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## THE WILL OF GOD

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# THE WILL OF GOD

(Friday—First Morning Session)

## Message One

### **The Mystery of God’s Will in the Universe Ultimately Being to Head Up All Things in Christ through the Church as the Body of Christ**

RK *Hymns*: 981

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:5, 9-11; 3:11; 5:17; Col. 1:9; Rev. 4:11; 21:1-2, 9-11

- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.
- Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

#### **I. We need to understand what the will of the Lord is—Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9.**

- Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

#### **II. God’s will is what He wants and what He intends to accomplish—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11:**

- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- A. God has an eternal will, which is the source of His eternal purpose—v. 11; 3:11.
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- B. Since God is eternal, without beginning or ending, His will is also eternal; it lies at the heart of the origin of the universe—Rev. 4:11.
- Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power,

for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.

- C. God created all things for His will so that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose—Eph. 3:11.  
Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- D. The will of God is concentrated in Christ and is for Christ to have the first place in all things; Christ is everything in God's eternal will—Col. 1:15-18; 3:4, 10-11.  
Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,  
Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.  
Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;  
Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;  
Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.  
Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,  
Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- E. God wants to have Christ with the church; the will of God is to obtain the church as the Body of Christ—Eph. 5:32; 1:9, 22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.  
Eph 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.  
Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,  
Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,  
Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.  
Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;  
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.  
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- F. God in Christ as the Spirit is now working within us to accomplish His eternal will to have the New Jerusalem—the wife of the Lamb filled with the glory of God for His eternal expression in the new heaven and new earth—Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:14-21; Rev. 21:1-2, 9-11.  
Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.  
Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,  
Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,  
Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,  
Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,  
Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are  
Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.  
Eph 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,  
Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.  
Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.  
Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,  
 Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

### **III. According to the good pleasure of His will, God predestinated us unto sonship—Eph. 1:5:**

- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- A. God has a will, in which is His good pleasure; God’s good pleasure is of His will and is embodied in His will, so His will comes first—vv. 5, 9, 11.  
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
 Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,  
 Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- B. God’s good pleasure is what makes God happy—it is the desire of His heart; the living, loving, and purposeful God surely has a heart’s desire—v. 5.  
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- C. God predestinated us to be His sons according to His pleasure, according to the desire of His heart—v. 5:  
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
1. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us to be holy; to be made holy—to be sanctified by God through His dispensing Himself into us and then mingling His nature with us—is the process, the procedure—v. 4.  
 Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
  2. To be sons of God is the aim, the goal, and is a matter of our being joined to the Son of God and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God so that our whole being may be “sonized” by God—v. 5; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15.  
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
 Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;  
 Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

### **IV. We have been “predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will”—Eph. 1:11:**

- A. God’s will is His intention, and God’s counsel is His consideration of the way to accomplish His will, His intention.
- B. According to His will, a council was held by the Trinity before the foundation of the world to make a counsel, a decision, which is His determined will—1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:11.  
 1 Pet 1:20 Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,  
 Rev 13:8 And all those dwelling on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world.  
 Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

**V. God’s will was hidden in Him as a mystery, so Ephesians 1:9 speaks of “the mystery of His will”:**

- A. In eternity God had a will, but this will was hidden in Him; hence, it was a mystery—v. 9; 3:3-5, 9.
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 3:3 That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- B. In the pleasure of His heart and in His wisdom and prudence, God made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—1:9; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3-4; 4:25; 8:3, 34.
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
- Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
- Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.
- Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

**VI. Ultimately, God’s will in the universe is to head up all things in Christ through the church as the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:10, 22-23; Rev. 21:1-2:**

- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- A. God’s eternal intention is, in the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, who has been appointed to be the universal Head—Eph. 1:10, 22.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- B. Through the dispensations of God in all the ages, all things will be headed up in Christ in the new heaven and new earth; this will be God’s eternal administration and economy—Rev. 21:1-2.
- Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- C. Satan’s goal is to corrupt God’s creation and to cause confusion—Rom. 8:19-23:
- Rom 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.

- Rom 8:20 For the creation was made subject to 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 freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the 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 the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.
1. The entire universe is a heap of collapse caused by Satan injecting himself as the factor of death into God's creation—Heb. 2:14; Rom. 8:20-21.
    - Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
    - Rom 8:20 For the creation was made subject to 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 freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
  2. God is working to liberate His creation from bondage and to bring it into liberty by heading up all things in Christ—Eph. 1:22, 10.
    - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
    - Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
  3. We all need to be delivered from the heap of collapse and headed up in Christ—Col. 1:12-13.
    - Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
    - Col 1:13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
  4. God's salvation is to save us not only from our fallen, sinful condition but also from the heap of collapse—vv. 12-13; Eph. 2:1-8, 21-22.
    - Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
    - Col 1:13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,
    - Eph 2:1 And you, though dead in your offenses and sins,
    - Eph 2:2 In which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience;
    - Eph 2:3 Among whom we also all conducted ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest;
    - Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
    - Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
    - Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,
    - Eph 2:7 That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
    - Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;
    - Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
    - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- D. God will subject all things under Christ by heading up all things in Christ through the church as the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 15:20-28:
- 1 Cor 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen



- asleep.
- 1 Cor 15:21 For since through man came death, through man also came the resurrection of the dead.
- 1 Cor 15:22 For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.
- 1 Cor 15:23 But each one in his own order: the firstfruits, Christ; then those who are Christ's at His coming;
- 1 Cor 15:24 Then the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to His God and Father, once He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.
- 1 Cor 15:25 For He must reign until God puts all His enemies under His feet.
- 1 Cor 15:26 Death, the last enemy, is being abolished.
- 1 Cor 15:27 For He has subjected all things under His feet. But when He says that all things are subjected, it is evident that all things are except Him who has subjected all things to Him.
- 1 Cor 15:28 And when all things have been subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to Him who has subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.
1. God is heading up His chosen ones to be the Body of Christ with Christ as the Head—  
Eph. 1:4, 22-23:
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- a. Christ's headship is being transmitted to the church; this means that, in a sense, we can share the headship of Christ over all things.
- b. The church is under nothing but Christ Himself; we are above everything else because we are the Body of the One who is over all things.
- c. The first step in the heading up of all things in Christ is for God to bring His chosen ones, His sons, out of the universal collapse and to place them under the headship of Christ—v. 22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10, 19.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 5:23 For a husband is head of the wife as also Christ is Head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body.
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- Col 2:10 And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
2. When the church takes the lead to be headed up in Christ, God has a way to head up all other things—Eph. 1:22-23, 10:
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- a. The church is the vessel used by God to solve His problems and to fulfill His purpose, which is to manifest Himself through man by mingling Himself with man—3:9-11.
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

- Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- b. Eventually, the Body with Christ as the Head will be the universal Head over all things—1:22-23.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
3. The church life is a life of being headed up—4:15; 1 Cor. 11:3:
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- 1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.
- a. In the proper church life we are being headed up in Christ.
- b. If we do not know what it is to be headed up in Christ, we cannot know the church.
- c. In the church life we are taking the lead to be headed up in Christ; for this we need to grow in life—Eph. 4:15.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- d. We are headed up through the divine dispensing—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 1:1; 3:2, 9, 16-17.
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:
- Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- e. God is working Himself into His chosen and redeemed ones through an administration that is a sweet dispensing, an intimate stewardship, a comfortable household arrangement—1:10; 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- E. The heading up in the church life is by life and light— John 1:4; 8:12:
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
1. God's way of recovery is Christ versus Satan, life versus death, light versus darkness, and order versus confusion.



2. The collapse comes from the factor of death; the heading up comes from the factor of life—Ezek. 37:4-10.
  - Ezek 37:4 Then He said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah.
  - Ezek 37:5 Thus says the Lord Jehovah to these bones: I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.
  - Ezek 37:6 And I will put sinews on you and bring flesh back on you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you will know that I am Jehovah.
  - Ezek 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.
  - Ezek 37:8 And I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh came back, and skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.
  - Ezek 37:9 Then He said to me, Prophecy to the wind; prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.
  - Ezek 37:10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them; and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.
3. God's way to recover the oneness among His creation is to impart Himself into us as life—Rom. 8:6, 10-11, 19-21.
  - Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
  - Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
  - Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
  - Rom 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.
  - Rom 8:20 For the creation was made subject to 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 freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
4. In order to be delivered from the heap of collapse in a practical way, we need to grow in life; the more we grow in life, the more we will be headed up and the more we will be rescued from the universal collapse—Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:19.
  - Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
  - Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
5. When God comes into us as life, the light of life shines within us— John 1:4; Eph. 5:8-9:
  - John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
  - Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
  - Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
    - a. This life swallows death, and this light dispels the darkness— John 8:12.
      - John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
    - b. If we are in the life and under the light, we will be delivered out of confusion and brought into order, harmony, and oneness.
- F. In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center, all things will be headed up in Christ; this will be the complete fulfillment of Ephesians 1:10—Rev. 21:2-3, 23-25; 22:1-2a:
  - Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- Rev 21:24 And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- Rev 21:25 And its gates shall by no means be shut by day, for there will be no night there.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2a And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; ...
1. In the New Jerusalem everything will be saturated with life and will be under light—v. 1; 21:23.
    - Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
    - Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
  2. In Revelation 21 we see the Head, the Body surrounding the Head, and all the nations walking in the light of the city; the whole universe will be headed up in the light shown through the transparent city—v. 18.
    - Rev 21 be omitted.
    - Rev 21:18 And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **THE MYSTERY HAVING BEEN HIDDEN THROUGH THE AGES**

In this message we come to the mystery of God's will. God's will has a mystery, a mystery that has been hidden through the ages (Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26). The universe is a mystery. Why is there a heaven, and why does the earth exist? Why are there so many millions of items in the universe? Why is man here on earth? All these questions are mysteries and have given rise to many different philosophies. The mystery, which is the will of God, has been made known to the church through the apostles. A will is an intention, and the will of God is God's intention. God's intention is intimately related to the desire of His heart. Thus, the mystery of the universe is a matter of God's will, which is related to the desire of God's heart. We need to know the mystery, the will of God, and the desire of God's heart.

Some may say that God's will and intention is to have the church and that the church is the desire of His heart. This is correct, but we need to ask what the church is. Many Christians, including Christian teachers, do not have a clear understanding concerning the church. The church is not simply a group of people. In ourselves we are not the church; we are pitiful sinners. The only way we can become the church is for God in His Son to work Himself into our being. Most Christians today do not see the crucial and vital matter that God in His Son is working Himself into His chosen and redeemed ones. They may know about God's selection and redemption, and they may realize that they are the chosen and redeemed ones. But they do not see that the very God who has chosen and redeemed them desires, in the person of the Son, to work Himself into them. Neither selection nor redemption is the goal. Both are steps toward the goal. God's goal is to work Himself into our being.

I realize that such a word may sound strange to many. For years I was in various branches of Christianity: fundamental Christianity, the Brethren assemblies, the inner-life practices, and the Pentecostal movement. But I was never told that in the person of the Son, God is working Himself into His redeemed ones. Nevertheless, this is the mystery of the universe.

The New Testament proves that God is working Himself into us. The Father, the Son, and the

Spirit are all in us (Eph. 4:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; John 14:17). According to 1 John, we are in God, and God is in us (4:15). Furthermore, we abide in Him, and He abides in us (John 15:4). In Philippians 1:21 the apostle Paul could even say, "To me, to live is Christ." In Galatians 2:20 he said that he lived no longer but that Christ lived in him. All these verses indicate that God in the Son is working Himself into us...

The mystery of the universe is the church, and the church is a group of people into whom God is working Himself. Eventually, the church will be fully saturated with God and will consummately become the holy city, the New Jerusalem. The church will not only be saturated with God but also mingled with Him. This does not mean, however, that we shall become the Godhead. No, this is neither what we say nor what we mean. Nevertheless, as those who are being saturated with God and mingled with Him, we shall become the very expression of God. The New Jerusalem will be the corporate expression of God. As we have pointed out a number of times, both God on the throne (Rev. 4:3) and the New Jerusalem (21:11) have the appearance of jasper. This means that the entire city has the appearance of God and is the expression of God. This is the mystery of the universe.

What a deliverance it would be for Christians if they could only see this! Many know only about being saved, being regenerated, becoming the children of God, and going to heaven some day. But the concept of being saved for the goal of going to heaven is much lower than the mystery of God's will. The mystery of God's will is to have a church constituted with those who have been saturated and mingled with God...

The mystery of the universe is that God is working Himself into us. Everything is working together for this purpose (Rom. 8:28). All things serve this goal. Everything is for God's working of Himself into our being. This is much different from merely having a happy life. You may be very happy today but not tomorrow. You may be happy in a meeting, but when you return home, your wife or husband may give you a difficult time. The mystery of God's will is not that we are becoming happy people. Today is not the time for us to be fully happy, because the time is not yet ripe. Because many do not have the adequate vision or revelation, they do not know what is actually taking place in the church life. They think that we are simply here to have a good time. But this is not the mystery of God's will. This mystery is that God is dispensing Himself into us to produce the church for Himself. This is a mystery hidden through the ages.

### **GOD'S WILL BEING GOD'S INTENTION TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT HE DESIRES FOR HIMSELF**

God's will is God's intention to accomplish what He has purposed in eternity past and what He desires for Himself for eternity future. He purposed and He desires to have the church. This is His will and intention.

### **THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL HAVING BEEN MADE KNOWN TO US BY REVELATION**

Ephesians 1:9 says that God has made known to us the mystery of His will. To make known to us the mystery of His will is one item of God's wisdom and prudence. In eternity God planned a will. This will has been hidden in Him; hence, it was a mystery. In His wisdom and prudence He has made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. It was the pleasure of God's heart to reveal to us the mystery of His will.

### **ACCORDING TO GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE**

God's good pleasure is the desire of His heart, that is, to have the church, and God's revelation of His hidden will is according to this desire of His heart. This is according to His good pleasure.

### **GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE HAVING BEEN PURPOSED BY GOD**

## **In Himself**

God's good pleasure has been purposed by God in Himself. This means that God Himself is the initiation, origination, and sphere of His eternal purpose. God has a plan, a desire, and according to His plan, He has a purpose. The existence of the universe is according to God's purpose. Heaven, earth, millions of items, and the human race are all according to God's purposed desire. Eventually, all these things will issue in God's desire. In the universe there is a desire, God's desire. Because this desire has been purposed by God, no one and nothing can overthrow it. Everything that takes place on earth is for this purpose. We, the sons of God, in whom God's grace abounds, are the focal point of His purpose, and everything is working for us. God has purposed this desire in Himself. He did not take counsel with anyone else regarding it.

God's good pleasure is what He has purposed in Himself for an administration (v. 10). The entire universe will eventually be under one administration. The Greek word rendered "administration" is *oikonomia*, from which we get the English word *economy*. God has purposed to have an economy. All the kingdoms in the universe—the angelic kingdom, the demonic kingdom, the human kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the plant kingdom—are for this economy, this administration, and are moving toward it. For example, today's world situation, the center of which is the Middle East, is according to the Bible. Since the reformation of the nation of Israel in 1948 and especially since the return of Jerusalem to Israel in 1967, the Middle East has become the center of international relations. This is altogether according to the Bible, and it is a sign that the universe is moving toward God's administration. Such an administration is what God has planned and purposed according to His desire. All the kingdoms will be under this unique administration, which is to head up all things in Christ. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 64-69)

## **THE HEADING UP OF ALL THINGS**

In Ephesians 1:10 Paul says, "Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him." We need to note that it is in Christ that God intends to head up all things. The word *Christ* here literally means "the Christ"; it refers to the One mentioned in verse 1 and verse 3, the One in whom are the spiritual blessings of God and in whom are the faithful saints, who participate in the blessings. He is a particular One; hence, He is called "the Christ."

The Greek word rendered "economy" in verse 10 is *oikonomia*, which means "house law, household management, or administration," and derivatively, "administrative dispensation, plan, or economy." The economy that God, according to His desire, planned and purposed in Himself is to head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times. This is accomplished through the dispensing of the abundant life supply of the Triune God as the life factor into all the members of the church that they may rise up from the death situation and be attached to the Body.

The expression *the times* in verse 10 refers to the ages. The fullness of the times will be when the new heaven and new earth appear after all the dispensations of God in all the ages have been completed. Altogether there are four ages: the age of sin (Adam), the age of the law (Moses), the age of grace (Christ), and the age of the kingdom (the millennium).

God's eternal intention is to head up all things in Christ, who has been appointed to be the universal Head. Through all the dispensations of God in all the ages, all things will be headed up in Christ in the new heaven and new earth. That will be God's eternal administration and economy. Thus, the heading up of all things is the issue of all the items covered in verses 3 through 9. God chose us to be holy, predestinated us unto sonship, accomplished redemption for us through the blood of Christ, graced us in the Beloved, and caused grace to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence in order that He may head up all things in Christ.

Ephesians 1:22 says that God gave Christ to be Head over all things. This reveals that the

heading up of all things is to the church so that the Body of Christ may share in all that is of Christ as the Head, having been rescued from the heap of the universal collapse in death and darkness, which was caused by the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man. In Christ God is in the process of heading up all things in heaven and on earth. However, without the church as the Body to match Christ as the Head, it will not be possible for God to head up all things in Christ. The heading up of all things is accomplished by the Head, but it cannot be accomplished without a Body for the Head. Whether Christ can be the Head over all things, whether all things can be subjected to the authority of Christ, and whether all things can be headed up in Christ completely depend upon whether or not the church has been produced and has grown up (4:14-16; Col. 2:19). When the church is fully grown, God is able to subject all things to the authority of Christ. By means of the church, Christ is able to be the Head over all things. Eventually, the Body with Christ as the Head will be the universal Head over all things. When everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony (Isa. 2:4; 11:6; 55:12; Psa. 96:12-13), a full rescue out of the collapse. This will begin from the time of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).

When God created the universe, everything of the universe was in oneness; all things in it were in harmony, not in chaos. God and the universe were in harmony. This harmony is the great oneness of the universe. All things related to the universe depend on God, who is one, as the factor of their oneness. The center of the universe is God Himself; hence, the oneness of the universe is God Himself. There was oneness in the creation of the universe, and in this oneness there was no confusion. Yet because of Satan's rebellion, which was followed by man's fall, this original oneness in creation was ruined so that the entire universe was brought into confusion. Satan damaged the oneness of the universe in creation by introducing death into all creation, which death severed the Creator's relationship with creation. In other words, when Satan brought death into the universe, the universe was separated from God, and the oneness of the universe was lost. Thus, there is not the full harmony in the universe.

Yet God had an eternal plan to head up all things in Christ, that is, to make Christ the Head of all things and the Head above all things. God's way to recover the oneness among His creation is to impart Himself in Christ into us as life (Rom. 8:6, 10-11, 19-21). The Triune God as life brings in light, and light issues in harmony and brings all things into oneness. Hence, the believers participate in this heading up by growing in life, by being headed up in the proper church life, and by living under Christ's light (John 1:4; Rev. 21:23-25). The more we grow in life, the more we will be headed up and the more we will be rescued from the universal collapse (Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:19). This process of heading up all things in Christ is still continuing, and the heading up of all things will be fully accomplished and manifested when Christ finishes His work to bring forth the new creation out of the old creation through all the dispensations of God. It is through this new creation that Christ will head up all creation and bring it into the universal oneness; this will issue in the new heaven and the new earth. In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center, all things will be headed up in Christ; this will be the complete fulfillment of the heading up of all things spoken of in Ephesians 1:10. In Revelation 21 we see the Head, the Body surrounding the Head, and all the nations walking in the light of the city. The whole universe will be headed up in the light shown through the transparent city (v. 18). (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 3341-3344)



# THE WILL OF GOD

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Two

### Knowing and Participating in God's Great and Lofty Will to Head Up All Things in Christ

EM Hymns: 981

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:9-10; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:1b

- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- 1 Cor 8:1b ... Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

#### I. “Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him”—Eph. 1:9-10:

- A. The economy, or dispensation, that God, according to His desire, planned and purposed in Himself is to head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times.
- B. This is accomplished through the dispensing of the abundant life supply of the Triune God as the life factor into all the members of the church so that they may rise up from the death situation and be attached to the Body.
- C. *The times* refers to the ages, and the fullness of the times will be when the new heaven and new earth appear after all the dispensations of God in all the ages have been completed:
1. A dispensation is the act or instance of dispensing, and it refers to God's dispensing of Himself into His chosen people; we need the element of God with His life and nature to be wrought into our being.
  2. Altogether there are four ages: the age of sin (Adam), the age of the law (Moses), the age of grace (Christ), and the age of the kingdom (the millennium).
  3. God dispensed Himself into Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with Joseph; He had an even greater dispensation with Moses and, of course, with the Lord Jesus.
  4. This dispensing continues in the New Testament Epistles; God's dispensation is even greater than it was at the time of the apostle Paul; today there is a deeper, higher, and wider dispensation of the grace of God—cf. Eph. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:10.  
Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,  
1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
  5. This dispensation will continue through the millennium until the fullness of the times; the ultimate, the consummate, dispensation will be the dispensing of the Triune God into the whole city of the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1-2.  
Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of



- the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2     And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
6.   We enjoy a miniature of this consummate dispensation in the church life today; as we enjoy the Spirit as the living water and eat Christ as the tree of life in the church life, we await the consummate dispensation, in which we will be fully saturated with the Triune God—1 Cor. 10:3-4; 12:13; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14; John 6:57.
- 1 Cor 10:3    And all ate the same spiritual food,
- 1 Cor 10:4    And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.
- 1 Cor 12:13   For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- Rev 2:7       He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev 22:2     And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
- Rev 22:14    Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.
- John 6:57     As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
7.   Where life is, there is light also (1:4; 8:12); because the New Jerusalem is saturated with light, it has no need of the light of the sun; the glory of the Triune God will be our shining and controlling light (Rev. 21:23).
- John 1:4      In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12     Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Rev 21:23     And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
8.   In the New Jerusalem there will be no night, no death, and no darkness; instead, there will be life and light, causing everything to rise up and be in good order and thus be fully headed up in Christ (v. 24; Eph. 1:10).
- Rev 21:24     And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- Eph 1:10      Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
9.   When we are fully headed up in Christ in the New Jerusalem, that will be God's eternal administration and economy.
- D.   The heading up of all things in Ephesians 1:10 is the issue of all the things covered in verses 3 through 9—God has chosen us, predestinated us, redeemed us, forgiven us, and graced us for the purpose of heading up all things in Christ.
- Eph 1:10      Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:3      Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,
- Eph 1:4      Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5      Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:6      To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- Eph 1:7      In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,
- Eph 1:8      Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence,
- Eph 1:9      Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He

- purposed in Himself,
- E. Verses 22 and 23 reveal further that this heading up is “to the church” so that the Body of Christ may share in all that is of Christ as the Head, having been rescued from the heap of the universal collapse in death and darkness, which was caused by the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man; to be rescued from the collapse is to be headed up.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- F. When everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony (Isa. 2:4; 11:6; 55:12; Psa. 96:12-13), a full rescue out of the collapse; this will begin from the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).
- Isa 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, / And will decide matters for many peoples. / And they will beat their swords into plowshares, / And their spears into pruning knives; / Nation will not lift up sword against nation, / Nor will they learn war anymore.
- Isa 11:6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb; / And the leopard will lie down with the kid, / And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; / And a young boy will lead them about.
- Isa 55:12 For you will go out with rejoicing, / And you will be led forth in peace; / The mountains and the hills / Will break forth before you with a ringing shout, / And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
- Psa 96:12 Let the field and all that is in it exult; / Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
- Psa 96:13 Before Jehovah, for He is coming; / For He is coming to judge the earth; / He will judge the world with righteousness, / And the peoples with His truth.
- Acts 3:21 Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of the restoration of all things, of which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from of old.
- G. The picture in Ezekiel 37 of the dead, dry, and scattered bones shows that the unique way to have the Body, the church, and the house of God in the genuine oneness is the way of life:
- Ezek 37 be omitted.
1. When the breath entered into the dead ones, it became life to them, and they lived and stood up in oneness to become an exceedingly great army.
  2. The dead bones were enlivened and became one as the issue of the dispensing of life and the growth in life—vv. 1-14.
- Ezek 37:1 The hand of Jehovah came upon me, and He brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.
- Ezek 37:2 And He caused me to pass all around among them, and there were very many on the surface of the valley, and they were also very dry.
- Ezek 37:3 And He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, You know.
- Ezek 37:4 Then He said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah.
- Ezek 37:5 Thus says the Lord Jehovah to these bones: I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.
- Ezek 37:6 And I will put sinews on you and bring flesh back on you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you will know that I am Jehovah.
- Ezek 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.
- Ezek 37:8 And I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh came back, and skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.
- Ezek 37:9 Then He said to me, Prophecy to the wind; prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.
- Ezek 37:10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them; and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.
- Ezek 37:11 Then He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Now they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off

- completely.
- Ezek 37:12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Now I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.
- Ezek 37:13 And you will know that I am Jehovah, when I open your graves and bring you up out of your graves, O My people.
- Ezek 37:14 And I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live; and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I, Jehovah, have spoken and that I have performed it, declares Jehovah.
3. God's way to head us up is to work Himself as the factor of life into us so that we may rise up and be attached to one another in the Body.

## II. In order to be headed up in Christ, we need to grow up into Christ, the Head, in all things—in all things means in everything big or small in our daily life and in our work—Eph. 4:15; Zech. 4:10:

- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
Zech 4:10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; they are the eyes of Jehovah running to and fro on the whole earth.
- A. The organic building up of the Body is the growth of the Body, which is the growth of God, the increase of God as life, in all the members—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; Col. 2:19.
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;  
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.  
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- B. The growing members are the building members; to grow in life is to have more of God in us; our problem is that we are short of God—Eph. 4:16; cf. Job 1:1-5; 42:1-6.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and this man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.  
Job 1:2 And seven sons and three daughters were born to him.  
Job 1:3 And his possessions were seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred female donkeys and a great many servants; and this man was greater than all the sons of the east.  
Job 1:4 And his sons would go and hold feasts in each one's house, each on his own day, and they would send word and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.  
Job 1:5 And when the days of feasting ran their course, Job would send word and sanctify them; and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their heart. Job did this continually.
- Job 42:1 Then Job answered Jehovah and said,  
Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things / And that no purpose of Yours can be restrained.  
Job 42:3 Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? / Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, / Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.  
Job 42:4 Hear now, and I will speak; / I will ask of You, and You shall inform me.  
Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;  
Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
- C. In order to grow up into the Head, we must hold to truth in the element and sphere of the divine love; *truth* in Ephesians 4:15 means things that are true— Rom. 3:4:
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
Rom 3:4 Absolutely not! But let God be true and every man a liar, as it is written, "That You

- may be declared righteous in Your words and may overcome when You are judged."
1. We need to hold to God's eternal economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4:
    - 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
    - 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
    - a. This is the economy of the mystery hidden in God—Eph. 3:9.
      - Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
    - b. This economy is to have the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate in the New Jerusalem for the manifestation of Christ as God's multifarious wisdom—vv. 10-11; 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 1:30.
      - Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
      - Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
      - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
      - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
      - 1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
  2. We need to hold to the all-inclusive Christ— John 14:6; Eph. 1:23:
    - John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
    - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
    - a. His measure is immeasurable—3:18.
      - Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
    - b. His riches are unsearchable—v. 8.
      - Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
    - c. His love is knowledge-surpassing—v. 19.
      - Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
  3. We need to hold to the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15:
    - 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
    - a. The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—Acts 9:4; 1 Cor. 12:12.
      - Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
      - 1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
    - b. The Body of Christ is the fullness, the expression, of Christ and of God— Eph. 1:23; 3:19.
      - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
      - Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
- D. We grow up into the Head through acknowledging the authority of the headship of Christ— Col. 2:19; cf. Josh. 9:14; 1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-27; 23:10-11:
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
  - Josh 9:14 And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.
- Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,
- Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;
- Matt 23:10 Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.
- Matt 23:11 And the greatest among you shall be your servant.
1. Christ is the Head of everyone—1 Cor. 11:3.
    - 1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.
  2. Christ is the Head of the church—Eph. 5:23.
    - Eph 5:23 For a husband is head of the wife as also Christ is Head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body.
  3. Christ is the Head of all things—1:22, 10.
    - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
    - Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- E. The believers participate in Christ's heading up by being willing to be headed up in the church life, that is, by growing in life and by living under Christ's light— John 1:4; 8:12; Eph. 4:15-16; 5:8-9; Rev. 21:23-25.
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- Rev 21:24 And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- Rev 21:25 And its gates shall by no means be shut by day, for there will be no night there.
- F. We grow up into the Head by allowing Christ to increase and grow in all the inward parts of our being:
1. In order to grow in life, we must pay attention to our spirit (Rom. 8:6); we must know, we must use, and we must exercise our mingled spirit (1 Tim. 4:6-8):
    - Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
    - 1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
    - 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
    - 1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
      - a. Ephesians 1:17 shows that we need to pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to fully know Christ and God's economy.
        - Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
      - b. Ephesians 2:22 says that all the believers are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
        - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in



- spirit.
- c. Ephesians 3:5 says that the mystery of Christ has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit.  
Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
  - d. Ephesians 3:16 shows that we need to pray to be strengthened into the inner man, which is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life.  
Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
  - e. Ephesians 4:23 tells us to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.  
Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
  - f. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled in spirit.  
Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,
  - g. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to pray at every time in spirit.  
Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
2. In order to grow in life, we must feed on the milk and food of the holy Word, as the embodiment of Christ, the living Word of God—1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14.  
1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,  
Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant;  
Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

### **III. As we grow up into the Head in life, our function will come out from the Head for the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:**

- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- A. When we allow Christ to be the Head in everything and when we grow up into Him in all things, we will be supplied with the riches of His life, receiving something from Him to transfuse into other members of the Body—1 Cor. 14:4b; John 7:37-39:  
1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.  
John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.  
John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.  
John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
    1. To build up the Body of Christ is to minister Christ as the life-giving Spirit into the saints for their growth into Christ—2 Cor. 3:6, 8.  
2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.  
2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
    2. We must help the saints learn to enjoy the Lord and be nourished by the Lord so that they can grow—Phil. 1:25; 2 Cor. 1:24.  
Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,  
2 Cor 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy; for by faith you stand.
  - B. Under Christ's headship all the Body causes the growth of the Body of Christ— Eph. 4:15-16:  
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head,



- Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
1. This growth is through every joint of the rich supply—all the particular gifts in the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12.
    - Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
    - Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
  2. This growth is through the operation in the measure of each one part—every member in the Body of Christ—vv. 7-8.
    - Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
    - Eph 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."
- C. The building up of the Body of Christ under His headship is in love and by love:
1. Love is the most excellent way to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ; nothing but love can keep us in a proper relationship with the Lord—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:13.
    - 1 Cor 12:31 ... And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
    - 1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
    - 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
    - 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
    - 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
    - 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
    - 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
    - 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
    - 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
    - 1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
    - 1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless.
    - 1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.
    - 1 Cor 13:12 For now we see in a mirror obscurely, but at that time face to face; now I know in part, but at that time I will fully know even as also I was fully known.
    - 1 Cor 13:13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.
  2. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as God's inner substance (1 John 4:8, 16) so that we may enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did (Eph. 5:25; 6:24; 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2).
    - 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
    - 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
    - Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
    - Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.
    - Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
    - Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being

- rooted and grounded in love,  
 Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,  
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.  
 Eph 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
3. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor. 8:1b); this refers to the building up of the corporate Body of Christ under the headship of Christ.
- D. To grow in life is to grow up into the Head, Christ, but to operate in the Body of Christ is to operate out from Him; first, we grow into the Head, and then we have something that is out from the Head for the building up of the Body; this is to participate in God’s great and lofty will to head up all things in Christ— Eph. 4:15-16.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **THE MEANING OF DISPENSATION**

Now we need to understand what a dispensation is. According to one teaching, a dispensation refers to an age. However, this understanding is not accurate. Another teaching is that a dispensation refers to the way God deals with people during a particular period of time. For example, in the dispensation of innocence God dealt with man in one way, and in the dispensation of conscience He dealt with man in another way. Likewise, God deals with people in different ways in the ages of human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom. This understanding of dispensation is not incorrect, but it falls short. A dispensation is the act or instance of dispensing. It refers to God’s dispensing of Himself into His chosen people. Although I have studied this matter of the dispensations for many years and have studied a number of diagrams, I have never been told that God’s dispensation is the dispensing of Himself into His people. We need to forget all the diagrams and remember one basic point: God is now dispensing Himself into us.

### **THE DISPENSING OF LIFE**

As we have pointed out, when Satan, the power of death, injected himself into man, Satan became death and darkness to man. Death brings in corruption, and darkness brings in confusion. Satan’s goal is to corrupt God’s creation and to cause confusion. But praise the Lord that where death abounds, life abounds all the more! After Satan came in to deaden, God came in to enliven, to impart life. Where there is life, there is light also. Death ruins, but life heals; darkness brings in confusion, but light brings in the proper order. We need to keep in mind that Satan came in to deaden God’s creation and that death ruins and darkness confuses. God, however, has come in to enliven the deadened creation and to bring in order. In this order all things are headed up in Christ.

God’s dispensation is the dispensing of life into people who have been deadened. Although Adam had become deadened, God came in to dispense something of Himself into Abel. He did the same with Enosh and Enoch. Do not think that in himself, a deadened person, Enoch was able to walk with God for three hundred years (Gen. 5:22). This was possible only through God’s dispensing of Himself into him. The same was true of Noah. Noah walked with God and had strong faith because

God was dispensing Himself into him. God's dispensing of Himself began with Abel and has increased with each generation. Thus, the dispensation with Enoch was greater than with Enosh and greater with Noah than with Enoch. With Abraham it was still greater. Acts 7:2 says that the God of glory appeared to Abraham. That appearing certainly was a dispensing. Abraham could have faith in God because God had been dispensed into him.

The same thing happened to us when we heard the gospel and repented. As we were repenting and confessing our sins to God, God was dispensing Himself into us, although we might not have been conscious of God's dispensing at the time. As we recall our experience, however, we realize that this was the case. On the day I repented and made confession to God of my sinfulness, something was dispensed into my being. I wept, but inwardly I was on fire. This was God's inspiration and also His dispensation. When God comes to inspire us, He dispenses Himself into us. Nothing can change us like God's dispensation. It can transform a robber into a saint, because it dispenses the holy nature of God into him. I encourage you all to go to the Lord for thirty minutes for His dispensation. During that time, forget your problems and your environment. Simply open to Him and confess your shortcomings and wrongdoings. The more you confess to Him, the more the way will be open for Him to dispense Himself into you.

No matter what term we use—*dispensing*, *inspiring*, *transfusing*, or *infusing*—the experience is the same. I do not care for terminology; I care for the divine element being imparted into you. We need God to get into us. We need the element of God to be wrought into our being. This is the meaning of dispensation.

There is a shortage of this dispensation of God into man among most Christians today. Many teach about the seven dispensations but never tell people that a dispensation denotes God's dispensing of His life and nature into His chosen people. Our burden today is not to teach doctrine; it is to dispense God's life and nature into His people. Please do not bring to this ministry your opinions or concepts. If you do, you will be wasting your time. We are not interested in arguing doctrinal points or concepts. Our burden is to transfuse God into you. You may know a great deal of doctrine but be very short of the divine element. What you need is the dispensing of the element of God into your being. I was with the Brethren for years and eventually became bored with their disputes over doctrine. We may not be short of doctrine, but we are short of the divine element. God's dispensation is to impart His very element into us.

### **THE ULTIMATE DISPENSATION**

We have seen that God dispensed Himself into Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. He had an even greater dispensation with Moses and, of course, with the Lord Jesus. The dispensing continues in the New Testament Epistles. It may surprise you to know that God's dispensation at the present time is even greater than it was at the time of the apostle Paul. I doubt that when Paul was on earth there was a congregation who had the privilege of hearing the things that you are hearing today. Today there is a deeper, higher, and wider dispensation of the grace of God. This dispensation will continue through the millennium until the fullness of the times. The dispensation of the fullness of the times will be the highest and the broadest. This dispensation will be in eternity, as revealed in Revelation 21 and 22.

In these chapters we have a new environment, the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1 says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more." In the Bible the sea signifies death. For there to be no more sea means that there will be no trace of death. By that time death will have been swallowed up. At the end of the millennium, death, the last enemy, will be abolished and cast into the lake of fire. In place of death, there will be a new environment, a new sphere, a new circumference, in the center of which will be the New Jerusalem.

If you read the book of Revelation carefully, you will see that the New Jerusalem is actually a

great mountain with a height of twelve thousand stadia, more than thirteen hundred miles. At the top of the mountain there is the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1). Out of the throne flows the river of water of life; it flows down the mountain and reaches the twelve gates of the city. The water of life is for drinking, for the life supply, not for bathing or for baptizing. In the water of life grows the tree of life (v. 2). This indicates that when you drink the water of life, you eat the tree of life. Therefore, when you drink the water, you receive the life supply. Here we see the ultimate, the consummate, dispensation: the dispensing of the Triune God into the whole city of New Jerusalem. This will cause the city to be filled, saturated, permeated, and soaked with the water of life. This is the highest dispensation purposed by God for the fullness of the times.

### **THE MINIATURE IN THE CHURCH LIFE**

We enjoy a miniature of this consummate dispensation in the church life today. In the church we have the flow of life, we drink the water of life, and we eat the tree of life. This is God's dispensation in the church life. However, it is not the highest dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of the times. As I enjoy the living water in the church, I am awaiting the ultimate dispensation. We shall all be in this consummate dispensation, and we shall be fully saturated with the Triune God.

God on the throne refers to the Father, the Lamb refers to the Son, and the river of water of life refers to the Spirit. John 7 reveals clearly that the river of life denotes the Spirit. Thus, in Revelation 22 we have God the Father, God the Son as the redeeming One, and God the Spirit flowing with God the Son as the tree of life to be our life supply. This is the dispensation of the Triune God, the top dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of the times.

This dispensation began with Abel and has been increasing throughout the ages until it eventually will reach the dispensation of the fullness of the times. We are getting close to that dispensation. If we realize this, we shall be beside ourselves with joy. Not even the apostle Paul was as close to the ultimate dispensation as we are. Hallelujah, we all shall share in the consummate dispensation! In the Lord's recovery we have in the church life a miniature of that coming dispensation. How wonderful! This is why we enjoy singing these lines from *Hymns*, #1151:

Drink! A river pure and clear that's flowing from the throne;  
Eat! The tree of life with fruits abundant, richly grown;  
Look! No need of lamp nor sun nor moon to keep it bright, for  
Here there is no night!

Oh, in the church life we drink the water of life and eat of the tree of life! By eating and drinking, we become saturated with God's very life through His dispensation. The more life that is dispensed into us, the higher we rise up. This is the heading up in Christ.

### **THE LIGHT OF LIFE KEEPING EVERYTHING IN ORDER**

Where life is, there is light also. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." This light is the light of life (8:12). In Revelation 21 we have both life and light. Because the New Jerusalem is saturated with light, it has no need for the light of the sun. Revelation 21:23 says, "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." In the New Jerusalem we shall have the glory of the Triune God as our shining light. In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem there will be no night, no death, and no darkness. Instead, there will be life and light. This will cause everything to rise up and be in good order.

Wherever there is light, things are kept in order. Suppose there were no lights in the city of Los Angeles. What darkness and confusion there would be! Life regulates, and light controls. In the church life we do not have regulations, but we do have the regulating life and the controlling light. When the church is full of life, it is also full of light. Then everyone in the church is regulated by the inward life,

not by outward regulations; and everyone is controlled and kept in order by the light of life. Here in life and in light, we are headed up. In Revelation 21 we see the Head, the Body surrounding the Head, and all the nations walking in the light of the city (v. 24). This will cause the new heaven and the new earth to be a bright sphere. Therefore, in the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center, all things will be headed up in Christ. This will be the fulfillment of the heading up of all things in Christ spoken of in Ephesians 1:10.

In order for this to take place, we need the dispensation of life. The life that is dispensed into us eventually becomes the light of men. In the dispensation of the fullness of the times, all the nations will walk in the light of the city. This means that there will be no death, no darkness, no corruption, and no confusion. Instead, everything will be in good order, headed up under Christ, the unique Head, to express the Triune God in eternity. This heading up of all things will be an eternal expression of the Triune God. Today's church life is a foretaste of this. It is a miniature of the new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem. As those in the miniature, we are enjoying the dispensation of life with light, and we are being headed up in Christ. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 90-96)

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Friday—Evening Session)

## Message Three

### Praying for God's Will to Be Done on Earth

MR Hymns: 783, 786

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:1; 1 John 5:14-15; John 15:4-5, 7

- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.
- 1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
- 1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

#### **I. Although God has a will for everything, He does not act independently; rather, He wants the human will on earth to echo His will before He does anything— Matt. 6:10; 1 John 5:14-15:**

- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- 1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
- 1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- A. In the universe there are three wills: the divine will, the satanic will, and the human will; God wants man's will to be joined to Him and be one with Him so that man may express and echo His will back to Him in prayer for the good pleasure of His will—Eph. 1:5, 11; Isa. 14:12-15; Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 26:39; Phil. 2:13.
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Isa 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, / O Daystar, son of the dawn! / How you have been hewn down to earth, / You who made nations fall prostrate!
- 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.
- Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High.
- Isa 14:15 But you will be brought down to Sheol, / To the uttermost parts of the pit.
- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.
- Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
- B. God will not act independently, and He will not accomplish His will alone; instead, He will accomplish His will only when His people agree with Him and are one with Him—Col. 1:9; 4:12:
- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,



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

1. If there is only a will in heaven, God will not move; the will in heaven is accomplished on earth only when we, His people, want the will in heaven to be done on earth—Matt. 6:10.  
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
2. Because God acts according to laws established by Him, He will not annul man's will on earth by His own will; He will not usurp man's will and act independently— Josh. 24:15, 22.  
Josh 24:15 And if it seems wrong in your sight to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, either the gods from across the River, whom your fathers served, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.  
Josh 24:22 Then Joshua said to the people, You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Jehovah on your own, to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses.
3. Everything related to God's move and work on earth can be accomplished only when there is a will on earth that cooperates with Him— John 7:17.  
John 7:17 If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.
4. God cannot do what He wants by Himself; He does it only with the cooperation of the church; He accomplishes His will through the church.
5. Whenever God's people place their will in harmony with God's will, the will of God will be done on earth as in heaven—Matt. 6:10.  
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

## **II. God's intention is to accomplish His will through the believers' prayer in union with Him—v. 10; John 15:7:**

Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

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

- A. God's people must pray before God will move on earth to accomplish His will.
- B. The prayer that is most pleasing to God is the prayer that asks for the accomplishment of His will—1 John 5:14.  
1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
- C. God wants us to work with Him to accomplish His will; the way to work together with Him is to pray—Luke 11:1; 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17:  
Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.  
Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,  
1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
  1. The purpose of prayer is that we be one with God's will so that God can work on earth to fulfill His purpose—Rom. 8:26-29.  
Rom 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.  
Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.  
Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.  
Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

2. If we do not work together with God in prayer for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, He cannot move on earth to accomplish His will—Matt. 6:10.  
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
  3. If we are one with the Lord, we want what God wants, and our will becomes one with God's will— John 15:7.  
John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
  4. The prayer for the accomplishment of God's will is not asking God to accomplish what we want Him to do but asking God what He Himself wants to do; such prayer is the outlet of God's will on earth—1 John 5:14-16.  
1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.  
1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.  
1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.
- D. Prayer for God's will to be done on earth consists of four steps—Matt. 6:10:  
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
1. God intends to do something according to His will—Eph. 1:5, 11.  
Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
  2. He reveals His will to us through the Spirit for us to know His will.
  3. We return and echo His will back to Him through prayer—1 John 5:14.  
1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
  4. God accomplishes His work according to His will—v. 15.  
1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- E. God needs us to exercise our spirit with our resurrected will to pray according to His divine will for Christ to be manifested and enjoyed by us, for the Body life to be practiced by us, and for the Body of Christ to be built up through us—Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 1:4-6, 9, 11, 22b-23; 3:16-19; 4:16:
- Heb 10:5 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.  
Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not delight.  
Heb 10:7 Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."  
Heb 10:8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),  
Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,  
Heb 10:10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.  
Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.  
Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.  
Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,  
Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

- Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 1:22b ... gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
- Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
1. A genuine man of prayer is one whose desires are fully blended into God's desires and whose thoughts are fully one with God's thoughts; he is a man in whom God's desires are imprinted, a man of revelation whose heart is a duplication of God's heart—1 Sam. 2:35; 3:21; 12:23.
    - 1 Sam 2:35 And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in My heart and in My mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he will go before My anointed continually.
    - 1 Sam 3:21 And Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh, for Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.
    - 1 Sam 12:23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray for you, but I will instruct you in the good and right way.
  2. When we come to the Lord in prayer, we need to allow the Spirit to mingle our desires with His desires, lead our thoughts into His thoughts, and imprint His desires and thoughts into us; then the prayers that we utter to God with His inward desires will be precious, weighty, and valuable to Him and will cause Satan to suffer loss—Rom. 8:26-27; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2, 12; Mark 9:28-29; Eph. 6:10-20.
    - Rom 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
    - Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.
    - Phil 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
    - Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
    - Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
    - Mark 9:28 And when He entered into the house, His disciples questioned Him privately, Why were we not able to cast it out?
    - Mark 9:29 And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by any means except prayer.
    - Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
    - Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,
    - Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
    - Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness
- Eph 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;
- Eph 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.
- Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
- Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,
- Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

### **III. Effective prayers for God's will to be done on earth are the expression of God's desire and intention and are the issue of our abiding in the Lord and of His words abiding in us— John 15:4-5, 7:**

- John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
- A. Prayer is God's heart's desire passing through us and returning to God:
1. The desire in our prayers does not originate with us; it originates with God and is an expression of what God desires—Eph. 1:5, 11.
 

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
  2. God's desire and intention are anointed into us through the Spirit and thus become our desire and intention, which we express to God in prayer—1 John 2:20, 27; 5:14-15.
 

1 John 2:20 And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know.

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

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

1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
  3. Our prayer, therefore, is God's desire and intention coming out from God, passing through us, and going back to Him—vv. 14-15.
 

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

1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- B. All prevailing prayers—prayers that can be counted effective before God—are the result of our abiding in the Lord and allowing His words to abide in us— John 15:4-5, 7:
- John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

1. When we abide in the Lord and His words abide in us, we touch God’s feeling and understand His desire—v. 7.  
John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
2. After we touch God’s feeling and understand His intention, we will spontaneously have His desire that comes out of His words in us—v. 7.  
John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
3. His desire will become our desire, what He wants will be what we want, and then we will pray according to this desire.
4. The Lord will answer this kind of prayer, and thus the will of God “will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth”—Matt. 6:10.  
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **THE EARTH CONTROLS HEAVEN**

After we know God’s will, we can say to Him, “God, we want You to do this. We are determined that You should do this. God, You must do this.” We can utter such strong and powerful prayers before God. We have to ask God to open our eyes to see the kind of work He is doing in this age. In this age all His work is based on this position. Heaven may want to accomplish something, but heaven will not do it alone; heaven waits for the earth to do it first, and then heaven does it. Although the earth stands in the second place, at the same time, it also stands in the first place. The earth must move before heaven will move. God wants the earth to move heaven.

### **HARMONY OF WILL**

Some may ask why God would want the earth to control heaven. If we want to understand this, we have to remember that our God is limited by time. Time refers to the section between the two eternities. There is an eternity past and an eternity future. Between these two eternities, there is time. Within this section called time, God is limited. He cannot work as freely as He wants to. This is a limitation God encountered in the creation of man. According to Genesis 2, God gave man a free will when He created him. God has a will, and man has a will. Whenever man’s will is not one with God’s will, God is limited. In this room, there is a table, chair, floor, and ceiling. If a man comes in, he can do whatever he wants and not be restricted. The table, chair, floor, and ceiling will not be able to restrict him. God is a powerful God; He can do anything. If the earth was filled with spiritless material, God would be without restriction. But one day, God created man. The man He created was not like a piece of stone or wood; he was not a table or a chair, which could be placed here or there by God at will. The man that God created had a free will. Man could choose to obey God’s word, and he also could choose to disobey His word. God did not create a man who was obligated to obey Him. He created a man with a free will, one who could obey or disobey His word. After God created a man with a free will, His power was limited by this man. He could no longer act according to what He wanted. He had to ask whether man wanted the same thing and whether he was willing to do the same thing. God cannot treat man like a stone, a piece of wood, a table, or a chair, because man has a free will. Since the day God created man, man could choose to allow God’s authority to be carried out or to be blocked. This is why we say that within time, the period between the two eternities, God’s authority is limited by man.

God is willing to be limited in time because He wants to gain a harmonious will in the second eternity. He wants man’s free will to be harmonious with His will. This is a glory to God. If you put a book on the table, it remains on the table. If you put it on the shelf, it remains on the shelf. It is very obedient to you. But even though it is obedient, you are still not satisfied, because it does not have a free will; it is completely passive. God does not want the man He created to be like a book that can be



shuffled around at will. Even though God wants man to be fully submissive to Him, He also gave man a free will. God's intention is that man's free will would choose to obey Him. This is a glory to God! In eternity future the free will of man will be joined to God's eternal will. That will be the time for God's eternal will to be fulfilled and for man's free will to become harmonious with God's eternal will. Every man has a free will. In eternity future man will still have a free will, but it will stand on God's side. He will still have the ability to oppose God, but he will not oppose Him. Hallelujah! Even though man will have the freedom to oppose God, he will not oppose Him. He will do what God wants. This harmony of will is a glory to God!

In eternity future, although man's will is free, it will be in conformity to God's will, and there will be no will that is not subordinate to God's authority. However, in time, God is limited by man. Man does not do what God wants, or man does only a little of what God wants. God may want something to be big, yet man may want it to be small. Or God may want something to be small, yet man may want it to be big. God has no freedom at all! God's move is controlled by man in time. This speaking is in reference to the church. All of God's moves are limited by the church in time because the church represents man in eternity future. The church is standing on the earth today for God's will. If the church comes up to the standard of God's will, He will not be limited. But if it does not come up to the standard of His will, God will be limited. God is doing what He wants to do through the church. Today the church is taking the position that man will take in eternity. Then, even though man's will is free, it will stand completely on the side of God's eternal will. The church is taking that position ahead of time. Just as God will express Himself in eternity through the New Jerusalem, the Lamb's wife, He also is expressing Himself today through the Body of Christ. Although the church has a free will, it submits this will to God's authority as if no other will existed. This allows God to do whatever He wants to do. When the church places its will under God's will today, He will move in the same way that He will in eternity; He will move as if no other will were opposing Him. This is a glory to God!

Now we can see the church's position before God. We cannot make the church so low by suggesting that it is merely a meeting. No, the church is a group of people who have been redeemed by the blood, who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, who have committed themselves to God's hand, and who are willing to take God's will, do His will, and stand for God on earth for the sake of maintaining His testimony.

We have to see that God works according to a law. Since there is free will on earth, God will not annul man by His own will. Brothers and sisters, do not think that this is a strange thing. This is a fact. God is in heaven. Yet all His works on earth can be accomplished only when there is a will on earth that agrees with and decides to do the works. He will not put aside man's will on earth. He will not usurp man's will on earth and act independently. Everything related to Him can be accomplished only when there is a will on earth that cooperates with Him. When the earth works, God works. When the earth decides, God acts. God must have man's will in harmony with His will. This harmony in will is a great glory to God!

### **THREE GREAT PRINCIPLES**

We have said that God has a will for everything. Yet God does not act independently; He will not do anything by Himself. Even though God has a will, He wants the free will on earth to echo His will before He does anything. If there is only a will in heaven, God will not move. The heavenly move is accomplished on earth only when the earth wants the same thing as heaven. Today this is called the ministry of the church. Brothers and sisters, the ministry of the church is not only the preaching of the gospel. This does not mean that we should not preach the gospel; it means that the ministry of the church is not merely the preaching of the gospel. The ministry of the church is to bring the will in heaven to earth. How does the church bring the will in heaven to earth? It is by prayer on earth. Prayer is not as small and insignificant as some may think. It is not something that is dispensable. Prayer is a work. Prayer is the church saying to God, "God, we want Your will." Prayer is the church knowing



God's heart and opening its mouth to ask for what is in God's heart. If the church does not do this, it does not have much use on earth.

Many prayers for spiritual edification, prayers for fellowship, and prayers for supplication cannot replace prayers that are in the nature of work or ministry. If all your prayers are prayers for spiritual edification, fellowship, and supplication, they are too small. A prayer that is in the nature of work or ministry is one in which you stand on God's side, wanting what God wants. Brothers and sisters, if a prayer is uttered according to God's will, it is the most powerful thing. For the church to pray means that it finds out God's will and speaks out this will. Prayer is not just asking God for something. For the church to pray means that it stands on God's side to declare that man wants what God wants. If the church declares this, the declaration will be effectual.

Now let us consider three great principles in ministerial prayer from Matthew 18:18-20.

### **Speaking Out God's Will**

In verse 18 the Lord said, "Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Who is the "you" here? It is the church, because verse 17 mentions the church, and verse 18 is a continuation of verse 17. Whatever the church binds on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever the church looses on earth will be loosed in heaven. This is a very important principle: today God works through the church. God cannot do anything at will; He has to do everything through the church. Without going through the church, God cannot do anything. Brothers and sisters, this is a very sober principle. God cannot do anything by Himself today. There is a free will besides His will. If this will does not cooperate with Him, He cannot do anything. The amount of power that the church has expresses the amount of power that God has because His power is expressed through the church. God has placed Himself in the church. The height and extent that the church reaches is the height and extent that God's power reaches. If the power of the church is small and restricted, God cannot express the height or extensiveness of His power. The water department's reservoir may be great, but if you have only a small tap in your house, a great amount of water will not flow out. If you want more water in your house, you have to install a larger pipe. Today the capacity of the church determines the degree to which God's power is expressed. This can be seen from God's expression in Christ; the capacity of Christ is the degree of the manifestation of God. Today God is expressed in the church; the capacity of the church determines the degree of the expression of God and also the amount of knowledge one can have about God.

God wants to do many things on earth today. But He must have the church stand on His side before He can accomplish these things through the church. God cannot do what He wants to do by Himself; He has to do it with the cooperation of the church. The church is the means through which God expresses Himself. Let me repeat: the church is like a water tap. If the tap is small, the amount of water flowing through the tap will not be great, even if there is as much water as the Yangtze River. God truly wants to work in heaven, but He has to wait for the earth to move before He can work. There are many things that God wants to bind in heaven, and there are many things that God wants to loose in heaven. God wants to see many people, objects, and things contrary to Him bound, and He wants to see many spiritual, valuable, beneficial, and holy things that are of Him loosed. The question is whether or not there are men on earth to bind what God wants to bind and loose what God wants to loose. He wants the earth to control heaven. God wants the church to control heaven.

This by no means says that God is not omnipotent. God is indeed omnipotent, but He needs a channel on earth before He can manifest His omnipotence. We cannot increase God's power, but we can hinder His power. Man cannot increase God's power, but he can block His power. We cannot ask God to do what He does not want to do, but we can limit what He wants to do. We cannot ask God to do something that He is not willing to do, yet we can stop Him from doing something that He wants to do. Brothers and sisters, have you seen this? There is a power in the church that puts God's power under its control. It can allow God to do what He wants to do, and it can stop God from doing what He

wants to do. Our eyes have to be opened to see the future. One day God will expand the church to become the New Jerusalem. God's glory will be manifested from the church without any hindrance. Today He wants the church to first loose on earth before He looses in heaven. He wants the church to first bind on earth before He binds in heaven. Heaven will not take the initiative to work; it follows the earth's work. God will not take the initiative to work; He follows the church's work. Brothers and sisters, since this is the case, how great is the responsibility of the church!

We have seen that Matthew 18:15-17 speaks of a particular case and that the great principle is given in the following verses. When a brother sins against another, he may not confess his sins or mistakes. When the church reproves him, he still may not listen. If this happens, the church will consider him as the Gentile and the tax collector. The sinning brother may say, "Who are you? How can you make me as the Gentile and the tax collector? I will just stop coming to your meeting. If I cannot come to this place, there are many other places I can go to." However, what did the Lord Jesus say after this? "Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Hence, if the church decides to consider a man a Gentile, God in heaven will consider him a Gentile also. If the church considers a man a tax collector, God in heaven will consider him a tax collector also. In other words, God will do in heaven what the church does on earth. If the church considers a brother a Gentile and a tax collector, God in heaven will consider the same brother a Gentile and a tax collector. Not only does this case follow the principle, a thousand other matters follow the same principle. This case is only an example. It shows us how much the church can do. Then it shows us the greatness of the principle.

The church is God's chosen vessel. God has placed His will in this vessel so that it will declare God's will on earth. When the earth wants something, heaven also wants it. When the church wants something, God also wants it. Hence, if God's demand is rejected in the church, God will not be able to accomplish what He wants to accomplish in heaven.

Many brothers and sisters are bearing a burden day and night. They are bearing the burden because they have not prayed. Once the tap is turned on, water flows out. Once it is turned off, the water is blocked. Is the water pressure strong when water is released or when it is blocked? We all know that when water is released, the pressure decreases. When water is blocked, the pressure increases. When the church prays, it is like turning on the tap; the more the tap is turned, the less the pressure becomes. If the church does not pray, it is like a tap being turned off with pressure building up. When God wants to accomplish something, He puts a burden in a brother, sister, or the whole church. If the church prays and fulfills its duty, it will feel relieved. The more the church prays, the more relieved it will feel. As it prays once, twice, five times, ten times, or twenty times, it feels more and more relieved. If the church does not pray, it will feel stuffed and burdened. If the church continues to not pray, it will suffocate to death. Brothers and sisters, if you feel heavy and pressed within, you have not fulfilled your ministry before God; God's pressure is upon you. Try to pray for half an hour or an hour; the pressure will be released, and you will feel relieved.

What then is the prayer ministry of the church? It is God telling the church what He wants to do and the church praying on earth what God wants to do. This prayer is not asking God to accomplish what we want Him to do but asking God to accomplish what He Himself wants to do. Brothers and sisters, the church's responsibility is to declare God's will on earth. On earth the church declares for God, "This is what I want." If the church fails in this matter, it will not be of much use in God's hand. Even if everything else is good, it will not be of much use if it fails in this matter. The greatest use of the church lies in the fact that it stands for God's will to be done on earth. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 22, "The Prayer Ministry of the Church," pp. 138-147)

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

## Message Four

### Living a Life according to God's Heart and Will

RS Hymns: 1248, 195

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:22, 36; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:9-11; Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:1-21

- Acts 13:22 And when He had deposed him, He raised up David for them as king, to whom also He testified and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will do all My will.
- Acts 13:36 Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, did indeed fall asleep and was buried with his fathers and saw corruption;
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
- Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
- Heb 10:5 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.
- Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not delight.
- Heb 10:7 Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."
- Heb 10:8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),
- Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,
- Heb 10:10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rom 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- Rom 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Rom 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
- Rom 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
- Rom 12:10 Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
- Rom 12:12 Rejoice in hope; endure in tribulation; persevere in prayer.
- Rom 12:13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.
- Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.
- Rom 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.

- Rom 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil; take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men.  
 Rom 12:18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.  
 Rom 12:19 Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."  
 Rom 12:20 But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head."  
 Rom 12:21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

**I. The Old Testament contains a portrait of David—a man according to God’s heart, who did the will of God and served his own generation by the counsel of God (Acts 13:22, 36); it was in David’s heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah the God of Israel; today God is blessing us in every way for the fulfillment of His economy to build up the Body of Christ (1 Sam. 13:14a; 1 Kings 8:17; 1 Chron. 22:7; 28:2; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:16).**

- Acts 13:22 And when He had deposed him, He raised up David for them as king, to whom also He testified and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will do all My will.  
 Acts 13:36 Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, did indeed fall asleep and was buried with his fathers and saw corruption;  
 1 Sam 13:14a But now your kingdom will not continue. ...  
 1 Kings 8:17 And it was on David my father’s heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah the God of Israel;  
 1 Chron 22:7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was on my heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah my God.  
 1 Chron 28:2 And David the king rose to his feet and said, Hear me, my brothers and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah and for the footstool of our God, and I prepared materials for building it.  
 Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.  
 Eph 2:20 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;  
 Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;  
 Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.  
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

**II. God’s great will in His New Testament economy, God’s good pleasure, the counsel of His will, and His purpose are to have a Body for the enlargement and expression of Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God— 1:9-11, 22-23; 3:9-11:**

- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,  
 Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;  
 Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,  
 Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,  
 Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.  
 Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,  
 Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,  
 Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,  
 A. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, man is for the producing of the church,

and the church is the enlargement and expression of the processed Triune God; God's great will is to have a Body composed of human beings who are regenerated, sanctified, renewed, and transformed into the image of the processed Triune God—Zech. 12:1; John 1:12-13; Eph. 5:26; 2 Cor. 4:16; 3:18.

Zech 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,

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

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,

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

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

B. God's great will is also to have a church to be the organic Body of Christ for the manifestation of His multifarious wisdom—Eph. 3:9-10.

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

C. Each chapter of the book of Ephesians unveils the mystery of God's will (1:9), the mystery of the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God, from a particular point of view:

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

1. Ephesians 1 reveals that the Body of Christ is the issue of the dispensing of the processed Trinity and the transmitting of the transcending Christ.

Eph 1 be omitted.

2. Ephesians 2 reveals that the Body of Christ is the masterpiece of the Triune God as the new man—vv. 10, 15-16.

Eph 2 be omitted.

Eph 2:10 For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.

Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,

Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

3. Ephesians 3 reveals that the Body of Christ is the fullness of the Triune God by our being supplied with the riches of Christ and by Christ's making His home in our hearts—vv. 8, 14-19.

Eph 3 be omitted.

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

Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,

Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,

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

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

Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are

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

4. Ephesians 4 reveals that the Body of Christ is the mingling of the processed Triune



God with the regenerated believers and that this one Body is built up by the one ministry—vv. 4-6, 11-16.

Eph 4 be omitted.

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

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

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

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

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

Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

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

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

5. Ephesians 5 reveals that the Body of Christ is composed of the children of light to be the bride of Christ for the satisfaction of Christ—vv. 8-9, 25-27.

Eph 5 be omitted.

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

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

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,

Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

6. Ephesians 6 reveals that the Body of Christ is the corporate warrior of the Triune God for the defeating of God's enemy—vv. 10-20.

Eph 6 be omitted.

Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness

Eph 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;

Eph 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- D. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word *blended* also means “adjusted,” “harmonized,” “tempered,” and “mingled”:

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

1. In order to be blended in the Body life, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit, dispensing Christ to others for the sake of the Body of Christ.
2. Blending means that when we are about to do something, we always stop to fellowship with others.
3. The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God’s economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

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

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

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

Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

### **III. God’s great will is to have Christ as the replacement for all the sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament so that we may enjoy Him as our all in all—**

#### **Heb. 10:5-10; Psa. 40:6-8:**

Heb 10:5 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.

Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not delight.

Heb 10:7 Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God."

Heb 10:8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),

Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,

Heb 10:10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Psa 40:6 You do not delight in sacrifice and offering; / You have prepared ears for Me; / You do not require burnt offering and sin offering.

Psa 40:7 Then I said, / Behold, I have come; / In the scroll of the book / It is written concerning Me.

Psa 40:8 I delight in doing Your will, O My God; / Indeed Your law is within My inward parts.

- A. As the unique sacrifice of the new covenant, Christ is the factor that enacts God’s New Testament economy (Matt. 26:28) so that He may be its centrality and universality for the producing and building up of the church as His organic Body, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

Matt 26:28 For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

- B. Christ’s replacing of all the Old Testament offerings, taking away all the Old Testament types and establishing Himself as everything to us, is God’s great will; hence, Christ has changed the age for the consummating of God’s new creation out of God’s old creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15); His changing the age is greater than the creation of the universe mentioned in Genesis 1:

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

- Gal 6:15 behold, they have become new.  
 Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
- Gen 1 be omitted.
1. The Old Testament predicted in Isaiah 53 that Christ would come to be the sacrifice for sin in order to replace and terminate the Levitical sacrifices (vv. 6, 11-12); God prepared a body for Christ so that He could offer Himself to God to replace all the offerings (Heb. 10:5).
- Isa 53 be omitted.
- Isa 53:6 We all like sheep have gone astray; / Each of us has turned to his own way, / And Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall on Him.
- Isa 53:11 He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the / many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities.
- 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.
- Heb 10:5 Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.
2. Christ took away "the first," the sacrifices of the old covenant, that He might establish Himself as "the second," the sacrifice of the new covenant—v. 9:
- Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,
- a. As "the second," Christ is everything—v. 9.  
 Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,
- b. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all so that we may enjoy and partake of Him as our everything— v. 10.  
 Heb 10:10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- C. Christ is the reality of the offerings so that we may worship God in spirit and truthfulness (the divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity for the true worship of God)—John 4:23-24:
- John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
1. The burnt offering, which was wholly for God's satisfaction, typifies Christ as God's pleasure and satisfaction, the One whose living on earth was absolutely for God—Lev. 1:3; Num. 28:2-3; John 7:16-18.
- Lev 1:3 If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall present it, a male without blemish; he shall present it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, that he may be accepted before Jehovah.
- Num 28:2 Command the children of Israel and say to them, My offering, My food for My offerings by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Me, you shall be careful to present to Me at its appointed time.
- Num 28:3 And you shall say to them, This is the offering by fire which you shall present to Jehovah: two male lambs a year old without blemish each day as a continual burnt offering.
- John 7:16 Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.
- John 7:17 If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.
- John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.
2. The meal offering typifies Christ in His perfect humanity as food for God and for

those who have fellowship with God and serve Him—Lev. 2:1, 4; John 7:46; 18:38; 19:4, 6.

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

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

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

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

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

John 19:6 When therefore the chief priests and the attendants saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify! Crucify! Pilate said to them, You take Him and crucify Him, for I do not find fault in Him.

3. The peace offering typifies Christ as the Peacemaker, the One who became the peace and the fellowship between us and God by dying for us, enabling us to enjoy Christ with God and to have fellowship with God in Christ for our mutual satisfaction with God—Lev. 3:1; Eph. 2:14-15; John 12:1-3; 20:21.

Lev 3:1 And if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he presents it from the herd, whether male or female, he shall present it without blemish before Jehovah.

Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,

Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,

John 12:1 Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 12:2 Therefore they made Him a supper there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of the ones reclining at table with Him.

John 12:3 Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

John 20:21 Then Jesus said to them again, Peace be to you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.

4. The sin offering typifies Christ as the One who was made sin for us and who died on the cross to deal with the sinful nature of our fallen being—Lev. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; John 1:29; 3:14.

Lev 4:3 If the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him present a bull of the herd without blemish to Jehovah for a sin offering for his sin that he committed.

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

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

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

5. The trespass offering typifies Christ as the One who bore our sins in His own body and was judged by God on the cross to deal with our sinful deeds that we might be forgiven in our sinful conduct—Lev. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Isa. 53:5-6, 10-11; John 4:15-18.

Lev 5:6 And he shall bring his trespass offering to Jehovah for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a sheep or a goat, as a sin offering; and the priest shall make expiation for him on account of his sin.

- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- 1 Pet 3:18 For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the spirit;
- Isa 53:5 But He was wounded because of our transgressions; / He was crushed because of our iniquities; / The chastening for our peace was upon Him, / And by His stripes we have been healed.
- Isa 53:6 We all like sheep have gone astray; / Each of us has turned to his own way, / And Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all / To fall on Him.
- Isa 53:10 But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief. / When He makes Himself an offering for sin, / He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand.
- Isa 53:11 He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied; / By the knowledge of Him, the righteous One, My Servant, will make the / many righteous, / And He will bear their iniquities.
- John 4:15 The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst nor come here to draw.
- John 4:16 He said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.
- John 4:17 The woman answered and said, I do not have a husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I do not have a husband,
- John 4:18 For you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.
6. The wave offering typifies Christ as the resurrected One in love—Lev. 7:30; 10:15.
- Lev 7:30 His own hands shall bring Jehovah's offerings by fire; the fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved as a wave offering before Jehovah.
- Lev 10:15 The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings by fire of the fat portions to wave as a wave offering before Jehovah, and it shall become a perpetual statute for you and for your sons with you, just as Jehovah has commanded.
7. The heave offering typifies the powerful Christ in ascension and exaltation—7:32; Exo. 29:27; Eph. 1:21.
- Lev 7:32 And the right thigh you shall give to the priest for a heave offering out of the sacrifices of your peace offerings.
- Exo 29:27 And you shall sanctify the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering which was waved and which was heaved up from the ram of consecration, from that which is for Aaron and from that which is for his sons.
- Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
8. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as wine before God for His satisfaction and also as the One who saturates us with Himself as heavenly wine to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction—Lev. 23:13; Exo. 29:40; Num. 28:7-10; Isa. 53:12; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Judg. 9:13.
- Lev 23:13 And its meal offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering by fire to Jehovah for a satisfying fragrance. And its drink offering shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin.
- Exo 29:40 And with the one lamb a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering.
- Num 28:7 And its drink offering shall be the fourth of a hin for the one lamb; in the sanctuary you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to Jehovah.
- Num 28:8 And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; you shall offer it with the meal offering and its drink offering as in the morning, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.
- Num 28:9 And on the Sabbath day two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and its drink offering -
- Num 28:10 This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.



- 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.
- Phil 2:17      But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.
- 2 Tim 4:6      For I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand.
- Judg 9:13      But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?

D. We need to live a life according to God's heart and will by daily enjoying Christ as the reality of all the offerings for the divine goal of the Triune God, which is to bring us all into Himself that we may take Him as our dwelling place and allow Him to take us as His dwelling place for His universal, enlarged, divine-human incorporation— John 14:23; Rev. 21:3, 22.

- John 14:23      Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.
- Rev 21:3      And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- Rev 21:22      And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

#### **IV. God's great will is to have the believers in Christ practice the Body life, that is, to have the living of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:1-21:**

- Rom 12:1      I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- Rom 12:2      And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:3      For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.
- Rom 12:4      For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5      So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rom 12:6      And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- Rom 12:7      Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Rom 12:8      Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
- Rom 12:9      Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
- Rom 12:10      Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.
- Rom 12:11      Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
- Rom 12:12      Rejoice in hope; endure in tribulation; persevere in prayer.
- Rom 12:13      Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.
- Rom 12:14      Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- Rom 12:15      Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.
- Rom 12:16      Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.
- Rom 12:17      Repay no one evil for evil; take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men.
- Rom 12:18      If possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.
- Rom 12:19      Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- Rom 12:20      But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head."
- Rom 12:21      Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

A. We are "one Body in Christ," having an organic union with Him; this union makes us one in life with Him and with all the other members of His Body—vv. 4-5:

- Rom 12:4      For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have

- the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
1. Two words from Romans 12:5 indicate the organic union—*in Christ*; *in Christ* always implies the thought or the fact that we are organically one with Christ.
 

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
  2. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ; this is why John 15 charges us to abide in Him; to abide in Him simply means to remain in the organic union.
 

John 15 be omitted.
- B. For the church life, the life of the Body of Christ, to be realized, our entire being is needed; a presented body, a transformed soul, and a burning spirit are indispensable to a proper church life—Rom. 12:1-2, 11:
- Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
1. We need to present our bodies as a living sacrifice for the church life:
    - a. *Bodies* in Romans 12:1 is plural, and *sacrifice* is singular; this indicates that although many bodies are presented, they become one sacrifice, implying that although we are many, our service in the Body of Christ should not be many individual services, separated and unrelated.
 

Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
    - b. All our service should constitute one whole service, and this service must be unique because it is the service of the one Body of Christ.
  2. After presenting our body, we need to have our mind renewed—vv. 2-3:
 

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.

    - a. The renewing of the mind, which results from setting the mind on the spirit (8:6), is the base for the transformation of our soul; our mind is the leading part of our soul, and as it is renewed, our will and emotion automatically follow to be renewed also.
 

Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
    - b. To be renewed means that a new element is wrought into our being; this produces an inward metabolic transformation, making us suitable for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is the practice of the church life.
  3. We must be burning in spirit that we may be stirred up and encouraged to go on in the church life in a positive way; dead, vain knowledge and doctrinal forms can make us degraded and lukewarm; we need to repent of our lukewarmness and be zealous, boiling, burning, that we may regain the enjoyment of the reality of Christ—12:11; Rev. 3:16, 19-22.
 

Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

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

- Rev 3:19 As many as I love I rebuke and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent.
- Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.
- Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.
- Rev 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

C. When Christ as grace comes into us, this grace brings with it the element of certain skills and abilities, which, accompanying our growth in life, develop into the gifts in life that we may function in the Body of Christ to serve God—Rom. 12:4-8.

- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rom 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- Rom 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Rom 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.

D. Verses 9 through 21 show the normal Christian life that is the necessary base for the practice of the church life and that matches the church life; this is a life of the highest virtues for the Body life; we can have such a living for the Body life only by reigning in life—5:17.

- Rom 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
- Rom 12:10 Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
- Rom 12:12 Rejoice in hope; endure in tribulation; persevere in prayer.
- Rom 12:13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.
- Rom 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.
- Rom 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.
- Rom 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil; take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men.
- Rom 12:18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all men.
- Rom 12:19 Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- Rom 12:20 But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head."
- Rom 12:21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.
- Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

E. God's complete salvation (vv. 10-11) is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace (God Himself as our all-sufficient supply for our organic salvation) and of the gift of righteousness (God's judicial redemption applied to us in a practical way); when we are all reigning in life, living under the ruling of the divine life, the issue is the real and practical Body life.

- Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,
- Rom 5:11 And not only so, but also boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE TOP REVELATION OF THE BIBLE— THE BODY OF CHRIST

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your move among us and even for Your move within us. Lord, we believe that this recovery is Your testimony at the end of this age. Lord, we thank You for the environment. Oh, we thank You for arranging everything that we could come together. O Lord Jesus, in this dark age You have captured us, and You have put us together to come together all the time for Your Word. Lord, we believe that tonight You are one with us. Lord, You know that we do have a desire to be really one spirit with You. We do have a standing to believe that You are really one with us, even one with us in this matter of training. Lord, we do consecrate this Perfecting Training to You, and we offer ourselves to You anew. Lord, thank You for such a new start. Thank You that You have gained so many saints in this area who are seeking after You. Lord, we thank You that You have opened up Your Word so much more than ever before. Lord, we trust You for this year's Perfecting Training. Do grant us to have a good start, a glorious new beginning. Lord, come again to visit everyone tonight and reach everyone and touch everyone and grant everyone Your grace. Lord, this is all that we need. Anoint everyone. Anoint every part of the training meeting. Rescue this meeting out of any forms, any rituals. We like to get out of any forms, any rituals, and just to be in the spirit. Oh, do cover us. We again realize that this is a fighting for Your recovery and for Your testimony, so hide us and fight the war for us. We trust in You. Thank You, Lord, in Your precious name, Amen.

### THE BODY

To begin this meeting I would like to ask a question: What is the top revelation in the holy Word? We know that the Bible has sixty-six books and that they were written over a period of at least sixteen hundred years. These sixty-six books cover a lot of things from eternity past to eternity future. They cover creation, salvation, and many other things. Bible students and Bible teachers have picked up a lot of subjects from the Bible, but we all have to see that the Body is *the* top point. Among all the thousands of words in the Bible, the *Body* should stand out to us. The biggest word in the Bible is the *Body*.

You have to realize that the most missed and neglected and lost point in the Bible is that the church is the Body of Christ. Many of you came from the background of Christianity. I do not have the confidence that you ever heard an adequate teaching concerning the Body while you were there. I was with the Brethren for seven and a half years. They were very famous fifty years ago for knowing the Bible. Every week I went to five of their meetings. I never heard one message concerning the Body, but I heard many messages concerning ten horns and four beasts. I never heard one message teaching me that Christ has a mystical Body—that besides His personal body, He has a mystical Body.

After the war, at the end of the 1950s I came to this country. I heard a lot of talk about the Body. I heard terms such as *Body life* and *Body ministry*. I went to visit all those who were talking in this way. I discovered that nearly no one knew what they were talking about. At least there was no Body. Today the most missed item of the revelation in the Bible is this one thing—the Body.

In the last two years we have stressed very strongly that Paul's ministry is the completing ministry to complete the divine revelation. Suppose you remove not all the writings of Paul but only Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians from the Bible. Then the Bible would have a big gap. If you took away some other books, you might not feel that there was such a big gap, but Paul's writings are the completion of the divine revelation. You have to realize that this completing ministry is altogether focused on the Body. Even in these four books, if you take away Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 and 4, and Colossians 1 and 2, you take away the chapters concerning the Body of Christ from Paul's writings. From these chapters you can see the top point, the ultimate point, of God's divine revelation, the Body.

Have you ever considered what is the top item produced by God in this universe? The heavens were produced, the earth was produced, man was produced, and even thousands of items were produced. God worked in creation, and God has been working through all the generations. God is still working, and we do not know how long His working will last, but eventually, what will be the ultimate

item that comes out of God's working? We have to see that it is the Body. You have to be deeply impressed that what will ultimately come out of God's working through all the centuries and all the generations will be a Body. Who is the Head of this Body? Christ is the Head. What will come out is just the Body. The Body is the ultimate item of God's continual working, so the Body is the top point of God's entire revelation. You have to realize that not only has this matter been missed in Christianity, but even among us in the Lord's recovery we could not see too much actuality of the Body. If you go to the Christian bookstores and pick up different expositions on Romans, you will see that one may stress justification, and another may go on to say something about sanctification, but it is hard for you to get one exposition on Romans that stresses the Body adequately. Some expositions may have taught something concerning the government in chapter 13, but they have not said much concerning the Body in chapter 12.

What about 1 Corinthians? When I was young, I learned that some Christians appreciated a book written by one of the Brethren teachers on 1 Corinthians. That book mainly says that 1 Corinthians solves ten problems among the believers. Although this book talks a lot about these ten problems, it does not talk about a particular positive thing, that is, the Body in chapter 12. By reading chapter 12 carefully, you could see that two-thirds of that chapter is occupied with the Body. Today many teachers and expositors of the Bible talk a lot about other points, but they do not talk about the Body. Why? Because it is surely easy to see divisions or fornication or lawsuits or marriage and so forth, but it is hard for people to apprehend the Body. Of course, a lot of books were put out concerning the physical body of the Lord Jesus, which is signified by the bread in the bread-breaking meeting. Many of these were written especially against the heretical teachings of the Catholic Church, which say that that piece of bread becomes the actual physical body of Christ. But not many of the good writers talk about the other aspect of the Lord's body. One aspect of His body is His physical body; the other is the mystical Body. Very few have paid adequate attention to the mystical Body of Christ. When I was young, I saw all the so-called holy communions in Christianity. I would say that of the people who partook of the "holy communion," not one out of one hundred realized that the loaf also signifies the mystical Body of Christ. Rather, they simply realized that the loaf signifies the physical body of Christ broken on the cross for us.

It is so good that we can see what is the top thing in the Bible, the Body. But the question is: How could we sinners become the Body of Christ? It is not that difficult. We may use the example of a denture. Even the very best denture is not a real part of the body; rather, it is an artificial part and may be considered as foreign matter put into your body. How then can all the parts of your body be your body? Anything that is in your body must be organic. Recently, one young sister received a kidney transplant. Her brother's kidney was removed from him and transplanted into her body. That was not like the fitting of a denture. Transplanting the kidney into the sister's body was something altogether organic.

### **ORGANIC MEMBERS**

First of all, we have to realize that we redeemed sinners have all been made part of Christ's Body. Also, we have to realize that all the parts of Christ's Body are organic. They are not only organic but also properly organic. The sister who received a kidney transplant passed through a lot of things. In other words, she passed through a lot of adjustment because the kidney was not properly organic. The surgeons had to do a lot of adjustment to make that kidney properly organic. To be properly organic in the Body does not mean that you simply get baptized and that you get into a so-called church, and then you become a member of the Body of Christ; rather, it means that you must be organically united with Christ. You must be a part properly planted into Christ's Body organically. Then you will have a proper organic union with the Body of Christ. Then you will become a part of the Body. Every British subject is a member of the Church of England, but we would say strongly that that is not the church, because it is not something organic.



Many Christians today teach about regeneration, but they never tell people that regeneration brings you into an organic union with Christ, making you a part of Christ. What verses or what portions of the Bible tell us that such an organic matter makes us members of His Body? Only four books in the entire Bible have verses that mention the Body of Christ. In the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels, there is no mention of the Body of Christ. Even in the book of Acts, which is very much related to the establishment of the church, there is no mention of the Body. Even in 2 Corinthians, which is deeper than 1 Corinthians, there is no mention of the Body. In no other Epistles does Paul mention the Body besides these four books. Furthermore, only the apostle Paul reveals the Body to us. Peter, John, James, and Jude do not mention the matter of the Body. Only the minister who completed the revelation, the apostle Paul, talks about the Body. And even among his fourteen books, only four mention the Body.

We need to ask a further question: among these four books—Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians—which touches the matter of the organic union? Even as the four Gospels show us one person from four different angles, so these four books view the Body from four different directions. Each of these four books has its own angle of viewing the Body. Two words from Romans 12:5 indicate the organic union—*in Christ*. “In Christ” is a matter of the organic union. “We who are many are one Body in Christ.” Just this one little phrase tells us from which angle Romans 12 speaks of the Body. It speaks from the angle of the life union, from the angle of the organic union. How then could we get into Christ? We were not born in Christ; we were born in Adam, but by being reborn we have been transplanted into Christ. We were dead in Adam, and God took us out of Adam and transplanted us into Christ by rebirth. This little phrase *in Christ* has been used many times in the New Testament. Whenever you read *in Christ*, you must remember that this indicates the organic union with Christ. *In Christ* always implies the thought or the fact that you are organically one with Christ.

Why does Romans 12 talk about the function of the Body? Because it talks about the Body based upon the organic union we have in Christ. In this union with Christ there is life. Dentures may be put into my mouth, but there is no organic union. The denture will not function in an organic way because there is no organic union. We have to see that Romans 12 talks about the Body of Christ from the angle of the organic union, from the uniting life, from a life that unites us together not only with Christ but also with all the other members of Christ. Today the Christians know the Bible too superficially. Many teachers talk about Romans 12, but hardly one would tell you that Romans 12 talks about the Body from the angle of the organic union.

If we could not see the organic union that we have with Christ, we could never understand what the Body is. The Body does not mean simply that you love me and I love you. That is a society. In 1963 I was invited to visit many places throughout the U.S.A. Many small groups were “hot” at that time; they all liked to hug one another. Although that did not scare me to death, that bothered me with a kind of stinking odor. That was just a kind of hugging society.

When I was with the Bible-teaching assembly, I heard a lot of messages out of Ephesians 4 mostly concerning humility, the bond of love, meekness, and so forth. But for some reason there was hardly a message on the Body. Although they even talked about the oneness, they did not speak concerning the Body. Even if we are meek and humble and all really love one another, is that the Body? Even Confucius taught some of these things: you must be meek; you must be humble. Confucius taught meekness, humility, and kindness, but he never touched the organic union with Christ that we all may become the Body.

We all have to realize that the Body of Christ is altogether a matter of life that keeps us in an organic union with Christ. When we remain in this organic union, we are in the Body. When we do not remain in this organic union, we are out of the Body. You need to check yourself for one day to see how much time you remain in this organic union. You will have to admit that you do not remain very much in this organic union. Occasionally, we get there, but quite often we get out of there, so we are not in the Body. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ. If we are

going to be actually living in the Body life, we must remain in the organic union with Christ. In other words, we must be remaining in Christ. So John 15 charges us to abide in Him. To abide in Him simply means to remain in this organic union. When we remain in this organic union, we are actually living in the Body. If we do not remain in this organic union with Christ, we have left the Body. As long as you say something by yourself, you have left the Body. This means that your gossip, your free talk, your loose conversation, is a strong sign that you have left the Body.

The Body is not an organization or a society. The Body is not just a bunch of Christians coming together. The Body is something that is held together by the organic union with Christ. When we remain in the organic union with Christ, we are just living in the Body. Otherwise, we leave the Body. If we talk by ourselves, it is a strong sign that we have left the Body. So the Body is altogether a matter in the organic union with Christ. We are many yet one Body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). *In Christ* implies an organic union.

If you read Ephesians and Colossians carefully, you could see that Ephesians tells us that the church is the fullness of Christ, the new man, the household of God, the commonwealth, that is, the citizenship of God, and the habitation of God. The church is also the bride and the warrior. But you have to realize that the basic item is the Body, and all the other items are subsidiary. Actually, Ephesians does not talk about the new man; it talks about the Body as the new man. It does not talk about the fullness of Christ; it talks about the Body as the fullness of Christ. All the other terms are subsidiary. The basic term is only one—*the Body*. The Body is the house of God. The Body is the commonwealth of God. The Body is the bride. The Body is the warrior. It is not so good to turn it around and say that the warrior is the Body or that the house is the Body or that the new man is the Body. The Body is the main point, and all these other terms are subsidiary. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1980, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," pp. 249-255*)

## IN CHRIST

[Previously,] I gave you that little phrase *in Christ*. This little phrase indicates the organic union that we have with Christ. As we are in Christ, surely there is a kind of union. When the Bible was being translated into the Chinese language, this term, *in Christ*, bothered the translators to the uttermost. Nearly all of them said that there was no way to translate the Bible into Chinese. In the Chinese language there is not such an expression to say that you are in someone. Humanly speaking, we would not say that one person is in another person. But the Bible has this expression, that we are in Christ. Even this kind of expression was first used by the Lord Jesus in John 15 where He said that He is the vine, we are the branches, and we should abide in Him (v. 5). Due to our background, we Christians take this kind of expression for granted. We never bothered to check it out. Even before I was saved, I heard messages concerning abiding in Him. Sometimes I did not pay attention to what they were talking about, but at other times I did pay attention and asked, "How could you abide in Jesus?" No doubt this expression strongly indicates that there is a kind of organic union, which spontaneously implies mingling. When you put tea into water, could you say that the tea abides in the water just in a kind of union without mingling? Likewise, how could we just be in union with Christ without mingling?

*In Christ* is a short phrase, but do not consider that this is a small expression. This is a great expression because it reveals such a great thing—that between you and Christ there is an organic union. If you do not have such an organic union, I would not call you a brother. A brother or a sister must be one in this organic union. Do not take this phrase, *in Christ*, for granted.

## SUPPORTS OF THE FOCAL POINT

The Bible has a principle: every book in the Bible has a focal point, which is supported by many verses. These supports may be considered like the four legs supporting a table. Even a small table has four legs supporting it. To find out the supports of a focal point in a certain book, you have to take care

of the context of the entire book. In Romans the expression *in Christ* does have adequate support. What are the verses that are the supports of this organic union “in Christ” found in Romans?

In chapters 1 through 4 it is hard to find any support of the organic union. But in chapter 5 there are several supports. Verse 10 says that we are saved in His life. We were justified, reconciled, through the death of Christ, but we will be saved much more in His life. Then verse 17 says, “If, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” Martin Luther stressed the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness very much, but I doubt whether he stressed that the abundant grace and the gift of righteousness are for reigning in life. To reign in life is much higher than being saved in life. Then verse 18 uses the term *unto justification of life*. This means that justification is for life or unto life. Verse 21 goes on to say that grace might reign unto eternal life. *Unto* means “with a view to” or “resulting in.” Grace reigns with a view to or resulting in life. In chapter 5 *life* is mentioned at least four times: first, we need to be saved in life; second, we need to reign in life; third, we are justified for life; and fourth, grace reigns, resulting in life. So according to chapter 5, life, not justification, is the focus.

Now let us go on to chapter 6. Verse 3 says, “All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death.” Many teachers have stressed that we are baptized into His death, but they have not stressed adequately that we have been baptized into Christ. That we have been baptized into Christ Jesus is the strongest support of the phrase *in Christ*. How did you get into Christ? You have been baptized into Christ. Although I do not like to speak concerning others’ shortage, I must point out that many Christians today stress the tail more than the head. They pick up the tail and forget about the head. Many teachers have stressed that we have been baptized into His death. I have never heard a message at a baptism telling people that they have been baptized into Christ. They always said that we are baptized into the death of Christ. But this verse concerning being baptized into Christ is the strongest support of the thought of the organic union in Christ.

Verse 4 goes on to say that we “might walk in newness of life,” and verse 5 says that “if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” This indicates a process of growth where we are growing into His death and through His death into His resurrection. This is an organic union in which growth takes place so that one partakes of the life and characteristics of another. In 6:5 there is an organic union. This growing together with Christ is a kind of organic union. In this organic union the life grows. Growth takes place. One part partakes of the life and characteristics of the other part. That means we partake of the life and characteristics of Christ. This is the organic union.

Verse 8 goes on to say that “we will also live with Him.” If we are not one with Him, how could we live with Him? It does not mean that we simply stay together with Him; it means that we live together with Him. Verse 11 says that we are “living to God in Christ Jesus.” Verse 13 says that we need to present ourselves to God as alive from the dead. This also indicates our union with Christ. The last verse in this chapter also is a support for the organic union: “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v. 23).

Today the Pentecostal people often ask, Have you received the “gift”? My answer would be, What kind of gift do you mean? This would open their eyes. When they speak of receiving the “gift,” they are referring mainly to speaking in tongues. But I have received a bigger gift than a tongue. I have received the eternal life. This is a much bigger gift. This shows the superficiality of today’s Christians. We have received the gift of eternal life. This means that the organic union is a free gift.

Chapter 8 also has some strong supports for this matter of being in Christ as an organic union. Verse 2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Here is life, here is the Spirit of life, and here is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This is a strong support. Verse 6 says that “the mind set on the spirit is life and peace,” and verse 10 says that “the spirit is life because of righteousness.” In the *Life-study of Romans* we pointed out that these verses in chapter 8 reveal four layers of the matter

of life. First, God's Spirit is life. Second, our human spirit is life. Third, the mind is life, and finally, our body is life. This life first is the life of the Spirit. Then this life comes into our being, into our spirit. Then it saturates our soul and, eventually, saturates our body. This is the organic union.

Chapter 11, revealing the grafting, also is a strong support of the organic union. All of us were wild branches, yet thank the Lord, His grace has grafted us into Christ! Again, it is ridiculous to say that mingling is a heresy. The branches grafted into a tree are not only united but mingled. To say that they are only united and not mingled is terrible. They are not like two iron bars. Two iron bars may be united, but they are not mingled. But if a branch is grafted into a tree, no doubt the two are mingled. The two bars of iron can only have a kind of connecting. They do not have the organic union. An organic union is a matter of mingling.

From chapter 11 we go to chapter 12. Chapter 12 indicates that we need to consecrate our bodies so that our minds may be transformed to see and discern the will of God, which is just to have a Body for Christ produced out of the organic union. Verse 5 says, "We who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another." This verse means that we who are many are just one Body in Christ, in this organic union. Have you seen all these supports of this one focal point—in Christ? Chapter 12 continues by saying that as a believer, based upon the organic union in Christ, you need to realize the Body life by having all three parts of your being exercised. Our body is mentioned in verse 1 where we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. So our body needs to be offered. Then in verse 2 we need to have our mind renewed. Our mind represents our soul. It is the main part of our soul. So this refers to the transformation of the soul for the Body life. The body needs to be presented, and the soul needs to be transformed. Then in verse 11 we have to be burning in spirit. This refers to the exercise of the human spirit, the mingled spirit, for the Body life. For the Body of Christ we have to offer our body. Then our soul needs to be transformed, and our spirit needs to be on fire. Thus, all three parts of our human being are exercised. In order to realize this focus of the Christian life, that is, the Body of Christ, we need to fully experience the organic union in Christ with a thorough realization that we are organically one with Christ in life.

To practice this Body life, you must first have your body offered to God. After having your body offered to God, you must have your soul transformed. You must be transformed in your soul by the renewing of your mind. Rarely can you hear teaching concerning this point among today's Christians. You can hardly hear a message on transformation or on the renewing of the mind. In the past twenty years we have put out many messages on transformation. This is absolutely and thoroughly needed. Our body must be offered and consecrated, and our soul must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Then our spirit has to be burning, to be on fire. If this is your case, I have the full confidence that you are now practically in the Body life. If you do not realize the organic union in Christ and you do not have your body offered, your soul transformed by the renewing of the mind, or your spirit burning, you are just outside the Body and apart from the Body, practically speaking.

### **AN ENTRANCE INTO THE PRACTICAL BODY LIFE**

From now on we will spend much of this Perfecting Training on Romans. If you have some leisure time, think about Romans, and pray about the Body of Christ. Restrict your consideration, your feeling, and your sensation about the Body of Christ to Romans. If time and occasion allow, I also hope you would fellowship with some others. It is best to fellowship with only two or three or at the most four. We, the married people, do have a privilege in that we always have at least two. Fellowship about this, and pray. This is not a small thing. We need a strong revelation, and we need a stronger vision to see this matter. It is too mysterious. The mystical Body of Christ is too mysterious for us human beings to grasp. Yet we do have the life of this Body, and we also have the Spirit of this Body. Thank the Lord for this. So pray and exercise your inner being to think over this book concerning the Body. Also remind yourself of what we have covered in the past two Perfecting Training meetings. Do not consider that these are simply doctrines. You must consider that these are precious light from the

very heart of God. They are altogether worthy of our thinking, considering, praying, and fellowshiping. This Perfecting Training has no intention to pass on to you mere doctrine. We have the heavy burden to help all of us enter into the practical Body life. We all need an entrance into the practical Body life. If we can have this kind of life, this kind of vision, of the Body, we will be able to enter into the practical Body life. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1980*, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," pp. 260-264)



# THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Five

### The Will of God—Our Sanctification

EM Hymns: 1135

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:10-11; 12:10, 14; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:26;

1 Thes. 4:3a; 5:23-24; John 17:17

- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb 12:10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- 1 Thes 4:3a For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

#### **I. The will of God is our sanctification; to be sanctified is to be made holy, which is to be separated unto God and saturated with God as the Holy One, the One who is different, distinct, from everything that is common—1 Thes. 4:3a; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:25-27.**

- 1 Thes 4:3a For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

#### **II. Ephesians 1:4-5 and Hebrews 2:10-11 show that sanctification is for sonship; actually, sanctification is God's "sonizing":**

- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

A. We were chosen in eternity past "to be holy...unto [for, or, resulting in] sonship"—Eph.

1:4-5; Rev. 21:2, 9-11.

Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

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

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

B. The resurrected Christ is the Captain of our salvation, leading many sons into glory by sanctifying them—Heb. 2:10-11.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

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

### III. There are three aspects of sanctification in the Scriptures:

A. There is the Spirit's sanctification in seeking the God-chosen people before they repent and believe—1 Pet. 1:2.

1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

B. There is the positional sanctification by the blood of Christ at the time of the believers' believing—Heb. 13:12; 9:13-14; 10:29.

Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Heb 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who are defiled sanctifies to the purity of the flesh,

Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 10:29 By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

C. There is the Spirit's dispositional sanctification in the believers' full course of their Christian life—1 Thes. 5:23-24; Rom. 15:16b; 6:19, 22; cf. 5:10; Rev. 22:14; 2 Pet. 1:4.

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

1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

Rom 15:16b ... a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

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 unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.

Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.

Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

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

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

#### **IV. The divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament:**

- A. The divine sanctification is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely, making us sons of God that we may become the same as God in His life and in His nature (but not in His Godhead), so that we may be God's expression.
- B. We say that sanctification is the holding line because every step of God's work with us is to make us holy— John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Psa. 73:16-17, 25-26:
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
- 1 Cor 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- 1 Cor 12:3b ... and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.
- Heb 12:4 You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin,
- Heb 12:5 And you have completely forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reprov'd by Him;
- Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."
- Heb 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline?
- Heb 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all sons have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.
- Heb 12:9 Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected them; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?
- Heb 12:10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.
- Heb 12:11 Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.
- Heb 12:12 Therefore set straight the hands which hang down and the paralyzed knees,
- Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather may be healed.
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.
- 1 Thes 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;
- Rev 2:7a He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ...
- Psa 73:16 When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight,
- Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.
- Psa 73:25 Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.
- Psa 73:26 My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.
1. The seeking sanctification, the initial sanctification, is unto repentance to bring us back to God—1 Pet. 1:2; Luke 15:8-10, 17-21; John 16:8-11.
- 1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

- Luke 15:8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?
- Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost.
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.
- Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!
- Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.
- Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.
- Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
- Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
2. The redeeming sanctification, the positional sanctification, is by the blood of Christ, to transfer us from Adam to Christ—Heb. 13:12.
- Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
3. The regenerating sanctification, the beginning of dispositional sanctification, renews us from our spirit to make us, the sinners, sons of God—a new creation with the divine life and nature— John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.
- Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
4. The renewing sanctification, the continuation of dispositional sanctification, renews our soul from our mind through all the parts of our soul to make our soul a part of God's new creation—Rom. 12:2b; 6:4; 7:6; Eph. 4:23; Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
- Rom 12:2b ... but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
- Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
- Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.
- Ezek 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.
- 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,

- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
5. The transforming sanctification, the daily sanctification, reconstitutes us with the element of Christ metabolically to make us a new constitution as a part of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- 1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
6. The conforming sanctification, the shaping sanctification, shapes us in the image of the glorious Christ to make us the expression of Christ—Rom. 8:29.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
7. The glorifying sanctification, the consummating sanctification, redeems our body by transfiguring it to make us Christ’s expression in full and in glory— Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23.
- Phil 3:21 Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.
- Rom 8:23 And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.
- C. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit—15:16b; 8:4.
- Rom 15:16b ... a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

**V. In order to live a holy life for the church life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness—1 Thes. 3:13:**

- 1 Thes 3:13 So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; John 14:1; 16:22; Acts 11:23)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
- Matt 9:4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?
- Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe into God, believe also into Me.
- John 16:22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
- Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;
- Heb 10:22 Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- 1 John 3:20 Because if our heart blames us, it is because God is greater than our heart and knows all things.
- B. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the “switch” of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by



our small heart—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.

Matt 12:33 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for by the fruit the tree is known.

Matt 12:34 Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt 12:35 The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things.

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

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

Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Ezek 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

C. God is the unchanging One, but according to our natural birth, our heart is changeable, both in our relationship with others and with the Lord—cf. 2 Tim. 4:10; Matt. 13:18-23.

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

Matt 13:18 You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed.

Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.

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 stumbled.

Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

D. There is no one who, according to his natural, human life, is steadfast in his heart; because our heart changes so easily, it is not at all trustworthy— Jer. 17:9-10; 13:23.

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?

Jer 17:10 I, Jehovah, search the heart / And test the inward parts, / Even to give to each one according to his ways, / According to the fruit of his deeds.

Jer 13:23 Can the Cushite change his skin, / Or the leopard his spots? / Then you also may be able to do good, / Who are accustomed to do evil.

E. Our heart is blamable because it is changeable; an unchanging heart is a blameless heart—Psa. 57:7; 108:1; 112:7.

Psa 57:7 My heart is steadfast, O God; / My heart is steadfast. / I will sing, indeed I will sing psalms.

Psa 108:1 My heart is fixed, O God; / I will sing, indeed I will sing psalms, / Even with my glory.

Psa 112:7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; / His heart is steadfast, trusting in Jehovah.

F. In God's salvation the renewing of the heart is once for all; however, in our experience our heart is renewed continually because it is changeable—Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 4:16.

Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

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

G. Because our heart is changeable, it needs to be renewed continually by the sanctifying Spirit so that our heart can be established and built up in the state of being holy, separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God—Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Psa. 51:10-12.

Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- 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 unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.
- Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
- 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, / And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- Psa 51:11 Do not cast me from Your presence, / And do not take the Spirit of Your holiness away from me.
- Psa 51:12 Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit.
- H. As our heart is being established blameless in holiness by the continual renewing of the sanctifying Spirit, we are becoming the New Jerusalem with the newness of the divine life, and we are becoming the holy city with the holiness of the divine nature—Rev. 21:2; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
- 1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

**VI. “The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it”—1 Thes. 5:23-24:**

- A. The God of peace is the Sanctifier; His sanctification brings in peace; when we are wholly sanctified by Him from within, we have peace with Him and with man in every way—vv. 23, 13; 2 Thes. 3:16.
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Thes 5:13 And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.
- 2 Thes 3:16 Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord be with you all.
- B. God desires to sanctify us, and He Himself will do it as long as we are willing to pursue Him as holiness and cooperate with Him; in this way we can be holy as He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16); without holiness we cannot see Him (Heb. 12:14).
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- C. By sanctifying us, God transforms us in the essence of our spirit, soul, and body, making us wholly like Him in nature; in this way He preserves our spirit, soul, and body wholly complete—1 Thes. 5:23:
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1. Through the fall our body was ruined, our soul was contaminated, and our spirit was deadened; in God’s full salvation our entire being is saved and made complete and perfect.

2. For this, God is preserving our spirit from any deadening element (Heb. 9:14), our soul from remaining natural and old (Matt. 16:24-26), and our body from the ruin of sin (1 Thes. 4:4; Rom. 6:6).
  - Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
  - Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
  - Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
  - Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
  - 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
  - Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
3. Such a preservation by God and His thorough sanctification sustain us to live a holy life unto maturity so that we may meet the Lord in His coming.
4. Quantitatively, God sanctifies us wholly; qualitatively, God preserves us complete—that is, He keeps our spirit, soul, and body perfect.
5. Although God preserves us, we need to take the responsibility, the initiative, to cooperate with His operation to be preserved by keeping our spirit, soul, and body in the saturating of the Holy Spirit—1 Thes. 5:12-24.
  - 1 Thes 5:12 Furthermore we ask you, brothers, to acknowledge those who labor among you and take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you,
  - 1 Thes 5:13 And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.
  - 1 Thes 5:14 And we exhort you, brothers, Admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, sustain the weak, be long-suffering toward all.
  - 1 Thes 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always pursue what is good both for one another and for all.
  - 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
  - 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
  - 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
  - 1 Thes 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;
  - 1 Thes 5:20 Do not despise prophecies,
  - 1 Thes 5:21 But prove all things. Hold fast to what is good;
  - 1 Thes 5:22 Abstain from every kind of evil.
  - 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

**VII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our spirit in sanctification, we must keep our spirit in a living condition by exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:6-7:**

- 1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- A. In order to preserve our spirit, we must keep our spirit living by exercising it to have fellowship with God; if we fail to exercise our spirit in this way, we will leave it in a deadened situation—2 Tim. 1:6-7; cf. Jude 19:
  - 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
  - 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
  - Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulless, having no spirit.

1. To rejoice, pray, and give thanks are to exercise our spirit; to preserve our spirit is first of all to exercise our spirit to keep our spirit living and to pull it out of death—1 Thes. 5:16-18.
  - 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
  - 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
  - 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
2. We need to cooperate with the sanctifying God to be separated from a spirit-deadening situation—cf. Num. 6:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:4.
  - Num 6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.
  - Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.
  - Num 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy to Jehovah.
  - 2 Cor 5:4 For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
3. We must worship God, serve God, and fellowship with God in and with our spirit; whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do toward God must be in our spirit—John 4:24; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 2:1.
  - John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
  - Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
  - Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- B. In order to preserve our spirit, we need to keep it from all defilement and contamination—2 Cor. 7:1.
  - 2 Cor 7:1 Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- C. In order to preserve our spirit, we must exercise ourselves to have a conscience without offense toward God and men—Acts 24:16; Rom. 9:1; cf. 8:16.
  - Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
  - Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,
  - Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- D. In order to preserve our spirit, we must take heed to our spirit, setting our mind on the spirit and caring for the rest in our spirit—Mal. 2:15-16; Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13.
  - Mal 2:15 But did He not make them one? And the remnant of the Spirit was His. And why the one? He sought the seed of God. Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one be treacherous to the wife of his youth.
  - Mal 2:16 For I hate divorce, says Jehovah the God of Israel; and he who does it behaves in violence, says Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirit, and do not be treacherous.
  - Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
  - 2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

**VIII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our soul in sanctification, we must clear the three main “arteries” of our psychological heart, the parts of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will—cf. Psa. 43:4; Neh. 8:10; 1 John 1:4; Jer. 15:16:**

- Psa 43:4 And I will go to the altar of God, / To God my exceeding joy; / And I will praise You with the harp, / O God, my God.

- 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; for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.
- 1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.
- Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.
- A. In order for our soul to be sanctified, our mind must be renewed to be the mind of Christ (Rom. 12:2), our emotion must be touched and saturated with the love of Christ (Eph. 3:17, 19), our will must be subdued by and infused with the resurrected Christ (Phil. 2:13), and we must love the Lord with our whole being (Mark 12:30).
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
- Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- B. The way to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart is to make a thorough confession to the Lord; we need to stay with the Lord for a period of time, asking Him to bring us fully into the light, and in the light of what He exposes, we need to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins— 1 John 1:5-9:
- 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
- 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1. In order to unclog the artery of our mind, we need to confess everything that is sinful in our thoughts and in our way of thinking.
  2. In order to unclog the artery of our will, we need to confess the germs of rebellion in our will.
  3. In order to unclog the artery of our emotion, we need to confess the natural and even fleshy way that we have expressed our joy and sorrow; also, in many cases we hate what we should love, and we love what we should hate— cf. Rev. 2:4, 6.  
 Rev 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.  
 Rev 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
  4. If we take the time necessary to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart, we will have the sense that our entire being has become living and is in a very healthy condition.

**IX. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our body in sanctification, we must present our body to Him so that we may live a holy life for the church life, practicing the Body life in order to carry out God's perfect will—Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:4; 5:18:**

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



- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
- 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- A. Our fallen body, the flesh, is the “meeting hall” of Satan, sin, and death, but by Christ’s redemption and in the regenerated spirit as the “meeting hall” of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, our body is a member of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 6:6, 12, 14; 7:11, 17-25; 8:2-3; 1 Cor. 6:15, 19.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 6:12 Do not let sin therefore reign in your mortal body so that you obey the body's lusts;
- Rom 6:14 For sin will not lord it over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.
- Rom 7:11 For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.
- Rom 7:17 Now then it is no longer I that work it out, but sin that dwells in me.
- Rom 7:18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.
- Rom 7:19 For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.
- Rom 7:20 But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me.
- Rom 7:21 I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me.
- Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man,
- Rom 7:23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.
- Rom 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?
- Rom 7:25 Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.
- Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- 1 Cor 6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Absolutely not!
- 1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
- B. To preserve our body is to glorify God in our body—v. 20.
- 1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.
- C. To preserve our body is to magnify Christ in our body—Phil. 1:20.
- Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
- D. To preserve our body, we must not live according to our soul, the old man; then the body of sin will lose its job and become unemployed—Rom. 6:6.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- E. To preserve our body, we must not present our body to anything that is sinful but instead present ourselves as slaves to righteousness and our members as weapons of righteousness—vv. 13, 18-19, 22; 1 Thes. 4:3-5.
- Rom 6:13 Neither present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God.
- Rom 6:18 And having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.
- 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 unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.

- Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
- 1 Thes 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication;
- 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
- 1 Thes 4:5 Not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;
- F. To preserve our body, we must buffet it and lead it as a slave to fulfill our holy purpose to become the holy city—1 Cor. 9:27; Rev. 21:2.
- 1 Cor 9:27 But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself may become disapproved.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### **GOD THE FATHER'S DISPENSING IN CHOOSING THE BELIEVERS TO BE HOLY BY PREDESTINATING THEM UNTO SONSHIP**

The first item of the spiritual blessings is the Father's choosing. We may think that God's choosing is one thing, and God's predestinating is another thing, but this is wrong. We need to look at the grammar of Ephesians 1:4-5. These verses say, "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." These verses do not say that He chose us *and* predestinated us. Instead, they say that He chose us, predestinating us. *Predestinating* in verse 5 modifies the predicate *chose* in verse 4, so these are not two things. These are one thing. God chose us. How did He choose us? God chose us by predestinating us, by marking us out. To predestinate is to mark out. God chose us to be holy for the sonship. The choosing of God's people for them to be holy is for the purpose of their being made sons of God, participating in the divine sonship.

For a person to have sons, he has to beget them by imparting his life into them. This imparting is dispensing. Without the dispensing of life, no children can be produced. Without God's dispensing, how could God have sons? For God to have sons means that there has been the dispensing of His life. This is fully unveiled in John 1. Christ came to be received. Whoever receives Him, He will give that one the right, the authority, to become a child of God. The right, the authority, to be a child of God is the very divine life dispensed into us. We receive the life of God, and this life is our authority to be the sons of God. We are sons of God because His life has been dispensed into us.

God dispenses Himself in a sanctifying way. God's chosen ones are made His sons by His sanctifying Spirit. God sanctified us to become His sons. He chose us to be holy for sonship. John Wesley said that sinless perfection is holiness, but the Brethren showed that this was wrong. They taught that holiness, sanctification, is not sinless perfection but is a transfer of our position. In Matthew 23 the Lord Jesus said that the gold is made holy, sanctified, by the temple (v. 17) and that the gift is made holy, sanctified, by the altar (v. 19). When the gold was in the market, it was common and worldly. But when the gold was separated unto God through the temple, it was sanctified because its position changed. Likewise, when the gift's location changed from a common place to a holy place, it was sanctified. The teaching of the Brethren concerning positional sanctification is scriptural, but this is not the entire truth concerning sanctification.

Sanctification is to separate God's people unto God for God to work on them and to work in them to make them His sons. God had an intention and made an economy to get many sons. Then the Spirit came to separate the chosen ones unto God so that God could beget them. First, they were sanctified unto God; then through this sanctification they became the object of God's begetting. God came to beget them, making them His sons, and this was through the sanctification of the Spirit. Verse 4 of Ephesians 1 says that God chose us to be holy. Then verse 5 says that He did this by

predestinating us unto sonship. Thus, sanctification is unto sonship, for sonship. First, the Spirit comes to sanctify God's chosen people. Then they are ready to be begotten by God into His sonship.

For us to be holy and for us to be sons both require God's dispensing. Without God dispensing His holy nature into our being, how could we be holy? God is the only One who is holy. For us to be holy we need a holy element dispensed into us. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He brings God's holy nature into us, and that holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. Stanza 1 of *Hymns*, #841 says, "By Thy holy nature / I am sanctified; / By Thy resurrection, / Vict'ry is supplied." His holy nature makes us holy, and His resurrection power makes us victorious. We have God's holy nature imparted into our being, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which we are made holy. Our being made holy is for us to be sons. The imparting of God's holy nature into us and His begetting us are His dispensing.

### **SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP IN OUR DAILY LIFE**

We may wonder what sanctification has to do with our daily life. This is my burden. We have to realize that sanctification for sonship is still going on. It is not a once-for-all matter. Every day we have to remember that God the Spirit is sanctifying us for God to impart more of His holy nature and holy life into our being to cause us to grow. We all have to grow in the divine life.

Now we need to consider how we can grow. In order for us to grow physically, we need the life within plus the nourishment. A young child has inherited a life from his parents. In other words, his parents have imparted their human life into this child. Then the mother feeds him every day, and he grows with the nourishment in the human life. In principle it is the same in the Christian life. We were born of God. God has imparted Himself into us as life. Now we need to grow by being nourished in the life of God. Our birth is a beginning, not a graduation. After our birth we need to grow in the life of Christ, in the divine life, in the eternal life, with the proper nourishment in the Spirit.

Both sanctification and the sonship are always carried out by the Spirit. This is why Ephesians 1:3 calls this a spiritual blessing, a blessing by the Spirit. Today we must learn to live by the Spirit, to act according to the Spirit, to have our being altogether by the Spirit, with the Spirit, and according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). As long as we have our being by the Spirit and act according to the Spirit, we are ready to grow in the divine life. Then we need some nourishment. We can be nourished in these three ways: by reading the holy Word, by listening to the spiritual speaking, and by coming to the meetings. This nourishment causes us to grow.

I am concerned that many dear ones among us are seeking after the Lord, but they still are not on the way of the growth in life. If we are driving a car for a long distance, we need to find the freeway and get on it. Once we get on the freeway, we have to be careful about the direction we take. If we get on the right freeway with the right direction, then our driving is okay. We need to get on the way of the growth in the divine life in the right direction. We still need some revelation to see the right way to grow in the divine life according to the New Testament teaching.

In order to grow, we must deal with the Spirit. We must get ourselves right with the Spirit. We must have our entire being in the Spirit, and walk, behave, and act according to the Spirit all day long. When the parents are with their children, they have to behave themselves according to the Spirit in order to be kept in the divine life. Many times the parents are too free and unrestricted in what they say to their children. They may be afraid of making mistakes when they talk to others, but they do not have any care when they speak to their children. This is wrong. We should not say anything according to our taste. Instead, we have to be regulated, corrected, and adjusted by saying everything and doing everything according to the Spirit.

It is the Spirit who sanctifies us unto sonship. It is the Spirit who begets us that we may be born of God (John 3:6). God chose us to be sanctified unto sonship. To be sanctified unto sonship is altogether a matter by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and with the Spirit. I am concerned when I see a number of dear saints who have been in the recovery for many years with no growth. Although they may meet,

read the Bible, and listen to the messages, they do not care for the Spirit. Instead of taking care of the Spirit when they speak, they freely gossip and criticize others. Although they say that they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church life, they do not care a bit for the Spirit. This is wrong. We have to take care of the Spirit. Today this Spirit, who is wrapped up with sanctification and with God's sonship, is in our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). If we desire to take care of the Spirit, we should first take care of our spirit.

The Bible says that we should not provoke our children to anger (Eph. 6:4). When we are angry with our children, we often provoke them. In dealing with our children, we have to take care of our spirit. We need to check, "Does our spirit agree with us, or are we acting according to our emotion?" We should deny our emotion and turn to our spirit. Then in our spirit, the Spirit will speak to us. When we are becoming angry with our children, the Spirit may say, "Go into your room and pray. Don't talk to your children at this time." That is a kind of sanctification. When we pray, the speaking Spirit will continue to speak. He may lead us to read a portion of the Word. Then we are nourished, and we grow in the divine life with the spiritual nourishment. If we do not care for our spirit in our family life, we surely cannot have a pleasant household, and God cannot sanctify us for His sonship and His household.

We need to take care of our spirit in everything. When a brother buys a necktie, he should not buy it according to his taste. If he buys it according to his taste, this is wrong. Even in buying a tie, he should take care of his spirit. What would our spirit say to us when we go shopping? If we would listen to our spirit, the Holy Spirit will speak more in us.

Today we are promoting the prophesying of all the saints. We want to see the saints speak for the Lord. Some saints, however, have determined not to speak in the meetings. They come to the church meetings, but they sit at the back in silence. The leading ones who are taking care of the saints may be afraid to say anything to these ones about speaking, because they are afraid they will stop coming to the meetings. Thus, they may come to the meetings for years without speaking anything for the Lord. They have been regenerated, and they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church, but they just would not speak. Be assured that if this is your case, you will not grow at all in the Lord.

You must take care of your spirit. Get down on your knees in your bedroom to pray, and see what your spirit would say to you. Your spirit will tell you that you are stubborn and that you should go along with the church to speak for the Lord. If you take care of your spirit, the divine Spirit will take the opportunity to speak many more things to you. Then you will come to the meeting by taking care of your spirit. You may even confess to the saints, "Dear saints, I regret that I have not spoken for the Lord in the meetings." The whole church will be happy. Then as you continue to speak, the Holy Spirit will speak to you so that you have even more to speak. Then you will see that the speed of your growth in life will fly like an airplane. Within half a year, you will grow much in Christ and be much more sanctified unto much more sonship. By your growth in life, you will become not just a son but an heir of God to inherit the riches of God (Rom. 8:17). Then you will be so useful in the church life. You will become a supplier to supply, to minister, the bountiful supply of the Spirit to all the congregation.

Dear saints, this is my burden. We should not think that Ephesians 1:4 and 5 transpired once for all. Sanctification for sonship is still going on. Day by day, however, we do not live in our sonship, because we do not care for the sanctifying Spirit speaking and working in our spirit. We must turn to our spirit, realizing that we have been sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit. This sanctifying and regenerating Spirit has much to say to us. He still wants to sanctify us more and more so that we may participate in the sonship more and more. Then we will grow, and the Father will have a pleasant household. If we care for our spirit and let the Spirit speak to us, we will grow as sons to become heirs, grown-up persons, to inherit all the riches of God. Then we can be a part of His pleasant household. The blessings in Ephesians 1 start from God's choosing for us to be sanctified that we might be more and more in the sonship of God. This should be a daily matter.

## CONCLUDING NOTES

(1) Without dispensing His holy element into our being, how could God make us holy? Especially for God's sonship, there is the need for God to dispense His life and nature into our being.

(2) The Father's dispensing in His choosing and predestinating of the believers issues in His sonship through His sanctifying of His chosen people, making them holy as He is in His life and in His nature, to make them like God in the divine life and nature but without His unique Godhead. This is the divine sanctification unto (for) the divine sonship. This is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament. Such a divine sanctification is carried out by the sanctifying Spirit (Rom. 15:16). The divine sonship is accomplished by the regenerating Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal. 4:6). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ," pp. 478-483)

## THE DIVINE SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP

We also have seen something further concerning the truth of sanctification. This has been a great subject among us in the recovery for the past seventy years. We studied and investigated this, spending much time to get into others' writings. But we were not fully satisfied with what we had seen. It was not until this year, 1993, that I saw the full intrinsic significance of sanctification. I saw this when the church in Anaheim was spending time to review our life-study on Hebrews, which was given in 1975. That life-study was very thorough, yet I did not see fully at that time how the sanctification of the Spirit is related to the sonship. Hebrews 2:10 says that the Lord as the Captain of God's salvation will lead many sons into glory. Then verse 11 speaks of the One who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified. When I considered these two verses, my eyes were opened to see that sanctification is for sonship. This is new light.

When I saw this, I entered into a fuller understanding of Ephesians 1:4-5. Verse 4 says, "To be holy," and verse 5 says, "Unto sonship." We need to put these two phrases together—*to be holy unto sonship*. This shows again that sanctification is for sonship. The Greek preposition for the word *unto* is very profound. It means "resulting in." To be holy results in the sonship. God's sonship comes to us through the Holy Spirit's sanctification. The concluding notes [in the previous "Concluding Notes"] point out that the divine sanctification is unto the divine sonship. I hope that the Lord will have mercy on all of us to pick up this thought. Divine sanctification is not for sinless perfection, nor is it merely for a change of our position. It is for the sonship and results in the sonship. We call it the divine sanctification because it is a matter of the Spirit Himself. It is a matter of the Triune God.

Now I would like to present a full view of the divine sanctification as unveiled in the holy Word. God has a desire. Based upon His desire, He made an intention with a purpose. This is His eternal economy, *oikonomia* (Gk.). This economy was made by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and carried out and applied to us by the Spirit. The carrying out of the eternal economy of God is by the Spirit's sanctification. The Spirit's sanctification is the carrying out of God's eternal purpose in four steps.

### Seeking Sanctification

The first step of the divine sanctification by the Spirit is His seeking sanctification. This is the Spirit's coming to seek out God's chosen people who became lost. The seeking sanctification is fully unveiled in the second parable in Luke 15. There the Spirit is likened to a woman seeking a lost coin by lighting a lamp and sweeping the house (v. 8). She sought this lost coin finely. Eventually, she found it. Actually, the lost coin was the prodigal son. Due to the Spirit's seeking and finding, the prodigal son woke up. He came to himself (v. 17). He made the decision to rise up and go back to his father to repent.

John 16 goes on to show that this seeking Spirit is also the convicting Spirit. He convicts all the lost sinners of sin in Adam, of righteousness in Christ, and of the judgment for Satan (vv. 8-11). Man's



full repentance is the result of the work of the seeking and convicting Spirit.

First Peter 1:2 tells us that this seeking and convicting of the Spirit is the sanctification of the Spirit before the sprinkling of the blood upon the repentant sinners. This shows that the seeking sanctification was before our repentance and believing in Christ. Actually, our repentance and believing were due to the seeking Spirit, the convicting Spirit. We were lost in sin and among a heap of sinners, but the seeking Spirit came to seek us out. As a result, we woke up, repented, returned to God, and asked Him to forgive us. This was the result of our Father's choosing with His predestinating in eternity past along with His Spirit's coming in time to seek us out and convict us. This seeking, this convicting, is the seeking sanctification.

### **Regenerating Sanctification**

At the juncture we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, the same Spirit, the seeking Spirit, sanctified us further by regenerating us. We were born of the Spirit (John 3:5), and God as the Spirit came into our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22). Now we are the sons of God, the children of God. The seeking Spirit woke us up and brought us back to the Father. We repented and believed in the Lord Jesus. We received Christ, and the Spirit sanctified us further, making us the children of God. This is the second step of the divine sanctification, the regenerating sanctification.

The Father put Christ's redeeming blood upon us, just like the loving father put the best robe upon the returned prodigal son (Luke 15:22; Heb. 13:12). Also, the sanctifying Spirit entered into our spirit with God's life to make us children of God. Now we have the blood of Christ without and the life of God within. All our offenses have been forgiven through the blood, the redemption of Christ, and our spirit has been regenerated. The Spirit's regenerating sanctification transpired in our spirit (John 3:6).

### **Transforming Sanctification**

After regeneration, the next step of the Spirit's sanctification is His transforming sanctification. This takes place in our soul. Our regenerated spirit has never been a problem to us. Our problems always come from two sources: our soul (comprising our mind, emotion, and will) and our body. Our untransformed mind, emotion, and will give us much trouble. Following the regeneration of the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit, the sanctifying Spirit carries out His continuous sanctification to transform us in our soul. We were regenerated, sanctified unto God, in our spirit, but we need the sanctifying Spirit's further work to sanctify our soul. This is the transforming sanctification.

This transformation implies renewing and conformation to the image of Christ. While the sanctifying Spirit works to sanctify us, we are being transformed. Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us clearly that transformation is by the Lord Spirit. This is a strong proof that the Spirit's transformation is His work to keep sanctifying us. Romans 12:2 says that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The transformation of the sanctifying Spirit first renews our troublesome mind. For us to be transformed, we need some new element added into us to carry away our old element and replace us with the new element. This is a kind of metabolism, which results in a metabolic change within us. Thus, we become another person in our thinking, in our feelings, and in our intentions. The Bible says that we are being transformed from the old man into the new man. This is a further step of the sanctifying Spirit, the transforming sanctification. Now we have the seeking sanctification, the regenerating sanctification, and the transforming sanctification, which includes the renewing and the conforming to the image of Christ.

### **Glorifying Sanctification**

Our full transformation will one day consummate in our glorification. That will be the work of the sanctifying Spirit to glorify us in our body. Another thing that bothers us besides our soul is our poor, vile body. Lust, weakness, sickness, and death are present in our corrupted body. Our body is

really vile, but one day we will be glorified and transfigured in our body (Phil. 3:21). Our spirit has been regenerated, our soul is being transformed, and our body will be transfigured, changed into a glorious body with no more lust, weakness, sickness, or death. This is the glorifying sanctification.

When all these four steps of the divine sanctification (seeking sanctification, regenerating sanctification, transforming sanctification, and glorifying sanctification) take place, we will be glorified. We will be qualified to meet the Lord. By that time we will be able to shout, “We have been fully sanctified!” Today we are like a butterfly that is still in the cocoon. Eventually, we will come out of the cocoon. We will not walk on this earth; we will fly. This is the consummating sanctification. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, “The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ,” pp. 487-491)

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—Evening Session)

## Message Six

### Doing the Will of God in the Kingdom of God under the Government of God for the Church as the Israel of God

RK Hymns: 942

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:17; Matt. 7:21; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:24; 5:6-7, 10; Gal. 6:10, 15-16

- 1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
- 1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
- Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
- Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.

#### I. We need to do the will of God in the kingdom of God—Matt. 7:21; 12:50:

- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
- A. “He who does the will of God abides forever”—1 John 2:17:
1. The world is against God the Father, and the things in the world are against the will of God—vv. 15-16:

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;

1 John 2:16 Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.

    - a. On the positive side, we have the Father and His will.
    - b. On the negative side, we have the world and the things in the world.
  2. We need to do the will of God habitually and continually, not just occasionally; this is indicated by the fact that the Greek verb for *does* in verse 17 denotes doing (things) habitually and continually by abiding (in the things).

1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
- B. In order to enter into the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age, we must do the will of our Father in this age—Matt. 7:21-23; 6:10; 12:50; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 5:17; Col. 1:9; 4:12:
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 7:22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?
- Matt 7:23 And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.

Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.  
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.  
 Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.  
 Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.  
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
 Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,  
 Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,  
 Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.  
 Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,  
 Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

1. The kingdom is absolutely a matter of God's will and completely fulfills God's will; in fact, the kingdom is God's will—Matt. 6:10.  
 Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
2. The ultimate issue of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens is the will of the heavenly Father—7:21.  
 Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
3. As the kingdom people, we are on earth to do the Father's will—v. 21; 12:50.  
 Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.  
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
4. In order to do the will of the Father, we need to enter in through the narrow gate and walk on the constricted way—7:13-14:  
 Matt 7:13 Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.  
 Matt 7:14 Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.
  - a. The narrow gate excludes the old man, the self, the flesh, the human concept, and the world with all its glory; only that which corresponds with God's will can enter in.
  - b. As we walk on the constricted way, we are restricted by a mysterious, invisible, inward control, and we live under this control.
5. Whoever does the will of the Father is a relative of the Lord Jesus—12:50:  
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
  - a. Christ, the heavenly King, always submitted to the Father's will, taking God's will as His portion and not resisting anything—11:28-30; 26:39.  
 Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.  
 Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
 Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.  
 Matt 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.

- b. Whoever does the will of the Father is a brother who helps the Lord Jesus, a sister who sympathizes with Him, and a mother who tenderly loves Him.
- 6. The Father's eternal will is to build up the church upon Christ the Son as the rock—16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.
  - Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
  - Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
  - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
  - Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

## **II. In order to do the will of God in the kingdom of God, we must live the Christian life under the government of God—1 Pet. 1:17; 2:24; 5:6-7, 10:**

- 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
- 1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
- A. In his writings Peter combines the Christian life and God's government, revealing that the Christian life and the government of God go together as a pair— 1:17; 2:21, 24; 3:15; 4:17; 5:5-8:
  - 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
  - 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
  - 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
  - 1 Pet 3:15 But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, being always ready for a defense to everyone who asks of you an account concerning the hope which is in you,
  - 1 Pet 4:17 For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?
  - 1 Pet 5:5 In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
  - 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
  - 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
  - 1 Pet 5:8 Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.
- 1. The subject of 1 Peter is the Christian life under the government of God, showing us the government of God especially in His dealings with His chosen people—1:2.
  - 1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 2. The subject of 2 Peter is the divine provision and the divine government, showing us that as God is governing us, He supplies us with whatever we need—1:1-4; 3:13.
  - 2 Pet 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:
  - 2 Pet 1:2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;



- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet 3:13 But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
3. God governs by judging; this judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government—1 Pet. 1:17; 4:17.
 

1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,

1 Pet 4:17 For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?
  4. The judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, which is carried out by the Father, is the present, daily judgment of God's governmental dealings with His children.
 

1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
  5. God judges everything that does not match His government; therefore, in this age we, the children of God, are under the daily judgment of God—v. 17.
 

1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- B. As believers in Christ and children of God, we should live a Christian life under the government of God— John 3:15; 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:13-19; 5:6-7:
- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 1 Pet 4:13 But inasmuch as you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice exultingly.
- 1 Pet 4:14 If you are reproached in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.
- 1 Pet 4:15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler into others' affairs;
- 1 Pet 4:16 But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.
- 1 Pet 4:17 For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?
- 1 Pet 4:18 And if the righteous man is saved only with difficulty, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?
- 1 Pet 4:19 So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
1. The Epistles of Peter reveal the Christ who enables us to take God's governmental dealings administered through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:6-8; 2:3-4, 19, 21-25; 3:18, 22; 4:1, 15-16; 5:8-9.
 

1 Pet 1:6 In which time you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials,

1 Pet 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

1 Pet 2:3 If you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

- 1 Pet 2:19 For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly.
- 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
- 1 Pet 2:22 Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;
- 1 Pet 2:23 Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously;
- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- 1 Pet 3:18 For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the spirit;
- 1 Pet 3:22 Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him.
- 1 Pet 4:1 Since Christ therefore has suffered in the flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same mind (because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin),
- 1 Pet 4:15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler into others' affairs;
- 1 Pet 4:16 But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.
- 1 Pet 5:8 Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.
- 1 Pet 5:9 Him withstand, being firm in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished among your brotherhood in the world.
2. In the death of Christ we have died to sins so that in the resurrection of Christ we might live to righteousness under God's government—2:24:
- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- a. To live to righteousness is to fulfill God's governmental requirements— v. 24.
- 1 Pet 2:24 Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.
- b. In our Christian life we should live in a way that matches the righteous requirements of His government—Psa. 89:14; Matt. 5:6, 10.
- Psa 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; / Lovingkindness and truth go before Your face.
- Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Matt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.
3. We should be humbled under the mighty hand of God, which carries out the government of God—1 Pet. 5:6:
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- a. In verse 6 *the mighty hand of God* refers to God's administrating hand seen especially in His judgment—1:17; 4:17.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet 1:17 And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
- 1 Pet 4:17 For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?
- b. To be humbled under God's mighty hand is to be made humble by God; however, we must cooperate with God's operation and be willing to be made

humble, lowly, under His mighty hand—5:6.

1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,

4. We should cast all our anxiety on God because it matters to Him concerning us—v. 7.  
1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
5. We should commit our souls to the faithful Creator—4:19:  
1 Pet 4:19 So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.
  - a. God can preserve our soul, and His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice in His governmental administration.
  - b. While God judges us in His government, He cares for us faithfully in His love; as we are suffering His disciplinary judgment, we should commit our souls to the faithful care of our Creator—Matt. 10:28-30; 11:28-29.  
Matt 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.  
Matt 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And not one of them will fall to the earth apart from your Father.  
Matt 10:30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.  
Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.  
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
6. As we live under the government of God, the God of all grace will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us—1 Pet. 5:10.  
1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

### **III. Doing the will of God in the kingdom of God under the government of God issues in the church as the Israel of God—Gal. 6:10, 15-16:**

- Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
- Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.
- A. God's New Testament economy is not only to make us sons of God but also to make us the Israel of God; the real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church— Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7; 6:16; Matt. 16:18.
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
- Rom 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.
- Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- Gal 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!
- Gal 4:7 So then you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- B. We need to become such an Israel, a prince, to execute God's government on earth—6:9-10.
- Matt 6:9 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified;
- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

- C. The apostle Paul considered the many believers in Christ—who are the household of the faith, the new creation—collectively the Israel of God—Gal. 6:10, 15-16; 3:7, 29.
- Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
- Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.
- Gal 3:7 Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham.
- Gal 3:29 And if you are of Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.
- D. In God's New Testament economy we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God—v. 26; 6:16:
- Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.
1. We are sons of God, members of God's family, for His expression—v. 10.  
Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
  2. We are kings-to-be, those destined to be kings; kingship is related to the Israel of God—Rev. 5:10.  
Rev 5:10 And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.
  3. Our destiny is to be sons of God expressing God and also kings reigning in the kingdom of God—21:7; 22:5b; 12:5a.  
Rev 21:7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be God to him, and he will be a son to Me.  
Rev 22:5b ... for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.  
Rev 12:5a And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; ...
- E. As the Israel of God, we represent God, exercise His authority, and carry out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose—Gen. 1:26, 28; Luke 10:19; Rev. 12:5, 7-11:
- 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 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.
- Luke 10:19 Behold, I have given you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
- Rev 12:5 And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.
- Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels.
- Rev 12:8 And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any longer in heaven.
- Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.
- Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.
- Rev 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.
1. God wants His creature *man* to deal with His creature *Satan* in order to bring the earth back to God—Psa. 149:7-9.  
Psa 149:7 To execute vengeance on the nations / And punishment among the peoples;

Psa 149:8 To bind their kings with fetters / And their nobles with chains of iron;  
Psa 149:9 To execute upon them the judgment written. / This honor is for all His faithful ones. / Hallelujah!

2. God needs man to do the work of God—to reign over His creation, to proclaim His triumph, and to cause Satan to suffer loss—Gen. 1:26.

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

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE MEANING OF DOING GOD’S WILL

#### Accomplishing the Will of God

**“I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me”** (John 5:30).

Doing the will of God means to not seek, follow, or accomplish our own will but to only seek, follow, and accomplish God’s will. People often say that they have prayed and that they are clear that the will of God is for them to go to a certain place or for them to do a certain thing. Some say that it is God’s will for them to run a business. Some say that it is God’s will for them to get married. But is this reliable? Is the one who thinks that he is acting according to God’s will consecrated to God, and is he living for God? Is he truly not seeking, following, or accomplishing his own will but seeking, following, and accomplishing God’s will? This is not a small matter. Many who claim to be acting according to the will of God are not truly practicing the will of God, because they have not consecrated themselves to Him to live for His will. They still hold on to themselves, keep things in their own hands, and live according to their own will.

A person who truly does the will of God does not seek his own will. He only seeks the will of God. This was the Lord Jesus’ pattern when He was on earth as a man. In all human history, only Jesus the Nazarene sought only the will of God and not His own will. Although He was one with God and equal to God, He willingly came to earth and stood in the position of one who was sent to do the will of God. In all things He only sought the will of Him who sent Him; He did not seek His own will. This is the meaning of doing the will of God.

**“Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God”** (Heb. 10:7).

When He came to earth, the Lord spoke the words in this verse to God. This shows that the Lord did the will of God according to what was written in the Scriptures. Consequently, we should realize that any practice of the will of God must be according to the Word of God, the Bible. The Bible reveals the entire will of God in all its aspects. Whatever He wants to complete in us, whatever He wants us to do, and how He wants us to do it are revealed, in principle, in the Bible. If we truly want to do the will of God, if we truly want to seek His will, we must know the Bible and consider what the Word of God says concerning every matter. We must find God’s will, in principle, concerning every matter from the Bible. Those who want to do the will of God and act according to God’s will cannot be sloppy with the Bible but must spend a considerable amount of time to read it carefully.

If we want to do the will of God, we cannot simply do what we think is the will of God. We cannot simply pray a few times and say with certainty that this or that is the will of God. Such a way is not reliable and is quite dangerous. We often are easily deceived by our own opinions and captured by our own thoughts and views. We must bring our opinions, thoughts, and views before the Bible and let them be judged by the Word of God. Whoever is not willing to let his “in my opinion,” “I think,” and “to my point of view” be conquered by the Word of God cannot do the will of God. We must put our own things aside in everything and see what the Word of God says and commands. In some things God tells us His will in detail; in others He reveals it only in principle. For example, the Word of God



contains a great principle that believers should not be dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. Consequently, we can know the will of God in many things related to this principle. In marriage, we know that a believing brother should not marry an unbelieving woman, and a believing sister should not be given in marriage to an unbelieving man. If we practice according to God's Word, we will be able to practice the will of God.

**“Not My will, but Yours be done”** (Luke 22:42).

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord prayed these words as He was about to be betrayed and killed. He prayed that He would accomplish God's will, not His own will. The Lord's prayer tells us what it means to do the will of God. To do the will of God is to do God's will, not our own will. After the Lord prayed this three times, He clearly knew that God's will was for Him to die on the cross. Therefore, He willingly obeyed. Whether or not we suffer, die for the Lord, or are even martyred, it should be according to the will of God, not our own preference or enthusiasm. Enthusiastically volunteering to suffer and to be martyred for the Lord cannot replace the will of God, nor is it necessarily God's will. Anything that is according to the predisposition and pleasure of the self cannot be regarded as the will of God. When the Lord clearly knew that God's will included His death, He was willing to drink the cup that the Father gave Him.

**“The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”** (John 18:11).

The cup of the Father in this verse refers to the Lord's death on the cross, including all its suffering. Since God had given a cup to Him, the Lord said that He could not refuse to drink it. This tells us that the Lord's death was not according to His preference, although He willingly accepted it. The cup given to Him by God was the portion God measured to Him. By accepting the cup, He accomplished the will of God and did the will of God. The Lord's death is the highest example of doing the will of God. It shows that the criterion for doing the will of God is not doing good things but accepting what God has measured to us. God has not necessarily measured many good things for us to do; consequently, good things should not be considered as the will of God. Even preaching the gospel, casting out demons, and works of power should not be counted as the will of God if God has not measured them to us. We should not think that good or even spiritual things are automatically the will of God. These things cannot replace the will of God. While the will of God is good and spiritual, good or spiritual things are not necessarily the will of God. The will of God can only be what God has particularly measured to us. Anything that is good and spiritual must be measured to us to do; it must be assigned to us by God in order for it to be God's will for us. Even our love for the brothers should be according to God's assignment and God's measure; otherwise, it may be excessive. Only God's measure and appointment for us are the will of God. When we do what He has measured and appointed, we are doing the will of God.

One who follows the Lord certainly must deal with sin and do away with all lawlessness and unrighteousness. However, doing lawful, righteous acts is not necessarily doing the will of God. We must do what God wants us to do and what He measures for us to do in order for it to be considered as doing the will of God. When we first begin to follow the Lord and desire to please Him, our standard is typically what we consider to be good, but slowly the Lord shows us that we need to take God as our standard. The Lord wants us to be His slaves, receiving His direction and not deciding anything according to our opinion or others' perceptions. As long as something is according to the Lord's desire, we should do it even if we as well as others may think that it is wrong. This is doing the will of God. On Mount Sinai, God ordered the Levites to kill their brothers. From the human viewpoint, this seems wrong, but God wanted them to do it. When they did as God directed, they were doing the will of God, and they pleased God. In doing God's will, God is the only standard, and His intention is the only rule. Neither goodness nor morality is the criterion. Neither our own preference nor our human view is the deciding factor. We should not live under man's evaluation or be influenced by man but live under God's enlightenment and governance.

**“Setting your mind on the things of God...Let him deny himself and take up his cross and**

**follow Me”** (Matt. 16:23-24).

To follow the Lord is to set our mind on the things of God. According to what the Lord said in these verses, the requirements for setting our mind on the things of God are to deny our self and take up our cross. Verse 25 shows that denying our self and losing our soul-life are absolutely related to one another. The self is the soul, or soul-life. The important components of our soul are the mind, the will, and the emotion. The soul has the functions of thinking, willing, and feeling. Therefore, to deny the self is to deny the things of the soul. This is to deny our own thoughts, that is, our own views; to deny our own will, that is, our own decisions; and to deny our own emotion, that is, our own likes and dislikes. We must deny and reject whatever is of our own thought, view, will, decision, predisposition, and likes in order to set our mind on the things of God and to follow the Lord and do the will of God.

The Lord spoke this word after He told the disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to die. After hearing the Lord’s word, Peter exhorted Him, saying, “God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You!” (v. 22). Then the Lord said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men” (v. 23). Peter’s human concern and love for the Lord had an element of Satan in them. Satan can cause people to love the Lord from their self, which keeps them from setting their mind on the things of God. Instead, he causes them to set their mind on the things of man. Satan does not cause people to do the will of God; he causes them to do their own will. Satan uses good things to influence and enter into people’s opinions, and then he stirs up the self to cause the self to be active to hinder the will of God. This is the reason that the Lord spoke of denying our self, giving up our self, and denying our own will, especially in good matters. Good things are opposed to the will of God. They serve only as a means for a display of our self and our will. Satan uses good things to ruin God’s will. Therefore, if we want to do the will of God, we must guard against our self, that is, our views and our intention to do good.

Many think that taking up the cross means to suffer or to suffer for the Lord. However, to suffer—even to suffer for the Lord—is not necessarily to set our mind on the things of God or to do the will of God. Suffering—especially suffering for the Lord—can sometimes be according to our own will, preference, or choice and thus is not the will of God. If it is not what God has ordained for us or what God has measured to us, it comes from our self. To truly take up the cross is to set our mind on the things of God and to do the will of God. The will of God always kills our self-life. Therefore, taking up the cross is not about suffering but about denying the self. It is not about causing the self to suffer but about putting the self in the position of death, because the goal of the cross is death, not suffering. When the Lord was crucified, we were crucified with Him on the cross. Now we need to not only confess this death but to remain in the death of the cross. Through the death of the cross, we can stand in the position of death to deny everything of the self, including our will, view, preference, and choice. This is the taking up of our cross. When we take up the cross, we follow the Lord, set our mind on the things of God, and do the will of God...

### **Proving the Will of God**

**“That you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect”** (Rom. 12:2).

Understanding the will of God involves proving. To prove is to search for the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God in everything. In order to prove the will of God, we need to stand in a position of consecration, to not follow the age of the world, to be renewed in our mind according to the Word of God, the Bible, and to understand the sense in our spirit and the condition of our environment. Searching out God’s will in everything involves discerning the motive, goal, and nature of things. Therefore, we must stand on God’s side in the reality of our consecration, be absolutely outside this age, and see God’s view according to a mind that has been renewed and taught by God. We must always use the clear teachings, principles, and examples of the Bible to measure and prove the will of

God and to see whether or not our ways are one with the will of God. We must use the sense in our spirit to test and judge what is according to the will of God. We also should consider whether or not the environment confirms what we have realized. If we are willing to prove the will of God in this manner, it will not be difficult for us to understand the will of God.

### **Having a Heart to Do the Will of God**

**“If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know”** (John 7:17).

If anyone resolves—has a heart—to do God’s will, he will know God’s will. If we want to understand the will of God, we must not only have a heart to understand but also a heart to do His will. God is not willing to reveal His will to those who do not have the heart to understand, nor does He want to reveal His will to those who have the heart to understand but not a heart to do it. Only those who have the heart to both understand and do the will of God can gain a revelation of God’s will from Him. Therefore, we must resolve to do God’s will if we want to understand the will of God. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1932–1949*, vol. 3, “Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Volume 2,” pp. 442-447, 450-451)

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

## Message Seven

### Taking the Lord's Yoke (the Father's Will) upon Us and Learning from Him to Find Rest for Our Souls

EM Hymns: 403

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26, 31; 2:1-2; Matt. 11:28-30;

Exo. 31:12-17; Isa. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 15:1

- 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 1:31 And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
- 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.
- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- Exo 31:12 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Exo 31:13 Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.
- Exo 31:14 Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.
- Exo 31:15 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Jehovah; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.
- Exo 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.
- Exo 31:17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.
- Isa 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah:
- Isa 2:1 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:
- Isa 13:1 The burden concerning Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw:
- Isa 15:1 The burden concerning Moab: Indeed in a night it is devastated

**I. “Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”—  
Matt. 11:28-30:**

- A. To toil here refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the toil of struggling to be successful in any work; whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.
- B. After the Lord extolled the Father, acknowledging the Father's way and declaring the divine economy (vv. 25-27), He called this kind of people to come to Him for rest.
- Matt 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.
- Matt 11:26 Yes, Father, for thus it has been well-pleasing in Your sight.
- Matt 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one fully knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone fully know the Father except the Son and him

to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

- C. Rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility, but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
- D. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father; it is not to be regulated or controlled by any obligation of the law or religion or to be enslaved by any work, but to be constrained by the will of the Father.
- E. The Lord lived such a life, caring for nothing but the will of His Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38); He submitted Himself fully to the Father's will (Matt. 26:39-46); hence, He asks us to learn from Him:

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

Matt 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.

Matt 26:40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, So were you not able to watch with Me for one hour?

Matt 26:41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Matt 26:42 Again, going away a second time, He prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.

Matt 26:43 And coming again, He found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

Matt 26:44 And leaving them, He went away again and prayed a third time, saying the same word again.

Matt 26:45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour has drawn near, and the Son of Man is being delivered up into the hands of sinners.

Matt 26:46 Arise, let us be going. Behold, the one who is betraying Me has drawn near.

1. The believers copy the Lord in their spirit by taking His yoke—God's will— and toiling for God's economy according to His model—11:29a; 1 Pet. 2:21.

Matt 11:29a Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, ...

1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

2. The Lord, who was submissive and obedient to the Father throughout His life, has given us His life of submission and obedience—Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-9.

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

Phil 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,

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

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

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

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

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

Heb 5:7 This One, in the days of His flesh, having offered up both petitions and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him out of death and having been heard because of His piety,

Heb 5:8 Even though He was a Son, learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Heb 5:9 And having been perfected, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,



3. Christ was the first God-man, and we are the many God-men; we have to learn of Him in His absolute submission to God and His uttermost satisfaction with God.
  4. God is doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ that we may be able to do His will (13:20-21); God operates in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).
    - Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,
    - Heb 13:21 Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
    - Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
- F. To be meek, or gentle, means not to resist opposition, and to be lowly means not to have self-esteem; throughout all the opposition the Lord was meek, and throughout all the rejection He was lowly in heart.
  - G. He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father, not wanting to do anything for Himself or expecting to gain something for Himself; hence, regardless of the situation He had rest in His heart; He was fully satisfied with the Father's will.
  - H. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is for our souls; it is an inward rest; it is not anything merely outward in nature.
  - I. We learn from the Lord according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection—Eph. 4:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:21.
    - Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,
    - Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,
    - 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
  - J. The Lord's yoke is the Father's will, and His burden is the work of carrying out the Father's will; such a yoke is easy, not bitter, and such a burden is light, not heavy.
  - K. The Greek word for *easy* means "fit for use"; hence, good, kind, mild, gentle, easy, pleasant—in contrast to hard, harsh, sharp, bitter.
  - L. If we take the Lord's yoke (the Father's will) upon us and learn from Him, we will find rest for our souls; the yoke of God's economy is like this; everything in God's economy is not a heavy burden but an enjoyment.

**II. In Exodus 31:12-17, after a long record concerning the building up of God's dwelling place, there is a repetition of the commandment to keep the Sabbath; according to Colossians 2:16-17, Christ is the reality of the Sabbath rest; He is our completion, rest, quietness, and full satisfaction—Heb. 4:7-9; Isa. 30:15a:**

- Exo 31:12 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Exo 31:13 Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.
- Exo 31:14 Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.
- Exo 31:15 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Jehovah; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.
- Exo 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.
- Exo 31:17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.
- Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,

- Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
- Heb 4:7 He again designates a certain day, today, saying in David after so long a time, even as He has said before, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."
- Heb 4:8 For if Joshua had brought them into rest, He would not have spoken concerning another day after these things.
- Heb 4:9 So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.
- Isa 30:15a For thus says the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, / In returning and rest you will be saved; / In quietness and in trust will be your strength; ...
- A. The fact that the insertion concerning the Sabbath follows the charge for the building work of the tabernacle indicates that the Lord was telling the builders, the workers, to learn how to rest with Him as they worked for Him.
- B. If we only know how to work for the Lord but do not know how to rest with Him, we are acting contrary to the divine principle:
1. God rested on the seventh day because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan; as long as man expresses God and deals with God's enemy, God is satisfied and can rest—Gen. 1:26, 31; 2:1-2.
 

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 1:31 And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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.
  2. Later, the seventh day was commemorated as the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11); God's seventh day was man's first day.
 

Exo 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day so as to sanctify it.

Exo 20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is a Sabbath to Jehovah your God; you shall not do any work, you nor your son nor your daughter, your male servant nor your female servant, nor your cattle nor the sojourner with you, who is within your gates.

Exo 20:11 For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.
  3. God had prepared everything for man's enjoyment; after man was created, he did not join in God's work; he entered into God's rest.
  4. Man was created not to work first but to be satisfied with God and rest with God (cf. Matt. 11:28-30); the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).
 

Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Mark 2:27 And He said to them, The Sabbath came into being for man, and not man for the Sabbath.
- C. Exodus 31:17 says, "In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed":
1. The Sabbath was not only a rest to God but also a refreshment to Him.
  2. God rested after His work of creation was completed; He looked upon His handiwork, at the heavens, the earth, and all the living things, especially at man, and said, "Very good!" (Gen. 1:31).
 

Gen 1:31 And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
  3. God was refreshed with man; God created man in His own image with a spirit so that

man could have fellowship with Him; man, therefore, was God's refreshment—v. 26; 2:7; cf. John 4:31-34.

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 from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

John 4:31 In the meantime, the disciples urged Him, saying, Rabbi, eat.

John 4:32 But He said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about.

John 4:33 The disciples therefore said to one another, Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

4. God was a "bachelor" before He created mankind (cf. Gen. 2:18, 22); He wanted man to receive Him, love Him, be filled with Him, and express Him to become His wife (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25); in eternity future God will have a wife, the New Jerusalem, which is called the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:9-10).

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 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

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

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

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

5. Man was like a refreshing drink to quench God's thirst and satisfy Him; when God ended His work and began to rest, He had man as His companion.
6. To God, the seventh day was a day of rest and refreshment; however, to man, God's companion, the day of rest and refreshment was the first day; man's first day was a day of enjoyment.

D. It is a divine principle that God does not ask us to work until we have had enjoyment; after a full enjoyment with Him and of Him, we may work together with Him:

1. If we do not know how to have enjoyment with God, how to enjoy God Himself, and how to be filled with God, we will not know how to work with Him and be one with Him in His divine work; man enjoys what God has accomplished in His work.

2. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Spirit, which means that they were filled with the enjoyment of the Lord; because they were filled with the Spirit, others thought that they were drunk with wine—Acts 2:4a, 12-13.

Acts 2:4a And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues,...

Acts 2:12 And they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, What does this mean?

Acts 2:13 But others jeered and said, They are full of new wine!

3. Actually, they were filled with the enjoyment of the heavenly wine; only after they were filled with this enjoyment did they begin to work with God in oneness with Him; Pentecost was the first day of the eighth week; therefore, concerning the day of Pentecost, we see the principle of the first day.

4. With God it is a matter of working and resting; with man it is a matter of resting and working.

- E. In doing God's divine work to build the church, typified by the work to build the tabernacle, we must bear a sign to indicate that we are God's people and that we need Him; then we will be able to work not only for God but also with God by being one with God; He will be our strength to work and our energy to labor:
1. We are God's people, and we should bear a sign that we need Him to be our enjoyment, strength, energy, and everything so that we may be able to work for Him to honor and glorify Him.
  2. The Sabbath means that before we work for God, we need to enjoy God and be filled with Him; Peter preached the gospel by the infilling God, the infilling Spirit; therefore, Peter had a sign that he was God's co-worker, and his gospel preaching was an honor and glory to God—v. 14.  
 Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them: Men of Judea, and all who are dwelling in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.
  3. As God's people, we must bear a sign that we rest with God, enjoy God, and are filled up with God first, and then we work with the very One who fills us; furthermore, we not only work with God but also work as those who are one with God.
  4. In our speaking to God's people, we must always seek to bear a sign that our Lord is our strength, our energy, and our everything for ministering the word—2 Cor. 13:3; Acts 6:4.  
 2 Cor 13:3 Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.  
 Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.
- F. Keeping the Sabbath is also an eternal agreement, or covenant, that assures God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and being filled with Him and then by working for Him, with Him, and in oneness with Him—Exo. 31:16:  
 Exo 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.
1. It is a serious matter to work for the Lord by ourselves without taking Him in and enjoying Him by drinking and eating Him—cf. 1 Cor. 12:13; John 6:57.  
 1 Cor 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.  
 John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
  2. As Peter was speaking on the day of Pentecost, he was inwardly partaking of Jesus, drinking and eating Him.
- G. The Sabbath is also a matter of sanctification (Exo. 31:13); when we enjoy the Lord and then work with Him, for Him, and by being one with Him, spontaneously we are sanctified, separated unto God from everything that is common and saturated with God to replace everything that is fleshly and natural.  
 Exo 31:13 Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.
- H. In the church life we may do many things without first enjoying the Lord and without serving the Lord by being one with the Lord; that kind of service results in spiritual death and the loss of the fellowship in the Body (vv. 14-15).  
 Exo 31:14 Therefore you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.  
 Exo 31:15 Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Jehovah; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.
- I. Everything related to God's dwelling place leads us to one matter—to the Sabbath with its

rest and refreshment of the Lord; in the church life we are in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle leads us to rest, to the enjoyment of God's purpose and of what He has done!

### **III. The Lord's yoke (the Father's will) is easy, and His burden (the work to carry out the Father's will) is light; we must always serve with a burden from the Lord:**

- A. An open spirit to God is the condition for receiving burdens from God; we must learn to receive burdens and release burdens through prayer in our intimate fellowship with the Lord—Luke 1:53; Psa. 27:4; Isa. 59:16; Col. 4:2.
- Luke 1:53     The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.  
Psa 27:4     One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.  
Isa 59:16    And He saw that there was no man, / And He was appalled that there was no intercessor. / Therefore His arm accomplished salvation for Him, / And His righteousness sustained Him.  
Col 4:2     Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
- B. The revelations that the prophets received were the burdens that they received; without burden, there is no ministry of the word, no prophesying, for the building up of the church—Isa. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 15:1; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 1:1; Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:4b:
- Isa 1:1     The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah:  
Isa 2:1     The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:  
Isa 13:1    The burden concerning Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw:  
Isa 15:1    The burden concerning Moab: Indeed in a night it is devastated  
Zech 12:1   The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,  
Mal 1:1     The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel through Malachi.  
Acts 6:4    But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.  
1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.
1. Our burden is to release God's revelation to man, and God's revelation is released through the words of revelation that God gives to us—2:11-16.  
1 Cor 2:11   For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God.  
1 Cor 2:12   But we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God;  
1 Cor 2:13   Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.  
1 Cor 2:14   But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.  
1 Cor 2:15   But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.  
1 Cor 2:16   For who has known the mind of the Lord and will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.
  2. When we minister the word of God, our concern must be whether we have God's speaking, not the topic of our speaking; in order to have God's speaking, the one who ministers the word must have a burden—Mal. 2:7.  
Mal 2:7     For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts.
  3. Those who minister the word must bear people's condition before God, sense their condition, and know what God wants to speak—Exo. 28:29-30.  
Exo 28:29    So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of



judgment on his heart when he goes into the sanctuary, for a memorial before Jehovah continually.

Exo 28:30 And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before Jehovah, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart before Jehovah continually.

- C. The greatest problem in the administration of the church and in the ministry of the word is not having a burden from the Lord:
1. Without a burden, all our activity will be dead and ineffective; with a burden, we will be living and flourishing.
  2. Having a burden deals with us the most; if there is a burden, the self decreases and is dealt with, because there are things that our burden will not allow us to do, and there are areas that will require our being dealt with before we can release our burden.
  3. If we serve according to obligation instead of serving with a burden, such service will cause us to lose the Lord's presence—cf. Deut. 4:25.  
Deut 4:25 When you have brought forth children and grandchildren and have languished in the land, and you have spoiled yourselves by making an idol, the form of anything, and have done that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah your God so as to anger Him;
  4. Whenever our service becomes a matter of fulfilling an obligation, our service has already degraded—Mal. 3:14 and footnote 1.  
Mal 3:14 You say, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and have walked <sup>1</sup>mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?  
Note 1 This word indicates that the children of Israel worshipped and served God, but they did it mournfully, not at all happy that they were required to do these things.
  5. The building work of the tabernacle and all its furniture (typifying the work of the Lord to build up the church) should begin with the enjoyment of God and continue in intervals with the refreshment by enjoying God; this will indicate that we do not work for God by our own strength but by the enjoyment of Him and by being one with Him; this is to keep the principle of the Sabbath with Christ as the inner rest in our spirit.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

#### The First Problem— Not Having a Burden

The greatest problem in the administration of the church and the ministry of the word is not having a burden or, we can say, not receiving a burden or not paying attention to a burden. It is possible for elders to administrate the church without a burden. Those who minister the word may also do so without a burden. The discharge of our burden when we minister the word does not depend on how well we speak. If our only desire is to speak well in order to touch people, our speaking will be without a burden. Likewise, an ability to administrate the church does not discharge one's burden. It is not a matter of how well we can administrate but whether our administration is effective and can touch people.

For example, when people come to a meeting, there may be the need to release the word. We must seek the Lord concerning what we speak and concerning the issue of our speaking. It is not a matter of how well we speak, the logistics of our presentation, or whether the saints are touched; rather, it is a matter of what will be produced in the saints. If some are not yet saved, we should receive

a burden to bear their souls by the Lord's grace in order to sow the seed of salvation into them when we release the word. Our burden is salvation, not the release of a dynamic word. If they are saved but do not love the Lord, our burden should be for them to love the Lord. If they love the Lord but are not willing to give themselves to the Lord and receive His dealing, our burden should be for them to willingly give themselves to the Lord and be dealt with by Him. This is the ministry of the word with a burden.

Otherwise, our Lord's Day message meeting may easily fall into the condition of the so-called Sunday service. Every week someone is assigned to release a message in order to maintain the meeting. After the meeting, everyone goes home, eats lunch, rests, and returns in the evening for the bread-breaking meeting. This is a Sunday service. In this situation those who minister the word must receive a burden. We need to know the condition of those who come to listen to a message. They might not have any feeling concerning their own condition, but we need to be clear and full of feeling concerning their condition. They may be able to sit and listen peacefully week after week, but we cannot speak peacefully week after week. We need to receive the burden to "disturb" and "trouble" them so that even if they come to the meeting peacefully, they will be inwardly disturbed when they leave.

If we are not concerned that our speaking does not produce any effect in those who listen, we do not have a burden. This situation indicates that those who speak and those who listen are in a routine. This is the condition of degraded Christianity where the congregation routinely listens to the pastor, and the pastor routinely preaches to the congregation year after year. This should not be our practice. The ministry of the word should enlighten those who hear. When we minister the word every Lord's Day, we should "trouble" people to the extent that they have no peace. This is what it means to have a burden.

If the listeners are lukewarm, even though they may listen peacefully, those who minister the word should not be at peace. They should go before the Lord, and let Him take away their peace, even to the point of losing sleep and not eating until they receive a burden from the Lord. Then their speaking will enable the Holy Spirit to work in the listeners. Only this kind of speaking is the speaking of God. Brothers who minister the word must have a burden, not merely doctrines, logic, and examples. Ministering the word in this way is intolerable; it is an offense to God, and it is a sin in His eyes.

### ***Receiving the Burden to Speak God's Word in the Ministry of the Word***

In Isaiah 13:1 the Chinese Union Version says that the prophets received inspiration when they spoke for God. The Hebrew word for *inspiration*, however, means "burden." Man needs to receive a burden. We cannot neglect this responsibility and think that God has not given us a burden. The Epistles of Paul clearly show that he received burdens. When someone in the church in Corinth committed the sin of fornication, Paul did not simply condemn the sin or stop praying for the one who sinned. He received a burden from God to bear a responsibility and commission for the church (1 Cor. 5:1-13). Paul did not preach doctrines in his Epistles; instead, he was burdened to fellowship concerning certain matters, so he was able to touch people's feelings.

There is a danger that the ministry of the word in the church in Taipei may become the same as the preaching of sermons in Sunday services. When we minister the word of God, our concern should be whether we have God's speaking, not the topic of our speaking. In order to have God's speaking, the one who ministers the word must have a burden. People may have a negative reaction or be stirred up when they hear a message that is spoken with a burden, but they cannot deny that it is God's speaking. This kind of message can help people and solve their problems. A message that sounds nice but is void of God's speaking cannot touch people, turn them inwardly, or satisfy those who are hungry and thirsty, because they are not the words that God wants to speak even if they are from the Bible.

Therefore, speaking should not be easy or cheap. We cannot speak simply because we have prepared a message. One who ministers the word should bear people's condition before God. He bears

the responsibility of knowing their needs. He needs to sense their condition and know what God wants to speak. The help we have received from training cannot replace the burden that is within us. The danger is that the burden has been replaced so that we are short of revelation and spiritual burden.

***Being Desperate for People's Situation  
to Preach the Effective Word***

Fifty-two weeks a year there is a message meeting in the church in Taipei on the Lord's Day. Do the brothers who minister the word fast and pray before ministering the word? Of course, there is no regulation that requires the brothers to fast and pray, as this would be useless. The brothers need to understand that bearing the word of God is equal to bearing the souls of man. The saints come to the meetings week after week to listen to our speaking, so we must bear them. If there is no change in them after three months, we should not be at peace. This can be compared to a merchant who is unable to sleep peacefully when he has no business for two weeks and who is unable to eat when there is no profit after three months. He will be full of sorrow and concern.

Many brothers and sisters with businesses come to me. Although they simply sit without opening their mouths, I can sense the heavy burden within them and realize that they have encountered difficulties in their business. Are the brothers who speak sorrowful for the souls who have not changed in three months? A store owner who has no customers would be unable to continue working, considering everything to be fine. He would consider the situation and find a way to change the situation. How can those who minister the word continue as usual when there is no profit? We should not consider that it is sufficient merely to speak from the podium week after week.

When Brother Nee began his work in Foochow, he fasted and prayed every Saturday for the gospel meeting on the Lord's Day. He considered before the Lord what to speak and how to speak. He considered what word the sinners needed to hear. Since he fasted and prayed with a heavy burden, his words were always very effective and were later published as messages. Many who are used by the Lord bear a burden in their ministry of the word. When Peace Wang was young, she had a successful revival work. She always knelt before the Lord and spent a long period of time weeping and grieving for sinners. Therefore, when she stood up to speak, her words were always living and operative.

***Serving with a Burden***

We have a good order in our service, but we are lacking in burden. Having a burden means that we have a goal that we must reach. If we have not reached our goal or are unable to produce the expected result, we should be concerned. If we are able to serve, even though there is no result, we do not have a burden. This attitude indicates a lack of burden. Our speaking should never fall into this. Hence, the brothers who minister the word must bear a heavy burden before the Lord, having no peace to rest or eat and even troubling others so that they also have no peace. This can be compared to the city of Jerusalem having no peace when the Lord Jesus was born (Matt. 2:1-18). Those who speak for the Lord must have a feeling to trouble the saints to the point that they have no peace inwardly. When they have no peace, we can have peace. The saints cannot love the world and love the Lord. They must not be lukewarm. Those who serve the Lord need to have this kind of burden.

Many serve as employees in a big company. They work a fixed number of hours every day and simply do the tasks that are assigned to them. They do not make big mistakes and are not concerned whether the company makes a profit. They are employees without a burden; they serve without a burden. If we make no profit on the first day of our business, we should be concerned about our livelihood. If the serving brothers, whether they serve in the children's work or the young people's work, have this kind of consciousness, they will succeed. Complaining that we fail because we are weak shows that we lack a burden. Every serving one must be burdened to the extent that he feels responsible if the work does not succeed. He should be like a businessman who thinks of his business even in his sleep.

### *Discerning between the Service of Responsibility and the Service of Burden*

The elders in all the churches must come before the Lord to receive a burden and to see if all the home meetings in their localities are satisfactory. We must have a concern for the condition of the meetings. Are they strong or weak, living or dead, rich or poor? We cannot remain unchanged. Perhaps those responsible for the home meetings are at peace, but the elders should not be at peace. The elders should coordinate together and not act individualistically. They should bear a corporate burden to completely change the condition of the home meetings. They need to pray for the saints, even with tears, and seek the Lord for the proper words to speak to them. Then they should speak in the meetings according to their burden until the saints become uneasy within and are not content with their present situation.

Such a speaking by the elders is not according to arrangement but according to burden. The elders should have a burden; they should not merely bear responsibility. As elders, we should not simply fellowship and discuss the condition of the different home meetings, visit them, and give an evaluation report at the next elders' meeting. There is no burden in such a practice; it will be ineffective and not result in any profit. If we have a company with many employees, its yearly earnings will not be influenced by discussions, reports, and evaluations. These do not carry out the burden. If we have a real burden, we will set a goal for our yearly profit, work toward this goal, and be determined to reach it.

Both in the administration of the church and in the ministry of the word, the brothers are commendable in their bearing of responsibility. However, they lack a burden. Without a burden, all our activity will be dead and ineffective; with a burden, we will be living and flourishing. Such an outcome is not related to our method but to our person.

#### *Serving with a Burden Causing the Self to Be Dealt With*

Children will never be successful in their studies if they study only for their tests. If they have a burden, their studying will change. A brother may give a message merely out of obligation, because it is his turn to speak. However, giving messages is not a matter of obligation but of burden. We may speak for half a year, but those who listen might not receive anything, and our speaking will be in vain. If we have a burden, we will see that our messages are ineffective. Our messages should "trouble" people so that they have no peace, and they are stirred up to love and serve the Lord. In this situation, our being will be touched by God. There is no need for the self to be dealt with if we give messages that are out of obligation. However, in giving a message out of a burden, our self must be dealt with.

Working from nine to six as an employee is a matter of obligation and does not require any dealing. However, we would work differently if we had our own business. Our laziness would be dealt with because we would rise earlier to work. The attitude of a waiter or clerk toward customers might not need to be dealt with. However, a person who owns his shop will adjust himself in order not to offend his customers. Instead of being dealt with, some brothers seem to have more problems because they serve out of obligation, not burden. If there is a burden, our self decreases and is dealt with. It will not increase, because there are things that our burden will not allow us to do, and there are areas that will require our being dealt with before we can release our burden. Hence, having a burden deals with us the most.

A young man who is not burdened with a family can be carefree in his living. However, after he is married and has children, he will know the meaning of being diligent and disciplined. A child can spend his parents' money freely without self-control. But when he is older and lives on his own, his spending is budgeted. He will be more careful when he goes shopping. Spending his parents' money was one thing, but spending his own money is a burden. It seems as if the brothers in the churches serve according to obligation as employees in a company. They do not seem to have much burden. Such service is dangerous and will cause us to lose the Lord's presence.

## *Everyone Receiving a Burden and Serving the Lord according to Burden*

Everyone who serves the Lord must receive a burden and have a burden. This also applies to the sisters even though they are not involved in the church administration or in giving messages. If the sisters fellowship together and visit people simply because it is time to do so, they are doing so out of obligation. The sisters should seek to know the result of their fellowship and visitation. They should know the condition of the sisters under their care. They should not say, "As long as the Lord works in them, they will be all right, but if the Lord does not work in them, there is nothing we can do." We must receive a genuine burden.

Even though many sisters have the desire to serve the Lord, few have risen up to serve the Lord lately. The brothers, however, continue to serve as usual. We should sense that the situation with the sisters is not right and receive the burden to stir them up. We also need to study the result of our gospel preaching. We should consider why many remain unsaved even though there are so many sinners. Some brothers should rise up to receive the burden to preach the gospel until someone is saved. We must have a burden.

The problem is that we are gradually leaning toward responsibility in our service; we lack a burden. Since our prayers are mostly without burden, our prayer meetings are ineffective. If someone is saved when we preach the gospel, we thank and praise the Lord. If no one is saved, we are at peace. When we give messages, we are at peace even if there is no effect. The same applies to the administration of the church and visiting the brothers and sisters; we are at peace even if there is no result. Since this is our condition, our prayer is a prayer of obligation, not a prayer with burden. If we pray with a burden, our prayer meeting will be different. Some brothers and sisters will weep bitterly and mourn in prayer, feeling that they cannot go on in the same way. They will feel that the gospel preaching, the administration of the church, and the condition of their meeting are unsatisfactory. This kind of prayer is out of a burden.

Some say that it is easy to lose their burden after a period of time. However, those who have been shown mercy receive burdens continually. It is a serious problem if our burden disappears after we have worked for some time. However, a Christian can continue to work out of obligation even though he has no burden, because his conscience will bother him if he stops working. Whenever our service becomes a matter of fulfilling an obligation, our service has already degraded. Genuine service is not a matter of obligation but a matter of burden; burden always goes beyond obligation.

### **The Second Problem— Lacking a Feeling for Coordination**

Another problem among us is that although the serving ones are capable, they do not have a feeling for coordination in their spirit when they come together to serve. It seems as if everyone is able to serve without others. Consequently, few among us have the spirit of a learner and the spirit of needing help. Those who truly coordinate in spirit should have a strong feeling that they cannot do anything without the help and coordination of others. Our present coordination is one of formality. We do our part without needing anyone else. We may not argue, but there is not much interdependence in spirit. This shows that our spirit of service is improper.

This is the situation of those who work with the young people and the children. The coordination is formal; everyone does what he should do when it is his turn. This is cooperation, not coordination. Coordination means that we cannot do anything without one another. There is a sense that we need others and that others need us. Those who work with young people should be like this; all the service of the church should also be like this. It is normal when the deacons and elders mutually need one another, and the saints feel that they cannot do anything without the elders and deacons.

Today we have rules and arrangements. The elders do things pertaining to elders, and the deacons do things pertaining to deacons. Everyone works when it is his turn. However, we do not have a deep



feeling that we cannot go on without the elders and deacons in our service. Some brothers not only lack a sense of the need for the elders and deacons, but they even think that elders and deacons are unnecessary. This is dangerous.

### ***Having the Greatest Form of Pride***

Those who live in the workers' home are bright and capable. They seem to be independent and do not need others. This is very dangerous because it is the greatest form of pride. If four brothers are living in the workers' home, they should depend on one another, and others should sense their dependence on one another. Sadly, this is not the atmosphere among us. For example, if it is my turn to preach the gospel, I will either do everything or do nothing. From the human perspective this may be considered to be coordination, but this coordination is according to regulation and arrangement. There is no sense of needing others in spirit. Some may think that coordination is unnecessary and troublesome and that it is better to not coordinate.

Those who do not need to coordinate are dry, lack blessing, and are useless. The fact that we are clever, capable, and do not need one another's help is a great danger. This is a sad and pitiful situation. The fearful thing is that this situation is hidden and not very apparent. This situation can be compared to leprosy. If it is manifested, it is easier to deal with it.

This shows that we lack the fellowship of the Body. When we come together, we seldom have thorough fellowship. For example, when saints from other cities visit Taipei, we sit together for a meeting. After the meeting, however, we all go our separate ways without fellowshiping. This was not our situation during our first six years in Taiwan. In those years, whenever we had a conference, we came together and had much fellowship. Now we are all capable, brilliant, and knowledgeable. We do not need one another; we do not need to fellowship. This is the greatest form of pride. It is the most offensive thing to the Lord and to the Body. We should humbly minister to others and restrict our cleverness through coordination.

### ***Needing Fellowship and Coordination in the Body and in Life***

If we lose the principle of coordination and dependence in the Body, we will not be strong in our administration of the church and ministry of the word. Once we lose this principle, we will not have much blessing. Our coordination should not become mechanical, and we should not work only when it is our turn. We should have the feeling that we cannot do anything without others, that we truly need one another. If we come together and assign work, with each doing only his own work, our situation is similar to the division of labor in a civic organization or a large institution. This lack of the flavor of coordination among the members of the Body must be dealt with.

What does it mean to see the Body? The greatest indication that we see the Body is that we cannot be independent. We feel that we need the Body, that we need the brothers and sisters. Presently, however, our coordination can be compared to work in an organization. It seems that we are moving like a machine and that we lack the sense of the fellowship of life.

### ***The Lack of Coordination Producing Criticism***

If we lack coordination with others, we will always criticize what they do. Even if we do not express it, we are filled with criticism, and we disapprove of what others do. Such people are narrow and pitiful. In our service we should not expect others to be like us, nor should we expect to be like others. However, because we lack coordination in our service and do not rely and mutually depend on one another, we often step on others. We either do not walk, or we step on others when we do walk. We either do not work, or we do the job of others. We either are not concerned, or we criticize the work of others. When a certain matter is in others' hands, we are not able to do anything, but when an opportunity comes to us, we do it according to our way and discard the help of others. Although this condition is not apparent among us, it will be in our future, because we are not willing to submit to

others. This is a foolish way.

***Not Requiring Others to Be the Same as We,  
but Respecting What Others Do***

We should not require others to be the same as we are in everything. We should not discuss the way others give messages, visit people, or live. Even if we are not pleased with the way others live, we cannot set standards for others, nor are we qualified to judge others. Only the Lord is the criterion and the Judge. We need to learn to respect what others do. When we speak of being zealous, we should respect others' quietness; when we speak of being calm and joined to the Lord, we should not criticize those who are busy. If everyone is the same as we are, there will not be the Body. There would be only one member. This is not the church. If everyone is like us, there would be only we ourselves and not the church. The church is composed of many kinds of people. This can be compared to the human body having different members. The hands look like hands, the feet look like feet, the ears look like ears, and the eyes look like eyes. Even the member who seems to be the most uncomely is necessary in the Body.

Hence, we should learn not to step on others. When it is our turn to work, we should not criticize what others have done. It is a blessing to respect the work of others and to add our work to theirs. We should be positive when we speak with others, not negative. It is unwise to say that others are wrong. As long as these negative factors exist among us, the administration of the church will have problems, and the ministry of the word will not be strong. Many saints from different places serve together in the church. They have different dispositions and family backgrounds, and they also have different spiritual backgrounds and training. Therefore, we cannot expect everyone to be like we are. We need to learn not to step on others. When we take a step, we should not step on others. We should especially avoid stepping on others when we minister the word.

For example, when speaking about prayer, we should not criticize those who speak about meditation, because the saints may need both. We should simply speak positively about prayer without criticizing others' speaking concerning meditation. When we serve together, we must absolutely avoid criticizing others in the ministry of the word. Some may speak about prayer and others about meditating; some may speak of being zealous and others of being in the Holy of Holies. These are not heretical teachings; they are merely different in emphasis. Criticizing others shows that we are narrow, and this will lead to division. If this is the way we work, there will be no building among us; on the contrary, there will be destruction.

We should simply labor positively and learn to receive help from others. We should realize that no one can do our part. Even the apostle Paul could not do what we can do. However, we also need to admit that we cannot replace others. Every person has his own function. When we minister the word, fellowship, and pray, we should not criticize others. In particular, when we pray with others, we should avoid praying in a contradictory manner.

***Not Insisting on Our Own Way***

The elders once felt that a certain group meeting should study the Gospel of John. One of the responsible brothers in that meeting, however, felt that John was too long and wanted to study 1 Thessalonians instead. He felt this would help those who did not normally read the Bible. Since he insisted, the elders eventually agreed with him even though his burden for 1 Thessalonians was not proper. This brother did not have a proper burden. He simply thought that the saints would be afraid of a book with twenty-one chapters, and he allowed his opinion to trample the feeling of the other brothers. Unless this brother was truly burdened for 1 Thessalonians, he should not have presented it in the service. We should not do things that we have no burden for, and we should not abandon things for which we are burdened; we must serve according to burden. To do otherwise violates a spiritual principle. This responsible brother had not learned the lesson in spiritual matters, and he was

inexperienced in the way he conducted himself. If our fellowship is a matter of spiritual burden, there should be no problem with proposing a change, and we should not criticize the burden. However, if we simply want to change others' ways, we should not do this.

We need to respect the ways of the ones with whom we serve. Even though the elders will not force a group to study a certain book or speak certain things, we should not casually change what they commit to us. Strictly speaking, it is all right to study either John or 1 Thessalonians; it does not matter which book is studied. It is possible to minister to the brothers and sisters through 1 Thessalonians and through the Gospel of John. In our service we should always avoid changing the ways of others.

We should realize that when we change others' ways, they might not accept it, because they feel that it is inappropriate, and if they accept our change, there is not a sweet feeling. Because of this kind of problem, our service in the administration of the church and the ministry of the word is not strong. Even in the world, when people work together, it is not easy to change one another's ways. If we truly have a skill, it will be manifested if we work according to their way. If we have spiritual content, we can minister to the saints through 1 Thessalonians and through the Gospel of John. No matter the book, we should be able to minister the spiritual content. What we should fear is not having spiritual content to minister to people; however, if we have spiritual content, we will be able to minister and develop any book of the Bible. Therefore, changing the way others do things indicates that we have not learned many spiritual lessons. It also indicates that we are inexperienced in the way we conduct ourselves.

Some brothers lead the saints to serve fervently, hoping that they can spend more time to learn to fellowship with the Lord and to know the indwelling Spirit. We should not change their practice. We should even praise them, saying that it is good to love the Lord and be fervent. However, our praise should not be insincere. It should positively supplement their labor. We always need to have an attitude of respect, cooperation, and coordination with others. We should serve according to our portion and honor the portion of others, because both portions have been entrusted by the Lord. Everyone should have the humility to not regard his portion higher than another person's. We should take care of others' feelings. Unless they speak heresy and create problems for the work and the church, we should always respect them, be accommodating toward them, and receive help from them.

May the Lord grant us grace to see that this is a matter of life that involves being broken and being humble. Those who can reach a goal without forcing others to take their way are truly humble. As those who love the Lord, we desire to live for Him and build up the church. These goals are right, but there are many ways to reach these goals. For example, preaching the gospel with a brother is a good goal that can be done according to his way or according to our way. We receive the blessing when we do not force others to do things our way. If we have spiritual content, we can minister his way, and if he has spiritual content, he can minister our way. Both ways are acceptable; it is not necessary to adhere to a certain way.

### ***Preserving the Consciousness of the Body and Being Built Up in Our Service***

The brothers need to learn the lesson of being broken, accommodating others, and respecting others' function. Our Lord is great, and His work has many aspects. Thus, we must be faithful to what the Lord has entrusted us with and learn to work in coordination with others, respecting what they do. Unless they speak heresy, we should not interfere, intervene, or criticize. Only in this way can we preserve the consciousness of the Body and produce the building among us.

The seeds of these problems are sown among us and have already produced some negative situations. Since we are serving the Lord together in His work and sharing this work together, we must rise up to utterly condemn such situations. These matters are intimately related to us and will manifest how much we have been dealt with before the Lord and the lessons of life we have learned. If we have grown in life, been broken, and learned some lessons, we will be saved in all these matters. When the elders suggested studying the Gospel of John and the responsible brother for the home meeting said

that it was too long, insisting that the elders accept his way, the feeling of coordination was weakened. Once the feeling of coordination is weakened, we cannot expect the building of the Body to be strong.

If this brother continues to oppose the proposals of the elders, the brothers and sisters in his meeting will eventually rise up to oppose him, because he took the lead to oppose others and give his opinions. If he continues in this way, how can he lead the brothers and sisters in his home meeting to have a strong service in coordination and a good building? We all need to learn a serious lesson. In the coordination of the Body, everyone needs to function and respect what others do. We should not criticize others but should join their labor so that the Body of Christ can be supplied, not damaged. In this way the feeling of coordination in the Body will be sweet, and the building up of the Body will be strong. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1957, vol. 2, "The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word," pp. 233-246*)

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

## Message Eight

### Meeting to Know and Do the Will of God

RK Hymns: 564

Scripture Reading: Matt. 7:21; 12:50; 18:20; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:12; 1 Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:25

- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
- Matt 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
- Heb 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.

#### **I. To meet is to know and do the will of God; our goal, our purpose, on earth is to do the will of the Father, and we do this by coming to the meetings of the church—Heb. 10:25.**

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

#### **II. We need to realize that besides our inner life with the Lord, nothing is as crucial, important, and profitable as the church meetings—1 Cor. 14:23-26:**

- 1 Cor 14:23 If therefore the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak in tongues, and some unlearned in tongues or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are insane?
- 1 Cor 14:24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;
- 1 Cor 14:25 The secrets of his heart become manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that indeed God is among you.
- 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

#### **A. As indicated by the Greek word *ekklesia*, the church—the dwelling place of God—is a meeting or an assembly of the called-out ones—Matt. 18:17-20:**

- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
- Matt 18:19 Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 18:20 For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst.
1. The church is a gathering of the believers, a meeting of a collective people.
  2. When God's called-out ones meet together, this is the church—Acts 2:42; 8:1.  
Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.  
Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
  3. Our Father has predestinated us to meet together; coming to the meetings is God's



will—Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 14:26.

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

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

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

B. The Christian life is a meeting life—Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 14:23-26:

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

1 Cor 14:23 If therefore the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak in tongues, and some unlearned in tongues or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are insane?

1 Cor 14:24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;

1 Cor 14:25 The secrets of his heart become manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that indeed God is among you.

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

1. Much of the grace that we receive is in the meetings, and much of the work that the Lord does is also in the meetings—Acts 4:33; 13:1-2.

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 13:2 And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

2. Since the Christian life is a meeting life and much of the Lord's work is carried out through the meetings, we should regard the meetings as being of great importance—Heb. 10:25.

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

### III. In the meetings God makes His will known to us—Psa. 73:16-17:

Psa 73:16 When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight,

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.

A. Doing God's will depends on knowing His will—John 7:17.

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

B. In our meetings there are many wonderful things underneath the surface, one of which is knowing God's will.

C. When the psalmist went into the sanctuary of God, he was able to know God's will—Psa. 73:16-17:

Psa 73:16 When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight,

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.

1. God's sanctuary, His habitation, is in our spirit and in the church—Eph. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:15.

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

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

2. In order to go into the sanctuary of God, we need to turn to our spirit and go to the meetings of the church.
3. Once we are in the sanctuary—in the spirit and in the meetings of the church—we receive another view, a particular perception, of our situation—Psa. 73:16-20.
 

Psa 73:16 When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight,

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.

Psa 73:18 Surely You set them in slippery places; / You cast them down into ruins.

Psa 73:19 How they are made desolate in a moment! / They are utterly consumed by terrors.

Psa 73:20 Like a dream, when one awakes, You, O Lord, / Upon arising, will despise their image.
4. God's way is made known in the sanctuary of God—v. 17:
 

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.

  - a. In our spirit and in the meetings we receive divine revelation—Rev. 1:10; Eph. 1:17-18.
 

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

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph 1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
  - b. When we exercise our spirit and attend the meetings of the church, God's way becomes clear to us—Psa. 73:17.
 

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.

**IV. Since the will of God is in Christ, concentrated in Christ, and for Christ, and Christ is everything in the will of God, we do God's will through exhibiting Christ in the meetings—Col. 1:9, 15-18, 12; 3:4, 11; 1 Cor. 14:26:**

- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
- Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.
- Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
- A. The will of God for us is that we would experience and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ and live Him as our life—Col. 1:9, 15-18; 3:4, 11.
- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
- Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.

- Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;  
 Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;  
 Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.  
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- B. Our meetings are to exhibit Christ, so when we come to a meeting, we need to bring with us the Christ whom we have enjoyed—1 Cor. 14:26.  
 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
- C. The proper church life depends upon the church meetings where all the saints exhibit Christ with His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.  
 Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- D. The goal of our meeting is to exhibit Christ, and the Christian meeting is an exhibition of our Christian daily life—1 Cor. 14:26; cf. Deut. 12:5-7, 13-14.  
 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.  
 Deut 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.  
 Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;  
 Deut 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.  
 Deut 12:13 Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see;  
 Deut 12:14 But in the place which Jehovah will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer up your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.
- E. We exhibit Christ in the meetings by offering to God Christ as the reality of the offerings, enjoying Christ together with God—Heb. 10:8-10, 25; 13:20-21.  
 Heb 10:8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law),  
 Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,  
 Heb 10:10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.  
 Heb 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.  
 Heb 13:20 Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,  
 Heb 13:21 Perfect you in every good work for the doing of His will, doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- F. We need to function in the meetings to exhibit Christ—Col. 1:12; 1 Cor. 14:26:  
 Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;  
 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
1. Due to the influence of Christianity, many believers do not bear responsibility in the meetings.
  2. The concept that we may attend a meeting but are not responsible for the meeting is a fundamental error; it is a ploy of Satan to render the members of the Body of Christ useless so that they do not function.

- G. As Christians, we are members of Christ, and our most important service is to meet—12:4-11, 14-27; Heb. 10:25:
- 1 Cor 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord;
- 1 Cor 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.
- 1 Cor 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for what is profitable.
- 1 Cor 12:8 For to one through the Spirit a word of wisdom is given, and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor 12:9 To a different one faith in the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit,
- 1 Cor 12:10 And to another operations of works of power, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits; to a different one various kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues.
- 1 Cor 12:11 But the one and the same Spirit operates all these things, distributing to each one respectively even as He purposes.
- 1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but many.
- 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.
- 1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
- 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
- 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
- 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.
- 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,
- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
- 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
- Heb 10:25 Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.
1. The church meetings are the best opportunity to exhibit Christ—Col. 3:11.  
Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
  2. As Christians, we are commissioned to exhibit Christ in the meetings and thus do the will of God—Matt. 7:21; 16:18; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:12.  
Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.  
Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.  
Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel  
Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
  3. “The Father we would glorify, / Exalting Christ the Son, thereby / The meeting’s purpose satisfy / That we exhibit Christ” (*Hymns*, #864, stanza 8).

**V. Since the Father's eternal will and the desire of His heart are to build up the church as the Body of Christ, we do His will by functioning in the meetings according to the scriptural way to meet for the building up of the Body—Matt. 7:21; 12:50; Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 14:26:**

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

Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.

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

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

A. The meetings of the believers should always be linked to God's New Testament economy; we should come to the meetings with a vision of the divine economy, and what we speak in the meetings should focus on the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:9; 1 Cor. 14:26.

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

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

B. The recovery according to the Lord's mind is to bring His believers out of the clergy-laity system and to replace this system with the scriptural way to meet and to serve for the building up of the Body of Christ—v. 26; Eph. 4:12, 16.

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

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

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

C. The Lord desires to recover the church meetings in mutuality with all functioning for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 14:4b, 24a, 26, 31:

1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.

1 Cor 14:24a But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, ...

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

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

1. When we come to the church meetings, we should have something of the Lord to share with others—v. 26.

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

2. Before coming to a meeting, we should prepare ourselves for the meeting with something from the Lord or of the Lord, either through our experience of Him or through our enjoyment of His word and fellowship with Him in prayer.

3. We must labor on Christ, our good land, so that we may reap some produce of His riches to bring to the church meeting and offer—Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8.

Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted



- portion of the saints in the light;
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
4. Thus, the meeting will be an exhibition of His riches and will be a mutual enjoyment of Christ shared with all the attendants before God and with God for the building up of the saints and the church—1 Cor. 14:26.
 

1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
  5. Whatever we do in the church meeting must be for the building up of the saints and the church—vv. 3-5, 12.
 

1 Cor 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks building up and encouragement and consolation to men.

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

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

1 Cor 14:12 So also you, since you are zealous of spirits, seek that you may excel for the building up of the church.
- D. In the practice of the scriptural way to meet and to serve, we emphasize prophesying—the excelling gift for the building up of the church—vv. 1, 4b, 24-25, 31:
- 1 Cor 14:1 Pursue love, and desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
- 1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.
- 1 Cor 14:24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;
- 1 Cor 14:25 The secrets of his heart become manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that indeed God is among you.
- 1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.
1. The significance of prophesying in 1 Corinthians 14 is to speak for the Lord, to speak forth the Lord, and even to speak the Lord, to minister, to dispense, the Lord, into others; in the sense of the divine dispensing, the entire Bible consummates in all prophesying—vv. 3, 24-25, 31.
 

1 Cor 14 be omitted.

1 Cor 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks building up and encouragement and consolation to men.

1 Cor 14:24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;

1 Cor 14:25 The secrets of his heart become manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that indeed God is among you.

1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.
  2. Prophesying, speaking for God and speaking forth God with God as the content, ministers God to the hearers and brings them to God—v. 25.
 

1 Cor 14:25 The secrets of his heart become manifest; and so falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that indeed God is among you.
  3. God desires that each of the believers prophesy, that is, speak for Him and speak Him forth—vv. 1b, 31; cf. Num. 11:29.
 

1 Cor 14:1b ... and desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

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

Num 11:29 But Moses said to him, Are you jealous for my sake? Oh that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put His Spirit upon them!
  4. The characteristic of prophesying is to minister Christ for the organic building up of the church as the Body of Christ; prophesying is the particular gift for the building up

of the church—1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 24, 26.

- 1 Cor 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks building up and encouragement and consolation to men.
- 1 Cor 14:4 He who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but he who prophesies builds up the church.
- 1 Cor 14:5 I desire that you all speak in tongues, but especially that you would prophesy; and greater is he who prophesies than he who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, that the church may receive building up.
- 1 Cor 14:12 So also you, since you are zealous of spirits, seek that you may excel for the building up of the church.
- 1 Cor 14:24 But if all prophesy and some unbeliever or unlearned person enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all;
- 1 Cor 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ASSEMBLING TOGETHER OF THE BELIEVERS THEMSELVES**

Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not abandoning our own assembling together, as the custom with some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day drawing near.” The apostle Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to encourage the hesitating, backslidden Hebrew believers to go forward within the veil and to go outside the camp (6:19; 13:13). To go “outside the camp” was to go outside of the old Jewish religion, and to enter “within the veil” was to enter into the Holy of Holies, where Christ is.

We must realize that our proper meeting is the Holy of Holies. To be gathered together in a proper way is to meet in the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is wherever the Lord Jesus is. The Lord is dwelling in the heavens (Rom. 8:34). The Lord is also dwelling in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), which is the Holy of Holies (Heb. 4:12, 16; see footnote 4:161, Recovery Version). Since the Lord is in the third heaven today, the third heaven is the Holy of Holies (9:12; cf. v. 24). Since He is now in our spirit, our spirit is the Holy of Holies. Because the Lord Jesus is in our meeting whenever we meet together, our meeting is also the Holy of Holies (10:22, 25). For the Hebrew believers to forsake their Christian meeting was for them to forsake the Holy of Holies and go back to their religious camp.

The book of Exodus shows us that after the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf (32:8), they became a camp. They had the Lord in name, but in reality they worshipped something else and hence became a religious camp among whom it was impossible to have the Lord’s presence. Moses knew that God, according to His holiness, would no longer stay among the people, for the camp had become idolatrous. Therefore, Moses took his tent, which formerly had been in the camp, and pitched it outside the camp. This tent then became the tent of God, the tent of meeting (33:7). If the people would not go out of the camp but would remain in it, they would not have the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord was no longer in the camp but in the tent (v. 9).

When the Lord Jesus was on this earth, there was a separation between the Jewish religionists, the camp, and the Lord Himself, the real tabernacle (John 1:14; 2:19, 21). The Lord Jesus was the very embodiment of God, and the real Holy of Holies was wherever He was. Outside of and around Christ, there was a religious organization, an old religion, a camp, which did not have God’s Holy of Holies. In that religious organization of Judaism, God was not there. At the time the Lord Jesus walked upon this earth, the proper worship was always held in the temple according to the rituals ordained by God. Yet we must ask ourselves who the Lord Jesus is. Actually, He is the very God, the One whom the children of Israel worshipped in their temple.

One day Jesus entered into the house in Bethany (12:1-11). He was in that home, yet the Jewish priests still worshipped God in the temple in Jerusalem. During that time, where was God? Was He in

the Holy of Holies within the temple at Jerusalem or in the small home at Bethany? No doubt, He was in the small home in Bethany. Because God was in that home in Bethany, that home became the very Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies in the temple was forsaken by God because it had become a part of the camp (Matt. 23:38—24:2). At that time, if anyone desired to worship God, they had to forsake the temple and go to that little home in Bethany. That little home was the Holy of Holies.

The principle is the same today. In order to worship God, you have to go outside of the camp of religion and enter within the veil to enjoy Christ in the Holy of Holies. The Lord Jesus as God is not in the old, religious, human organization, which is just a camp. In Hebrews Paul charged the hesitating, wandering, backsliding Hebrew believers to forget about their old religion, old temple, and old ritualistic worship and to go forth outside the camp to enter into the Holy of Holies to enjoy Christ (6:19; 10:22; 13:13). This Holy of Holies is the proper Christian meeting.

The Holy of Holies in Hebrews denotes three things: the third heaven, our spirit, and the Christian meeting. Whenever we come together properly, our gathering is the Holy of Holies. Of the three, which do you prefer, the third heaven, our spirit, or the Christian meeting? The heavens are difficult to reach, and we are often unable to remain in our spirit all day long, day and night. But according to my Christian experience, the meetings keep me in the Lord, in His Holy of Holies. I do not enjoy the Lord's presence elsewhere as much as I do in the meetings. It is enjoyable to be in our spirit, but the meeting as the Holy of Holies is much better and higher.

After some of us attend a ten-day training or a conference, and we are returning to our localities, we may feel that we are in the outer court and not in the Holy of Holies. We may long for the time when we can gather together again. This experience illustrates the reason Paul urged the Hebrew believers not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. If they forsook their assembling together, it meant that they went back to their old religion, their former camp. Thus, Paul charged them to go outside the camp and to enter within the veil. To enter within the veil includes three things: to enter into the heavenly Holy of Holies; to enter into our spirit, which is linked to the heavenly Holy of Holies; and to enter into the Christian meeting. The Christian meeting is the best because it nourishes, strengthens, edifies, and enlightens us, becoming a great spiritual benefit to us. The meetings are wonderful.

The meeting in the New Testament is referred to as a gathering (Matt. 18:20) and an assembly (Heb. 10:25). The assembling together of the believers, the meetings, should not be in the nature of fulfilling mixed purposes. Frequently, in Christianity the meetings are not pure in their purpose. The meetings of the believers should be purely in the nature of carrying out God's New Testament economy. If we were to hold a meeting that is not pure and that has a mixed purpose, it would be difficult to have the Lord's presence. The proper Christian meeting must be pure in its purpose. The essence, the nature, of the meeting must be purely to carry out God's New Testament economy.

God's New Testament economy is to get a people through Christ to be the church so that God may have a corporate expression in His fatherhood. Every Christian meeting must be pure in nature to carry out this economy of God so that God may express Himself as a great Father in all His children. To have a meeting with such a motive and purpose is really pure.

## **TO HAVE THE FULL MUTUALITY**

### **In Speaking**

The Christian meetings should be full of mutuality in speaking (Eph. 5:19). To fill the Christian meetings with mutuality is not very easy, but to have the mutuality is wonderful. Whether we come together with fifty, one hundred, or one hundred fifty, everyone should function. This creates a mutuality that fills up the entire meeting. One speaks for one minute, another speaks for half a minute, another speaks for five minutes, someone may speak for eight minutes, and someone else may speak for ten minutes. By this practice of everyone speaking according to their measure, we all would

produce a meeting that is full of mutuality.

I hope that we would improve, grow, and advance to a condition where many would speak. Some would speak for forty seconds, others for four minutes, and another for thirty minutes. We not only need the short speaking; we also need some longer speaking. There may be a meeting in which many speak in a short way and one would speak in a new, living, refreshing, and high way for perhaps forty minutes. This would be wonderful. The first chapter of Luke illustrates this. In this chapter there are three different kinds of speaking. The record of Elizabeth's speaking is the shortest (vv. 42-45). Mary, the mother of Jesus, spoke for a longer time (vv. 46-55). Finally, Zachariah, full of experiences, spoke the longest (vv. 68-79). Zachariah's speaking in Luke 1 contains no wasted words, and it is full of riches. How long you should speak depends upon your age and experience. Your experience and knowledge of the word of God constitute the content and the length of your speaking.

If everyone in the meeting speaks for a short time, and the meeting is full of mutuality, the new ones who come to the meeting will be convinced (1 Cor. 14:24-25). They may be shocked at first, asking what kind of meeting this is. They may have been Christians for many years, but they may never have seen a meeting with such mutuality—with everyone speaking.

We should also learn not to speak lightly. We must speak with weight. Otherwise, some may say that our speaking does not have much content. Our speaking must be with content. This needs the proper learning, practice, and training; therefore, the churches should train the saints to speak with content. If we all learn to give living and weighty words whenever and wherever we speak, we will surely be welcomed by all the churches. On the other hand, if we go to the meetings and only sit without saying anything, we will not be appreciated that much. Learn to speak, but do not speak lightly. This needs our daily practice. Every morning we should contact the Lord, reading a few verses to enjoy the Lord by enjoying His Word. We should pick up something from the Word and practice speaking the Lord the entire day. This will enrich our being, our person, and this will constitute the proper speaking. Then wherever we go, we will have not only the boldness but also the practice and habit of speaking. If I go to visit a church and stay for a few days, I cannot refrain from speaking. I am addicted to speaking. Wherever I go, I must speak—the more, the better. Build up a habit and taste for speaking.

When you speak, you get the firstfruits of the benefit. While I am speaking, you get some benefit, but I get the firstfruits of the benefit. This is why I am so strong. Learn to speak. To merely listen weakens you. On the one hand, listening nourishes you. On the other hand, if you listen only to others' speaking, it does nourish you, but it does not allow you to grow. The more help you receive in this way, the more you will eventually die. We must learn to speak, speak, speak.

It would be marvelous if we would learn to speak every item of the contents of chapter 1 of this book, [entitled "The God-ordained Way to Meet and to Serve as Revealed in the Holy Word"]. We can tell others, "The Christian meeting is linked to the processed Triune God. It is linked to Christ, who has passed through the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension." We should learn to speak these things. Chapter 1 of this book is enough for the saints in the churches to speak on for one year, day by day and in every meeting. The contents of all my writings are embodied in this chapter. The husbands should speak concerning these things to their wives, and the wives to their husbands. I have been speaking concerning God's economy and the processed Triune God for nearly twenty-five years in the United States, and I have not yet exhausted this subject. Speaking concerning the Triune God is like cooking American beef in many different ways. The beef is the same, but the ways of cooking and serving it are many. Learn to speak concerning the processed Christ all the time. In other words, learn to speak the same thing all the time (1 Cor. 1:10). In order to fill the meeting with mutuality, the primary thing is speaking. When everyone speaks, the meeting is always full of mutuality.

**In Considering One Another  
and in Exhorting One Another**

Hebrews 10:24 says, “Let us consider one another so as to incite one another to love and good works.” *Consider one another* indicates mutuality. I take care of you, and you take care of me—this is mutuality. Exhorting one another in verse 25 also indicates mutuality. In the New Testament, exhortation is mutual; it is not just in one direction. With exhortation there should be a two-way traffic, as indicated by the words *one another* in verses 24 and 25. In the meetings of Christianity exhortation is usually from one direction—from the pastor to the congregation; there is no exhortation that goes back to the pastor. However, when we meet, our exhortation must be among ourselves; it must be mutual.

### **In Teaching and in Admonishing**

Teaching and admonishing are also in mutuality (Col. 3:16). We speak to one another, teaching and admonishing one another. Sometimes the sisters could admonish the brothers. The sisters should not say that because they are not teachers, they cannot speak. They should not teach (1 Tim. 2:12), but they should admonish. We admonish one another because we love one another. We are members of the same Body, so I admonish you, and you admonish me.

When I was young, I discovered that some Christian teachers said that females could teach in the church meetings, but others said that they could not. One day in Los Angeles in 1963, a brother who was knowledgeable of the Bible attended our meetings. When he observed that the sisters spoke in the meetings, he asked me why we allowed the sisters to speak. He said that the sisters should be silent. I responded by asking him whether or not the sisters were silent in his meetings. He said that they were. I then asked him if the sisters sang in his meetings. He affirmed that they did. Then I asked him whether or not singing was a kind of speaking. In other words, as long as the sisters were singing in his meeting, they were not actually silent. Then I asked why the sisters were allowed to sing and were not allowed to pray.

How strange that was! It is strange that the sisters were qualified to sing hymns but not qualified to pray. According to 1 Corinthians 11:5, however, women may pray and prophesy in the meeting, but they must do this under the covering of the brothers. The sisters must be emancipated to speak in the church meeting. They must be encouraged to speak but not in terms of teaching. The sisters should not teach, but they can exhort and admonish. Many times mothers can admonish their children better than fathers; likewise, the sisters are usually very skillful in admonishing. This is because the sisters are fine, not rough or coarse. Brothers, on the other hand, may be rough and coarse. When the brothers say Amen, it can be very rough. However, when the sisters say Amen, it can be like music, very pleasant to our ears. Since admonishing is a fine work, it is sometimes very difficult for the brothers to admonish. As a brother, teaching is very easy for me. But I may not be as qualified to admonish as some of the sisters. When the brothers admonish, the saints may not listen very much. But when a dear sister comes and admonishes, everyone may listen and obey. This illustrates why we need the sisters to speak. As long as they would speak and not teach, everything is fine.

All the sisters should be encouraged to speak. Many of the sisters need to be “emancipated,” not from man’s control but from their own control. Many sisters control themselves too much. It is always good for a sister to be quiet, gentle, and meek. I agree with and appreciate this. But I do not agree that the sisters’ mouths would be shut in the meeting. The sisters need to be gentle and meek but speaking.

### **PAYING A HIGH PRICE TO REACH THE STANDARD**

To reach the standard of these characteristics of the believers’ meetings requires that we pay a high price. We must endeavor to reach this highest standard so that our meetings could be revolutionized, bearing the proper characteristics. Once our meetings are converted from the old way into the new way, the Lord will have something according to His New Testament economy. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1987, vol. 3, “The Scriptural Way to Meet and to Serve for the Building Up of the Body of Christ,” pp. 300-306*)