

# **International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones**

Fall 2011

**GENERAL SUBJECT:**

**THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

*Living Stream Ministry*  
Anaheim, California

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# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—First Morning Session)

## Message One

### Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel

Scripture Reading: John 18:37; 11:25; 14:6; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5

- John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been <sup>a</sup>born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the <sup>1b</sup>truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the <sup>a</sup>life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall <sup>b</sup>live;
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5c</sup>truth.
- 1 Tim 3:16 And <sup>1</sup>confessedly, great is the <sup>2a</sup>mystery of <sup>b</sup>godliness: <sup>3</sup>He who was <sup>4c</sup>manifested in the <sup>d</sup>flesh, <sup>5</sup>Justified in the Spirit, <sup>6</sup>Seen by angels, <sup>7</sup>Preached among the nations, <sup>8</sup>Believed on in the world, <sup>9</sup>Taken up in glory.
- Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,
- Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,

#### I. The Lord's recovery is mainly founded upon four pillars: truth, life, the church, and the gospel—Eph. 1:13; 4:18; 5:23-25, 29, 32; 6:15.

- Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,
- Eph 4:18 Being <sup>1a</sup>darkened in their understanding, alienated from the <sup>2b</sup>life of God because of the <sup>3c</sup>ignorance which is in them, because of the <sup>4d</sup>hardness of their heart;
- Eph 5:23 For a husband is <sup>1a</sup>head of the wife as also Christ is <sup>b</sup>Head of the church, He Himself *being* the <sup>2</sup>Savior of the Body.
- Eph 5:24 <sup>1</sup>But as the church is subject to Christ, so also *let* the wives *be subject* to their husbands in <sup>2</sup>everything.
- Eph 5:25 Husbands, <sup>1a</sup>love your wives even <sup>2a</sup>as Christ also <sup>b</sup>loved the church and gave Himself up for her
- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but <sup>1a</sup>nourishes and <sup>b</sup>cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- Eph 5:32 This <sup>a</sup>mystery is great, but I speak with regard to <sup>4</sup>Christ <sup>b</sup>and the church.
- Eph 6:15 And having <sup>1</sup>shod your <sup>a</sup>feet with the <sup>2</sup>firm foundation of the <sup>b</sup>gospel of <sup>c</sup>peace;

#### II. The first great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the truth—John 18:37:

- John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been <sup>a</sup>born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the <sup>1b</sup>truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice.
- A. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the divine truths as revealed in the Word of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
- 2 Tim 3:16 <sup>1</sup>All <sup>a</sup>Scripture is <sup>2</sup>God-breathed and profitable for <sup>b</sup>teaching, for <sup>3</sup>conviction, for <sup>4</sup>correction, for <sup>5</sup>instruction in righteousness,
- B. The Lord's word, His truth, is in the Bible, but the Bible needs the proper interpretation—2:15.
- 2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to <sup>a</sup>present yourself <sup>b</sup>approved to God, an unashamed workman, <sup>1</sup>cutting straight the <sup>c</sup>word of the <sup>2d</sup>truth.
- C. The truth is absolute in itself, and we must be absolute for the truth—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-8.
- 2 John 1 The <sup>1a</sup>elder to the <sup>b</sup>chosen <sup>2</sup>lady and to her children, whom I <sup>c</sup>love in <sup>3d</sup>truthfulness, and not only I but also all <sup>4</sup>those who know the <sup>5</sup>truth,
- 2 John 2 <sup>1</sup>For the sake of the <sup>2</sup>truth which <sup>a</sup>abides in us and will be <sup>b</sup>with us forever:

- 2 John 4 I <sup>1</sup>rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children <sup>a</sup>walking in <sup>2</sup>truth, even as we received <sup>3b</sup>commandment from the Father.
- 3 John 3 For I <sup>1</sup>rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and <sup>a</sup>testifying to <sup>2</sup>your *steadfastness in the* truth, even as you <sup>3</sup>walk in <sup>4</sup>truth.
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my <sup>a</sup>children are walking in the <sup>b</sup>truth.
- 3 John 7 For on behalf of the <sup>1a</sup>Name they went out, taking nothing from the <sup>2</sup>Gentiles.
- 3 John 8 We therefore ought to <sup>1</sup>support such ones that we may become <sup>a</sup>fellow workers in the <sup>2</sup>truth.
- D. The standard of the Lord's recovery depends upon the standard of the truth we put out; the truths will be the measure and the standard—John 18:37.
- John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been <sup>a</sup>born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the <sup>1b</sup>truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice.
- E. The kind of church we build up depends on the kind of truth we teach; thus, there is a desperate need of the living truth to produce the church, to help the church to exist, and to build up the church—1 Tim. 3:15.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.
- F. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being—1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2; 3 John 3-4:
- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we <sup>1</sup>do not have sin, <sup>2</sup>we are deceiving ourselves, and the <sup>3a</sup>truth is not in us.
- 1 John 2:4 He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments is a <sup>1a</sup>liar, and the <sup>2b</sup>truth is not in this one;
- 2 John 1 The <sup>1a</sup>elder to the <sup>b</sup>chosen <sup>2</sup>lady and to her children, whom I <sup>c</sup>love in <sup>3d</sup>truthfulness, and not only I but also all <sup>4</sup>those who know the <sup>5</sup>truth,
- 2 John 2 <sup>1</sup>For the sake of the <sup>2</sup>truth which <sup>a</sup>abides in us and will be <sup>b</sup>with us forever:
- 3 John 3 For I <sup>1</sup>rejoiced greatly at the brothers' coming and <sup>a</sup>testifying to <sup>2</sup>your *steadfastness in the* truth, even as you <sup>3</sup>walk in <sup>4</sup>truth.
- 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than these things, that I hear that my <sup>a</sup>children are walking in the <sup>b</sup>truth.
1. To be constituted with the truth is to have the intrinsic element of the divine revelation wrought into us to become our constituent, our intrinsic being, our organic constitution—John 17:17.
- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
2. The solid truth that is constituted into us becomes in us a constant and long-term nourishment—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Thes. 2:13.
- 1 Tim 2:4 Who desires <sup>1a</sup>all men to be <sup>b</sup>saved and to come to the <sup>2c</sup>full knowledge of the <sup>d</sup>truth.
- 2 Thes 2:13 But we ought to <sup>a</sup>thank God always concerning you, brothers <sup>b</sup>beloved of the Lord, because God <sup>1c</sup>chose you <sup>2</sup>from the <sup>d</sup>beginning unto <sup>e</sup>salvation in <sup>3f</sup>sanctification of the Spirit and <sup>4</sup>belief of the <sup>a</sup>truth,
- G. If the truth is wrought into us and constituted into our being, we will be able to protect the interests of the riches of God's divinity and the attainments of His consummation—Rev. 21:12a, 17.
- Rev 21:12a It had a <sup>1</sup>great and high <sup>a</sup>wall and had <sup>2b</sup>twelve <sup>e</sup>gates, ...
- Rev 21:17 And he measured its wall, a <sup>1</sup>hundred and forty-four cubits, *according to* the measure of a <sup>2</sup>man, that is, of an <sup>a</sup>angel.

### III. The second great pillar in the Lord's recovery is life—John 14:6; 11:25:

- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the <sup>a</sup>life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall <sup>b</sup>live;
- A. Both the truth and the life are the Lord Himself, but they are two different aspects of what He is—14:6:
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

1. The truth is the outward definition and explanation, and life is the inward and intrinsic content—8:32; 11:25.
 

John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the <sup>a</sup>life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall <sup>b</sup>live;
  2. The Lord is in us as our life, but the experience of life needs an explanation; this explanation is the truth—Col. 3:4; 1:5:
 

Col 3:4 When <sup>1</sup>Christ our <sup>2a</sup>life is <sup>b</sup>manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in <sup>c</sup>glory.

Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,

    - a. If we receive the Lord according to this explanation, we have life; in order to experience and enjoy the Lord as life, we must know the truth—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6.
 

1 John 1:1 <sup>1</sup>That which was <sup>2</sup>from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have <sup>a</sup>seen with our <sup>b</sup>eyes, which we <sup>3</sup>beheld and our hands <sup>4c</sup>handled, concerning the <sup>5</sup>Word of <sup>6</sup>life

1 John 1:2 (And the <sup>1a</sup>life was <sup>2b</sup>manifested, and we have seen and <sup>c</sup>testify and report to you <sup>3</sup>the <sup>d</sup>eternal life, which was <sup>4c</sup>with the <sup>5</sup>Father and was <sup>6</sup>manifested to us);

1 John 1:5 <sup>1</sup>And this is the <sup>a</sup>message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that <sup>2</sup>God is <sup>3b</sup>light and in Him is no <sup>4</sup>darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we <sup>1</sup>have fellowship <sup>2</sup>with Him and yet <sup>3</sup>walk in the <sup>a</sup>darkness, we <sup>4b</sup>lie and are not <sup>5</sup>practicing the <sup>6</sup>truth;
    - b. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth—John 14:6.
 

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
  3. If we are not clear about the truth and do not understand or know the truth, we will have no way to enjoy the Lord as our life—8:32; 11:25.
 

John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the <sup>a</sup>life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall <sup>b</sup>live;
- B. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life, and the content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 2:4; John 8:32; 10:10.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>g</sup>against it.
- 1 Tim 2:4 Who desires <sup>1a</sup>all men to be <sup>b</sup>saved and to come to the <sup>2c</sup>full knowledge of the <sup>d</sup>truth.
- John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I <sup>a</sup>have come that they may have <sup>1</sup>life and may have *it* abundantly.
- C. Life is the Triune God dispensed into us and living in us—God the Father as the source of life, God the Son as the embodiment of life, and God the Spirit as the flow of life—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; John 5:26; 1:4; 1 John 5:11-12; Rev. 22:1.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:6 For <sup>1</sup>the mind set on the flesh is <sup>2</sup>death, but <sup>3</sup>the mind set on the spirit is <sup>a</sup>life and <sup>b</sup>peace.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- John 5:26 For just as the Father has <sup>a</sup>life in Himself, so He gave to the Son to also have life in Himself;
- John 1:4 In Him was <sup>1a</sup>life, and the life was the <sup>2b</sup>light of men.
- 1 John 5:11 And this is the <sup>a</sup>testimony, that God <sup>1</sup>gave to us <sup>b</sup>eternal <sup>c</sup>life and this life is in His Son.

1 John 5:12 He who <sup>1</sup>has the Son has the <sup>a</sup>life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.  
Rev 22:1 And <sup>1</sup>he <sup>a</sup>showed me a <sup>2b</sup>river of <sup>3c</sup>water of life, bright as <sup>4d</sup>crystal, <sup>e</sup>proceeding out of the <sup>5f</sup>throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its <sup>6g</sup>street.

D. Life is the way to fulfill God's purpose; God's desire for man to express Him in His image and to rule in Him with His dominion can be realized only by God's life—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.

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

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

#### IV. The third great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the church—1 Tim. 3:15-16:

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.

1 Tim 3:16 And <sup>1</sup>confessedly, great is the <sup>2a</sup>mystery of <sup>b</sup>godliness: <sup>2</sup>He who was <sup>4c</sup>manifested in the <sup>d</sup>flesh, <sup>5</sup>Justified in the Spirit, <sup>6</sup>Seen by angels, <sup>7</sup>Preached among the nations, <sup>8</sup>Believed on in the world, <sup>9</sup>Taken up in glory.

A. The Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life so that He may have the church; the truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church—John 18:37; 10:10; 1 Cor. 10:32.

John 18:37 Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been <sup>a</sup>born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the <sup>1b</sup>truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I <sup>a</sup>have come that they may have <sup>1</sup>life and may have *it* abundantly.

1 Cor 10:32 <sup>1</sup>Do not become a <sup>a</sup>stumbling block, both to <sup>2</sup>Jews and to Greeks and to the <sup>b</sup>church of God;

B. The church is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.

1. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—the place where God can have His rest and put His trust—Eph. 2:21-22.

Eph 2:21 In <sup>1</sup>whom <sup>2</sup>all the building, being <sup>3a</sup>fitted together, is <sup>4b</sup>growing into a holy <sup>5c</sup>temple <sup>6</sup>in the Lord;

Eph 2:22 In whom <sup>1</sup>you <sup>2</sup>also are being built together into a <sup>3a</sup>dwelling place of God <sup>b</sup>in <sup>4</sup>spirit.

2. The church as the house of God is the Father's house, the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation—John 14:2; 12:23; 13:31-32.

John 14:2 In <sup>1a</sup>My Father's house are <sup>2</sup>many <sup>b</sup>abodes; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you; for I <sup>3c</sup>go to prepare a place for you.

John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The <sup>a</sup>hour has come for the Son of Man to be <sup>1b</sup>glorified.

John 13:31 Then when he went out, Jesus said, Now has the Son of Man been <sup>1a</sup>glorified, and God has been <sup>2b</sup>glorified in Him.

John 13:32 <sup>1</sup>If God has been <sup>2a</sup>glorified in Him, God will also <sup>3b</sup>glorify Him in Himself, and He will glorify Him immediately.

C. The church is the supporting pillar and the holding base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15:

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.

1. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in the New Testament concerning Christ and the church—Matt. 16:16, 18; Eph. 5:32.

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.

Matt 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the <sup>1a</sup>Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Son of the <sup>2c</sup>living God.

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6c</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>e</sup>against it.

Eph 5:32 This <sup>a</sup>mystery is great, but I speak with regard to <sup>1</sup>Christ <sup>b</sup>and the church.

2. As the pillar, which bears the truth, and the base, which holds the pillar, the church testifies the truth, the reality, of Christ as the mystery of God and of the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.

Col 2:2 That their hearts may be <sup>1a</sup>comforted, they being knit together in <sup>2</sup>love and unto all the <sup>3</sup>riches of the <sup>4b</sup>full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the <sup>5c</sup>mystery of God, Christ,

Eph 3:4 By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the <sup>1a</sup>mystery of Christ,

D. The church is the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know <sup>1</sup>how one ought to conduct himself in the <sup>2a</sup>house of God, which is the <sup>b</sup>church of the <sup>3c</sup>living God, the <sup>4d</sup>pillar and base of the <sup>5e</sup>truth.

1 Tim 3:16 And <sup>1</sup>confessedly, great is the <sup>2a</sup>mystery of <sup>b</sup>godliness: <sup>3</sup>He who was <sup>4c</sup>manifested in the <sup>d</sup>flesh, <sup>5</sup>Justified in the Spirit, <sup>6</sup>Seen by angels, <sup>7</sup>Preached among the nations, <sup>8</sup>Believed on in the world, <sup>9</sup>Taken up in glory.

1. God's manifestation was first in Christ as an individual expression in the flesh—v. 16; Col. 2:9; John 1:1, 14.

1 Tim 3:16 And <sup>1</sup>confessedly, great is the <sup>2a</sup>mystery of <sup>b</sup>godliness: <sup>3</sup>He who was <sup>4c</sup>manifested in the <sup>d</sup>flesh, <sup>5</sup>Justified in the Spirit, <sup>6</sup>Seen by angels, <sup>7</sup>Preached among the nations, <sup>8</sup>Believed on in the world, <sup>9</sup>Taken up in glory.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the <sup>1a</sup>fullness of the <sup>2</sup>Godhead <sup>3</sup>bodily,

John 1:1 <sup>1a</sup>In the beginning was the <sup>2b</sup>Word, and the Word was <sup>3</sup>with <sup>c</sup>God, and the <sup>4</sup>Word was <sup>5</sup>God.

John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.

2. God is manifested in the church as His enlarged, corporate expression in the flesh—Eph. 2:19; 1:22-23.

Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>e</sup>household of God,

Eph 1:22 And He <sup>1a</sup>subjected all things under His feet and <sup>2</sup>gave Him <sup>3</sup>to be <sup>b</sup>Head over all things to the <sup>4c</sup>church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His <sup>1a</sup>Body, the <sup>2b</sup>fullness of the One who <sup>3c</sup>fills all in all.

3. The great mystery of godliness is that God has become man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God in the flesh—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24.

Rom 8:3 For that which the <sup>1</sup>law could <sup>2</sup>not do, in that it was <sup>a</sup>weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the <sup>3</sup>likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,

Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

Eph 4:24 And <sup>1a</sup>put on the <sup>2b</sup>new man, which was <sup>c</sup>created according to <sup>3</sup>God in <sup>4d</sup>righteousness and <sup>e</sup>holiness of <sup>5</sup>the <sup>f</sup>reality.

## V. The fourth great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the gospel—1:13; Col. 1:5:

Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,

Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,

- A. The gospel that we preach in the Lord's recovery is the purest, highest, most complete gospel—Rom. 1:1, 3-4; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 20:24; Eph. 3:8; 6:15; 2 Cor. 4:4.

Rom 1:1 <sup>1</sup>Paul, a <sup>2</sup>slave of <sup>3</sup>Christ <sup>4</sup>Jesus, a <sup>5</sup>called <sup>6</sup>apostle, <sup>7</sup>separated <sup>8</sup>unto the <sup>9</sup>gospel of God,

Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,

- Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
- Mark 1:14 And after John was <sup>a</sup>delivered up, Jesus came into <sup>1</sup>Galilee, <sup>2b</sup>proclaiming the <sup>c</sup>gospel <sup>3</sup>of God,
- Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is <sup>a</sup>fulfilled and the <sup>1b</sup>kingdom of God has drawn near. <sup>2c</sup>Repent and <sup>3d</sup>believe in the <sup>4</sup>gospel.
- Acts 20:24 But I <sup>1</sup>consider my <sup>2a</sup>life of no account *as if* precious to myself, in order that I may finish my <sup>b</sup>course and the <sup>c</sup>ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly <sup>d</sup>testify of the <sup>e</sup>gospel of the <sup>f</sup>grace of God.
- Eph 3:8 To me, <sup>1</sup>less than the <sup>a</sup>least of all saints, was this <sup>b</sup>grace given to announce to the <sup>c</sup>Gentiles the <sup>2</sup>unsearchable <sup>3d</sup>riches of Christ as the gospel
- Eph 6:15 And having <sup>1</sup>shod your <sup>a</sup>feet with the <sup>2</sup>firm foundation of the <sup>b</sup>gospel of <sup>c</sup>peace;
- 2 Cor 4:4 In whom the <sup>1a</sup>god of <sup>b</sup>this age has <sup>2c</sup>blinded the <sup>3d</sup>thoughts of the unbelievers that the <sup>4e</sup>illumination of the gospel of the <sup>f</sup>glory of Christ, who is the <sup>a</sup>image of God, might not <sup>5</sup>shine on them.

B. The gospel includes all the truths in the Bible; the entire Bible is the gospel of God—Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5:

- Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,
- Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,
1. The truth is the gospel, and the light of the truth is the light of the gospel—Mark 1:1, 14-15; John 8:12, 32.
 

Mark 1:1 The <sup>1</sup>beginning of the <sup>2</sup>gospel of <sup>3</sup>Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup>the <sup>a</sup>Son of God,

Mark 1:14 And after John was <sup>a</sup>delivered up, Jesus came into <sup>1</sup>Galilee, <sup>2b</sup>proclaiming the <sup>c</sup>gospel <sup>3</sup>of God,

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is <sup>a</sup>fulfilled and the <sup>1b</sup>kingdom of God has drawn near. <sup>2c</sup>Repent and <sup>3d</sup>believe in the <sup>4</sup>gospel.

John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the <sup>1a</sup>light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the <sup>b</sup>light of life.

John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.
  2. We should not think that the gospel is one thing and that the truth is another thing—Eph. 1:13:
 

Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,

    - a. The truth is the gospel, and our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the gospel—Col. 1:5.
 

Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,
    - b. To preach the gospel is actually to speak the truth, because the real gospel preaching is the speaking of the truth—Acts 8:4, 12, 30-35.
 

Acts 8:4 Those therefore who were scattered went throughout *the land* <sup>1a</sup>announcing the word as the gospel.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who <sup>1</sup>announced the gospel of the <sup>a</sup>kingdom of God and of the name of <sup>b</sup>Jesus Christ, they were <sup>c</sup>baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:30 And when Philip ran up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, Do you really know the things that you are reading?

Acts 8:31 And he said, How could I <sup>a</sup>unless someone guides me? And he entreated Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "As a sheep <sup>1a</sup>He was led to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is dumb, so He does <sup>b</sup>not open His mouth.

Acts 8:33 In His <sup>a</sup>humiliation His judgment was taken away. Who shall declare His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth."

Acts 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I beseech you, Concerning whom does the prophet say this? Concerning himself or concerning someone else?

Acts **8:35** And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this <sup>a</sup>Scripture he <sup>b</sup>announced Jesus as the gospel to him.

3. For the preaching of the high gospel, we have a strong burden to encourage everyone to pursue the knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4:

1 Tim **2:4** Who desires <sup>1a</sup>all men to be <sup>b</sup>saved and to come to the <sup>2c</sup>full knowledge of the <sup>d</sup>truth.

a. We should study the truth to the extent that we can expound the truth and announce the truth; this is to preach the high gospel.

b. If we are filled with the truth inwardly, we will spontaneously express it outwardly by speaking the mystery of the gospel to people—1 Thes. 1:8; Eph. 6:19.

1 Thes **1:8** For from you the word of the Lord has sounded out; not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place, your <sup>1a</sup>faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need of saying anything.

Eph **6:19** And <sup>a</sup>for me, that <sup>1</sup>utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in <sup>b</sup>boldness the <sup>2c</sup>mystery of the gospel,

4. The commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth; our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the high gospel—Mark 16:15; 1 Tim. 2:4.

Mark **16:15** And He said to them, Go into all the <sup>a</sup>world and <sup>1</sup>proclaim the gospel to <sup>2b</sup>all the creation.

1 Tim **2:4** Who desires <sup>1a</sup>all men to be <sup>b</sup>saved and to come to the <sup>2c</sup>full knowledge of the <sup>d</sup>truth.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE LORD'S RECOVERY BEING THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH

Today the whole earth needs the truth of the Lord that is in His Word. Regrettably, however, the Bible, the divine Word, has not been fully opened to the world. Thus, it has not been possible for people to fully know the truth of the Lord. At the most, Christians are able to boast that the holy Word of God has been published into many languages and propagated over the whole earth. Yet they are not able to say that after reading the Bible, regardless of which language, they have been able to truly understand the deep mysteries within it. They have been able to understand the superficial meanings of the things revealed in the Bible according to their own culture, philosophy, tradition, customs, ethics, living, and morality but have had no way of comprehending the mysteries of the truths in it. The mysteries of the truths in the Bible are very deep and profound. We need the spiritual enlightening of the Spirit of God to understand them, and we also need to spend time to dig them out (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

The truths in the holy Word of the Lord were completed approximately two thousand years ago, but over a period of a little more than one thousand years they seemed to slowly vanish. Only in the last few centuries have the truths again been released little by little through the zealous and careful study of many lovers of the Lord. This is what we refer to as the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of all the truths in the Bible that were lost. Thus, the recovery of the truth is one of the great pillars in the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery lies with the recovery of the knowledge of the truth.

### HAVING THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH FOR THE SPREAD OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY

The New Testament says repeatedly that we should know the truth. Moreover, when referring to this matter, Paul repeatedly says that we should come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). This means that we must know not just a small part or one aspect of the truth but rather the truth in its entirety and in all of its aspects. Paul also said that the church is the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). This implies that the truth in the Bible is like a large building that is not one-sided but complete on all sides with a foundation and a roof. If we are going to spread

the Lord's recovery today, we must know the truth and be able to expound the truth. For this reason, we must know every side of the truth without any biases or particular leanings.

The truth not only has many sides but also includes many crucial items. For example, the Bible speaks about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the believers, the church, the kingdom, and the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins with God, then continues with God's creation, man's fall, God's redemption, and God's entering into man to be man's life for man to be regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed into His own image, and ultimately to be brought fully into glory. In the midst of all these matters, the Bible also shows us the believers and the corporate church. This corporate church brings in the kingdom, consummating in the ultimate expression, which is the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. All of these aspects are included in the truths of the Bible.

Considering the deeper and more detailed truths, the Bible speaks about the two aspects of God's complete salvation of us: redemption and salvation. The aspect of redemption includes forgiveness, cleansing, justification, reconciliation, and acceptance; the aspect of salvation includes His coming to regenerate, sanctify, renew, and transform us, so as to conform us to His image and ultimately to bring us into His glory. This is God's complete salvation. We must diligently learn all of these things, obtain the knowledge of them, and be able to speak them clearly to others.

### **LEARNING TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE TRUTH**

The above points merely show the different aspects of the truth, not the mysteries of the truth in their entirety. What are the mysteries of the truth in the Bible? What is the central mystery of the Bible? In brief, in the holy Word of God there is a central mystery. This central mystery is that the Triune God wants to dispense Himself into man. Our God is the Triune God, and He wants to dispense Himself into His chosen ones to be their life and everything. This is the kernel, the core, of the mystery in the Bible. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 43-45)

### **THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE DIVINE DISPENSING**

Today we enjoy the Lord as the Spirit in our spirit. There will be a day in the future when the Lord will come back to transfigure our body. This will be the redemption of our body. At that time He will come forth from us as glory, and we will also enter into glory (Phil. 3:20-21). Then we will be with Him in the millennial kingdom, enjoying His joy, His presence, His glory, and His authority for a thousand years (Matt. 25:21, 23; Rev. 20:4, 6). After a thousand years of being beside ourselves, a condition that will be full of glory, we will arrive with the Lord at the ultimate manifestation—the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate expression of the mingling of God and man—God living in man and man living out God's glory.

This is the central mystery in the Bible. This central mystery is that the Triune God is working Himself into tripartite man so that God and man can be mingled and become one—God in man and man in God. This is a mystery that cannot be described with human words. We absolutely believe that in that day when we are in the New Jerusalem, we will all be “crazy” and beside ourselves because we will all be exulting without end.

Although the millennial kingdom and the New Jerusalem have not come, today in the church life we can have a foretaste of this in miniature. When we call on the Lord, speak the Lord, and enjoy the Lord, we become beside ourselves and are filled with the Triune God inwardly and outwardly.

### **PREACHING THE CENTRAL MYSTERY AS THE GOSPEL**

For this reason, we must speak the truth of the central mystery in the Bible everywhere. We should no longer speak the superficial gospel of peace and prosperity. Do not tell others that if they are suffering, they should believe on Jesus so that they will have peace, or that if their business is bad, they only have to believe in Jesus and pray to Him, and then they will get rich. That is not the gospel. The proper gospel is to tell others that the only God, who is the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Spirit—became flesh, died on the cross to accomplish redemption, and resurrected to become the life-giving

Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is the processed Triune God. He went through incarnation, death, and resurrection to become the all-inclusive Spirit. When man repents and believes into Him, immediately He enters into man to be man's life and life supply. He is in man as the essential Spirit and upon man as the economical Spirit. In this way He becomes one spirit with man and man also becomes one spirit with Him. The result is that man possesses real joy, satisfaction, and the true meaning of human life. This is the high gospel that we should announce everywhere.

When we preach and speak in this way, the essential Spirit will fill us inwardly, and the economical Spirit will fill us outwardly. In other words, we will have the Spirit within and without. We will become one spirit with God and will be filled with God. At this juncture, the life we live will be a life of love, light, holiness, and righteousness, and we will spontaneously live out God's image. This is true spirituality, true holiness, and true overcoming. Ultimately this is glory, which will expand to become the kingdom, consummating in the New Jerusalem. This will be the completion of the truth of God's central mystery. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 52-53)

### **THE LORD JESUS BEING THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE**

The Lord's recovery is mainly founded upon four pillars: the truth, life, the church, and the gospel. The reason Christianity is degraded is that it has lost the truth and is short of life. The Bible tells us that the Lord Himself is the truth and the life. In John 14:6 the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way and the reality and the life." In this verse the reality is the truth. Thus, the Lord said that He Himself is the life and the truth.

Both the truth and the life are the Lord Himself, but they are two different aspects of what He is. The difference is that the truth is an outward definition and explanation, and life is the inward and intrinsic content. The Lord is in us as our life, but the experience of life needs an explanation. This explanation is the truth. If we receive the Lord according to this explanation, we have life. Hence, in order to experience and enjoy the Lord as life, we must know the truth. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth. If we are not clear about the truth and do not understand or know the truth, we will have no way to enjoy the Lord as our life. For this reason we must spend an adequate amount of time to learn the truth.

### **EXPERIENCING LIFE BY KNOWING THE TRUTH**

The Lord has not left us in darkness. Today all of His truths are contained in the Bible, which He has given to us. We must realize that the Bible is a book of life. The reason the Bible is a book of life is that its entire content is truth. All experienced Christians confess that no one can enjoy Christ as life if he does not know the Bible or understand the truth in the Bible. We need to go to the supermarkets to buy food for our physical body to be fed and sustained. In like manner, we must come to the Bible to receive the truth that is in it if we want to receive and enjoy the Lord as life. All the truths in the Bible are food for our spiritual life.

The Bible is not merely a book of knowledge. All the knowledge contained in the Bible is in fact truth, and in this truth, life is concealed. When we read the Bible, if we study only the letter but not the intrinsic truth within, we will not receive life. Hence, every Bible reader has to see the truth that is conveyed through the letter of the Word. Once we see the truth, we will spontaneously touch life. The life-studies have been published to help us enter into the depths of the letter of the Word. Therefore, all those who carefully study the life-studies will surely gain a certain amount of experience. The life-studies bring us into the biblical truths, from which we may receive the genuine life supply.

Today the Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life. We all know that the decline of Christianity is due to the fact that it has lost both the truth and life. This loss of the truth and life eventually produced many human methods and worldly organizations, which are not what the Lord wants. The Lord does not want any organization or human method. Instead, He wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life. The entire content of the church must be

the growth of Christ in us as truth and life. This may be likened to an orchard, the entire content of which is the fruits of life produced from the fruit trees. In an orchard we cannot find any organization or behavior. We can only see the fruit trees growing and bearing fruit as the issue of their growth in life. This should be the situation of the churches in the Lord's recovery today. In the churches we do not want to have any organization or human methods. Rather, we want to minister to God's people for their growth by planting and watering as the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6 and 9. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 69-71)

### **LEARNING THE MYSTERY OF THE TRUTH FOR THE PREACHING OF THE HIGH GOSPEL**

For the preaching of the high gospel, we have a strong burden to encourage everyone to pursue the knowledge of the truth. In Texas there are some saints who put the life-studies everywhere in their home—not only in the study, the living room, and the kitchen, but also in the bathroom. They make good use of their time to pursue the truth. Some saints play message tapes in their cars and listen to them while driving. We must have this kind of pursuing spirit in order to know the truth thoroughly. The truth is the gospel. This corresponds to the Chinese saying, “What is real in a person will be manifested outwardly.” If we are filled with the truth inwardly, we will spontaneously express it outwardly by speaking the mystery of the gospel to people. May we all one day be able to speak the life-study messages even in our dreams. This would prove that the life-studies have been received and thoroughly constituted into us, because what we dream about at night is what we think about during the day.

We all have the heart to preach the gospel, but if we do not know the truth, we will quickly run out of words as soon as we open our mouths to speak to people. After two or three sentences we will not know what to say. In the end, we will have nothing to say, and people will be unwilling to listen to us. Hence, we must learn the truth. The word of the gospel is the truth. For us to speak the word of the truth, we must first learn the truth. If from now on we would be willing to seriously learn the truth, we all would know how to preach the gospel in two months. To preach the gospel is actually to speak the truth, because the real gospel preaching is the speaking of the truth. To speak the truth is to preach the gospel; thus, we all must learn the truth in a proper way.

### **THE TRUTH BEING THE URGENT NEED TODAY**

Today the truth is needed everywhere. Not only the non-Christians do not know the truth; even many Christians do not know the truth. However, the Lord has given us many rich truths. Even our gospel hymns are full of precious truths. For example, the first stanza of *Hymns*, #1058 says, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee; / Let the water and the blood, / From Thy riven side which flowed, / Be of sin the double cure, / Save me from its guilt and power.” Here it mentions *the water and the blood*, *the double cure*, and *guilt and power*. Even many saints among us may not know the meanings of these phrases. Here the double cure refers to the cure of our outward sinful acts and our inward sinful nature. The blood refers to the precious blood shed by the Lord to deal with our outward sinful acts (John 1:29; Heb. 9:22), and the water refers to the life imparted by the Lord to deal with our inward sinful nature (John 19:34). The precious blood of the Lord redeems us from the eternal punishment we deserve due to our sinful acts, and His life saves us from the power of our sinful nature.

If we have a thorough understanding of this hymn, we will be able to preach the high gospel to people. We may invite someone to sing this hymn with us and then explain it to him. This would be a very good gospel message. After hearing this, he will be surprised and will respect the excellence and mysteriousness of the content of the gospel. When we speak to him, the Holy Spirit will work in him. Then we could sing this hymn with him again. In this way, he would probably be saved in less than half an hour. We should not say anything about perdition and “heaven” or even prosperity and peace. Instead, we should speak only about Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, who was crucified for us, and out from whose riven side came blood for redeeming us from the eternal punishment that we deserved due

to our sins, and water for saving us out of the power of sin. This kind of simple but excellent singing and speaking, matched by the working of the Holy Spirit, will lead people to salvation. This is the proper way to preach the gospel today.

First Timothy 3:15b says, “The church...the pillar and base of the truth.” This indicates that without the truth, there would be no church. The truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church. In addition, the unique commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth. The truth tells us one central point: the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is dispensing Himself into us—sinful, tripartite men—that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive God’s life and have God Himself in us for our transformation into the sons of God. This is the truth and the gospel. We must learn the truth. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord’s Recovery*, pp. 125-127)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Two

### The First Great Pillar—Truth

(1)

#### Being Sanctified by the Truth

#### to Move out of Ourselves and into the Triune God for the Oneness

Scripture Reading: John 17:14-24

- John 17:14 I have <sup>a</sup>given them Your <sup>1</sup>word, and the <sup>2</sup>world has <sup>b</sup>hated them, because they are <sup>c</sup>not <sup>3</sup>of the world even as <sup>d</sup>I am not of the world.
- John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them <sup>1</sup>out of the world, but that You would <sup>a</sup>keep them out of *the hands of the* <sup>2b</sup>evil one.
- John 17:16 They are <sup>a</sup>not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
- John 17:18 As You have <sup>1a</sup>sent Me into the world, I also have <sup>b</sup>sent them into the world.
- John 17:19 And for their sake I <sup>1</sup>sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be <sup>a</sup>sanctified in truth.
- John 17:20 And I do not <sup>a</sup>ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;
- John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24 Father, *concerning* that which You have <sup>a</sup>given Me, I desire that they also may <sup>1</sup>be with Me <sup>b</sup>where I am, that they may behold My <sup>c</sup>glory, which You have given Me, for You <sup>d</sup>loved Me <sup>e</sup>before the foundation of the world.

#### I. Truth is the divine light shining on the facts of the Bible and televising a heavenly, spiritual vision of these facts into our being:

- A. In the New Testament, truth denotes this kind of “heavenly television.”
- B. The Lord is the light, the truth, and the Word; the Word, which is also the truth, gives light, for in the Word there is light—John 8:12; 14:6; 17:17; Psa. 119:105.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the <sup>1a</sup>light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the <sup>b</sup>light of life.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
- Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.
- C. Truth is the shining of the light, the expression of the light; in other words, truth is light expressed.
- D. The Spirit is called the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of reality (John 14:17); the Spirit of reality is the “heavenly electricity” by which spiritual things are televised into our being.
- John 14:17 *Even* the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; but you know Him, because <sup>2</sup>He abides with you and shall be <sup>3b</sup>in you.
- E. When the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of reality, shines upon the spiritual facts recorded and contained in the Bible, we receive the truth, reality.
- F. If we read the Word without the shining of the Spirit, we may have doctrine or “news reports” but not the truth, the reality, or the vision.
- G. All the divine facts are contained in the Word and conveyed to us through the Word; when the Spirit shines upon the Word, we have the “heavenly television”; the light shines upon

the facts in the Word and conveys a heavenly vision of these facts into our being, and we know the truth—cf. Eph. 1:17-18a.

Eph 1:17 That the <sup>1a</sup>God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the <sup>2</sup>Father of glory, may give to you a <sup>3b</sup>spirit of <sup>4c</sup>wisdom and <sup>d</sup>revelation in the <sup>e</sup>full knowledge of Him,

Eph 1:18a The <sup>1a</sup>eyes of your heart having been <sup>2b</sup>enlightened, that you may know what is the <sup>3c</sup>hope of His <sup>4d</sup>calling, ...

## II. There are two functions of the truth:

A. The truth sets us free from the bondage of sin, freeing us from all the negative things—John 8:32, 36.

John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.

John 8:36 If therefore the Son <sup>a</sup>sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

B. The truth sanctifies us positionally and dispositionally, saturating us with the element of God—17:17; Eph. 5:26.

John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.

Eph 5:26 That He might <sup>1a</sup>sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the <sup>2b</sup>washing of the <sup>3</sup>water in the <sup>4c</sup>word,

## III. The Triune God in His Word realized by us and being imparted and infused into our being is the truth that sets us free and sanctifies us:

A. When we are disappointed or depressed, feeling empty within, we can open ourselves and come to the Word; after reading for a while, something within us rises up, and we enjoy the presence of the Lord.

B. By taking the Word in this way, something of the Lord is wrought into us; this is the reality of the Triune God living, moving, working, and separating us.

C. Every morning we can touch the living Word and have the divine reality, the Triune God, infused into our being:

1. This transfusion of the element of God frees us from such negative things as temper, jealousy, hatred, and pride; it sets us free from every kind of falsehood, and we have real liberation, real freedom.

2. As we are being set free, we are also sanctified, separated, made holy to God, not only positionally but also dispositionally; we become one with God because His very essence is wrought into us.

D. Daily we need to come to the Word in this way; we need to come to the Word every morning and, if possible, at other times as well.

E. When the Word is mingled with the living Spirit in our spirit, we are sanctified with the essence of God.

F. By contacting the Word in this way, God is added into us day by day; as a result, we are permeated with God and made one with Him.

G. Our crucial need is to have the living Triune God infused and wrought into us through the written Word, the living Word, and the applied word of God.

## IV. Sanctification through the word of the truth results in oneness by dealing with the factors of division; truth sanctifies, and sanctification issues in oneness—John 17:14-24:

John 17:14 I have <sup>a</sup>given them Your <sup>1</sup>word, and the <sup>2</sup>world has <sup>b</sup>hated them, because they are <sup>c</sup>not <sup>3</sup>of the world even as <sup>d</sup>I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them <sup>1</sup>out of the world, but that You would <sup>a</sup>keep them out of *the hands of the* <sup>2b</sup>evil one.

John 17:16 They are <sup>a</sup>not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.

John 17:18 As You have <sup>1a</sup>sent Me into the world, I also have <sup>b</sup>sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sake I <sup>1</sup>sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be <sup>a</sup>sanctified in truth.

- John 17:20 And I do not <sup>a</sup>ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;
- John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24 Father, *concerning* that which You have <sup>a</sup>given Me, I desire that they also may <sup>1</sup>be with Me <sup>b</sup>where I am, that they may behold My <sup>c</sup>glory, which You have given Me, for You <sup>d</sup>loved Me <sup>e</sup>before the foundation of the world.

A. The Lord Jesus, the Son, is the truth; the Spirit is the Spirit of truth; and the Father's word is the truth—1:14, 17; 14:6, 17; 17:17; 1 John 5:6:

- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- John 1:17 For the <sup>1</sup>law was given through Moses; <sup>a</sup>grace and reality <sup>2</sup>came through Jesus Christ.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 14:17 *Even* the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because <sup>2</sup>He abides with you and shall be <sup>3b</sup>in you.
- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
- 1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

1. The Father is embodied in the Son, the Son is realized as the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit is one with the Word—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.

- John 6:63 <sup>a</sup>It is the <sup>1</sup>Spirit who gives life; the <sup>2</sup>flesh profits nothing; the <sup>3</sup>words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Eph 6:17 And receive the <sup>1a</sup>helmet of salvation and the <sup>2b</sup>sword of the Spirit, <sup>3</sup>which *Spirit* is the <sup>4c</sup>word of God,

2. Whenever we come to the Word with an open heart and an open spirit, we immediately touch both the Word and the Spirit as the truth.

B. The sanctifying word, the sanctifying Spirit, the sanctifying life, and the sanctifying God are all one; therefore, if we are being sanctified, we are one spontaneously because all the factors of division are taken away.

C. In John 17:17-23 we see that sanctification issues in the genuine oneness because this sanctification keeps us in the Triune God; verse 21 says, “That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us”:

- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
- John 17:18 As You have <sup>1a</sup>sent Me into the world, I also have <sup>b</sup>sent them into the world.
- John 17:19 And for their sake I <sup>1</sup>sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be <sup>a</sup>sanctified in truth.
- John 17:20 And I do not <sup>a</sup>ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;
- John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.

1. In order to be one, we need to be in the “Us,” that is, in the Triune God.
2. The only way to be in the Triune God is by the sanctifying truth that deals with all the factors of division.
3. By being kept in the Triune God, we are one, but whenever we are out of the Triune God, we are divided immediately.

4. We need to contact the Lord every morning, touch the living Word, and have the divine reality infused into our being; as we contact the Lord in this way, the factors of division are overcome.
5. When the factors of division in us are put to death by the sanctifying truth, we are brought into the genuine oneness, for sanctification keeps us in the Triune God.
6. Sanctification through the word of the truth results in the oneness of the Body of Christ, which is the enlarged oneness of the Triune God—v. 21.

John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.

D. There are four factors of division:

1. The first of these factors is worldliness; as long as we love the world in a certain aspect, that aspect of worldliness becomes a cause of division—vv. 14-16, 18; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.
 

John 17:14 I have <sup>a</sup>given them Your <sup>1</sup>word, and the <sup>2</sup>world has <sup>b</sup>hated them, because they are <sup>c</sup>not <sup>3</sup>of the world even as <sup>d</sup>I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them <sup>1</sup>out of the world, but that You would <sup>a</sup>keep them out of *the hands of the* <sup>2b</sup>evil one.

John 17:16 They are <sup>a</sup>not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:18 As You have <sup>1a</sup>sent Me into the world, I also have <sup>b</sup>sent them into the world.

1 John 2:15 <sup>1</sup>Do not love the <sup>2a</sup>world nor the things in the world. If anyone <sup>b</sup>loves the <sup>c</sup>world, <sup>3d</sup>love for the <sup>4</sup>Father is not in him;

1 John 2:16 Because all that is in the world, the <sup>1a</sup>lust of the flesh and the lust of the <sup>b</sup>eyes and the vainglory of <sup>2c</sup>life, is not of the Father but is of the world.

1 John 2:17 And the world is <sup>a</sup>passing away, and its <sup>1</sup>lust, but he who <sup>2b</sup>does the <sup>c</sup>will of God abides forever.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are <sup>1</sup>of God, and the <sup>2</sup>whole <sup>a</sup>world <sup>3</sup>lies in the <sup>4b</sup>evil one.
2. Another cause of division is ambition; when we contact the Lord through the Word and allow Him to infuse Himself into us, the truth thus imparted into our being kills our ambition—cf. Isa. 14:13.
 

Isa 14:13 But you, you said in your heart: I will ascend to heaven; Above the stars of God I will exalt my throne. And I will sit upon the mount of assembly In the uttermost parts of the north.
3. A third cause of division is self-exaltation; we should be willing to be nobody and to exalt Christ as the only Somebody, the One who has the universal preeminence—Col. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:5; 3 John 9-11.
 

Col 1:18 And He is the <sup>a</sup>Head of the <sup>b</sup>Body, the church; He is the <sup>c</sup>beginning, the <sup>1d</sup>Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

2 Cor 4:5 <sup>1</sup>For we do not <sup>a</sup>preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as <sup>2b</sup>Lord, and ourselves as your <sup>3c</sup>slaves for Jesus' sake.

3 John 9 I wrote something to the <sup>1</sup>church; but <sup>2</sup>Diotrephes, who loves <sup>3</sup>to be <sup>a</sup>first among them, does not <sup>4</sup>receive us.

3 John 10 For this reason, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, <sup>1</sup>babbling against us with <sup>2</sup>evil words; and not being satisfied with these, neither does he himself receive the brothers, and those intending to *do so* he forbids and <sup>a</sup>casts out of the church.

3 John 11 Beloved, do not <sup>a</sup>imitate the <sup>1b</sup>evil, but the <sup>c</sup>good. He who <sup>2</sup>does good is <sup>3</sup>of God; he who <sup>4</sup>does evil has <sup>5d</sup>not seen God.
4. The fourth factor of division is opinions and concepts; we should not hold on to our opinion but simply pursue the Lord's goal: the recovery of Christ as life and as everything for the building up of the church—Matt. 16:21-24; cf. Rev. 3:14.
 

Matt 16:21 <sup>a</sup>From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He <sup>1</sup>must go to <sup>b</sup>Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be <sup>c</sup>killed and on the third day be raised.

- Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by <sup>1</sup>no means happen to You!
- Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.
- Rev 3:14 And to the messenger of the church in <sup>1a</sup>Laodicea write: These things says the <sup>2b</sup>Amen, the faithful and true <sup>c</sup>Witness, the <sup>3d</sup>beginning of the creation of God:

## V. When we move out of ourselves and into the Father and into His glory, we are one and are even perfected into one—John 17:21-24:

- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;
- John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24 Father, *concerning* that which You have <sup>a</sup>given Me, I desire that they also may <sup>1</sup>be with Me <sup>b</sup>where I am, that they may behold My <sup>c</sup>glory, which You have given Me, for You <sup>d</sup>loved Me <sup>e</sup>before the foundation of the world.
- A. In ourselves we have the four factors of division; we cannot escape from these four things if we stay in the self.
- B. To be sanctified is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and to allow Christ to live in us; in this way, we are perfected into one—vv. 21-23.
- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;
- John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.
- C. This sanctification takes place by the Word, which is the truth, and by the Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth:
1. As we come to the Word every morning, outwardly we touch the Word, but inwardly the Spirit touches us; by the Word and by the Spirit, both of which are the reality, we are sanctified.
  2. The more we touch the Word and the more the Spirit touches us, the more we move out of ourselves; we move from one dwelling place, the self, to another dwelling place, the Triune God.
  3. Every day we need to make this move, for in the self there are worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts.
  4. If we continually touch the Word and allow the Spirit to touch us day by day, we shall be sanctified; that is, we shall move out of ourselves, our old lodging place, and into the Triune God, our new lodging place.
  5. Once we are out of ourselves, we are sanctified, separated from the factors of division and separated not only unto God but also into God.
  6. To have the genuine oneness, we must first move out of ourselves and into the Triune God (vv. 17, 21); then we must allow Christ to live in us (v. 23a):
- John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.
- John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.
- John 17:23a I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, ...
- a. This perfected oneness is the real building; it is the growth in life—Eph. 4:16.
- Eph 4:16 <sup>1</sup>Out from whom <sup>a</sup>all the Body, being <sup>2b</sup>joined together and being knit together through every <sup>3c</sup>joint of <sup>4</sup>the rich supply <sup>5</sup>and *through* the <sup>6</sup>operation in the

<sup>d</sup>measure of <sup>7</sup>each one part, <sup>8</sup>causes the <sup>9e</sup>growth of the Body unto the <sup>f</sup>building up of itself in <sup>10a</sup>love.

- b. To grow in life means that we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us; if we move into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us, we can be one with the saints in any locality.

D. “I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one”—John 17:23:

John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.

1. To be perfected into one means to be rescued from worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts.
2. “I in them”—this means that the Son is living and moving in us.
3. “You in Me”—this means that the Father is living and moving in the Son.
4. In other words, while the Son lives and moves in us, the Father lives and moves in Him; by this twofold living and moving, we are perfected into one, and we express the Father in glory.

E. Ambition is implied in John 17:21; self-exaltation, in verse 22; and concepts and opinions, in verse 23:

John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.

John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;

John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.

1. In the Triune God there is no ambition, in the glory of the Father there is no self-exaltation, and in the place where Christ lives and reigns there are no opinions.
2. In the divine and mystical realm of the processed Triune God, ambition is swallowed up, self-exaltation disappears, and concepts and opinions are killed; here there is no evil of division in the Satan-systematized world (v. 15); instead, there is genuine oneness.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them <sup>1</sup>out of the world, but that You would <sup>a</sup>keep them out of *the hands of the* <sup>2b</sup>evil one.

F. Genuine oneness is living in the Father, allowing Christ to live in us, and living in the Father’s glory, His expression—vv. 22, 24:

John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;

John 17:24 Father, *concerning* that which You have <sup>a</sup>given Me, I desire that they also may <sup>1</sup>be with Me <sup>b</sup>where I am, that they may behold My <sup>c</sup>glory, which You have given Me, for You <sup>d</sup>loved Me <sup>e</sup>before the foundation of the world.

1. We need to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and remain in Him for the Father’s expression, His glory.
2. The real building, the oneness, is possible only in the Triune God, and it is prevailing only when Christ lives in us; then we can express the Father in glory and experience the genuine oneness.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### MOVING OUT OF OURSELVES BY BEING SANCTIFIED

When we are with the Lord in the Father and in the glory, we are one. But when we are in ourselves, we cannot be one with others. In ourselves we are one only with ourselves, not with anyone else. If we desire to be one with others, we need to move out of the self and into God the Father. No one can make this move for us; we are responsible to do it ourselves. When we move out of ourselves and into the Father and into the Father’s glory, we are one and are even perfected into one.

The way to make this move is by being sanctified. To be sanctified is to make the move out of ourselves and into the Father. If we remain in ourselves, we are not sanctified and thus we cannot be one with others. In ourselves we have worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. It is impossible for us to eradicate these things from our being. Do you realize that the world is actually yourself? The same is true of ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts. This is the reason we cannot escape from these four things if we stay in the self. Paul told the Corinthians that among them there was envy, strife, and division (1 Cor. 3:3). These are some of the characteristics of those who are in the self. The church life, however, is a building, and the real building is the genuine oneness. In this genuine oneness there is no room for worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, or opinion.

How can we remove these four things from us? In ourselves, it is impossible. There is no way for us to eliminate them. As fallen people we are constituted with worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Even little children know how to exalt themselves; at an early age they also become ambitious. Furthermore, children do not need to be taught worldliness, for they are worldly by nature. As long as we are alive, we are subject to worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Although some of us are gentle and meek because of our natural disposition, this does not mean that we are not ambitious or opinionated. With some, ambition is expressed in an outward way and is quite obvious, whereas with others, ambition is a hidden matter concealed in the heart. But everyone is ambitious; ambition is a constituent of our being.

The Lord Jesus knows our problem. In John 15:5 He said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." He is the vine, and we are the branches. We must remain in Him, that is, abide in Him. To remain in Christ as the vine means that we move out of ourselves and into Him. Since the Lord is in the Father, we also may be in the Father by being in Him. In John 17:21 the Lord prayed, "That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us." This is the oneness in the Triune God. In order to be in the Triune God, we must move out of ourselves. John 17:22 says, "And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one." When we move out of ourselves and remain in the Triune God, Christ lives in us. In this way we are perfected into one.

Only by our being sanctified can we abide in Christ and can Christ live in us. Again I say, to be sanctified is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and to allow Christ to live in us. According to chapters fourteen through seventeen of John, this is the proper concept of sanctification. The more we are sanctified, the more we are out of ourselves and in the Triune God.

### **SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT**

This sanctification takes place by the Word, which is truth, and by the Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth. In these four chapters of John the Word and the Spirit are mentioned again and again. Actually, the Word and the Spirit are one. I thank the Lord that so many of us have come back to the Word and are getting into the Word every day. As we come to the Word every morning, outwardly we touch the Word, but inwardly the Spirit touches us. By the Word and by the Spirit, both of which are the reality, we are sanctified.

To be sanctified is not merely to be separated from the world; it is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God. If you check with your experience, you will see that the more you touch the Word and the more the Spirit touches you, the more you move out of yourself. You move from one dwelling place, the self, to another dwelling place, the Triune God. Every day we need to make this move. If we do not move out of ourselves, we are wrong; for in the self there is worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion.

### **LEARNING TO DEAL WITH OUR OPINIONS**

We may apply this to the practical situation in the church life. Now is the time for the church in Anaheim as well as for all the other churches to be built. In order for the church to be built, we need to come together for the church service. Regarding this, the leading ones are quite cautious because they

do not want the saints to be offended. Do you know what causes the saints to be offended? It is the self with its ambition and self-exaltation. Suppose you are troubled because someone else is made a leader instead of you. If you are troubled in this way because of your ambition, you should get into the Word right away and allow the Spirit to touch you. Then you will be able to move out of yourself and declare, "Angels and demons, I do not care who the leader is. I will not remain in myself. Instead, I will move out of myself into the Triune God and remain in Him."

In the service of the church the most damaging element is not ambition nor self-exaltation; it is opinion. Apparently, opinion is not as ugly as self-exaltation. We may express our opinion in a meek and humble way. Nevertheless, in the service of the church the first lesson we need to learn is to say, "I don't know." If you say that you already know what to do in the church service, it indicates that you have an opinion. But if you say, "I don't know," it reveals that you are willing to serve, but do not know how to serve. How wonderful it would be if we all could say, "I don't know!"

In 1928, at the beginning of the work in Shanghai, a certain brother who had been a postmaster became a co-worker. Not knowing what to do when he was first invited to a particular place to work for the Lord, he asked Brother Nee for advice. Brother Nee replied, "Simply learn to say, 'I don't know.' If you say this whenever people ask you something, you will be the best co-worker." However, it is very difficult for us to say this. When we come to the service of the church, we all have the assurance that we know something. Nevertheless, our need is to learn to say, "I don't know."

We learn to do this only by moving out of ourselves. If we remain in ourselves, we shall always think that we know a great deal. But if we move out of ourselves into the Triune God and remain in Him, we shall regard ourselves as knowing nothing. To know nothing means to have no opinion. When we are in the Triune God, we have no opinions.

The Lord's disciples afford us a good example of moving out of the self and into the Triune God. Before the Lord's resurrection, the disciples stayed in themselves and were very opinionated. Peter, Martha, and even Mary had opinions. But in Acts 2 we see that the disciples had lost their opinions. In the Gospels they were in themselves, but in the Acts they had moved out of the self and into the Triune God. A big move took place between the Gospels and the Acts. Although an important work began in Acts 2, there were no conferences or discussions about it. When people are opinionated, they need conferences and discussions. But in Acts 2 there was no such need.

Not many Christians know how to be free from opinions. When we come together to serve with the saints, we all must learn to have no opinions. How can we be without opinions? It is not by adjusting ourselves or by improving our behavior. It is by moving out of ourselves and into the Triune God. This is a deeper understanding of sanctification. Once we are out of ourselves, we are separated from worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Then we are separated not only unto God, but also into God.

### **ONE IN THE TRIUNE GOD**

When we are in the Triune God, we are one. When we are in ourselves, however, we are divided. Outward teachings concerning oneness do not make us one. The more today's Christians talk about oneness, the more divided they are. Like the Corinthians, they are still in themselves; hence, they are through with the genuine oneness.

We have pointed out that in John 14 the Lord Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us. This place is God the Father Himself, and the way there is the Lord Jesus. In John 14:6 the Lord said, "I am the way, and the reality, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." Christ, the Son, is the way, and the Father is the place. Although unbelievers can lodge only in themselves, we have a choice between dwelling in ourselves and dwelling in the Triune God. We do not need to remain in ourselves; we can move into the Triune God. A place has been prepared for us, and a choice is presented to us. The Lord said that after He prepared a place for us in the Father's house, He would come to receive us into that place. Therefore, where He is, we may be also. The Lord is in the Father, and He desires that we too be in the Father. Now that the place has been prepared for

us in the Father, we can move into Him by being sanctified through the truth. This involves both the Word and the Spirit. If we continually touch the Word and allow the Spirit to touch us day by day, we shall be sanctified; that is, we shall move out of ourselves, our old lodging place, and into the Triune God, our new lodging place. By making this move, worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion are left behind.

### **PERFECTED INTO ONE**

John 17:23 says, "I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one." Not only have we moved into the Triune God, but the Lord is also in us. His being in us is a matter of living. We move out of ourselves in order to be in the Triune God. When we are in the Triune God, Christ can live in us. When we remain in the Triune God and when Christ lives in us, we are perfected into one.

If we come together for the church service in ourselves, it will be impossible for us to be one. In order to serve in oneness, we must move out of ourselves. We serve by moving into the Triune God. However, as we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God, we need to let Christ live in us. His living in us perfects us into one. By moving out of ourselves and into the Triune God, we have oneness. However, this is not yet the perfected oneness. Only when Christ lives in us do we sense the reality of the genuine oneness. The more the Lord lives in us, the more His living perfects us with others into the genuine oneness.

Genuine oneness is not merely a matter of meeting together. To have the genuine oneness, we must firstly move out of ourselves and into the Triune God; secondly, we must allow the Lord to live in us. Then we are not only one, but also perfected into one. Here in this genuine oneness there is no worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, or opinions. Instead, there is just the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

### **REAL BUILDING**

This perfected oneness is the real building. In 1954 I first began to speak of the building. I told the saints in Manila that they had to know who was above them, under them, and beside them. Later I learned by experience that this concept of building is not accurate, for it applies only to a building with lifeless material that does not move from place to place, not to us as living ones who may move from one city to another. I asked the Lord to show me what the practical building was. Gradually, mainly from Ephesians 4, I saw that real building is the proper growth in life. When we grow in life normally, we get out of ourselves and into the Triune God, and Christ lives in us. When this is our experience, we have the genuine oneness and we are perfected into one. When we are perfected into one, there is no problem with building. Wherever we go, we are one with the saints. But if we remain in ourselves, we shall have problems no matter where we may be.

Real oneness is not merely relatedness, nor is it merely coordination. It is the growth in life. To grow in life means that we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us. If we move into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us, we can be one with the saints in any locality. If you have problems in the church, do not blame your environment or the saints. Instead, blame yourself for not moving out of yourself and into the Triune God and for not allowing Christ to live in you. (*Truth Messages*, pp. 56-62)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—Evening Session)

## Message Three

### The First Great Pillar—Truth

(2)

#### Knowing the Divine Truth, the Divine Reality

Scripture Reading: John 1:14; 8:32; 14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:6, 20

- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another <sup>1a</sup>Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
- John 14:17 *Even* the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because <sup>2</sup>He abides with you and shall be <sup>3b</sup>in you.
- John 15:26 But when the <sup>a</sup>Comforter comes, whom I will <sup>b</sup>send to you <sup>1c</sup>from the Father, the <sup>d</sup>Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will <sup>e</sup>testify concerning Me;
- John 16:13 But when He, the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of <sup>b</sup>reality, comes, He will <sup>1</sup>guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak <sup>e</sup>from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you <sup>d</sup>the things that are coming.
- John 16:14 He will <sup>a</sup>glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare *it* to you.
- John 16:15 <sup>a</sup>All that the Father has is Mine; for this *reason* I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare *it* to you.
- 1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.
- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

#### I. The divine truth, the divine reality, is the Triune God and His word—1 John 5:6:

- 1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.
- A. Reality is the element of God realized by us in the Son—John 1:14.
- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- B. The divine reality is God, who is light and love, incarnated to be the reality of the divine things—1 John 1:5; 4:8; John 1:1, 14.
- 1 John 1:5 <sup>1</sup>And this is the <sup>a</sup>message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that <sup>2</sup>God is <sup>3b</sup>light and in Him is no <sup>4</sup>darkness at all.
- 1 John 4:8 He who <sup>a</sup>does <sup>1</sup>not love has not <sup>b</sup>known God, because God is <sup>2c</sup>love.
- John 1:1 <sup>1a</sup>In the beginning was the <sup>2b</sup>Word, and the Word was <sup>3</sup>with <sup>e</sup>God, and the <sup>4</sup>Word was <sup>5</sup>God.
- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- C. The divine reality is Christ, who is God incarnated and in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, as the reality of God and man, the types, figures, and shadows in the Old Testament, and all the divine and spiritual things—Col. 2:9, 16-17; John 1:18, 51; 11:25; 14:6:
- Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the <sup>1a</sup>fullness of the <sup>2</sup>Godhead <sup>3</sup>bodily,
- Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you <sup>1</sup>in <sup>a</sup>eating and in drinking or in respect of a <sup>2b</sup>feast or of a <sup>3c</sup>new moon or of the <sup>4d</sup>Sabbath,
- Col 2:17 Which are a <sup>1a</sup>shadow of the things to come, but the <sup>2</sup>body is of <sup>3b</sup>Christ.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the <sup>1</sup>only begotten Son, who is <sup>2</sup>in the bosom of the Father, He has <sup>3a</sup>declared *Him*.

John 1:51 And He said to him, <sup>1</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see <sup>2a</sup>heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the <sup>3</sup>Son of Man.

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

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

1. Because Christ the Son is the embodiment of God, He is the reality of what God is—Col. 2:9.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the <sup>1a</sup>fullness of the <sup>2</sup>Godhead <sup>3</sup>bodily,

2. The truth is the reality of the divine things, and this reality is Christ Himself—John 8:32.

John 8:32 And you shall know the <sup>1a</sup>truth, and the truth shall <sup>b</sup>set you free.

3. The reality of the divine things came through Christ and becomes the realization of God to us—14:6.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

D. The divine reality is the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured, as the reality of Christ and of the divine revelation; hence, the Spirit is the reality—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:6.

1 Cor 15:45b... the last Adam *became* a <sup>c</sup>life-giving Spirit.

2 Cor 3:17 <sup>1</sup>And the <sup>2</sup>Lord is the <sup>3a</sup>Spirit; and where the <sup>4b</sup>Spirit of the Lord is, there is <sup>5c</sup>freedom.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another <sup>1a</sup>Comforter, that He may be with you forever,

John 14:17 *Even* the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because <sup>2</sup>He abides with you and shall be <sup>3b</sup>in you.

John 15:26 But when the <sup>a</sup>Comforter comes, whom I will <sup>b</sup>send to you <sup>1c</sup>from the Father, the <sup>d</sup>Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will <sup>e</sup>testify concerning Me;

John 16:13 But when He, the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of <sup>b</sup>reality, comes, He will <sup>1</sup>guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak <sup>e</sup>from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you <sup>d</sup>the things that are coming.

John 16:14 He will <sup>a</sup>glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare *it* to you.

John 16:15 <sup>a</sup>All that the Father has is Mine; for this *reason* I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare *it* to you.

1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

E. The divine reality is the Word of God as the divine revelation, which not only reveals but also conveys the reality of God and Christ and of all the divine and spiritual things; hence, the Word of God also is reality—John 17:17:

John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.

1. The Father's word carries the reality of the Father with it.

2. God's word is the reality, the truth, unlike Satan's word, which is vanity, a lie—8:44.

John 8:44 <sup>a</sup>You are of *your* <sup>1</sup>father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a <sup>b</sup>murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the <sup>c</sup>truth, because there is no truth in him. When <sup>d</sup>he speaks the lie, he speaks *it* out of his own <sup>2</sup>*possessions*; for he is a liar and the <sup>3</sup>father of it.

F. God, Christ, and the Spirit—the Divine Trinity—are essentially one; hence, these three, being the basic elements of the substance of the divine reality, are actually one reality—1:1, 14; 14:6; 1 John 5:6:

John 1:1 <sup>1a</sup>In the beginning was the <sup>2b</sup>Word, and the Word was <sup>3</sup>with <sup>c</sup>God, and the <sup>4</sup>Word was <sup>5</sup>God.

John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the <sup>1</sup>way and the <sup>2a</sup>reality and the <sup>b</sup>life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

1. This one divine reality is the substance of the Word of God as the divine revelation.
2. The divine reality thus becomes the revealed divine reality in the divine Word and makes the divine Word the reality—John 17:17.

John 17:17 <sup>1a</sup>Sanctify them <sup>2</sup>in the truth; Your <sup>3</sup>word is truth.

3. The divine Word conveys this one divine reality as the contents of the faith, and the contents of the faith are the substance of the gospel revealed in the entire New Testament as its reality, which is the divine reality of the Divine Trinity—Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5.

Eph 1:13 In whom you also, having heard the <sup>a</sup>word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were <sup>1b</sup>sealed with the <sup>c</sup>Holy Spirit of the <sup>2</sup>promise,

Col 1:5 Because of the <sup>1a</sup>hope <sup>2</sup>laid up for you in the heavens, of which you heard before in the <sup>b</sup>word of the <sup>3</sup>truth of the gospel,

- G. The divine reality is versus the lie, the vanity of the old creation, and the idolatrous substitutes of the true God—John 8:44; Eccl. 1:2; 1 John 5:20-21:

John 8:44 <sup>a</sup>You are of *your* <sup>1</sup>father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a <sup>b</sup>murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the <sup>c</sup>truth, because there is no truth in him. When <sup>d</sup>he speaks the lie, he speaks *it* out of his own <sup>2</sup>possessions; for he is a liar and the <sup>3</sup>father of it.

Eccl 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

1 John 5:21 <sup>1</sup>Little children, <sup>2</sup>guard yourselves from <sup>3a</sup>idols.

1. The devil's nature is a lie and brings in death and darkness—John 8:44:

John 8:44 <sup>a</sup>You are of *your* <sup>1</sup>father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a <sup>b</sup>murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the <sup>c</sup>truth, because there is no truth in him. When <sup>d</sup>he speaks the lie, he speaks *it* out of his own <sup>2</sup>possessions; for he is a liar and the <sup>3</sup>father of it.

- a. With darkness is falsehood, the opposite of truth—1 John 1:6.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we <sup>1</sup>have fellowship <sup>2</sup>with Him and yet <sup>3</sup>walk in the <sup>a</sup>darkness, we <sup>4b</sup>lie and are not <sup>5</sup>practicing the <sup>6</sup>truth;

- b. The satanic lie is the expression of the satanic darkness—Rom. 1:25; 3:4.

Rom 1:25 Who exchanged the <sup>1</sup>truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is <sup>a</sup>blessed forever. Amen.

Rom 3:4 <sup>1</sup>Absolutely not! But let God be true and every man a liar, as it is written, "<sup>a</sup>That You may be <sup>2</sup>declared righteous in Your words and may overcome when You are judged."

2. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun; only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun,” is not vanity but is a reality—Eccl. 1:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:17.

Eccl 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Eccl 1:3 What advantage does a man have in all his work Which he does under the sun?

2 Cor 5:17 <sup>1</sup>So then if anyone is <sup>2a</sup>in Christ, *he is a* <sup>3b</sup>new creation. The <sup>4c</sup>old things have <sup>d</sup>passed away; <sup>5</sup>behold, <sup>6</sup>they have become <sup>e</sup>new.

3. Anything that replaces, or is a substitute for, the divine reality is an idol, and we should garrison ourselves against it—1 John 5:20-21:

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

1 John 5:21 <sup>1</sup>Little children, <sup>2</sup>guard yourselves from <sup>3a</sup>idols.

- a. Idols are the heretical substitutes for the genuine God and the vain replacements for the real God.
- b. We should be on the alert to guard ourselves from heretical substitutes and from all vain replacements of our genuine and real God—v. 21.  
1 John 5:21 <sup>1</sup>Little children, <sup>2</sup>guard yourselves from <sup>3a</sup>idols.

## II. We may know the divine truth, the divine reality, by being in the true One—v. 20:

- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.
- A. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, has come and has given us an understanding that we might know the genuine and real God—John 1:14, 18; 1 John 5:20:
- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the <sup>1</sup>only begotten Son, who is <sup>2</sup>in the bosom of the Father, He has <sup>3a</sup>declared *Him*.
- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.
1. This understanding is the faculty of our mind enlightened and empowered by the Spirit of reality to apprehend the divine reality in our regenerated spirit—Eph. 4:23; John 16:12-15.
 

Eph 4:23 And *that* you be <sup>1a</sup>renewed in the <sup>2b</sup>spirit of your mind

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.

John 16:13 But when He, the <sup>a</sup>Spirit of <sup>b</sup>reality, comes, He will <sup>1</sup>guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak <sup>c</sup>from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you <sup>d</sup>the things that are coming.

John 16:14 He will <sup>a</sup>glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare *it* to you.

John 16:15 <sup>a</sup>All that the Father has is Mine; for this *reason* I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare *it* to you.
  2. *Know* in 1 John 5:20 is the ability of the divine life to know the true God in our regenerated spirit through our renewed mind, enlightened by the Spirit of reality—John 17:3; Eph. 1:17.
 

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

John 17:3 And this is <sup>1</sup>eternal life, that they may <sup>a</sup>know You, the only <sup>b</sup>true God, and Him whom You have <sup>2c</sup>sent, Jesus <sup>d</sup>Christ.

Eph 1:17 That the <sup>1a</sup>God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the <sup>2</sup>Father of glory, may give to you a <sup>3b</sup>spirit of <sup>4c</sup>wisdom and <sup>d</sup>revelation in the <sup>e</sup>full knowledge of Him,
  3. Because as believers we have been born of the divine life, we are able to know the true God and the things of God—John 1:12-13; 3:6, 15; 17:3.
 

John 1:12 But as many as <sup>1a</sup>received Him, to them He gave the authority to become <sup>2</sup>children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:6 That which is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit is spirit.

John 3:15 That every one who believes into Him may have <sup>1</sup>eternal life.

John 17:3 And this is <sup>1</sup>eternal life, that they may <sup>a</sup>know You, the only <sup>b</sup>true God, and Him whom You have <sup>2c</sup>sent, Jesus <sup>d</sup>Christ.
- B. First John 5:20 twice speaks of *Him who is true, the true One, the True*:
- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

1. The term *the true One* refers to God becoming subjective to us, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience.
2. The true One is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.
3. This verse indicates that the divine reality, which is God Himself, has become our reality in our experience; the God who was once objective to us has become our subjective reality—v. 6.

1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.

C. To be in the true One is to be in His Son Jesus Christ—v. 20:

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ.

<sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

1. This indicates that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God.
2. This also indicates that the true One and Jesus Christ are one in the way of coinherence; therefore, to be in the Son is spontaneously to be in the true One.

D. The word *this* in verse 20 refers to the God who has come through incarnation and has given us an understanding to know Him as the genuine God and to be one with Him organically in His Son Jesus Christ:

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ.

<sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

1. All this is the genuine and real God and eternal life to us.
2. This genuine and real God is eternal life to us so that we may partake of Him as everything for our regenerated being.
3. *This* refers to the true God and Jesus Christ in whom we are; it includes the fact that we are in this One, the true One, and implies that, in a practical sense, eternal life is the God in whom we are in our experience.
4. Therefore, the true God and eternal life include our being in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ; now in our experience the true One becomes the true God, and Jesus Christ becomes eternal life.

E. By being in the True, we know the divine reality intrinsically and experientially—v. 20; John 17:3.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has <sup>1a</sup>come and has given us an <sup>2b</sup>understanding that we might <sup>3</sup>know <sup>4</sup>Him who is <sup>5c</sup>true; and we are <sup>6</sup>in Him who is true, <sup>7</sup>in His Son Jesus Christ.

<sup>8</sup>This is the <sup>d</sup>true God and <sup>e</sup>eternal life.

John 17:3 And this is <sup>1</sup>eternal life, that they may <sup>3</sup>know You, the only <sup>b</sup>true God, and Him whom You have <sup>2c</sup>sent, Jesus <sup>d</sup>Christ.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE DIVINE TRUTH

#### The Meaning of Truth

In 1 John 1:6 John speaks concerning the divine truth: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth.” What is truth? It is difficult to define truth. We may think that truth in such a verse as 1:6 refers to sound or correct doctrine. The word for truth in the Chinese language means genuine doctrine. Many have a similar understanding of the English word “truth” and consider that, at least insofar as it is found in the Bible, it means correct doctrine.

In our daily conversation we may have a somewhat different understanding of truth and regard truth as meaning something that is true as opposed to something false. For example, we speak of telling a true story.

If we would understand the meaning of truth in the Bible, we need to go beyond the traditional and common understanding of what truth is. The traditional view concerning the truth in the Bible as correct doctrine is not accurate, and the common denotation of the word should not be applied to the word truth as found in the Bible.

The Greek word for truth is *aletheia*. In studying this word, I consulted a number of lexicons and concordances. I was especially helped by the article on truth in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Furthermore, I also considered all the verses in the New Testament that use either the word *aletheia* or a related word. After studying these verses in context and after consulting the lexicons and concordances, I came to certain conclusions regarding the meaning of truth in the New Testament, and these conclusions are summarized in the lengthy note on truth in 1:6 printed in the Recovery Version of the Epistles of John. In this message we shall consider only the first part of this note.

The Greek word *aletheia* means truth or reality (versus vanity), verity, veracity, genuineness, sincerity. It is John's highly individual terminology, and it is one of the profound words in the New Testament. This word denotes all the realities of the divine economy as the content of the divine revelation, contained, conveyed, and disclosed by the holy Word.

### **God**

According to the New Testament, truth is first God, who is light and love, incarnated to be the reality of the divine things—including the divine life, the divine nature, the divine power, the divine glory—for our possession, so that we may enjoy Him as grace, as revealed in John's Gospel (John 1:1, 4, 14-17).

### **Christ**

Second, truth in the New Testament denotes Christ, who is God incarnated and in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:9), to be the reality of: a) God and man (John 1:18, 51; 1 Tim. 2:5); b) all the types, figures, and shadows of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16-17; John 4:23-24); and c) all the divine and spiritual things, such as the divine life and resurrection (John 11:25; 14:6), the divine light (John 8:12; 9:5), the divine way (John 14:6), wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Hence, Christ is the reality (John 14:6; Eph. 4:21).

### **The Spirit**

Third, truth is the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17), the reality of Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) and of the divine revelation (John 16:13-15). Hence, the Spirit is the reality (1 John 5:6).

Now we can see that truth, *aletheia*, in the New Testament refers to God. Truth is God as the divine light and love incarnated to be the reality of all the divine things for our possession so that we may enjoy God as grace. This means that the very God is the truth, the reality, of the divine things for our possession. Therefore, we need to possess God as the reality and then enjoy Him as grace. Hence, the divine reality is actually God Himself. He is the reality of all the divine things.

Truth in the New Testament also denotes Christ as God incarnate. Christ is the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. As the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, Christ, who is God incarnate, is the reality of God and man, the reality of all the types, figures, and shadows of the Old Testament, and the reality of all the divine and spiritual things.

What is truth? What is reality? Reality is Christ as God incarnate. Reality is Christ as the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily to be the reality of God, man, the types, figures, and shadows, and all divine and spiritual things. In the Old Testament we have many types, figures, and shadows. Christ is the reality of them. In the Bible we also read of many divine and spiritual things,

such as life, light, wisdom, and righteousness. Christ Himself is the reality of all these things. Therefore, when we read the word “truth” or “reality” in the New Testament, we need to realize that it refers first to God and also to Christ.

We have indicated that in the New Testament truth denotes the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured and also the reality of Christ and of the divine revelation. For this reason, in 5:6, John says, “The Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”

### **The Word of God**

Having seen that truth is the Triune God, we may go on to point out that truth is also the Word of God as the divine revelation, which not only reveals but also conveys the reality of God and Christ and of all the divine and spiritual things. Hence, the Word of God also is reality (John 17:17).

The Word is the explanation of the Triune God. This means that the fourth aspect of what the truth is, the Word, is actually the explanation of the first three aspects of the truth, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Therefore, reality is God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and also the divine Word. (*Life-study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude*, pp. 78-81)

### **The True One**

In 1 John 5:20 John twice speaks of “Him who is true.” A better translation would be “the true One.” To speak of God simply as God may be to speak in a rather objective way. However, the term “the true One” is subjective; it refers to God becoming subjective to us. In this verse, the God who is objective becomes the true One in our life and experience.

What is the meaning of the expression “the true One”? In particular, what does the word “true” mean? Here the Greek word translated “true” is *alethinos*, genuine, real (an adjective akin to *aletheia*, truth, verity, reality—John 1:14; 14:6, 17), opposite of false and counterfeit. Actually, the true One is the reality. The Son of God has given us an understanding so that we may know—that is, experience, enjoy, and possess—this divine reality. Therefore, to know the true One means to know the reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.

First John 5:20 indicates that God has become our reality in our experience. The Son of God has come through incarnation and through death and resurrection and has given us an understanding so that we may experience, enjoy, and possess the reality, which is God Himself. Now the God who once was objective to us has become our subjective reality.

In 5:20 John says that we are in the true One. We not only know the true God; we are also in Him. We not only have the knowledge of Him; we are in an organic union with Him. We are one with Him organically.

When John says that we are in the true One, he is making a crucial point. Not only do we know the true One, and not only do we experience, enjoy, and possess Him as the reality, but we are in this reality. We are in the true One.

### **In the True One, in His Son Jesus Christ**

In 5:20 John says, “We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.” To be in the true God is to be in His Son Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the very embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), to be in Him is to be in the true God. This indicates that Jesus Christ the Son of God is the true God.

### **The True God and Eternal Life**

Let us now go on to consider the last part of verse 20: “This is the true God and eternal life.” “This” refers to the God who has come through incarnation and has given us the ability to know Him as the genuine God and be one with Him organically in His Son Jesus Christ. All this is the genuine and real God and eternal life to us. This genuine and real God is eternal life to us so that we may partake of Him as everything for our regenerated being.

We need to pay special attention to the word “this.” In 5:20 John does not say, “He is”; he says, “This is.” This is the correct translation of the Greek. Furthermore, John uses the word “this” to refer both to the true God and to eternal life. By this we see that the true God and eternal life are one.

We have seen that we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ. Doctrinally, the true One and His Son Jesus Christ may be considered two. But when we are in the true One and in Jesus Christ experientially, They are one. For this reason John uses “this” to refer both to the true One and to His Son Jesus Christ.

For someone who is not in the true One and Jesus Christ, They are two. But when we are in Them experientially, They are one. We have seen that to be in the true One is to be in His Son Jesus Christ. This means that in our experience of being in Them, They are one.

Moreover, when we are in the true One and Jesus Christ, They are our true God and also our eternal life. First, John speaks of the true One and His Son Jesus Christ, and then he speaks of the true God. Here there may be some distinction between the true One and the true God. When we are in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ, the true One is called the true God, and His Son Jesus Christ is called eternal life. This means that first They are the true One and His Son Jesus Christ. But when we are in Them, They become the true God and eternal life.

We need a clear understanding of what “this” in 5:20 refers to. The word “this” refers to the very God who has become experiential to us through our being in Him. No longer are we outside of this God. Rather, we are in this God, and we are in the true One, in His Son Jesus Christ. Because we are in Them, God and Jesus Christ are no longer objective to us, and in our experience They are no longer two. When we are in Them, They become one to us. Therefore, John says that “this” is the true God, and “this” is eternal life. Who is “this”? “This” is the very God and the very Jesus Christ in whom we are. We may also say that “this” includes the condition of our being in God and Jesus Christ. Hence, the true God and eternal life include our being in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ.

We are in the true One and in Jesus Christ. Now in our experience this true One becomes the true God, and Jesus Christ becomes eternal life. Where are we now? Are we outside the true God and outside eternal life? No, we are in the true God and in eternal life. The word “this” includes this fact of our being in the true God and eternal life. Hallelujah, this is the true God and eternal life, and we are in this God and in this life! We know that we are in the true God and in eternal life because we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ.

Verse 20 says that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding so that we may know the true One, and we are in the true One, which means that we are in His Son Jesus Christ. When we are in the true One and Jesus Christ, *this*, including the fact that we are in Them, is the true God.

If we are not in God, we cannot say from experience that to us He is true. Of course, He would still be true in Himself, but we could not testify that in us He is true. But since we are in the true One, to us He is the true God. Furthermore, Christ is eternal life to us. If we were not in Him, Christ would still be eternal life in Himself, but He would not be eternal life to us. Because we are now in Him, to us Jesus Christ is eternal life.

Verse 20 indicates strongly that we are now experiencing the true God, and we are experiencing Him by being in Him. We experience, enjoy, and possess Him by being in Him. This, to us, is the true God and eternal life.

In verse 20 we have the crucial conclusion of the entire Epistle of 1 John. This Epistle reveals that now we are truly one with the Triune God, and He becomes true, real, to us. He becomes reality and life to us because we are in Him. (*Life-study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude*, pp. 351-355)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Friday—First Morning Session)

## Message Four The Second Great Pillar—Life

(1)

### The Tree of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; 3:24; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19

- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen 3:24 So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an <sup>1a</sup>ear, let him hear what the <sup>2b</sup>Spirit says to the <sup>3</sup>churches. To him who <sup>4c</sup>overcomes, to him I will give to <sup>5d</sup>eat of the <sup>6e</sup>tree of life, which is in the <sup>7f</sup>Paradise of God.
- Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2c</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5d</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.
- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.
- Rev 22:19 And if anyone <sup>a</sup>takes away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life and out of the <sup>c</sup>holy city, which are written in this scroll.

#### I. We need a vision to see that the Bible presents to us a picture of God in Christ as the tree of life to be our food; this is why the tree of life is mentioned both at the beginning and the end of the Bible—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2, 14, 19:

- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2c</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5d</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.
- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.
- Rev 22:19 And if anyone <sup>a</sup>takes away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life and out of the <sup>c</sup>holy city, which are written in this scroll.

#### A. God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness was that man would receive Him as life and express Him in all His attributes—Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9.

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

Gen 1:27 And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

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

#### B. The tree of life signifies the crucified and resurrected Christ, who imparts life to man and pleases and satisfies man in an edible form—v. 9.

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

#### C. The tree of life is the center of God's economy; the carrying out of God's economy depends on the tree of life, for it is the way to fulfill God's economy—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9.

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to <sup>1a</sup>myths and unending <sup>2b</sup>genealogies, which produce <sup>c</sup>questionings rather than God's <sup>3d</sup>economy, which is in <sup>4e</sup>faith.

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all *that they may see* what the <sup>1a</sup>economy of the <sup>2b</sup>mystery is, which <sup>3</sup>throughout the ages has been <sup>5</sup>hidden in God, who created all things,

D. The tree of life is the center of the universe:

1. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden; hence, the universe is centered on the tree of life.

2. Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life—Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:14.

Gen 3:22 And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever—

Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.

E. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life:

1. John 1:4, speaking of Christ, says, “In Him was life”; this refers to the life signified by the tree of life in Genesis 2.

John 1:4 In Him was <sup>1a</sup>life, and the life was the <sup>2b</sup>light of men.

Gen 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth and all their host were finished.

Gen 2:2 And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Gen 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created. When Jehovah God made earth and heaven,

Gen 2:5 And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to work the ground,

Gen 2:6 But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—

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

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

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

Gen 2:10 And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.

Gen 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

Gen 2:12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.

Gen 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Cush.

Gen 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one that goes east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

Gen 2:15 And Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

Gen 2:16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely,

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

Gen 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart.

Gen 2:19 And Jehovah God formed from the ground every animal of the field and every bird of heaven, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called any living animal, that was its name.

Gen 2:20 And the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart.

- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken.
- Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- Gen 2:25 And both the man and his wife were naked and were not ashamed before each other.
2. The life displayed in Genesis 2 was the life incarnated in Christ—1 John 5:11-12.
- Gen 2 (be omitted)
- 1 John 5:11 And this is the <sup>a</sup>testimony, that God <sup>1</sup>gave to us <sup>b</sup>eternal <sup>c</sup>life and this life is in His Son.
- 1 John 5:12 He who <sup>1</sup>has the Son has the <sup>a</sup>life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
3. If we put together John 1:4 and 15:5, we will realize that Christ, who Himself is life and also a vine tree, is the tree of life.
- John 1:4 In Him was <sup>1a</sup>life, and the life was the <sup>2b</sup>light of men.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears <sup>a</sup>much fruit; for apart from Me you can do <sup>b</sup>nothing.
- F. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all God's redeemed—Rev. 22:1-2:
- Rev 22:1 And <sup>1</sup>he <sup>a</sup>showed me a <sup>2b</sup>river of <sup>3c</sup>water of life, bright as <sup>4d</sup>crystal, <sup>e</sup>proceeding out of the <sup>5f</sup>throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its <sup>6g</sup>street.
- Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2c</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5d</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.
1. The tree of life fulfills for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. The fact that the tree of life bears twelve fruits means that the fruit of the tree of life is rich and sufficient for the carrying out of God's eternal administration.

## II. The Lord wants to recover the church back to the beginning—to the eating of the tree of life—Rev. 2:7:

- Rev 2:7 He who has an <sup>1a</sup>ear, let him hear what the <sup>2b</sup>Spirit says to the <sup>3</sup>churches. To him who <sup>4c</sup>overcomes, to him I will give to <sup>5d</sup>eat of the <sup>6c</sup>tree of life, which is in the <sup>7f</sup>Paradise of God.
- A. In general, Christians have neglected the eating of the tree of life and have lost sight of the fact that they have the right to eat the Lord—22:14.
- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.
- B. God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically so that God might become the constituent of man's being—Gen. 2:9, 16-17:
- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen 2:16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely,
- Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

1. God not only desires that man be His vessel to contain Him; He also wants man to eat, digest, and assimilate Him—Rom. 9:21, 23; John 6:57.
 

Rom 9:21 Or does not the <sup>a</sup>potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one <sup>1b</sup>vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the <sup>a</sup>riches of His <sup>1</sup>glory upon <sup>b</sup>vessels of <sup>c</sup>mercy, which He had before prepared unto <sup>d</sup>glory,

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I <sup>a</sup>live because of the Father, so he who <sup>1</sup>eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
  2. God wants to be digested and assimilated by us so that He can become the constitution of our inward being and that we will be one with Him and the same as He is in life and in nature—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 

1 John 5:11 And this is the <sup>a</sup>testimony, that God <sup>1</sup>gave to us <sup>b</sup>eternal <sup>c</sup>life and this life is in His Son.

1 John 5:12 He who <sup>1</sup>has the Son has the <sup>a</sup>life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

2 Pet 1:4 <sup>1</sup>Through <sup>2</sup>which He has granted to us precious and <sup>3</sup>exceedingly great <sup>a</sup>promises that through <sup>4</sup>these you might become <sup>b</sup>partakers of the divine nature, <sup>5</sup>having <sup>c</sup>escaped the <sup>6</sup>corruption which is in the <sup>d</sup>world <sup>7</sup>by <sup>e</sup>lust.
- C. The essence of the tree of life is in the water of life; if we would enjoy Christ as the tree of life, as the element of life, we must drink Him as the water of life, the essence of life—Isa. 12:3-4; John 4:14; Rev. 22:1-2.
- Isa 12:3 Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing From the springs of salvation,
- Isa 12:4 And you will say in that day, Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name! Make His deeds known among the peoples; Remind them that His name is exalted.
- John 4:14 But whoever <sup>a</sup>drinks of the water that I will give him shall <sup>b</sup>by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into <sup>1c</sup>eternal life.
- Rev 22:1 And <sup>1</sup>he <sup>a</sup>showed me a <sup>2b</sup>river of <sup>3c</sup>water of life, bright as <sup>4d</sup>crystal, <sup>e</sup>proceeding out of the <sup>5f</sup>throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its <sup>6g</sup>street.
- Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2c</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5d</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.
- D. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—2:7; John 6:57.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an <sup>1a</sup>ear, let him hear what the <sup>2b</sup>Spirit says to the <sup>3</sup>churches. To him who <sup>4c</sup>overcomes, to him I will give to <sup>5d</sup>eat of the <sup>6e</sup>tree of life, which is in the <sup>7f</sup>Paradise of God.
- John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I <sup>a</sup>live because of the Father, so he who <sup>1</sup>eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

### III. Through the redemption of Christ, the way by which man could touch the tree of life, which is God Himself in Christ as life to man, has been opened again—Heb. 10:19-20; Rev. 22:14:

- Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brothers, <sup>a</sup>boldness for <sup>1b</sup>entering the <sup>c</sup>Holy of Holies in the <sup>d</sup>blood of Jesus,
- Heb 10:20 Which *entrance* He initiated for us as a <sup>1</sup>new and living <sup>a</sup>way through the <sup>2b</sup>veil, that is, His <sup>c</sup>flesh,
- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>a</sup>gates into the city.
- A. As a fallen man, Adam was separated from the life of God and was not permitted to contact God as the tree of life—Gen. 3:1-6, 11-13, 22-24:
 

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than every other animal of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

Gen 3:2 And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die!

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

- Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make oneself wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.
- Gen 3:11 And He said, Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?
- Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.
- Gen 3:13 And Jehovah God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.
- Gen 3:22 And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever—
- Gen 3:23 Therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken.
- Gen 3:24 So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

1. Satan's tempting man to take the tree of the knowledge of good and evil indicates that Satan wants to keep man from taking God as his life—vv. 1-6.

- Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than every other animal of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?
- Gen 3:2 And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;
- Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.
- Gen 3:4 And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die!
- Gen 3:5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.
- Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make oneself wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.

2. The significance of man's fall is that man was estranged from the life of God—Eph. 4:17-18.

- Eph 4:17 This therefore I say and <sup>1</sup>testify <sup>a</sup>in the Lord, that you no longer <sup>2b</sup>walk as the <sup>c</sup>Gentiles also <sup>d</sup>walk in the <sup>3c</sup>vanity of their mind,
- Eph 4:18 Being <sup>1a</sup>darkened in their understanding, alienated from the <sup>2b</sup>life of God because of the <sup>3c</sup>ignorance which is in them, because of the <sup>4d</sup>hardness of their heart;

3. God's prohibiting man by the cherubim and the flaming sword from taking the tree of life indicates that God's glory (signified by the cherubim), holiness (signified by the flame), and righteousness (signified by the sword) do not allow sinful man to abuse the life of God—Heb. 9:5; 12:29; Rom. 2:5.

- Heb 9:5 And above it <sup>a</sup>cherubim of glory overshadowing the <sup>1b</sup>propitiation place, concerning which it is not now *the time* to speak in detail.
- Heb 12:29 For our God is also a <sup>1</sup>consuming <sup>a</sup>fire.
- Rom 2:5 But, according to your hardness and *your* unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the <sup>a</sup>righteous judgment of God,

B. When Christ's flesh was crucified, the veil was rent (Heb. 10:20; Matt. 27:51), thus opening the way for us, those who were alienated from God, who is signified by the tree of life, to enter into the Holy of Holies to contact Him and take Him as the tree of life for our enjoyment.

- Heb 10:20 Which *entrance* He initiated for us as a <sup>1</sup>new and living <sup>a</sup>way through the <sup>2b</sup>veil, that is, His <sup>c</sup>flesh,
- Matt 27:51 And behold, the <sup>1a</sup>veil of the temple was split in two <sup>2</sup>from top to bottom, and the <sup>3</sup>earth was shaken and the <sup>4</sup>rocks were split,

C. "Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life"—Rev. 22:14:

- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.

1. Through Christ's redemption, which fulfilled all the requirements of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness, the way to the tree of life was opened again to the believers.
2. Those who wash their robes in the redeeming blood of Christ have the right to enjoy the tree of life as their eternal portion in the holy city, the Paradise of God, in eternity—v. 14.

Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.

#### IV. In God's economy we are not only the eaters of the tree of life, enjoying the continually fresh fruit, but we are also the branches of this tree, abiding in Christ, the tree of life, to enjoy the life-juice—v. 2; John 15:5:

Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1b</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2c</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5d</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.

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

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

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is <sup>1a</sup>joined to the Lord is <sup>2b</sup>one spirit.

1. In His desire to be one with man, God created man in His image and according to His likeness and with a spirit to contact, receive, and contain Him—Gen. 1:26; 2:7.

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

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

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

3. This oneness is an organic union, a union in life—a grafted life—John 15:4-5:

John 15:4 <sup>a</sup>Abide <sup>b</sup>in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit <sup>1</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>much fruit; for apart from Me you can do <sup>b</sup>nothing.

- a. The grafted life is not an exchanged life—it is the mingling of the human life with the divine life.

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

John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.

1 Cor 2:2 For I did <sup>1</sup>not determine to know anything among you except <sup>2</sup>Jesus <sup>a</sup>Christ, and this One <sup>b</sup>crucified.

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

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

- (1) Since we have been grafted into Christ, we should allow the pneumatic Christ to live in us—Gal. 2:20.

Gal 2:20 I am <sup>1a</sup>crucified with Christ; and *it is* <sup>2</sup>no longer I *who* live, but *it is* <sup>3b</sup>Christ *who* lives in me; and the <sup>4</sup>life which I now live in the flesh I <sup>c</sup>live in <sup>5</sup>faith, the <sup>d</sup>faith <sup>6</sup>of the <sup>7</sup>Son of God, who <sup>8c</sup>loved me and <sup>9</sup>gave Himself up for me.

- (2) We should live a grafted life by the mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled with the regenerated human spirit—1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:4.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is <sup>1a</sup>joined to the Lord is <sup>2b</sup>one spirit.

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be <sup>1</sup>fulfilled in us, who do not <sup>2a</sup>walk according to the flesh but according to the <sup>3</sup>spirit.

- d. In the grafted life, the human life is not eliminated but is strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine life; the branch retains its essential characteristics, but its life is uplifted and transformed by being grafted into a higher life—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a.

Gal 2:20 I am <sup>1a</sup>crucified with Christ; and *it is* <sup>2</sup>no longer I *who* live, but *it is* <sup>3b</sup>Christ *who* lives in me; and the <sup>4</sup>life which I now live in the flesh I <sup>5</sup>live in <sup>6</sup>faith, the <sup>7</sup>faith <sup>8</sup>of the <sup>9</sup>Son of God, who <sup>10</sup>loved me and <sup>11</sup>gave Himself up for me.

Gal 4:19 My <sup>1a</sup>children, with whom I <sup>2b</sup>travail again in birth until <sup>3c</sup>Christ is <sup>4</sup>formed <sup>5</sup>in you,

Eph 3:16 <sup>1</sup>That He would grant you, according to the <sup>2a</sup>riches of His glory, to be <sup>3b</sup>strengthened with <sup>4c</sup>power through His <sup>5</sup>Spirit <sup>6</sup>into the <sup>7</sup>inner man,

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His <sup>a</sup>home in your <sup>1</sup>hearts through <sup>2</sup>faith, ...

- B. Christ as the tree of life is the embodiment of God as life to us (Col. 2:9), and we are united with Him organically; we not only eat Christ as the tree of life—we are united with Him, we are one with Him, and we are part of Him—John 15:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17.

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the <sup>1a</sup>fullness of the <sup>2</sup>Godhead <sup>3</sup>bodily,

John 15:1 I am the <sup>1</sup>true <sup>a</sup>vine, and My Father is the <sup>2</sup>husbandman.

John 15:4 <sup>a</sup>Abide <sup>b</sup>in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit <sup>1</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>much fruit; for apart from Me you can do <sup>b</sup>nothing.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is <sup>1a</sup>joined to the Lord is <sup>2b</sup>one spirit.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE God's Putting Man before the Tree of Life Indicating that God Desires that Man Would Take Him, Signified by the Tree of Life, as Man's Life

The tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9) is a symbol of God as life. God is Spirit (John 4:24); as such, He is abstract, difficult for people to grasp, understand, or touch. In His wisdom God used the tree of life as a symbol of Himself. The tree of life is a particular tree. All the other different kinds of trees, such as the apple tree, the peach tree, and the banana tree, are easily understood by everyone. But not many people understand what the tree of life is. Life is mysterious and abstract. The tree of life symbolizes God as life. Therefore, when we take the tree of life, we take God into us as our life. Although this seems very simple, the tree of life is not easy to understand.

On a radio program some years ago in Los Angeles, a famous preacher and Bible teacher was asked what the tree of life is. He replied that, since the tree of life no longer existed, there was no further need for us to know about it. His answer indicated that he was short of the proper biblical knowledge. The tree of life is mentioned not only in Genesis 2 but also in Revelation 2 and 22. Revelation 2:7 says, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." How could the Lord give us to eat of something that no longer exists? In Revelation 22:2 the Bible concludes emphatically with the matter of the tree of life. The tree of life continues to exist, but few understand the meaning of the tree of life. Life is inexplicable, and God also is inexplicable. The tree of life in Genesis 2:9 symbolizes God. Therefore, the tree of life can also be called "the tree of God."

According to the description in Revelation 22:2, the tree of life apparently is a vine. This verse says that the tree of life grows on the two sides of the river. Hence, it grows along the river on both of its banks. A pine tree, which grows upward, can never occupy two banks of a river; but a vine can. In John 15 the Lord Jesus said that He was the true vine (v. 1). The other vines are symbols, but the Lord

Jesus is the real vine. If we put Genesis 2, John 15, and Revelation 22 together, we can see that God is the tree of life and that the tree of life is a vine. As a vine God can reach people wherever they are.

**God's Prohibiting the Fallen Man,  
by the Cherubim and the Flaming Sword,  
from Taking the Tree of Life Indicating That  
God's Glory, Holiness, and Righteousness**

**Do Not Allow the Sinful Man to Abuse the Life of God**

Satan's tempting of man to take the tree of knowledge indicates that Satan wants to keep man from taking God as his life (Gen. 3:1-6). After man took of the tree of knowledge, God placed cherubim and a flaming sword (Gen. 3:24) before the tree of life in order to prevent man from taking of the tree of life also. God's prohibiting of fallen man by the cherubim and the flaming sword from taking the tree of life indicates that God's glory (signified by the cherubim), holiness (signified by the flame), and righteousness (signified by the sword) do not allow the sinful man to abuse the life of God. The sword signifies God's righteousness. In Revelation 19 the Lord is the One who judges in righteousness (v. 11) with the sharp sword that proceeds out of His mouth (v. 15). The Lord judges by the sword, and the sword is related to His righteousness. God's glory, holiness, and righteousness keep man away from taking God as his life. Fallen man has lost his position to enter into God to take God as his life.

**Man Having the Right to Partake of God as the Fountain of Life  
through the Redemption of Christ**

Christ's redemption meets the requirement of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness. The Lord Jesus died for us in order to satisfy God's requirements. Christ redeemed us back to our original position so that we can enter into God and enjoy Him as our life. Since the redemption of Christ had not yet been accomplished in the Old Testament, God used propitiation, which was accomplished with the animal sacrifices. Propitiation in the Old Testament typified the redemption of Christ in the New Testament. The blood of the sacrifice offered to God for the sins of the Israelites on the day of propitiation was brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the cover of the ark (Lev. 16:14-15). Within the ark, under its cover, were the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. These commandments placed certain demands upon man before God. But the blood of the bullock covered the demands of these commandments. As a result, God could see only the covering blood and not the Ten Commandments. The troublesome situation between man and God was covered, that is, propitiated. The issue of this propitiation was peace. On the propitiatory place, the cover of the ark, God and man were able to meet in peace. The propitiation in the Old Testament gave the saints the right to partake of God as the fountain of life for their satisfaction (Psa. 36:8-9).

The propitiation in the Old Testament pointed to the redemption of Christ, which He accomplished in the New Testament. Now, under this redemption we have the full right to enter into God and take Him as our life. (*The Triune God to be Life to the Tripartite Man*, pp. 16-18)

**Putting Man before the Tree of Life**

The third striking point in God's creation of man is that after God created man, He put man before the tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9). The man created by God was complete and perfect, having a body and a spirit with a soul. God put this complete and perfect man in front of the tree of life.

The figure of the tree of life in the Bible has puzzled nearly all the Bible teachers. In the Bible the tree of life is mentioned first in Genesis 2, and it proceeds through the Bible to the end, to Revelation 22. Between the two ends of the Bible, in Revelation 2:7 the Lord promised the overcomers that He will give them to eat of the tree of life. In order to discover what the tree of life is, we need to read through the Bible, beginning from Genesis 2. Eventually, we will reach Psalm 36:9, which says, "For with You is the fountain of life." According to this verse, with God is the fountain of life. The tree of life must be something that is related to life. Where is life? Life is in God. With God there is the

fountain of life. Thus, God is the fountain, the source, of life. After reading further, we come to the New Testament. In John 1:4 we read, "In Him was life." The word *Him* in this verse refers to the Word in verse 1, who is God Himself. In the Word, who is God, is life. In John 14:6 this One came and told us, "I am...the life," and in John 15:1 He said, "I am the true vine." Besides Christ, every vine is a false one. Only He is the true vine. A vine is a tree. If we put these two matters, life and the tree, together, we have the tree of life. Who is the tree of life? The tree of life is the Triune God, who embodied Himself in Christ. Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God is the life in the vine tree. Therefore, Christ is the tree of life.

The tree of life is a vine tree...Ultimately, the tree of life is described in Revelation 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." From this verse we can see that the tree of life does not grow by shooting upward; rather, it grows along the river of water of life, on the two sides of the river. A tree that grows along the two sides of a river surely must be a vine.

In brief, the tree of life in the Bible is a figure of the Triune God embodied in Christ to be the very substance of the divine life. This tree is good for man to take and eat (Gen. 2:16; John 6:57b) that man may be constituted with God as the constituent of life. Thus, man and God become organically united and live together as one person (John 15:5; Phil. 1:20-21a). Colossians 3:4 says that Christ is our life. Therefore, we need to take Him as our supply, as the very substance of the divine life, in which life we can be victorious and overcoming and can be so high that we can even reign in His eternal life (Rom. 5:17). We can be kings in the eternal life. Eventually, we will be co-kings with Christ in the thousand-year kingdom (Rev. 3:21; 20:4).

However, according to my observation, I have not been able to find one dear saint through the years who truly lives not himself but Christ. We all have two lives. We have the natural life, the human life, and we have the spiritual life, the divine life. The natural life is just us, ourselves; and the divine life is also a person, Christ. Each one of us is two persons, one person being our self and the other being Christ in us. As two persons, we have two lives, our natural life and the divine life. We have the life from Adam and we have the life that is Christ Himself in us.

The problem is, by what life will we live? By the first life or the second life? By the natural life or the divine life? By our self or by Christ? I say again that I have not found anyone, even one who is very much in the church life, who lives Christ day by day and hour after hour and does not live himself. Hymns #841, 499, and 501 (*Hymns*) speak of living Christ and not ourselves. We need to check to see if our life matches the standard expressed in these hymns. We need to realize that we were created to be like God, even to be one with God. Furthermore, we have been saved into God to be regenerated by Him that we may be His children and may be members of Christ to constitute the Body of Christ. However, we need to ask ourselves whether we live God or not. We do have a marvelous provision. God has provided us with a body and with a spirit, which are very sufficient for us to live as a man to worship God, to receive God, and to contain God that we may live God and express Him.

Even after being saved by God, we may not live Him. We may be gentlemen, men who are right, but we may not be able to say, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20a). We may not be able to apply this holy word to ourselves. We need to realize the organic union between us and God. We need to behave ourselves, to walk, to live, to do everything, in this organic union. It should not be I but Christ; it should not be I by myself, but I with God, united, mingled, and blended to be one person, a God-man. (*The Organic Union in God's Relationship with Man*, pp. 18-21)

### **Man as an Eating Vessel before the Tree of Life**

The picture shown by these portions of the Word is that God created man as an eating vessel. To eat is to receive, digest, and assimilate food. In this way, whatever you eat will eventually become you. Last night I ate a very good fish. Before I ate the fish, it was fish. But this morning while I am sitting here, the fish is becoming me. It was received by me last night at dinner. Later, I digested it. A little later, it was assimilated into me, and eventually this morning it has become me. Look at the picture in

Genesis 1 and 2. Man was created as a vessel with God's image and likeness outwardly and with a spirit as a receiver inside. After man was created in this way, God brought him to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). This tree of life was good for food. This is like bringing someone to a dining table. Once he eats the food, he begins to digest and assimilate the food. Eventually the food becomes part of him.

Before man could eat of the tree of life, the Bible tells us that Satan the Devil, through the serpent, distracted man (Gen. 3:1-6). Thus, man was separated from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). Eventually, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). The life the Lord came to bring us is the life of the tree of life, a tree which is good for food (Gen. 2:9). In the Gospel of John, the Lord also told us that He is the vine tree (John 15:1, 5) and that He is food (6:35, 55), good for eating (vv. 51, 53, 57). The picture in these verses in the Gospel of John is the same picture as that in Genesis 2. In Genesis 2 man was placed before the tree of life, and in the Gospel of John we are told to eat Jesus, who is the tree of life (John 15:1).

In Revelation 2:7, after the churches had become degraded, the Lord came in to call the overcomers to eat the tree of life. The overcomers are those who are eating Jesus as the tree of life in the church life today. This eating of the tree of life today signifies that the tree of life will be in the New Jerusalem in the millennium. Today in the church life as overcomers, we are eating Jesus as the tree of life, and tomorrow all the overcomers will be eating Jesus as the tree of life in the New Jerusalem during the thousand year millennial kingdom. Ultimately, in eternity the tree of life will be in the center of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:2). The tree of life will feed all of God's redeemed people for eternity. (*The Experience & Growth in Life*, pp. 6-7)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Five

### The Second Great Pillar—Life

(2)

#### The Flow of Life with the Ministry of Life out of and for the Magnificent House of God

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 47:1-12; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 9:11; 3:6, 9; 4:15; 3:2, 12

- Ezek 47:1 Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.
- Ezek 47:2 Then He brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around on the way outside to the outer gate, on the way to the gate that faces east; and there the water was running out on the south side.
- Ezek 47:3 When the man went out to the east with the line in His hand, He measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles.
- Ezek 47:4 Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins.
- Ezek 47:5 Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.
- Ezek 47:6 And He said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then He led me and brought me back along the bank of the river.
- Ezek 47:7 And when I returned, there were very many trees on the bank of the river, on one side and on the other.
- Ezek 47:8 Then said He to me, This water flows out toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah and goes to the sea; when it flows into the sea, the water of the sea is healed.
- Ezek 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish, when this water comes there. And the water of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.
- Ezek 47:10 And fishermen will stand beside the sea from En-ge-di even to En-eg-laim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.
- Ezek 47:11 But its swamps and its marshes will not be healed; they shall be left for salt.
- Ezek 47:12 And on the banks on both sides of the river will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail; but they will bring forth new fruit every month, because the water for them flows out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food, and their leaves for healing.
- 2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us <sup>a</sup>sufficient as <sup>b</sup>ministers of a <sup>c</sup>new covenant, *ministers* not of the <sup>1</sup>letter but of the <sup>2d</sup>Spirit; for the <sup>3</sup>letter kills, but the <sup>4e</sup>Spirit gives life.
- 1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown to you the <sup>a</sup>spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap from you the fleshly things?
- 1 Cor 3:6 <sup>a</sup>I <sup>1</sup>planted, <sup>b</sup>Apollos watered, but <sup>c</sup>God caused the growth.
- 1 Cor 3:9 For we are <sup>1</sup>God's <sup>a</sup>fellow workers; you are God's <sup>2b</sup>cultivated land, God's <sup>c</sup>building.
- 1 Cor 4:15 For though you have ten thousand <sup>1</sup>guides in Christ, yet *you do not have many* <sup>2a</sup>fathers; for <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus I have <sup>c</sup>begotten you through the <sup>d</sup>gospel.
- 1 Cor 3:2 I <sup>1</sup>gave you <sup>2a</sup>milk to drink, not solid <sup>b</sup>food, for you were <sup>c</sup>not yet able *to receive it*. But <sup>3</sup>neither yet now are you able,
- 1 Cor 3:12 <sup>1</sup>But if anyone builds upon the foundation <sup>2</sup>gold, silver, precious stones, <sup>3</sup>wood, grass, stubble,

#### I. In order to participate in God's ultimate move, we need to experience the flow of life out of the house of God—Ezek. 47:1-12:

- Ezek 47:1 Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.
- Ezek 47:2 Then He brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around on the way outside to the outer gate, on the way to the gate that faces east; and there the water was running out on the south side.

- Ezek 47:3 When the man went out to the east with the line in His hand, He measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles.
- Ezek 47:4 Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins.
- Ezek 47:5 Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.
- Ezek 47:6 And He said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then He led me and brought me back along the bank of the river.
- Ezek 47:7 And when I returned, there were very many trees on the bank of the river, on one side and on the other.
- Ezek 47:8 Then said He to me, This water flows out toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah and goes to the sea; when it flows into the sea, the water of the sea is healed.
- Ezek 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish, when this water comes there. And the water of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.
- Ezek 47:10 And fishermen will stand beside the sea from En-ge-di even to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.
- Ezek 47:11 But its swamps and its marshes will not be healed; they shall be left for salt.
- Ezek 47:12 And on the banks on both sides of the river will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail; but they will bring forth new fruit every month, because the water for them flows out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food, and their leaves for healing.

A. God's ultimate move is His move in man to deify man by saturating man with all that He is in His life, nature, element, and essence for the glory, the expression, of God—2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.

2 Cor 3:18 <sup>1</sup>But <sup>2</sup>we all with <sup>3</sup>unveiled face, <sup>4a</sup>beholding and reflecting like a <sup>5b</sup>mirror the <sup>6c</sup>glory of the Lord, are <sup>7</sup>being <sup>d</sup>transformed into the <sup>8</sup>same <sup>e</sup>image <sup>9</sup>from glory to <sup>f</sup>glory, even as <sup>10</sup>from the <sup>11</sup>Lord Spirit.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and <sup>1</sup>it has not yet been <sup>a</sup>manifested what we will be. We <sup>2</sup>know that if <sup>3</sup>He is manifested, we will be <sup>b</sup>like Him because we will <sup>4c</sup>see Him even as He is.

B. The water flows out from under the threshold—Ezek. 47:1:

Ezek 47:1 Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

1. In order for the water to flow, there must be a threshold, an opening—cf. Psa. 81:10.

Psa 81:10 I am Jehovah your God, Who brought you up out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

2. If we draw closer to the Lord and have more contact with Him, there will be an opening that will allow the living water to flow out from the church—*Hymns*, #846.

*Hymns* #846

1	Oh, may my spirit flow, Now I beseech Thee, Lord, My past I would forsake, My spirit free would make;	Oh, may it flow! Oh, may it flow! The iron walls would break, Oh, may it flow!
2	Oh, may my spirit flow, Now I implore Thee, Lord, No more self-satisfied. No more my spirit tied;	Oh, may it flow! Oh, may it flow! No more in self-bound pride, Oh, may it flow!
3	Oh, may my spirit flow, For this I plead with Thee, High-minded not to be, I'd flow unceasingly,	Oh, may it flow! Oh, may it flow! Pride shall not prison me, In spirit flow.
4	Oh, may my spirit flow, For this I seek Thee, Lord, No more to isolate, My spirit nought abate,	Oh, may it flow! Oh, may it flow! Nor self to perfect make, Deeply to flow.
5	Oh, may my spirit flow,	Oh, may it flow!

	I ask Thee, gracious Lord, My trust in self o'erthrow, That living water flow	Oh, may it flow! Down from self's throne I'll go, In spirit, Lord.
6	Oh, may my spirit flow, Answer my prayer, dear Lord, Not just commune with Thee, Mingle with others free	Oh, may it flow! Oh, may it flow! I long to builded be, In spirit, Lord.

C. The flow is toward the east—Ezek. 47:1:

**Ezek 47:1** Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

1. The river of God flows in the direction of God's glory—cf. Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2.

**Num 2:3** And those who encamp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, according to their companies; and the leader of the children of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab;

**Ezek 43:2** And the glory of the God of Israel was there, coming from the way of the east, and His voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth was illuminated with His glory.

2. If everyone in the church seeks and cares for God's glory, the living water will flow out from the church—John 7:18; 1 Cor. 10:31.

**John 7:18** He who speaks from himself <sup>a</sup>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.

**1 Cor 10:31** <sup>1</sup>Therefore <sup>2</sup>whether you <sup>a</sup>eat or drink, or <sup>b</sup>whatever you do, do all to the <sup>c</sup>glory of God.

D. The water flows out from the right side of the house—Ezek. 47:1:

**Ezek 47:1** Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

1. In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place—cf. Heb. 1:3.

**Heb 1:3** Who, being the <sup>1</sup>effulgence of His glory and the <sup>a</sup>impress of His <sup>b</sup>substance and upholding and bearing all things by the <sup>2</sup>word of His power, having made <sup>3</sup>purification of sins, <sup>4c</sup>sat down on the right hand of the <sup>5d</sup>Majesty on <sup>6</sup>high;

2. The flow of life must have the preeminence within us, becoming the controlling factor in our living and work—Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b.

**Rev 22:1** And <sup>1</sup>he <sup>a</sup>showed me a <sup>2b</sup>river of <sup>3c</sup>water of life, bright as <sup>4d</sup>crystal, <sup>e</sup>proceeding out of the <sup>5f</sup>throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its <sup>6g</sup>street.

**Col 1:18b** ... He is the <sup>c</sup>beginning, the <sup>1d</sup>Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

E. The flowing is by the side of the altar, showing that we need the dealing of the cross and a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life—Ezek. 47:1.

**Ezek 47:1** Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

F. For the increase of the flow of life, we need to be measured by the Lord as the man of bronze—40:3; 47:2-5; Rev. 1:15; cf. John 7:37-39:

**Ezek 40:3** And He brought me there, and there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze with a line of flax and a measuring reed in His hand, standing in the gate.

**Ezek 47:2** Then He brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around on the way outside to the outer gate, on the way to the gate that faces east; and there the water was running out on the south side.

**Ezek 47:3** When the man went out to the east with the line in His hand, He measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles.

**Ezek 47:4** Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins.

**Ezek 47:5** Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.

**Rev 1:15** And His <sup>1a</sup>feet were like shining bronze, as having been <sup>2</sup>fired in a furnace; and His voice was like the <sup>3b</sup>sound of many waters.

- John 7:37 Now on the <sup>1</sup>last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone <sup>a</sup>thirsts, let him <sup>b</sup>come to Me and <sup>c</sup>drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his <sup>a</sup>innermost being shall <sup>1</sup>flow <sup>2</sup>rivers of living water.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been <sup>b</sup>glorified.
1. To measure is to examine, test, judge, and possess—cf. Isa. 6:1-8; cf. Ezek. 42:20.
 

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.

Ezek 42:20 He measured it on four sides. It had a wall all around, the length five hundred cubits and the width five hundred cubits, to make a separation between what was holy and what was common.
  2. The four measurings of a thousand cubits, which is a complete unit (cf. Psa. 84:10), indicate that as creatures we need to be thoroughly measured by the Lord so that He may take over and thoroughly possess our entire being—Ezek. 47:2-5.
 

Psa 84:10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand; I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

Ezek 47:2 Then He brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around on the way outside to the outer gate, on the way to the gate that faces east; and there the water was running out on the south side.

Ezek 47:3 When the man went out to the east with the line in His hand, He measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles.

Ezek 47:4 Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins.

Ezek 47:5 Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.
  3. The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes; the depth of the flow depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord—cf. 1 John 1:5, 7.
 

1 John 1:5 <sup>1</sup>And this is the <sup>a</sup>message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that <sup>2</sup>God is <sup>3b</sup>light and in Him is no <sup>4</sup>darkness at all.

1 John 1:7 But if we <sup>a</sup>walk in the light as He <sup>1</sup>is in the light, we <sup>2</sup>have fellowship with one another, and the <sup>3b</sup>blood of <sup>4</sup>Jesus His Son <sup>5</sup>cleanses us from every <sup>6</sup>sin.
  4. The more we are measured by the Lord, the more we are restricted and limited by the flowing of the grace of life until eventually we are lost in and carried along by the flowing Triune God as a river in which to swim; in one sense we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free—Ezek. 47:4-6.
 

Ezek 47:4 Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins.

Ezek 47:5 Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.

Ezek 47:6 And He said to me, Son of man, have you seen this? Then He led me and brought me back along the bank of the river.

G. The river causes everything to live—v. 9a:

Ezek 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish, when this water comes there. ...

1. Where the river flows, everything shall live and be full of life.

2. The flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle—vv. 7, 9-10, 12.

Ezek 47:7 And when I returned, there were very many trees on the bank of the river, on one side and on the other.

Ezek 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish, when this water comes there. And the water of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.

Ezek 47:10 And fishermen will stand beside the sea from En-ge-di even to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish shall be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.

Ezek 47:12 And on the banks on both sides of the river will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail; but they will bring forth new fruit every month, because the water for them flows out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food, and their leaves for healing.

H. The river waters the desert and heals the Dead Sea—v. 8:

Ezek 47:8 Then said He to me, This water flows out toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah and goes to the sea; when it flows into the sea, the water of the sea is healed.

1. The river waters the dry, parched land and heals the death waters.

2. This watering and healing are for the purpose of producing life.

I. The river is unable to heal the swamps and marshes—v. 11:

Ezek 47:11 But its swamps and its marshes will not be healed; they shall be left for salt.

1. A swamp or marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise and lukewarmness—cf. Rev. 3:15-16.

Rev 3:15 I <sup>a</sup>know your works, that you are neither cold nor <sup>b</sup>hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to <sup>1</sup>spew you out of My mouth.

2. For the flow of life and for the church life, we need to be absolute.

3. “If you are in the Lord’s recovery, be in the recovery absolutely, not halfway... The Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness... By being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in. Then everything shall live where the river comes” (*Life-study of Ezekiel*, pp. 311-312).

## II. Our enjoyment of Christ as the flow of life, the life-giving Spirit, is for us to be sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders with the ministry of life for the marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God:

A. A sufficient minister of the new covenant is a person who ministers life to others in order to help them grow in life—2 Cor. 3:6.

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us <sup>a</sup>sufficient as <sup>b</sup>ministers of a <sup>c</sup>new covenant, *ministers* not of the <sup>1</sup>letter but of the <sup>2d</sup>Spirit; for the <sup>3</sup>letter kills, but the <sup>4c</sup>Spirit gives life.

B. A minister of life is a sower who sows spiritual seeds:

1. In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul says to the Corinthians, “We have sown to you the spiritual things”; *the spiritual things* refer to spiritual seeds.

1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown to you the <sup>a</sup>spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap from you the fleshly things?

2. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a spiritual seed is to impart life in, with, and out of our spirit.
  3. The Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race—Matt. 13:3, 37.  
 Matt 13:3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, <sup>1</sup>Behold, the <sup>2a</sup>sower went out to sow.  
 Matt 13:37 And He answered and said, He who sows the good seed is the <sup>a</sup>Son of Man;
  4. In the Lord's recovery we, as ministers of the new covenant, need to be sowers who impart life to grow and produce Christ in others.
- C. A minister of life is a planter who plants Christ into God's people—1 Cor. 3:6:  
 1 Cor 3:6 <sup>a</sup>I <sup>1</sup>planted, <sup>b</sup>Apollos watered, but <sup>c</sup>God caused the growth.
1. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, God's farm, in God's new creation—v. 9.  
 1 Cor 3:9 For we are <sup>1</sup>God's <sup>a</sup>fellow workers; you are God's <sup>2b</sup>cultivated land, God's <sup>c</sup>building.
  2. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit.
- D. A minister of life is a waterer who waters people with Christ—v. 6:  
 1 Cor 3:6 <sup>a</sup>I <sup>1</sup>planted, <sup>b</sup>Apollos watered, but <sup>c</sup>God caused the growth.
1. Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life—Rev. 22:17.  
 Rev 22:17 And the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit and the <sup>b</sup>bride say, <sup>2c</sup>Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is <sup>d</sup>thirsty <sup>3e</sup>come; let <sup>4</sup>him who wills take the <sup>f</sup>water of life freely.
  2. We may liken a waterer in God's farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water; we should be a divine "irrigation system" with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God's farm.
  3. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him so that we can be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life—John 4:14; 7:37-39.  
 John 4:14 But whoever <sup>a</sup>drinks of the water that I will give him shall <sup>b</sup>by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into <sup>1c</sup>eternal life.  
 John 7:37 Now on the <sup>1</sup>last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone <sup>a</sup>thirsts, let him <sup>b</sup>come to Me and <sup>c</sup>drink.  
 John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his <sup>a</sup>innermost being shall <sup>1</sup>flow <sup>2b</sup>rivers of living water.  
 John 7:39 But this He said concerning the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been <sup>b</sup>glorified.
- E. A minister of life is a begetter, a father, who imparts life to his children, whom he begets—1 Cor. 4:15:  
 1 Cor 4:15 For though you have ten thousand <sup>1</sup>guides in Christ, yet *you do not have* many <sup>2a</sup>fathers; for <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus I have <sup>c</sup>begotten you through the <sup>d</sup>gospel.
1. To beget is to generate spiritual children, to bring them forth, through the impartation of life.
  2. We need to have the divine "life germ" in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God.
- F. A minister of life is a feeder; feeding is a matter of life; it differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge:
1. To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others—3:2.  
 1 Cor 3:2 I <sup>1</sup>gave you <sup>2a</sup>milk to drink, not solid <sup>b</sup>food, for you were <sup>c</sup>not yet able *to receive it*. But <sup>3</sup>neither yet now are you able,
  2. What the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers seemed to be knowledge; actually, it was milk (not yet solid food), and it should have nourished them.

3. The sound teaching of the apostles ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them—1 Tim. 1:10b; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9.

1 Tim **1:10b** ... and whatever other thing that is opposed to the <sup>1b</sup>healthy teaching,

1 Tim **6:3** If anyone teaches <sup>1a</sup>different things and does not consent to <sup>2b</sup>healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to <sup>3c</sup>godliness,

2 Tim **1:13** <sup>a</sup>Hold a <sup>1</sup>pattern of the <sup>2b</sup>healthy words that you have <sup>c</sup>heard from me, in the <sup>3d</sup>faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

Titus **1:9** <sup>1a</sup>Holding to the <sup>2b</sup>faithful word, which is according to the <sup>3</sup>teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the <sup>4c</sup>healthy teaching and to <sup>5</sup>convict <sup>6</sup>those who <sup>d</sup>oppose.

- G. A minister of life is a builder who builds with gold, silver, and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12:

1 Cor **3:12** <sup>1</sup>But if anyone builds upon the foundation <sup>2</sup>gold, silver, precious stones, <sup>3</sup>wood, grass, stubble,

1. Gold symbolizes God the Father in His divine nature, silver symbolizes Christ in His redemptive work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work (this is versus wood, which signifies the human nature; grass, which signifies man in the flesh; and stubble, which signifies lifelessness).

2. Song of Songs portrays that in the proper church life, the perfected believers coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect Christ's loving seekers by ministering the Triune God to them for their transformation by the Triune God's attributes being wrought into them to become their virtues—1:10-11.

S.S. **1:10** Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, Your neck with strings of jewels.

S.S. **1:11** We will make you plaits of gold With studs of silver.

3. This is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for the accomplishing of God's eternal economy—1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 21:18-21.

1 Cor **3:12** <sup>1</sup>But if anyone builds upon the foundation <sup>2</sup>gold, silver, precious stones, <sup>3</sup>wood, grass, stubble,

Rev **21:18** And the building work of its wall was <sup>1a</sup>jasper; and the city was <sup>2</sup>pure <sup>3b</sup>gold, like <sup>4</sup>clear glass.

Rev **21:19** The <sup>1a</sup>foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every <sup>b</sup>precious stone: the first foundation was <sup>2</sup>jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

Rev **21:20** The fifth, <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>twelve gates were twelve <sup>1b</sup>pearls; each <sup>2</sup>one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the <sup>3</sup>street of the city was pure <sup>c</sup>gold, like <sup>4</sup>transparent glass.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### A COMPETENT MINISTER OF THE NEW COVENANT

We will go on to see six statuses of a competent minister of the new covenant as revealed in 1 Corinthians: a sower, a planter, a waterer, a begetter, a feeder, and a builder. These six statuses are related to the matter of life, that is, to our experience and enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

#### A Sower

In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul says to the Corinthians, "We have sown to you the spiritual things." *The spiritual things* refers to spiritual seeds. A minister of the new covenant, a minister of the new testament, sows spiritual seeds. The first thing a new testament minister does is not to pass on doctrinal teachings but to sow spiritual seeds. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a seed is to impart life. Hence, sowing the spiritual things is a matter of life. According to Matthew 13, the Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race (vv. 3, 37). Likewise, in the Lord's recovery of the church life, we need to realize that we should not merely pass on knowledge or

doctrines; instead, we should sow spiritual things. In the Lord's recovery we as ministers of the new covenant need to be sowers who impart life into others.

To be a sower is much more difficult than to be a teacher. In order to be a teacher, a person simply needs to go to a Bible school where he may be trained to be a good speaker, learning not only biblical doctrines and parables but also how to use one's voice, tell stories, speak eloquently, and use gestures. However, in order to be a sower, one must have seeds of life that can grow and produce Christ in others. Such spiritual seeds are not mere doctrines or letters; instead, they are something of life in our spirit. They are spiritual things, things that are in, with, and out of our spirit. To acquire teachings is easy, but to obtain these seeds is difficult.

### **A Planter**

In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul says, "I planted." Planting is also a matter of life, for it involves sowing seeds, the containers of life, or placing herbs, plants, or trees in the ground, all of which are living things that grow. Verse 9 tells us that we, the believers in Christ, are "God's cultivated land," that is, God's farm. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, a farm in God's new creation. Corporately, we as the church of God have Christ planted in us. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit. If we grow and produce Christ within us, we will have something of Christ to plant into others. Again, spiritual planting is not a matter of doctrines but of life.

### **A Waterer**

In 3:6 Paul continues, "Apollos watered." We should not only be planters but also waterers. Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life (Rev. 22:17). Day by day we should water the dear saints, who are plants in God's farm that need watering. We may liken a waterer in God's farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water. We should be a divine "irrigation system" with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God's farm. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him. Consequently, we will have a fountain of life bubbling within us constantly (John 4:14), and we will be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life (7:37-39). We need to be waterers, those who are filled with the water of life and who water their fellow believers for their growth in life. If we do not have the sufficient experience of Christ as the living water, it will be difficult for us to water others.

### **A Begetter**

In 1 Corinthians 4:15 Paul says, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." To beget is to generate something, to bring forth something, through the impartation of life. Like the apostle Paul, who begot the Corinthian believers in Christ by imparting the divine life into them, we should be fathers who beget spiritual children by imparting the divine life into others. Begetting, unlike teaching, is a matter of life. We need to have the divine "life germ" in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God.

### **A Feeder**

After begetting spiritual children, we need to feed them with the spiritual milk. Hence, we need to be feeders. In 1 Corinthians 3:2 Paul says, "I gave you milk to drink." To give others milk to drink is to feed them. Feeding is a matter of life. It differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge. Instead of merely instructing others, we need to feed them. This can be illustrated by the difference between a mother feeding her infant with the milk she produces herself and a mother feeding her infant with the milk she buys from a store. We may say that the former is organic and the latter artificial. We should be constantly nourished with Christ as spiritual food so that we may be able to feed others. We need to feed on Christ to produce spiritual milk so that we may be able to feed our spiritual children. This is a genuine experience of Christ as life.

In order to practice the proper church life, we need the genuine experience of life. Many Christians are not able to practice the proper church life because they neglect the experience of life. Paul was not only a father who begot spiritual children but also a mother who fed them. We need to be spiritually strong and healthy so that, like Paul, we may be able to beget spiritual children and adequately produce the spiritual milk to feed them. Those who take the lead in the churches need to be such fathers and mothers. If the elders become fathers who impart life to their spiritual children and mothers who produce the spiritual milk to feed them, we will have a proper family life in the church as the household of God (Eph. 2:19). The unique way to practice the church life as a proper family life is through the genuine experience of life.

### **A Builder**

The new covenant ministers as sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, and feeders should eventually become builders. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 Paul speaks of himself as “a wise master builder” who laid the unique foundation, Christ, for others to build upon. Then in verse 12 Paul speaks of building upon the foundation gold, silver, and precious stones. As we carry out the work of sowing, planting, watering, begetting, and feeding, Christ will grow in the believers. This growth of life in the believers will be accompanied by a measure of transformation in them. While the believers grow day by day, they will be transformed (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2). As they grow as plants on God’s farm, they will experience transformation, which produces gold, silver, and precious stones. Consequently, the believers will be not only mature plants, that is, full-grown men in Christ (Rev. 14:4, 15; Col. 1:28), but also gold, silver, and precious stones, precious materials for the building of God’s house (Rev. 21:2-3, 11, 18-22).

If we would be builders who build with gold, silver, and precious stones, we need to be these precious materials. Gold signifies the divine nature of the Father, silver signifies the redemptive work of Christ, and precious stones signify the transforming work of the Spirit. In building the house of God, the builders are not separate from the materials of the building. In order to be builders, we ourselves need to be the transformed materials by being constituted with the Triune God. We should be both the builders and the building material of the house of God. If we ourselves have not been transformed into precious materials, we cannot help others be transformed into such materials. We ourselves first need to be the precious materials and be built into the house of God. Then we will be qualified to build the house of God with other believers as the transformed materials.

The believers as the transformed materials come from the growth in life, and the growth in life comes from the sowing, planting, watering, begetting, and feeding. In this light, what we in the church life need are not mere teachers or guides but sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders. In 1 Corinthians 4:15 Paul contrasts guides with fathers, saying, “Though you have ten thousand guides in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers.” Guides give instructions and directions, whereas fathers impart life to those whom they beget. It is easy to have guides, but it is difficult to have fathers. The fact that there are many guides but few fathers indicates that the latter are incomparably more precious than the former. In the Lord’s recovery we need sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders so that the Lord may gain His organic building, the house of God.

### **Being a Spiritual Man Who Exercises His Spirit**

In the local churches many ministers of the new covenant are carrying out the work of sowing, planting, watering, begetting, feeding, and building. In order for us to be such competent new covenant ministers, we need to receive the seeds of life, the living water, the divine life, and the spiritual milk. The way that we receive these items of life is by being a spiritual man who exercises his spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 Paul declares, “A soulless man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually. But the spiritual man discerns all things.” A soulless man cannot receive the spiritual things, the deep things of God concerning Christ as the believers’ portion (v. 10). Instead, the spiritual things are foolishness

to the soulish man. For instance, when spiritual men exercise their spirit to call upon the name of the Lord, the soulish man considers them foolish. It is impossible to receive anything of the Spirit of God by being soulish. A person cannot receive spiritual seeds by exercising his soul—his mind, emotion, and will—apart from exercising his spirit. It is difficult to keep ourselves from being soulish. In particular, it is difficult to stay away from our mind. A soulish man considers himself intelligent and therefore lives in his mind. Such a person can never understand spiritual things, for all the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to him. Yet in order for us to receive the spiritual seed, water, life, and milk, we need to be in our spirit. We should be afraid of living in our mind, and we should turn from our mind to our spirit. Because the apostles, being spiritual men, forsook their human wisdom and exercised their spirit for the sake of Christ, they were “fools because of Christ” (3:1; 4:10). Likewise, in the church life we should be willing to be “fools” for Christ’s sake by turning from our mind to our spirit and becoming persons in the spirit.

### **Enjoying the Lord as the Life-giving Spirit**

We may receive the things of the Spirit of God, the deep things of God concerning Christ, by becoming spiritual men, men who exercise their spirit. First Corinthians unveils to us many items of the riches of the all-inclusive Christ. Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom as our righteousness for our past, our sanctification for our present, and our redemption for our future (1:24, 30). We see that He is also the deep things of God (2:10) and the unique foundation of God’s building (3:11). He is our Passover (5:7), the unleavened bread (v. 8), the spiritual food, the spiritual drink, and the spiritual rock (10:3-4). He is the Head (11:3) and the Body (12:12). He is the firstfruits (15:20, 23), the second man (v. 47), and the last Adam (v. 45b). As the firstfruits, the second man, and the last Adam, He is the first, the second, and the last; as such He is everything. Ultimately, He is the life-giving Spirit (v. 45b).

If Christ were not the life-giving Spirit, He could not be power and wisdom to us. Neither could He be our righteousness for our past, our sanctification for our present, and our redemption for our future. If He were not the life-giving Spirit, how could He be the deep things of God to us? How could He be the spiritual rock that not only follows us but also indwells us (2 Cor. 13:5)? All the items of the riches of Christ revealed in 1 Corinthians are embodied in Christ as the life-giving Spirit. In order for us to experience Christ in all these aspects, Christ had to become the life-giving Spirit so that all the aspects of His riches could be made real, applicable, and prevailing in our experience. Today Christ is not a religion, form, teaching, or ritual; He is the life-giving Spirit. The more we exercise our spirit, the more we will be filled with Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

Not only is Christ the life-giving Spirit, but we are also one spirit with Him. In 1 Corinthians 6:17 Paul declares, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” All that Christ is, is in the life-giving Spirit, and we are joined to Him as one spirit, not one heart, one soul, or one mind. Therefore, in order to enjoy all the riches of Christ, we need to exercise our spirit and be persons in the spirit, not persons in the soul. Since we are joined to Christ as one spirit, we may enjoy Him by eating, drinking, and breathing Him (John 6:57; 7:37-39; 20:22). In 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 Paul speaks of Christ as our spiritual food and spiritual drink, saying, “All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.” In 12:13 Paul says that we “were all given to drink one Spirit.” Now that we are one spirit with Christ, we should exercise our spirit to feed on Him and drink of Him in order to enjoy Him.

### **Calling on the Name of the Lord to Enjoy Him as the Spirit**

We may exercise our spirit to enjoy the Lord by calling on His name. At the beginning of 1 Corinthians, Paul says, “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” (v. 2). The Greek word translated “call upon” is *epikaleo*. This word is composed of *epi*, upon, and *kaleo*, call by name; that is, to call out audibly, even loudly (Acts 7:59-60). To call on the name of the Lord is not a matter of praying silently; it is to call on the Lord

audibly (Lam. 3:55-56; Isa. 12:2-6). We may call on the name of the Lord by saying, “O Lord Jesus.” If we practice calling out to the Lord audibly and even loudly rather than praying silently or in a low voice, we will be able to testify that this kind of calling makes a great difference in our enjoyment of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12:3 Paul says, “No one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.” The literal translation of the Greek expression *Jesus is Lord* is “Lord Jesus.” When we say with a proper spirit, “Lord Jesus,” we are in the Holy Spirit. When we open our being to the Lord, exercise our spirit, and say, “Lord Jesus,” we are in our spirit and in the Holy Spirit. It is by calling on the name of the Lord that we eat Him, drink of Him, and breathe Him into us in order to enjoy Him. If all of us who are in the local churches enjoy the Lord in this way, we will become not only sowers, planters, waterers, begetters (fathers), feeders (mothers), and builders but also the precious materials of gold, silver, and precious stones for the building of God’s habitation on earth. Consequently, we will be constituted a marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God. This is the proper church life. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1970, vol. 1, pp. 577-583)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Friday—Evening Session)

## Message Six

### The Third Great Pillar—the Church

#### (1)

### The Church as the Kingdom of God

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:19; 1 Thes. 2:12; Col. 1:13; John 3:3, 5; Rom. 14:17; Matt. 6:10

- Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>s</sup>household of God,
- 1 Thes 2:12 So that you might <sup>a</sup>walk in a manner worthy of God, who <sup>1b</sup>calls you into His own <sup>2c</sup>kingdom and <sup>3d</sup>glory.
- Col 1:13 Who <sup>1</sup>delivered us out of the authority of <sup>2a</sup>darkness and transferred *us* into the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of the <sup>3c</sup>Son of His love,
- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>1a</sup>born anew, he cannot <sup>2</sup>see the <sup>3b</sup>kingdom of God.
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Matt 6:10 Your <sup>a</sup>kingdom come; Your <sup>b</sup>will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on <sup>1</sup>earth.

#### I. Ephesians 2:19 reveals that the church is the kingdom of God:

- Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>s</sup>household of God,
- A. The term *fellow citizens* indicates the kingdom of God—v. 19.
- Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>s</sup>household of God,
- B. In Ephesians 2:19 Paul's main concept is that of citizenship in God's kingdom.
- Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>s</sup>household of God,
- C. All the believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are citizens of God's kingdom, which is a sphere wherein God exercises His authority—John 3:5; Rev. 1:6, 9:
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- Rev 1:6 And made us a <sup>1a</sup>kingdom, <sup>2b</sup>priests <sup>c</sup>to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow <sup>a</sup>partaker in the <sup>b</sup>tribulation and <sup>s</sup>kingdom and <sup>1d</sup>endurance in <sup>2</sup>Jesus, was on the island called <sup>3</sup>Patmos because of the <sup>e</sup>word of God and the <sup>f</sup>testimony of Jesus.
1. Citizenship in God's kingdom involves rights and responsibilities, two things that always go together.
  2. We enjoy the rights of the kingdom, and we bear the responsibilities of the kingdom—22:14; Luke 14:15-24; 19:11-27; Matt. 24:14; 28:18-19.
- Rev 22:14 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed are those who <sup>2b</sup>wash their <sup>c</sup>robes that <sup>3</sup>they may have <sup>4d</sup>right to the <sup>e</sup>tree of life and may <sup>f</sup>enter <sup>5</sup>by the <sup>g</sup>gates into the city.
- Luke 14:15 And one of those reclining *at table* with *Him*, hearing these things, said to Him, <sup>a</sup>Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of God.
- Luke 14:16 And He said to him, A certain man was making a <sup>1</sup>great dinner and invited many;
- Luke 14:17 And he sent his slave at the dinner hour to say to those who had been invited, Come, for all things are now ready.
- Luke 14:18 And they all with one consent began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have bought a piece of land, and I need to go out and see it. I ask you, have me excused.

- Luke 14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to prove them. I ask you, have me excused.
- Luke 14:20 And another said, I have <sup>a</sup>married a wife, and because of this I cannot come.
- Luke 14:21 And the slave came up and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and told his slave, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the <sup>a</sup>poor and crippled and blind and lame.
- Luke 14:22 And the slave said, Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.
- Luke 14:23 And the master said to the slave, Go out into the roads and hedges and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.
- Luke 14:24 For I tell you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.
- Luke 19:11 And as they were listening to these things, He spoke <sup>1</sup>further a parable, because He was near <sup>a</sup>Jerusalem and they supposed that the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of God was to <sup>2</sup>appear immediately.
- Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A <sup>1</sup>certain man of noble birth <sup>2</sup>went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to <sup>3</sup>return.
- Luke 19:13 And he called <sup>1a</sup>ten of his own slaves and gave them ten <sup>2</sup>minas, and he said to them, Do business <sup>3</sup>until I come.
- Luke 19:14 But his <sup>1a</sup>citizens hated him and sent an envoy after him, saying, <sup>2</sup>We do not want this man to reign over us.
- Luke 19:15 And when he came back, having received the kingdom, he commanded that those slaves to whom he had given the money should be called to him so that he might know what they had gained by doing business.
- Luke 19:16 And the first appeared, saying, Master, your mina has gained ten minas.
- Luke 19:17 And he said to him, Well *done*, good slave. Because you <sup>1</sup>have become <sup>a</sup>faithful in the least, have authority <sup>b</sup>over ten cities.
- Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas.
- Luke 19:19 And he said to this one as well, And you, be over <sup>1</sup>five cities.
- Luke 19:20 <sup>1</sup>And the other came, saying, Master, behold your mina, which I <sup>2</sup>kept laid away in a <sup>a</sup>handkerchief;
- Luke 19:21 For I was afraid of you, because you are a <sup>1</sup>harsh man: you withdraw what you did <sup>a</sup>not deposit, and you reap what you did not sow.
- Luke 19:22 He said to him, Out of your mouth I will <sup>1</sup>judge you, <sup>a</sup>wicked slave. You knew that I am a harsh man, withdrawing what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.
- Luke 19:23 Why then did you not put my money <sup>1</sup>in the bank, and when I came, I would have collected it with interest?
- Luke 19:24 And to those standing by he said, Take the mina away from him, and give *it* to the one who has the ten minas.
- Luke 19:25 And they said to him, Master, he has ten minas.
- Luke 19:26 I tell you that to everyone who <sup>a</sup>has, *more* shall be given, but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away.
- Luke 19:27 However, these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring *them* here and <sup>1a</sup>slay them before me.
- Matt 24:14 And this <sup>1a</sup>gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a <sup>2</sup>testimony to all the nations, and then the <sup>3b</sup>end will come.
- Matt 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All <sup>1</sup>authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
- Matt 28:19 Go <sup>1</sup>therefore and <sup>2</sup>disciple all the <sup>a</sup>nations, <sup>3</sup>baptizing them <sup>4</sup>into the <sup>5</sup>name of the <sup>6</sup>Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

## II. God has called us to enter into His kingdom; the kingdom of God is the realm for us to worship God and enjoy God under the divine rule—1 Thes. 2:12:

1 Thes 2:12 So that you might <sup>a</sup>walk in a manner worthy of God, who <sup>1b</sup>calls you into His own <sup>2c</sup>kingdom and <sup>3d</sup>glory.

A. The kingdom of God is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan; it is a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends—Matt. 6:10.

Matt 6:10 Your <sup>a</sup>kingdom come; Your <sup>b</sup>will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on <sup>1</sup>earth.

- B. The New Testament preaches the gospel in the way of the kingdom; the gospel is for the kingdom, and the gospel is proclaimed so that rebellious sinners might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom—Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 4:17; Acts 8:12.

Mark 1:14 And after John was <sup>a</sup>delivered up, Jesus came into <sup>1</sup>Galilee, <sup>2b</sup>proclaiming the <sup>e</sup>gospel <sup>3</sup>of God,

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is <sup>a</sup>fulfilled and the <sup>1b</sup>kingdom of God has drawn near. <sup>2c</sup>Repent and <sup>3d</sup>believe in the <sup>4</sup>gospel.

Matt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim and to say, <sup>1a</sup>Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who <sup>1</sup>announced the gospel of the <sup>a</sup>kingdom of God and of the name of <sup>b</sup>Jesus Christ, they were <sup>e</sup>baptized, both men and women.

### III. The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church—Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19:

Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about in all of Galilee, teaching in their <sup>1a</sup>synagogues and proclaiming the <sup>2b</sup>gospel of the kingdom and <sup>e</sup>healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

- A. The life of God is the kingdom of God; the divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church—John 3:3, 5; Matt. 7:14, 21; 19:17, 29; 25:46:

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>1a</sup>born anew, he cannot <sup>2</sup>see the <sup>3b</sup>kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Matt 7:14 Because <sup>1a</sup>narrow is the <sup>b</sup>gate and constricted is the <sup>e</sup>way that leads to <sup>2</sup>life, and <sup>d</sup>few are those who find it.

Matt 7:21 Not every one who says to Me, <sup>a</sup>Lord, Lord, will <sup>1b</sup>enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who <sup>e</sup>does the <sup>d</sup>will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 19:17 And He said to him, Why do you ask Me concerning what is <sup>a</sup>good? There is *only* <sup>1</sup>One *who is* <sup>2</sup>good. But if you want to <sup>3b</sup>enter into life, <sup>4c</sup>keep the commandments.

Matt 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or <sup>a</sup>brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My name's sake shall <sup>1</sup>receive <sup>2a</sup>a hundred times as much and shall <sup>3</sup>inherit <sup>b</sup>eternal life.

Matt 25:46 And these shall go away <sup>a</sup>into eternal <sup>1</sup>punishment, but the <sup>2</sup>righteous <sup>3</sup>into eternal life.

1. The kingdom is the realm of life for life to move, rule, and govern so that life may accomplish its purpose, and this realm of life is the kingdom.

2. The gospel brings in the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church—2 Tim. 1:10.

2 Tim 1:10 But now has been <sup>1a</sup>manifested through the <sup>b</sup>appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who <sup>2</sup>nullified <sup>e</sup>death and brought <sup>3d</sup>life and <sup>4e</sup>incorruption to light through the gospel,

3. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of life—Matt. 4:23; Acts 8:12.

Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about in all of Galilee, teaching in their <sup>1a</sup>synagogues and proclaiming the <sup>2b</sup>gospel of the kingdom and <sup>e</sup>healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who <sup>1</sup>announced the gospel of the <sup>a</sup>kingdom of God and of the name of <sup>b</sup>Jesus Christ, they were <sup>e</sup>baptized, both men and women.

- B. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life—Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:4-6, 9:

Matt 5:3 <sup>1</sup>Blessed are the <sup>2a</sup>poor in <sup>3</sup>spirit, for theirs is the <sup>4b</sup>kingdom of the heavens.

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.

- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Rev 1:4 John to the <sup>1a</sup>seven <sup>b</sup>churches which are in <sup>2</sup>Asia: <sup>c</sup>Grace to you and <sup>d</sup>peace from <sup>3e</sup>Him <sup>4</sup>who is and who was and who is coming, and from the <sup>5f</sup>seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful <sup>a</sup>Witness, the <sup>b</sup>Firstborn of the dead, and the <sup>c</sup>Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who <sup>d</sup>loves us and has <sup>1</sup>released us from our sins <sup>2</sup>by His <sup>e</sup>blood
- Rev 1:6 And made us a <sup>1a</sup>kingdom, <sup>2b</sup>priests <sup>c</sup>to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow <sup>a</sup>partaker in the <sup>b</sup>tribulation and <sup>c</sup>kingdom and <sup>1d</sup>endurance in <sup>2</sup>Jesus, was on the island called <sup>3</sup>Patmos because of the <sup>e</sup>word of God and the <sup>f</sup>testimony of Jesus.

1. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.  
Matthew 5—7 (be omitted)
2. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life—Rom. 14:17.  
Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.

C. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up—Matt. 16:18-19:

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

1. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.
2. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible—v. 19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you <sup>1a</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>2</sup>have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

John 20:23 <sup>a</sup>Whoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whoever *sins* you retain, they are retained.

3. When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.

Col 2:19 And <sup>1</sup>not <sup>a</sup>holding the Head, <sup>2b</sup>out from whom all the <sup>3</sup>Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the <sup>4</sup>joints and <sup>5</sup>sinews, <sup>6</sup>grows with the <sup>7</sup>growth of God.

Eph 4:15 But <sup>1</sup>holding to truth in <sup>2a</sup>love, we may <sup>3b</sup>grow up into Him in all things, who is the <sup>4c</sup>Head, Christ,

Eph 4:16 <sup>1</sup>Out from whom <sup>a</sup>all the Body, being <sup>2b</sup>joined together and being knit together through every <sup>3c</sup>joint of <sup>4</sup>the rich supply <sup>5</sup>and *through* the <sup>6</sup>operation in the <sup>d</sup>measure of <sup>7</sup>each one part, <sup>8</sup>causes the <sup>9e</sup>growth of the Body unto the <sup>f</sup>building up of itself in <sup>10g</sup>love.

#### IV. The Father delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love—Col. 1:13:

Col 1:13 Who <sup>1</sup>delivered us out of the authority of <sup>2a</sup>darkness and transferred *us* into the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of the <sup>3c</sup>Son of His love,

- A. Through regeneration we have been transferred into the delightful kingdom of the Son of God's love—a realm where we are ruled in love with life—v. 13.

Col 1:13 Who <sup>1</sup>delivered us out of the authority of <sup>2a</sup>darkness and transferred *us* into the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of the <sup>3c</sup>Son of His love,

B. When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love; here we have the church life—3:4; John 6:57.

Col 3:4 When <sup>1</sup>Christ our <sup>2a</sup>life is <sup>b</sup>manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in <sup>c</sup>glory.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I <sup>a</sup>live because of the Father, so he who <sup>1</sup>eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

C. Although the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love comprises the present age, the coming age, and the eternal age, the emphasis in Colossians 1:13 is on the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love in this age, the age of the church:

Col 1:13 Who <sup>1</sup>delivered us out of the authority of <sup>2a</sup>darkness and transferred *us* into the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of the <sup>3c</sup>Son of His love,

1. Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant realm, a matter of delight—Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

Matt 3:17 And behold, a <sup>a</sup>voice out of the heavens, saying, <sup>1</sup>This is My <sup>b</sup>Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My <sup>c</sup>delight.

Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright <sup>a</sup>cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a <sup>b</sup>voice out of the cloud, saying, <sup>1</sup>This is My Son, the <sup>c</sup>Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. <sup>d</sup>Hear <sup>2</sup>Him!

2. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is.

## V. The kingdom of God today is a realm of the divine species, in which are all the divine things—John 3:3, 5:

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>1a</sup>born anew, he cannot <sup>2</sup>see the <sup>3b</sup>kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

A. To enter into the divine realm, the realm of the divine species, we need to be born of God to have the life and nature of God, thereby becoming God-men in the kingdom of God—1:12-13.

John 1:12 But as many as <sup>1a</sup>received Him, to them He gave the authority to become <sup>2</sup>children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

B. We were regenerated of God to become the species of God and enter into the kingdom of God; now we are God-men in the kingdom of God as a realm of the divine species—3:3, 5.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>1a</sup>born anew, he cannot <sup>2</sup>see the <sup>3b</sup>kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is <sup>a</sup>born <sup>1</sup>of <sup>2</sup>water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

## VI. The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today, the believers live the kingdom life in the church—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6:

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>g</sup>against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, <sup>1</sup>tell *it* to the <sup>2a</sup>church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you <sup>3</sup>just like the <sup>b</sup>Gentile and the <sup>c</sup>tax collector.

Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you <sup>1a</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>2</sup>have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

Matt 13:44 The kingdom of the heavens is like a <sup>1</sup>treasure hidden in the <sup>2a</sup>field, which a <sup>3</sup>man found and <sup>b</sup>hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and <sup>c</sup>buys that field.

Matt 13:45 Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a <sup>1</sup>merchant seeking fine pearls;  
 Matt 13:46 And finding one <sup>1a</sup>pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and <sup>b</sup>bought it.  
 Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.  
 1 Cor 4:20 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not in speech but in <sup>b</sup>power.  
 Eph 2:19 So then <sup>1</sup>you are no longer <sup>2a</sup>strangers and sojourners, but you are <sup>3b</sup>fellow citizens with the saints and <sup>4</sup>members of the <sup>c</sup>household of God,  
 Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called <sup>a</sup>Justus; these alone of the <sup>b</sup>circumcision are *my* fellow workers for the <sup>c</sup>kingdom of God, ones who have become a <sup>d</sup>consolation to me.  
 Rev 1:4 John to the <sup>1a</sup>seven <sup>b</sup>churches which are in <sup>2</sup>Asia: <sup>c</sup>Grace to you and <sup>d</sup>peace from <sup>3c</sup>Him <sup>4</sup>who is and who was and who is coming, and from the <sup>5f</sup>seven Spirits who are before His throne,  
 Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful <sup>a</sup>Witness, the <sup>b</sup>Firstborn of the dead, and the <sup>c</sup>Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who <sup>d</sup>loves us and has <sup>1</sup>released us from our sins <sup>2</sup>by His <sup>e</sup>blood  
 Rev 1:6 And made us a <sup>1a</sup>kingdom, <sup>2b</sup>priests <sup>c</sup>to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

A. Each time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, He mentioned it in relation to the kingdom; this indicates how intimately the kingdom and the church are related—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18:

Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.  
 Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.  
 Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, <sup>1</sup>tell *it* to the <sup>2a</sup>church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you <sup>3</sup>just like the <sup>b</sup>Gentile and the <sup>c</sup>tax collector.  
 Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you <sup>1a</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>2</sup>have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

1. Romans 14:17 proves that the church in this age is the kingdom of God.

Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.

2. *The kingdom of God* in 1 Corinthians 4:20 refers to the church life (v. 17), implying that in the sense of authority, the church in this age is the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 4:20 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not in speech but in <sup>b</sup>power.

1 Cor 4:17 Because of this I have sent <sup>a</sup>Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful <sup>b</sup>child in the Lord, who will remind you of my <sup>1</sup>ways which are in Christ, even as I teach <sup>2</sup>everywhere in every <sup>c</sup>church.

3. What Paul and his fellow workers were doing in the gospel work for the establishing of the churches was for the kingdom of God—Col. 4:11.

Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called <sup>a</sup>Justus; these alone of the <sup>b</sup>circumcision are *my* fellow workers for the <sup>c</sup>kingdom of God, ones who have become a <sup>d</sup>consolation to me.

4. The word *kingdom* in Revelation 1:6 reveals that where the church is, there the kingdom of God is; the church represents the kingdom.

Rev 1:6 And made us a <sup>1a</sup>kingdom, <sup>2b</sup>priests <sup>c</sup>to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

B. Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live, walk, and have our being in the spirit, not in our natural man—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25.

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be <sup>1</sup>fulfilled in us, who do not <sup>2a</sup>walk according to the flesh but according to the <sup>3</sup>spirit.

Gal 5:16 But I say, <sup>1a</sup>Walk <sup>b</sup>by the <sup>2</sup>Spirit and you shall by no means <sup>c</sup>fulfill the <sup>d</sup>lust of the flesh.

Gal 5:25 If we <sup>1</sup>live by the Spirit, let us also <sup>2a</sup>walk by the Spirit.

C. When the authority of God's kingdom is allowed to operate in us, righteousness, peace, and joy will characterize our daily life—Rom. 14:17.

Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.

D. As those who are under the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live a kingdom life in the church, growing and developing in the divine life until we reach maturity—2 Cor. 13:14; Mark 4:26-29:

2 Cor 13:14 The <sup>1a</sup>grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the <sup>b</sup>love of God and the <sup>c</sup>fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God: as if a <sup>2</sup>man cast <sup>3b</sup>seed on the earth,

Mark 4:27 And <sup>1</sup>sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and <sup>2</sup>lengthens—how, he does not know.

Mark 4:28 The <sup>1</sup>earth bears fruit <sup>2</sup>by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear.

Mark 4:29 But when the fruit is ripe, <sup>a</sup>immediately he sends forth the <sup>1b</sup>sickle, because the harvest has come.

1. After we have entered into the kingdom of God through regeneration, we need to go on to have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by experiencing the full development of the divine life as revealed in 2 Peter 1:5-11.

2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, <sup>1</sup>adding all <sup>a</sup>diligence, <sup>2</sup>supply bountifully in your <sup>3b</sup>faith <sup>4c</sup>virtue; and in virtue, <sup>5d</sup>knowledge;

2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, <sup>1a</sup>self-control; and in self-control, <sup>2b</sup>endurance; and in endurance, <sup>3c</sup>godliness;

2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, <sup>1a</sup>brotherly <sup>2b</sup>love; and in brotherly love, love.

2 Pet 1:8 For <sup>1</sup>these things, <sup>2</sup>existing in you and <sup>3</sup>abounding, <sup>4</sup>constitute *you* neither <sup>5</sup>idle nor <sup>6a</sup>unfruitful <sup>7</sup>unto the full <sup>8b</sup>knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom <sup>1</sup>these things are not present is <sup>a</sup>blind, being <sup>2</sup>shortsighted, <sup>3</sup>having forgotten the <sup>b</sup>cleansing of his past sins.

2 Pet 1:10 <sup>1</sup>Therefore, brothers, be the more <sup>a</sup>diligent to <sup>2</sup>make your <sup>b</sup>calling and <sup>c</sup>selection <sup>d</sup>firm, for doing <sup>3</sup>these things you shall by no means ever <sup>e</sup>stumble.

2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the <sup>a</sup>entrance into the <sup>1</sup>eternal <sup>b</sup>kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly *and* <sup>c</sup>bountifully <sup>2</sup>supplied to you.

2. As a result of the growth and development of the divine life to maturity and of living in the reality of the kingdom in the church life today, we will inherit the kingdom of God—1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 5:21.

1 Cor 15:50 Now this I say, brothers, that <sup>1a</sup>flesh and blood cannot inherit the <sup>b</sup>kingdom of God, neither does <sup>c</sup>corruption inherit <sup>d</sup>incorruption.

Gal 5:21 <sup>a</sup>Envyings, <sup>1</sup>bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will <sup>b</sup>not <sup>2</sup>inherit the kingdom of God.

## VII. The church brings in the kingdom; the work of the church of God is to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10:

Matt 6:10 Your <sup>a</sup>kingdom come; Your <sup>b</sup>will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on <sup>1</sup>earth.

Matt 12:22 <sup>a</sup>Then there was brought to Him one possessed by a demon, <sup>1b</sup>blind and <sup>c</sup>dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw.

Matt 12:23 And all the crowds were amazed and said, Is this not the <sup>1a</sup>Son of David?

Matt 12:24 But the Pharisees, hearing *this*, said, This man does not cast out the demons except by <sup>1a</sup>Beelzebul, <sup>b</sup>ruler of the demons.

Matt 12:25 <sup>a</sup>But <sup>b</sup>knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself becomes desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his <sup>1a</sup>kingdom stand?

Matt 12:27 And if I, by <sup>a</sup>Beelzebul, <sup>b</sup>cast out the demons, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

Matt 12:28 But if I, by the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the <sup>2b</sup>kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matt 12:29 Or how can anyone enter into the <sup>1</sup>house of the <sup>2</sup>strong man and <sup>a</sup>plunder his <sup>3</sup>goods unless he first <sup>4</sup>binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house.

Rev 11:15 And the <sup>1a</sup>seventh angel <sup>2b</sup>trumpeted; and there were loud <sup>c</sup>voices in heaven, saying, The <sup>3d</sup>kingdom of the world has become the <sup>e</sup>kingdom of our Lord and of <sup>f</sup>His Christ, and He will <sup>4g</sup>reign forever and ever.

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the <sup>2</sup>accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who <sup>b</sup>accuses them before our God day and night.

- A. All the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.
- B. The church is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth—Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50.

Matt 6:10 Your <sup>a</sup>kingdom come; Your <sup>b</sup>will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on <sup>1</sup>earth.

Matt 7:21 Not every one who says to Me, <sup>a</sup>Lord, Lord, will <sup>1b</sup>enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who <sup>c</sup>does the <sup>d</sup>will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 12:50 For whoever <sup>1a</sup>does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My <sup>b</sup>brother and sister and mother.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Ephesians 2:19 says, “You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God.” The term “fellow citizens” indicates the kingdom of God. All the believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are citizens of God's kingdom, which is a sphere wherein God exercises His authority. As long as anyone is a believer, he is a citizen of the kingdom of God. This citizenship involves rights and responsibilities, two things that always go together. We enjoy the rights of the kingdom, and we bear the responsibilities of the kingdom.

In 2:19 Paul covers two aspects of the church: the kingdom, indicated by the term “fellow citizens,” and the family of God, indicated by the phrase “the household of God.” God's house is a matter of life and enjoyment; all believers were born of God into His household to enjoy His riches. God's kingdom is a matter of rights and responsibilities; all believers who were born into the house of God have the civil rights of and their responsibility in the kingdom of God. Therefore, in 2:19 two profound matters are covered: the kingdom of God with its rights and responsibilities and the house of God with its enjoyment of the Father's life and riches.

Ephesians 2:19 speaks of the saints, the household of God, and the kingdom of God. The saints are individuals, but the household of God is corporate and results in the kingdom of God. If there were no household, there could be no kingdom. First, we are saints, individuals. Then, corporately, we are the house of God resulting in the kingdom of God.

It is significant that in verse 19 Paul refers to the kingdom of God before the household of God. Paul's thought here concerns our former status as strangers and sojourners. Strangers and sojourners are related to a kingdom, not to a household. Those who are aliens in this country are not aliens in relation to a family but in relation to the nation. Because strangers and sojourners are aliens to kingdoms, not to families, Paul mentions the kingdom first. In this verse Paul's main concept is that of citizenship in God's kingdom. The kingdom, however, is composed of families. For this reason, Paul also mentions the household of God, that is, the family of God.

Ephesians 2:19 affords us the basis for saying that the church today is God's kingdom. The citizens mentioned here are related to a kingdom, a nation, not to a family. A family is composed of members, not of citizens. On the one hand, we are members of God's household; on the other hand, we are citizens of God's nation, of God's kingdom.

Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live and walk in spirit. Whenever we behave according to the old man or live in the flesh or the self, we, in a practical way, are out of God's kingdom. This means that when we are in the flesh, we are in the old realm of the fallen human nature, which has been fully usurped by Satan to form his kingdom. Therefore, a genuine Christian, if he lives in the flesh instead of in the spirit, may live in a practical way not in the kingdom of God but in the kingdom of Satan. Only when we live, walk, behave, and have our being altogether in our spirit, not in our natural man, are we in the kingdom of God and, in reality, are the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God, like the house of God, is a corporate person. The church as the house of God is a corporate person because this house is the family of God, the household of God. The kingdom is likewise a corporate person because it is also a corporate entity. Whether we are living in the church as the house of God or as the kingdom of God depends on whether we are living as members or as citizens. To live as members of the house of God is a matter of enjoyment, but to live in the kingdom of God is a matter of bearing responsibility and of being regulated. We are members of our Father's household, and we are citizens of our God's kingdom.

### **Being the Reality of the Church**

The kingdom of God is the reality of the church. According to the New Testament, the church is intimately related to the kingdom. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus declared, "On this rock I will build My church," and in verse 19 He went on to speak of the kingdom of the heavens. The words "the kingdom of the heavens" in verse 19 are interchangeably used for the word "church" in verse 18. This is a strong proof that the genuine church is the kingdom of the heavens in this age.

Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up. For the building up of the church, we need the kingdom as the reality of the church. Although the kingdom is the reality of the church, we cannot say that the church is the reality of the kingdom. We can say only that the kingdom is the reality of the church.

### **Being the Living of the Church**

The kingdom of God is the living of the church. A verse that strongly proves this is Romans 14:17. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." According to some Bible teachers, the kingdom has not yet come. They claim that now is the dispensation of the church, and the next dispensation will be that of the kingdom. But in 14:17 Paul does not say that the kingdom of God *shall be*; he uses the present tense and says that the kingdom of God *is*. According to the context of Romans 14, which speaks of receiving the believers, the kingdom is today's church life. The reality of the church life is the kingdom. Romans 12 speaks of the Body life and Romans 14, of the kingdom life. This indicates that, in Romans, the kingdom life is the reality of the Body life.

In a sense, it is correct to say that the present age is the church age and that the coming age will be the kingdom age. However, in another sense, the kingdom of God is here today, for the kingdom is the reality of the church and the living of the church. Hence, the church is the kingdom. Since the church is the kingdom today, it is not correct to say that the kingdom has been suspended altogether until the coming age. Romans 14:17 proves definitely that the kingdom is the living of the church today.

Furthermore, in Acts, which is concerned with the church, there is frequent mention of the kingdom (8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). In Acts the believers preached the kingdom of God as the gospel (8:12). The gospel is even called the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, it is not correct to say that the kingdom is altogether separate from today's church life.

According to the revelation in the New Testament, the proper church life is the kingdom life. If we live under the rule of the living God within us, that is, under the rule of the kingdom of the heavens, we shall have the kind of life recorded in chapters five, six, and seven of Matthew. We shall also have a life of the kingdom practiced in the church life. Hence, we should not separate the kingdom of God from the church.

In Romans 14:17 we see that the kingdom of God as the living of the church is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. When the authority of God's kingdom operates in us, righteousness, peace, and joy will characterize our daily life.

Righteousness, peace, and joy are actually the expression of Christ. When Christ is expressed, He is our righteousness toward ourselves, our peace toward others, and our joy with God.

As the believers live the kingdom life in the church, they will live righteously toward themselves. This means that we must be strict with ourselves and make no excuses for ourselves.

To live the kingdom life in the church also means that we live peacefully toward others. Our relationships with others must be characterized by peace. Toward others we must endeavor to pursue peace, continually seeking to be at peace with them. This peace is Christ Himself lived out from our being.

Living the kingdom life in the church also requires that we live joyfully to God in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of joy. If we are not joyful, this indicates that we are not in the Holy Spirit. If we are truly living the kingdom life, we shall be joyful with God, praising Him. Whenever we live righteously toward ourselves and peacefully toward others, we shall live joyfully to God in the Holy Spirit. Such a living is the kingdom of God as the living of the church.

**Those Developing and Growing  
in the Life of God in the Church Life  
Shall Be Richly and Bountifully Supplied  
with the Entrance into the Kingdom of God**

In 2 Peter 1:3-11 we see that those believers who develop and grow in the life of God in the church life shall be richly and bountifully supplied with the entrance into the kingdom of God. After we have entered into the kingdom of God through regeneration, we need to go on to have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On the one hand, we have entered the kingdom; on the other hand, we still need a rich entrance. The initial entry into the kingdom is regeneration, but the rich entrance is through the full growth and development of the divine life revealed in 2 Peter 1:5-11.

According to Peter's word in 1:5-11, to grow to maturity is to develop what we have already received. We have been allotted the like precious faith, which is an all-inclusive seed. All the divine riches are in this seed, but we must be diligent to develop them into virtue. Then we need to develop in our virtue, knowledge; in knowledge, self-control; in self-control, endurance; in endurance, godliness; in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love. Through such a growth and development we eventually shall reach maturity and shall have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The fact that those who develop and grow in the life of God in the church life will have a rich entrance into the coming kingdom implies that certain believers will not have a share in the coming kingdom, because they have not been living in the proper church life and have not had the adequate growth in the divine life. For this reason, at the time of the manifestation of the kingdom, they will have no participation in the kingdom. But those who grow and develop in the divine life to the full extent will be supplied with a rich and bountiful entry into the coming kingdom. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2235-2241, 2243)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

## Message Seven

### The Third Great Pillar—the Church

(2)

#### The Way to Build Up the Church as the Kingdom of God— Denying the Self, Taking Up the Cross, and Losing the Soul-life

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:16-28

- Matt 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the <sup>1a</sup>Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Son of the <sup>2c</sup>living God.
- Matt 16:17 And Jesus answered and said to him, <sup>a</sup>Blessed are you, <sup>b</sup>Simon <sup>1</sup>Barjona, because <sup>2c</sup>flesh and blood has not <sup>d</sup>revealed *this* to you, but My <sup>3</sup>Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 16:20 Then He charged the disciples <sup>1</sup>not to tell <sup>a</sup>anyone that He was the Christ.
- Matt 16:21 <sup>a</sup>From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He <sup>1</sup>must go to <sup>b</sup>Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be <sup>c</sup>killed and on the third day be raised.
- Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by <sup>1</sup>no means happen to You!
- Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.
- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
- Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his <sup>1</sup>soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
- Matt 16:27 <sup>1</sup>For the <sup>a</sup>Son of Man is to <sup>b</sup>come in the <sup>c</sup>glory of His Father with His <sup>d</sup>angels, and then He will <sup>2e</sup>repay each man according to his doings.
- Matt 16:28 Truly I say to you, There are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the Son of Man <sup>1a</sup>coming in His kingdom.

#### I. In Matthew 16 the way to build up the church as the kingdom of God is revealed; the enemy of the building is also revealed—Matt. 16:16-28:

- Matt 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the <sup>1a</sup>Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Son of the <sup>2c</sup>living God.
- Matt 16:17 And Jesus answered and said to him, <sup>a</sup>Blessed are you, <sup>b</sup>Simon <sup>1</sup>Barjona, because <sup>2c</sup>flesh and blood has not <sup>d</sup>revealed *this* to you, but My <sup>3</sup>Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the <sup>1a</sup>keys of the <sup>2</sup>kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you <sup>3b</sup>bind on the earth shall <sup>4</sup>have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 16:20 Then He charged the disciples <sup>1</sup>not to tell <sup>a</sup>anyone that He was the Christ.
- Matt 16:21 <sup>a</sup>From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He <sup>1</sup>must go to <sup>b</sup>Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be <sup>c</sup>killed and on the third day be raised.
- Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by <sup>1</sup>no means happen to You!
- Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.

- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
- Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his <sup>1</sup>soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
- Matt 16:27 <sup>1</sup>For the <sup>a</sup>Son of Man is to <sup>b</sup>come in the <sup>c</sup>glory of His Father with His <sup>d</sup>angels, and then He will <sup>2e</sup>repay each man according to his doings.
- Matt 16:28 Truly I say to you, There are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the Son of Man <sup>1a</sup>coming in His kingdom.
- A. Christ, the Son of the living God, builds the church on Himself as the rock, with stones such as Peter, a transformed person—vv. 16-18.
- Matt 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the <sup>1a</sup>Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Son of the <sup>2c</sup>living God.
- Matt 16:17 And Jesus answered and said to him, <sup>a</sup>Blessed are you, <sup>b</sup>Simon <sup>1</sup>Barjona, because <sup>2e</sup>flesh and blood has not <sup>d</sup>revealed *this* to you, but My <sup>3</sup>Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.
- B. The gates of Hades, Satan's authority, or power of darkness, attacks the church to frustrate the Lord from building up the church—v. 18.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>a</sup>against it.
- C. In order to build the church, the Lord had to pass through death and enter into resurrection—v. 21:
- Matt 16:21 <sup>a</sup>From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He <sup>1</sup>must go to <sup>b</sup>Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be <sup>c</sup>skilled and on the third day be raised.
- The church was produced through Christ's death and resurrection—John 12:24.  
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, <sup>a</sup>Unless the grain of wheat <sup>1</sup>falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears <sup>2b</sup>much fruit.
  - The way to build the church is to be crucified and resurrected—cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-12; Gal. 2:20.  
2 Cor 4:10 Always bearing about <sup>a</sup>in the body the <sup>1b</sup>putting to <sup>c</sup>death of Jesus <sup>2</sup>that the <sup>3</sup>life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.  
2 Cor 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto <sup>a</sup>death for <sup>1</sup>Jesus' sake that the <sup>b</sup>life of Jesus also may be manifested in our <sup>c</sup>mortal <sup>2</sup>flesh.  
2 Cor 4:12 So then <sup>a</sup>death operates in us, but <sup>1</sup>life in you.  
Gal 2:20 I am <sup>1a</sup>crucified with Christ; and *it is* <sup>2</sup>no longer I *who* live, but *it is* <sup>3b</sup>Christ *who* lives in me; and the <sup>4</sup>life which I now live in the flesh I <sup>c</sup>live in <sup>5</sup>faith, the <sup>d</sup>faith <sup>6</sup>of the <sup>7</sup>Son of God, who <sup>8e</sup>loved me and <sup>f</sup>gave Himself up for me.
- D. Peter, with a good heart, rebuked the Lord and tried to prevent the Lord from going to Jerusalem to be crucified—Matt. 16:22:
- Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by <sup>1</sup>no means happen to You!
- It was not Peter but Satan who came out through one of the gates of Hades, the gate of Peter's self, to try to frustrate the Lord from building up the church—v. 23.  
Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.
  - The self, the mind, and the soul-life are the main gates through which Satan comes forth to attack and damage the church—vv. 23-26.  
Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.  
Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.  
Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.  
Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his <sup>1</sup>soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

## II. The building up of the church as the kingdom of God depends on the shutting up of the gates of Hades through the exercise of three keys—vv. 24-26:

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.

Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his <sup>1</sup>soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

### A. We need to learn to exercise the key of denying the self—v. 24:

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.

#### 1. The self is the embodiment of Satan; the self is the soul plus the satanic mind, the mind of Satan—Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 16:22-23:

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than every other animal of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

Gen 3:2 And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die!

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

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make oneself wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.

Matt 16:22 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by <sup>1</sup>no means happen to You!

Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.

a. The self is the embodiment of the soul-life, which is expressed through the mind; thus, the self, the soul-life, and the mind are three-in-one.

b. Behind these three is Satan, who manipulates the self in order to damage the church—v. 23.

Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, <sup>1a</sup>Satan! <sup>2</sup>You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are <sup>3</sup>not setting your <sup>b</sup>mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.

#### 2. The self is the soul declaring independence from God:

a. The Lord does not have regard for what we do; rather, He has regard for our dependence on Him—7:21-23.

Matt 7:21 Not every one who says to Me, <sup>a</sup>Lord, Lord, will <sup>1b</sup>enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who <sup>c</sup>does the <sup>d</sup>will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt 7:22 Many will say to Me in <sup>1</sup>that day, Lord, Lord, *was it* not in Your name *that* we prophesied, and in Your name <sup>a</sup>cast out demons, and in Your name did many <sup>b</sup>works of power?

Matt 7:23 And then I will declare to them: I never <sup>1a</sup>knew you. <sup>b</sup>Depart from Me, you workers of <sup>c</sup>lawlessness.

b. The enemy of the Body is the self; because the self is something independent, the self is the greatest problem, the greatest frustration and opposition, to the building up of the Body:

(1) We should depend not only on God but also on the Body, on the brothers and sisters—Exo. 17:11-13; Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33.

Exo 17:11 And when Moses lifted his hand up, Israel prevailed; and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

- Exo 17:12 But Moses' hands were heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.
- Exo 17:13 And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.
- Acts 9:25 But his disciples took *him* by night and <sup>a</sup>let him down through the wall, <sup>b</sup>lowering *him* in a basket.
- 2 Cor 11:33 And in a basket I was <sup>a</sup>lowered through a window, through the wall, and escaped his hands.
- (2) The Lord and the Body are one; hence, if we are dependent on the Body, we are also dependent on the Lord, and if we are independent of the Body, we are spontaneously independent of the Lord.
- (3) When we are dependent, the self is gone, and instead of the self, we have the Lord's presence and are full of peace.
3. When the self has been utterly dealt with by the cross, we are able to touch the reality of the Body of Christ and come to know the Body.
4. We need to deny the following aspects of the self:
- a. Ambition, pride, and self-exaltation—Matt. 20:20-28; 1 Pet. 5:5; Rom. 12:3; Num. 12:1-10; 16:1-3; Phil. 2:3-4.
- Matt 20:20 <sup>a</sup>Then the mother of the <sup>1</sup>sons of <sup>b</sup>Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshipping and asking something of Him.
- Matt 20:21 And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will <sup>a</sup>sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom.
- Matt 20:22 But Jesus answered and said *to them*, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to <sup>1</sup>drink the <sup>a</sup>cup which I am about to drink? They said to Him, We are able.
- Matt 20:23 He said to them, My cup you shall indeed <sup>a</sup>drink, but to sit on My right and on My left, this is <sup>1</sup>not Mine to give, but *it is for* those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.
- Matt 20:24 And when the ten heard *this*, they were indignant concerning the two brothers.
- Matt 20:25 <sup>a</sup>But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.
- Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become <sup>a</sup>great among you shall be your <sup>1</sup>servant,
- Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your <sup>1a</sup>slave;
- Matt 20:28 Just as the <sup>a</sup>Son of <sup>1</sup>Man did not come to be served, but to <sup>b</sup>serve and to give His <sup>2</sup>life as a <sup>c</sup>ransom for many.
- 1 Pet 5:5 In like manner, <sup>a</sup>younger men, be <sup>b</sup>subject to <sup>1</sup>elders; and all of you <sup>2</sup>gird yourselves with <sup>3c</sup>humility toward one another, because God <sup>4d</sup>resists the <sup>5c</sup>proud but <sup>f</sup>gives <sup>6a</sup>grace to the <sup>7h</sup>humble.
- Rom 12:3 For I say, through the <sup>a</sup>grace given to me, to every one who is among you, not to <sup>1</sup>think more <sup>b</sup>highly of *himself* than he ought to think, but to think so as to be <sup>c</sup>sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a <sup>d</sup>measure of faith.
- Num 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman).
- Num 12:2 And they said, Has Jehovah indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not also spoken through us? And Jehovah heard it.
- Num 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than anyone else who was on the surface of the earth.
- Num 12:4 And suddenly Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron and to Miriam, You three come out to the Tent of Meeting. So the three of them came out.
- Num 12:5 Then Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam. And when they had both come forward,
- Num 12:6 He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream.
- Num 12:7 My servant Moses is not so; He is faithful in all My house.

- Num 12:8 With him I speak face to face, even openly, and not in riddles; And he beholds the form of Jehovah. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?
- Num 12:9 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them, and He departed.
- Num 12:10 And when the cloud had departed from over the tent; there Miriam was, leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, leprous.
- Num 16:1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took men
- Num 16:2 And rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred fifty leaders of the assembly, who were summoned to the meeting, well-known men.
- Num 16:3 And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the assembly are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah?
- Phil 2:3 <sup>1</sup>Doing nothing by way of <sup>2a</sup>selfish ambition nor by way of <sup>b</sup>vainglory, but in <sup>3c</sup>lowliness of <sup>4</sup>mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves;
- Phil 2:4 Not regarding each his own <sup>1</sup>virtues, but each the virtues of others also.
- b. Self-righteousness, self-justification, and exposing, criticizing, and condemning others—Matt. 9:10-13; Luke 18:9-14; 1 Pet. 4:8; John 3:17; 8:11; Luke 6:37; Matt. 7:1-5.
- Matt 9:10 And as He was reclining *at table* in the <sup>1</sup>house, behold, many <sup>2a</sup>tax collectors and <sup>b</sup>sinners came and reclined together with Jesus and His disciples.
- Matt 9:11 And when the <sup>1</sup>Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>Why does your Teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?
- Matt 9:12 Now when He heard *this*, He said, Those who are strong have no need of a <sup>1</sup>physician, but those who are <sup>2</sup>ill.
- Matt 9:13 But go and <sup>1</sup>learn what *this* means, "<sup>a</sup>I desire <sup>2</sup>mercy and not <sup>b</sup>sacrifice," for I did not come to call the <sup>3c</sup>righteous, but <sup>d</sup>sinners.
- Luke 18:9 And <sup>1</sup>He told this parable also to certain ones who <sup>a</sup>trusted in themselves that they were <sup>b</sup>righteous and despised the rest:
- Luke 18:10 Two men <sup>a</sup>went up to the temple to pray, the one a <sup>b</sup>Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
- Luke 18:11 The Pharisee <sup>a</sup>stood and prayed these things to himself: God, I thank You that I am <sup>1</sup>not like the rest of men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.
- Luke 18:12 I <sup>1a</sup>fast twice a <sup>2</sup>week; I <sup>b</sup>give a tenth of all that I get.
- Luke 18:13 But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would <sup>a</sup>not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but <sup>b</sup>beat his breast, saying, God, be <sup>1</sup>propitiated to me, the <sup>c</sup>sinner!
- Luke 18:14 I tell you, This man went down to his house <sup>a</sup>justified rather than that one; for everyone who exalts himself shall be <sup>b</sup>humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.
- 1 Pet 4:8 Above all, have <sup>a</sup>fervent <sup>b</sup>love among yourselves, because love <sup>c</sup>covers a multitude of sins.
- John 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to <sup>1</sup>condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
- John 8:11 And she said, No one, <sup>1</sup>Lord. And Jesus said, <sup>2a</sup>Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on <sup>b</sup>sin no more.
- Luke 6:37 And <sup>1</sup>do <sup>a</sup>not judge, and you shall by no means be judged; and do <sup>b</sup>not condemn, and you shall by no means be condemned; <sup>c</sup>release, and you will be released;
- Matt 7:1 <sup>1a</sup>Do <sup>2</sup>not judge, that you be not judged.
- Matt 7:2 For <sup>1</sup>with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what <sup>a</sup>measure you measure, it shall be measured to you.
- Matt 7:3 And why do you look at the <sup>a</sup>splinter which is in your brother's eye, but the beam in your eye you do not <sup>1</sup>consider?
- Matt 7:4 Or how can you say to your brother, Let me remove the splinter from your eye, and behold, the beam is in your eye?
- Matt 7:5 <sup>1a</sup>Hypocrite, first remove the beam from your eye, and then you will <sup>2</sup>see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

- c. Introspection and self-despising—S. S. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 12:15-16.
- S. S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills.
- S. S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.
- 1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.
- d. Being offended by the church, the leading ones, or the saints—Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26; Col. 3:13.
- Matt 6:14 <sup>1</sup>For if you <sup>a</sup>forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also;
- Matt 6:15 But if you do <sup>a</sup>not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.
- Matt 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, Lord, how often shall my brother <sup>a</sup>sin against me and I <sup>b</sup>forgive him? Up to <sup>c</sup>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 <sup>1</sup>king who desired to <sup>2a</sup>settle accounts with his slaves.
- Matt 18:24 And when he began to settle *them*, one who owed him <sup>1</sup>ten thousand talents was brought to him.
- Matt 18:25 But since he did not have *the means* to <sup>a</sup>repay, the master commanded him to be <sup>b</sup>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 <sup>1</sup>forgave him the loan.
- Matt 18:28 But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a <sup>1</sup>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 <sup>1</sup>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, <sup>a</sup>Evil slave, all that debt I forgave you, because you begged me.
- Matt 18:33 Should you not also have had <sup>a</sup>mercy on your fellow slave even <sup>b</sup>as I had mercy on you?
- Matt 18:34 And his master became angry and <sup>1</sup>delivered him to the torturers until he would <sup>a</sup>repay all that was owed.
- Matt 18:35 So also will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you does <sup>a</sup>not forgive his brother <sup>b</sup>from your hearts.
- Mark 11:25 And when you <sup>a</sup>stand praying, <sup>1b</sup>forgive, if you have <sup>2</sup>anything <sup>c</sup>against anyone, so that your <sup>d</sup>Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your offenses.
- Mark 11:26 <sup>1</sup>But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in the heavens forgive your offenses.
- Col 3:13 Bearing <sup>1</sup>one another and <sup>a</sup>forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the <sup>2</sup>Lord forgave you, so also *should* you *forgive*.
- e. Disappointment and discouragement—Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:1.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that <sup>1</sup>all things <sup>2</sup>work together for <sup>3</sup>good to those who <sup>4</sup>love God, to those who are <sup>a</sup>called according to *His* <sup>5</sup>purpose.

- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- 2 Cor 4:1 <sup>1</sup>Therefore having <sup>2</sup>this <sup>a</sup>ministry as we have been shown <sup>3b</sup>mercy, we do <sup>e</sup>not lose heart;
- f. Self-love, self-preservation, self-seeking, and self-pity—Matt. 13:5, 20-21.
- Matt 13:5 And others fell on the <sup>1a</sup>rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no <sup>b</sup>depth of earth.
- Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
- Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is <sup>a</sup>stumbled.
- g. Murmurings and reasonings—Exo. 16:1-9; Phil. 2:14.
- Exo 16:1 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the assembly of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure out of the land of Egypt.
- Exo 16:2 And the whole assembly of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness.
- Exo 16:3 And the children of Israel said to them, If only we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole congregation with hunger.
- Exo 16:4 Then Jehovah said to Moses, I will now rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My law.
- Exo 16:5 And on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.
- Exo 16:6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, In the evening you will know that Jehovah has brought you out from the land of Egypt;
- Exo 16:7 And in the morning you will see the glory of Jehovah, for He hears your murmurings against Jehovah. And what are we, that you murmur against us?
- Exo 16:8 And Moses said, This you will see when Jehovah gives you flesh to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for Jehovah hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against Jehovah.
- Exo 16:9 And Moses said to Aaron, Say to all the assembly of the children of Israel, Come near before Jehovah, for He has heard your murmurings.
- Phil 2:14 Do all things without <sup>1a</sup>murmurings and <sup>b</sup>reasonings
- h. Natural affection (friendship) based on natural taste and preference—Matt. 12:46-50; Phil. 2:2b; 1 Cor. 12:25.
- Matt 12:46 <sup>a</sup>While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His <sup>b</sup>mother and His <sup>c</sup>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, <sup>1</sup>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 <sup>1a</sup>does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My <sup>b</sup>brother and sister and mother.
- Phil 2:2b ...that you <sup>3b</sup>think the <sup>4</sup>same thing, having the same love, <sup>5c</sup>joined in soul, thinking <sup>6</sup>the one thing,
- 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no <sup>a</sup>division in the body, but *that* the members would have the <sup>1</sup>same care for one another.
- i. Being opinionated and dissenting—John 11:21, 23-28, 39; Acts 15:35-39; cf. 1 Cor. 7:25, 40.
- John 11:21 Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, <sup>a</sup>if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

John 11:23 Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again.  
 John 11:24 Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again <sup>1</sup>in the <sup>a</sup>resurrection in the last day.  
 John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the <sup>a</sup>life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall <sup>b</sup>live;  
 John 11:26 And every one who lives and believes into Me shall by <sup>a</sup>no means die forever. Do you believe this?  
 John 11:27 She said to Him, Yes, Lord; I have <sup>1</sup>believed that <sup>a</sup>You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who <sup>b</sup>comes into the world.  
 John 11:28 And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher <sup>1</sup>is here and is calling you.  
 John 11:39 Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him who was deceased, said to Him, Lord, by now he smells, for *it is the <sup>a</sup>fourth day that he is there.*  
 Acts 15:35 And Paul and Barnabas stayed in <sup>a</sup>Antioch, teaching and <sup>b</sup>announcing the word of the Lord as the gospel with many others also.  
 Acts 15:36 Now after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brothers in <sup>a</sup>every city in which we announced the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing.  
 Acts 15:37 And Barnabas intended to take <sup>a</sup>John, who is called Mark, along with *them* also;  
 Acts 15:38 But Paul did not consider it suitable to take with *them* this one who <sup>a</sup>withdrew from them in Pamphylia and did not go with them to the work.  
 Acts 15:39 And there was a <sup>1</sup>sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; and Barnabas, taking Mark along, sailed away to <sup>a</sup>Cyprus.  
 1 Cor 7:25 Now concerning <sup>a</sup>virgins I have <sup>b</sup>no <sup>1</sup>commandment of the Lord, but I give *my* <sup>c</sup>opinion as one who has been shown <sup>d</sup>mercy by the Lord to be <sup>e</sup>faithful.  
 1 Cor 7:40 But she is <sup>1</sup>more blessed if she so remains, according to my <sup>a</sup>opinion; but I think that I <sup>2</sup>also have the <sup>b</sup>Spirit of God.

j. Being individualistic and independent—16:12.

1 Cor 16:12 And <sup>1</sup>concerning our brother <sup>a</sup>Apollos, <sup>2</sup>I urged him many times to come to you with the brothers; yet it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he <sup>b</sup>will come when he has opportunity.

5. We can deny the self by exercising our spirit to know the indwelling Christ and the power of His resurrection—Phil. 3:10; cf. S. S. 2:8-9, 14.

Phil 3:10 To <sup>1a</sup>know Him and the <sup>2b</sup>power of His resurrection and the <sup>3c</sup>fellowship of His sufferings, being <sup>4d</sup>conformed to His death,  
 S.S. 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills.  
 S.S. 2:9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.  
 S.S. 2:14 My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

B. We need to learn to exercise the key of taking up the cross—Matt. 16:24:

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.

1. To take up the cross simply means to take up the will of God; the cross is God's will—cf. 26:39:

Matt 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and <sup>a</sup>prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this <sup>1b</sup>cup pass from Me; yet not as I <sup>c</sup>will, but as You *will*.

a. The Lord Jesus was willing to be crucified so that through His death, His life might be released to produce and build up the church—John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:12.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, <sup>a</sup>Unless the grain of wheat <sup>1</sup>falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears <sup>2b</sup>much fruit.

2 Cor 4:12 So then <sup>a</sup>death operates in us, but <sup>1</sup>life in you.

b. The Lord Jesus was willing to take up the cross and be crucified for the fulfillment of God's will.

2. *Let him...take up his cross* (Matt. 16:24) means that we are not forced to bear the cross but that we willingly take it up.

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him <sup>1</sup>deny <sup>2</sup>himself and take up his <sup>3a</sup>cross and <sup>4</sup>follow Me.

3. The one church is God's will, and every brother and sister in the church is God's will; thus, to bear the cross is to bear the church and to bear all the saints so that we would have the genuine oneness—John 17:21-23; Eph. 4:3, 13; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2.

John 17:21 That they all may be <sup>1a</sup>one; even as You, Father, are <sup>b</sup>in Me and I <sup>c</sup>in You, that they also may be <sup>d</sup>in Us; that the <sup>e</sup>world may believe that You have <sup>f</sup>sent Me.

John 17:22 And the <sup>1a</sup>glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be <sup>2b</sup>one, even as We are <sup>c</sup>one;

John 17:23 I <sup>a</sup>in them, and You <sup>b</sup>in Me, that they may be perfected into <sup>c</sup>one, that the world may know that You have <sup>d</sup>sent Me and have <sup>1e</sup>loved them even as You have loved Me.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to <sup>1</sup>keep the <sup>2a</sup>oneness of the Spirit in the uniting <sup>3b</sup>bond of <sup>c</sup>peace:

Eph 4:13 Until we all <sup>1</sup>arrive at the <sup>2a</sup>oneness of the <sup>b</sup>faith and of the full <sup>c</sup>knowledge of the <sup>3d</sup>Son of God, at a <sup>4e</sup>full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the <sup>5f</sup>fullness of Christ,

1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the <sup>1a</sup>name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all <sup>2b</sup>speak the same thing and *that* there be no <sup>3c</sup>divisions among you, but *that* you be <sup>4</sup>attuned in the <sup>d</sup>same mind and in the same <sup>5e</sup>opinion.

Phil 2:2 <sup>1</sup>Make my <sup>2a</sup>joy full, that you <sup>3b</sup>think the <sup>4</sup>same thing, having the same love, <sup>5c</sup>joined in soul, thinking <sup>6</sup>the one thing,

4. We need to remain on the cross by the power of the resurrected, pneumatic Christ in our spirit, keeping our old man 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 <sup>1a</sup>cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Rom 6:6 <sup>1</sup>Knowing this, that our <sup>2</sup>old man has been <sup>3a</sup>crucified with *Him* in order that the <sup>4b</sup>body of sin might be <sup>5</sup>annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Gal 2:20 I am <sup>1a</sup>crucified with Christ; and *it is* <sup>2</sup>no longer I *who* live, but *it is* <sup>3b</sup>Christ *who* lives in me; and the <sup>4</sup>life which I now live in the flesh I <sup>c</sup>live in <sup>5</sup>faith, the <sup>d</sup>faith <sup>6</sup>of the <sup>7</sup>Son of God, who <sup>8c</sup>loved me and <sup>f</sup>gave Himself up for me.

Phil 3:10 To <sup>1a</sup>know Him and the <sup>2b</sup>power of His resurrection and the <sup>3c</sup>fellowship of His sufferings, being <sup>4d</sup>conformed to His death,

1 Cor 15:31 I protest by the <sup>1a</sup>boasting <sup>2</sup>in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I <sup>b</sup>die daily.

C. We need to learn to exercise the key of losing the soul-life—Matt. 16:25:

Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

1. To save the soul-life is to please the self by allowing the soul to have its enjoyment; to lose the soul-life is to lose the enjoyment of the soul:

- a. Receiving God into man's spirit and expressing God through the soul should be man's joy and amusement—cf. Neh. 8:10; Rom. 14:17.

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way; eat the fat, and drink the sweet wine, and send portions to him for whom nothing has been prepared; <sup>3b</sup>for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.

- b. The Lord Jesus lost the enjoyment of His soul in this age so that He might find His soul-life in the coming age (John 10:11; Isa. 53:12); we must do the same.

John 10:11 I am the good <sup>a</sup>Shepherd; the good Shepherd <sup>b</sup>lays down His <sup>1</sup>life for the sheep.

Isa 53:12 Therefore I will divide to Him a portion with the Great, And He will divide the spoil with the Strong; Because He poured out His life unto death And was numbered with the transgressors, Yet He alone bore the sin of many And interceded for the transgressors.

- c. If we save our soul-life in this age, we will lose it in the coming age, but if we lose our soul-life in this age, we will find it in the coming age—Matt. 16:25.

- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
- d. We need to love the Lord Jesus and to hate and deny our soul-life, not loving our soul-life even unto death—1 Cor. 16:22; 2:9; Luke 14:26; 9:23; Rev. 12:11.
- 1 Cor 16:22 If anyone does not <sup>a</sup>love the Lord, let him be <sup>1b</sup>accursed! <sup>2</sup>The <sup>c</sup>Lord comes!
- 1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written, "<sup>a</sup>Things which <sup>1</sup>eye has not seen and ear has not heard and *which* have not <sup>b</sup>come up <sup>2</sup>in man's heart; things which God has <sup>c</sup>prepared for those who <sup>3d</sup>love Him."
- Luke 14:26 <sup>1</sup>If anyone <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>b</sup>soul-life, he cannot be My disciple.
- Luke 9:23 And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his <sup>a</sup>cross <sup>b</sup>daily and follow Me.
- Rev 12:11 And <sup>1</sup>they <sup>a</sup>overcame him because of the <sup>2b</sup>blood of the <sup>c</sup>Lamb and because of the <sup>3</sup>word of their testimony, and they <sup>4d</sup>loved not their soul-life even <sup>5e</sup>unto death.
2. If we are willing to lose all our present soulish enjoyment for the Lord's sake, for the sake of the church, and for the sake of all the saints, others will be nourished by us and will be built up through us; this is not a suffering but a joy—Heb. 12:2.
- Heb 12:2 <sup>1</sup>Looking away <sup>a</sup>unto <sup>2</sup>Jesus, the <sup>3b</sup>Author and <sup>4</sup>Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the <sup>c</sup>cross, despising the <sup>d</sup>shame, and has <sup>5e</sup>sat down on the right hand of the <sup>f</sup>throne of God.
3. The kingdom reward of sharing the King's joy in ruling over the earth in the manifestation of the kingdom depends upon whether or not we save our soul-life in this age or lose it—Matt. 16:25-28; 25:21, 23.
- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his <sup>a</sup>soul-life shall <sup>1</sup>lose it; but whoever <sup>2</sup>loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
- Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his <sup>1</sup>soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
- Matt 16:27 <sup>1</sup>For the <sup>a</sup>Son of Man is to <sup>b</sup>come in the <sup>c</sup>glory of His Father with His <sup>d</sup>angels, and then He will <sup>2e</sup>repay each man according to his doings.
- Matt 16:28 Truly I say to you, There are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the Son of Man <sup>1a</sup>coming in His kingdom.
- Matt 25:21 His master said to him, Well *done*, good and <sup>a</sup>faithful slave. You were faithful over a <sup>1</sup>few things; I will <sup>b</sup>set you <sup>2</sup>over <sup>3</sup>many things. Enter into the <sup>4c</sup>joy of your master.
- Matt 25:23 His master said to him, <sup>1</sup>Well *done*, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will <sup>2</sup>set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE CHURCH DAMAGED BY THE SELF

My burden in this message is not interpretation; it is application. Throughout history, the church has not been damaged mainly by Judaism or Gnosticism; it has been damaged mainly by the self. Martin Luther once said that although he was afraid of the pope, he was more afraid of the stronger pope, the self, within his own heart. Nothing damages and frustrates the building up of the church more than the self. Self is the embodiment of the soul, which is expressed through the mind. Thus the self, the soul, and the mind are three-in-one. Behind these three is Satan, who manipulates the self in order to damage the church life. We all need to heed this word for ourselves.

Simply because of the self, certain saints have left the church life. In 1948 there was a certain brother in Shanghai who was full of self and whose soul was an open gate that no one could lock. He was ambitious to be an elder, and he often complained about the situation in the church. One day he stood up in a meeting to speak many negative things. After his negative speaking, I said, "Brother, there is no need for us to waste our time. If you can find a better place, please tell me about it and I'll go there with you. But if you cannot find a better place, please be quiet and remain here." He had nothing more to say. A short while later, he stopped coming to the church meetings, began a meeting

in his home, and hired a traveling preacher. With the financial support of this dissenting brother, this preacher wrote a long article opposing Brother Nee. No doubt, this brother damaged the church life. At the same time, he himself lost the church life. This was due to the self. With this brother, there was no building, for he did not become a Peter, but remained the son of Bar-jona. This was the result of Satan coming out through the self.

### **THE SERIOUSNESS OF BEING OFFENDED**

Let me honestly and lovingly say a word to you all: It is a very serious matter to be offended. Do not casually say, "I have been offended in the church life. The elders and other leading ones have offended me." Although others may offend you, you will always be the first to suffer. On the one hand, I condemn all the offenses; but on the other hand, I must say that there is no excuse for your being offended. If we were not in ourselves, we could not be offended. If I exercise the key of self-denial to lock up the self, it will be impossible for me to be offended. The reason we are offended is that the self is so open and prevailing. Through the open gate of the self, Satan comes forth, and we are offended.

Perhaps in certain matters the church may be wrong. Do not think that the church is no longer the church because it is wrong. For example, when your child makes a mistake, he is still your child. Whether the church is right or wrong, it is still the church. Although you may be offended by something or someone in the church, do not make any excuses for yourself. This frustrates the building up of the church.

### **USING THE KEY OF SELF-DENIAL**

As we have seen, Matthew 16 speaks about the building up of the church and also about the gates of Hades and the keys of the kingdom. Without the keys to lock the gates, the church cannot be built. Because there has been so little exercise of these keys, the church has not yet been built. We may talk a great deal about the building. However, when certain things take place to touch us, the self is open. Because we are open to Hades, something from Hades—Satan—comes out. How we need to use the key of self-denial to lock the self! The way to keep from being offended by others is to lock up yourself by denying yourself. Blessed are those who are not offended.

There is no excuse for being offended. When the Lord Jesus comes and sets up His judgment seat, He will tell us to settle our account with Him. He may ask us why we were offended in certain places. But if we make excuses for ourselves, the Lord will not accept them. The problem is not the offense—it is the self. Certain viruses are very contagious. However, no virus can cause a table to be sick. If you can be offended, it is a proof that you are full of self. If my self has been locked up, I will not be offended no matter what you do to me or how you treat me.

### **NO NATURAL AFFECTION**

I have spoken about being offended. Now I wish to say a word about natural affection. In the church life there should not be any natural friendships. If you regard certain ones as your special friends, it also is an indication that you are full of self. Certain ones match your taste, and you fit their taste. You feed one another's taste. This is very damaging, and it hinders the building. Among the brothers and sisters in the church, there should be a pure divine love, but there should not be any personal affection. If any personal affection creeps into your relationship with the saints, it proves that you are full of self. In the church life there should be no such affection. To me, all the brothers and sisters are the same. To have a favorite among the brothers and sisters is to be full of self. It is not to be a Peter, but a son of Jonah. This damages the building.

We need to receive the mercy of the Lord to regard all the saints as our brothers and sisters, but none as our friends. For the Lord's building in the church life, everything natural must be extracted. There should be no natural affection, relationship, or feeling. Rather, we all must be fearful of natural affection and shun it. Whenever a brother loves me in a naturally affectionate way, I am frightened. That is the time for me to exercise the key to deny the self. I will lock myself and avoid that brother's affection. Whenever you discover that you are feeding a brother's self and that he is feeding yours, you

must use the key to lock the gate of the self. If you do not lock up the self, Satan will come out through the door of the self. Then you and others will remain sons of Jonah. You will not be Peters, and it will be impossible for the Lord to build the church with you.

### **THE HIDDEN SELF**

More than nineteen hundred years ago, the Lord Jesus prophesied that He would build the church. But why, after so many centuries, do we not yet have the building? It is because the key of self-denial has been neglected. In these messages I have no desire to talk about doctrines. But I do have a heart to fellowship with you all. Oh, the hidden self! Peter had a good heart, but within him there was the hidden self that became the gateway for Satan to come out. I appreciate the Lord's discernment. If I had been the Lord, I would not have had the discernment, but would have appreciated Peter's concern. However, the Lord Jesus immediately discerned that Satan had come out through the gate of the self.

I am glad that in the churches we have the brothers' houses and the sisters' houses. But, through experience, we have realized that there are two kinds of results from living in such a house. Some form natural friendships; others become dissatisfied and disappointed. However, no matter what the situation may be, you should not be disappointed. To be disappointed is a proof that you are in the self. The self of those who live in the brothers' and sisters' houses must be locked up. If the self is locked up, we shall have the building. If you exercise the key of self-denial, others may be offended, but you will not be offended. Instead, you will be built up because the self in you has been locked up. We all need to use the prevailing key of self-denial to lock the self, the soul, and the mind. Otherwise, the building up of the church will be frustrated.

### **CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED FOR THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH**

Matthew 16:24 says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." The "Me" in this verse means a great deal. This "Me" is the pattern, the pathway. Furthermore, this "Me" is the crucified and resurrected "Me." If we are not crucified and resurrected, there can be no church. The church comes into existence through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Not only our self, which is defiled, but even the Lord's pure, sinless self had to be denied. If the Lord had not denied Himself and gone to the cross, He could not have been resurrected, and there would have been no church. We must follow after Him. This means that we must deny ourselves as He did and must allow ourselves to be crucified as He did. Without this, it is impossible for the church to be built up. Whenever we sense that we are feeding the self life of another, we must say, "Lord, I will follow You. I will stop having so much contact with this brother." If you do this, the building of the church will proceed.

### **KNOWING CHRIST, THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS**

When you read this word, you may feel that you are not able to fulfill it. No, we cannot do it. This is why we need to pay attention to Paul's word in Philippians 3:10: "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death" (Gk.). Here we see that Paul desired to know three things: Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. The "Him" in Philippians 3:10 is the "Me" in Matthew 16:24. We are not able to deny ourselves and go to the cross. But by the power of Christ's resurrection, we can do these things. Furthermore, through His resurrection, we can enter into the fellowship of His sufferings and be conformed to His death. Although in ourselves we cannot do this, we have One living within us who can do it.

### **WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION**

In Philippians 2:12 Paul says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." In the New Testament the word salvation is used in various ways. Regarding our eternal salvation, we cannot

work anything out. The Lord Jesus has done everything to accomplish this. But we do need to work out the salvation that enables us to be built up together. For the building of the church, we need to work out this salvation.

The entire book of Philippians is a book on the building. Among the Philippians there was division and the lack of building. Thus, the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle to help them to be built up. Paul was telling them to work out the building, for this building was their salvation. Many Christians today are missing the building. This indicates that they are not working out their salvation.

Suppose you are living in the brothers' house. When you first moved in, you thought living with the brothers would be wonderful. However, after a short period of time, you found that you could not get along with certain brothers. There is nothing you should do about this. Rather, remain in that brothers' house to be killed. Although you cannot suffer this killing, there is One in you who can. You simply need to follow Him to work out your salvation.

### **GOD WORKING IN US**

Philippians 2:13 tells us how to work out our salvation: "For it is God which worketh in you both the willing and the working for his good pleasure" (Gk.). God is in us doing this work. We simply need to exercise the key of self-denial and say amen to the Lord. We need to exercise the key to lock the self. If we all learn this lesson, we shall be built up together, and we shall become a strong testimony. We shall be able to testify that although we have different characters, dispositions, temperaments, and backgrounds, we can be one and can be built up together. This is precisely what the Lord is dealing with in Matthew 16.

### **LOCKING UP THE SELF FOR THE BUILDING**

Matthew 16 has been veiled for centuries. Perhaps you have read this chapter again and again and again without knowing what the Lord was really saying. But now the Lord has given us further understanding to see how the church can be built up through the exercise of the keys. We need to be afraid of ourselves and use the key to lock up ourselves. We should do this not only in the church life, but also in our family life. If you exercise the key to lock the self, you will have no problems in your marriage. All the problems are from Satan who comes out through the gate of the self. When this gate is locked, Satan is confined, and there are no problems.

In these messages I am not concerned with mere doctrine. Instead, I am presenting to you what I have learned through years of suffering. We need to find out how the church can be built up. If you say that the church is built up through the cross and the resurrection, that is still too doctrinal. We need to go on to learn to exercise the key of self-denial to lock up the self in every situation. Whether a situation is for you or against you, you must lock up the self. Whether the brothers love you and welcome you or hate you and do not welcome you, you still need to lock your self. If you do this, there will be no problems, and it will be possible to have the building of the church. But without the locking up of the self, there is no possibility of having the building. (*The Exercise of the Kingdom for the Building of the Church*, pp. 25-31)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Eight

### The Fourth Great Pillar—the Gospel

(1)

### Blood and Water

Scripture Reading: John 19:34, 36; Gen. 2:21-24

- John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1a</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.
- John 19:36 For <sup>1</sup>these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "<sup>a</sup>No <sup>2</sup>bone of His shall be broken."
- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken.
- Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

#### I. Our hymns are full of precious truths that enable us to preach the high gospel to people; for example, the first stanza of *Hymns*, #1058 says, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee; / Let the water and the blood, / From Thy riven side which flowed, / Be of sin the double cure, / Save me from its guilt and power”:

- A. We need to take note of *the water and the blood, the double cure, and guilt and power*.
- B. The *double cure* refers to the cure of our outward sinful acts by the Lord's precious blood to save us from the guilt of sin, and it refers to the cure of our inward sinful nature by the Lord's flowing life to save us from the power of sin.
- C. The blood refers to the precious blood shed by the Lord to deal with our outward sinful acts (John 1:29; Heb. 9:22), and the water refers to the life imparted by the Lord to deal with our inward sinful nature (John 19:34).
- John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the <sup>1a</sup>Lamb of God, who takes away the <sup>b</sup>sin of the <sup>2</sup>world!
- Heb 9:22 And almost all things are purified by <sup>a</sup>blood according to the law, and <sup>1</sup>without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1a</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.
- D. The precious blood of the Lord redeems us from the eternal punishment that we deserve due to our sinful acts, and His life saves us from the power of our sinful nature.
- E. If we have a thorough understanding of the stanza of this hymn, we will be able to preach the high gospel to people, because this “double cure” of blood and water fulfills God's original intention with man.

#### II. Two substances came out of the Lord's pierced side: blood and water—v. 34:

- John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1a</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.
- A. We sinners became fallen and were then against God's righteousness and estranged from God's life—Gen. 3:24; Eph. 4:18.
- Gen 3:24 So He drove the man out, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

- Eph 4:18 Being <sup>1a</sup>darkened in their understanding, alienated from the <sup>2b</sup>life of God because of the <sup>3c</sup>ignorance which is in them, because of the <sup>4d</sup>hardness of their heart;
- B. As sinners, we need to be redeemed judicially from God's condemnation according to the righteous requirement of His law (Gal. 3:13), and we need to be saved organically by His life from the death brought in by sin (2 Tim. 1:10; Rom. 5:10, 12, 17, 21).
- Gal 3:13 Christ has <sup>a</sup>redeemed us out of the <sup>b</sup>curse of the law, having <sup>1</sup>become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, "<sup>c</sup>Cursed is every one hanging on a <sup>2d</sup>tree";
- 2 Tim 1:10 But now has been <sup>1a</sup>manifested through the <sup>b</sup>appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who <sup>2</sup>nullified <sup>c</sup>death and brought <sup>3d</sup>life and <sup>4e</sup>incorruption to light through the gospel,
- Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were <sup>1a</sup>reconciled to God through the death of His Son, <sup>2</sup>much more we will be <sup>3</sup>saved <sup>4</sup>in His <sup>5b</sup>life, having been reconciled,
- Rom 5:12 Therefore just as through <sup>1a</sup>one man <sup>2b</sup>sin entered into the <sup>3</sup>world, and <sup>c</sup>through sin, <sup>4d</sup>death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned—
- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the <sup>1</sup>abundance of grace and of the gift of <sup>2</sup>righteousness will <sup>3</sup>reign in <sup>4</sup>life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Rom 5:21 In order that just as <sup>1a</sup>sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through <sup>2</sup>righteousness unto <sup>b</sup>eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C. God's full salvation for us is judicial according to His righteousness and organic according to His life.
- D. Christ, as the Redeemer and Savior of fallen man, redeems us and saves us through His death and resurrection.
- E. In His crucifixion, after He was pierced by a soldier, blood and water, two elements which are critical to human life, came out of Him—John 19:34:
- John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1a</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.
1. Blood is for God's judicial redemption to deal with sins (1:29; Heb. 9:22) for the purchasing of the church (Acts 20:28):
 

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the <sup>1a</sup>Lamb of God, who takes away the <sup>b</sup>sin of the <sup>2</sup>world!

Heb 9:22 And almost all things are purified by <sup>a</sup>blood according to the law, and <sup>1</sup>without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Acts 20:28 <sup>a</sup>Take heed to yourselves and to all the <sup>1b</sup>flock, among whom the Holy <sup>2c</sup>Spirit has <sup>d</sup>placed you as <sup>3e</sup>overseers to <sup>4f</sup>shepherd the <sup>e</sup>church of God, which He <sup>b</sup>obtained through <sup>5</sup>His own <sup>i</sup>blood.

    - a. Redeeming the believers—Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Gal. 3:13; 4:5.
 

Eph 1:7 In whom we have <sup>1a</sup>redemption through His <sup>b</sup>blood, the <sup>2c</sup>forgiveness of <sup>d</sup>offenses, according to the <sup>e</sup>riches of His grace,

1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that *it was* not with corruptible things, with <sup>1a</sup>silver or gold, *that* you were <sup>b</sup>redeemed <sup>c</sup>from your <sup>2d</sup>vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,

1 Pet 1:19 But with <sup>1</sup>precious <sup>a</sup>blood, as of a <sup>b</sup>Lamb <sup>c</sup>without blemish and without spot, *the blood* of Christ;

Gal 3:13 Christ has <sup>a</sup>redeemed us out of the <sup>b</sup>curse of the law, having <sup>1</sup>become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, "<sup>c</sup>Cursed is every one hanging on a <sup>2d</sup>tree";

Gal 4:5 That He might <sup>1a</sup>redeem those under law that we might receive the <sup>2b</sup>sonship.
    - b. Forgiving the believers' sins—Heb. 9:22.
 

Heb 9:22 And almost all things are purified by <sup>a</sup>blood according to the law, and <sup>1</sup>without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
    - c. Washing away the believers' sins—1:3.
 

Heb 1:3 Who, being the <sup>1</sup>effulgence of His glory and the <sup>a</sup>impress of His <sup>b</sup>substance and upholding and bearing all things by the <sup>2</sup>word of His power, having made <sup>3</sup>purification of sins, <sup>4c</sup>sat down on the right hand of the <sup>5d</sup>Majesty on <sup>6</sup>high;
    - d. For God to justify the believers—Rom. 3:24; 5:9.
 

Rom 3:24 Being <sup>1</sup>justified <sup>2</sup>freely by His grace through the <sup>3</sup>redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

- Rom 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified in His <sup>a</sup>blood, we will be saved through Him from the <sup>b</sup>wrath.
- e. Sanctifying the believers positionally—Heb. 13:12; 10:29.
- Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might <sup>1a</sup>sanctify the people through His own <sup>2b</sup>blood, suffered <sup>c</sup>outside the <sup>3</sup>gate.
- Heb 10:29 <sup>a</sup>By <sup>b</sup>how much do you think he will be thought worthy of <sup>1</sup>worse punishment who has <sup>2c</sup>trampled underfoot <sup>d</sup>the Son of God and has <sup>3</sup>considered the blood of the covenant by which he was <sup>e</sup>sanctified a common thing and has <sup>4</sup>insulted the <sup>f</sup>Spirit of grace?
- f. Speaking something better for the New Testament believers before God—12:24.
- Heb 12:24 And to Jesus, the <sup>a</sup>Mediator of a <sup>1b</sup>new covenant; and to the <sup>2c</sup>blood of <sup>d</sup>sprinkling, which <sup>3</sup>speaks something better than *that of* <sup>e</sup>Abel.
- g. Overcoming Satan, the accuser of the believers—Rev. 12:11.
- Rev 12:11 And <sup>1</sup>they <sup>a</sup>overcame him because of the <sup>2b</sup>blood of the <sup>c</sup>Lamb and because of the <sup>3</sup>word of their testimony, and they <sup>4d</sup>loved not their soul-life even <sup>5e</sup>unto death.
- h. Thus, it is the precious blood of Christ—1 Pet. 1:19.
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with <sup>1</sup>precious <sup>a</sup>blood, as of a <sup>b</sup>Lamb <sup>c</sup>without blemish and without spot, *the blood of Christ*;
- i. It is also considered God's own blood, which is very dear to God and with which God has purchased and obtained the church as His flock—Acts 20:28.
- Acts 20:28 <sup>a</sup>Take heed to yourselves and to all the <sup>1b</sup>flock, among whom the Holy <sup>2c</sup>Spirit has <sup>d</sup>placed you as <sup>3e</sup>overseers to <sup>4f</sup>shepherd the <sup>a</sup>church of God, which He <sup>b</sup>obtained through <sup>5</sup>His own <sup>i</sup>blood.
2. Water, signifying the divine life, is for God's organic salvation—for imparting life (John 12:24; 3:14-15) for the producing and building up of the church (Eph. 5:29-30):
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, <sup>a</sup>Unless the grain of wheat <sup>1</sup>falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears <sup>2b</sup>much fruit.
- John 3:14 And as <sup>a</sup>Moses <sup>b</sup>lifted up the <sup>1</sup>serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
- John 3:15 That every one who believes into Him may have <sup>1</sup>eternal life.
- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but <sup>1a</sup>nourishes and <sup>b</sup>cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- Eph 5:30 Because we are <sup>a</sup>members of His <sup>b</sup>Body.
- a. The Lord promises to give the sinners the water of life—John 4:10, 14; Rev. 21:6.
- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the <sup>a</sup>gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you <sup>b</sup>living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever <sup>a</sup>drinks of the water that I will give him shall <sup>b</sup>by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into <sup>1c</sup>eternal life.
- Rev 21:6 And He said to me, <sup>1</sup>They have come to pass. I am the <sup>a</sup>Alpha and the Omega, the <sup>b</sup>Beginning and the End. I will give to him who <sup>c</sup>thirsts from the <sup>d</sup>spring of the <sup>e</sup>water of life freely.
- b. The Lord calls the sinners to come and drink His water of life—22:17; John 7:37-38:
- Rev 22:17 And the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit and the <sup>b</sup>bride say, <sup>2c</sup>Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is <sup>d</sup>thirsty <sup>3e</sup>come; let <sup>4</sup>him who wills take the <sup>f</sup>water of life freely.
- John 7:37 Now on the <sup>1</sup>last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone <sup>a</sup>thirsts, let him <sup>b</sup>come to Me and <sup>c</sup>drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his <sup>a</sup>innermost being shall <sup>1</sup>flow <sup>2b</sup>rivers of living water.
- (1) The believers are regenerated by God with His divine life—1 Pet. 1:3.
- 1 Pet 1:3 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed be the <sup>2</sup>God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great <sup>3b</sup>mercy has <sup>4c</sup>regenerated us <sup>5</sup>unto a <sup>6</sup>living <sup>d</sup>hope <sup>7</sup>through the <sup>e</sup>resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- (2) The divine life saves the believers—Rom. 5:10b.  
 Rom 5:10b ... <sup>2</sup>much more we will be <sup>3</sup>saved <sup>4</sup>in His <sup>5</sup>life, having been reconciled,
- (3) The divine life dispositionally sanctifies (6:19, 22), renews (12:2b; Titus 3:5), transforms (Rom. 12:2a; 2 Cor. 3:18), conforms (Rom. 8:29), and glorifies (v. 30) the believers.
- Rom 6:19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness <sup>1</sup>unto lawlessness, so now <sup>a</sup>present your members as slaves to righteousness unto <sup>2</sup>sanctification.
- Rom 6:22 But now, having been <sup>a</sup>freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto <sup>1</sup>sanctification, and the end, <sup>e</sup>eternal <sup>2</sup>life.
- Rom 12:2 And do <sup>1</sup>not be <sup>a</sup>fashioned according to <sup>2</sup>this <sup>b</sup>age, but be <sup>3</sup>transformed by the <sup>4</sup>renewing of the <sup>e</sup>mind that you may <sup>5</sup>prove what the <sup>6</sup>will of God is, that which is good and <sup>b</sup>well pleasing and perfect.
- Titus 3:5 Not out of <sup>1</sup>works in <sup>b</sup>righteousness which we did but according to His <sup>2</sup>mercy He <sup>d</sup>saved us, through the <sup>3</sup>washing of <sup>4</sup>regeneration and the <sup>e</sup>renewing of the <sup>5</sup>Holy <sup>b</sup>Spirit,
- 2 Cor 3:18 <sup>1</sup>But <sup>2</sup>we all with <sup>3</sup>unveiled face, <sup>4</sup>beholding and reflecting like a <sup>5</sup>mirror the <sup>6</sup>glory of the Lord, are <sup>7</sup>being <sup>d</sup>transformed into the <sup>8</sup>same <sup>e</sup>image <sup>9</sup>from glory to <sup>f</sup>glory, even as <sup>10</sup>from the <sup>11</sup>Lord Spirit.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2</sup>glorified.
- (4) The believers reign in life—5:17.  
 Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the <sup>1</sup>abundance of grace and of the gift of <sup>2</sup>righteousness will <sup>3</sup>reign in <sup>4</sup>life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- (5) The believers grow in life for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16.  
 Eph 4:15 But <sup>1</sup>holding to truth in <sup>2</sup>love, we may <sup>3</sup>grow up into Him in all things, who is the <sup>4</sup>Head, Christ,  
 Eph 4:16 <sup>1</sup>Out from whom <sup>a</sup>all the Body, being <sup>2</sup>joined together and being knit together through every <sup>3</sup>joint of <sup>4</sup>the rich supply <sup>5</sup>and *through* the <sup>6</sup>operation in the <sup>d</sup>measure of <sup>7</sup>each one part, <sup>8</sup>causes the <sup>9</sup>growth of the Body unto the <sup>f</sup>building up of itself in <sup>10</sup>love.
- (6) The divine life consummates the New Jerusalem, which is wholly supplied with the river of water of life and with the tree of life—Rev. 21:2; 22:1-2.  
 Rev 21:2 And I saw the <sup>a</sup>holy city, <sup>1</sup>New Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>e</sup>prepared as a <sup>3</sup>bride adorned for her <sup>e</sup>husband.  
 Rev 22:1 And <sup>1</sup>he <sup>a</sup>showed me a <sup>2</sup>river of <sup>3</sup>water of life, bright as <sup>4</sup>crystal, <sup>e</sup>proceeding out of the <sup>5</sup>throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its <sup>6</sup>street.  
 Rev 22:2 And on this <sup>a</sup>side and on that side of the river was the <sup>1</sup>tree of life, producing twelve <sup>2</sup>fruits, yielding its fruit <sup>3</sup>each <sup>4</sup>month; and the <sup>5</sup>leaves of the tree are for the <sup>e</sup>healing of the <sup>f</sup>nations.

### III. The flowing water and the unbroken bone mentioned by John in 19:34 and 36 are signs that relate to the life-releasing aspect of His death and the life-imparting aspect of His resurrection for the producing of His bride, His counterpart—Gen. 2:21-24:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.

- John 19:36 For <sup>1</sup>these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "<sup>a</sup>No <sup>2</sup>bone of His shall be broken."
- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken.
- Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- A. In order to produce a complement for Himself, God first became a man (John 1:14), as typified by God's creation of Adam (Rom. 5:14).
- John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.
- Rom 5:14 But <sup>1a</sup>death reigned from <sup>2</sup>Adam until Moses, even over those <sup>b</sup>who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's <sup>3</sup>transgression, who is a <sup>4</sup>type of Him who was to come.
- B. Adam's deep sleep for the producing of Eve as his wife typifies Christ's death on the cross (1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14) for the producing of the church as His complement (Gen. 2:21; Eph. 5:25-27).
- 1 Cor 15:18 Then also those who have <sup>1a</sup>fallen asleep in Christ have <sup>2</sup>perished.
- 1 Thes 4:13 But we do not want you to be <sup>a</sup>ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are <sup>1</sup>sleeping, that you would not grieve even as also the rest who have <sup>b</sup>no hope.
- 1 Thes 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and <sup>a</sup>rose, so also <sup>b</sup>those who have fallen asleep through Jesus, God will bring <sup>c</sup>with Him.
- 1 Thes 4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the <sup>1a</sup>coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep;
- 1 Thes 4:16 Because the Lord Himself, with a <sup>1a</sup>shout of command, with the voice of the <sup>b</sup>archangel and with the <sup>2c</sup>trumpet of God, will descend from <sup>d</sup>heaven, and the <sup>e</sup>dead in Christ will <sup>f</sup>rise first.
- John 11:11 He said these things, and after this He said to them, Our friend Lazarus has fallen <sup>a</sup>asleep; but I am going that I may wake him out of sleep.
- John 11:12 The disciples then said to Him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will <sup>1</sup>recover.
- John 11:13 But Jesus had spoken about his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.
- John 11:14 So Jesus then told them plainly, Lazarus has <sup>1</sup>died.
- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Eph 5:25 Husbands, <sup>1a</sup>love your wives even <sup>2</sup>as Christ also <sup>b</sup>loved the church and gave Himself up for her
- Eph 5:26 That He might <sup>1a</sup>sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the <sup>2b</sup>washing of the <sup>3</sup>water in the <sup>4c</sup>word,
- Eph 5:27 That He might <sup>1a</sup>present the <sup>2b</sup>church to Himself <sup>3</sup>glorious, not having <sup>4</sup>spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be <sup>5c</sup>holy and <sup>d</sup>without blemish.
- C. Through Christ's death, the divine life within Him was released, and through His resurrection, His released divine life was imparted into His believers for the constituting of the church.
- D. Through such a process, God in Christ has been wrought into man with His life and nature so that man can be the same as God in life and nature in order to match Him as His counterpart.
- E. The rib taken from Adam's opened side (Gen. 2:21) typifies the unbreakable, indestructible eternal life of Christ (Heb. 7:16; John 19:36), which flowed out of His pierced side (v. 34) to impart life to His believers for the producing and building up of the church as His complement:
- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Heb 7:16 Who has been appointed not according to the law of a <sup>a</sup>fleshy commandment but according to the <sup>b</sup>power of an <sup>1</sup>indestructible <sup>e</sup>life.
- John 19:36 For <sup>1</sup>these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "<sup>a</sup>No <sup>2</sup>bone of His shall be broken."

- John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out <sup>1a</sup>blood and <sup>b</sup>water.
1. When Adam was created, there was no sin, so there was no need of redemption; it was not until Genesis 3 that sin came in.  
Genesis 3 (be omitted)
  2. Thus, all that came out of Adam's side was the rib, without the blood.
  3. However, by the time that Christ was sleeping on the cross, there was the problem of sin; thus, His death had to deal with the sin problem.
  4. The blood came out of Christ's side for judicial redemption; following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life to produce and build up the church.
  5. This divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam's side.
  6. "These things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'No bone of His shall be broken'"—John 19:36:
    - a. In the Scriptures the first mention of a bone is in Genesis 2:21-23; there it was a rib taken out of Adam for the producing and building of Eve as a match for Adam.  
Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.  
Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.  
Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken.
    - b. Eve is a type of the church, which is produced and built with the Lord's resurrection life released out of Him.
    - c. Hence, the bone is a symbol, a figure, of the Lord's resurrection life, which nothing can break.
    - d. The Lord's side was pierced, but not one of His bones was broken; this signifies that although the Lord's physical life was terminated, His resurrection life, the very divine life, could not be hurt or damaged by anything.
    - e. This is the life with which the church is produced and built; it is also the eternal life, which we have obtained by believing into Him (John 3:36).  
John 3:36 He who <sup>a</sup>believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.
  7. The building of Eve with the rib taken from Adam's side typifies the building of the church with the resurrection life released from Christ through His death on the cross and imparted into His believers in His resurrection—Gen. 2:22-24; John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3.  
Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.  
Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken.  
Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.  
John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, <sup>a</sup>Unless the grain of wheat <sup>1</sup>falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears <sup>2b</sup>much fruit.  
1 Pet 1:3 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed be the <sup>2</sup>God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great <sup>3b</sup>mercy has <sup>4c</sup>regenerated us <sup>5</sup>unto a <sup>6</sup>living <sup>d</sup>hope <sup>7</sup>through the <sup>e</sup>resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
  8. The church as the real Eve is the totality of Christ in all His believers; only that which comes out of Christ, having His resurrection life, can be His complement and counterpart, the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 5:28-30.  
1 Cor 12:12 <sup>1</sup>For even as <sup>2</sup>the body is <sup>a</sup>one and has many <sup>b</sup>members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

- Eph 5:28 In the same way the husbands also ought to <sup>a</sup>love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his own wife loves himself.
- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but <sup>1a</sup>nourishes and <sup>b</sup>cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- Eph 5:30 Because we are <sup>a</sup>members of His <sup>b</sup>Body.
9. Day by day as we enjoy this flowing, divine, uncreated, unbreakable, resurrection life, we are being transformed, and as we are being transformed, we are also being built into the church to be the bride to match Christ as His counterpart—Matt. 16:18.
- Matt 16:18 And I <sup>1</sup>also say to you that you are <sup>2a</sup>Peter, and upon <sup>3</sup>this <sup>b</sup>rock I will <sup>4c</sup>build My <sup>5d</sup>church, and the <sup>6e</sup>gates of <sup>f</sup>Hades shall not prevail <sup>g</sup>against it.
10. At the end of Genesis 2 there is Eve, and at the end of the entire Bible there is the New Jerusalem, which is the ultimate Eve, the ultimate consummation of the eternal bride built up with precious materials produced by the flowing, resurrection life of Christ.
- Genesis 2 (be omitted)
11. May we all be brought into the enjoyment and experience of this flowing, transforming, and building life to be prepared as the bride of Christ that will bring Christ back.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE TRUTH BEING THE URGENT NEED TODAY

Today the truth is needed everywhere. Not only the non-Christians do not know the truth; even many Christians do not know the truth. However, the Lord has given us many rich truths. Even our gospel hymns are full of precious truths. For example, the first stanza of *Hymns*, #1058 says, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee; / Let the water and the blood, / From Thy riven side which flowed, / Be of sin the double cure, / Save me from its guilt and power.” Here it mentions *the water and the blood, the double cure, and guilt and power*. Even many saints among us may not know the meanings of these phrases. Here the double cure refers to the cure of our outward sinful acts and our inward sinful nature. The blood refers to the precious blood shed by the Lord to deal with our outward sinful acts (John 1:29; Heb. 9:22), and the water refers to the life imparted by the Lord to deal with our inward sinful nature (John 19:34). The precious blood of the Lord redeems us from the eternal punishment we deserve due to our sinful acts, and His life saves us from the power of our sinful nature.

If we have a thorough understanding of this hymn, we will be able to preach the high gospel to people. We may invite someone to sing this hymn with us and then explain it to him. This would be a very good gospel message. After hearing this, he will be surprised and will respect the excellence and mysteriousness of the content of the gospel. When we speak to him, the Holy Spirit will work in him. Then we could sing this hymn with him again. In this way, he would probably be saved in less than half an hour. We should not say anything about perdition and “heaven” or even prosperity and peace. Instead, we should speak only about Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, who was crucified for us, and out from whose riven side came blood for redeeming us from the eternal punishment that we deserved due to our sins, and water for saving us out of the power of sin. This kind of simple but excellent singing and speaking, matched by the working of the Holy Spirit, will lead people to salvation. This is the proper way to preach the gospel today.

First Timothy 3:15b says, “The church...the pillar and base of the truth.” This indicates that without the truth, there would be no church. The truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church. In addition, the unique commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth. The truth tells us one central point: the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is dispensing Himself into us—sinful, tripartite men—that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive God’s life and have God Himself in us for our transformation into the sons of God.

This is the truth and the gospel. We must learn the truth. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 126-127)

### **THE BLOOD AND WATER**

In His crucifixion, after He was pierced by a soldier, blood and water, two elements which are critical to human life, came out of Him (John 19:34).

#### **Blood Being for God's Judicial Redemption**

The blood of Christ is for God's judicial redemption in His redeeming the believers (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19), forgiving the believers' sins (Heb. 9:22), and washing away the believers' sins (Heb. 1:3). The blood of Christ is also for God to justify the believers (Rom. 3:24; 5:9) and sanctify the believers positionally (Heb. 13:12; 10:29). This blood speaks something better for the New Testament believers before God (Heb. 12:24). By the blood of Christ, the Lamb, we can overcome Satan, the accuser of the believers (Rev. 12:11). Thus, it is the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19).

It is also considered God's own blood, which is very dear to God and with which God has purchased and obtained the church as His flock. Acts 20:28 says that God secured, purchased, redeemed, the church with His own blood. If He were merely God, He could not have blood. God's own blood is the blood of the man Jesus Christ, who is the very God. God's purchasing the church with His own blood indicates the preciousness, the exceeding worth, of the church in the eyes of God. The church is dear to God, so we have to regard and respect the church.

#### **Water Signifying the Divine Life for God's Organic Salvation**

Water, signifying the divine life (see Message Three), is for God's organic salvation. The Lord promises to give the sinners the water of life (John 4:10, 14; Rev. 21:6).

Also, the Lord calls the sinners to come and drink His water of life (Rev. 22:17; John 7:37-38). The believers were regenerated by God with His divine life (1 Pet. 1:3). This divine life saves the believers (Rom. 5:10b). It dispositionally sanctifies (Rom. 6:19, 22), renews (Rom. 12:2b; Titus 3:5), transforms (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), conforms (Rom. 8:29), and glorifies (Rom. 8:30) the believers. The believers reign in it (Rom. 5:17). We can be kings by this divine life. The believers also grow with it for the building up of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:15-16). We all have to grow into the Head, Christ. Then out from Him we have something of the divine life to minister to the Body for its building up. This consummates the New Jerusalem, which is wholly supplied with the river of water of life and with the tree of life (Rev. 21:2; 22:1-2). The river of water of life signifies the Spirit of life, and the tree of life signifies Christ as the embodiment of the divine life. Both are for the supply of the New Jerusalem. (*Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John*, pp. 125-126)

### **HOW THE BRIDE OF CHRIST COMES INTO BEING**

In Genesis 2 there is the picture of how the bride of Christ comes into being. Before God prepared a bride for Adam, He brought all the animals to Adam, and Adam named each one. But none of these created things matched Adam, and they could not be his counterpart (vv. 19-20). Then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam (v. 21). Adam is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14), and his sleep is a type of Christ's death. In the Bible sleep means death (1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14).

During Adam's sleep, God took one of his ribs from his side. Likewise, when Christ was sleeping on the cross, something came out of His side. John 19:34 tells us that when the soldier pierced His side, out came blood and water. At Adam's time there was no sin, so there was no need of redemption. It was not until Genesis 3 that sin came in. Thus, all that came out of Adam's side was the rib without the blood. However, by the time that Christ was sleeping on the cross, there was the problem of sin. Thus, His death must deal with this sin problem. The blood came out of Christ's side for redemption. Following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life to produce the church. This divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam's side.

When the Lord Jesus was dying on the cross, two others were dying with Him. Their legs were broken, but when the soldiers came to the Lord Jesus, He was already dead, and there was no need to break His bones. This fulfilled the prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken (John 19:31-33). Thus, the bone taken out of Adam's side signifies the Lord's unbroken, unbreakable, resurrection life. His resurrection life is unbreakable. The rib taken out of Adam signifies the resurrection life, and God built a woman with the rib of Adam. Now God builds up the church with the resurrection life of Christ. Just as Eve was a part of Adam, so the church is a part of Christ. Eve was bone of Adam's bones and flesh of Adam's flesh. Today we as the church are a part of Christ (Eph. 5:30-32). This marvelous revelation can be seen by comparing Genesis 2, John 19, and Ephesians 5.

When we received the Lord Jesus, He came into us as the resurrection life, the unbreakable life. It is this life that transforms us. This life is the tree of life, the river of life, the very life that supplies us and that flows within us to transform us. Day by day as we enjoy this flowing, divine, uncreated, unbreakable life, we are being transformed. This transformation is mentioned and revealed in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. As we are being transformed, we are also being built into the church to be the bride to satisfy Christ as His counterpart. At the end of Genesis 2 is Eve, and at the end of the entire Bible is the New Jerusalem, which is the ultimate Eve, the ultimate consummation of the universal bride built up with precious materials produced by the resurrection life of Christ.

The life seen in Genesis 2 is the flowing life, the transforming life, and the building life. This life flows within us, transforms us, and eventually builds us up as the bride of Christ. This bride, the New Jerusalem, will fulfill the two aspects of the purpose of God. First, the New Jerusalem will be the full expression of God in God's full image (Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3). Second, this New Jerusalem will subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority over the entire universe, especially over the creeping things (22:5; 21:15; cf. v. 8; 20:10, 14-15). God's dominion will be realized on the whole earth through the New Jerusalem. Thus, God's purpose is fully fulfilled by the New Jerusalem, which is the result, the issue, the ultimate consummation of life. What we believers need is life, and this life is nothing less than the Triune God Himself, the Father in the Son and the Son as the Spirit. May we all be brought into the enjoyment and experience of this flowing, transforming, and building life to be prepared as the bride that will bring Christ back. (*The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures*, pp. 20-21)

# THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Saturday—Evening Session)

## Message Nine

### The Fourth Great Pillar—the Gospel

(2)

#### The Center of Paul's Gospel

Scripture Reading: Rom. 1:1, 3-4, 9, 15-16; 2:16; 8:2-3, 9-11, 28-30; 16:25

- Rom 1:1 <sup>1</sup>Paul, a <sup>2</sup>slave of <sup>3</sup>Christ <sup>4</sup>Jesus, a <sup>5</sup>called <sup>6</sup>apostle, <sup>7</sup>separated <sup>8</sup>unto the <sup>9</sup>gospel of God,
- Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,
- Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I <sup>1</sup>serve in my <sup>2</sup>spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- Rom 1:15 So, for my part, I am ready to announce the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the <sup>1</sup>power of God unto <sup>2</sup>salvation to every one who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek.
- Rom 2:16 In the day when God judges the secrets of men according to my gospel <sup>a</sup>through Jesus Christ.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:3 For that which the <sup>1</sup>law could <sup>2</sup>not do, in that it was <sup>a</sup>weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the <sup>3</sup>likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God <sup>2</sup>dwells in you. Yet <sup>3</sup>if anyone does not have the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of Christ, he is not <sup>5</sup>of Him.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that <sup>1</sup>all things <sup>2</sup>work together for <sup>3</sup>good to those who <sup>4</sup>love God, to those who are <sup>a</sup>called according to *His* <sup>5</sup>purpose.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1a</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2b</sup>glorified.
- Rom 16:25 <sup>a</sup>Now to Him who is able to <sup>1b</sup>establish you according to <sup>2c</sup>my gospel, that is, the <sup>d</sup>proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the <sup>3c</sup>mystery, which has been kept in silence in the <sup>4</sup>times of the ages

#### I. The book of Galatians presents the basic truth of the gospel—2:5, 14:

- Gal 2:5 To them we yielded with the subjection *demanded* not even for an hour, that the <sup>1a</sup>truth of the gospel might remain with you.
- Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not <sup>1</sup>walking in a <sup>a</sup>straightforward way in relation to the <sup>b</sup>truth of the gospel, I said to <sup>c</sup>Cephas <sup>d</sup>before *them* all, If you, being a Jew, <sup>2c</sup>live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to <sup>3f</sup>live like the Jews?
- A. The first aspect of the truth of the gospel is that fallen man cannot be justified out of works of law—v. 16a.
- Gal 2:16a And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of <sup>a</sup>law, but through <sup>1b</sup>faith in Jesus Christ, ...
- B. Under God's New Testament economy, we are justified out of faith in Christ—v. 16b:
- Gal 2:16b ... we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law <sup>c</sup>no <sup>2</sup>flesh will be justified.
1. Through believing, we are joined to Christ and become one with Him—John 3:15.  
John 3:15 That every one who believes into Him may have <sup>1</sup>eternal life.
  2. Faith in Christ denotes an organic union with Him through believing; the term *in Christ* refers to this organic union—Gal. 2:17; 3:14, 28; 5:6.

- Gal 2:17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also have been found <sup>a</sup>sinners, is then Christ a <sup>1</sup>minister of sin? <sup>2b</sup>Absolutely not!
- Gal 3:14 In order that the <sup>1a</sup>blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus, that we might <sup>2c</sup>receive the <sup>d</sup>promise of the <sup>3e</sup>Spirit through <sup>f</sup>faith.
- Gal 3:28 There <sup>1</sup>cannot be <sup>2a</sup>Jew nor Greek, there cannot be <sup>3</sup>slave nor free man, there cannot be <sup>4b</sup>male and female; for you are all <sup>5c</sup>one <sup>d</sup>in Christ Jesus.
- Gal 5:6 For <sup>a</sup>in Christ Jesus neither <sup>b</sup>circumcision <sup>1</sup>avails anything nor uncircumcision, but <sup>c</sup>faith <sup>avails</sup>, <sup>2</sup>operating through <sup>3</sup>love.
3. Justification is not merely a matter of position; it is also an organic matter, a matter in life.
  4. It is by means of our organic union with Christ that God can reckon Christ as our righteousness; only in this way can we be justified by God—1 Cor. 1:30.
 

1 Cor 1:30 But <sup>1a</sup>of Him you are <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus, who became <sup>c</sup>wisdom to us from God: both <sup>2d</sup>righteousness and <sup>e</sup>sanctification and <sup>f</sup>redemption,

## II. Paul's gospel is the unique gospel, the complete gospel—Rom. 16:25:

- Rom 16:25 <sup>a</sup>Now to Him who is able to <sup>1b</sup>establish you according to <sup>2c</sup>my gospel, that is, the <sup>d</sup>proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the <sup>3e</sup>mystery, which has been kept in silence in the <sup>4</sup>times of the ages
- A. Paul's gospel includes all the aspects of the gospel in the four Gospels:
    1. In Matthew the goal of the gospel of the kingdom is to bring people into God to make them citizens of the kingdom of the heavens—28:19; 24:14; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:21.
 

Matt 28:19 Go <sup>1</sup>therefore and <sup>2</sup>disciple all the <sup>a</sup>nations, <sup>3</sup>baptizing them <sup>4</sup>into the <sup>5</sup>name of the <sup>6</sup>Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matt 24:14 And this <sup>1a</sup>gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a <sup>2</sup>testimony to all the nations, and then the <sup>3b</sup>end will come.

Rom 14:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but <sup>2b</sup>righteousness and <sup>c</sup>peace and <sup>d</sup>joy in the Holy Spirit.

Gal 5:21 <sup>a</sup>Envyings, <sup>1</sup>bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will <sup>b</sup>not <sup>2</sup>inherit the kingdom of God.
    2. In Mark the preaching of the gospel is to bring part of the old creation into the new creation—16:15-16; Rom. 8:20-21; Gal. 6:15.
 

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, Go into all the <sup>a</sup>world and <sup>1</sup>proclaim the gospel to <sup>2b</sup>all the creation.

Mark 16:16 He who <sup>1a</sup>believes and is <sup>b</sup>baptized shall be <sup>c</sup>saved, but he who does <sup>2d</sup>not believe shall be condemned.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was made subject to <sup>a</sup>vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected *it*,

Rom 8:21 In hope that the creation itself will also be <sup>1</sup>freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the <sup>a</sup>glory of the children of God.

Gal 6:15 For neither is <sup>1a</sup>circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a <sup>b</sup>new creation *is what matters*.
    3. In Luke we have the gospel of forgiveness to bring redeemed people back to the God-ordained blessing—24:46-47; 1:77-79; 2:30-32; Eph. 1:3, 7; Gal. 3:14.
 

Luke 24:46 And He said to them, Thus it is <sup>a</sup>written, that the Christ would <sup>b</sup>suffer and rise up from the dead on the <sup>c</sup>third day,

Luke 24:47 And that repentance for <sup>1a</sup>forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His <sup>b</sup>name to all the <sup>c</sup>nations, beginning from <sup>d</sup>Jerusalem.

Luke 1:77 To give knowledge of <sup>a</sup>salvation to His people by the <sup>b</sup>forgiveness of their sins,

Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful <sup>a</sup>compassions of our God, in which the rising <sup>1b</sup>sun will <sup>c</sup>visit us from on high,

Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in <sup>a</sup>darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of <sup>b</sup>peace.

Luke 2:30 For my eyes have seen Your <sup>1a</sup>salvation,

Luke 2:31 Which You have prepared before the face of all the peoples,

Luke 2:32 A <sup>1a</sup>light for revelation to the Gentiles and the <sup>b</sup>glory of Your people Israel.

- Eph 1:3 <sup>1a</sup>Blessed be the <sup>2b</sup>God and Father of <sup>3</sup>our Lord Jesus Christ, who has <sup>4</sup>blessed us <sup>5</sup>with every <sup>6</sup>spiritual <sup>7</sup>blessing in the <sup>8c</sup>heavenlies <sup>9</sup>in Christ,
- Eph 1:7 In whom we have <sup>1a</sup>redemption through His <sup>b</sup>blood, the <sup>2c</sup>forgiveness of <sup>d</sup>offenses, according to the <sup>e</sup>riches of His grace,
- Gal 3:14 In order that the <sup>1a</sup>blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus, that we might <sup>2c</sup>receive the <sup>d</sup>promise of the <sup>3c</sup>Spirit through <sup>f</sup>faith.
4. In John we have the eternal life so that we may bear fruit for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is Christ's increase—20:31; 15:16; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 12:4-5; Gal. 3:28; 4:19; 6:10, 16.
- John 20:31 But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the <sup>1a</sup>Christ, the <sup>b</sup>Son of God, and that <sup>e</sup>believing, you may have life in His name.
- John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I <sup>a</sup>chose you, and I <sup>1</sup>set you that you should <sup>2</sup>go forth and <sup>b</sup>bear fruit and <sup>3</sup>that your fruit should <sup>4</sup>remain, that whatever you <sup>5c</sup>ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:6 For <sup>4</sup>the mind set on the flesh is <sup>2</sup>death, but <sup>3</sup>the mind set on the spirit is <sup>a</sup>life and <sup>b</sup>peace.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in <sup>a</sup>one body we have <sup>b</sup>many members, and all the members do not have the <sup>c</sup>same <sup>1</sup>function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body <sup>1</sup>in Christ, and individually <sup>2a</sup>members one of another.
- Gal 3:28 There <sup>1</sup>cannot be <sup>2a</sup>Jew nor Greek, there cannot be <sup>3</sup>slave nor free man, there cannot be <sup>4b</sup>male and female; for you are all <sup>5c</sup>one <sup>d</sup>in Christ Jesus.
- Gal 4:19 My <sup>1a</sup>children, with whom I <sup>2b</sup>travail again in birth until <sup>3c</sup>Christ is <sup>4</sup>formed <sup>d</sup>in you,
- Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is <sup>1a</sup>good toward all, but especially toward those of the <sup>2b</sup>household of the <sup>3c</sup>faith.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as <sup>1</sup>walk by this <sup>2a</sup>rule, <sup>3b</sup>peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the <sup>4c</sup>Israel of God.

B. Paul's gospel is the center of the New Testament revelation—Rom. 1:1, 9:

- Rom 1:1 <sup>1</sup>Paul, a <sup>2</sup>slave of <sup>3</sup>Christ <sup>4</sup>Jesus, a <sup>5</sup>called <sup>6</sup>apostle, <sup>7</sup>separated <sup>8</sup>unto the <sup>9</sup>gospel of God,
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I <sup>1</sup>serve in my <sup>2</sup>spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
1. Paul's gospel is a revelation of the Triune God, processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 3:2, 5, 14.
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam *became* a <sup>e</sup>life-giving Spirit.
- 2 Cor 3:17 <sup>1</sup>And the <sup>2</sup>Lord is the <sup>3a</sup>Spirit; and where the <sup>4b</sup>Spirit of the Lord is, there is <sup>5c</sup>freedom.
- Gal 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you <sup>1</sup>receive the <sup>2a</sup>Spirit out of the <sup>3b</sup>works of law or out of the <sup>c</sup>hearing of <sup>d</sup>faith?
- Gal 3:5 He therefore who <sup>1</sup>bountifully <sup>a</sup>supplies to you the <sup>2b</sup>Spirit and <sup>3c</sup>does <sup>4d</sup>works of power among you, *does He do it* out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Gal 3:14 In order that the <sup>1a</sup>blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles <sup>b</sup>in Christ Jesus, that we might <sup>2c</sup>receive the <sup>d</sup>promise of the <sup>3c</sup>Spirit through <sup>f</sup>faith.
2. Paul's gospel is centered on the Triune God being our life in order to be one with us and to make us one with Him, that we may be the Body of Christ to express Christ in a corporate way—Rom. 8:11; 12:4-5; Eph. 1:22-23.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in <sup>a</sup>one body we have <sup>b</sup>many members, and all the members do not have the <sup>c</sup>same <sup>1</sup>function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body <sup>1</sup>in Christ, and individually <sup>2a</sup>members one of another.
- Eph 1:22 And He <sup>1a</sup>subjected all things under His feet and <sup>2</sup>gave Him <sup>3</sup>to be <sup>b</sup>Head over all things to the <sup>4c</sup>church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His <sup>1a</sup>Body, the <sup>2b</sup>fullness of the One who <sup>3c</sup>fills all in all.

### III. Paul's gospel includes the entire book of Romans—2:16; 16:25:

Rom 2:16 In the day when God judges the secrets of men according to my gospel <sup>a</sup>through Jesus Christ.

Rom 16:25 <sup>a</sup>Now to Him who is able to <sup>1b</sup>establish you according to <sup>2c</sup>my gospel, that is, the <sup>d</sup>proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the <sup>3e</sup>mystery, which has been kept in silence in the <sup>4</sup>times of the ages

A. The gospel of God, as the subject of the book of Romans, concerns Christ as the Spirit living within the believers after His resurrection—8:10-11:

Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.

Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

1. This is higher and more subjective than what was presented in the Gospels, which mainly concern Christ in the flesh as He lived among His disciples after His incarnation but before His death and resurrection—John 1:14; 14:17.

John 1:14 And the <sup>1</sup>Word became <sup>2a</sup>flesh and <sup>3b</sup>tabernacled among us (and <sup>4c</sup>we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten <sup>5</sup>from the Father), full of <sup>6d</sup>grace and <sup>e</sup>reality.

John 14:17 *Even* the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because <sup>2</sup>He abides with you and shall be <sup>3b</sup>in you.

2. The Epistle to the Romans reveals that Christ has resurrected and has become the life-giving Spirit, and as such, He is no longer merely the Christ outside the believers, but He is now the Christ within them—8:9-11.

Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God <sup>2</sup>dwells in you. Yet <sup>3</sup>if anyone does not have the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of Christ, he is not <sup>5</sup>of Him.

Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.

Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

3. The gospel in the book of Romans is the gospel of the One who is now indwelling His believers as their subjective Savior—1:3-4, 15-16; 8:10.

Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,

Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

Rom 1:15 So, for my part, I am ready to announce the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the <sup>1</sup>power of God unto <sup>2</sup>salvation to every one who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek.

Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.

B. The entire book of Romans, from chapter 1 on the person of Jesus Christ the God-man and on the righteousness of God to chapter 16 on the local churches as the expression of the Body of Christ, is the gospel of God in its completeness—1:1, 3-4, 9, 16-17; 12:4-5; 16:1, 4, 16.

Rom 1, 16 (be omitted)

Rom 1:1 <sup>1</sup>Paul, a <sup>2</sup>slave of <sup>3</sup>Christ <sup>4</sup>Jesus, a <sup>5</sup>called <sup>6</sup>apostle, <sup>7</sup>separated <sup>8</sup>unto the <sup>9</sup>gospel of God,

Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,

Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I <sup>1</sup>serve in my <sup>2</sup>spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the <sup>1</sup>power of God unto <sup>2</sup>salvation to every one who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek.

- Rom 1:17 For the <sup>1a</sup>righteousness of God is revealed in it <sup>2</sup>out of faith to faith, as it is written, "<sup>b</sup>But the righteous shall <sup>3</sup>have life and live by <sup>4</sup>faith."
- Rom 12:4 For just as in <sup>a</sup>one body we have <sup>b</sup>many members, and all the members do not have the <sup>c</sup>same <sup>1</sup>function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body <sup>1</sup>in Christ, and individually <sup>2a</sup>members one of another.
- Rom 16:1 I <sup>1</sup>commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a <sup>a</sup>deaconess of the <sup>2</sup>church which is in <sup>b</sup>Cenchrea,
- Rom 16:4 Who <sup>1</sup>risked their own necks for my <sup>2</sup>life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the <sup>3a</sup>churches of the Gentiles;
- Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the <sup>1a</sup>churches of Christ greet you.
- C. As revealed in Romans, Paul's gospel is a gospel of sonship—8:14, 29; Gal. 3:26; 4:7:
- Rom 8:14 For as many as are <sup>1</sup>led by the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of God, these are <sup>3a</sup>sons of God.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Gal 3:26 For you are all <sup>1a</sup>sons of God through <sup>2b</sup>faith <sup>c</sup>in Christ Jesus.
- Gal 4:7 So then you are <sup>1</sup>no longer a <sup>a</sup>slave but a <sup>2</sup>son; and if a son, an <sup>3b</sup>heir also <sup>4</sup>through God.
- The central concept of the gospel of God is related to the Son of God, and God's intention is to bring many sons into glory—Rom. 1:3-4; 8:3, 29; Heb. 2:10.
 

Rom 1:3 Concerning <sup>1</sup>His Son, who <sup>2</sup>came <sup>3</sup>out of the <sup>4a</sup>seed of David according to the <sup>5</sup>flesh,

Rom 1:4 Who was <sup>1</sup>designated the <sup>2a</sup>Son of God in <sup>3</sup>power according to the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of <sup>5</sup>holiness <sup>6</sup>out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;

Rom 8:3 For that which the <sup>1</sup>law could <sup>2</sup>not do, in that it was <sup>a</sup>weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the <sup>3</sup>likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting <sup>a</sup>for <sup>1</sup>Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading <sup>2b</sup>many sons into <sup>3c</sup>glory, to make the <sup>4d</sup>Author of their <sup>e</sup>salvation <sup>5f</sup>perfect through sufferings.
  - God predestinated us unto sonship; the choosing of God's people to be holy is for the purpose of their being made sons of God, participating in the divine sonship—Eph. 1:4-5; Rom. 8:28-30.
 

Eph 1:4 Even as He <sup>1a</sup>chose us in Him <sup>2b</sup>before the foundation of the world to be <sup>3c</sup>holy and <sup>4</sup>without blemish <sup>5</sup>before Him <sup>6</sup>in <sup>7d</sup>love,

Eph 1:5 <sup>1a</sup>Predestinating us unto <sup>2b</sup>sonship <sup>3</sup>through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the <sup>4c</sup>good pleasure of His <sup>d</sup>will,

Rom 8:28 And we know that <sup>1</sup>all things <sup>2</sup>work together for <sup>3</sup>good to those who <sup>4</sup>love God, to those who are <sup>a</sup>called according to *His* <sup>5</sup>purpose.

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;

Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1a</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2b</sup>glorified.
- D. We need to preach the gospel in Romans in a way that will cause people to realize the following:
- That once they believe in the Lord, their sins will be forgiven, and they will be redeemed and justified by God, reconciled to God, and accepted by God—3:20, 23-28; 5:1-2, 8, 10, 17.
 

Rom 3:20 Because <sup>a</sup>out of the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before Him; for <sup>b</sup>through the law is the clear knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:23 For <sup>a</sup>all have sinned and fall short of the <sup>1</sup>glory of God,

Rom 3:24 Being <sup>1</sup>justified <sup>2</sup>freely by His grace through the <sup>3</sup>redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Rom 3:25 Whom God <sup>1</sup>set forth as a <sup>2a</sup>propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God <sup>3</sup>passed over the sins that had previously occurred,

Rom 3:26 With a view to the demonstrating of His righteousness in the present time, so that He might be righteous and the One who <sup>1</sup>justifies him who is of the <sup>2</sup>faith of Jesus.

- Rom 3:27 Where then is boasting? <sup>1</sup>It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, but through the law of faith.
- Rom 3:28 For we account that <sup>a</sup>a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.
- Rom 5:1 Therefore having been <sup>a</sup>justified out of faith, we have <sup>b</sup>peace <sup>1</sup>toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- Rom 5:2 Through whom also we have obtained access by <sup>1</sup>faith into this <sup>2a</sup>grace in which we <sup>3</sup>stand and <sup>4</sup>boast because of the <sup>5b</sup>hope of the <sup>c</sup>glory of God.
- Rom 5:8 But God commends His own <sup>a</sup>love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ <sup>b</sup>died for us.
- Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were <sup>1a</sup>reconciled to God through the death of His Son, <sup>2</sup>much more we will be <sup>3</sup>saved <sup>4</sup>in His <sup>5b</sup>life, having been reconciled,
- Rom 5:17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the <sup>1</sup>abundance of grace and of the gift of <sup>2</sup>righteousness will <sup>3</sup>reign in <sup>4</sup>life through the One, Jesus Christ.
2. That they will be regenerated in the spirit, have God's life and nature, and have God dwelling in them to renew and transform them so that they may be conformed to the image of God's Son and eventually reach the maturity in life and be fully glorified as sons of God—8:2, 9-11, 16, 29-30.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God <sup>2</sup>dwells in you. Yet <sup>3</sup>if anyone does not have the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of Christ, he is not <sup>5</sup>of Him.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself <sup>a</sup>witnesses <sup>1</sup>with <sup>2</sup>our <sup>b</sup>spirit that <sup>3</sup>we are <sup>c</sup>children of God.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1a</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2b</sup>glorified.
3. That although they are sinners, they will become sons of God and members of Christ, coordinating together to constitute the Body of Christ, which is the testimony and the expression of Christ expressed practically on earth as the local churches—12:1-2, 4-5, 11; 16:1, 4, 16.
- Rom 12:1 <sup>1</sup>I <sup>2a</sup>exhort you therefore, brothers, through the <sup>3b</sup>compassions of God to <sup>4c</sup>present your bodies a <sup>5</sup>living <sup>d</sup>sacrifice, holy, <sup>e</sup>well pleasing to God, *which is* your <sup>6</sup>reasonable <sup>7f</sup>service.
- Rom 12:2 And do <sup>1</sup>not be <sup>a</sup>fashioned according to <sup>2</sup>this <sup>b</sup>age, but be <sup>3c</sup>transformed by the <sup>4d</sup>renewing of the <sup>e</sup>mind that you may <sup>5f</sup>prove what the <sup>6g</sup>will of God is, that which is good and <sup>h</sup>well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in <sup>a</sup>one body we have <sup>b</sup>many members, and all the members do not have the <sup>c</sup>same <sup>1</sup>function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body <sup>1</sup>in Christ, and individually <sup>2a</sup>members one of another.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, *but* be <sup>1a</sup>burning in spirit, <sup>2b</sup>serving the Lord.
- Rom 16:1 I <sup>1</sup>commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a <sup>a</sup>deaconess of the <sup>2</sup>church which is in <sup>b</sup>Cenchrea,
- Rom 16:4 Who <sup>1</sup>risked their own necks for my <sup>2</sup>life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the <sup>3a</sup>churches of the Gentiles;
- Rom 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the <sup>1a</sup>churches of Christ greet you.

#### IV. The center of Paul's gospel is Romans 8, which concerns the dispensing of the Triune God as life into the tripartite man—vv. 2, 6, 10-11:

Rom 8 (be omitted)

Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.

- Rom 8:6 For <sup>1</sup>the mind set on the flesh is <sup>2</sup>death, but <sup>3</sup>the mind set on the spirit is <sup>a</sup>life and <sup>b</sup>peace.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- A. The Bible reveals the mystery of God, the mystery of the universe, the mystery of man, the mystery of the church, and the mystery of the future; within the Bible, Romans 8 is the mystery of all mysteries, for it particularly unveils and explains these five mysteries—vv. 1-2, 4, 6, 9-11, 17-25, 28-30.
- Rom 8:1 There is <sup>1</sup>now then no <sup>2</sup>condemnation to those who are <sup>3</sup>in Christ Jesus.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be <sup>1</sup>fulfilled in us, who do not <sup>2a</sup>walk according to the flesh but according to the <sup>3</sup>spirit.
- Rom 8:6 For <sup>1</sup>the mind set on the flesh is <sup>2</sup>death, but <sup>3</sup>the mind set on the spirit is <sup>a</sup>life and <sup>b</sup>peace.
- Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God <sup>2</sup>dwells in you. Yet <sup>3</sup>if anyone does not have the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of Christ, he is not <sup>5</sup>of Him.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 8:17 And <sup>1</sup>if children, <sup>a</sup>heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we <sup>b</sup>suffer with *Him* that we may also be <sup>c</sup>glorified with *Him*.
- Rom 8:18 For I <sup>1</sup>consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming <sup>a</sup>glory to be revealed <sup>2</sup>upon us.
- Rom 8:19 For the <sup>1</sup>anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the <sup>2</sup>revelation of the sons of God.
- Rom 8:20 For the creation was made subject to <sup>a</sup>vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected *it*,
- Rom 8:21 In hope that the creation itself will also be <sup>1</sup>freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the <sup>a</sup>glory of the children of God.
- Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now.
- Rom 8:23 And not only *so*, but we ourselves also, who have <sup>1</sup>the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves <sup>2</sup>groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting <sup>3a</sup>sonship, the <sup>b</sup>redemption of our body.
- Rom 8:24 For we were saved in <sup>a</sup>hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees?
- Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await *it* through endurance.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that <sup>1</sup>all things <sup>2</sup>work together for <sup>3</sup>good to those who <sup>4</sup>love God, to those who are <sup>a</sup>called according to *His* <sup>5</sup>purpose.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1a</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2b</sup>glorified.
- B. Romans 8 reveals the focal point of God’s economy—that in eternity past God purposed to enter into His chosen and redeemed people so that He could be their life and they could be His corporate expression—vv. 10-11, 28-30.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 8:28 And we know that <sup>1</sup>all things <sup>2</sup>work together for <sup>3</sup>good to those who <sup>4</sup>love God, to those who are <sup>a</sup>called according to *His* <sup>5</sup>purpose.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated *to be* <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also <sup>1a</sup>justified; and those whom He justified, these He also <sup>2b</sup>glorified.

- C. Romans 8, an experiential chapter, speaks about the Triune God in the experience of the Christian life—vv. 2, 10-11.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- D. The law of the Spirit of life is uniquely revealed in Romans 8; the law of the Spirit of life is the Triune God in motion; when the Triune God moves within us, He is the law of the Spirit of life—vv. 2, 10-11.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- E. Romans 8 concerns the wonderful, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the Triune God; this Spirit will make us exactly the same as Christ is in life, nature, and expression—vv. 2, 9, 11, 13-14, 16, 23.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the <sup>1a</sup>Spirit of God <sup>2</sup>dwells in you. Yet <sup>3</sup>if anyone does not have the <sup>4</sup>Spirit of Christ, he is not <sup>5</sup>of Him.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>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 <sup>1</sup>die, but if by the Spirit you <sup>2a</sup>put to death the <sup>3</sup>practices of the body, you will live.
- Rom 8:14 For as many as are <sup>1</sup>led by the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of God, these are <sup>3a</sup>sons of God.
- Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself <sup>a</sup>witnesses <sup>1</sup>with <sup>2</sup>our <sup>b</sup>spirit that <sup>3</sup>we are <sup>c</sup>children of God.
- Rom 8:23 And not only *so*, but we ourselves also, who have <sup>1</sup>the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves <sup>2</sup>groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting <sup>3a</sup>sonship, the <sup>b</sup>redemption of our body.
- F. The purpose of the all-inclusive Spirit being life to our spirit, mind, and body is that we would be conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son; this conformation is the goal of the working of the divine life within us—vv. 2, 6, 10-11, 29.
- Rom 8:2 For the <sup>1a</sup>law of the <sup>2</sup>Spirit of <sup>3</sup>life has <sup>4</sup>freed <sup>5</sup>me in Christ Jesus from the <sup>6</sup>law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:6 For <sup>1</sup>the mind set on the flesh is <sup>2</sup>death, but <sup>3</sup>the mind set on the spirit is <sup>a</sup>life and <sup>b</sup>peace.
- Rom 8:10 But if <sup>1a</sup>Christ is <sup>2</sup>in you, though the <sup>3</sup>body is <sup>4</sup>dead because of sin, the <sup>5</sup>spirit is <sup>6</sup>life because of <sup>7</sup>righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the <sup>1</sup>Spirit of <sup>2</sup>the One who raised Jesus from the dead <sup>3a</sup>dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also <sup>4b</sup>give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated to be <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- G. Romans 8 is central because it concerns God's goal and our destiny—conformation to the image of the firstborn Son of God; eventually, we will be fully conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son for the eternal, corporate expression of the Triune God—v. 29; 12:4-5; Rev. 21:10-11.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He <sup>1</sup>foreknew, He also <sup>2a</sup>predestinated to be <sup>3</sup>conformed to the <sup>b</sup>image of His Son, that He might be the <sup>4c</sup>Firstborn among <sup>5</sup>many <sup>d</sup>brothers;
- Rom 12:4 For just as in <sup>a</sup>one body we have <sup>b</sup>many members, and all the members do not have the <sup>c</sup>same <sup>1</sup>function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body <sup>1</sup>in Christ, and individually <sup>2a</sup>members one of another.

- Rev 21:10 And he <sup>a</sup>carried me away <sup>b</sup>in spirit onto a <sup>1</sup>great and high mountain and showed me the <sup>c</sup>holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- Rev 21:11 Having the <sup>1a</sup>glory of God. Her <sup>2b</sup>light was like a most <sup>3c</sup>precious stone, like a <sup>4d</sup>jasper stone, as clear as <sup>e</sup>crystal.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### PAUL'S GOSPEL INCLUDING THE ENTIRE BOOK OF ROMANS

The book of Romans has four stations. Chapters one through four are the first station, which is justification. Chapters five through eight are the second station, the station of sanctification. Chapters nine through twelve are the third station, the station of the Body of Christ, because chapter twelve says that as members the believers are becoming one Body. Chapters thirteen through sixteen are the last station, the station of the church life, because chapter sixteen mentions the local churches in different places, such as the church in Cenchrea, the church in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, and the churches of the Gentiles.

In the past nineteen centuries many people have studied Romans, but none of them was able to say that the last station of this book is on the local churches. The book of Romans is concerning the gospel of God (1:1-4). As sinners, we need justification and then sanctification. Sanctification is transformation, which constitutes us into the Body of Christ. This Body is expressed as churches in different localities. This is the subject of Romans. The *Life-study of Romans* takes this line as its center and speaks of numerous truths in a clear way. Now a life-study of the entire New Testament has been accomplished. We have to encourage the churches in every place to study the life-studies carefully, because the life-studies are full of diamonds.

For example, although we all have read Romans 8, we may not be clear concerning what it talks about. Now the *Life-study of Romans* tells us clearly that the subject of Romans 8 is that the Triune God is dispensing Himself into the tripartite man. If you could ask Martin Luther about the subject of Romans, he would tell you that Romans speaks about justification. His explanation would stop at only the first station. Hence, we all have to diligently learn the truth. This is what is meant by the Chinese saying, "Reading is always beneficial." As long as we open the life-study messages and study them every day, regardless of what chapters or verses they cover, we will profit from them.

Today the reason that the gospel of the Lord cannot be spread is that we do not know the truth. The truth is the gospel. If we speak the truth in every place, we are in fact preaching the gospel in every place. The entire Bible is the gospel of God, but it seems that we do not understand this. Now we have to turn this situation around so that all the saints among us will know how to speak the truth and preach the gospel. This will provide the Lord a broad way to fulfill His desire. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 100-101)

### THE COMPLETE AND FULL GOSPEL OF GOD

The four pillars in the Lord's recovery are the truth, life, the church, and the gospel. The truth brings us life, life produces the church, and the church is responsible for the preaching of the gospel.

Christians today have a very superficial view of the gospel. They think that the gospel tells people that they are sinners and will perish after death but that God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son to save them—He was crucified to bear the sin of the world—so that if they repent and believe in Him, they will not perish but will have eternal life and enjoy peace in the future, and they will also enjoy prosperity and peace in this age. We cannot say that this kind of a gospel is wrong, but it is superficial and very poor.

The book of Romans, written by the apostle Paul, consists of sixteen chapters, and each chapter contains the gospel. In 1:14-15 Paul says that he is a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to foolish, and that, for his part, he is ready to announce the gospel to the Gentiles. In the gospel Paul preached, which is the whole book of Romans, there is no mention of perdition, heaven, or prosperity and peace. Instead, Paul first speaks of justification, then sanctification, then the Body of

Christ, and last of the local churches in every place. This means that even the local churches are a part of the gospel.

We must see that if what we preach is merely about escaping perdition and going to “heaven,” then we are preaching the poorest gospel. We must preach the gospel in a way that allows people to clearly see that once they believe in the Lord, their sins will be forgiven, and they will be redeemed and justified by God, reconciled to God, and accepted by God. They should also see that at the same time they will be regenerated in their spirit, have God’s life and nature, and have God dwelling in their spirit to renew them day by day and transform them moment by moment. This is so that they may be conformed to the image of His Son and eventually reach the maturity in life and be fully glorified as the sons of God. Furthermore, they should see that although they are sinners, they will become sons of God. At the same time, they are members of Christ, coordinating together to constitute the Body of Christ, which is the testimony, the riches, and the expression of Christ expressed practically on the earth as the local churches. This is the gospel in Romans.

In the New Testament there are not only the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John but also the gospels of Acts and Romans. In Romans 1 Paul tells us that he preached this book as the gospel to the Romans, the Gentiles. This book is concerning the complete gospel of God, beginning with forgiveness of sins, passing through sanctification, transformation, and the constitution of the Body of Christ, and eventually arriving at the living of the church life in the churches.

Romans 8 is the center of Paul’s gospel, which is concerning the Triune God dispensing Himself into the tripartite man. Hence, in this chapter Paul mentions the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (vv. 9-11). God is the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—for the purpose of dispensing Himself into man. We human beings are tripartite, having a spirit, soul, and body. Our mind occupies a great part of our soul. Romans 8 tells us that the Triune God first enters into our spirit (v. 10), then saturates our mind from our spirit, that is, enters into our soul (v. 6), and then enters into our body, giving life to our mortal bodies (v. 11). In this way, our tripartite being—our spirit, soul, and body—is filled with God. This is the center of Romans 8 and of the entire book of Romans as well. This is the gospel of God.

Do not think that the gospel is one thing and that the truth is another thing. The truth is the gospel, and our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the gospel. To preach the gospel is not to tell people about escaping perdition and going to heaven nor to tell them about prosperity and peace. It is to tell people about God, about Christ Jesus, and about the church. In other words, to preach the gospel is to tell people that God wants to enter into man and make sinners sons of God, that these sons of God are living members of Christ for the constitution of the church, and that these ones are in the church, which is expressed in different localities, so that they can live the church life in the local churches. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord’s Recovery*, pp. 121-123)

### **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD**

Fourth, the life of God continuously renews and transforms us so that eventually we who are transformed by Him may be conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29). The Lord Jesus originally was God’s only begotten Son; at that time, within Him there was only divinity, with no humanity. It was not until He became the Son of Man, putting on the flesh, that He had humanity. But this part, His humanity, was still not the Son of God. When He was crucified on the cross, His humanity was brought to death, passed through resurrection, and was uplifted to be brought into divinity. Through this, the part that was His humanity also became the Son of God. Now, He is the firstborn Son of God, having both divinity and humanity. Moreover, we who believed in Him and were regenerated became God’s many sons (Rom. 8:19). He is the Firstborn, with divinity plus humanity; we are the many sons, with humanity plus divinity. He and we, we and He, both have the divine and human natures.

Before we were saved, we were persons living merely in our humanity. Some people do things by their reasoning, and they are able to suppress themselves in not getting angry, nor talking loosely;

they are proper and ethical people. There are also some whose will is not that strong, who do things foolishly, who always make mistakes and get upset. Regardless of whether we are proper or not, ethical or not, we have only humanity, and no divinity. But one day we believed in Jesus; the Son of God as the life-giving Spirit came into us. As soon as He came in, we who believed in Jesus, regardless of whether we were good or evil, had divinity added into our humanity. Therefore, in actuality, we Christians all have a double character. The first character is our original nature, our human nature; the second character is the added nature of God. If we pray and contact the Lord adequately, the divine nature within will increase, and we will be able to live out a superior living.

We all have this experience. Once this Jesus has entered into us, He will by no means go out. You may not want Him, but He still wants you; you may not like Him, but He still likes you. Within us He is full of grace, desiring to work on us in every way in order to sanctify, renew, and transform us step by step so that eventually we will be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God, so that we will be exactly like Christ. Christ the firstborn Son was simply divinity living in humanity expressing the divine attributes. It is the same with us, with humanity mingled with divinity; it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. Also, we live out this Christ from within us. The living of us the many sons is identical with that of Christ the Firstborn; our humanity lives by divinity so that the divine attributes may be expressed in the human virtues to the extent that we are full of the glory and beauty of divinity. In this way, Christ the Son of God can be the Firstborn among God's many sons so that God may obtain the corporate expression of His firstborn Son with the many sons for the accomplishing of His original purpose of creation.

We were created in His image by the Triune God. Now through the redemption and salvation of the Triune God, every one of us one day will be conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son. Thus, God's firstborn Son with the many sons will constitute God's corporate expression. This also accomplishes God's original purpose of creation, that is, that man may have God's image and, by God's life, live Him out to express Him. Moreover, He desires those who are saved by His life to express the glory and beauty of His divine attributes in their human virtues. When we who died with Christ and live with Him express the glory and beauty of the divine attributes, such as love, light, holiness, righteousness, patience, and humility, in our human virtues, God will obtain an unsurpassing glory through this. In this way, we are corporately conformed to the image of the firstborn Son. (*Conformation to the Image of the Son of God*, pp. 20-22)