and extolled—Phil. 1:20:

Phil 1:20  According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

A. The apostle’s sufferings afforded him opportunity to express Christ in His unlimited greatness—Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 6:4; 11:23; Col. 1:24.

Acts 9:16  For I will show him how many things he must suffer on behalf of My name.

2 Cor 6:4  But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

2 Cor 11:23  Ministers of Christ are they? I speak as being beside myself, I more so! In labors more abundantly, in imprisonments more abundantly, in stripes excessively, in deaths often.

Col 1:24  I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

B. To magnify Christ under any circumstances is to experience Him with the topmost enjoyment—Phil. 1:18; 4:23.

Phil 1:18  What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truthfulness, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice;

Phil 4:23  The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
C. As Paul was held captive in a Roman prison, he magnified Christ, making Him to appear great in the eyes of his captors:


   Acts 16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them securely,
   Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks.
   Acts 16:25 And about midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, sang hymns of praise to God; and the prisoners were listening to them.
   Acts 16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken. And instantly all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

2. Since Philippians is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is a book filled with joy and rejoicing—1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.

   Phil 1:4 Always in my every petition on behalf of you all, making my petition with joy,
   Phil 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truthfulness, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice;
   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,
   Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,
   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.
   Phil 2:18 And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.
   Phil 2:28 I have sent him therefore the more eagerly, so that when you see him again, you may rejoice and I may be less sorrowful.
   Phil 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,
   Phil 3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, for me it is not irksome, but for you it is safe.
   Phil 4:1 So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, in the same way stand firm in the Lord, beloved.
   Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

3. Paul’s shining forth and expressing Christ in his joy were a declaration of the unlimited greatness of Christ and a declaration that Christ is inexhaustible— Eph. 3:8; cf. Isa. 9:6.

   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
   Isa 9:6 For a child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.

D. All of Paul’s life and work were not for expressing himself or for displaying his knowledge, his ability, or his other merits and strong points; what he was and what he did were for expressing Christ, even for magnifying Christ—Phil. 1:20; 3:3-10; 4:22; 2 Cor. 4:5:

   Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
   Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
   Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
   Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
   Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.
Phil 3:7  But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8  But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil 3:9  And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

Phil 3:10  To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Phil 4:22  All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar's household.

2 Cor 4:5  For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

1. To “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” is to live by Christ and live out Christ, thus magnifying Christ for His corporate expression in the genuine church life—Rom. 13:14.

Rom 13:14  But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.

2. The expression of Christ, signified by the priestly garments, qualifies us to serve as priests and sanctifies us unto God for His unique purpose; the expression of Christ as our “holy garments” is for glory and beauty—Exo. 28:2-4; 1 Pet. 2:5:

Exo 28:2  And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

Exo 28:3  And you shall speak to all who are wise in heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may serve Me as a priest.

Exo 28:4  And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a girding sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and for his sons that he may serve Me as a priest.

1 Pet 2:5  You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

a. For glory means to express Christ’s divinity with the divine attributes—John 1:14; Heb. 1:3; John 17:22; 2 Cor. 3:18.

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

Heb 1:3  Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

John 17:22  And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

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.


Luke 24:19  And He said to them, What things? And they said to Him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a Prophet powerful in work and word before God and all the people;

Acts 16:7  And when they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

Psa 27:4  One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.
c. Whenever we express the divine glory blended with the beauty of human virtues, we are built up together as the priesthood—1 Pet. 2:5.

1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

3. We should be those who “do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31) so that we can “glorify God in [our] body” (6:20); to glorify God in our body is to allow God, who dwells in us (1 John 4:13), to occupy and saturate our body and express Himself through our body.

1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.
1 John 4:13 In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.

III. If we magnify Christ in our body for His expression by living Him, we will become strong factors, channels of supply, to enable the saints to grow in life and enjoy the Lord—Phil. 1:20-26:

Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Phil 1:22 But if I am to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for my work, then I do not know what I will choose.
Phil 1:23 But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better;
Phil 1:24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.
Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,
Phil 1:26 That your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you.

A. In Paul’s chained body, Christ was exalted, extolled, praised, and appreciated because Paul lived Christ—v. 21; Eph. 6:20.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

B. Christ’s being magnified is so that He may be seen by others in the reality of His resurrection and ministered to others in the reality of His Spirit.

C. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was living in prison and not outwardly working; his speaking of “fruit for my work” indicates that his work was actually his living—Phil. 1:22:

Phil 1:22 But if I am to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for my work, then I do not know what I will choose.

1. The fruit of this work was Christ lived out, magnified, ministered, and transfused into others.
2. The fruit of this work was the issue, the result, of Paul’s living in prison.
3. Paul’s living work was to minister Christ to others and to transfuse the Christ whom he magnified into them.
4. Through Paul’s magnification of Christ, even some in Caesar’s household were saved—4:22.

Phil 4:22 All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar’s household.

D. All of us should aspire to be strong factors, channels of supply, to the saints for their “progress” (their growth in life) and their “joy of the faith” (their enjoyment of Christ); whether or not we are such factors of the saints’ growth in life and of their enjoyment of Christ depends on whether or not we magnify Christ by living Him—1:25:

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,
1. Because Paul lived and magnified Christ to the uttermost, he could transfuse Christ into the saints and minister Christ to all the churches.

2. Paul’s consideration to either depart and be with Christ or to remain in the flesh was not selfish but was for the saints’ sake; he was absolutely occupied by the Lord and the church—vv. 23-24.

Phil 1:23 But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better;
Phil 1:24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

3. It should matter to the church whether we remain or go to be with the Lord, but this depends on our living Christ, magnifying Christ, ministering Christ, and transfusing Christ from the depths of our being into that of the saints—cf. 2:25-30.

Phil 2:25 But I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your apostle and minister to my need,
Phil 2:26 Since he longed after you all and was greatly distressed because you heard that he had become sick;
Phil 2:27 For indeed he had become sick, near to death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.
Phil 2:28 I have sent him therefore the more eagerly, so that when you see him again, you may rejoice and I may be less sorrowful.
Phil 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,
Phil 2:30 Because for the work of Christ he drew near unto death, risking his life, that he might fill up your lack of service toward me.

4. In the Body life there is the urgent need of certain ones to function as channels of supply—Zech. 4:12-14.

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.

IV. In order for the believers to enter into the oneness in the divine glory, the corporate expression of God, they must fully deal with the self—John 17:22; 2 Cor. 4:5:

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake.

A. Leprosy signifies the serious sin that issues from within man’s self, which is the enemy of the Body; leprosy results from man’s rebellion and disobedience, and the cleansing of the leper is to recover the sinner from the self to the fellowship with God and with men—cf. Lev. 13:45-46.

Lev 13:45 And as for the leper in whom the infection is, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be let loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry, Unclean, unclean!
Lev 13:46 He shall be unclean all the days during which the infection is in him; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

B. In order for a leper to be cleansed, he must “shave off all his hair; he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair” (14:9); each of the different kinds of hair signifies different aspects of the self:

Lev 14:9 And on the seventh day he shall shave off all his hair; he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. Then he shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

1. The hair of the head signifies man’s glory in self-display; everyone has his boasts in
certain areas; some boast of their ancestry, some of their education, some of their
virtues, some of their zeal in their love for the Lord; everyone can find an area in
which to boast, to glorify himself, and to make a display before man.

2. The beard signifies man’s self-assumed honor; people esteem themselves honorable
with regard to their position, their family background, or even their spirituality; they
always have a feeling that they are above others.

3. The eyebrows signify man’s natural beauty, his excellencies, merits, virtues, and
strong points, issuing from his natural birth, not from the experience of God’s
salvation.

4. The hair of the whole body signifies man’s natural strength and ability; as human
beings, we are full of natural strength, natural methods and opinions, thinking that we
can do this or that for the Lord and that we are capable of doing all things.

C. These problems of the self must be “shaved with a razor,” which means that they must be
dealt with by the cross:
1. In order to deal with the self, we must be those who bear the cross, allowing the cross
to work on us continually in order to put our self to death.
2. We need to remain on the cross, keeping our self under the termination of the cross
day by day—Luke 14:27; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:31.
   Luke 14:27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.
   Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the
   body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
   Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives
   in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son
   of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
   Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His
   sufferings, being conformed to His death,
   1 Cor 15:31 I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord,
   I die daily.

3. By exercising our spirit, we can apply the death of Christ in the compound Spirit
(flowing myrrh signifies the precious death of Christ, and fragrant cinnamon signifies
the sweetness and effectiveness of Christ’s death) for the subjective crucifixion of our
self—Exo. 30:23-25.
   Exo 30:23 You also take the finest spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of
   fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred fifty shekels, and of fragrant
   calamus two hundred fifty shekels,
   Exo 30:24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary,
   and a hin of olive oil.
   Exo 30:25 And you shall make it a holy anointing oil, a fragrant ointment compounded
   according to the work of a compounder; it shall be a holy anointing oil.

D. Stanzas 5 and 6 of Hymns, #866 show how we are freed from the self when we exercise our
spirit:
1. “Freed within the spirit ⁄ From self-righteousness, ⁄ From self-condemnation ⁄ And self-
   consciousness.”
2. “Freed within the spirit ⁄ From self-will and pride, ⁄ From self-love and glory, ⁄ All to
   override.”

E. We need to follow the pattern of Paul, who said, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31); as we die to
ourselves daily, we do not preach ourselves for our glory, but we live to the Lord for His
divine glory; furthermore, we are being transformed from glory to glory as Christ is making
His home in our hearts for His glory in the genuine church life (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:5; 5:14-15;
Eph. 3:16-17, 21a).
   1 Cor 15:31 I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die
daily.
2 Cor 3:18  But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
2 Cor 4:5   For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake.
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.
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,
Eph 3:21a  To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. …

F. The glorification of God is the purpose of our living and our service; the highest living and service that we can render to God is to “do all to the glory of God” for the corporate expression of God—1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:7; John 7:18; 8:50a; 17:4; Rom. 11:36.
1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
Isa 43:7   Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.
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 8:50a But I do not seek My glory; …
John 17:4   I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
Rom 11:36  Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PAUL’S EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was in prison in a foreign country, far away from his homeland. Paul had good reason to worry and be sad. Since his circumstances were so difficult, he could have easily wept about his situation. However, if Paul had been weeping instead of rejoicing, he could not have said, “For me this shall turn out to salvation” (1:19). If he had wept, he would not have experienced salvation in that environment. Suppose you were a Jew held captive in a Roman prison. Would you have rejoiced? I am sure we all would have felt sorrowful and homesick. But instead of weeping, Paul rejoiced in the Lord. For him, everything that happened turned out to salvation.

According to the context of Philippians 1:19-26, salvation means that Paul was not put to shame in anything. Not only did he not feel shameful, but nothing caused him to be put to shame. Christ was magnified in Paul’s body. This magnification of Christ, spoken of in verse 20, is the very salvation mentioned in verse 19. This means that the salvation which was according to Paul’s earnest expectation and hope was that he would not be put to shame, but would magnify Christ in his body. Therefore, in verse 20 we have a definition of the practical enjoyment of salvation.

To enjoy this kind of salvation is to live Christ. This is the reason Paul says in verse 21, “For to me to live is Christ.”

Paul’s sufferings did not put him to shame. Instead, they afforded him an opportunity to magnify Christ. If we experience the salvation mentioned in these verses, then when we undergo suffering, we shall magnify Christ and not be put to shame. But if we are defeated by suffering, suppressed by it, and filled with worry, we shall be put to shame. But if we magnify Christ in sufferings, we shall experience this salvation.

One day the wife of a certain brother died. Her death was a great loss to her husband and children. If in our contact with this brother we had seen nothing but sorrow and tears, we would have had a sense
of shame. In such a case, the loss of his wife would have brought him into shame, and there would have been no manifestation of Christ and no magnification of Him. As a result, there would have been no experience of salvation. Rather, the brother’s experience in grieving over the loss of his wife would not have been different from the experience of an unbeliever. However, with this brother the situation was very different. He could rejoice, praise the Lord, and testify of the Lord’s grace. Truly in his situation the Lord was manifested and magnified, and the brother experienced salvation. In this experience of salvation, the brother was saved in his suffering from the loss of his wife. Furthermore, this salvation enabled the brother to magnify Christ.

The experience of this brother in magnifying Christ after the loss of his wife illustrates Paul’s experience in prison. Although he was a prisoner in a foreign country, his suffering did not put him to shame. According to Paul’s earnest expectation and hope, Christ was magnified in him, and Paul enjoyed the Lord’s salvation.

THE KEY TO PAUL’S EXPERIENCE

The key to Paul’s experience of salvation was the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Everything that happened to Paul turned out to salvation through this bountiful supply. Between salvation in verse 19 and the magnifying of Christ in verse 20, we have the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Actually, in our experience, salvation, Christ, and the bountiful supply of the Spirit are one. But if we would enjoy Christ and experience Him as our salvation in every circumstance, we need the bountiful supply of the Spirit. Just as this Spirit dwelt in the apostle Paul during his imprisonment, He also dwells within us today. Through the supply of such a Spirit, Paul enjoyed salvation.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST AND GAIN

In verse 21 Paul says, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” In this verse we have a contrast between Christ and gain. Some may think that the gain here refers to Christ. Although in a sense it may refer to Christ, it refers to Christ in a different way, not to the Christ we experience by living Him. In a practical way, the gain in verse 21 is the presence of Christ. When Paul said, “To die is gain,” he meant that to die is to enjoy Christ’s presence in a better way. In verse 23 Paul says that his desire is to depart and to be with Christ. To be with Christ is a matter of degree, not of place. While Paul was desiring to be with Christ in a higher degree, he was already with Him continually. Through his physical death, he would be with Christ to a fuller extent than he enjoyed in this earthly life.

When Paul was in prison, he enjoyed Christ and experienced Him in two ways. One way was to enjoy the presence of Christ, and the other way was to live Christ. There is a vast difference between enjoying the presence of Christ and living Christ. For example, I may enjoy my wife’s presence, but I cannot live her. By this we see that we may enjoy a person’s presence without living that person. Paul not only enjoyed the Lord’s presence, but he also lived Him. He knew that when he died he would have no further opportunity to live Christ, but he would enter into a higher enjoyment of the presence of Christ. Therefore, to die would be gain. What Paul valued was not only the presence of Christ, but also the opportunity to live Him.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have been encouraged to practice the presence of the Lord. However, there has been little encouragement, if any, to live Him. Many believers are familiar with the famous book *The Practice of the Presence of God* and have been encouraged by it to endeavor to live in God’s presence. However, the concept of practicing the presence of God is mainly an Old Testament concept, not a New Testament one. Yes, according to the New Testament, we may enjoy the Lord’s presence on the one hand. But, on the other hand, we should practice living Him. We have not only the Lord’s presence, but we also have His Person. Not only do we need to be in His presence; we also need to be one person with Him and live Him. To live Christ is a much deeper experience than simply to be in His presence. Living Him goes far beyond the enjoyment of His presence.
Do you intend just to practice the presence of Christ, or is it your desire also to live Christ? To live the Lord is even better than to be with the Lord. Yes, it is a gain to die and be with the Lord in a greater degree than on earth. But it is even better to live Him while we are on earth. Probably you have thanked the Lord for His presence, but have you ever thanked Him for the experience of living Him? It is easy for us to thank the Lord for the sweetness and loveliness of His presence. Many have the habit of doing this. Sometimes when I am about to utter such a thanksgiving to the Lord, I have the conviction within that I am simply following an Old Testament practice. I am then reminded of my need to live Christ. First Corinthians 6:17 says, “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” We are one spirit with the Lord not only that we may enjoy His presence, but even more that we live Him. But what Christians today are being instructed and helped to live Christ? For years we have been helped to develop the habit of practicing the Lord’s presence. This experience is on the first floor of the Christian life. Now in the Lord’s recovery we must go on to the second floor, to the practice of living Christ.

There certainly is a difference in verse 21 between living Christ and gaining a greater degree of His presence. I can testify that my preference is to live Christ and not just to gain a greater degree of His presence.

FRUIT FROM WORK

In Philippians 1:22 Paul goes on to say, “But if to live in the flesh, this to me is fruit from work, and what I shall choose I cannot tell.” To a great extent, the word work has been spoiled. Many Christians care only for a work; they do not care for Christ. But Paul could speak of “fruit from work.” Paul’s use of the word fruit indicates that his work was actually his living. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was living in prison; he was not working. This indicates that his living was his work. From such a living work, fruit would come forth. The fruit of this work was Christ lived out, magnified, and ministered to others. The fruit of Paul’s work was thus the transfusion of Christ into others. Therefore, the fruit of work in verse 22 is the issue, the result, of Paul’s living in prison.

Paul’s living work was to minister Christ to others and to transfuse the Christ he magnified into them. As far as Paul was concerned, to die was to gain, but to live was to carry on such a living and fruitful work. It was difficult for him to choose between the two. This was the reason he said, “What I shall choose I cannot tell.” If you had to choose between the gain which comes from dying physically and the fruit which comes from a living work, what would be your choice? I would definitely prefer to live in the flesh in order to carry on the living work of magnifying Christ and transfusing Him into others.

PAUL’S DESIRE TO BE WITH CHRIST

Verse 23 says, “But I am constrained by the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it rather is much better.” When Paul wrote these words, he was in bonds suffering mistreatment. Under those circumstances, we would expect him to long to be with Christ. Any believer in Paul’s situation would have the same desire.

We have indicated that to be with Christ is a matter of degree, not of place. No doubt, Paul was with Christ in prison. The fact that he was already with Christ indicates that being with Christ is not a matter of place. But although Paul was with Christ to a certain degree, he desired to be with Him in a higher degree. Paul knew that as a result of physical death he would be with Christ to a greater extent than in his earthly life. For this reason, he could desire to depart and to be with Christ, regarding this as much better.

REMAINING FOR THE SAINTS’ PROGRESS AND JOY

In verse 24 Paul continues, “But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.” The words your sake mean for the sake of the church. The apostle’s consideration was not selfish, but was
for the sake of the saints. He was absolutely occupied by the Lord with the church. Paul realized that the churches needed more of the ministry of Christ. For their sake, he would remain in order to minister Christ to them.

Paul was a person full of Christ. When he spoke, he spoke Christ. When he lived, he lived with Christ. When he worked, he worked with Christ and ministered Christ to the churches. For the sake of the church, he was willing to remain in the flesh that he might minister Christ to the saints.

Verse 25 says, “And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith.” The faith here refers to what the saints believe in (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 4:7); progress, to the growth in life; and joy, to the enjoyment of Christ. Paul was willing to remain for the sake of the saints’ progress and joy of the faith.

It is possible to be a Christian for years without having any progress or joy, without growing in life and without enjoying the Lord. We need both the growth in life and the enjoyment of Christ. I have known some saints who have been faithful to stay in the Lord’s recovery. But with them there have been little growth in life and little enjoyment of Christ. As a result, they have had little progress and little joy. How about you? What can you say about your progress and your joy? Oh, we need the progress and the enjoyment!

Whether Paul was in prison or out of prison, he was a strong factor of the saints’ progress and joy. Because of him the churches could have the growth in life and could be filled with the enjoyment of Christ. This should also be true of us today. All the elders in the local churches should be factors of the saints’ growth in life and of their enjoyment of Christ. But whether or not the elders are such factors of progress and joy depends on whether or not they magnify Christ by living Him. If the elders live Christ, He will surely be magnified in them. Then the elders will become factors to enable the saints to grow in life and enjoy the Lord.

**BOASTING IN CHRIST IN PAUL**

In Philippians 1:26 Paul says, “That your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence again with you.” This verse is not easy to understand. What does boasting refer to? The Greek word has a threefold meaning: “boasting,” “rejoicing,” and “glorying.” When we boast, we are glorying, and when we are glorying, we are rejoicing. Here Paul says that the saints’ “boasting may abound in Christ Jesus in me.” It may be better to place “in me” before “in Christ Jesus,” since this arrangement corresponds more closely to Paul’s thought. Here Paul is saying that the believers may boast, rejoice, glory in Paul in Christ. Their boasting in Paul must be in Christ. It is rather easy to boast in Christ, but it is not so easy to boast in someone in Christ. However, what does this mean? The King James Version says, “rejoicing…in Jesus Christ for me.” This rendering may be logical, but it is not accurate according to the Greek. The Greek does not say “for me”; it clearly says “in me.” Paul was not saying that the Philippians boasted in Christ for him or because of him. He was saying that they boasted in Christ in him.

In this difficult verse lies a deep secret concerning the experience of Christ. If we would experience Christ, we, the believers, must be able to boast, rejoice, and glory not only in Christ Himself, but also in someone in Christ. It was necessary for the saints in Philippi to boast in the apostle Paul in Christ. This boasting is related to the crucial fact that what we receive of Christ is not received directly in Christ, but is received from the Head through other members of the Body. Hence, we receive spiritual blessing from the Head through another member. No doubt, Paul was a very important member of the Body. If he had been lost to the Body, the Body would have been deprived of a very important means of spiritual blessing.

Our physical body illustrates how members can be a means of supply to the Body. The arm, for example, is such a means of supply for the fingers. Apart from the arm as a means, the fingers cannot receive any supply from the head. As an important member of the Body of Christ, Paul was such a means of supply between us and the Head. If we did not have him, we would lack an important channel
of supply.

None of us can boast, rejoice, and glory directly in the Head. Rather, we need to boast in Christ in and through a certain channel of supply. In verse 26 Paul says, “That your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus in me.” The words in me include the meaning of “through me,” but are not limited to this meaning. During the time of Paul’s imprisonment, Gentile believers, like those in Philippi, were boasting in Paul. Their boasting, rejoicing, glorying was not in the Judaistic preachers; it was in the apostle Paul. They could boast in Paul because he magnified Christ and lived Christ to the uttermost. Because Paul lived Christ and magnified Him in this way, he could transfuse Christ into the saints and minister Christ to all the churches. Therefore, the saints had reason to boast in such an apostle. If Paul had died prematurely, their boasting in him would have been cut short. But as long as Paul continued to live, they were able to boast in him in Christ. Hence, in verses 25 and 26 Paul said that he was confident that he would remain and continue with the saints for their progress and joy of the faith so that their boasting could abound in Christ Jesus in him through his presence with them again.

CHANNELS FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST

In these verses we see the very crucial point that in the Body life there is the urgent need of certain ones to function as channels of supply. We need members like Paul. When such members die, the transfusion of Christ is in a very real sense interrupted. But as long as such ones are with us, the transfusion continues unabated, and we can boast in them in Christ. The leading ones in all the local churches should be such channels, such means of supply.

It should matter to the church whether we live or die. Our living should matter greatly to the saints. But whether or not this is so depends on the degree to which we live Christ, minister Christ, and infuse others with Christ. I am sorry to say that, with respect to infusing Christ into the church, there are certain leading ones about whom it makes little difference whether they live or die. But with others their continuing with us or their being taken from us in death makes a great difference. I think of the example of a brother very dear to us, Eugene Gruhler, Sr. He surely was a means of supply to the Body. From the depths of my heart, I can say that his going to be with the Lord was a loss to us in the church life. It made a difference to us whether this brother remained or went to be with the Lord. The same should be true of every one of us. It should matter to the church whether we live or die. But this depends on our living Christ, magnifying Christ, ministering Christ, and transfusing Christ from the depths of our being into that of the saints. If we experience Christ and enjoy Him in this way, it will make a difference to the church whether we remain or go to be with the Lord.

We have seen that we cannot boasts directly in Christ as the Head. Rather, there need to be some members to function as channels through which others may enjoy Christ and grow in life. There is an urgent need for such means of supply. Even if there are only one or two in a particular country, many others will receive the supply of Christ. Because Paul was this kind of member, he chose to remain and continue with the saints for their progress and their joy in the faith so that they could glory in him in Christ. If the saints are to experience Christ, there is the need for someone to serve as such a channel. In certain countries there is no way for people to experience Christ because there is not even one person in that country who truly lives Christ and magnifies Him. As a result, the believers there have no way to enjoy Christ. There is a great need for people like Paul. When Paul was alive, many could experience Christ and have the progress and joy in the faith. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 55-64)
Knowing, Experiencing, and Living
The All-Inclusive Christ
For the Genuine Church Life
(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five
Doing All Things in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:17; Phil. 2:9-10; Eph. 1:20-21; John 5:43; 14:26; 15:26

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

John 5:43 I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

I. The highest name in the universe, the greatest name, is the name of Jesus—Phil. 2:9-10:

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

A. The Lord emptied Himself, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak—vv. 7-8.

Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.

B. By His exaltation, the Lord has been given the name which is above every name, far above every name that is named—Phil. 2:10-11.

Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

C. From the time of Christ’s ascension, there has never been a name in history higher than the name of the Lord Jesus—Phil. 2:10-11.

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

D. The name is the expression of the sum total of what the Lord Jesus is in His person and work—Eph. 1:21.

Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
II. **In the name of the Lord Jesus actually means “in the Lord Himself,” for the name denotes the person—Col. 3:17:**

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

A. Being in the name of the Lord Jesus means that God has committed His Son to us, that we partake of His name, and that the Lord has given Himself to us and is willing to acknowledge everything that we do in His name—1 Cor. 1:30; John 3:16; 14:12; 2 Cor. 12:2; Col. 3:17.

1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

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.

John 14:12 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes into Me, the works which I do he shall do also; and greater than these he shall do because I am going to the Father.

2 Cor 12:2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body I do not know, or outside the body I do not know; God knows) such a one was caught away to the third heaven.

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

B. It is vital for us to see that to be in the name of the Lord Jesus means that we are one with Him, that we are in Him and He is in us—Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 3:27-28; Col. 1:27:

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

2 Cor 13:5 Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?

Gal 3:27 For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Gal 3:28 There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

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,

1. To be in the Lord’s name is to be in His person, in Himself, and to be in the sphere and element of all that He is—Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 1:30.

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

1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

2. To be in the Lord’s name is to live by the Lord and to let the Lord live in us—Gal. 2:20.

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

3. When we are in the name of the Lord Jesus, we are in Christ, Christ is in us, and we are one with Christ—Col. 1:27; 3:1, 3; John 15:4-5.

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 3:1 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

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

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

III. **As revealed in the Gospel of John, our being in the name of the Lord Jesus involves the Divine Trinity—5:43; 10:25, 30; 14:26; 15:26:**

John 5:43 I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
John 10:25  Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works which I do in My Father's name, these testify concerning Me;

John 10:30  I and the Father are one.

John 14:26  But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

John 15:26  But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

A. John 5:43 says that the Son came in the name of the Father, and 14:26 says that the Father sent the Spirit in the name of the Son; in these two verses the Divine Trinity is revealed:

  John 5:43  I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

  John 14:26  But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

1. To say that the Son came in the name of the Father indicates that the Son and the Father are one—5:43.

   John 5:43  I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

2. To say that the Father sent the Spirit in the name of the Son indicates that the Father is one with the Son—14:26.

   John 14:26  But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

B. The Son came in the name of the Father and did things in the name of the Father—5:43; 10:25:

  John 5:43  I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

  John 10:25  Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works which I do in My Father's name, these testify concerning Me;

1. The fact that the Lord came in the name of the Father means that He came with the Father and in the Father.

   John 5:43  I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

2. The Son was one with the Father and lived by the Father, and the Father worked in Him—6:57; 14:10.

   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 14:10  Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

C. The Father sent the Spirit in the Son’s name, and the Son sent the Spirit from the Father—v. 26; 15:26:

  John 14:26  But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

  John 15:26  But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

1. The Spirit being sent by the Father in the Son’s name implies that both the Father and the Son are the Sender of the Spirit—14:26.

   John 14:26  But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and remind you of all the things which I have said to you.

2. According to John 15:26, the Son sent the Spirit from the Father.

   John 15:26  But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

3. The Son sending the Spirit from the Father and the Father sending the Spirit in the Son’s name refer to the same thing.

4. Both the Father and the Son send the Spirit; this indicates that the Father and the Son are one—10:30.

   John 10:30  I and the Father are one.
IV. In our daily life and our service in the church, we need to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus—Col. 3:17:

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

A. Because the name denotes a person, to do things in the name of Jesus means to do all things in His person—v. 17; Rom. 6:3; 8:1; 1 Cor. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:17:

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

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

Rom 8:1 There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor 4:15 For though you have ten thousand guides in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

1. Doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus is the basic aspect of our Christian life—Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17.

Eph 5:20 Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father,

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

2. We should be able to say that we do the ordinary things of our daily life in the name of the Lord—I Cor. 10:31.

1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

B. Our service in the church requires that we do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus—Rom. 1:9; 6:6; 7:6; 12:1, 7; Col. 3:17:

Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1. Our service must be initiated by the Lord and be according to His desire—Matt. 7:21; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:2, 7-11.

Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph 3:7 Of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God which was given to me according to the operation of His power.

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

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Eph 3:10  In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavens the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph 3:11  According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

2. The service for the building up of the church is a life-ministering service—the service of supplying others with the divine life—2 Cor. 4:12; Rom. 12:1, 7:

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

Rom 12:1  I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom 12:7  Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;

a. Church service is to supply life, for it is a service of life—8:2, 6, 10-11.

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

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

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

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

b. As serving ones, we need to be deeply impressed with the necessity of being able to minister life—1 John 5:11-16.

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

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

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

1 John 5:14  And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

1 John 5:15  And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

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

V. Our speaking—all our words—should be in the name of the Lord Jesus—Col. 3:17; Eph. 4:25, 29; Matt. 12:36-37:

Col 3:17  And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Eph 4:25  Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Eph 4:29  Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Matt 12:36  And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

Matt 12:37  For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

A. No corrupt word should proceed out of our mouth but only that which is truthful and gives grace to those who hear—Eph. 4:25, 29.

Eph 4:25  Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Eph 4:29  Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

B. “Every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment”—Matt. 12:36:

1. An idle word is a non-working word, an inoperative word, having no positive function
and being useless, unprofitable, unfruitful, and barren.

2. Idle words are redundant words, incongruous words, unnecessary words, and gossiping words—v. 36.

Matt 12:36 And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

3. In the day of judgment those who speak such words will render an account concerning every one of them—vv. 36-37.

Matt 12:36 And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

Matt 12:37 For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

VI. The Gospel of John makes it clear that we should pray in the name of the Lord—14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26:

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

John 16:26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father concerning you,

A. There are a great number of Christians who do not know that it is necessary for believers to pray in the name of the Lord—14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26.

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

John 16:26 In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father concerning you,

B. Praying in the Lord’s name means that we are living in union with the Lord, are united with Him, and allow God to be manifested through us—15:4-5, 7; 13:31-32.

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

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

John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

John 13:31 Then when he went out, Jesus said, Now has the Son of Man been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him.

John 13:32 If God has been glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and He will glorify Him immediately.

C. When we pray in the name of the Lord, the Lord prays together with us—15:7.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

D. In John 14 through 16 the Lord Jesus clearly pointed out that prayers in the name of the Lord by those who live in the Lord are prayers that accomplish God’s will—14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26; 4:34; 5:30; 6:38:

John 14-16 be omitted.

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
John 16:24  Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full.
John 16:26  In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father concerning you,
John 4:34  Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
John 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.

1. All real prayers in the name of the Lord are in accordance with God’s will— Matt. 6:10; 12:50; 26:39, 42.
   Matt 6:10  Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
   Matt 12:50  For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
   Matt 26:39  And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.
   Matt 26:42  Again, going away a second time, He prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.

2. Praying in the name of the Lord is equal to doing God’s will and accomplishes God’s will— John 14:13; 15:16; 16:24, 26; 6:38.
   John 14:13  And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
   John 15:16  You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
   John 16:24  Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full.
   John 16:26  In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father concerning you,
   John 6:38  For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

IN THE LORD’S NAME AND PRAYER

Let us read several verses from the Gospel of John. “Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, the Father may be glorified in the Son” (14:13).

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you” (15:16).

“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full...In that day you will ask in My name” (16:24, 26).

There are a great number of Christians who do not know that it is necessary to pray in the name of the Lord. Many Christians often say that they pray by the precious blood of the Lord or by the Lord’s merits. The Bible clearly states, however, that we should pray in the name of the Lord. What does praying in the Lord’s name really mean? Although we often use such a phrase, we do not necessarily know its meaning. Although some may know a little about it, they may not necessarily have the reality of it. The spiritual meaning of praying in the Lord’s name is very deep and high, so we need to go before the Lord to learn about it.

THE MEANING OF IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

In John 14 through 16 the Lord Jesus personally said at least five times that we need to pray in His name. In Ephesians 5:20 the apostle Paul also says, “Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and the Father.” In John 14 through 16 we should know that
the Lord’s name undoubtedly denotes the Son. The name of the Father in the same chapters also
denotes the Father. Hence, if we want to know the meaning of the Lord’s name in the Gospel of John,
we need to know something concerning the matter of the Lord coming to be the Son. What is the
meaning of the Son? We have said many times that the Son is the expression of the Father. God has a
Son in the universe, and this Son is the expression of God. Whenever John 14 through 16 mentions the
Lord Jesus, the emphasis is not that He is the Lord or that He is the Christ but that He is the Son. As the
Son, He is the expression of God. This name, therefore, is God’s expression. To be in such a name is to
be in the expression of God.

We must see that in John 14 through 16 there is a basic concept concerning a threefold matter: the
Father is expressed in the Son; the Son becomes the Spirit and enters into us; and as a result, the Spirit
lives out a certain life in us. The Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—thus becomes one with us. This
is what John 14 through 16 discloses to us. Immediately following, in chapter 17, the Lord offered a
prayer in which He clearly showed how the Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—and we become
perfectly one.

In the Gospel of John there are three main concepts. The first concept is that the Father has been
expressed in the Son. The Father has been seen and touched in the Son by men. John 14:9 says that he
who has seen the Son has seen the Father. When the Son is in the midst of men, it is the Father who is
in the midst of men. The second concept is that the Son had to go and change His form to become the
Spirit. The third concept is that the Spirit comes into us who belong to Him, to be with us forever.
Consequently, as He lives, we also live. We live together with Him, and we live by Him.

So, in chapter 15 we are shown just such a union. The Lord said that He is the true vine and we
are the branches. We abide in Him, and He abides in us. Then in chapter 16 the Lord showed how the
Spirit reveals all His reality into us so that we may experience and be led into the reality. Therefore, in
these chapters of John the Lord said that we need to pray while living on the earth, and we need to pray
in His name.

Based on the abovementioned concepts, we know that praying in the Lord’s name bespeaks the
fact that we have a perfect union with the Lord and that such a union causes God to be manifested in us.
We need three chapters of the Scripture, John 14 through 16, to explain the matter of praying in the
Lord’s name. When we have a thorough understanding of these three chapters, we know what it means
to pray in the Lord’s name. Briefly, it means that we are in union with the Lord. The Lord is the
expression of God, this expression has become the Spirit, and the Spirit is dwelling in us. When we
have this perfect union with the Triune God, our living becomes His living, and God is manifested
through us.

Please remember, therefore, that to pray in the name of the Lord means that we are united with the
Lord, and we allow God to be manifested through us. Never consider in the name of the Lord as a
phrase or a form that you have to use at the end of every prayer. At times it may not be necessary to add
in the name of the Lord at the end of a prayer. To add in the name of the Lord does not necessarily
mean that there is the reality, and not adding it does not mean that the reality of it is missing. It is not a
matter of formality but a matter of reality. A person who truly prays in the name of the Lord is one with
the Lord. His prayer, therefore, is the Lord’s asking. He has been united with the Lord to such an extent
that the two have become one.

Never understand praying in the name of the Lord in a superstitious way. More than once I have
heard people explain it by using the following illustration: You have asked a rich man for something,
but he would not give it to you. Later, you find out that he loves his son very much, so you go and
make the same request in the name of his son. Then, as a result, the rich man gives you what you have
requested because he loves his son. Similarly, when we, the sinners, come before God to ask for
something, He will not give it to us. But when we ask in the name of His Son, God will give it to us
because He loves His Son. If this is how you understand and explain it, you are simply superstitious.
Actually, if God refuses you when you ask on your own, He will also refuse you when you ask in the
name of His Son.

Acts 19 gives us an account of some who superstitiously tried to imitate Paul in casting out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus. Eventually, the demon said, “Jesus I know of, and with Paul I am acquainted; but who are you?” and he leaped upon them and wounded them (vv. 15-16). To cast out demons in this way is simply being superstitious. When Paul cast out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus, he could say, “I am one with the Lord Jesus, and for me to live is Christ.” This is the meaning and the spiritual reality of in the name of the Lord.

**PRAYING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**

Having understood the meaning of being in the name of the Lord, it becomes clear that to pray in the name of the Lord means that you, the praying one, are in union with the Lord. When you pray in the name of the Lord, the Lord prays together with you.

Brothers and sisters, when we have prayed, many times we were unable to say that we prayed in the name of the Lord, for we know that it was just our prayer; the Lord would not have prayed that way. So, at the end we should have said, “O God, we are praying in our own name,” for in practice, it is we ourselves, not the Lord praying in us. In order to be in the reality of praying in the Lord’s name, we need to be praying in the Lord. And when we pray thus, the Lord also prays in us.

Here we can see that the prayers in the name of the Lord in John 14 and 16 are tremendous prayers. The Lord even said that the works which He does we will do also and that we will do greater works than these. He also said that He will do whatever we ask in His name. This is a great matter. If you read those words in their context, you can see that the Lord who lived on this earth has now become the Spirit living in you, and He is living Himself out from you. In the course of this living, there are many things about which you need to pray. So while you pray, He prays in you and you in Him. When you pray in such a union with Him and He with you, you are praying in His name.

I believe, brothers and sisters, you have all had the following experience. In your early experience of praying, you were able to pray for many things. But when you began to pray in the name of the Lord, immediately your prayers were reduced. When you really learn to allow the Lord to be in union with you and pray together with you, out of ten items, you may be able to pray for only three of them. You know that if you pray for the other seven things, the Lord is not praying. You are asking, but the Lord is not asking.

I have often heard children pray. At the end of their prayers they also said, “In the name of the Lord.” But later on, when they really know what it means to pray in the name of the Lord, they will not be able to pray as freely as before. Neither will they be able to say “In the name of the Lord” with such ease. So, brothers, you need to be clear that to pray in the name of the Lord is not a mere formality or an empty phrase. Rather, it is that when a person lives in the Lord and is practically united with the Lord, his prayer is the Lord praying in him. In such a union many prayers become purified.

**A LIVING OF PRAYER IN THE LORD’S NAME**

Actually, John 14 through 16 is not mainly concerned either with prayer or with life but with a kind of united living. Here is a group of people that are chosen by God. God has separated them in order that they might be a testimony on earth, testifying that they and the Triune God have such a perfect union. This is their living. What the Lord Jesus repeatedly spoke of in those three chapters of the Bible is such a united living. A part of this living is prayer. Prayer in the name of the Lord not only needs such a living as its support and backing but actually constitutes part of such a living. Therefore, we must know that praying in the Lord’s name is not merely a matter of prayer but, even more, a matter of living. When a person lives in the Lord, lives by the Lord, lives in union with the Lord, and is mingled with the Lord, spontaneously a part of his living is prayer.

Conversely, it is not possible to pray in the name of the Lord if you do not live by the Lord or in the Lord. It is an erroneous concept to believe that you can live apart from the Lord and make use of
His name when you have something to ask of Him, simply because you know that your name is of no value before Him. This is just superstitious thinking. Prayer in the Lord’s name requires a living in union with the Lord to back it up. Prayer in the Lord’s name must be a part of a living in union with the Lord. Hence, the requirement for such prayer is very high. It is the same as putting a name at the end of an article to show that it is finished. What it means is that all your daily practical living is in union with the Lord. You learn to live before God by the risen Lord. You walk according to His Spirit and allow His Spirit to live in you. Such a living is the basis and support of your praying in the Lord’s name. Furthermore, such prayer actually constitutes a part of such a living.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAYING IN THE LORD’S NAME AND DOING GOD’S WILL

In John 14 through 16 the Lord Jesus clearly pointed out that prayers in the name of the Lord by those who live in the Lord are prayers that accomplish God’s will. When we first heard that we needed to pray in the name of the Lord, we thought that we could pray for anything in the Lord’s name. But as we learn the lesson, we discover that out of ten matters we want to pray for, we are able to pray for only two. We realize that the other eight are not the Lord’s will, and therefore, the Lord cannot pray together with us. All real prayers in the name of the Lord are surely in accordance with God’s will.

From John 14 through 16 we can see that doing God’s will and praying in the Lord’s name are almost the same thing. When you are praying in the Lord’s name, it is equal to doing God’s will. Because you are one who lives in the Lord and by the Lord, your living is the Lord’s living. Please consider, can such a person still have goals or inclinations outside the Lord? Of course he cannot. Therefore, we would like to mention once again that of all the places in the Bible that are concerned with God’s promise in relation to prayer, none seems as broad as the one here in the Gospel of John. Here the Lord Jesus said, “Ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you” (15:7). In one sense this promise is really broad. But actually speaking, this prayer is also very narrow, because the kind of prayer referred to in John 14 through 16 is a prayer in the Lord. On the one hand, it says that whatever you want will be given to you, but on the other hand, it says that such prayer needs to be in the Lord’s name. Although you may have many desires when you are in yourself, once you turn and get into the Lord’s name, you will see that your desires become restricted and that there are many things for which you simply cannot ask.

I remember, years ago, when I first went to Nanking, a brother invited me to a meal. He was very happy, and during the whole mealtime he was the only one talking. He kept saying, “Brother Lee, now that we have won the war, I have a feeling about this, and I have a feeling about that; I would like to do this, and I would like to do that.” He spoke of his many, many likes, and they were all for God. While I was listening to him, I had a very deep sensation that this brother did not know what he was saying. What he wanted, the Lord did not want. Those were his wants apart from the Lord. If one day he would go into the Lord, he would soon realize that he must leave all his desires outside the Lord. He himself may come into the Lord but not his desires.

You all know what I mean. When you are living outside the Lord, you may have many desires. You may say, “I want God to do this for me, and by His power, I also want to do that for Him.” But gradually, as you learn to live in the Lord, you will see that all those desires are outside the Lord and not in accordance with the will of God. Hence, God has no way to fulfill those desires. Then, and only then, can you say that your desire is God’s desire. Hence, your prayer will accomplish God’s will; it is doing God’s will.

In summary, to pray in the name of the Lord is not just a statement or a form; rather, it is a spiritual reality and a life in union with the Lord. When we actually live in the Lord and have such a life in union with Him, we will pray spontaneously, and our prayers will surely be in accordance with the Lord’s will. When we live in Him and allow Him to live in us, He will be expressed through us. Then the prayers that come forth from us will be restricted to the expression of God’s desires. Once we
have this kind of prayer, God’s will will definitely be accomplished because the purified desire within us issues from the mingling—the Lord with us and we with Him. The prayers of such a one are prayers in the name of the Lord. (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1959, vol. 4, “Lessons on Prayer,” pp. 209-215)
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE
(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Allowing the Peace of Christ to Arbitrate in Our Hearts,
Letting the Word of Christ Dwell in Us Richly,
and Persevering in Prayer for the Genuine Church Life

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:15-16; 4:2
MC Hymns: Psalm 36:8-9 (tune #367)

I. We need to allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts—Col. 3:12-15;
Eph. 2:14-18; Rom. 5:1; Matt. 18:21-35:

Col 3:12 Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, inward parts of compassion,
kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering;
Col 3:13 Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against
anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive.
Col 3:14 And over all these things put on love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness.
Col 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one
Body; and be thankful.
Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle
wall of partition, the enmity,
Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create
the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,
Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by
it.
Eph 2:17 And coming, He announced peace as the gospel to you who were far off, and peace to
those who were near,
Eph 2:18 For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.
Rom 5:1 Therefore having been justified out of faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord
Jesus Christ,
Matt 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I
forgive him? Up to seven times?
Matt 18:22 Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy times seven.
Matt 18:23 For this reason the kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who desired to settle
accounts with his slaves.
Matt 18:24 And when he began to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to
him.
Matt 18:25 But since he did not have the means to repay, the master commanded him to be sold, as
well as his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.
Matt 18:26 Then the slave fell down and worshipped him, saying, Be patient with me and I will repay
you all.
Matt 18:27 And the master of that slave was moved with compassion and released him and forgave
him the loan.
Matt 18:28 But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii,
and he took hold of him and began to choke him, saying, Repay me what you owe.
Matt 18:29 Then his fellow slave fell down and begged him, saying, Be patient with me and I will repay
you.
Matt 18:30 But he would not; instead, he went away and threw him into prison until he would repay what was owed.

Matt 18:31 Then his fellow slaves, seeing what had taken place, were greatly grieved and came and explained fully to their master all that had taken place.

Matt 18:32 Then his master called him to him and said to him, Evil slave, all that debt I forgave you, because you begged me.

Matt 18:33 Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave even as I had mercy on you?

Matt 18:34 And his master became angry and delivered him to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed.

Matt 18:35 So also will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts.

A. The Greek term for arbitrate can also be rendered “umpire,” “preside,” or “be enthroned as a ruler and decider of everything”; the arbitrating peace of Christ dissolves our complaint against anyone—Col. 3:13.

Col 3:13 Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive.

B. Often we are conscious of three parties within us: a positive party, a negative party, and a neutral party; hence, there is the need for inward arbitration to settle the dispute within us:

1. Whenever we sense that different parties within our being are arguing or quarreling, we need to give place to the presiding peace of Christ and allow this peace, which is the oneness of the new man, to rule within us and have the final word.

2. We need to set aside our opinion, our concept, and listen to the word of the indwelling referee.

C. If we allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will settle all the disputes among us; we will have peace with God vertically and with the saints horizontally:

1. Through the arbitration of the peace of Christ, our problems are solved, and the friction between the saints disappears; then the church life is preserved in sweetness, and the new man is maintained in a practical way.

2. The arbitrating of the peace of Christ is Christ working within us to exercise His rule over us, to speak the last word, and to make the final decision—cf. Isa. 9:6-7.

   Isa 9:6 For a child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.

   Isa 9:7 To the increase of His government / And to His peace there is no end, / Upon the throne of David / And over His kingdom, / To establish it / And to uphold it / In justice and righteousness / From now to eternity. / The zeal of Jehovah of hosts / Will accomplish this.

3. If we stay under the ruling of the enthroned peace of Christ, we will not offend others or damage them; rather, by the Lord’s grace and with His peace, we will minister life to others.

4. This peace should bind all the believers together and become the uniting bond—Eph. 4:3.

   Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

II. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly—Col. 3:16:

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.

A. We need to allow the word of the Lord to have the first place in us and to inhabit us so that we may experience the functions of the word of God operating within us and ministering the riches of Christ into our being:

1. The word of God enlightens us (Psa. 119:105, 130), nourishes us (Matt. 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:6), and waters us to quench our thirst (Isa. 55:1, 8-11).

   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.
Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
Isa 55:1 Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price.
Isa 55:8 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, / And your ways are not My ways, declares Jehovah.
Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, / So My ways are higher than your ways, / And My thoughts higher than your thoughts.
Isa 55:10 For just as the rain comes down / And the snow from heaven, / And does not return there, / Until it waters the earth / And makes it bear and sprout forth, / That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
Isa 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; / It will not return to Me vainly, / But it will accomplish what I delight in, / And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it.
2. The word of God strengthens us (1 John 2:14b; Prov. 4:20-22), washes us (Eph. 5:26), and builds us up (Acts 20:32).
1 John 2:14b … I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one.
Prov 4:20 My son, be attentive to my words; / Incline your ear to my sayings.
Prov 4:21 Do not let them depart from your sight; / Keep them in the midst of your heart.
Prov 4:22 For they are life to those who find them, / And healing to all their flesh.
Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
Acts 20:32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.
3. The word of God completes, perfects (2 Tim. 3:15-17), and sanctifies us to bring us into the oneness in the Triune God (John 17:14-21).
2 Tim 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.
John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.
John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.
John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
B. Colossians 3:16 speaks of letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly. “teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace” in our hearts to God:
1. One way to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly is by singing it; in addition to praying the Word, we need to learn to sing-read and psalm the word of God—Psa. 119:54.
Psa 119:54 Your statutes have become my songs of praise / In the house of my pilgrimage.
2. Psalming the word of God includes dwelling upon it, musing on it, and enjoying it, thereby giving more opportunity for the word to saturate us (v. 15); singing and psalming the word are excellent ways to exercise our spirit and to be ushered into the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15; Psa. 47:6-7).

   *Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
   *1 Cor 14:15 What then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray also with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing also with the mind.
   *Psa 47:6 Sing psalms to God, sing psalms; / Sing psalms to our King, sing psalms.
   *Psa 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; / Sing psalms with understanding.

3. In singing and psalming God’s word, we may use any kind of melody, even a spontaneous one of our own composition; we need to build up the habit of singing and psalming the word day by day.

4. The more we sing and psalm the Lord’s word, the more we give opportunity to the word to dwell in us, sink into us, and permeate us with the divine element; then spontaneously, we will live Christ—cf. John 6:57, 63.

   *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.

C. Daily we need to practice coming to Christ as the living word in God’s written word so that He may speak to us personally as the applied word of the Spirit for Him to be infused into us according to the following life principles—Rev. 19:13; Matt. 4:4; John 5:39-40; 6:63; 8:31-32; 15:7; Deut. 17:18-19:

   *Rev 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.
   *Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.”
   *John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.
   *John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
   *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 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples;
   *John 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.
   *John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
   *Deut 17:18 And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Levitical priests.
   *Deut 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

1. We must open our entire being to the Lord for the inner shining of the divine light and the supplying of the divine life; the one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is absolutely open to the Lord—Psa. 119:105; Prov. 20:27; Psa. 139:23-24.

   *Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.
   *Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
   *Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts;
   *Psa 139:24 And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way.

2. We must seek the Lord with all our heart—119:2; Mark 12:30.

   *Psa 119:2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, / Who seek Him with all their heart.
   *Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
3. We must deal with anything that separates us from the Lord—Acts 24:16; 2 Tim. 1:3a; 1 John 1:9; cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26.

   Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
   2 Tim 1:3a I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, ...
   1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. We must humble ourselves before the Lord, putting aside our self-confidence and self-assurance and looking to Him for His mercy and grace—Isa. 66:1-2; 1 Pet. 5:5.

   Isa 66:1 Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest?
   Isa 66:2 For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.
   1 Pet 5:5 In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

5. We must exercise our spirit to pray over and with God’s word and exercise our whole being to sing, psalm, and muse on His word—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15-16; cf. Lev. 11:3.

   Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
   Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
   Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
   Psa 119:16 I will take delight in Your statutes; / I will not forget Your word.
   Lev 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.

D. By allowing the word of God to inhabit us, we can become a man of God filled with the breath of God so that we can be fully equipped with God’s word as the divine antidote against the decline of the church—2 Tim. 3:14-17.

   2 Tim 3:14 But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them
   2 Tim 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
   2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
   2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

III. We need to persevere in prayer—Col. 4:2-3:

   Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
   Col 4:3 Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound).

A. We need to allow adequate time for prayer, which will enable us to absorb more of the riches of Christ as the all-inclusive land—1:12; 2:6-7; 4:2:

   Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
   Col 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
   Col 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
   Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
1. We need to take time to absorb the Lord, contacting Him in a definite and prevailing way—Luke 8:13; Matt. 14:22-23; 6:6.

   Luke 8:13 And those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; yet these have no root, who believe only for a while, and in time of trial they draw back.

   Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

   Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

   Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

2. To meet with God in the morning is not only to meet with Him early in the day; it is also to meet with God in a situation that is full of light; we should go to God alone, without any persons, matters, or things to distract or occupy us—Prov. 4:18; Exo. 33:11a; 34:3-4; Mark 1:35.

   Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

   Exo 33:11a And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion, ...

   Exo 34:3 And no one shall come up with you, nor let anyone be seen anywhere on the mountain, nor let the flocks or herds graze in front of that mountain.

   Exo 34:4 So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, just as Jehovah had commanded him; and he took two tablets of stone in his hand.

   Mark 1:35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.

3. When we pray, coming forward to the throne of grace, grace will become a river flowing in us and supplying us—Heb. 4:16; cf. Rev. 22:1.

   Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

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

B. In order to fight on God’s side against Satan, we need to persevere in prayer—Dan. 6:10:

   Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.

1. As those who take sides with God, we find that the whole fallen universe is against us and, in particular, against our prayer; resistance to prayer lies not only outside of us but even within us—Matt. 26:41.

   Matt 26:41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

2. To pray is to go against the current, the trend, in the fallen universe—Luke 18:1-8.

   Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,

   Luke 18:2 Saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not regard man.

   Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent.

   Luke 18:4 And for a time he would not; but afterward he said within himself, Even though I do not fear God nor regard man,

   Luke 18:5 Yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wear me out.

   Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge says.

   Luke 18:7 And will not God by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night, though He is long-suffering over them?
Luke 18:8  I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the
Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

C.  We need to set aside definite times for prayer; our attitude should be that prayer is our most
important business and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with it—Dan. 6:10; Acts
12:5, 12.

Dan 6:10  Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his
house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times
daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he
had always done so previously.

Acts 12:5  So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the
church to God concerning him.

Acts 12:12  And when he became aware of this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of
John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled
together and praying.

D.  We need to remain in an atmosphere of prayer by continually exercising our spirit—Eph.
6:18; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:7; Col. 1:3, 9:

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,

1 Tim 4:7  But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.

2 Tim 1:7  For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of
sobermindedness.

Col 1:3  We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always
concerning you,

Col 1:9  Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on
your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual
wisdom and understanding,

1.  We need to pray without ceasing, to persevere in prayer, keeping ourselves intimately
connected to the Lord—1 Thes. 5:17; Matt. 26:41; Col. 2:19.

1 Thes 5:17  Unceasingly pray,

Matt 26:41  Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but
the flesh is weak.

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.

2.  Even in the smallest details we need to inquire of the Lord; to do this is to persevere in
prayer and thereby to live Christ—cf. Josh. 9:14; Phil. 4:7-8.

Josh 9:14  And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel
of Jehovah.

Phil 4:7  And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard
your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:8  Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are
righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well
spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.

IV.  As we are ruled by the peace of Christ and inhabited by the word of Christ
through persevering in prayer, He permeates and replaces us with Himself
until all our natural distinctions have been eliminated for us to have the
genuine church life—Col. 3:15-16; 4:2; 3:10-11.

Col 3:15  And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one
Body; and be thankful.

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.

Col 4:2  Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

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.
Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE RULE OF PEACE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE NEW MAN

For the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, it must rule in us. It must be enthroned as the ruler and decider. I believe you all have experienced that Someone has been enthroned in you to rule you and make the final decisions. Let us take as an example a brother who is offended by one of the elders. In my early ministry, I would have encouraged the offended brother to love the elder and not to be offended by him. However, from experience I learned that the more I did this, the more the offended one accused me of taking sides with the elder. Eventually I learned that the best thing is simply to pray that the Lord will have mercy on the brother who has been offended. In His mercy, the Lord will come to him and cause him to set his mind on the things above so that once again he can experience the divine transmission which gives rise to the arbitrating peace of Christ. Then, ruled by the peace of Christ, the brother will admit that even though the elder might have been wrong, he himself was wrong to a greater degree. Immediately he will confess to the Lord, receive grace, and have love for that elder. Through the arbitration of the peace of Christ, our problems are solved, and the friction between the saints disappears. Then the church life is preserved, and the new man is maintained in a practical way.

The church life as the life of the new man is preserved not by mere teachings, but by setting our mind on the things above and allowing the heavenly transmission to impart the divine element into us. Then we shall have the renewing of the new man and experience the peace of Christ ruling within us. The peace of Christ is actually Christ Himself in a particular aspect. Hence, the arbitrating of the peace of Christ is Christ working within us to exercise His rule over us, to speak the last word, and to make the final decision. In the case of the brother offended by the elder, Christ’s word is to love that elder, to seek him out for fellowship, and to enjoy the Lord with him. This is Christ enthroned as peace ruling, deciding, and uttering the last word.

In order to have a proper Christian walk and preserve the church life, we need the arbitrating peace of Christ. Otherwise, there will be no way for friction to be dissolved. Only the heavenly Christ, the One who is interceding, ministering, and administrating, can solve our problems and resolve the friction. If a brother and his wife set their mind on Christ in the heavens, they will experience the divine transmission. Then the peace of Christ will arbitrate in them.

In meeting after meeting and in message after message, we desire to minister Christ to the saints. As the saints see the revelation of Christ and experience the arbitrating peace of Christ, the church life will be preserved in freshness.

When the peace of Christ is enthroned in our hearts to be the unique umpire within us, we shall have peace with God vertically and with the saints horizontally. We praise the Lord that we are enjoying peace, and in this peace the church life as the new man is preserved! As the peace of Christ presides in our hearts, the renewing of the new man takes place continually. If we stay under the ruling of the enthroned peace of Christ, we shall not offend others or damage them. Rather, by the Lord’s grace and with His peace, we shall minister life to others. The oneness in a local church and among the churches is not maintained by human endeavoring. It is maintained only by the arbitrating peace of Christ. The management and maintenance of the Lord’s recovery are not our responsibility. All the churches and the recovery as a whole are under the arbitrating peace of Christ. In us Christ is the supplying grace and the arbitrating peace.

We need to allow the arbitrating peace of Christ to be enthroned in us first. Do not ask the Lord to exercise His sovereign rule over your wife or husband. Instead, pray, “Lord, be enthroned in me and exercise Your rule over me.” If instead of praying for yourself to be ruled by the Lord, you ask Him to rule others, the Lord may say, “Let Me first set up My throne in you. Let Me rule you, subdue you, and make the final decisions for you.” If we allow the enthroned peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, our married life, family life, and church life will all be preserved in oneness.
May we be encouraged to set our mind on the things above so that the heavenly transmission may bring the divine substance into our being for the renewing of the new man. Then Christ in the particular aspect of peace will arbitrate in our hearts, and the Lord will have a way to build up the new man and prepare the bride for His coming. *(Life-study of Colossians, pp. 564-566)*

**IN ALL WISDOM**

In Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly “in all wisdom.” Have you ever considered what it means for the word of Christ to dwell in you in all wisdom? If we would understand the meaning of this expression, we must differentiate between wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is related primarily to the function of the mind, whereas wisdom is related to the function of our spirit. This means that if the word of Christ is to dwell in us in all wisdom, we need to exercise our spirit. If we use our mind to memorize the Word, the Word will then dwell in us in knowledge. Memorizing Bible verses is a function of the mind related to knowledge, not a function of the spirit related to wisdom. For the Word to dwell in us in all wisdom refers to its indwelling every way possible through the exercise of the spirit. Wisdom is deeper, finer, and more profound than knowledge. It comes from the exercise of the spirit.

The difference between knowledge and wisdom can be illustrated in married life. Suppose a brother’s wife is murmuring and even rebukes him. If he fights back by reasoning with her, he will exercise his mind with its knowledge. In this, there is no wisdom. But suppose while his wife is murmuring, he calls on the name of the Lord Jesus and prays. This is wisdom. To reason is related to knowledge, but to pray is related to wisdom. Pray-reading and singing may also be related to wisdom. The brother may also show wisdom by exercising his spirit to share a helpful testimony he heard recently in a church meeting. The point here is that knowledge involves the exercise of the mind, but wisdom involves the exercise of the spirit by such means as praying, pray-reading, singing, and testifying.

When Paul speaks in Colossians 3:16 of letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, he does not mention reading, which is an exercise of the mind. Rather, he mentions wisdom, which implies the exercise of the spirit. What issues from the exercise of the spirit is wisdom, but what comes through the exercise of the mind is knowledge.

**TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER**

In this verse Paul also speaks of “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace” in our hearts to God. Here Paul does not speak of teaching and admonishing in an ordinary way, but of teaching and admonishing in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Furthermore, Paul indicates that it is by singing that we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. We may also teach and admonish by singing.

**SINGING TO THE LORD**

Because many of us were born into Christianity, raised in Christianity, and even constituted of Christianity, we must admit that, at least to some extent, we are still under the influence of the religion of Christianity, especially in the way we gather together for the meetings. Nowhere in the New Testament are Christians told that we should gather together and sit quietly, waiting for someone to start the meeting. According to the book of Psalms, when the children of Israel came together for the feasts three times a year, they began their meetings not in the temple, but at the foot of Mount Zion. As they ascended the mountain, they psalmed the songs of ascent (Psalms 120 through 134). Likewise, the church meetings should begin not in the meeting hall, but either in our homes or on our way to the meeting. The meeting should be an exhibition of our daily life, of the way we live at home, at school, or at work. The meeting should be full of singing and praising because we sing and praise the Lord day by day. I appreciate the chorus of the hymn, “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.” But where can you find a Christian who praises the Lord all day long? Many Christians who
sing this hymn do not praise their Savior in their daily living. But our daily life should be filled with singing to the Lord.

Many of us have read the Bible for years without realizing that we can receive the Word of God by singing. Is it your practice to take a verse of the Bible not only by reading, but also by singing? Christians have been taught to study the Bible and to read it, but not to sing it. We are thankful for the recovery of prayer-reading the Word. Now we must go on to sing-read the Word of God. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom by singing. This is not my teaching; it is the charge given by the apostle Paul in Colossians 3:16.

Even though we have been reading Colossians for years, we have not paid adequate attention to taking the Word by singing. Many Christians claim to be scriptural. But instead of being wholly scriptural, they may be formal and religious. It certainly is scriptural to sing the Word of God.

We should sing the Word not only in the meetings, but especially in our daily life. In particular, we should sing the Word at home. When you are alone in your room or with others at the dining table, sing the Word of God. Singing the Word is an excellent way to exercise the spirit. To pray is to exercise the spirit, but to sing is an especially good way to exercise the spirit.

The longest book of the Bible is the book of Psalms, containing one hundred fifty psalms. This book was composed not merely for reading; it was written for singing, even for psalming. Psalming is more elevated than singing. In Colossians 3:16 Paul mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Spiritual songs are usually short; hymns, of medium length; and psalms are usually longer compositions. We need to sing and psalm the Word of God. Psalming is higher, deeper, and more profound than singing.

SATURATED WITH THE WORD BY SINGING

If we sincerely desire to be saturated with the living Word so that we may live Christ, we need to follow the practice advocated by Paul in Colossians 3:16. This means that we must let the word of Christ inhabit us in a rich way, not by mere knowledge from the mind, but by every kind of wisdom from our spirit, including singing and psalming. Oh, we need to sing and psalm the Word of God! To sing the Word is better than reading it, and to psalm the Word is even better than singing it. Psalming the Word includes musing upon it and enjoying it. As we psalm the Word, we dwell upon it, muse on it, and enjoy it, thereby giving more opportunity for the Word to saturate us.

If we only read the Word, there is little opportunity for the portion we read to sink into us and saturate our being. But if we sing the Word, and especially if we psalm it, we open our being more fully to the Word and give it the opportunity to sink into us and saturate us. For example, if we sing Psalm 1, we shall enjoy the riches found in this short psalm. Let us sing and psalm the Word of God not only in the meetings. Let us come to the Word daily to sing and psalm it with our whole being. In singing and psalming the Word of God, let us exercise our voice, our mind, our heart, and our spirit.

Furthermore, I hope that from now on in the church meetings more place will be given to spontaneous singing of the Word. Perhaps in a certain meeting we shall sing or psalm the whole book of Ephesians. No doubt, if we spend an entire meeting to do this, we shall touch the riches in this Epistle.

It is surprising that in Colossians 3:16 Paul does not mention reading. Instead, he emphasizes singing. It is possible to read the Word without exercising our spirit and without contacting God. But by praying, singing, and psalming, we are ushered into the Spirit. The best way to receive the word of life and to be saturated with the element of Christ is to sing the Word.

FILLED IN SPIRIT

Ephesians 5:18-19 is parallel to Colossians 3:16. In these verses Paul says, “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled in spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord.” Notice that in Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, but in Ephesians 5:18 he tells us to be filled in spirit.
When we put these verses together, we see that we should be filled in spirit with the word of Christ. These two portions of the Word have the same goal—that we should have our spirit filled with the Word.

We may compare our spirit to an automobile needing gasoline, and the Word, the Bible, to a gas station. When we sense that we are empty, we should come to the Word to be filled. In the Word we have an inexhaustible supply of spiritual gasoline. The way to pump this “gasoline” into us is by singing and psalming the Word. If we are filled in this way, surely we shall speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We shall also discover that singing and psalming the Word are higher than pray-reading it.

The more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more we shall be delivered from the influence of religion, the influence which causes us to come to the meetings in a formal way. Let us build up the habit of singing the Word day by day. Then our meetings will not be formal. Instead of any kind of performance, the meetings will be filled with an exhibition of our daily life. What we exhibit in the church meetings will be the way we live day by day. In particular, we shall sing in the meetings because we sing the Word daily.

Concerning the singing of the Word of God, my main burden is not that the meetings will be enriched; it is that we shall be saturated with the living Word. We shall participate in the bountiful supply of the Spirit and enjoy the riches of Christ by receiving the Word of God.

In the past I lost many opportunities to be saturated with the Word because I did not know to sing the Word. I spent a great deal of time reading and studying the Bible, filling several Bibles with notes, but I did not realize I could sing or psalm the Word. It is one thing to read Ephesians 2 and another thing to pray-read it. But once again I wish to emphasize that singing the Word is even better than pray-reading. Many of today’s Christians exercise only their mind to read and study the Word. They do not sing the Word at all, and some actually oppose the practice of pray-reading. I am confident that the more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we shall be washed by and saturated with the element of Christ.

Concerning those things necessary for life, what is important is not understanding, but receiving. We may not understand very much about the water we drink and especially about the food we eat, but we need to drink and eat nevertheless. By eating and drinking we receive what is necessary to maintain life. In like manner, we need to receive the Word into us by eating it. Yes, we can eat the Word by reading it in a proper way. Furthermore, from experience we know that we can take the Word as food by pray-reading it. But now we must go on to see that there is no better way to receive the Word into our being than by singing the Word. The more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more it will sink into the depths of our being and saturate us. If we take even a little time to sing the Word, we shall sense that we are inwardly filled and saturated with it. Then spontaneously we shall live Christ.

When the element of Christ has been infused into us by our singing and psalming the Word, we live Christ spontaneously and automatically. Sometimes we may read the Word without having any element of Christ infused into our being. But when we sing and psalm the Word, we are saturated with the divine element contained in the Word and conveyed to us through the Word. The more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we give opportunity to the Word to dwell in us, sink into us, and permeate us with the divine element. Then we shall be constituted of the element of Christ. Automatically we shall become what we eat and live out what we have absorbed. This is the way to live Christ. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 354-359)

RECEIVING BLESSING FROM THE LAW AS GOD’S LIVING WORD

If our condition is normal, we should be helped and very much blessed whenever we come to the Word of God. If we do not receive any blessing, there must be something wrong with us. All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore, the words of the Bible are God’s breath. Furthermore, as the
embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), the Lord Jesus is Himself called the Word (John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13). Thus, coming to the Word should be the equivalent of coming to God. Because the Word is the embodiment of God, it contains the riches of God. The Word of God contains all that God is. This is the reason the Word of God is so rich, substantial, living, and enlightening. All that God can be to us, the Word can be also. Provided we have no problems within us which cause a hindrance, we should receive blessing whenever we come to the Word of God.

PROBLEMS OF THE HEART

No Exercise of Heart

If you fail to receive help when you come to the Word, there is probably a problem of some kind in your heart. Your heart is not right. It may be that you have no genuine exercise of heart in coming to the Word. You read the Bible, but you have no heart for the Word. In human life it is possible to do many things out of necessity without having a heart for those things. For example, a young person may be forced to attend school, but he may have no heart for education. He goes to school only because he is compelled to do so. Likewise, although we may read the Word of God, perhaps out of a sense of duty, we may not have a heart for the Word.

A Divided Heart

Another problem you may have in your heart is the problem of a divided heart. It is possible that your heart is divided into two or three parts, perhaps even more. This may especially be true of young people. A young person may love many different things. This causes the heart to be divided. One thing occupies one part of the heart, and something else occupies another part. Suppose a young man has a heart for his studies, but also has a heart for a particular form of worldly entertainment. This will cause his heart to be divided.

If a person’s heart is divided into two parts, one part for something good and another part for something evil, the evil tendency will always prevail. This seems to be a natural law or principle. In his heart a person may have two opposite intentions; he may intend both to lie and to tell the truth. The evil intention, that of telling a lie, will prevail over the good intention, that of telling the truth. Whenever our heart is divided, reading the Word of God will not help us. If we come to the Bible halfheartedly or with a divided heart, we shall not receive blessing from the Word. Whenever we come to the Bible, we must come with a whole heart and with a single heart. It is not profitable to read the Word of God in a halfhearted way.

A Lack of Heart

Another problem of the heart in relation to the Word is that of not having any heart at all for the Word. We have pointed out the problem of not using or exercising our heart in reading the Word. However, there is a difference between this and not having a heart for the Word. There are some people who seem to have no heart at all. Inwardly, they are like dead wood. No matter how much such a person may read the Bible, he will not receive any blessing from his reading, for he lacks the function through which to comprehend what the Bible is saying. He simply has no function of heart in reading the Word. This is a very serious problem. When many Christians come to the Bible, they are like dead wood, without a heart.

Coverings, Hindrances, and Frustrations

Another problem with the heart is related to things that cover you, separate you from the Lord, or frustrate your contact with the Lord. In reading the Word of God, you may cry out to the Lord and be desperate to receive something from the Lord. However, there may be hindrances or frustrations within you. There may be a certain sin that besets, captures, and possesses you. On the one hand, you love the Word of God. On the other hand, a certain sin may lie hidden in your heart, and you may not be willing
for the Lord to deal with it. Such a hidden sin will prevent you from receiving blessing from the Word. Suppose, for example, someone has offended you, and you are not willing to forgive this offense. You may not consider that your unwillingness to forgive is a sin, but it is in fact a sin. You may hide this sin, or other kinds of sins, from man, and you may even attempt to conceal it from the Lord. If you come to the Bible with such a sin hidden within you, you will not be able to receive anything from the Word, even though you have a heart for the Word. If you have a tendency toward something which does not please the Lord and at the same time desire to come to the Word, you will not be blessed by reading the Word of God.

We know from our experience that at times we struggle with the Lord, perhaps over the issue of consecration. We may not be willing to consecrate ourselves, to be subdued by the Lord, or to be convinced by Him. We may insist on holding to our opinion regarding a particular matter. Even though the Lord speaks to us again and again, we still are not willing to be convinced, because His speaking is contrary to our opinion. We cling to our concept and insist on it. Such an insistence is a veil that covers our heart. Do you think that you can receive help from the Word if your heart is covered in this way? To be sure, reading the Word when you are in such a condition will not be a help to you.

If we want to receive blessing from the Word of God, we must first deal with our heart and turn to the Lord absolutely and with our whole heart. We also need to deal with anything in our heart that is negative or that causes separation between us and the Lord. If we deal with our heart and with the negative things between us and the Lord, our condition is likely to be normal. Then it is very possible that we shall receive help from the Word.

Even if we deal with our heart and with the negative things in our heart, we may still have some complications. All of us, young and old alike, are complicated. Within us there are a number of factors which cause complications. These complications also make it difficult for us to receive blessing from the Word.

As we read Psalm 119, we see that the psalmist was right with the Lord. There was nothing between him and the Lord. I appreciate the line in the hymn, “Nothing between, Lord, nothing between.” However, it is one thing to sing this hymn, but it is another thing to practice having nothing between us and the Lord. How much we shall receive from the living Word if there is nothing between the Lord and us!

If a person studies diligently for a number of years, he may receive a Ph.D. in a certain field, perhaps in nuclear physics. Although I have known a number of young people who have earned a Ph.D., I do not know many who have attained a comparable measure of understanding in spiritual matters. Some have had the Bible, a book of heavenly, divine, and spiritual science, in their hands for decades, but still they have only an elementary understanding of it. This indicates that although they have acquired a certain amount of knowledge, they have not been blessed through their reading of the Word. Earning a Ph.D. degree requires much study, but it does not require that you deal with your heart. For example, does refusing to forgive someone hinder you from earning a doctoral degree? Of course not! But such a thing can keep you from receiving blessing from the Word of God. A sister, Margaret E. Barber, used to say that even a small leaf can hide a bright star. Likewise, even a small matter can keep us from receiving blessing from the Bible.

THE NEED TO HUMBLE OURSELVES

The Bible requires more of us than any other book. The Bible demands that we humble ourselves and put aside our self-confidence and self-assurance. In coming to the Word, we need to pray that the Lord will have mercy on us. If we do not receive the Lord’s mercy, something within us unconsciously may continue to cover us and keep us from the Lord’s Word. Let us learn to pray, “Lord, have mercy on me. I don’t want to be covered by anything, and I don’t want to have anything between You and me. Lord, grant that there will be nothing between us.” This should be not only our prayer, but also our attitude toward the Lord.
In coming to the Word we should not have any self-confidence. We should not presume to have the assurance that there are no problems between us and the Lord. We simply do not have the ground for this kind of assurance. Although we may not realize it, there may be still a number of problems between us and Him. Therefore, we need to humble ourselves before the Lord. The Bible says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). If we do not humble ourselves in coming to the Word, we shall be greatly hindered in receiving help from the Word.

Some may think that as long as we love the Lord, everything will be all right. However, loving the Lord is somewhat general. We may love Him without ever having humbled ourselves before Him. Realizing that there are still apt to be negative things within us, we need to humble ourselves. If it is difficult to clean our physical surroundings in an absolute way, how much more difficult it is to clean our heart! Can you say that in cleaning your house you clean thoroughly? It is very difficult for anyone to say this. Years ago, when our youngest daughter needed minor surgery, the physician told us that he could not perform the surgery in his office. To us, the office seemed very clean. But the doctor realized that because the ceiling of his office could not be thoroughly cleansed, his office was not a proper place for surgery to be performed. When he said this, I thought that this is also true of the “ceiling” of our inward being. Because our inward ceiling is not absolutely clean, it is difficult for surgery to be performed within us. Therefore, we should have no confidence in ourselves, but humbly look to the Lord for mercy.

Recently, some of the young people have completed a special training. Although they have passed through a very good training, they should not think that everything is right between them and the Lord. They should not assume that everything has been rectified or sanctified. They still may have many problems in their heart. If we realize this about ourselves, we shall not be so confident as to think that in everything we are right with the Lord. Instead, we shall humble ourselves before the Lord and ask Him for mercy.

ENLIGHTENED BY THE WORD

If we have a humble attitude when we come to the Word, not having any trust in ourselves, we shall be enlightened. To have no trust in ourselves means that we have no reservations. Nothing remains as a problem between us and the Lord. However, if instead of having a humble attitude we still have confidence in ourselves, we shall have serious problems in receiving blessing from the Word. Perhaps you are wondering why you do not receive light from the Word, even though you have been reading the Bible regularly for a long time. The reason may be that you have too much confidence in yourself. Again I say, we must let go of our confidence, humble ourselves before the Lord, and pray that He will have mercy on us. We should say, “Lord, I do not have any confidence in myself, and I do not insist on anything. Lord, I open to You, and I ask You to have mercy on me.” If this is your attitude in coming to the Bible, you will receive blessing from the Word, no matter what portion of the Word you read. Even the first seventeen verses of the Gospel of Matthew will have something as a help for you. The crucial matter is that you humble yourself before the Lord.

A REALM OF LIGHT

Often saints testify that they see light in reading the Word. This is true. Through the Word we do receive light. But in my experience I have found that whenever I humble myself, do not insist on any opinion, and ask the Lord for His mercy, I have the sense that I come into a realm of light whenever I come to the Word. Even if I do not receive any particular light, I have the consciousness that I am in the light.

Whenever we come to the Word, we come to the light, because the Word is the embodiment of God, and God is light (1 John 1:5). When you stand under the light of the sun, you do not need to receive light, for you are already in the light. Likewise, when we come to the Word with a proper attitude, we have the sense that we are in the light and under the light and are not merely receiving
light. Then, the whole Bible in our experience becomes a book of light. No matter where we may be in our reading, we sense that the Bible is a shining light.

As the embodiment of God, the unique light, the Word of God is a shining light. This light is actually God Himself in the Word. Because the Word is the condensation of the divine light, we enter into an atmosphere of light whenever we come to the Word. This is like entering into a lighted room. When we are in a lighted room, we do not simply receive light, but we are in a realm of light.

Whether or not the Bible is shining in our experience depends on our attitude and condition. If we are humble and ask the Lord for mercy, the Bible will be to us a book of light. After reading a portion of the Word, you may not have much understanding, but you have the sense that you are in light. This proves that the Bible is the divine Word. You do not have the sense that you are in light when you read a newspaper or magazine. But if you read the Word or pray-read some verses of the Scriptures with a sincere heart and in an attitude of humility, you will be conscious of having been brought into light. Whenever we come to the Word in a proper way, we have the conviction that we have come into the light and are in a sphere of light. Then spontaneously we receive light, and we become people who are absolutely in light.

The Entrance of the Word Giving Light

In 119:130 the psalmist says, “The entrance of thy words giveth light.” The Word has an entrance. This means that the Bible has an opening, a gate. According to my experience, the bar to this gate is not on the inside, but on the outside. It is on our side of the gate. This means that if the gate is closed, we are the ones who have closed it. Whether the Word is open to us or not depends on how we deal with it. Sometimes we pray that the Lord would open the Word to us. However, when we pray in this way, the Lord may tell us that, on His side, He has already opened His Word. Now we, on our side, need to open the gate of the Word. Our experience testifies that if we have no problems with the Lord when we come to the Word, the Word will be open to us. But if we come to the Word when we have problems with the Lord, the door will be shut. This indicates that the bar to the gate is on our side. When we come to the Word and open it, then in our spiritual experience, the Word will have an entrance, an opening.

I wish to emphasize the fact that whether the gate of the Word is open or closed depends on us. We need to thank the Lord that the Word has an entrance, a gate, and that the bar of the gate is on our side. We should say, “Lord, thank You for the entrance, the opening, to Your Word.” Often in our experience we sense that, because we come to the Word in the right way, the Word has an opening. This opening seems to depend on the Lord and come from Him. However, it actually depends on us and comes from approaching the Word in a proper way. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 690-697)

A VOW CONCERNING OUR PRAYER LIFE

In light of the fact that there is great resistance to praying, let us now consider in a very practical way how to persevere in prayer. Before you try to persevere in prayer, you should first make a deal with the Lord concerning your prayer life. Pray to Him in a definite way and say, “Lord, I mean business with You about this matter of prayer. I call heaven and earth to witness that from this time forth I will have a life of prayer. I will not be a prayerless person. Rather, I will be a praying person.” If you do not have such a prayer to the Lord, you will not be able to persevere in prayer. We need to say to Him, “Lord, I am desperate about this. I offer myself to You so that I may have a prayer life. Lord, keep me in the spirit of prayer. If I forget this or neglect this, I know that You will not forget it. Remind me again and again about prayer.” This kind of prayer may be regarded as a vow made to the Lord. We all need to make a vow to Him concerning our prayer life. We should tell the Lord, “Lord, I know that if I forget this vow, You will not forget it. From the very beginning, Lord, I want to clearly hand the responsibility over to You. Lord, don’t let me go. Remind me to pray.”

SETTING ASIDE DEFINITE TIMES
After we make such a deal with the Lord concerning prayer, we should set aside definite times for prayer. For instance, you may reserve ten minutes every morning. During this time, prayer must be the top priority. Our attitude should be that prayer is our most important business and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with it. If we do not have this attitude, we shall not be able to have a successful prayer life. No matter how many things we have to do each day, we can reserve at least a few minutes here and there for prayer. We may pray a little in the morning. Then again at noon, after work, and in the evening we may have other times for prayer. By setting aside definite times during the day, we may be able to have a half hour reserved for prayer.

When you are observing a set time for prayer at home, take the telephone off the hook. This will help eliminate distractions. Prayer time is not the time for telephone calls. Furthermore, you should not pay attention to those knocking at your door. The time you have dedicated to the Lord for prayer should be used only for prayer, not for anything else. Regarding this, you need to be strong and persevering.

In order to have more time for prayer, we should try to save time during the day. For example, perhaps we can reduce the time spent in personal grooming or in conversation with others. Unnecessary talk weakens our praying spirit, damages the praying atmosphere, and occupies time that can be used for prayer. The battle over prayer is continual. Probably it will last until eternity.

What I have been sharing about prayer is not mere doctrine. It comes from years of experience. As far as prayer is concerned, I must admit that I have had much failure. I do not boast of great success in my prayer life. Rather, I have suffered many failures because of the opposition of the enemy, the distractions around me, and even the hindrances within me. I have surely learned that prayer is a battle. Because it is a battle, a fight, we must persevere in it.

THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER

Persevering in prayer has many benefits. By prayer we set our mind on the things above. In fact, prayer is the only way to have our mind set on the things in heaven. When we set our mind on things above by praying, we shall not pray for trivial matters. Instead, our prayer will be occupied with Christ’s heavenly intercession, ministry, and administration. Because Christ is interceding for the churches around the world, we also pray for the churches. Let the Lord take care of all the small matters in our living. Our responsibility is to seek first the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness. Since the Father knows our need, He will take care of us and meet our need.

When we set our mind on the things above during our times of prayer, we become a reflection of Christ’s ministry in the heavens. Through our prayer, Christ, the Head, is given a way to carry out His administration through His Body. When we pray, we are a heavenly ambassador on earth with the extension of God’s kingdom. However, when we are gossiping, we are not a heavenly ambassador at all. Only when we pray do we become an ambassador of the heavenly kingdom on earth in a practical way.

When we pray, we enter into the Holy of Holies and approach the throne of grace. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for timely help.” Prayer is the way to come forward to the throne of grace. Coming forward to the throne of grace, we receive mercy and grace to meet our timely need. When we pray, approaching the throne of grace, mercy and grace will become a river flowing in us and supplying us. How rewarding this is! Receiving the flow of grace in prayer is actually more important than having our prayers answered. Whether or not our prayer is answered is secondary. The primary thing is that grace flows like a river from the throne and into our being.

To receive this river of grace is to have our spiritual battery charged with heavenly current. The heavenly current, the divine electricity, is the Triune God as grace flowing out of the throne and into us. The supply and enjoyment this brings is unspeakable.

Christians today are weak because their spiritual batteries are not charged. Because they are short of prayer, they are short of the heavenly transmission. Again and again during the day, we need to be
charged with the divine electrical current. This surely is a reward for persevering in prayer.

Another benefit of praying is related to fellowship with the Lord. We all love the Lord’s presence and anointing, and we all love to have fellowship with Him. But how can we enjoy the Lord’s presence and have fellowship with Him? The only way is to pray. When we pray, we enter into fellowship with the Lord and become conscious of the fact that we are truly one spirit with Him and that He is actually one spirit with us. The more we pray, the more we experience being one with the Lord, and the more we enjoy His presence and have fellowship with Him. What a marvelous reward!

It is always difficult at first to have a proper prayer life. But if you practice this for a long period of time, it will get easier and easier, for you will realize the rewards of praying.

We have seen that for a normal Christian walk we need to set our mind on things above, have the renewing of the new man, have the peace of Christ arbitrating in us, and allow the word of Christ to inhabit us. These four matters, however, all require prayer. To practice them and to experience them, we need to pray. Prayer ushers us into the reality of these four things and keeps us in this reality.

WATCHING WITH THANKSGIVING

In charging us to persevere in prayer, Paul tells us to watch in it with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2). This indicates that if we are not thankful to God for anything, we must be lacking in prayer. All day long we need to thank God. We need to be those who continually offer thanks to Him. If we are constantly giving thanks to the Lord, do you think it will be possible for a brother to argue with his wife? Surely not! Arguments between husband and wife are a sign of prayerlessness. They argue because they are lacking in prayer. The sign of a praying person is thankfulness. If you are one who perseveres in prayer, you will always be thankful to the Lord. This giving of thanks to Him will preserve you in your life of prayer.

In 4:2 Paul does not say to persevere in prayer and to watch. He says, “Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving.” We watch in prayer by the giving of thanks. If we continually offer thanks to the Lord, the adversary will not be able to carry us off from our prayer life. Prayer is maintained by watching in it with thanksgiving.

GRACE AND WISDOM

In 4:6 Paul says, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” If we are praying people, we shall utter thanks to the Lord, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, our speech will be with grace. Out of our mouth will flow thanks to God and grace to others. In this way we shall know that we are praying people. However, if our speech is lacking in grace, we must be short of prayer. When we become aware of the lack of grace, we need to pray again and be charged with the divine electricity. Then our mouth will be filled with grace.

In 4:5 Paul says, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are without, redeeming the time.” This is a result of persevering in prayer. If we pray without ceasing, offer thanks to God, and have speech filled with grace, we shall spontaneously become very wise and know how to redeem the time. In our daily living no time will be wasted. If we are filled with thanks to God and with grace toward others, we shall have the wisdom to walk in a way which glorifies God and builds up others. Then our time will be redeemed.

Concerning persevering in prayer, I wish to say once again that we need to be willing to make a deal with the Lord, even to make a vow to Him, that we shall be a praying people. If all the saints in all the churches make such a deal with the Lord, the recovery will be greatly enriched and uplifted. Furthermore, the saints will enjoy the Lord, His presence, and His instant and constant anointing. All day long, they will enjoy the smile of the Lord’s face. As we persevere in prayer, the living Person of Christ becomes our experience and enjoyment. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 579-584)
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE
(Lord’s Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

Laboring on the All-inclusive Christ—
“a Land Flowing with Milk and Honey”—
and Bringing the Surplus of the Riches of Christ
to the Meetings of the Church
for an Exhibition of Christ and the Corporate Worship of God

Scripture Reading: Deut. 8:7-10; 12:6-7, 11-12, 18

Deut 8:7  For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;
Deut 8:8  A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;
Deut 8:9  A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.
Deut 8:10 And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.
Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;
Deut 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.
Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.
Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.
Deut 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.

I. As believers in Christ who have been led by Christ into Himself as the good land typified by the land of Canaan, we need to labor on Christ—1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:12:

1 Cor 1:30  But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
Col 1:12  Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

A. After the people of Israel entered into and possessed the land of Canaan and received their allotted portion, they labored on the land—Deut. 8:7-10; 12:6-7, 11-12, 18:

Deut 8:7  For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;
Deut 8:8  A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;
Deut 8:9  A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.
Deut 8:10  And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.

Deut 12:6  And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

Deut 12:7  And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.

Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.

Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

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

1. Whether or not they were willing to labor on the land was a serious matter; they had to labor on and cultivate the land.

2. This is a picture of how we need to labor diligently on Christ so that we may enjoy His all-inclusive riches—Eph. 3:8; 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 3:10.

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

Eph 1:7  In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

B. The life we live after entering into Christ as the good land is a life of laboring on Christ—Col. 1:12; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 15:10:

Col 1:12  Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

Rom 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

1. As the Lord’s people who are living in the all-inclusive Christ, we need to labor on Christ, seeking Christ and enjoying Christ in every situation—Col. 1:12; 3:1, 4, 10-11.

Col 1:12  Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

Col 3:1  If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

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

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

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

2. We are in a very rich land, but if we do not labor on it, there will be no produce for us to experience and enjoy—Eph. 1:7; 2:7; 3:8; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Eph 1:7  In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,

Eph 2:7  That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
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.

1 Cor 15:58  Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

C. Although we need to labor on Christ as the land to produce Christ, we need to realize that it is not we who produce Christ but Christ who produces Himself in us through our labor—Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:15-16:

Phil 2:13  For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

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

Col 3:15  And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in One Body; and be thankful.

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.

1. We all need to labor on Christ and let Christ give us much produce; then we will have rich experiences of Christ—Eph. 3:8; Phil. 4:19.

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.

Phil 4:19  And my God will fill your every need according to His riches, in glory, in Christ Jesus.

2. The harvest of Christ is the Christ on whom we have labored and have reaped to be our harvest—3:10.

Phil 3:10  To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

D. Every morning we need to pray, asking the Lord for the day’s portion of grace and consecrating ourselves to the Lord for the purpose of experiencing and enjoying Him by laboring on Him—Rom. 12:1-2; 15:16.

Rom 12:1  I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

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 15:16  That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

E. Throughout the day we need to maintain our fellowship with the Lord and thereby contact Him, labor on Him, apply Him, experience Him, and enjoy Him—John 15:4-5, 11; 16:22; 1 Pet. 1:8.

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

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

John 15:11  These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.

John 16:22  Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.

1 Pet 1:8  Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

F. Exercising our spirit is the key to laboring on Christ, experiencing Christ, and producing Christ—1 Tim. 4:7:

1 Tim 4:7  But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.

1. The way to labor on Christ is to exercise our spirit to contact the Spirit, the reality of the all-inclusive Christ as the good land—Gal. 3:14.

Gal 3:14  In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
2. Throughout the day, in every situation and in all our circumstances, we should exercise our spirit to contact the Lord and experience Him—1 Tim. 4:7; Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 4:11-13.

1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
Phil 4:11 Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.
Phil 4:12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.
Phil 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

G. We labor on Christ as the good land by exercising our heart to have faith in the Lord and to love the Lord and by exercising our spirit to contact the Lord and to receive the dispensing of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, the reality of Christ as the good land—2 Cor. 3:16; 13:14; Gal. 3:14.

2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Gal 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

II. As a type of the all-inclusive Christ, the land of Canaan is “a land flowing with milk and honey”—Exo. 3:8, 17; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:27; 14:8; Deut. 6:3; 26:9, 15; 27:3; Josh. 5:6:

Exo 3:8 And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
Exo 3:17 And I say, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.
Exo 33:3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you in the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.
Lev 20:24 But I have said to you, You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am Jehovah your God, who has separated you from the peoples.
Num 13:27 And they told him and said, We came to the land into which you sent us; and it indeed flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.
Num 14:8 If Jehovah is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us; a land which flows with milk and honey.
Deut 6:3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and be certain to do it, that it may go well with you and that you may be greatly increased, in a land flowing with milk and honey, even as Jehovah, the God of your fathers, promised you.
Deut 26:9 And He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.
Deut 26:15 Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the ground which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.
Deut 27:3 And you shall write upon them all the words of this law when you cross over, in order that you may enter the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of your fathers, promised to you.
Josh 5:6 For the children of Israel went for forty years through the wilderness until all the nation, the men of war who had come out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not listen to the voice of Jehovah, they to whom Jehovah swore that they would not see the land that Jehovah had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.
A. Milk and honey are produced out of the mingling of two kinds of lives—the vegetable life and the animal life:

1. In Deuteronomy 8:8 honey is put together with the plants—the wheat, the barley, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree:
   Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

2. In Deuteronomy 32:14 milk is put together with the animals—the cattle and the flock:
   Deut 32:14 Curd of cows and milk of sheep, / With fat of lambs, / And rams, the offspring of Bashan, and goats, / With the choicest wheat; / And the blood of the grape you drank as fermenting wine.

3. For the most part honey has to do with the plant life, and the greater part of milk is related to the animal life:
   a. When these two lives are mingled together, honey is produced by bees from the nectar of flowers.
   b. Milk is also a product of both the animal life and the vegetable life, but it belongs mainly to the animal life; it is produced from grazing in the pasture (vegetable life) by the cattle and the flock (animal life).

B. Milk and honey, which are the mingling of both the animal life and the vegetable life, signify two aspects of the life of Christ—the redeeming aspect and the generating aspect—8:8; 32:13-14:

1. The vegetable life is the life that generates and multiplies; this life signifies the generating and multiplying life of Christ—John 12:24.
   John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

2. The animal life signifies the redeeming life of Christ—6:54-55.
   John 6:54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day.
   John 6:55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

3. The redeeming aspect of Christ’s life is for our judicial redemption, and the generating aspect of Christ’s life is for our organic salvation—1:29; 12:24; Rev. 2:7; Rom. 5:10.
   John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
   John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
   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.
   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,

4. The symbols of the Lord’s table signify the redeeming and generating aspects of Christ’s life for God’s complete salvation—Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:17.
   Matt 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body.
   Matt 26:27 And He took a cup and gave thanks, and He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you,
   Matt 26:28 For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
   1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.
5. Milk and honey speak forth the goodness and sweetness of the life of Christ— Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18:

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.

Phil 4:18 But I have received in full all things and abound; I have been filled, receiving from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling savor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

a. When at the same time we experience and enjoy Christ as both the vegetable life and the animal life, we realize how good, sweet, and rich the Lord is to us.

b. We sense the richness and the sweetness of Christ—the goodness of the milk and the sweetness of the honey.

6. By enjoying Christ as the land of milk and honey, we will be constituted with Him as milk and honey—“Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue”—S. S. 4:11a; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

III. Daily we should labor on Christ to have a surplus, a harvest, to bring to the church meetings for the corporate worship of God the Father—Deut. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:26; John 4:23-24; Deut. 16:15-16:

Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

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

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

Deut 16:15 You shall keep the feast to Jehovah your God for seven days in the place which Jehovah will choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings; therefore you shall be nothing but joyful.

Deut 16:16 Three times a year all your males shall appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty-handed;

A. The life in the land is a life full of the enjoyment of Christ, both personally and collectively with the Lord’s people—8:7-10.

Deut 8:7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;

Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

Deut 8:9 A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.

Deut 8:10 And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.

B. The life in the good land is a life of laboring on Christ, producing Christ, enjoying Christ, sharing Christ with others, and offering Christ to God that He may enjoy Him with us:

1. This kind of enjoyment and sharing is an exhibition of Christ to the entire universe—Rev. 19:7.

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.

2. This is a worship to God and a shame to the enemy— John 4:23-24.

John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
John 4:24  God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

C. May we be diligent to labor on Christ, to have our hands filled with Him, and then come to the church meetings to enjoy this rich and glorious Christ with God’s children and with God Himself—1 Cor. 14:26; John 4:23-24.

1 Cor 14:26  What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

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

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

D. Whenever we come to the Lord’s table meeting to remember the Lord and worship the Father, we should not come with our hands empty; we must come with our hands full of the produce of Christ—Deut. 16:15-16:

Deut 16:15  You shall keep the feast to Jehovah your God for seven days in the place which Jehovah will choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings; therefore you shall be nothing but joyful.

Deut 16:16  Three times a year all your males shall appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before Jehovah empty-handed;

1. To worship God with Christ is to worship Him collectively with all the children of God by enjoying Christ with one another and with God—1 Cor. 14:26.

1 Cor 14:26  What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

2. We need to produce enough of Christ so that there will be a surplus to share with others and offer the best part of the produce to God the Father for His joy, delight, and satisfaction—Deut. 15:11; 18:3-4; 12:11.

Deut 15:11  For the needy will not cease being in the land; therefore I am commanding you, saying, You must open your hand to your brother, to the poor one with you and to the needy one with you in your land.

Deut 18:3  And this shall be the priests’ rightful due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: They shall give the priest the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the stomach.

Deut 18:4  You shall give him the firstfruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your fresh oil, and the first shearing of your sheep;

Deut 12:11  Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

LABORING ON CHRIST

What then is the life we need to enjoy the good land? It is a life first of all of laboring on Christ. It is a life of making Christ our industry.

So much is said today about industry. People study many subjects for industry, they go into business for industry, and cities are planned for industry. Practically everything today is for industry. Nations are even competing with each other in the matter of industrial growth. There are many kinds of industries in the world, but we who are the Lord’s people living in the all-inclusive Christ should have one industry—Christ. Christ is our industry. We must labor on Him.

Many today are students of science or engineering. Day by day they are delving into these matters and working on them. They spend many hours of laborious study, experimentation, and even practice in
these fields. But please tell me, as a Christian, born of God, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and strengthened daily by resurrection power into your inner man, on what are you laboring? In other words, what is your business?

Wherever I go, I never like to tell people that I am a preacher. It may sound strange, but I feel shameful to make myself known to others in such a way. And I do not like to let people know that I am a so-called minister. It is really difficult for me to tell people my business. Many times when I am traveling by air or by train, someone sits beside me and asks me concerning my occupation. Sometimes I startle them by replying, “I am working on Christ. Christ is my job.” When they ask me what firm I am working for, I sometimes answer, “My firm is Christ Incorporated.” Then they usually ask what I mean by “Christ Incorporated.” I can only tell them that day by day I am working on Christ and that Christ Himself is my very business.

You who are students must realize and experience even while studying that you are working on Christ. Christ is your industry. You who are truck drivers must realize that truck driving is not your real occupation; your real business is Christ; you must be working on Him continually. You who are housewives must know that your real work is not caring for your home and your family but Christ. Are you working on Christ all the time? Are you seeking to enjoy Him and experience Him in every situation?

The life after the possession of the good land is a life of laboring on Christ. It is a life of making Christ our industry and producing Him in mass production. We are working for “Christ Incorporated,” and day by day we are producing Christ. Many farmers are fruit growers and fruit producers. We are Christ growers and Christ producers. We are working diligently day and night on the farm of Christ. Yet we are working happily, and our work is such a rest to us.

Consider the people of Israel after they occupied the good land and all their enemies were subdued. What did they do? They simply labored on the land. They tilled the ground, sowed the seed, watered the plants, nurtured the vines, and pruned the trees. These were all necessary tasks for the enjoyment of that piece of land. It is a picture of how we must work diligently on Christ that we may enjoy His all-inclusive riches. This is our business. Christ is our industry. We must work on Christ to produce His riches. We have seen how rich that good land is in so many aspects, but without laboring on it, how could its riches be brought forth and abundantly produced? To have this rich Christ is one thing, but to continually labor on Him is another.

What about today’s Christianity? Is it rich, or is it poor? We must confess that it is indeed poor. Christ is rich beyond measure, but the church today is groveling in poverty. Why? It is because the Lord’s children today are indolent. They will not exert themselves to labor on Christ. Read the proverbs written by that wise man King Solomon: “How long, sluggard, will you lie there? / When will you arise from your sleep? / A little sleep, a little slumber, / A little folding of the hands to rest, / And your poverty will come upon you like a robber” (Prov. 6:9-11). How is it that America today is so rich? God indeed gave America an exceedingly rich land. But this is not the whole story. Many Americans have worked diligently on this land to produce its riches, to bring forth its abundant wealth. We have to work; we cannot be lazy. What about most Christians today? They are too busy with their worldly industries, and they are too lazy in working on Christ.

We must till our spiritual ground; we must sow the spiritual seed; we must water the spiritual plants—all the time. We cannot rely upon others to do it for us; we must do it ourselves, or it will never be done. Sisters, have you pray-read the Word this morning? Brothers, how many times have you contacted the Lord today? This is the situation. We do not cultivate Christ. We have a very rich land, but we do not work on it, so there is no produce. We are indeed rich in resource but poor in produce.

The Lord told His people that they must come together to worship Him at least three times a year: at the time of the Passover, at the time of Pentecost, and at the Feast of Tabernacles. And He told them that whenever they come together, they should in no wise come with their hands empty. They must bring something in their hands to Him, something of the produce of the good land. If they were lazy
and did not work on the land, not only would they be unable to bring anything to the Lord, but they would have nothing to satisfy themselves; they would be hungry.

Brothers and sisters, we must realize that whenever we come to the meetings, whenever we come to worship the Lord, we should not come with our hands empty. We must come with our hands full of the produce of Christ. We have to labor on Christ day by day so that we produce Him in mass production. We need more than a little of Christ to satisfy our own needs. We must produce enough of Him so that there will be a surplus remaining for others, for the poor and for the needy: “You must open your hand to your brother, to the poor one with you and to the needy one with you in your land” (Deut. 15:11). There must also be a surplus to meet the needs of the priests and the Levites: “This shall be the priests’ rightful due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: They shall give the priest the shoulder...You shall give him the firstfruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your fresh oil, and the first shearing of your sheep” (18:3-4). And above all, the best of the surplus must be reserved for the Lord: “Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah” (12:11). When they harvested the field, they were to reserve the firstfruits for the Lord. When the cattle were brought forth, the firstborn were for the Lord. We must labor diligently, not only to bring forth enough to satisfy our own needs but also to acquire a surplus to meet the needs of others, with the best reserved for the Lord. Then we will be acceptable to the Lord, and He will be pleased with us.

This is the life in the good land. It is a life in which we are continually laboring on Christ, in which we are producing Him in a mass way. We are reaping so much of Christ that we are fully satisfied, and beyond that we have a surplus to share with others and to worship God. To worship God with Christ does not mean to worship Him individually but to worship Him collectively with all the children of God by enjoying Christ with one another and with God. When you come, you bring something of Christ. When he comes, he brings something of Christ. Everyone brings a portion of Christ from his laboring on Him, and there is a rich enjoyment of Christ, not only by all the saints but most of all by God, to whom the best is offered.

**HOW TO LABOR ON CHRIST**

We have seen briefly our need to work on Christ and make Christ our industry. I believe we are clear regarding this matter, but I am afraid it may be merely a doctrine to many. How can we apply it in a practical way? What must we do to work on Christ daily?

Let me illustrate. Every morning you need to pray, “Lord, I consecrate myself once more to You, not to work for You but to enjoy You.” You must consecrate yourself sincerely to the Lord for the simple purpose of enjoying and experiencing Him—nothing more. From the moment you awake in the morning, you need to say, “Lord, here I am. I give myself to enjoy You. Grant me through the entire day, from this moment on, to experience and apply You in every situation. I am not asking for anything tomorrow. I am asking for grace to enjoy You today. Show me how to till the ground, sow the seed, and water the plants of the Lord.” Moment by moment through the whole day you will maintain your communion with the Lord. You will live practically in the Lord, laboring on Him, applying Him, and enjoying Him. If you do this, consider how fruitful and how beautiful your “farm” will be. The farm of Christ in your daily life will be full of produce. When the Lord’s Day comes, and you go to worship the Lord with the saints, you will be able to say, “I am going now to see my God; I am going to worship my Lord. I will not go with empty hands but with hands full of Christ. I have a surplus, and in my right hand is the best part reserved for my dear Lord.” When you come to the meeting, a brother may approach you, saying, “I am having a certain problem. Could you help me?” You can have a little fellowship with him and pass on some of your surplus of Christ. You can give him a little of the produce from the Christ upon whom you have been laboring, the Christ whom you have been enjoying.
day by day. You have been abundantly satisfied with Him, and you have something over to share with
the brothers and sisters. When the meeting begins, you are well prepared to offer your prayers and
praises to the Lord from your reserve for Him. This is the best of your surplus, and with the saints you
joyfully render it to the Lord for His enjoyment and satisfaction. You have reaped enough of Christ for
yourself, for the needy ones, and for the Lord. You have furthermore put aside a considerable portion
that will stand you in good stead in future days.

If we are rich with Christ, we must necessarily be rich with work, rich with industry. In Christ we
cannot be lazy. We must let God enjoy Christ with us and at the same time with others. If you do this, I
do this, and we all do this, how wonderful the meetings will be when we come together to worship the
Lord. I will share with you, and you will share with me. You will give me something of the Lord, and I
will give you something in exchange. There will be every kind of sharing and mutual enjoyment. And
the Lord will have His full portion.

EXHIBITING CHRIST

In the world today there are many exhibitions and fairs. At certain times people from all over
certain areas and districts and sometimes from throughout the entire world bring their products together
for exhibition. This is just what we are doing when we come together to worship God. We are meeting
together to have an exhibition of Christ, not just the Christ whom God gave us but the Christ we have
produced, the Christ upon whom we have labored and whom we have experienced. That is the Christ
whom we all come together to exhibit. Brothers and sisters, this is what all our meetings should be—an
exhibition, a fair, in which all sorts of the produce of Christ are displayed.

Consider again the people of Israel. At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles so many from all over
the land came together to their center, Jerusalem. All brought with them some of their produce—some
fruit, some vegetables, some cattle, and many other things. If we could be there at that time and witness
the occasion, we would marvel at the riches of the land. We would behold the abundance of the
produce heaped here and there—beautiful, ripened, and in many colors—with the sheep and the cattle
on every hand. Everything was put together and mutually enjoyed in the presence of Jehovah, God too
having His own portion.

Brothers and sisters, the church life is simply this. It is all the saints enjoying Christ before God
and mutually with God. They are enjoying the Christ they produce. Day by day they are working on
Christ; day by day they are producing Christ. Then on a certain day appointed by the Lord they come
together. Not only are their hands full, but even upon their shoulders, figuratively speaking, they are
bearing Christ. They are rejoicing in the abundance of their harvest and in all the riches they have
reaped from that “good land” in which they are living. They are not coming empty-handed with
wrinkled and smileless faces. They are not sleeping in the pews while a poor minister occupies the
platform. How miserable is this kind of situation! This is certainly not the worship of the Lord’s people.
The worship of His people is when everyone is full of Christ, radiant with Christ, and exhibiting the
Christ upon whom they have labored and whom they have produced. One brother could say, “Here is
the Christ whom I have labored upon and produced today. He is so rich and abundant to me in this
aspect and in that aspect.” A sister could testify, “Praise the Lord, I have experienced the very patience
and kindness of Christ in my difficult home situation. He is so sweet and real to me in this way.” This
is her produce of Christ. Everyone exhibits the Christ whom they have reaped. What a worship to God,
what an edification to the saints, and what a shame to the enemy! This kind of meeting is a great
embarrassment to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The evil forces beholding it are
put to shame that Christ is such a Christ. Brothers and sisters, do you have meetings like this in your
locality?

I fear that the enemy today is laughing, and the wicked forces in the heavenlies are mocking our
Christian meetings. But we can turn the tables on them by enjoying the all-inclusive Christ, by laboring
diligently on Him day after day, and by bringing our abundant produce of Him together to share with
God and with all the saints. If we do this, the enemy and his hosts will tremble with rage and shame.

This is the life after the possession of the good land. It is a life of working on Christ, producing Christ, enjoying Christ, sharing Christ with others, and offering Christ to God so that He may enjoy Him with us. This kind of enjoyment and sharing is an exhibition of Christ to the entire universe. It is a worship to God and a shame to the enemy. Every time after such a worship, not one of the Lord’s children will be poor. Everyone will be rich, everyone will be satisfied, and everyone will go from “Jerusalem” rejoicing. At the conclusion of such a meeting all the brothers and sisters will be richly and abundantly nourished. They came with a surplus, and they leave with a greater surplus. Everything of the life in the land is Christ, but it is a Christ related to us. It is not merely an objective Christ but a very subjective Christ. It is a Christ who is labored on by us, a Christ who is produced by us, a Christ who is enjoyed by us, a Christ who is shared with others and offered to God by us.

TWO WAYS OF ENJOYING CHRIST

According to the book of Deuteronomy, there are two ways set forth for enjoying Christ. One could be called the personal, individual way, and the other the collective way. For instance, as far as the grain—the wheat and the barley—was concerned, all the people of Israel at any time and in any place could enjoy it. This is one way of enjoying the produce of the land. But some of the grain could not be enjoyed individually and separately. The tithe and firstfruits of the grain together with the tithes and firstfruits of all their harvest must be preserved and on a certain day brought to the priests chosen by God. They must be brought to the place where God’s habitation was located, the place where He put His name. At that place in the presence of God these things were to be enjoyed together with all the children of God and with God Himself. This was the collective worship.

These two ways applied also to the cattle. If they desired to eat the meat of the flock or of the herd, they could slay the animals in any place and enjoy them. But they could not eat the firstborn; they could not eat the tithe. That must be kept and brought to the priest at the place where the Lord put His name, where the Lord made His habitation, and where the Lord’s children met. On one hand, they could enjoy something of the riches and fullness of the good land in any place. Whenever and wherever they felt the need, they could do so. But on the other hand, there was a portion for which they had no choice and no liberty. They must take it to the place chosen by God to enjoy it together with His children. Thus, there were these two ways: the individual way and the collective way.

Now let us apply these principles. We as Christians may enjoy Christ anytime and anywhere by ourselves. But if we would enjoy Christ in a collective way with the Lord’s children, we have no choice; there is only one place to which we can go. To enjoy Him separately and individually is permissible anywhere—for this we have full liberty. But if we would enjoy Christ with the Lord’s people as worship to God, we must go to the very place chosen by God. This is an extremely vital matter, for it preserves the unity of the Lord’s children.

This principle is entirely contrary to the situation that prevails in today’s Christianity. How much confusion, complication, and division have been created by the violation of it! Consider the children of Israel. For generation after generation, through century after century, there was no division among them, for they had only one center for their worship. No one dared establish another. There was only one location for them to gather, one place for them to worship—the place that Jehovah chose out of all their tribes to put His name and His habitation. In all the land of Israel, Jerusalem was unique. It was the place appointed by the Lord to which all the people must come for collective worship to Him.

Let us read the Word of the Lord:

Deuteronomy 12:5-8: To the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go. And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock; and there you shall eat before Jehovah your God...You shall not do
according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes.

When we come into that land, which is the all-inclusive Christ, we can no longer do what is right in our own eyes. We cannot meet with the Lord’s children for corporate worship in the places we choose. We must go to the place that the Lord has chosen, to that one center, that one ground of unity. [Editor’s note: see chapter 4 of Further Talks on the Church Life by Watchman Nee.] How contrary is today’s situation! If there are nine or ten brothers in a certain place, it is so easy for them to say, “Come, let us form a new church.” And if two or three do not agree, they will say, “All right, you go and form your church.” And they will. Just in one locality it is rather difficult to count how many so-called churches there are. In Christianity today everyone acts as if he has the right to choose according to his own desire. The saying is popular and current, “Attend the church of your choice.” I would like to shout at the top of my voice to all the Lord’s children, “You have no choice!” On one hand, you have full liberty to enjoy Christ by yourself wherever you are, but when you gather with the Lord’s children to worship Him, you have lost your liberty. The place where the Lord’s children gather must be the very place appointed by the Lord Himself. We must go to that place.

If you were an Israelite in the Old Testament times, you could not say to David or Solomon, “I am not happy with you. If you worship at Jerusalem, I will go to Bethlehem. I will set up another center of worship at Bethlehem.” But this is just what people are doing today. “We do not want to be where you are. If you are meeting on First Street, we will start a meeting on Second Street.” They even seek to justify what they are doing by quoting Matthew 18:20: “Where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.” They say, “What we are doing is quite scriptural. We are two or three meeting in the name of the Lord, and we are meeting on the ground of Christ.” A few months after beginning this meeting, some brothers in their midst will not feel happy there and will leave to set up yet another meeting. They will say, “If you can set up a meeting on Second Street, we can set up a meeting on Third Street.” What confusion this is! In such a situation there is no limitation, there is no rule, and the divisions will be endless.

We must meet together with the children of God on the common ground of unity. You cannot say that this ground is too legal. We must be legal in such a way. You and I have to be limited by the rule of God. We have no right to set up another center for worship—it will only create a division among the Lord’s children. The only ground we can take and stand upon is the ground of unity. We can enjoy Christ anywhere by ourselves, but we absolutely cannot set up a meeting anywhere to enjoy Christ with other brothers and sisters as worship to God. Not one of us has any right to do this. We must all go to the very place that the Lord has appointed, where He has set His name and where His habitation is. In the whole universe the Lord’s Body, the Lord’s dwelling place, is only one; therefore, in every place there should be only one expression of it. This is a basic rule.

Brothers and sisters, read the book of Deuteronomy. The two rules for enjoying Christ in the land are clearly set forth. One pertains to your own personal enjoyment of the produce of the good land. You can do it anywhere and everywhere, whenever and wherever you please. The other rule is that if you would enjoy the produce of the good land together with the Lord’s people before God as worship, you have no choice, you have no right to follow your own inclinations and do what is right in your eyes. You must give up your own thoughts and say in fear and trembling, “Lord, where is the place that You have chosen? Let me know where You have put Your name, where Your habitation is. I will go there.” There you can enjoy Christ with all of God’s children and with God Himself in His very presence.

If you would do this, I can assure you, you will be most pleasing to God. If otherwise, you will be against Him by increasing the division among His children. You must be exceedingly careful. I beg you to hearken to these words.

Christ is so full, so rich, and so living! We can enjoy Him anytime and all the time. It is not only permissible but proper that we seek to enjoy Him wherever we are. But we must remember the basic and strict rule, that if we would enjoy Him with the Lord’s people before God as worship, we cannot do as we like. We must be in fear and trembling in this matter.
Brothers and sisters, are you meeting now with God’s children in the place that He has appointed, in the place where He has put His name? I would advise you to stop and look to the Lord. Seek the Lord. Ask Him to show you the place He has chosen, and tell Him you will go to that place. This is the right way for us to solve the problem of division among the Lord’s people today. There is no other way. May He be merciful to us.

The life in the land is a life full of the enjoyment of Christ, both personally and collectively with the Lord’s people. May we be diligent to labor on Him, to have our hands filled with Him, and then come to the place that He has appointed, to the very ground of unity, to enjoy this rich and glorious Christ with God’s children and with God Himself. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1961–1962*, vol. 4, “The All-inclusive Christ,” pp. 342-352)
KNOWING, EXPERIENCING, AND LIVING
THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
FOR THE GENUINE CHURCH LIFE
(Lord’s Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight
The Vision, Experience, and Enjoyment
of the Glorious and Excellent Christ
as the Supreme Preciousness of God
for the Genuine Church Life

Scripture Reading: Isa. 6:1-8; John 12:38-41; Dan. 10:4-9, 11, 19; 9:23;
Rev. 1:9—2:1, 7; 21:18-21

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of
His robe filled the temple.
Isa 6:2 Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two
he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
Isa 6:3 And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled
with His glory.
Isa 6:4 And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was
filled with smoke.
Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a
people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar
with a pair of tongs.
Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is
taken away, and your sin is purged.
Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said,
Here am I; send me.
John 12:38 That the word of the prophet Isaiah which he said might be fulfilled, "Lord, who has believed our
report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"
John 12:39 For this reason they could not believe, because again Isaiah said,
John 12:40 "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes
and understand with their heart and turn, and I will heal them."
John 12:41 These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him.
Dan 10:4 And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the great river, that is, the
Hiddekel,
Dan 10:5 I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were
girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.
Dan 10:6 His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of
fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the
sound of a multitude.
Dan 10:7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; instead,
a great dread fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves.
Dan 10:8 Thus I was left alone and I saw this great vision; and no strength was left in me, but my color
turned deathly pale; and I retained no strength.
Dan 10:9 Yet I heard the sound of His words; and when I heard the sound of His words, I fell into a deep
sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.
Dan 10:11 And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you
and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to
me, I stood up trembling.
Dan 10:19 And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And
when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.
Dan 9:23  At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell you, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

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

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

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

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

Rev 1:13  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 1:14  And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Rev 1:15  And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Rev 1:16  And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face shone as the sun shines in its power.

Rev 1:17  And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last

Rev 1:18  And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Rev 1:19  Write therefore the things which you have seen and the things which are and the things which are about to take place after these things.

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 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.

Rev 21:18  And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Rev 21:19  The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

Rev 21:20  The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

Rev 21:21  And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

I. The vision of Christ in glory was seen by Isaiah in his depression—Isa. 6:1-8; cf. 5:20; 22:1; 2 Chron. 26:1-5:

Isa 6:1  In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2  Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3  And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.

Isa 6:4  And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5  Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Isa 6:6  Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

Isa 6:7  And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

Isa 6:8  Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

Isa 5:20  Woe to those who call evil good, / And good evil; / Who put darkness for light, / And light for darkness; / Who put bitter for sweet, / And sweet for bitter!
Isa 22:1  The burden concerning the valley of vision: What then troubles you / That all have gone up to the housetops?

2 Chron 26:1  And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.

2 Chron 26:2  It was he who built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.

2 Chron 26:3  Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah, from Jerusalem.

2 Chron 26:4  And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that Amaziah his father had done.

2 Chron 26:5  And he set himself to seek after God during the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God; and as long as he sought after Jehovah, God caused him to prosper.

A. The evil time during Isaiah’s days is seen by the Lord’s warning word—“Woe to those who call evil good, / And good evil; / Who put darkness for light, / And light for darkness; / Who put bitter for sweet, / And sweet for bitter!”—Isa. 5:20.

B. In spite of the rebellion, iniquities, and corruptions of God’s chosen and beloved people, Christ, as the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts, is still sitting on a high and lofty throne in glory—6:1-5; Lam. 5:19; Rev. 22:1.

Isa 6:1  In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2  Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3  And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.

Isa 6:4  And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5  Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Lam 5:19  You, O Jehovah, abide forever; / Your throne is from generation to generation.

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

C. The One who was seen by Isaiah was Christ—Isa. 6:5b; John 12:38-41:

Isa 6:5b  ... Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

John 12:38  That the word of the prophet Isaiah which he said might be fulfilled, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

John 12:39  For this reason they could not believe, because again Isaiah said,

John 12:40  "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I will heal them."

John 12:41  These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him.

1. John, in his account of Christ’s living and working on earth, said that Isaiah “saw His glory and spoke concerning Him”—v. 41.

2. In order to see the vision of the glorious enthroned Christ, we need to take heed to Isaiah’s warning word (Isa. 6:9-10) by exercising our spirit to pray that the Lord would open our inner eyes, soften our heart, and keep our heart turned to Him so that we may receive His inner healing of our blindness and sickness (John 12:40; Matt. 13:14-17; Acts 28:25-27; Rev. 3:18; 4:2; 2 Cor. 3:16-18).

Isa 6:9  And He said, Go and say to this people, Hear indeed, but do not perceive; / And see indeed, but do not understand.

Isa 6:10  Make the heart of this people numb; / Dull their ears, / And seal their eyes; / Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, / And their heart perceive and return, and they are healed.

John 12:40  "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I will heal them."

Matt 13:14  And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you shall see and by no means perceive.

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Matt 13:15  For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.”

Matt 13:16  But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

Matt 13:17  For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to perceive the things that you see, and have not perceived them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.

Acts 28:25  And when they disagreed with one another, they departed, Paul saying one word to them, Well has the Holy Spirit spoken through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

Acts 28:26  Saying, “Go to this people and say, In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you will see and by no means perceive;

Acts 28:27  For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.”

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 4:2  Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;

2 Cor 3:16  But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor 3:17  And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

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.

D.  Christ’s long robe signifies His splendor in His virtues, expressed mainly in and through His humanity; that Christ was wearing a long robe indicates that He appeared to Isaiah in the image of a man; Christ is the enthroned God-man with the divine glory expressed in His human virtues—Isa. 6:1; cf. Ezek. 1:26, 22; Acts 2:36; Heb. 2:9a.

Isa 6:1  In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Ezek 1:26  And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

Ezek 1:22  And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Acts 2:36  Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Heb 2:9a  But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, …

E.  Isaiah saw Christ in His holiness based on His righteousness—Isa. 6:2-3:

Isa 6:2  Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3  And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.

1.  The seraphim signify or represent the holiness of Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God; they were standing there for Christ’s holiness.

2.  Christ’s holiness is based on His righteousness; because Christ was always righteous, He was sanctified, separated, from the common people—5:16.

Isa 5:16  But Jehovah of hosts is exalted in judgment, / And the holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness.

F.  As a result of seeing this vision, Isaiah was terminated, finished, realizing that he was a man of unclean lips, dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips—6:5:

Isa 6:5  Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
1. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God; to gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature so that we may be constituted with God—cf. Gen. 13:13-14; Gal. 3:14; Matt. 5:8.

Gen 13:13 Now the men of Sodom were very wicked and sinful toward Jehovah.
Gen 13:14 And Jehovah said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, Now lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;
Gal 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

2. Seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we gain God and receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged; this metabolic process is transformation—2 Cor. 3:15—4:1; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 3:8.

2 Cor 3:15 Indeed unto this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart;
2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
2 Cor 4:1 Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;
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.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

3. The more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and the more we deny ourselves—Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
Luke 9:23 And He said to them all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple.

G. After Isaiah realized that he was unclean, he was purged by one of the seraphim, signifying the holiness of God, with an ember from the altar:

1. The application of this ember by the seraphim signifies the effectiveness of Christ’s redemption accomplished on the cross and applied by “the Spirit the Holy” in His judging, burning, and sanctifying power—Isa. 6:6-7; 4:4; cf. Luke 12:49; Rev. 4:5.

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.
Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.
Isa 4:4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and has cleansed away the bloodstains of Jerusalem from her midst, by the judging Spirit and the burning Spirit.
Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
2. Seeing God issues in being purged and cleansed by God, and being cleansed by God issues in being sent by God to bring His chosen people into a state of living Christ so that they might express Him in His glory, be saturated with His holiness, and live in His righteousness—Isa. 6:6-8; 1 John 1:7-9; Acts 13:47; Phil. 1:21a.

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 13:47 For so the Lord has commanded us, "I have set you as a light of the Gentiles, that you would be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ …

II. The vision of the excellent Christ, who appeared to Daniel in His supreme preciousness as a man, was for Daniel’s appreciation, consolation, encouragement, and stabilization—Dan. 10:4-9:

Dan 10:4 And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the great river, that is, the Hiddekel,

Dan 10:5 I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.

Dan 10:6 His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

Dan 10:7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; instead, a great dread fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves.

Dan 10:8 Thus I was left alone and I saw this great vision; and no strength was left in me, but my color turned deathly pale; and I retained no strength.

Dan 10:9 Yet I heard the sound of His words; and when I heard the sound of His words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

A. Christ appeared as a Priest in His humanity, signified by the linen robe, to care for His chosen people in their captivity—v. 5a; Exo. 28:31-35.

Dan 10:5a I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, ...

Exo 28:31 And you shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue strands.

Exo 28:32 And there shall be an opening for the head in its center; around its opening there shall be a binding edge of woven work, like the opening of a coat of mail, so that it will not be torn.

Exo 28:33 And you shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet strands, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around:

Exo 28:34 A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the hem of the robe all around.

Exo 28:35 And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the sanctuary before Jehovah and when he comes out, so that he may not die.

B. Christ appeared in His kingship in His divinity, signified by the girdle of gold, for ruling over all the peoples—Dan. 10:5b.

Dan 10:5b ... whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.

C. For His people’s appreciation, Christ appeared in His preciousness and dignity, as signified by His body being like beryl; the Hebrew word for beryl could refer to a bluish-green or yellow precious stone, signifying that Christ in His embodiment is divine (yellow), full of life (green), and heavenly (blue)—v. 6a.

Dan 10:6a His body also was like beryl, …
D. Christ also appeared in His brightness for shining over the people, as signified by His face being like the appearance of lightning (v. 6b), and in His enlightening sight for searching and judging, signified by His eyes being like torches of fire (v. 6c).

Dan 10:6b  ... His face like the appearance of lightning, ...
Dan 10:6c  ... His eyes like torches of fire, ...

E. Christ appeared to Daniel in the gleam of His work and move, as signified by His arms and His feet being like the gleam of polished bronze—v. 6d.

Dan 10:6d  ... His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, ...

F. Christ appeared in His strong speaking for judging people, as signified by the sound of His words being like the sound of a multitude—v. 6e:

Dan 10:6e  ... and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

1. The entire world situation is under the rule of the heavens by the God of the heavens in order to give Christ the preeminence in all things, to cause Christ to have the first place in everything—2:34-35; 7:9-10; 4:34-35; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 2:4-5.

2. Christ must have the first place, the preeminence, in our personal universe; today Christ, the preeminent One, must be the centrality and universality in our church life, family life, and daily life—Col. 1:17b, 18b; 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31.

3. Under His heavenly rule God is using the environment to make Christ the centrality (the first) and the universality (everything) to us—Rom. 8:28; Col. 1:18, 27; 3:4, 10-11.

Rom 8:28  And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

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

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

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

4. As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for Christ’s preeminence, we are under God’s heavenly rule to make Christ preeminent, to cause Him to have the first place in everything—Dan. 4:26b, 35; Col. 1:18; 3:4, 10-11; Psa. 27:4.

Dan 4:26b ... your kingdom will be assured to you after you have come to know that the heavens do rule.

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of earth are considered as nothing, / But He does according to His will in the army of heaven / And among the inhabitants of the earth; / And there is no one who can resist His hand / Or say to Him, What are You doing?

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

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

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

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

Psa 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.

III. The vision of the glorious Christ walking in the midst of the golden lampstands as the High Priest (Rev. 1:9—2:1) was given to John in his spirit for him to see the ascended Christ as the Son of Man “clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle” (1:13, cf. v. 10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10):

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

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

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

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

Rev 1:13 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 1:14 And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Rev 1:15 And His feet were like shining bronze, as having been fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

Rev 1:16 And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His face shone as the sun shines in its power.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
Write therefore the things which you have seen and the things which are and the things which are about to take place after these things.

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.

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:

Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;

And he carried me away in spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

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

A. The Son of Man is Christ in His humanity, the golden girdle signifies His divinity, and breasts are a sign of love:
   1. In Daniel 10 Christ is girded at the loins, strengthened for the divine work (Exo. 28:4; Dan. 10:5) to produce the churches, but in Revelation 1 He is girded about at the breasts, caring for the churches that He has produced by His love.
      
      Dan 10 be omitted.
      Exo 28:4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a girding sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and for his sons that he may serve Me as a priest.
      
      Dan 10:5 I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.
      
      Rev 1 be omitted.
   2. The golden girdle signifies Christ’s divinity as His divine energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by and with His love to nourish the churches.

B. Christ takes care of the churches in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them—v. 13a:
   Rev 1:13a And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, ...
   1. He dresses the lamps of the lampstands to make them proper, cherishing us so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable—Exo. 30:7; cf. Psa. 42:5, 11:
      
      Exo 30:7 And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.
      Psa 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? / And why are you disquieted within me? / Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him / For the salvation of His countenance.
      Psa 42:11 Why are you cast down, O my soul? / And why are you disquieted within me? / Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, / The salvation of my countenance and my God.
      
      a. The Lord’s presence provides an atmosphere of tenderness and warmth to cherish our being, giving us rest, comfort, healing, cleansing, and encouragement.
      b. We can enjoy the cherishing atmosphere of the Lord’s presence in the church to receive the nourishing supply of life—Eph. 5:29; cf. 1 Tim. 4:6; Eph. 4:11.
      Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
      1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
      Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
   2. He trims the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, cutting off all the negative things that frustrate our shining—Exo. 25:38:
      Exo 25:38 And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold.
a. The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God’s purpose and need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation.

b. He trims away all the differences among the churches (the wrongdoings, shortages, failures, and defects) so that they may be the same in essence, appearance, and expression—cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 12:18; Phil. 2:2.

1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

2 Cor 12:18 I entreated Titus and sent with him the brother. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not walk in the same spirit? In the same steps?

Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.

C. Christ takes care of the churches in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle at His breasts, to nourish the churches—Rev. 1:13b:

Rev 1:13b ... clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

1. He nourishes us with Himself as the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages—incarnation, inclusion, and intensification—so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy.

2. As the walking Christ, He gets to know the condition of each church, and as the speaking Spirit, He trims and fills the lampstands with fresh oil, the supply of the Spirit—2:1, 7; cf. Zech. 4:12-14.

D. The Lord’s seven eyes are like a flame of fire for watching, observing, searching, judging by enlightening, and infusing; Christ’s eyes are for God’s move and operation on earth, since seven is the number for completion in God’s move—Rev. 1:14; 5:6; Dan. 10:6; 7:9-10; Rev. 2:18; 19:11-12.

Rev 1:14 And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Rev 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Dan 10:6 His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

Dan 7:9 I watched / Until thrones were set, / And the Ancient of Days sat down. / His clothing was like white snow, / And the hair of His head was like pure wool; / His throne was flames of fire, / Its wheels, burning fire.

Dan 7:10 A stream of fire issued forth / And came out from before Him. / Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, / And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. / The court of judgment sat, / And the books were opened.
And to the messenger of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like shining bronze:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written which no one knows but Himself.

E. Christ is the One who lives forever and ever; by knowing the Lord as the God who lives forever and ever, we can be assured of His presence in our spirit all the time; nothing establishes us more than the assured presence of the Lord—1:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Matt. 1:23; 28:20; Exo. 33:14-16.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead; and He placed His right hand on me, saying, Do not fear; I am the First and the Last

Rev 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and beheld, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

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

Matt 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel” (which is translated, God with us).

Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

Exo 33:14 And He said, My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.

Exo 33:15 And he said to Him, If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.

Exo 33:16 For how then shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, are distinct from all the other people who are on the face of the earth?

IV. Peter speaks in his Epistles about the supremely precious Christ and the items organically related to Him:

A. Christ Himself is the preciousness to His believers—1 Pet. 2:7.

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"

B. The precious stone for God’s building is Christ Himself—vv. 4, 6-8.

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

1 Pet 2:6 For it is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame."

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"

1 Pet 2:8 And, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

C. The precious blood of Christ has redeemed us from our vain manner of life— 1:14, 18-19.

1 Pet 1:14 As children of obedience, do not be fashioned according to the former lusts in your ignorance;

1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,

1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;

D. The precious and exceedingly great promises have been granted to us by our God and Savior, Jesus Christ—2 Pet. 1:1, 4.

2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

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.

E. God has allotted to all the believers equally precious faith—v. 1.

2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
F. The precious proving of our faith is by trials that come through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:7.

1 Pet 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

V. We must redeem the time to enjoy Christ as the supreme preciousness of God so that we can be constituted with Him to be men of preciousness, even preciousness itself, as His personal treasure for us to become the New Jerusalem as a miraculous structure of treasure for His glory—Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19:

Dan 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell you, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Dan 10:11 And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Dan 10:19 And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

A. We need to ask the Lord to grant us the light to have a thorough change in our concept of value so that we will continually choose Christ and all that He is as our super-excelling portion—Mark 9:7-8; Phil. 3:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:8.

Mark 9:7 And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him!

Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ.

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

2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

B. When we minister God’s word, we need to take heed to Jeremiah’s admonition— “If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth”—Jer. 15:19, 16.

Jer 15:19 Therefore thus says Jehovah, / If you return, I will restore you; / You will stand before Me; / And if you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth; / They will turn to you, / But you will not turn to them.

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

C. We must treasure the Lord’s words more than all earthly riches so that we can speak oracles of God to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ as the varied grace of God into His people—Psa. 119:72, 9-16; Eph. 3:2, 8; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.

Psa 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me / Than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.

Psa 119:9 With what should a young man keep his way pure? / By guarding it according to Your word.

Psa 119:10 With all my heart I have sought You; / Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

Psa 119:11 In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You.

Psa 119:12 Blessed are You, O Jehovah; / Teach me Your statutes.

Psa 119:13 With my lips I have declared / All the ordinances of Your mouth.

Psa 119:14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies / As much as in all riches.

Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
Psa 119:16  I will take delight in Your statutes; / I will not forget Your word.

Eph 3:2  If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

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

2 Cor 6:10  As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

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 Pet 4:11  If anyone speaks, as speaking oracles of God; if anyone ministers, as ministering out of the strength which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

D. We need a vision to see that the New Jerusalem is the Triune God, the Divine Trinity, as three basic factors wrought into and structured together with His redeemed as the conclusion of the whole Bible—the gold as the base of the city typifies God the Father; the pearls as the gates of the city typify God the Son; and the jasper wall of the city typifies God the Spirit—Rev. 21:18-21.

Rev 21:18  And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Rev 21:19  The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

Rev 21:20  The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

Rev 21:21  And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

E. As we live in Christ’s precious and present presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure, He builds Himself into us to make us His spiritual house and His holy and royal priesthood for the accomplishment of His heart’s desire—1 Pet. 2:1-9; 3:4; 2 Cor. 2:10; Psa. 16:5; Exo. 19:4-6; 2 Pet. 3:8, 11-12.

1 Pet 2:1  Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings,

1 Pet 2:2  As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

1 Pet 2:3  If you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1 Pet 2:4  Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

1 Pet 2:5  You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 2:6  For it is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen and precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.”

1 Pet 2:7  To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,”

1 Pet 2:8  And, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

1 Pet 2:9  But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

1 Pet 3:4  But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

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;

Psa 16:5  Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; / You maintain my lot.

Exo 19:4  You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Exo 19:5  Now therefore if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My personal treasure from among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine.

Exo 19:6  And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.
Excerpts from the Ministry:

A VISION OF CHRIST IN HIS DIVINE GLORY

In this message we want to see the vision of Christ in Isaiah 6. In this chapter Christ is seen in His divine glory with His human virtues held in His holiness. His glory is divine, His virtues are human, and His holiness is standing fast. The Bible says that no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18a). Our God is invisible, yet Isaiah saw Him. Isaiah declared that he saw the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts (Isa. 6:1).

A clear picture is presented in Isaiah 6, showing us Christ in glory. This chapter, however, does not give us a detailed description of what Christ looks like. Isaiah only says, “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple” (v. 1). The Lord seen by Isaiah must have been in the image of a man because verse 1 tells us that the train of His robe filled the temple. His robe is the first main item in this scene because it fills the temple.

The second main item in Isaiah’s vision is the temple being filled with smoke (v. 4). The third main item is the seraphim (v. 2). Verse two says, “Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings.” The word “hovered” literally means “stood.” The seraphim stood over Him. We know that they were standing for His holiness because they declare, “Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts” (v. 3). Verse 4 says, “The foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called.” The divine glory is another major item in Isaiah’s vision. Verse 3 says, “The whole earth is filled with His glory.” John 12 says that Isaiah saw the Lord’s glory and spoke concerning Him (v. 41). The smoke that filled the house, the temple, in Isaiah 6:4 is the glory. Isaiah 4:5 also refers to glory as a cloud of smoke over the convocations of Israel.

The divine glory is signified by the smoke, holiness is signified by the seraphim, and the Lord’s human virtues are signified by the train of His robe. Human virtues mainly are based upon righteousness. An unrighteous person does not have human virtues. He is bankrupt in human virtues because he is unrighteous. Human virtues depend upon righteousness. When Christ accomplished His redemption on the cross, He fulfilled the requirements of God’s glory, God’s holiness, and God’s righteousness. As fallen sinners, we cannot fulfill the requirements of God’s glory, holiness, and righteousness, but Christ satisfied them. We need to see the vision of Christ in Isaiah 6 in His glory. His holiness, and His righteousness with His human virtues.

A VISION SEEN BY ISAIAH IN HIS DEPRESSION

The vision of Christ in glory was seen by Isaiah in his depression (Isa. 6:1, 5). Isaiah loved God and loved Israel, God’s elect. He realized by looking at Israel’s situation, that there was not the expression of God’s glory. Israel had also violated God’s holiness and had become corrupt in human virtues. Furthermore, King Uzziah had died. Among the kings of Israel, he was a very good king, yet he died. In that kind of environment, Isaiah was surely very depressed. The Lord appeared to him in his depression.

THE LORD, THE KING, JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, APPEARING TO ISAIAH

The Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts, appeared to Isaiah. He saw the Lord sitting on a high and
lofty throne (Isa. 6:1a). Isaiah saw the glory of God and the train of the Lord’s robe filling the entire temple. He also saw the seraphim, and each seraphim had six wings. Two of the wings were for covering his face, two covered his feet, and with two he flew. These seraphim called to each other, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory” (v. 3). That was their fellowship with each other, indicating that they signify or represent the holiness of Christ. They were standing there for His holiness. Such a vision should have encouraged the depressed prophet, but he did not tell us he was encouraged. Instead, he said, “Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell” (v. 5). Then one of the seraphim flew to Isaiah with an ember from the altar to touch his mouth for his cleansing (vv. 6-7). This is the picture presented in Isaiah 6.

In Isaiah 6 Christ, the God-man, is seen in His divine glory. This God-man is unveiled in chapter four as the Shoot of Jehovah, the Fruit of the earth, a canopy covering God’s interests in the entire universe, and the tabernacle overshadowing God’s elect to protect them from all kinds of troubles. Isaiah 6 shows us the same One in another aspect. In Isaiah 6 He is the God in glory sitting on the throne. Because He is wearing a long robe, He is also a man. This One is the God-man with divine glory and human virtues.

His human virtues are signified by the long train of His robe. This indicates that the vision here pays more attention to Christ’s human virtues. The four Gospels show us Christ as God and as man, but they show us more concerning Christ as a man. In the Gospels we see more of Christ in His manhood and in His humanity than in His divinity. Christ is expressed in His human virtues much more than in His divine glory. However, His human virtues need the divine glory as a source. Christ is a person with the divine glory expressed in His human virtues.

We all have to see the full vision of Christ in Isaiah 6. Christ is sitting on a high and lofty throne as the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts. He is the very God on the throne. John the apostle told us in John 12 that Isaiah saw Christ’s glory. This means that Jehovah of hosts, the King, the Lord, was Christ. Christ was wearing a long robe in this vision. This means that Christ’s humanity is “long.” The train of Christ’s robe fills the temple. The Lord who appeared to Isaiah was on a high and lofty throne in His divine glory (John 12:39-41), signified by the smoke, and with His human virtues, signified by the train of His robe. His holiness is held by the seraphim (Isa. 6:2-3).

**CHRIST’S PERSON**

Christ is seen in Isaiah 6 as God in His divinity, signified by the smoke, and as a man in His humanity, signified by the train of His robe.

**CHRIST’S DIVINE GLORY BEING UNIVERSAL AND HIS HUMAN VIRTUES BEING LOCAL**

Christ’s divine glory is filling the earth (Isa. 6:3b), whereas His human virtues are filling the temple (v. 1b). The glory filling the earth is universal, and the robe filling the temple is local.

**ISAIAH BEING SENT**

Isaiah 6:8-10 shows us Isaiah being sent. He was sent by the Christ who is full of the divine glory and the human virtues in His holiness (vv. 1-4). Christ’s holiness is based upon His righteousness. Isaiah 5:16 says, “Jehovah of hosts is exalted in judgment, and the holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness.” God is sanctified in His righteousness. Someone who is righteous is separated from the common people. A righteous person is a sanctified person. He is not common but holy, separated unto God. Righteousness is the foundation of God’s throne (Psa. 97:2), and we are expecting new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). Since God is righteous, He is holy, sanctified, separated from the common people. In the four Gospels, Jesus surely was a separated, unique, and particular person because He was righteous all the time. Therefore, He is holy, sanctified.
Isaiah was sent by Christ to a people who were short of the divine glory, were violating the divine holiness, and were corrupt in the human virtues (Isa. 6:5). He was sent by the Lord to lead Israel to express Christ’s divine glory in His human virtues held in His holiness (Isa. 5:16b). In other words, God wanted Israel to be a holy people, fully separated from the nations. Their holiness is based upon their righteousness. Then they could express God’s glory. Today to live Christ is to express God’s glory. To live Christ is to be righteous. Righteousness is the base, the foundation, of God’s salvation. God’s salvation firstly justifies us, making us righteous. Then we will be holy, sanctified, separated. Spontaneously, we will be brought into the expression of the divine glory of Christ, which is to live Christ.

Every sent one is sent by the Lord to do the same thing. First, God sent the prophets. Second, God sent His Son. Third, God sent the New Testament apostles. He sent them all to bring God’s chosen people into a state of living Christ. He desired that they would live righteousness, showing that they are a holy people, different and distinct from the nations. Then they would express Christ’s divine glory. To live Christ is to express Christ’s divine glory in His holiness with His righteousness. We must be righteous people, holy people, and people full of the divine glory. Then we will be those who live Christ. (Life-study of Isaiah, pp. 234-238)

THE MODEL OF CHRIST CHERISHING THE CHURCHES
AND NOURISHING THE CHURCHES IN TAKING CARE OF THE CHURCHES

Christ is the best model of cherishing and nourishing as seen in Revelation 1. In verses 12 and 13 John says, “I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, 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.” This shows that Christ is taking care of the lampstands by being the Son of Man with a long garment. This garment is the priestly robe (Exo. 28:33-35), which shows that Christ is our great High Priest.

He is also girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. This girdle is a long piece of gold. The girdle and the gold are not two separate things. The girdle is the gold. The golden girdle is one piece of gold to become a belt. The Son of Man is in His humanity, and the golden girdle signifies His divinity. This golden girdle is on His breasts, and the breasts are a sign of love.

The priests in the Old Testament were girded at the loins for their ministry (Exo. 28:4). In Daniel 10:5 Christ also was girded at His loins, with fine gold. To be girded at the loins is to be strengthened for the work. Christ has finished His divine work in producing the churches. Now by His love He is caring for the churches that He has produced. This is why He is girded at the breasts. Today Christ is our High Priest taking care of His churches established by His labor. But now He takes care of the churches with the girdle not on His loins but on His breasts, signifying love. I hope we all could realize that in these days even among us, Christ is wearing a golden girdle on His breasts.

The golden girdle is a sign, signifying Christ’s divinity becoming His energy. Christ’s energy is totally His divinity. A piece of gold is now a girdle. The totality of Christ in His divinity has become a girdle. The golden girdle signifies Christ’s divinity becoming His energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by His love. His divine energy is exercised by and with His love to nourish the churches.

Taking Care of the Churches in His Humanity

Christ takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them (Rev. 1:13a). Christ as our High Priest takes care of the churches that He has established first in His humanity to cherish the churches, to make the churches happy, pleasant, and comfortable.

By Dressing the Lamps

He does this by dressing the lamps of the lampstand. The high priest in the Old Testament dressed
the lamps of the lampstands every morning (Exo. 30:7). To dress the lamps is to make them proper.

**By Trimming the Wicks**

Christ cares for the lampstands by trimming the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, just as the priest did according to the type in the Old Testament (Exo. 25:38). When the wick was burned out, it became charred and black, so the priest had to come to cut off the black part of the wick. This is what it means to snuff the wick so that the lamp may shine better. The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God’s purpose which need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation. All the lampstands are organic. They are living lampstands. Since each church is a living lampstand, each church has much feeling. A church with charred wicks will not feel comfortable.

About eight years ago, there was no feeling of happiness or pleasantness with the church in Anaheim. This was because of the black, burned-out, charred wicks. But one day Christ as our High Priest came to dress the lamps of the lampstand, the church in Anaheim, by trimming the wicks to cut off all the black, charred wicks. This was a cherishing, to make the church in Anaheim happy, pleasant, and comfortable. There is no comparison between the way the church in Anaheim was eight years ago and the way it is today. Eight years ago it was full of burned, black wicks, with no shining. The saints felt unhappy, unpleasant, and uncomfortable. But one day the Lord Jesus as the High Priest in His humanity came to snuff all the negative things. Then we became happy, pleasant, and comfortable. This is Christ’s taking care of the church in His humanity to dress the lamps of the church.

I thank the Lord that today in His recovery He is the High Priest in His humanity. Hebrews 4 says that we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin (v. 15). Our Christ is the same as we are. He has been tempted in everything like us, so He can easily be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses. This means that He always sympathizes with our weaknesses in His humanity. He is the High Priest in His humanity taking care of us by cherishing us all the time.

**Taking Care of the Churches in His Divinity**

Christ, as the High Priest, takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches (Rev. 1:13b). Christ is not only human but also divine. He is the Son of Man wearing a golden girdle, signifying His divinity as His divine energy. His divinity as the divine energy nourishes the churches in many ways.

Revelation 2 and 3 reveal Christ’s care for the lampstands. On the one hand, He trims the wicks of the church lamps, cutting away all the wrongdoings, shortages, failures, and defects mentioned in the seven epistles to the seven churches. Christ does the best trimming work in His humanity to cherish the churches. On the other hand, in each of these seven epistles, we see Christ’s nourishing.

In the first epistle to the church at Ephesus, Christ says, “To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God” (2:7). We may say that this is a prophecy referring to the kingdom age, in which the overcomers will enjoy Christ as the tree of life in God’s Paradise. But if we do not enjoy Christ as the tree of life in the church life today, surely we will not participate in the tree of life in the kingdom age. According to my experience, today the church in Anaheim is a paradise to me. In this paradise I eat much of Christ as the tree of life every day. If I do not eat Christ here today, I will not eat Him in the kingdom age. I have to eat here first.

In the second epistle to Smyrna, a persecuted and suffering church, Christ says that He will give the crown of life to those who overcome (v. 10). A crown signifies victory. If we are not a victor today, overcoming persecution and suffering, how can we be victors in the kingdom? Our victory today is out of Christ’s being our life. If we do not have such an enjoyment today, how can we wear the crown of life in the coming age?

In the third epistle to the church in Pergamos, a church married to the world, the Lord says that
He will give the overcomers in Pergamos to eat of the hidden manna (v. 17). In the Old Testament a portion of manna was preserved in a golden pot concealed in the Ark (Exo. 16:32-34; Heb. 9:4). Today we must enjoy the hidden Christ in God’s golden divine nature. Then we will enjoy Christ as the hidden manna in the coming age. Also, the Lord will give us a white stone and a new name, signifying that we have become a transformed person to be material for God’s building.

The Lord promises the overcomers in the church in Thyatira that they will have the authority to rule, to reign as kings, over the nations (Rev. 2:26). First, we need to reign as kings today. According to Romans 5:17, we must receive the Lord’s abounding grace to reign in life today. If we do not reign as kings today in Christ’s life, how can we be kings in the coming age to rule over the nations?

In His fifth epistle, the Lord tells the church in Sardis that they are dead and dying. He promises the overcomers that they will be clothed in white garments (Rev. 3:5). White garments signify the walk and living that are not stained with deadness. The way the overcomers walk in this age will become a prize to them in the coming age. We have to become living so that we can have the white garments.

The Lord tells the church in Philadelphia to hold fast what they already have (v. 11). Those who overcome to hold fast what they have in the Lord’s recovery will be built into the New Jerusalem, the temple of God, as a pillar (v. 12). In the seventh epistle the Lord counsels the church in Laodicea to buy gold, white garments, and eyesalve to be saved from their degradation in lukewarmness (v. 18). He promises to dine with the ones who would open the door to Him (v. 20). We can see that this is the nourishing of Christ in His divinity exercised by and with His love.

With His Divine and Mystical Ministry by Love in His Three Stages

He is also the High Priest with His divinity as the “energy belt” to nourish us with Himself as the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry of three stages.

That the Churches May Grow and Mature in His Divine Life

His nourishing the churches in His divinity is so that the churches may grow and mature in His divine life and become the overcomers in His sevenfold intensification.

Our Christ today is our High Priest. In His humanity He is easily touched with the feeling of our weaknesses. He sympathizes with our weakness because He was tempted in all respects like us. He is cherishing us in His humanity. Meanwhile, He is nourishing us in His divinity with all the positive aspects of His person revealed in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. He is taking care of the churches in the recovery in both ways. In His humanity He is cherishing us to make us proper so that we may be happy, pleasant, and comfortable. In His divinity He is nourishing us so that we may grow and mature in the divine life to be His overcomers to accomplish His eternal economy. (The Vital Groups, pp. 104-109)