

Message One

Christ as Our Virtues, the Peace of God, Our Secret, and the One Who Empowers Us

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:5-9, 11b-13

Phil. 4:5-9—Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man's* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things. ⁹The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

Phil. 4:11-13—Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. ¹²I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. ¹³I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

I. The virtues of Christ for our experience in Philippians 4:5-9 are the expression of a life that lives Christ—1:19-21a; 2:5-13; 3:8-10:

Phil. 4:5-9—Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man's* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things. ⁹The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According 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. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Phil. 2:5-13—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. ¹²So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure.

Phil. 3:8-10—But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ ⁹And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and* based on faith, ¹⁰To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- A. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
- B. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers' life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites—Matt. 6:22-34.

Matt. 6:22-34—The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light; ²³But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! ²⁴No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. ²⁵Because of this, I say to you, Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of heaven. They do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷Who among you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁸And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider well the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin *thread*. ²⁹But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. ³⁰And if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is *here* today and tomorrow is cast into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? ³²For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its *own* evil.

II. “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near”—Phil. 4:5:

- A. According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues; forbearance is actually the all-inclusive Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit with His bountiful supply—1:19-21a:

Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According 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. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

- 1. Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due:

- a. Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we will also have righteousness and holiness.
- b. Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things—cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-9—And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. ⁸Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

2. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable—cf. 6:1a; 10:1; Phil. 1:19; Isa. 11:2:

cf. 2 Cor. 6:1—And working together with *Him*, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;

cf. 2 Cor. 10:1—But I myself, Paul, entreat you through the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who (*as you say*) in person am base among you, but while absent am bold toward you,

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

cf. Isa. 11:2—And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.

- a. If we are forbearing, we will have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we will also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it—50:4-5; Col. 1:28; Prov. 25:15.

Isa. 50:4-5—The Lord Jehovah has given me The tongue of the instructed, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *me* morning by morning; He awakens my ear To hear as an instructed one. ⁵The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn back.

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

Prov. 25:15—By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue can break the bone.

- b. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.

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

- B. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:

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

1. To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men.
2. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today—Luke 24:15-19, 28-31; Matt. 17:24-27; John 11:20-34.

Luke 24:15-19—And while they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. ¹⁷And He said to them, What are these words which you are exchanging with one another while you are walking? And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸And one of *them*, Cleopas by name, answered and said to Him, Do You alone dwell as a stranger in Jerusalem and not know the things which have taken place in it in these days? ¹⁹And He said to them, What things? And they said to Him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a Prophet powerful in work and word before God and all the people;

Luke 24:28-31—And they drew near to the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. ²⁹And they constrained Him, saying, Stay with us, because it is near evening and the day is already gone by. And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰And as He reclined *at table* with them, He took the loaf and blessed *it*, and having broken *it*, He began handing *it* to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He disappeared from them.

Matt. 17:24-27—And when they came to Capernaum, those who take up the temple tax came to Peter and said, Does not your Teacher pay the temple tax? ²⁵He said, Yes. And when he came into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive custom or poll tax, from their sons or from strangers? ²⁶And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said to him, So then the sons are free. ²⁷But that we do not stumble them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. And when you open its mouth, you will find a stater; take that and give *it* to them for Me and you.

John 11:20-34—Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary sat in the house. ²¹Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You. ²³Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. ²⁴Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day. ²⁵Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live; ²⁶And everyone who lives and believes into Me shall by no means die forever. Do you believe this? ²⁷She said to Him, Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who comes into the world. ²⁸And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here and is calling you. ²⁹And she, when she heard *this*, rose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹The Jews then who were with her in the house and were consoling her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed

her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²Then Mary, when she came to where Jesus was, saw Him and fell at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ³³Then Jesus, when He saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, was moved with indignation in His spirit and was troubled, ³⁴And He said, Where have you put him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see.

3. To make known our forbearance is to live a life that expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.
4. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul says that the Lord is near (Phil. 4:5); with respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help; with regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon (cf. Rom. 10:8-13); the Lord's being near primarily refers to His presence with us (Matt. 1:23; Exo. 33:14).
Phil. 4:5—Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

cf. Rom. 10:8-13—But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of the faith which we proclaim, ⁹That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰For with the heart there is believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth there is confession unto salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes on Him shall not be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; ¹³For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Matt. 1:23—“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel” (which is translated, God with us).

Exo. 33:14—And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.

- C. We need to learn Christ as the secret (Phil. 4:12) of being transformed, that is, of being metabolically changed in our natural life, in any kind of environment, situation, or circumstance; this practical and simple secret is in verses 6 and 7—“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

Phil. 4:12—I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.

- III. “When we have problems in our daily life, we do not have to seek advice from others, because we have a spirit in us and the Lord as the Spirit dwelling in our spirit is very near to us. We can ask Him about everything, without any need to use the telephone or the fax machine, for He can talk with us right within us. You can talk with Him and confer with Him in everything. The Lord's Word says, ‘In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God’ (Phil. 4:6). Hence, if you have some problem, you just need to tell Him. He is right within you, and He is with you face to face. The

Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is in us not to trouble us but to be our Paraclete, Comforter, and Supporter. I always pray, ‘O Lord, now I am going to take a walk. Support me, sustain me, and strengthen me.’ This is to drink the Lord. In this way I have no anxiety. When anxiety comes, you should say, ‘O Lord, this anxiety is Yours, not mine; I give it to You because You bear it for me.’ Thus, you receive the Lord’s element into you, and metabolism will work constantly in you. Consequently, what is expressed through you outwardly is Christ. This is to live Christ. Those who do not know this secret consider that to live Christ is a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ”—*The Organic Aspect of God’s Salvation*, pp. 54-55:

Phil. 4:6—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

A. Christ Himself is the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding—Phil. 4:7; Isa. 9:6; John 14:27; Luke 7:50; Rom. 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 15:13; 16:20.

Phil. 4:7—And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man’s* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

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

John 14:27—Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Luke 7:50—But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

Rom. 3:17—And the way of peace they have not known.

Rom. 5:1—Therefore having been justified out of faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

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

Rom. 15:13—Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 16:20—Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

B. The words *in everything* refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day; prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord—Phil. 4:6.

Phil. 4:6—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

- C. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is “in the fellowship with God”—v. 6.

Phil. 4:6—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

- D. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God; the peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

Phil. 4:9—The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

John 16:33—These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

- E. The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil (Isa. 30:15a); if we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ (Rom. 8:28-30; Matt. 10:29-31; 2 Cor. 4:15-18).

Isa. 30:15—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; But you were not willing,

Rom. 8:28-30—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹Because 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; ³⁰And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Matt. 10:29-31—Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And not one of them will fall to the earth apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.

2 Cor. 4:15-18—For all things are for your sakes that the grace which has abounded through the greater number may cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. ¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸Because 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.

IV. “Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things”—Phil. 4:8:

- A. These virtues are the expressions of God’s attributes lived out from within the pursuers of Christ, who is the embodiment of God.

- B. These virtues are six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ:
1. A life that lives Christ is true—ethically truthful, without any pretense or falsehood.
 2. A life that lives Christ is dignified—honorable, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and worthy of reverence—1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2; cf. Rom. 9:21.
1 Tim. 3:8—Deacons *must* similarly *be* grave, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for base gain;
1 Tim. 3:11—Women similarly *must be* grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.
Titus 2:2—*Exhort* older men to be temperate, grave, of a sober mind, healthy in faith, in love, in endurance;
cf. Rom. 9:21—Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
 3. A life that lives Christ is righteous—right before God and man—Phil. 3:9.
Phil. 3:9—And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and* based on faith,
 4. A life that lives Christ is pure—single in intention and action, without any mixture—Matt. 5:8.
Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
 5. A life that lives Christ is lovely—lovable, agreeable, and endearing.
 6. A life that lives Christ is well spoken of—renowned, of good repute, attractive, winning, and gracious—Hosea 14:7.
Hosea 14:7—Those who sit under his shade will return; They will revive *like* grain And will bud like the vine; His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.
- C. Virtue and praise are a summing up of the six foregoing items, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise—Matt. 5:16.
Matt. 5:16—In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.
- D. To be a proper human being is to express God through His divine attributes in our human virtues, to have a human life filled with Christ as the reality of the attributes of God—cf. Gen. 1:26.
cf. 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.

V. **“I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me”—Phil. 4:11b-13:**

- A. Paul took Christ as the secret to experience Christ, being content and rejoicing in every kind of circumstance, in any situation, and in any matter because of Christ—v. 4.

Phil. 4:4—Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

- B. *I have learned the secret* literally means “I have been initiated”; the metaphor here refers to a person’s being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3-4; 5:32:

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

Eph. 3:3-4—That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief, ⁴By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

Eph. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

1. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ—Acts 9:3-19, 25-28; 22:6-21; 13:1-4.

Acts 9:3-19—And as he went, he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ⁵And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He *said*, I am Jesus, whom you persecute. ⁶But rise up and enter into the city, and it will be told to you what you must do. ⁷And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸And Saul rose from the ground; and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. And they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without seeing, and he neither ate nor drank. ¹⁰And there was a certain disciple in Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord *said* to him, Rise up and go to the lane called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas a man from Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying; ¹²And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him so that he may receive his sight. ¹³But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many concerning this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name. ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶For I will show him how many things he must suffer on behalf of My name. ¹⁷And Ananias went away and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him, he said, Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road on which you were coming—so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight and rose up and was baptized. ¹⁹And once he had taken food, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples in Damascus for some days.

Acts 9:25-28—But his disciples took *him* by night and let him down through the wall, lowering *him* in a basket. ²⁶And when he arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to the disciples; yet all feared him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took hold of him and led *him* to the apostles, and he related to them how

Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸And he was with them, going in and going out in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

Acts 22:6-21—And as I journeyed and drew near to Damascus about midday, suddenly a great light flashed out of heaven around me; ⁷And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ⁸And I answered, Who are You, Lord? And He said to me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute. ⁹And those who were with me beheld the light, but did not hear the voice of the One who was speaking to me. ¹⁰And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise up and go into Damascus, and there it will be told to you concerning all the things which have been appointed to you to do. ¹¹And as I could not see because of the glory of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. ¹²And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well attested to by all the Jews dwelling *there*, ¹³Came to me, and standing by, said to me, Saul, brother, receive your sight! And in that very hour I looked up at him. ¹⁴And he said, The God of our fathers has previously appointed you to know His will and to see the righteous One and to hear the voice from His mouth; ¹⁵For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now, why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name. ¹⁷And when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I went into a trance; ¹⁸And I saw Him saying to me, Hurry, and go quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony concerning Me. ¹⁹And I said, Lord, they know that I was imprisoning and beating from synagogue to synagogue those who believe on You; ²⁰And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I myself also was standing by and approving and keeping the garments of those who did away with him. ²¹And He said to me, Go, for I will send you forth far away to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:1-4—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. ²And 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. ³Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on *them*, they sent them away. ⁴They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.

2. Paul learned the secret of how to take Christ as life (Col. 3:4), how to live Christ (Phil. 1:21a), how to magnify Christ (v. 20), how to gain Christ (3:8, 12), and how to have the church life (1:8, 19; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).

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

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

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

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

Phil. 3:12—Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Phil. 1:8—For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

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

Phil. 2:1-4—If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, ²Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing, ³*Doing* nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves; ⁴Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also.

Phil. 2:19-20—But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged by knowing the things concerning you. ²⁰For I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you;

Phil. 4:1-3—So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, in the same way stand firm in the Lord, beloved. ²I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord. ³Yes, I ask you also, genuine yokefellow, assist them, since they contended with me in the gospel, as well as with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

3. The secret in Philippians 4 is to do all things in Christ as the One who empowers us (v. 13; *Hymns*, #564); as a person in Christ, Paul experienced Christ and applied Him in all circumstances (Phil. 3:9); this Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing (4:5b; *Hymns*, #539).

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

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

Phil. 4:5—Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

4. Paul's word about Christ as the empowering One specifically applies to Christ's empowering us to live Him as our human virtues and thereby to magnify Him in His unlimited greatness in every kind of circumstance—Phil. 4:8-13.

Phil. 4:8-13—Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things. ⁹The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you. ¹⁰But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because now at length you have caused your thinking for me to blossom

anew; for which matter you had indeed taken thought, but lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. ¹²I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. ¹³I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

5. By the empowering of Christ, we can live a contented life and be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of (vv. 11-12, 8); to live a life of these virtues is much more difficult than doing a Christian work.

Phil. 4:11-12—Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. ¹²I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.

Phil. 4:8—Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.

6. If we would experience Christ as the empowering One, we need to cooperate with Him in the following matters:

- a. In our practical living on the earth, we must be persons who pray continually by coming before God, entering into Him, and living in the light of His face—Psa. 42:5, 11; 80:1, 3, 7, 19.

Psa. 42:5—Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him *For* the salvation of His countenance.

Psa. 42:11—Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, The salvation of my countenance and my God.

Psa. 80:1—O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned *between* the cherubim, shine forth.

Psa. 80:3—O God, restore us; And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:7—O God of hosts, restore us; And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:19—O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

- b. We need to experience a thorough and fresh forgiveness of our sins, based on the shedding of the Lord's blood on the cross—Heb. 9:14; 10:19, 22; Exo. 24:8; Matt. 26:28.

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. 10:19—Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the *Holy of Holies* in the blood of Jesus,

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.

Exo. 24:8—So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people and said, Here is the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you in accordance with all these words.

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

- c. We need to know what ascension is and know that the life we have received is a heavenly life; we should be aware of the fact that we have ascended into the heavens with the Lord and are thus heavenly persons; outwardly, we are still living on the earth, but inwardly, with respect to our inner life and mood, we are living in the heavens—Eph. 2:6; Heb. 8:1-2; 4:14-15; 7:25-26.

Eph. 2:6—And raised *us* up together with *Him* and seated *us* together with *Him* in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

Heb. 8:1-2—Now in the things which are being said the chief point *is this*: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

Heb. 4:14-15—Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like *us*, yet without sin.

Heb. 7:25-26—Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them. ²⁶For such a High Priest was also fitting to us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and having become higher than the heavens,

Message Two

Knowing and Taking Christ as Our Pattern

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:5-11

Phil. 2:5-11—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

I. In order to experience Christ and live Christ, we must know Him as our pattern and take Him as our pattern—Phil. 2:5-11:

Phil. 2:5-11—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

- A. In 2:5-11 Paul presents Christ as the pattern; we need to have this pattern infused into us.

Phil. 2:5-11—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

- B. The pattern of the Christian life is the God-man Savior who emptied Himself and humbled Himself and who has been exalted and glorified by God—vv. 6-9:

Phil. 2:6-9—Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

1. Although the Lord was equal with God, He did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped and retained; He emptied Himself, laying aside what He possessed—the form of God—vv. 6-7a.

Phil. 2:6-7—Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

2. In His incarnation the Lord did not alter His divine nature; He changed only His outward expression from the form of God to the form of a slave—v. 7.
Phil. 2:7—But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
3. The Lord became “in the likeness of men”—vv. 7b-8a:
Phil. 2:7-8—But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross.
 - a. The form of God implies the inward reality of Christ’s deity; the likeness of men denotes the outward appearance of His humanity.
 - b. He appeared to men as a man outwardly, but as God, He had the reality of deity inwardly.
 - c. Christ entered into the condition of humanity, and He was found in fashion as a man.
4. Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient even unto death—the death of the cross—v. 8b:
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.
 - a. Humbling Himself was a further step in emptying Himself.
 - b. Christ’s self-humbling manifested His self-emptying.
 - c. The death of the cross was the climax of Christ’s humiliation—Acts 8:33; Phil. 3:21.
Acts 8:33—In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. Who shall declare His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth.”
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.
5. The Lord humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak and bestowed on Him “the name which is above every name”—2:9:
Phil. 2:9—Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 - a. God has exalted Jesus, a real man, to be the Lord of all—Acts 2:32-33; 5:31.
Acts 2:32-33—This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses. ³³Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
Acts 5:31—This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
 - b. This exaltation of Christ was the manifestation of resurrection power.

c. The highest name in the universe, the greatest name, is the name of Jesus:

(1) The name is the expression of the sum total of what the Lord Jesus is in His person and work.

(2) *In the name of Jesus* means in the sphere and element of all that the Lord is—Phil. 2:10.

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,

d. The result of our confessing that Jesus is Lord is that God the Father is glorified; this is the great end of all that Christ is and has done in His person and work—v. 11; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

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

1 Cor. 15:24-28—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. ²⁵For He must reign until *God* puts all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶Death, the last enemy, is being abolished. ²⁷For 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. ²⁸And 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.

C. The principle of this pattern is that someone with the highest life and position would be willing to live in a lowly way.

II. Christ as our pattern is not only objective but also subjective and experiential—Phil. 2:5, 12-13:

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

Phil. 2:12-13—So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure.

A. The One who set up the pattern and who Himself is the pattern is now operating within us as the indwelling God—v. 13.

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

B. The principle of Christ as the inward pattern for our living is that even if we have the highest standard or the highest position, we should not grasp it.

C. We need to be partners with Christ in His human living, especially in His emptying and humbling Himself and in His not grasping equality with God as a treasure—vv. 6-7.

Phil. 2:6-7—Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

D. The Christ who is our pattern is now the life within us—Col. 3:4:

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

1. We have a life in us that is a self-emptying and self-humbling life; this life never grasps at something as a treasure but is always willing to lay aside position and title.
2. We have Christ crucified as our pattern, and this pattern is the crucified life within us—Gal. 2:20:

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

- a. The steps of Christ's humiliation in Philippians 2:5-8 are all aspects of the crucified life lived out in a full way.

Phil. 2:5-8—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross.

- b. When we live Christ, we live the One who is the pattern of a crucified life—1:21a.

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

3. Taking the crucified life as our pattern opens the gate for resurrection and brings us into the power of resurrection—3:10:

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

- a. By living a crucified life, we can experience the power of resurrection that exalted Christ to the highest peak in the universe—Eph. 1:19-22.

Eph. 1:19-22—And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength, ²⁰Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, ²¹Far 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; ²²And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church,

- b. The highest life on earth is the crucified life; whenever we live a crucified life, God will bring us into the power of resurrection.

4. Christ should be exalted not only objectively in the universe but also subjectively in our daily life—Phil. 2:9:

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

- a. Christ is exalted in us when we take Him as the crucified life to be the pattern of our daily life.

- b. The bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the power that exalts Christ—1:19.

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

III. If we would take Christ as our pattern, we need to take Christ's mind as our mind—2:5:

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

- A. Paul not only took Christ as his living and expression outwardly but also took the mind of Christ as his mind inwardly—1 Cor. 2:16.

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

- B. For the mind of Christ to be in us means that this mind is something living; actually, the mind of Christ is Christ Himself, for the person of Christ is manifested in His mind.

- C. We need to open ourselves and let “this mind” be in us—Phil. 2:5:

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

- 1. This refers to the considering in verse 3 and to the regarding in verse 4.

Phil. 2:3-4—*Doing* nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves; ⁴Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also.

- 2. This kind of thinking was in Christ when He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and humbled Himself, being found in fashion as a man—vv. 7-8.

Phil. 2:7-8—But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross.

- 3. To have such a mind requires us to be one with Christ in His inward parts—1:8.

Phil. 1:8—For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

IV. We need to know the Son's submission—2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-8:

Phil. 2:5-11—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Heb. 5:7-8—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, ⁸Even though He was a Son, learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

- A. The Word of God tells us that the Lord Jesus and the Father are one—John 10:30.

John 10:30—I and the Father are one.

- B. The Father and the Son are equal, equipotent, coexisting, and existing simultaneously.

- C. Philippians 2:5-7 forms one section, and verses 8 through 11 form another section:

Phil. 2:5-7—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, ⁷But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

Phil. 2:8-11—And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and *that* the death of a cross. ⁹Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

1. The first section is on Christ emptying Himself.
2. The second section is on Christ humbling Himself in His humanity—v. 8.

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.

- D. When the Lord came to the earth, He emptied Himself of the glory, power, position, and image of His deity.

- E. The Father became the representation of authority, and the Son became the representation of submission:

1. When the Lord came down to the earth, He dropped authority on the one hand and picked up submission on the other hand.
2. He set His heart to become a slave, to be restricted in time and space as a man.
3. The Lord humbled Himself, becoming obedient; the obedience in the Godhead is the most wonderful thing in the whole universe.

- F. We should submit to authority; this is a great matter.

- G. We need to have the mind in us which was in Christ Jesus—v. 5:

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

1. All of us should take the way of our Lord, taking His principle of submission as our principle of submission.
2. Whoever knows this principle will realize that no sin is uglier than rebellion and that nothing is more important than submission—Jude 11; Rom. 1:5; 16:26.

Jude 11—Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have rushed out in the error of Balaam for reward and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Rom. 1:5—Through whom we have received grace and apostleship unto the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name,

Rom. 16:26—But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;

3. Only when we see the principle of submission can we serve God—Matt. 4:10; 20:28; Acts 6:2; Rom. 1:9; 16:18; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3.

Matt. 4:10—Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.”

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

Acts 6:2—And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples to *them* and said, It is not fitting for us to forsake the word of God and serve tables.

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

Rom. 16:18—For such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and through smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Heb. 12:28—Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear;

Rev. 22:3—And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

4. God’s principle can be maintained only by submitting in the way that the Lord submitted.

- H. Hebrews 5:8 tells us that the Lord’s obedience was learned through suffering:
Heb. 5:8—Even though He was a Son, learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

1. Suffering brought obedience to Him.
2. True submission is found when there is still obedience in spite of suffering.
3. When the Lord came to the earth, He did not bring obedience with Him; rather, He learned it through sufferings.

- I. Salvation not only brings joy; it also brings submission—Rom. 1:5; 16:18, 26; Titus 3:1:

Rom. 1:5—Through whom we have received grace and apostleship unto the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name,

Rom. 16:18—For such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and through smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Rom. 16:26—But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;

Titus 3:1—Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work,

1. Only the submissive ones will experience the fullness of salvation.

2. We need to be submissive, even as the Lord was submissive.
 3. The Lord became the source of our salvation through obedience—Heb. 5:8-9.
Heb. 5:8-9—Even though He was a Son, learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹And having been perfected, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,
 4. God saved us with the hope that we would submit to His will—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.
- J. When one meets God's authority, submission is a simple matter, and knowing God's will is also a simple matter, because the Lord, who was submissive throughout His life, has already given us His life of submission—John 11:25.
John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Message Three

Enjoying the All-inclusive Christ as the Good Land— Our Allotted Portion

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:12; 2:6-15, 19; Exo. 3:8; Deut. 8:8-9; 26:9

Col. 1:12—Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

Col. 2:6-15—As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, ⁷Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ; ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority. ¹¹In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹²Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses; ¹⁴Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

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.

Exo. 3:8—And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

Deut. 8:8-9—A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey; ⁹A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.

Deut. 26:9—And He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

I. Christ as the preeminent and all-inclusive One is the allotted portion of the saints—Col. 1:12:

Col. 1:12—Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

- A. *The allotted portion* refers to the lot of the inheritance, as illustrated by the allotment of the good land of Canaan given to the children of Israel for their inheritance—Josh. 14:1.

Josh. 14:1—And these are what the children of Israel received as inheritances in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel gave to them as inheritances,

- B. The New Testament believers' allotted portion is not a physical land; it is the all-inclusive Christ as the life-giving Spirit—Col. 2:6-7; Gal. 3:14:

Col. 2:6-7—As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, ⁷Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Gal. 3:14—In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

1. The riches of the good land typify the unsearchable riches of Christ in different aspects as the bountiful supply to His believers in His Spirit—Deut. 8:7-10; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19.

Deut. 8:7-10—For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains; ⁸A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey; ⁹A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper. ¹⁰And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.

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

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

2. By enjoying the riches of the land, the believers in Christ are built up to be His Body as the house of God and the kingdom of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17.

Eph. 1:22-23—And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 2:21-22—In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²In 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.

Matt. 16:18-19—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. ¹⁹I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Rom. 14:17—For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

II. The purpose of God's calling is to bring God's chosen people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ, typified by the good land flowing with milk and honey—Exo. 3:8; cf. 1 Cor. 1:9:

Exo. 3:8—And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

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

- A. Milk and honey, which are the mingling of both the animal life and the vegetable life, are two aspects of the life of Christ—the redeeming aspect and the generating aspect—Deut. 8:8; 26:9; cf. John 1:29; 12:24:

Deut. 8:8—A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

Deut. 26:9—And He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

cf. 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!

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

1. The redeeming aspect of Christ's life is for our judicial redemption, and the generating aspect of Christ's life is for our organic salvation—1:29; 12:24; Rev. 2:7; Rom. 5:10.

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

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

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

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

2. The symbols of the Lord's table signify the redeeming and generating aspects of Christ's life for God's complete salvation; thus, the good land has become a table, a feast, for our enjoyment—Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:17.

Matt. 26:26-28—And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed *it*, and He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. ²⁷And He took a cup and gave thanks, and He gave *it* to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

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

- B. We must be *in the light* in order to enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the good land in His redeeming and generating aspects—Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 2:9; Isa. 2:5:

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

Isa. 2:5—House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.

1. God is light—1 John 1:5.

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.

2. The word of God is light—Psa. 119:105, 130.

Psa. 119:105—Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Psa. 119:130—The opening of Your words gives light, Imparting understanding to the simple.

3. Christ is light—John 8:12; 9:5.

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.

John 9:5—While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

4. The life of Christ is light—1:4.

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

5. The believers are light—Matt. 5:14; Phil. 2:15.

Matt. 5:14—You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city situated upon a mountain to be hidden.

Phil. 2:15—That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world,

6. The church is a lampstand shining with light—Rev. 1:20; Psa. 73:16-17.

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

Psa. 73:16-17—When I considered this in order to understand *it*, It was a troublesome task in my sight, ¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I perceived their end.

- C. We must eat God's words to enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the good land in His redeeming and generating aspects; God's word is milk for us to drink and honey for us to eat—John 6:57, 63, 68; 1 Pet. 2:2; Psa. 119:103; Ezek. 3:3.

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

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

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

1 Pet. 2:2—As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

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

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

- D. By enjoying Christ as the land of milk and honey, we will be constituted with Him as milk and honey—"Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue"—S. S. 4:11a:

S. S. 4:11—Your lips drip fresh honey, *my* bride; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

1. Honey restores the stricken ones, whereas milk feeds the new ones.
2. The seeker has stored so many riches within her that food is under her tongue, and she can dispense the riches of Christ to the needy ones at any time—Isa. 50:4; Matt. 12:35-36; Luke 4:22; Eph. 4:29-30.

Isa. 50:4—The Lord Jehovah has given me The tongue of the instructed, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *me* morning by morning; He awakens my ear To hear as an instructed one.

Matt. 12:35-36—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. ³⁶And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

Luke 4:22—And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth, and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Eph. 4:29-30—Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

3. This sweetness is not produced overnight but comes from a long period of gathering, inward activity, and careful storage—S. S. 4:16; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

S. S. 4:16—Awake, O north wind; And come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden: Let its spices flow forth; Let my beloved come into his garden And eat his choicest fruit.

2 Cor. 12:7-9—And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. ⁸Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

III. We can walk in Christ as our living land and absorb Christ as our rich soil, in which we have been rooted, so that we may grow with the elements that we absorb from the soil—Col. 2:6-7; cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:19:

Col. 2:6-7—As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, ⁷Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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

cf. 1 Cor. 3:9—For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

cf. 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. Colossians 2:8-15 presents a full description and definition of Christ as the soil, in which we do not lack anything; as we take time to absorb Him as the all-inclusive land, the facts in these verses become our experience:

Col. 2:8-15—Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ; ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority. ¹¹In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹²Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with *Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses; ¹⁴Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of *them* openly, triumphing over them in it.

1. Christ as the soil is the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily—v. 9:

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

- a. *Fullness* refers not to the riches of God but to the expression of the riches of God; what dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but the expression of the riches of what God is—v. 9; 1:15, 19; 3:10-11.

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

Col. 1:15—Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

Col. 1:19—For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

- b. When we are rooted in Christ as the soil, we are made full in Him; we are filled up with all the divine riches to become His expression—Eph. 3:8, 19.

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

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

- c. In Christ as the soil we are filled, completed, perfected, satisfied, and thoroughly supplied; we do not lack anything—cf. Phil. 1:19.

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

- d. Christ as the soil is the history and mystery of God with all the riches of His person and processes—Col. 2:2.

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

- 2. Christ as the soil is the Head of all rule and authority—v. 10.

Col. 2:10—And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

- 3. In Christ as the soil there is an element with the killing power that puts the flesh to death—v. 11.

Col. 2:11—In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ,

- 4. In Christ as the soil there is an element that causes us to be buried—v. 12a.

Col. 2:12—Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with *Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- 5. In Christ as the soil there is an element that causes us to be raised up—v. 12b.

Col. 2:12—Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with *Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- 6. In Christ as the soil there is an element that vivifies us—v. 13.

Col. 2:13—And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

- 7. In Christ as the soil there is an element that wipes out the handwriting in ordinances—v. 14.

Col. 2:14—Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.

- 8. In Christ as the soil there is an element that is victorious over the evil spirits in the atmosphere—v. 15.

Col. 2:15—Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of *them* openly, triumphing over them in it.

- B. We must take time to enjoy the Lord as the all-inclusive land so that all the elements of Christ as the rich soil may be absorbed into us for us to be made full in Him in our experience—v. 10a; 4:2:

Col. 2:10—And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

Col. 4:2—Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

1. If we would absorb the riches of Christ as the soil, we need to have tender, new roots—cf. 2 Cor. 4:16.

cf. 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. We need to forget our situation, our condition, our failures, and our weaknesses and simply take time to absorb the Lord; as we take time to absorb Him, we grow with the growth of God in us for the building up of the Body of Christ—Luke 8:13; Matt. 14:22-23; 6:6; Col. 2:7a, 19.

Luke 8:13—And those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; yet these have no root, who believe *only* for a while, and in time of trial they draw back.

Matt. 14:22-23—And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. ²³And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

Matt. 6:6—But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Col. 2:7—Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Col. 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.

Message Four

The Mystery of God—Christ

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:2-3, 9-13; 3:1; 4:3;
Eph. 3:8-9; John 1:1, 14, 16; 1 Cor. 6:17

Col. 2:2-3—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, ³In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

Col. 2:9-13—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority. ¹¹In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹²Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with *Him* through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

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

Col. 4:3—Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

Eph. 3:8-9—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 ⁹And 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,

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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.

John 1:16—For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

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

I. In the Bible a mystery refers not only to things that are hidden and unknown but also to things that are hidden in God's heart; this is the principle concerning the mysteries mentioned in the Bible—Mark 4:11; Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19.

Mark 4:11—And He said to them, To you it has been given *to know* the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside, all things are in parables,

Rom. 16:25-26—Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages ²⁶But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;

Col. 1:26-27—The mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations but now has been manifested to His saints; ²⁷To whom God willed to make known what are

the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

Col. 4:3—Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

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

Eph. 3:3-4—That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief, ⁴By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

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. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

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,

II. Colossians 2:2 says, “The mystery of God, Christ”; the mystery of God is manifested in Christ, so Christ is the mystery of God.

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

III. There are five great mysteries in the Bible:

A. The mystery of the universe is God, who is the meaning and purpose of the universe—Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9.

Gen. 1:1—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

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.

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. The mystery of man is also God—Gen. 1:26; Zech. 12:1; 1 Cor. 2:11.

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.

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,

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.

- C. The mystery of God is Christ—Col. 2:2.

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

- D. The mystery of Christ is the church—Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:3.

Eph. 3:4—By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

Col. 4:3—Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

- E. The mystery of the church is the organism of Christ, the Body of Christ as the enlargement of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4, 16; 5:30, 32.

Eph. 1:22-23—And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

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

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. 5:30—Because we are members of His Body.

Eph. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

IV. In Ephesians *mystery* is a crucial word:

- A. In eternity God planned a will, but it was hidden in Him; it was a mystery—1:9.

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

- B. God's hidden purpose is the mystery, and the unveiling of this mystery in the mingled spirit is the revelation of the mystery—3:3, 5.

Eph. 3:3—That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,

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,

- C. God's mystery is His hidden purpose, and with this mystery there is an economy—the economy of the mystery—v. 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,

- D. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ—v. 4; Col. 4:3.

Eph. 3:4—By which, in reading *it*, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

Col. 4:3—Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

- E. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:32.
1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Eph. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

V. The all-inclusive Christ is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2:

Col. 2:2—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

- A. God Himself is a mystery, and Christ is the mystery of this mystery.
- B. *The mystery of God* indicates something incomprehensible and inexplicable.
- C. As the mystery of God, the all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the definition, explanation, and expression of God—the Word of God—John 1:1, 14:
John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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

- 1. Although God is infinite and eternal, without beginning or ending, He also has a history, a story—Rom. 16:26; Psa. 90:2.
Rom. 16:26—But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;

Psa. 90:2—Before the mountains were brought forth, And *before* You gave birth to the earth and the world, Indeed from eternity to eternity, You are God.

- 2. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ—the mystery of God, the mysterious story of God—is the history of God.
- 3. God's history refers to the process through which He passed in Christ so that He may enter into us, and we may be brought into Him; this process includes incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and enthronement—John 1:12-14, 29; 3:14; 12:24; 14:20.

John 1:12-14—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, ¹³Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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.

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,

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

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

- D. In this all-inclusive, extensive Christ as the mystery of God, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden—Col. 2:3:

Col. 2:3—In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

1. Wisdom is related to our spirit, and knowledge is related to our mind—Eph. 1:8, 17.

Eph. 1:8—Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence,

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,

2. God is the unique source of wisdom and knowledge—Rom. 16:27; 11:33.

Rom. 16:27—To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Rom. 11:33—Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways!

3. This is the spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the divine economy concerning Christ and the church—Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 5:32.

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. 3:9—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. 5:32—This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

4. Wisdom and knowledge also refer to all the “stories” of God.
5. All the wisdom and knowledge pertaining to God’s stories are hidden in Christ, who is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2-3.

Col. 2:2-3—That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, ³In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

VI. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead—v. 9:

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

- A. *All the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the entire Godhead, the complete God—v. 9:

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

1. The word *Godhead* refers to deity and strongly indicates the deity of Christ.

2. Since the Godhead comprises the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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

3. For Christ to be the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead means that the fullness of the Triune God dwells in Christ in a bodily form—Col. 2:9:

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

- a. This implies the physical body that Christ put on in His humanity, and it indicates that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ as the One who has a human body—John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14.

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. 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,

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,

- b. Before His incarnation the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ as the eternal Word, but it did not dwell in Him bodily—John 1:1.

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- c. After He became incarnate, clothed with a human body, the fullness of the Godhead began to dwell in Him in a bodily way, and in His glorified body (Phil. 3:21) now and forever it dwells.

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.

- B. *Fullness* in Colossians 2:9 refers not to the riches of God but to the expression of the riches of God:

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

1. The riches are the quantity of an object, whereas the fullness is the flowing out, the overflow, of the object to become the expression of the object.
2. What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but also the expression of the riches of what God is:
 - a. God's fullness is the overflow of His riches, and this overflow is God's expression.

- b. The fullness of the Godhead is the expression of the Godhead, the expression of what God is—v. 9.

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

- 3. The Godhead is expressed both in the old creation, the universe, and in the new creation, the church—1:15, 18.

Col. 1:15—Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

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;

- C. When the Son of God was incarnated as a man, with Him was the fullness of God, and of this fullness we have all received—John 1:14, 16:

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.

John 1:16—For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

- 1. In John 1:16 *grace* does not refer to the riches of grace but to the fullness of grace; the riches of grace are in God, but the fullness of grace is in Christ Jesus—Col. 2:9.

John 1:16—For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

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

- 2. The grace we receive is the fullness of grace; beginning from the time we are saved, we may receive grace upon grace.
- 3. The phrase *grace upon grace* in John 1:16 can be compared to the rolling waves of the sea that come in wave upon wave without ceasing.

John 1:16—For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

VII. As believers in Christ, we are made full in Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily—Col. 2:9-10:

Col. 2:9-10—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

- A. The Greek word translated “full” in verse 10 implies completion, perfection.

- B. Because all the fullness dwells in Christ and because we have been put into Him, we have been made full, filled with the divine riches—1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 3:8:

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,

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

- 1. All those who believe in Christ have been put into Christ; therefore, we are identified with Him and are one with Him—Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:17.

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

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.

2. We the believers have been put into the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, identified with Him, and joined to Him as our Husband; hence, we are one with Him—Col. 1:28; Rom. 7:2-4; 1 Cor. 6:17.

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

Rom. 7:2-4—For the married woman is bound by the law to her husband while he is living; but if the husband dies, she is discharged from the law regarding the husband. ³So then if, while the husband is living, she is joined to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if the husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. ⁴So then, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God.

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

3. Because we are one with Christ, we partake of all that He has accomplished, obtained, and attained; we inherit all that Christ has experienced and passed through, receiving all that He is and has.
4. All that He has passed through is now our history, and all that He has obtained and attained is our inheritance.
5. The result is that all that He is and all that He has belong to us, and all that He has experienced has become our history—Col. 2:11-13; 3:1.

Col. 2:11-13—In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹²Buried together with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised together with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

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

- C. We need to have a full realization of what we have in Christ and to exercise faith to partake of all that is ours in Christ—Eph. 3:17.

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

- D. Because this fullness is all-inclusive, it accomplishes everything for us, it fully satisfies and supplies us, and it makes us full, perfect, and complete—Col. 2:9.

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

- E. We have the all-inclusive, inexhaustible fullness that dwells in Christ bodily, and in Him we are made full—Eph. 3:8; Col. 2:9-10.

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

Col. 2:9-10—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰And you have been made full in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority.

Message Five

**The Cause of Our Blamelessness in Holiness
and the Cause of Our Complete Sanctification
in Our Spirit, Soul, and Body**

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 3:13; 5:23-24

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

1 Thes. 5:23-24—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. ²⁴Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do *it*.

I. In order to live a holy life for the church life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness (with no fault found in our 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. The heart is the conglomerate of man's inward parts, man's chief representative, his acting agent:

1. 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.

2. Our heart and its condition before God are organically, intrinsically, and inseparably related to the condition of our spirit, soul, and body before God:
 - a. The exercise of the spirit works only when our heart is active; if man's heart is indifferent, the spirit is imprisoned within and is unable to show forth its capability—Matt. 5:3, 8; Psalms 78:8; Eph. 3:16-17.

Matt. 5:3—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Psa. 78:8—That they might not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set their heart right, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Eph. 3:16-17—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- b. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action; the heart is the acting agent, the acting commissioner, of our entire being.
 - c. The activities and movements of our physical body depend on our physical heart; in like manner, our daily living, the way we act and behave, depends on what kind of psychological heart we have.
- 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. 12:33-37—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. ³⁴Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things. ³⁶And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

cf. Ezek. 36:26-27—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. ²⁷And 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. 13:3-9, 18-23.

cf. 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.

cf. Matt. 13:3-9—And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered. ⁷And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them. ⁸But others fell

on the good earth and yielded fruit, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold. ⁹He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

cf. Matt. 13:18-23—You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed. ¹⁹When 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. ²⁰And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹Yet 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. ²²And 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. ²³But 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. 17:9-10—The heart is deceitful above all things, And it is incurable; Who can know it? ¹⁰I, 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, built up, in the state of being holy, the state of being separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God—Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22.

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.

- H. In order to be “those who are being sanctified” in living a holy life for the church life, we must cooperate with the inner operating of the One “who sanctifies” by dealing with our heart—Heb. 2:11; Psa. 139:23-24:

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,

Psa. 139:23-24—Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxious thoughts; ²⁴And see if there is some harmful way in me, And lead me on the eternal way.

1. God wants our heart to be soft—Ezek. 36:26; Matt. 13:4, 19; 2 Cor. 5:14; cf. Exo. 32:9; Jer. 48:11.

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.

Matt. 13:4—And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them.

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.

2 Cor. 5:14—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

cf. Exo. 32:9—And Jehovah said to Moses, I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people.

cf. Jer. 48:11—Moab has been at ease from his youth; And he is settled on his lees And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; Nor has he gone into exile. Therefore his taste remains in him, And his scent is not changed.

2. God wants our heart to be pure—Matt. 5:8; Psa. 73:1, 25; Jer. 32:39; Psa. 86:11b; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:5.

Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Psa. 73:1—Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart.

Psa. 73:25—Whom do I have in heaven *but You?* And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.

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

Psa. 86:11—Teach me, O Jehovah, Your way; I will walk in Your truth. Make my heart single in fearing Your name.

2 Tim. 2:22—But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

1 Tim. 1:5—But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and *out of* a good conscience and *out of* unfeigned faith;

3. God wants our heart to be loving—Psa. 42:1-2; S. S. 1:1-4; 2 Cor. 3:16; 2 Thes. 3:5; *Hymns*, #546, #547; Eph. 6:24; John 15:9-10; 21:15-17; Matt. 26:6-13; 1 John 2:5.

Psa. 42:1-2—As the hart pants After the streams of water, So my soul pants For You, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, For the living God. When will I come and appear Before God?

S. S. 1:1-4—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. ²Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. ³Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; Your name is like ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. ⁴Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

2 Cor. 3:16—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

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

John 15:9-10—As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Matt. 26:6-13—Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷A woman came to Him, having an alabaster flask of ointment of great value, and she poured *it* on His head as He reclined *at table*. ⁸But when the disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, Why this waste? ⁹For this could have been sold for much and given to the poor. ¹⁰But Jesus, knowing *it*, said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? She has done a noble deed to Me. ¹¹For the poor you have with you always, but you do not always have Me. ¹²For in pouring out this ointment on My body, she has done *it* for My burial. ¹³Truly I say to you, Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be told as a memorial of her.

1 John 2:5—But whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know that we are in Him.

4. God wants our heart to be at peace—Acts 24:16; 1 John 3:19-21; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 1:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:5; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 3:13-15.

Acts 24:16—Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

1 John 3:19-21—And in this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will persuade our heart before Him, ²⁰Because if our heart blames *us*, *it is* because God is greater than our heart and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not blame *us*, we have boldness toward God;

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 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 1:9—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Tim. 1:5—But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and *out of* a good conscience and *out of* unfeigned faith;

Phil. 4:6-7—In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man's* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Col. 3:13-15—Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also *should* you *forgive*. ¹⁴And over all these things *put on* love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

- I. 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 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 5:11-12—And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. ¹²He 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.

II. God not only has made us holy in position by the redeeming blood of Christ to separate us unto Himself in His judicial redemption but also is sanctifying us in disposition by His own holy nature to saturate us with Himself in His organic salvation—Heb. 13:12; 10:29; Rom. 6:19, 22; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thes. 5:23-24:

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

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?

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.

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

1 Thes. 5:23-24—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.
²⁴Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

A. God's dispositional sanctification of our spirit, soul, and body is 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 can be God's expression—Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 2:10-11.

Eph. 1:4-5—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Heb. 2:10-11—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. ¹¹For 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,

B. 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. Quantitatively, God sanctifies us wholly; qualitatively, God preserves us complete—that is, He keeps our spirit, soul, and body perfect.
2. 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—vv. 12-24.

1 Thes. 5:12-24—Furthermore we ask you, brothers, to acknowledge those who labor among you and take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we exhort you, brothers, Admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, sustain the weak, be long-suffering toward all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always pursue what is good both for one another and for all. ¹⁶Always rejoice, ¹⁷Unceasingly pray, ¹⁸In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit; ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹But prove all things. Hold fast to what is good; ²²Abstain from every kind of evil. ²³And 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. ²⁴Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do *it*.

C. 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. 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:

a. 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—vv. 16-18.

1 Thes. 5:16-18—Always rejoice, ¹⁷Unceasingly pray, ¹⁸In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

b. 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.

cf. Num. 6:6-8—All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person. ⁷He 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. ⁸All the days of his separation he is holy to Jehovah.

cf. 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.

c. 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 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,

2. 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.

3. 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,

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

4. 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. 2:15-16—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. ¹⁶For 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.

- D. 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—Phil. 2:2, 5; 1:8; 2:13:

Phil. 2:2—Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

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

Phil. 1:8—For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

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

1. 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; cf. S. S. 4:4a; 7:4a), 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.

cf. S. S. 4:4—Your neck is like the tower of David, Built for an armory: A thousand bucklers hang on it, All the shields of the mighty men.

cf. S. S. 7:4—Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus.

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.”

2. 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 1:5-9—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. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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. ⁸If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- a. 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.
 - b. 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 and also that, in many cases, we hate what we should love, and we love what we should hate.
 - c. In order to unclog the artery of our will, we need to confess the germs of rebellion in our will.
 - d. 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.
- E. 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. 12:1-2—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. ²And 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.

1. Our fallen body, the flesh, is the “meeting hall” of Satan, sin, and death, but by Christ’s redemption and in our 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, 24; 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. 7:24—Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?

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?

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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;
5. 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; Dan. 5:23:

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. 6:18-19—And having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness. ¹⁹I 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.

Dan. 5:23—But you have exalted yourself against the Lord of the heavens; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and of gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see nor hear nor know. But the God in whose hand is your breath and to whom all your ways *belong*, you have not honored.

- a. “This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor”—1 Thes. 4:3-4.

1 Thes. 4:3-4—For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; ⁴That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

- b. That they do not know God is the basic reason that people indulge in the passion of lust—v. 5.

1 Thes. 4:5—Not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

- 6. 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.

Message Six

The Church in the Triune God

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:1, 3-6, 10; 1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12

1 Thes. 1:1—Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

1 Thes. 1:3-6—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; ⁴Knowing, brothers, beloved of God, your selection; ⁵For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit,

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

1 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 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 4:16—And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

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

I. The Triune God is the structure of the New Testament—Matt. 12:28; 28:19; John 15:26; Acts 2:33; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:4-6; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-5.

Matt. 12:28—But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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

Acts 2:33—Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.

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.

Gal. 4:6—And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!

Eph. 3:16-17—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph. 4:4-6—One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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?

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

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

II. We come to know the Triune God by experiencing Him and enjoying Him— 1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12:

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 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 4:16—And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

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

A. The Triune God is not merely the object of our faith; He is dwelling in us as our life and life supply for our experience and enjoyment—4:13-15.

1 John 4:13-15—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

B. We need to know the Triune God experientially through the inner enjoyment of the subjective God—2:27; 4:4.

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 4:4—You are of God, little children; and you have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

- C. If we would know the Triune God, we must be in the line of life and in the process of the growth in life; the more we grow in life, the more we will be concerned with the Divine Trinity—2:13-18.

1 John 2:13-18—I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, young children, because you know the Father. ¹⁴I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one. ¹⁵Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him; ¹⁶Because 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. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever. ¹⁸Young children, it is the last hour; and even as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come; whereby we know that it is the last hour.

III. When the Triune God becomes our experience and enjoyment, He is not only the One on the throne who is universally vast, but He is also the One in our heart—Rev. 4:2-3; 5:6; 1 John 3:19-21:

Rev. 4:2-3—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting; ³And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and *there was* a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 5:6—And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having *just* been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

1 John 3:19-21—And in this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will persuade our heart before Him, ²⁰Because if our heart blames *us*, *it is* because God is greater than our heart and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not blame *us*, we have boldness toward God;

- A. We know the Triune God not in the vastness of the universe but in the personal realm of our heart—Heb. 8:10-11.

Heb. 8:10-11—For this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them; and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me. ¹¹And they shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me from the little one to the great one among them.

- B. The concern of the New Testament is that we know the Triune God who has come to dwell in our being—the One who dwells in our spirit and desires to spread into all the inward parts of our heart—Eph. 3:14-17a; 1 John 3:19-21.

Eph. 3:14-17—For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, ¹⁵Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, ¹⁶That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That

Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

1 John 3:19-21—And in this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will persuade our heart before Him, ²⁰Because if our heart blames *us*, *it is* because God is greater than our heart and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not blame *us*, we have boldness toward God;

- C. The New Testament way for us to know the Triune God is personal, detailed, and experiential—2:20, 27; Heb. 10:16.

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.

Heb. 10:16—“This is the covenant which I will covenant with them after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will inscribe them,”

- D. How precious is this experiential way of knowing the Triune God!

IV. The New Testament, like the Bible as a whole, is fully composed of and structured with the Divine Trinity—Matt. 28:19; Rev. 1:4-5; 22:1-2:

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Rev. 1:4-5—John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

Rev. 22:1-2—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. ²And 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.

- A. The entire New Testament is related to the Triune God; the Triune God is the element for the construction of the New Testament—Eph. 3:16; 4:4-6.

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. 4:4-6—One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- B. The Bible presents us a picture of the move of the Divine Trinity for the accomplishment of His economy—Luke 15:3-32; Eph. 2:18.

Luke 15:3-32—And He told them this parable, saying, ⁴Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds *it*, he lays *it* on

his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance. ⁸Or 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*? ⁹And when she finds *it*, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost. ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting. ¹¹And He said, A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to *me*. And he distributed to them his living. ¹³And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely. ¹⁴And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs. ¹⁶And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him *anything*. ¹⁷But 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! ¹⁸I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ²⁰And 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. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ²²But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf; slaughter *it*, and let us eat and be merry, ²⁴Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry. ²⁵Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing, ²⁶And calling to *him* one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be. ²⁷And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back healthy. ²⁸But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and entreated him. ²⁹But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me a goat that I might be merry with my friends; ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf. ³¹And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

Eph. 2:18—For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.

- C. The Bible was written according to the governing principle of the Triune God wrought into His chosen and redeemed people as their enjoyment, their drink, and their fountain of life and light—Psa. 36:8-9.

Psa. 36:8-9—They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. ⁹For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

- D. The revelation concerning the Triune God in the Word of God is for the dispensing of God in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people for their experience and enjoyment so that they might become His corporate expression for eternity—Eph. 1:3-23; 4:16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.

Eph. 1:3-23—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, ⁴Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved; ⁷In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰Unto 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; ¹¹In 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, ¹²That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ, ¹³In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, ¹⁴Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory. ¹⁵Therefore I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you and your love to all the saints, ¹⁶Do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers, ¹⁷That 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, ¹⁸The 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, ¹⁹And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength, ²⁰Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, ²¹Far 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; ²²And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, ²³Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

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

Rev. 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. 21:10-11—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, ¹¹Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

V. The Epistle of 1 Thessalonians is addressed to “the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”—1:1:

1 Thes. 1:1—Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

A. On the one hand, the church in Thessalonica was of the Thessalonians; on the other hand, this church was in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Such a church is born of God the Father with His life and nature and is organically united with the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He is and has done—John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17.

John 1:12-13—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, ¹³Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

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,

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

2. We need to see that the church is composed of human beings who are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have the life of God and who are in the organic union with Christ—John 3:15; 15:1, 5.

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

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

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

B. When Paul speaks of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually means that the church is in the Triune God—1 Thes. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:4-6:

1 Thes. 1:1—Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

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

1 Cor. 12:4-6—But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord; ⁶And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.

1. The expressions *God the Father* and *the Lord Jesus Christ* both imply the Spirit; therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood, and we may speak of the church being in the Triune God.

1 Thes. 1:1—Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2. Because the three of the Divine Trinity are inseparable, whenever we have the first, the Father, we also have the second, the Son, and the third, the Spirit—Matt. 12:28; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:4-6.

Matt. 12:28—But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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.

Gal. 4:4-6—But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵That He might redeem those under law that we might receive the sonship. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!

3. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, not three; They are distinct but not separate—2 Cor. 13:14:

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

- a. We cannot separate the Son from the Father, or the Father and the Son from the Spirit, because all three coexist and coinhere—John 14:10-11.

John 14:10-11—Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

- b. In Their eternal coexistence the three of the Godhead are distinct, but Their eternal coinherence makes Them one.

4. In the divine economy the three of the Divine Trinity work and are manifested respectively in three consecutive stages—Eph. 1:3-14:

Eph. 1:3-14—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, ⁴Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved; ⁷In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰Unto 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; ¹¹In 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, ¹²That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ, ¹³In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, ¹⁴Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.

- a. The Father is the One who plans, originates, and initiates—vv. 3-6.

Eph. 1:3-6—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, ⁴Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus

Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;

- b. The Son accomplishes everything that the Father has planned, originated, and initiated—vv. 7-12.

Eph. 1:7-12—In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰Unto 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; ¹¹In 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, ¹²That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ,

- c. The Spirit executes and applies what the Father has planned and what the Son has accomplished—vv. 13-14.

Eph. 1:13-14—In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, ¹⁴Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.

- d. Selection is of the Father, deliverance is of the Son, and imparting, or propagating, is of the Spirit—1 Thes. 1:3-6, 10.

1 Thes. 1:3-6—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; ⁴Knowing, brothers, beloved of God, your selection; ⁵For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit,

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

- 5. When the Son comes, He comes with the Father and by the Spirit; the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the Son with the Father—John 14:26; 15:26.

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

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

- C. For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is in the processed Triune God—Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6:

Matt. 28:19—Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Eph. 4:4-6—One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

1. According to the Bible, there is no such thing as the church being merely in God; rather, the church is in the processed Triune God—2 Cor. 13:14.

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

2. In Genesis 1 God was the unprocessed God, but in the New Testament He has become the processed Triune God—John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:19.

John 7:37-39—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. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

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

3. *Processed* refers to the crucial steps through which the Triune God has passed in the divine economy: incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection:

- a. In crucifixion the Lord accomplished redemption, the termination of the old creation, and the destruction of Satan and death—Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14.

Eph. 1:7—In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,

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;

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,

- b. In resurrection He germinated the new creation—2 Cor. 5:17.

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.

- c. Now He is the life-giving Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17a.

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

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

4. The church in the processed Triune God is the church in the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son—John 14:20:

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

- a. The processed Triune God reaches us, contacts us, and is applied to us in our experience as the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.

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

- b. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is now the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us—John 14:10-11, 16-17, 20.

John 14:10-11—Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

John 14:16-17—And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, ¹⁷*Even* the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

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

- c. When we are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Spirit; thus, we are the church in the processed Triune God.
- D. If we see the vision of the church in the Triune God, this vision will control our thinking, our activities, and our entire life—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19.

Prov. 29:18—Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.

Acts 26:19—Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

Message Seven

The Author (the Captain) of Salvation and the Forerunner Leading Many Sons into Glory by Entering within the Veil and Going outside the Camp

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:10-11; 6:19-20; 13:13

Heb. 2:10-11—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. ¹¹For 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. 6:19-20—Which we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm and which enters within the veil, ²⁰Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Heb. 13:13—Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

I. God's eternal goal is to bring many sons into glory:

- A. God created, formed, and even made us for His glory, which is the expression of God, God expressed; the highest service that we can render to God is to express Him in glory—Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; 2 Cor. 3:8-9, 18; 4:1, 5; Exo. 40:34.

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

1 Cor. 6:20—For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

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

2 Cor. 3:8-9—How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory? ⁹For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

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

2 Cor. 4:1—Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

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

Exo. 40:34—Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.

- B. God's eternal purpose is to express Himself in a corporate way through His redeemed people—Gen. 1:26; Eph. 3:16-17a, 21.

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.

Eph. 3:16-17—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

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

- C. The New Jerusalem, having the glory of God, is the corporate expression of God:
1. God as the light shines in and through the Lamb as the lamp, eventually shining through the entire city, causing the city to bear the appearance of God Himself—Rev. 21:10-11, 18, 23; 4:3.

Rev. 21:10-11—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, ¹¹Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

Rev. 21:18—And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

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

2. When we look at the New Jerusalem, we see the expression of God—the light in the lamp shining through the jasper.
- D. Christ is the Author (the Captain) of our full salvation into glory—Heb. 2:3, 10:
- Heb. 2:3**—How shall we escape if we have neglected so great a salvation, which, having had its beginning in being spoken by the Lord, has been confirmed to us by those who heard,

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.

1. Jesus was the seed of the divine glory, falling into the earth to die and growing up to blossom in glory in resurrection—John 12:23-24; Luke 24:26; 1 Cor. 15:36, 43a.

John 12:23-24—And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Luke 24:26—Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory?

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

1 Cor. 15:43—It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

2. By His growing up, His whole being, including His humanity and His human nature, was brought into the glorious expression of God.
 3. He is the “Man in the glory,” the Man in God’s expression, even the Man who is God’s expression, God’s glory—*Hymns*, #505.
- E. As the Author, the Captain, the Pioneer, the Forerunner (Heb. 6:20), Christ took the lead to enter into glory, and we, His followers, are taking the same way to be brought into the same glory, which was ordained by God for us (1 Cor. 2:7; 1 Thes. 2:12).
- Heb. 6:20**—Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
- 1 Cor. 2:7**—But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the *wisdom* which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory,
- 1 Thes. 2:12**—So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- F. The Author (the Captain) of salvation, the Man in the glory, the Man who is God’s glory, is the seed of glory within us—Col. 1:27; 1 John 3:9:
- Col. 1:27**—To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
- 1 John 3:9**—Everyone who has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God.
1. Our Savior took the lead to fight through into glory; His whole life was a fighting process for glory—Luke 12:49-50.
Luke 12:49-50—I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!
 2. The growing of the seed of glory within us is a fighting process.
 3. Glory is the blossoming of the divine element from within us.
 4. The glory into which we will enter is the glory of the divine element that has been sown into us as a seed—2 Thes. 1:10.
2 Thes. 1:10—When He comes to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all those who have believed (because our testimony to you was believed) in that day.
- G. We are saved into glory, the expression of God, through the process of suffering; all our sufferings help us along the highways to Zion to transform us from glory to glory so that we may become Christ’s glorious bride—Heb. 10:32-35; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Psa. 84:5-7; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:17-18, 21.
- Heb. 10:32-35**—But call to mind the former days, in which, having been enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings; ³³On one hand, being made a spectacle both in reproaches and in afflictions, and on the other, having become partakers with those who are treated the same. ³⁴For you both sympathized with those in bonds and accepted with joy the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves have a better possession and one that abides. ³⁵Do not cast away therefore your boldness, which has great reward.

2 Cor. 4:16-18—Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸Because 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.

Psa. 84:5-7—Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, In whose heart are the highways to *Zion*. ⁶Passing through the valley of Baca, They make it a spring; Indeed the early rain covers it with blessings. ⁷They go from strength to strength; *Each* appears before God in Zion.

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

Rom. 8:17-18—And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* that we may also be glorified with *Him*. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us.

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.

- H. Christ as the Author (the Captain) of our salvation fulfills His duty to lead us into glory by being our High Priest to pray for us and to minister God into us—Heb. 2:16-18; 7:25; 8:2.

Heb. 2:16-18—For assuredly *it is* not to angels *that* He gives help, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For being tempted in that which He Himself has suffered, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

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

Heb. 8:2—A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

- I. Christ as the Author (the Captain) of salvation leads many sons into glory, the corporate expression of God, by saving them organically through sanctification; this divine sanctification is carried out by the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit—2:10-11; Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Thes. 5:23; Rom. 5:10; 15:16; Eph. 5:26:

Heb. 2:10-11—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. ¹¹For 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,

Eph. 1:4-5—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

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.

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

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

1. 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.
2. 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:

- a. 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.

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

Luke 15:8-10—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*? ⁹And when she finds *it*, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost. ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.

Luke 15:17-21—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! ¹⁸I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ²⁰And 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. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

- b. The redeeming sanctification, the positional sanctification, is through the blood of Christ, to transfer us out of Adam into Christ—Heb. 13:12.

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

- c. The regenerating sanctification, the beginning of the dispositional sanctification, renews us from our spirit to make us, the sinners, sons of God—2 Cor. 5:17; John 1:12-13.

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.

John 1:12-13—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, ¹³Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- d. The renewing sanctification, the continuation of the 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; Eph. 4:23; Gal. 6:15.

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

Gal. 6:15—For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation *is what matters*.

- e. 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—2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 3:12.

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

1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

- f. The conforming sanctification, the shaping sanctification, shapes us in the image of the glorious Christ to make us the expression of Christ—Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Rom. 8:28-29—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹Because 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 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.

- g. The glorifying sanctification, the consummating sanctification, redeems our body by transfiguring it to make us Christ's expression in full 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.

II. The goal, the ultimate conclusion, of the book of Hebrews is that we would enter within the veil and go outside the camp—6:19-20; 13:13; *Hymns*, #549:

Heb. 6:19-20—Which we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm and which enters within the veil, ²⁰Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Heb. 13:13—Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

- A. To enter within the veil means to enter into the Holy of Holies, where the Lord is enthroned in glory, and to go outside the camp means to come out of religion, from which the Lord was cast in rejection:
 - 1. The camp signifies the organization of religion, which is earthly and human.
 - 2. Every religion is a human organization and an earthly realm that keeps people away from God's economy.
- B. We must be in our spirit, where, experientially speaking, the practical Holy of Holies is today, and outside religion, where the practical camp is today:
 - 1. The more we are in our spirit, enjoying the heavenly Christ, the more we will come outside the camp of religion, following the suffering Jesus.
 - 2. The more we remain in our spirit to contact the heavenly Christ, who is in glory, the more we will go forth outside the camp of religion unto the lowly Jesus to suffer with Him.
 - 3. The genuine New Testament ministry brings us into the enjoyment of Christ in our spirit, within the veil, and strengthens us to follow Jesus outside the camp in the fellowship of His sufferings for the sake of His Body—2 Cor. 11:2-3, 23-33.

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

2 Cor. 11:23-33—Ministers of Christ are they? I speak as being beside myself, I more so! In labors more abundantly, in imprisonments more abundantly, in stripes excessively, in deaths often. ²⁴*Under the hands of the Jews five times I received forty stripes less one;* ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep; ²⁶In journeys often, in dangers of rivers, in dangers of robbers, in dangers from *my race*, in dangers from the Gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers in the sea, in dangers among false brothers; ²⁷In labor and hardship; in watchings often; in hunger and thirst; in fastings often; in cold and nakedness—²⁸Apart from the things which *have not been mentioned, there is this*: the crowd of *cares* pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn? ³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of the things of my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me; ³³And in a basket I was lowered through a window, through the wall, and escaped his hands.

4. Within the veil we participate in the ministry of the heavenly Christ so that we may be equipped to minister Him to the thirsty spirits outside the camp.
- C. To enter within the veil is to get into our spirit; when we turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit, we enter within the veil—1 Tim. 4:7-8:
1 Tim. 4:7-8—But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness. ⁸For 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.
1. We have to exercise, to use, to employ, our spirit by fanning our spirit into flame, setting our mind on the spirit, and discerning our spirit from our soul—2 Tim. 1:6-7; Rom. 8:5-6; Heb. 4:12.
2 Tim. 1:6-7—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. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
Rom. 8:5-6—For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
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.
 2. We must exercise our spirit so that we may enter within the veil to have direct contact with the heavenly Christ, the Man in the glory, beholding Him to be transfused and infused with Him so that we may become His corporate reproduction—2 Cor. 3:18.
2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
 3. To be within the veil is to be in the Holy of Holies, in a realm where we partake of Christ and enjoy Him as the hidden manna, the budding rod, and the law of life, issuing in God's corporate expression for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose—Heb. 9:3-4.
Heb. 9:3-4—And after the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, ⁴Having a golden altar and the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant,
- D. After the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf, Moses moved to a place outside the camp, where everyone who sought the Lord went to meet with him, for both the Lord's presence and speaking were there—Exo. 33:7-11; cf. Num. 12:6-8:
Exo. 33:7-11—Now Moses would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, some distance from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up and stand, every man at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses, until he entered the tent. ⁹And whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stay at the entrance of the

tent, and *Jehovah* would speak with Moses. ¹⁰When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at the entrance of his tent. ¹¹And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

cf. Num. 12:6-8—He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. ⁷My servant Moses is not so; He is faithful in all My house. ⁸With him I speak face to face, even openly, and not in riddles; And he beholds the form of Jehovah. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?

1. We need to be warned by the principle of the golden-calf idol, an idol made by God's redeemed people and that made them an idolatrous camp—1 Cor. 10:5-7; Ezek. 14:3; 1 John 5:21 and paragraph 1 of footnote 3:

1 Cor. 10:5-7—But with most of them God was not well pleased, for they were strewn along in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things occurred as examples to us, that we should not be ones who lust after evil things, even as they also lusted. ⁷Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play."

Ezek. 14:3—Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?

1 John 5:21—Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

- a. Self-beautification leads to idolatry—Exo. 32:1-3; 33:5-6; Gen. 35:2-4; cf. Exo. 28:2; Isa. 60:21.

Exo. 32:1-3—And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, Come, make a god for us who will go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. ²And Aaron said to them, Tear off the gold rings, which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me. ³And all the people tore off the golden rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron.

Exo. 33:5-6—Now Jehovah had said to Moses, Say to the children of Israel, You are a stiff-necked people; if I were to go up in your midst for one moment, I would consume you. Now therefore put off your ornaments from you, and I will decide what to do to you. ⁶Thus the children of Israel were stripped of their ornaments from Mount Horeb *onward*.

Gen. 35:2-4—Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments. ³And let us rise up and go up to Bethel, that I may make an altar there to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone. ⁴So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem.

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

cf. Isa. 60:21—Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be beautified.

- b. Idolatry is Satan's usurping of what God has given us in order to make it a waste; it is our abusing what God has given us and not using God's gifts, both material and spiritual, for God's purpose.
- c. Idolatry is the worship of the things that we enjoy, the worship of enjoyment, amusement, and entertainment—Exo. 32:6, 18-19; cf. Psa. 36:8-9.

Exo. 32:6—And they rose up early on the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Exo. 32:18-19—But Moses said, It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, Neither is it the sound of the cry of defeat; But it is the sound of singing that I hear. ¹⁹And as soon as he drew near to the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

cf. Psa. 36:8-9—They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. ⁹For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

- d. With idolatry there is the pretense of worshipping the true God—Exo. 32:4-6; 1 Kings 12:26-30.

Exo. 32:4-6—And he took *the gold* from their hand and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! ⁵And when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; then Aaron made a proclamation and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. ⁶And they rose up early on the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

1 Kings 12:26-30—And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. ²⁷If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah. ²⁸And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! ²⁹And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan. ³⁰And this thing became a sin; and the people went *to worship* the one as far as Dan.

- e. With idolatry there is mixture in worship—Exo. 32:4-6, 21-24.

Exo. 32:4-6—And he took *the gold* from their hand and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! ⁵And when Aaron saw *this*,

he built an altar before it; then Aaron made a proclamation and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. ⁶And they rose up early on the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Exo. 32:21-24—And Moses said to Aaron, What did this people do to you that you brought so great a sin upon them? ²²And Aaron said, Do not let the anger of my lord burn. You know the people, that they are *set* on evil; ²³For they said to me, Make a god for us who will go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. ²⁴So I said to them, Whoever has any gold, let them tear *it* off; so they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out.

2. Because Moses realized that the Lord's presence would no longer be in the midst of the people, he removed his tent and pitched it some distance from the camp; his tent then became the tent of God—33:7.

Exo. 33:7—Now Moses would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, some distance from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought Jehovah went out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.

3. The camp signifies a religious people, who belong to the Lord in name but who, in actuality, worship idols, worshipping something and seeking something other than the Lord Himself.
4. After Moses removed his tent and separated from the idolatrous camp, the Lord spoke to him face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion—v. 11:
Exo. 33:11—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

- a. God and Moses were companions, associates, partners, involved in the same career and having a common interest in a great enterprise.
- b. Because Moses was intimate with God, he was a person who knew God's heart, who was according to God's heart, and who could touch God's heart—v. 14.

Exo. 33:14—And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.

- c. We need to enter within the veil and go outside the idolatrous camp to have the closest and most intimate relationship with the Lord so that we can be persons who share a common interest with God and who can be used by Him to carry out His enterprise on earth.

Message Eight

Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of Our Faith

Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:3; 12:1b-2a; 1 Cor. 9:24; 2 Thes. 3:5

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

Heb. 12:1-2—Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles *us* and run with endurance the race which is set before us, ²Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

1 Cor. 9:24—Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

I. “Looking away unto Jesus”—Heb. 12:2a:

Heb. 12:2—Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

- A. The Greek word translated “looking away unto” denotes looking with undivided attention by turning away from every other object—v. 2a.

Heb. 12:2—Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

- B. The Hebrew believers had to look away from all the things in their environment, away from their old religion, Judaism, and its persecution, and away from all earthly things, that they might look unto Jesus, who is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens—1:3.

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

- C. If we would enjoy the heavenly Christ (v. 3), we need to look away from all things on earth unto Him.

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

- D. The wonderful Jesus, who is enthroned in heaven and crowned with glory and honor (2:9), is the greatest attraction in the universe.

Heb. 2:9—But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

- E. It is by being attracted by His charming beauty that we look away from all things other than Him so that we may run with endurance the race which is set before us—12:1b.

Heb. 12:1—Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles *us* and run with endurance the race which is set before us,

II. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize—1 Cor. 9:24:

1 Cor. 9:24—Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

- A. The prize is not salvation in a common sense but a reward in a special sense—v. 24; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:14-15.

1 Cor. 9:24—Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

Eph. 2:8-9—For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God; ⁹Not of works that no one should boast.

1 Cor. 3:14-15—If anyone's work which he has built upon *the foundation* remains, he will receive a reward; ¹⁵If anyone's work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- B. The apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize—9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8:

1 Cor. 9:26-27—I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air; ²⁷But I buffet my body and make *it* my slave, lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself may become disapproved.

Phil. 3:13-14—Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing *I do*: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, ¹⁴I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

2 Tim. 4:7-8—I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.
2. The unique entangling sin in Hebrews 12 was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God's economy, and of going back to Judaism—10:25-26.

Heb. 10:25-26—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. ²⁶For when we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice of *bulls and goats* for sins,

3. Both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would have frustrated the Hebrew believers and restrained them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.
4. We need to run with endurance, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ—2 Thes. 3:5:
2 Thes. 3:5—And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.
 - a. The love is our love toward God, issuing from the love of God that has been poured out in our hearts—1 John 4:19; Rom. 5:5.
1 John 4:19—We love because He first loved us.
Rom. 5:5—And hope does not put *us* to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
 - b. This endurance is to endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced—cf. Rev. 1:9.
cf. Rev. 1:9—I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

III. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith—Heb. 12:2a:

Heb. 12:2—Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

- A. The faith of the believers is actually not their own faith but Christ entering into them to be their faith—Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16:
Rom. 3:22—Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all those who believe, for there is no distinction;
Gal. 2:16—And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.
 1. Our believing is our appreciation of Christ as a reaction to His attraction—Rom. 10:17.
Rom. 10:17—So faith *comes* out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
 2. In the natural man we have no believing ability; we do not have faith by ourselves.
 3. The faith by which we are saved is the precious faith that we have received from the Lord, the God-allotted faith—2 Pet. 1:1; Col. 1:12.
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:
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;

4. When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.
1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.
 5. This faith is not of ourselves but of Him who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us.
- B. Faith is a substantiating ability, a “sixth sense,” the sense by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
Heb. 11:1—Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
1. Substantiating is the ability that enables us to realize a substance.
 2. The function of our five senses is to substantiate the things of the outside world, transferring all the objective items into us to become our subjective experience.
 3. As the eye is to seeing, the ear is to hearing, and the nose is to smelling, so faith, our spirit of faith, is the organ whereby we substantiate everything in the unseen spiritual world to us—2 Cor. 4:13:
2 Cor. 4:13—And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak,
 - a. We must exercise our spirit of faith, our mingled spirit, to believe and to speak the things that we have experienced of the Lord.
 - b. Faith is in our spirit, which is mingled with the Holy Spirit, not in our mind; doubts are in our mind.
 4. We do not regard, look at, the things which are seen and temporary but the things which are not seen and eternal—v. 18:
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.
 - a. The Christian life is a life of things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
Rom. 8:24-25—For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await *it* through endurance.
Heb. 11:27—By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.
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,
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.
 - b. The degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things.

- c. The Lord's recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen.
- 5. Faith is to believe that God is.
- 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.
Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- 7. “He who comes forward to God must believe that He is”—v. 6b:
Heb. 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him*, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - a. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
John 8:58—Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I am.
Eccl. 1:2—Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
 - b. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Heb. 11:5.
Heb. 11:5—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.
 - c. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
 - d. The Lord was saying, “I am the great I am. I am the One who is. You must believe that I am and you are not”—cf. John 8:24, 28, 58.
cf. John 8:24—Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.
cf. John 8:28—Jesus therefore said to them, When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and *that* I do nothing from Myself, but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things.
cf. John 8:58—Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I am.
 - e. This is faith—“O the joy of having nothing and being nothing, seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory, and being careful for nothing but His interests down here”—J. N. Darby.

IV. Jesus is the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith—Heb. 12:2a:

Heb. 12:2—Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

- A. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race—vv. 1b-2a.

Heb. 12:1-2—Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles *us* and run with endurance the race which is set before us, ²Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

- B. When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is, that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth—2 Cor. 3:18.

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.

- C. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us—Rom. 12:3:

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.

1. Faith in the progressing stage comes through our contacting the Triune God, who is faith in us—1 Thes. 5:17.

1 Thes. 5:17—Unceasingly pray,

2. The way to receive such a faith is to contact its source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His Word—Heb. 4:2, 16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18.

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

Heb. 4:16—Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Rom. 10:12—For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him;

2 Tim. 2:22—But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Eph. 6:17-18—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, ¹⁸By 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,

3. When we contact Him, He is overflowing within us, and there is a mutuality of faith among us; we are encouraged through the faith which is in one another—Rom. 1:12; Philem. 6.

Rom. 1:12—That is, that I with *you* may be encouraged among you through the faith which is in one another, both yours and mine.

Philem. 6—That the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the full knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ.

- D. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized-and-usurped world—1 John 5:4.

1 John 5:4—For everything that has been begotten of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory which has overcome the world—our faith.

- E. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, which is in faith—Luke 18:8; Phil. 2:30; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim. 1:4.

Luke 18:8—I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?

Phil. 2:30—Because for the work of Christ he drew near unto death, risking his life, that he might fill up your lack of service toward me.

Rom. 16:3-4—Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Acts 20:24—But I consider my life of no account *as if* precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

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.

Message Nine

The Vision, Experience, Enjoyment, and Expression of the Supreme Preciousness of Christ for the Genuine Church Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:7, 19; 2:4, 6-7; 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:1, 4

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. 1:19—But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, *the blood* of Christ;

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

1 Pet. 2:6-7—For it is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.” ⁷To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,”

1 Pet. 3:4—But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible *adornment* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

2 Pet. 1:1—Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

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

I. The believers in Christ should have a change in their concept of value— Matt. 23:16-26; 1 Sam. 16:7; Luke 16:15; 9:54-56; 1 Pet. 3:4; Phil. 3:7-8:

Matt. 23:16-26—Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound. ¹⁷Fools and blind men, which is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold? ¹⁸And, Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift which is upon it, he is bound. ¹⁹Blind men, which is greater, the gift or the altar which sanctifies the gift? ²⁰Therefore he who swears by the altar swears by it and by all the things upon it; ²¹And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it; ²²And he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. ²³Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you give a tenth of the mint and the anise and the cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these you should have done and not neglected the others. ²⁴Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but swallow the camel! ²⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inwardly they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the dish so that their outside also may become clean.

1 Sam. 16:7—But Jehovah said to Samuel, Do not regard his appearance and the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For *it is* not how man sees *that matters*; for man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart.

Luke 16:15—And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Luke 9:54-56—And seeing *this*, the disciples James and John said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? ⁵⁵But turning, He rebuked them and said, You do not know of what kind of spirit you are. ⁵⁶The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them*. And they went into another village.

1 Pet. 3:4—But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible *adornment* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

Phil. 3:7-8—But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. ⁸But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ

A. The proper concept of value for the believers can be seen in their estimation and assessment of the following aspects of Christ and His full salvation:

1. Their valuation of the Lord Jesus as the chief cornerstone for the building up of the church—Psa. 118:22; 1 Pet. 2:7.

Psa. 118:22—The stone which the builders rejected Has become the head of the corner.

1 Pet. 2:7—To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,”

2. Their valuation of the Lord Jesus in comparison to their relatives—Matt. 10:37-38; Luke 18:26-30; 1 Pet. 1:1, 17; 2:11a.

Matt. 10:37-38—He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me; ³⁸And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Luke 18:26-30—And those who heard said, Then who can be saved? ²⁷But He said, The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. ²⁸And Peter said, Behold, we have left our own things and have followed You. ²⁹And He said to them, Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰Who shall not by all means receive back many times as much in this time, and in the coming age, eternal life.

1 Pet. 1:1—Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

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. 2:11—Beloved, I entreat *you* as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,

3. Their valuation of Christ as the treasure of justice in comparison to earthly treasure—Job 22:23-28; Matt. 12:18-21; Isa. 42:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:18-20.

Job 22:23-28—If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. If you put injustice far away from your tents, ²⁴And place *your* gold nuggets in the dust And *your gold of* Ophir in the stones of the brooks, ²⁵Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets And precious silver to you. ²⁶For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, And you will lift up your countenance to God. ²⁷You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; And you will repay your vows. ²⁸You will also decree something, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways.

Matt. 12:18-21—“Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles. ¹⁹He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. ²⁰A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench until He brings forth justice unto victory. ²¹And in His name will the Gentiles hope.”

Isa. 42:1-4—Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen One *in whom* My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him, And He will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry out, nor lift up *His voice*, Nor make His voice heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break; And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish; He will bring forth justice in truth. ⁴He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait for His instruction.

1 Pet. 1:18-20—Knowing that *it was* not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, *that* you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, ¹⁹But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, *the blood of Christ*; ²⁰Who was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has been manifested in the last of times for your sake,

4. Their valuation of the knowledge of Christ in comparison to all things—v. 8; 2 Pet. 1:2-3, 8; 2:20; 3:18.

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,

2 Pet. 1:2-3—Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³Seeing 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. 1:8—For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute *you* neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. 2:20—For if, having escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but having again been entangled in these, they are defeated, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

2 Pet. 3:18—But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.

5. We need a vision to see that the New Jerusalem is the Triune God, the Divine Trinity, as three basic factors wrought into and structured together with His redeemed as a miraculous structure of treasure to be the conclusion of the

whole Bible—the gold as the base of the city typifies God the Father; the pearls as the gates of the city typify God the Son; and the jasper wall of the city typifies God the Spirit—Rev. 21:18-21; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12.

Rev. 21:18-21—And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

cf. 1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

- B. We need to ask the Lord to grant us the light to have a thorough change in our concept of value so that we will continually choose Christ and all that He is as our super-excelling portion—Mark 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:8.

Mark 9:7-8—And a cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud: This is My Son, the Beloved. Hear Him! ⁸And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but Jesus only with them.

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

2 Cor. 4:7—But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

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

- C. “If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth”—Jer. 15:19; cf. v. 16:

Jer. 15:19—Therefore thus says Jehovah, If you return, I will restore you; You will stand before Me; And if you bring out the precious from the worthless, You will be as My mouth; They will turn to you, But you will not turn to them.

cf. 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.

1. We must treasure the Lord’s words more than our apportioned food, tasting the Lord in His word as the reality of the good land flowing with nourishing milk and fresh honey for us to dispense to God’s people for their full salvation—Job 23:12; 1 Pet. 2:2-5; Ps. 119:103; Deut. 8:8; S. S. 4:11a.

Job 23:12—As for the commandment of His lips, I have not turned back from *it*; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my apportioned food.

1 Pet. 2:2-5—As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, ³If you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen *and* precious, ⁵You

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

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

Deut. 8:8—A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

S. S. 4:11—Your lips drip fresh honey, *my* bride; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

2. We must treasure the Lord's words more than all earthly riches so that we can speak oracles of God to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ as the varied grace of God—Psa. 119:72, 9-16; Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.

Psa. 119:72—The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of *pieces of* gold and silver.

Psa. 119:9-16—With what should a young man keep his way pure? By guarding *it* according to Your word. ¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. ¹¹In my heart I have treasured up Your word That I might not sin against You. ¹²Blessed are You, O Jehovah; Teach me Your statutes. ¹³With my lips I have declared All the ordinances of Your mouth. ¹⁴I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies As much as in all riches. ¹⁵I will muse upon Your precepts And regard Your ways. ¹⁶I will take delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

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

2 Cor. 6:10—As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

1 Pet. 4:10-11—Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God. ¹¹If anyone speaks, as *speaking* oracles of God; if anyone ministers, as *ministering* out of the strength which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

II. Peter saw that Christ Himself is the preciousness to His believers—2:7; cf. Phil. 3:8:

1 Pet. 2:7—To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,”

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

- A. Peter was charmed (attracted and captivated) by the Lord to such an extent that even though he was rebuked by the Lord many times and failed miserably, he still followed the Lord as his Shepherd until his martyrdom—Luke 5:8-11; Mark 14:67-72; 16:7; John 21:15-22; 2 Pet. 1:14-15:

Luke 5:8-11—And when Simon Peter saw *this*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord. ⁹For amazement had taken possession of him and all who were with him, because of the catch of the fish which they took; ¹⁰And likewise also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men alive. ¹¹And when they had brought the boats to the land, they left all and followed Him.

Mark 14:67-72—And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus. ⁶⁸But he denied *it*, saying, I neither know nor understand what you are talking about. And he went outside into the forecourt, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹And the servant girl, seeing him, began again to say to those standing by, This man is *one* of them! ⁷⁰But again he denied *it*. And after a little while, those standing by again said to Peter, Surely you are *one* of them, for you are a Galilean as well. ⁷¹But he began to curse and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak! ⁷²And immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered the word, how Jesus had said to him, Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And thinking upon it, he wept.

Mark 16:7—But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.

John 21:15-22—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. ¹⁸Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish *to go*. ¹⁹Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me. ²⁰Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined on His breast at the supper and said, Lord, who is the one betraying You? ²¹Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man? ²²Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.

2 Pet. 1:14-15—Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.

1. Peter realized that he, James, and John had been admitted into the highest degree of initiation at the Lord's transfiguration, admitted to be the initiated spectators of His majesty—vv. 16-18; cf. 1 Pet. 5:1.

2 Pet. 1:16-18—For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved,

in whom I delight. ¹⁸And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.

cf. 1 Pet. 5:1—Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:

2. In His ascension, Christ is “the Majestic”—He is our God and Savior (2 Pet. 1:1) and the Lord of all (1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 2:36) as our Judge, our Lawmaker, and our King in God’s government (Isa. 33:21-22) in order to dispense Himself into us to be our enjoyment for our full salvation (Rev. 22:1).

2 Pet. 1:1—Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

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.

Acts 2:36—Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Isa. 33:21-22—But there the Majestic, Jehovah, will be for us A place of rivers *and* broad streams, On which no boat with oars will go And no majestic ship will pass. ²²For Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Lawmaker, Jehovah is our King; He will save us.

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

- B. The precious stone for God’s building is Christ Himself—1 Pet. 2:4, 6-8.

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

1 Pet. 2:6-8—For it is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.” ⁷To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,” ⁸And, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

- C. The precious blood of Christ has redeemed us from our vain manner of life—1:14, 18-19.

1 Pet. 1:14—As children of obedience, do not be fashioned according to the former lusts in your ignorance;

1 Pet. 1:18-19—Knowing that *it was* not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, *that* you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, ¹⁹But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, *the blood* of Christ;

- D. The precious and exceedingly great promises have been granted to us by our God and Savior, Jesus Christ—2 Pet. 1:1, 4; cf. Isa. 42:6; Heb. 8:8-12:

2 Pet. 1:1—Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

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

cf. Isa. 42:6—I am Jehovah; I have called You in righteousness; I have held You by the hand; I have kept You and I have given You As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations;

cf. Heb. 8:8-12—For finding fault with them He says, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will consummate a new covenant upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah, ⁹Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. ¹⁰For this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them; and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me. ¹¹And they shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me from the little one to the great one among them. ¹²For I will be propitious to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I shall by no means remember anymore.”

1. By calling on the precious name of the Lord, we drink of Him as the cup of salvation, enjoying Him as the reality of all the precious and exceedingly great promises of God for the goal of God’s building—Acts 4:10-12; Psa. 116:12-13.

Acts 4:10-12—Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified *and* whom God has raised from the dead, in this *name* this man stands before you in good health. ¹¹This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner. ¹²And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.

Psa. 116:12-13—What shall I return to Jehovah For all His benefits toward me? ¹³I will take up the cup of salvation And call upon the name of Jehovah.

2. These precious promises are embodied in the word of God; by pray-reading the promises, we partake of and enjoy the divine nature so that we may grow and develop in life unto the maturity of life to enjoy a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—2 Pet. 1:4-11.

2 Pet. 1:4-11—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. ⁵And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge; ⁶And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness; ⁷And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love. ⁸For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute *you* neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he in whom these

things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble. ¹¹For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly *and* bountifully supplied to you.

E. God has allotted to all the believers equally precious faith—v. 1; Rom. 12:3.

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:

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.

F. The precious proving of our faith is by various trials that come through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:6-7.

1 Pet. 1:6-7—In which *time* you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials, ⁷So 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;

III. The vision of Christ in glory was seen by Isaiah in his depression—Isa. 6:1-8; cf. 5:20; 22:1; 2 Chron. 26:1-5:

Isa. 6:1-8—In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ²Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; The whole earth is filled with His glory. ⁴And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, *which* he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷And he touched my mouth *with it* and said, Now that this has touched your lips, Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged. ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

cf. Isa. 5:20—Woe to those who call evil good, And good evil; Who put darkness for light, And light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, And sweet for bitter!

cf. Isa. 22:1—The burden concerning the valley of vision: What then *troubles* you That all have gone up to the housetops?

cf. 2 Chron. 26:1-5—And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah. ²It was he who built Eloth and restored it to Judah after *Amaziah* the king slept with his fathers. ³Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah, from Jerusalem. ⁴And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that Amaziah his father had done. ⁵And he set himself to seek after God during the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God; and as long as he sought after Jehovah, God caused him to prosper.

- A. The evil time during Isaiah's days is seen by the Lord's warning word—"Woe to those who call evil good, / And good evil; / Who put darkness for light, / And light for darkness; / Who put bitter for sweet, / And sweet for bitter!"—Isa. 5:20.
- B. In spite of the rebellion, iniquities, and corruptions of God's chosen and beloved people, Christ, as the Lord, the King, Jehovah of hosts, is still sitting on a high and lofty throne in glory—6:1-5; Lam. 5:19; Rev. 22:1.

Isa. 6:1-5—In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ²Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; The whole earth is filled with His glory. ⁴And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Lam. 5:19—You, O Jehovah, abide forever; Your throne is from generation to generation.

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

- C. The One who was seen by Isaiah was Christ—Isa. 6:5b; John 12:38-41:

Isa. 6:5—Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

John 12:38-41—That the word of the prophet Isaiah which he said might be fulfilled, "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹For this *reason* they could not believe, because again Isaiah said, ⁴⁰"He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I will heal them." ⁴¹These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him.

1. John, in his account of Christ's living and working on earth, said that Isaiah "saw His glory and spoke concerning Him"—v. 41.

John 12:41—These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him.

2. In order to see the vision of the glorious enthroned Christ, we need to take heed to Isaiah's warning word (Isa. 6:9-10) by exercising our spirit to pray that the Lord would open our inner eyes, soften our heart, and keep our heart turned to Him so that we may receive His inner healing of our blindness and sickness (John 12:40; Matt. 13:14-17; Acts 28:25-27; Rev. 3:18; 4:2; 2 Cor. 3:16-18).

Isa. 6:9-10—And He said, Go and say to this people, Hear indeed, but do not perceive; And see indeed, but do not understand. ¹⁰Make the heart of this people numb; Dull their ears, And seal their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, And their heart perceive and return, and they are healed.

John 12:40—“He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, that they might not see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I will heal them.”

Matt. 13:14-17—And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, “In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you shall see and by no means perceive. ¹⁵For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.” ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to perceive the things that you see, and have not perceived *them*, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard *them*.

Acts 28:25-27—And when they disagreed with one another, they departed, Paul saying one word *to them*, Well has the Holy Spirit spoken through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, ²⁶Saying, “Go to this people and say, In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you will see and by no means perceive; ²⁷For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.”

Rev. 3:18—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.

Rev. 4:2—Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting;

2 Cor. 3:16-18—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- D. Christ’s long robe signifies His splendor in His virtues, expressed mainly in and through His humanity; that Christ was wearing a long robe indicates that He appeared to Isaiah in the image of a man; Christ is the enthroned God-man with the divine glory expressed in His human virtues—Isa. 6:1; cf. Ezek. 1:26, 22; Acts 2:36; Heb. 2:9a.

Isa. 6:1—In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

cf. Ezek. 1:26—And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

cf. Ezek. 1:22—And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

cf. Acts 2:36—Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

cf. Heb. 2:9—But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

E. Isaiah saw Christ in His holiness based on His righteousness—Isa. 6:2-3:

Isa. 6:2-3—Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; The whole earth is filled with His glory.

1. The seraphim signify or represent the holiness of Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God; they were standing there for Christ's holiness.
2. Christ's holiness is based on His righteousness; because Christ was always righteous, He was sanctified, separated, from the common people—5:16.
Isa. 5:16—But Jehovah of hosts is exalted in judgment, And the holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness.

F. As a result of seeing this vision, Isaiah was terminated, finished, realizing that he was a man of unclean lips, dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips—6:5:

Isa. 6:5—Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

1. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God; to gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature so that we may be constituted with God—cf. Gen. 13:14-15; Gal. 3:14; Matt. 5:8.

cf. Gen. 13:14-15—And Jehovah said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, Now lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your seed forever.

cf. Gal. 3:14—In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

cf. Matt. 5:8—Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

2. Seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we gain God and receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged; this metabolic process is transformation—2 Cor. 3:16—4:1; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 3:8.

2 Cor. 3:16—4:1—But whenever [their heart] turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸But 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. ¹⁹Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

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

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

3. The more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and the more we deny ourselves—Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.
Job 42:5-6—I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye has seen You; ⁶Therefore I abhor *myself*, and I repent In dust and ashes.

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

Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Luke 14:26—If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple.

- G. After Isaiah realized that he was unclean, he was purged by one of the seraphim, signifying the holiness of God, with an ember from the altar:

1. The application of this ember by one of the seraphim signifies the effectiveness of Christ's redemption accomplished on the cross and applied by "the Spirit the Holy" in His judging, burning, and sanctifying power—Isa. 6:6-7; 4:4; cf. Luke 12:49; Rev. 4:5.

Isa. 6:6-7—Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, *which* he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷And he touched my mouth *with it* and said, Now that this has touched your lips, Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

Isa. 4:4—When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and has cleansed away the bloodstains of Jerusalem from her midst, by the judging Spirit and the burning Spirit.

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

cf. Rev. 4:5—And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

2. Seeing God issues in being purged and cleansed by God, and being cleansed by God issues in being sent by God to bring His chosen people into a state of living Christ so that they may express Him in His glory, be saturated with His holiness, and live in His righteousness—Isa. 6:6-8; 1 John 1:7-9; Acts 13:47; Phil. 1:21a.

Isa. 6:6-8—Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, *which*he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷And he touched my mouth *with it*

and said, Now that this has touched your lips, Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged. ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

1 John 1:7-9—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. ⁸If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 13:47—For so the Lord has commanded us, “I have set you as a light of the Gentiles, that you would be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

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

IV. The vision of the excellent Christ, who appeared to Daniel in His supreme preciousness as a man, was for Daniel’s appreciation, consolation, encouragement, and stabilization—Dan. 10:4-9:

Dan. 10:4-9—And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the great river, that is, the Hiddekel, ⁵I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz. ⁶His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude. ⁷And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; instead, a great dread fell on them, and they fled to hide themselves. ⁸Thus I was left alone and I saw this great vision; and no strength was left in me, but my color turned deathly pale; and I retained no strength. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of His words; and when I heard the sound of His words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

- A. Christ appeared as a Priest in His humanity, signified by the linen robe, to care for His chosen people in their captivity—v. 5a; Exo. 28:31-35.

Dan. 10:5—I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.

Exo. 28:31-35—And you shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue *strands*. ³²And there shall be an opening for the head in its center; around its opening there shall be a *binding* edge of woven work, like the opening of a coat of mail, so that it will not be torn. ³³And you shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet *strands*, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: ³⁴A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the hem of the robe all around. ³⁵And it shall be upon Aaron when *he* ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the sanctuary before Jehovah and when he comes out, so that he may not die.

- B. Christ appeared in His kingship in His divinity, signified by the girdle of gold, for ruling over all the peoples—Dan. 10:5b.

Dan. 10:5—I lifted up my eyes and I looked, and there was a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz.

- C. For His people’s appreciation, Christ appeared in His preciousness and dignity, as signified by His body being like beryl; the Hebrew word for *beryl* could refer

to a bluish-green or yellow precious stone, signifying that Christ in His embodiment is divine (yellow), full of life (green), and heavenly (blue)—v. 6a.

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

- D. Christ also appeared in His brightness for shining over the people, as signified by His face being like the appearance of lightning (v. 6b), and in His enlightening sight for searching and judging, signified by His eyes being like torches of fire (v. 6c).

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

- E. Christ appeared to Daniel in the gleam of His work and move, as signified by His arms and His feet being like the gleam of polished bronze—v. 6d.

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

- F. Christ appeared in His strong speaking for judging people, as signified by the sound of His words being like the sound of a multitude—v. 6e:

Dan. 10:6—His body also was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and His feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of His words like the sound of a multitude.

1. The entire world situation is under the rule of the heavens by the God of the heavens in order to give Christ the preeminence in all things, to cause Christ to have the first place in everything—2:34-35; 7:9-10; 4:34-35; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 2:4-5.

Dan. 2:34-35—You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Dan. 7:9-10—I watched Until thrones were set, And the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was like white snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool; His throne was flames of fire; Its wheels, burning fire. ¹⁰A stream of fire issued forth And came out from before Him. Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. The court of judgment sat, And the books were opened.

Dan. 4:34-35—And at the end of *those* days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me; and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored the ever-living One; For His dominion is an eternal dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation; ³⁵And all the inhabitants of earth are considered as nothing, But He does according to His will in the army of heaven And

among the inhabitants of the earth; And there is no one who can resist His hand Or say to Him, What are You doing?

Col. 1:15—Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

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;

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love.
⁵Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

2. Christ must have the first place, the preeminence, in our personal universe; today Christ, the preeminent One, must be the centrality and universality in our church life, family life, and daily life—Col. 1:17b, 18b; 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31.
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. 3:17—And whatever you do in word or in deed, *do* all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

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

3. Under His heavenly rule God is using the environment to make Christ the centrality (the first) and the universality (everything) to us—Rom. 8:28; Col. 1:18, 27; 3:4, 10-11.

Rom. 8:28—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col. 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

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

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

4. As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for Christ's preeminence, we are under God's heavenly rule to make Christ preeminent, to cause Him to have the first place in everything—Dan. 4:26b, 35; Col. 1:18; 3:4, 10-11; Psa. 27:4.

Dan. 4:26—And in that it was commanded that the stump of roots of the tree be left, your kingdom will be assured to you after you have come to know that the heavens do rule.

Dan. 4:35—And all the inhabitants of earth are considered as nothing, But He does according to His will in the army of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of the earth; And there is no one who can resist His hand Or say to Him, What are You doing?

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

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

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

Psa. 27:4—One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

V. We must redeem the time to enjoy Christ as the supreme preciousness of God so that we can be constituted with Him to be men of preciousness as His personal treasure; as we live in His precious presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure, He builds Himself into us to make us His spiritual house and His holy and royal priesthood for the accomplishment of His heart's desire—1 Pet. 3:4; Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19; 2 Cor. 2:10; Psa. 16:5; Exo. 19:4-6; 1 Pet. 2:1-9; 2 Pet. 3:8, 11-12.

1 Pet. 3:4—But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible *adornment* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

Dan. 9:23—At the beginning of your supplications the command went forth, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are preciousness itself. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Dan. 10:11—And he said to me, Daniel, man of preciousness, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand in your place, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

Dan. 10:19—And he said, Do not be afraid, man of preciousness. Peace to you. Be strong, yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me, I received strength and said, Speak, sir, for you have strengthened me.

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

Psa. 16:5—Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; You maintain my lot.

Exo. 19:4-6—You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵Now therefore if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My personal treasure from among all peoples, for all the earth

is Mine. ⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.

1 Pet. 2:1-9—Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings, ²As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, ³If you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen *and* precious, ⁵You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and he who believes on Him shall by no means be put to shame.” ⁷To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, “The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,” ⁸And, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; who stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed. ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

2 Pet. 3:8—But do not let this one thing escape you, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.

2 Pet. 3:11-12—Since all these things are to be thus dissolved, what kind of persons ought you to be in holy manner of life and godliness, ¹²Expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements, burning with intense heat, are to be melted away?

Message Ten

Shepherding according to God

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; 10:9-17; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4; 2:25; Heb. 13:20

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

John 10:9-17—I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture. ¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly. ¹¹I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹²He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. ¹³*He flees* because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd. ¹⁷For this *reason* the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

1 Pet. 5:2—Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

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.

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,

I. Shepherding is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock; shepherding refers to taking care of all the needs of the sheep—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28.

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son of John*, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Acts 20:28—Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

II. The two basic elements of shepherding are cherishing and nourishing—Eph. 5:29:

Eph. 5:29—For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,

- A. To shepherd is to comfort, to soothe, to nurture with tender love, and to foster with tender care.
- B. In shepherding others, we should first cherish them to make them happy, and then we should nourish them.

III. In the Lord's recovery today there is an urgent need of shepherding—John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4:

John 21:16—He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

1 Pet. 5:2—Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

- A. The greatest lack among us is in the matter of shepherding.
- B. In His organic salvation God the Father first regenerates us by God the Spirit and then shepherds us in God the Son as our Shepherd that we may exist and grow in His life for eternity—1:3; John 10:11; Rev. 7:17.

1 Pet. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

John 10:11—I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

Rev. 7:17—For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

- C. Shepherding the believers is crucial for their growth in the divine life unto maturity for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:13-16.

Eph. 4:13-16—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, ¹⁴That 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, ¹⁵But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, ¹⁶Out 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.

- D. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding—1 Cor. 12:23-26:

1 Cor. 12:23-26—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, ²⁴But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, ²⁵That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same

care for one another. ²⁶And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with *it*.

1. All believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding; we all have defects and shortcomings and need others to shepherd us.
2. We need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and to be one with Him to shepherd others—John 10:11, 16; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25.

John 10:11—I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:16—And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.

Heb. 13:20-21—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, ²¹Perfect 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.

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

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.

3. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality; through this shepherding, the church is built up into the Body of Christ—Heb. 5:14; Eph. 4:12-13.

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.

Eph. 4:12-13—For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, ¹³Until 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,

- E. The more we are constituted with Christ, the more we will spontaneously live a shepherding life and have the burden to take care of others—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11, 14:

Col. 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

Col. 3:14—And over all these things *put on* love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness.

1. The constitution of Christ in our spiritual life has a shepherding aspect—John 21:15-17.

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. ¹⁶He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. ¹⁷He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

2. Shepherding is not a matter of responding to being encouraged by others to shepherd.
3. Shepherding is the issue of being constituted with Christ—Col. 3:4, 10-11.
Col. 3:4—When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

4. The part of our being that has been constituted with Christ is the part that shepherds others.
5. We cannot shepherd anyone; the Christ constituted into us is the Shepherd—John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4; Heb. 13:20.

John 10:11—I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

1 Pet. 2:25—For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Pet. 5:2—Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Heb. 13:20—Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,

- F. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the loving and tender heart of our Father God and according to the seeking and shepherding Spirit of our Savior Christ—Luke 15:1-32:

Luke 15:1-32—Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him. ²And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among *themselves*, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. ³And He told them this parable, saying, ⁴Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons

who have no need of repentance. ⁸Or 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*? ⁹And when she finds *it*, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost. ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting. ¹¹And He said, A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to *me*. And he distributed to them his living. ¹³And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely. ¹⁴And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs. ¹⁶And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him *anything*. ¹⁷But 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! ¹⁸I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ²⁰And 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. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ²²But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf; slaughter *it*, and let us eat and be merry, ²⁴Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry. ²⁵Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing, ²⁶And calling to *him* one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be. ²⁷And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back healthy. ²⁸But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and entreated him. ²⁹But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me a goat that I might be merry with my friends; ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf. ³¹And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

1. We need to shepherd one another in love—1 Cor. 13:1-13.

1 Cor. 13:1-13—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. ²And 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. ³And 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. ⁴Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag *and* is not puffed up; ⁵It does not behave unbecomingly *and* does not seek its own things; it is not provoked *and* does not take account of evil; ⁶It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never falls *away*. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰But

when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless. ¹¹When 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. ¹²For 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. ¹³Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

2. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything—12:31b:

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

- a. God has given us a spirit of love—2 Tim. 1:7.

2 Tim. 1:7—For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

- b. Since God is love and since we have been regenerated by God to be His species, we should be love—1 John 4:8; John 3:6.

1 John 4:8—He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

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

3. The Body of Christ builds up itself in love—Eph. 4:16.

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.

IV. Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls—John 10:9-17; Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2:25:

John 10:9-17—I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture. ¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly. ¹¹I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹²He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. ¹³*He flees* because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd. ¹⁷For this *reason* the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

Heb. 13:20-21—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, ²¹Perfect 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.

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

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.

A. As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and may have it abundantly—John 10:10-11:

John 10:10-11—The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly. ¹¹I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

1. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life—vv. 11, 15, 17.

John 10:11—I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:15—Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

John 10:17—For this *reason* the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

2. He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him—v. 9.

John 10:9—I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.

3. The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believers into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding—v. 16.

John 10:16—And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.

B. God raised up from the dead “our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant”—Heb. 13:20:

Heb. 13:20—Now the God of peace, He who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant,

1. The eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by shepherding.

2. The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem.

C. As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches—1 Pet. 5:4:

1 Pet. 5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1. Without the elders’ shepherding, the church cannot be built up.

2. The elders’ shepherding should be Christ shepherding through them.

D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being—2:25:

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. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being.
2. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.

V. “Shepherd the flock of God...according to God”—5:2:

1 Pet. 5:2—Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

A. *According to God* means that we live God—1 Thes. 3:8; 5:10.

1 Thes. 3:8—Because now we live if you stand firm in the Lord.

1 Thes. 5:10—Who died for us in order that whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with Him.

B. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead, and we are God in our shepherding of others—Rom. 11:24.

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

C. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God’s nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.

D. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes—Eph. 4:18; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 15:3.

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

1 John 4:8—He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

Rev. 15:3—And they sing the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are Your works, Lord God the Almighty! Righteous and true are Your ways, O King of the nations!

E. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function:

1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become a totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself—John 4:14; Col. 3:4.

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

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

2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness.

3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities.
 4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy.
- F. If we would shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17:
John 14:20—In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
1. The basic principle of the Bible is that in His economy God is making Himself one with man and man one with Him—John 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
John 15:4—Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me.
1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
 2. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together to become one life that has one living—John 6:57; Gal. 2:20.
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.
Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- G. Shepherding according to God requires that we be constituted with God—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11:
Eph. 3:17—That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
1. God desires to dispense Himself into our being so that our being may be constituted with His being to be one constitution with His being—Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11.
Eph. 3:17—That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
Col. 3:10-11—And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 2. As the Divine Being, God infuses us with His element, causing us to be the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead—2 Cor. 13:14.

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

H. Only those who live God can shepherd according to God—Phil. 1:21a:

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

1. God's economy is to work Himself into us so that we may receive Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him—John 11:25; 6:48, 57.

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

John 6:48—I am the bread of life.

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. We are participating in the divine life and the divine nature so that we can live God in our humanity—Gal. 2:20.

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

I. As those who would shepherd according to God, we need to represent God and function as the acting God:

1. Jehovah made Moses “God to Pharaoh”; in Moses, God had one to represent Him and to execute His will—Exo. 7:1; 3:16-18; 5:1.

Exo. 7:1—And Jehovah said to Moses, See, I have made you God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.

Exo. 3:16-18—Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have surely visited you and *seen* what is being done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷And I say, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁸And they will listen to your voice. And you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God.

Exo. 5:1—And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.

2. As the representative of God, Samuel was the acting God—1 Sam. 1:11; 2:35; 7:3; 8:22:

1 Sam. 1:11—And she made a vow and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your female servant and remember me and not forget Your female servant, but give to Your female servant a male child, then I will give him to Jehovah for all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head.

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. 7:3—Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If you are returning with all your heart to Jehovah, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from your midst, and direct your heart to Jehovah and serve only Him; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

1 Sam. 8:22—Then Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to their voice, and appoint a king to them. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go, each one to his city.

- a. Samuel could be the acting God because his being and God's heart were one—2:35.

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.

- b. Samuel's living and working were for carrying out whatever was in God's heart.

3. In his ministry Elisha the prophet, as the man of God, behaved himself as God's representative, as the acting God; today we, the believers in Christ, can be the same—2 Kings 4:9; 1 Tim. 6:11.

2 Kings 4:9—And she said to her husband, Now I know that this man who continually passes through unto us is a holy man of God.

1 Tim. 6:11—But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness.

- J. To shepherd according to God is to minister God to others—2 Cor. 13:14:

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

1. The Triune God is embodied in Christ and realized as the consummated Spirit; this is the God whom we worship, proclaim, and minister to others—Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12, 15-16; 2:10; 13:14.

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

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

2 Cor. 1:3-4—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort, ⁴Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Cor. 1:12—For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

2 Cor. 1:15-16—And in this confidence I intended to come to you previously that you might have double grace, ¹⁶And through you to pass through into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you and be sent forward by you into Judea.

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

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

2. If we would minister God to one another, we need to speak words of grace, truth, spirit, and life, ministering the processed God who has been wrought into our being—Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:25, 29; John 6:63.

Eph. 3:16-17—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, ¹⁷That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

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

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

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

Message Eleven

The Fellowship of the Eternal Life— the Reality of Living in the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1—2:2

1 John 1:1—2:2—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write that our joy may be made full. ⁵And 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. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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. ⁸If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

¹My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for *those of* the whole world.

I. John's Epistles (especially his first Epistle) unfold the mystery of the fellowship of the eternal life—1 John 1:3-4, 6-7:

1 John 1:3-4—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

1 John 1:6-7—If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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.

- A. Fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, illustrated by the flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem; the reality of the Body of Christ, the church life in actuality, is the flow of the Lord Jesus within us, and this flowing One must have the preeminence within us—vv. 2-4; Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b; cf. Ezek. 47:1.

1 John 1:2-4—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

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.

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;

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

- B. Fellowship is the flowing Triune God—the Father is the fountain of life, the Son is the spring of life, and the Spirit is the river of life; this flowing issues in the totality of eternal life—the New Jerusalem—John 4:14b; Rev. 22:1-2.

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

Rev. 22:1-2—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. ²And 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.

- C. Fellowship is the imparting of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into the believers as their unique portion and blessing for them to enjoy today and for eternity—1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27.

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

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

Num. 6:22-27—Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²³Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the children of Israel; you shall say to them, ²⁴Jehovah bless you and keep you; ²⁵Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. ²⁷So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, that I Myself may bless them.

- D. Fellowship indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose; hence, to be in the divine fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3.

Acts 2:42—And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

- E. Fellowship comes from teaching; if we teach wrongly and differently from the apostles' teaching, the teaching of God's economy, our teaching will produce a sectarian, divisive fellowship—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:18.

Acts 2:42—And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Tim. 1:3-6—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 ⁴Nor

to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith. ⁵But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and *out of* a good conscience and *out of* unfeigned faith; ⁶From which things some, having misaimed, have turned aside to vain talking,

1 Tim. 6:3-4—If anyone teaches different things and does not consent to healthy words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching which is according to godliness, ⁴He is blinded with pride, understanding nothing, but is diseased with questionings and contentions of words, out of which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions,

2 Cor. 3:8-9—How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory? ⁹For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

2 Cor. 5:18—But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

- F. First John reveals the principles of the divine fellowship, 2 John reveals that we must have no fellowship with those who deny Christ (vv. 7-11), and 3 John reveals that we should stay in the one fellowship of God's family by sending forward those who travel for the gospel and the ministry of the word in a manner worthy of God and by not loving to be first in the church (vv. 5-10).

2 John 7-11—For many deceivers went out into the word, those who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸Look to yourselves that you do not lose the things which we wrought, but that you may receive a full reward. ⁹Everyone who goes beyond and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not say to him, Rejoice! ¹¹For he who says to him, Rejoice, shares in his evil works.

3 John 5-10—Beloved, you do faithfully in whatever you have wrought for the brothers, and this for strangers, ⁶Who testified to your love before the church; whom you will do well to send forward in a manner worthy of God; ⁷For on behalf of the Name they went out, taking nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸We therefore ought to support such ones that we may become fellow workers in the truth. ⁹I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us. ¹⁰For this reason, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he does, babbling against us with evil words; and not being satisfied with these, neither does he himself receive the brothers, and those intending to do so he forbids and casts out of the church.

II. The fellowship of the eternal life is the reality of living in the Body of Christ in the oneness of the Spirit—1 Cor. 10:16-18; Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:3:

1 Cor. 10:16-18—The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? ¹⁷Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?

Acts 2:42—And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Eph. 4:3—Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

- A. We enter into the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God in our loving Him—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3, 6; Mark 12:30.

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

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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;

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. We enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit; this aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another by the exercise of our spirit in our loving one another—Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10; 1 John 1:2-3, 7; 1 Cor. 16:18; Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15.

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,

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

1 John 1:2-3—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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 Cor. 16:18—For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones.

Mark 12:31—The second is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.

Rom. 13:8-10—Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law. ⁹For, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does not work evil to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Gal. 5:13-15—For you were called for freedom, brothers; only do not *turn* this freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

- C. The one divine fellowship is an interwoven fellowship—the horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship:
1. The initial experience of the apostles was the vertical fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship—1 John 1:2-3; cf. Acts 2:42.
1 John 1:2-3—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
 - cf. Acts 2:42**—And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
 2. Our horizontal fellowship with the saints brings us into vertical fellowship with the Lord; then our vertical fellowship with the Lord brings us into horizontal fellowship with the saints.
 3. We must maintain both the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship in order to be healthy spiritually—cf. 1 John 1:7, 9.
cf. 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.
cf. 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.
- D. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life:
1. When fellowship disappears, God also disappears; God comes as the fellowship—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 22:1.
2 Cor. 13:14—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
 2. In this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us; this interweaving is the mingling of God and man to bring the divine constituent into our spiritual being for our growth and transformation in life—Lev. 2:4-5.
Lev. 2:4-5—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. ⁵And if your offering is a meal offering *baked* on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.
 3. The divine fellowship blends us, tempers us, adjusts us, harmonizes us, and mingles us together into one Body—1 Cor. 10:16-18; 12:24-25.
1 Cor. 10:16-18—The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? ¹⁷Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Look at Israel according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices those who have fellowship with the altar?

1 Cor. 12:24-25—But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, ²⁵That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another.

III. In order to remain in the enjoyment of the divine fellowship, we need to take Christ as our sin offering for the indwelling sin in our nature and as our trespass offering for the sinful deeds in our conduct—1 John 1:8-9; 3:20-21; Lev. 4:3; 5:6; John 1:29; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24-25:

1 John 1:8-9—If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 3:20-21—Because if our heart blames *us*, *it is* because God is greater than our heart and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not blame *us*, we have boldness toward God;

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.

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.

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!

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,

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.

1 Pet. 2:24-25—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. ²⁵For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

A. Sin is the evil nature of Satan, who injected himself into man through Adam's fall and has now become the sinful nature of lawlessness that is dwelling, acting, and working as a law in fallen man—Rom. 5:12, 19a, 21a; 6:14; 7:11, 14, 17-23; Psa. 51:5; 1 John 3:4; cf. 2 Thes. 2:3, 7-8.

Rom. 5:12—Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned—

Rom. 5:19—For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be constituted righteous.

Rom. 5:21—In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. 7:14—For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am fleshy, sold under sin.

Rom. 7:17-23—Now then *it is* no longer I *that* work it out but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸For 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. ¹⁹For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice. ²⁰But if what I do not will, this I do, *it is* no longer I *that* work it out but sin that dwells in me. ²¹I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me. ²²For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, ²³But 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.

Psa. 51:5—Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin did my mother conceive me.

1 John 3:4—Everyone who practices sin practices lawlessness also, and sin is lawlessness.

cf. 2 Thes. 2:3—Let no one deceive you in any way, because *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

cf. 2 Thes. 2:7-8—For *it is* the mystery of lawlessness *that* is now operating, *but* only until the one now restraining goes out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

- B. Taking Christ as our sin offering means that our old man is dealt with (Rom. 6:6), that sin in the nature of fallen man is condemned (8:3), that Satan as sin itself is destroyed (Heb. 2:14), that the world is judged, and that the ruler of the world is cast out (John 12:31):

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. 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,

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,

John 12:31—Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

1. The word *ruler* in *the ruler of this world* implies authority or power and the struggle for power—Luke 4:5-8; cf. Matt. 20:20-21, 24; 3 John 9.

Luke 4:5-8—And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to Him, To You I will give all this

authority and their glory, because to me it has been delivered, and to whomever I want I give it. ⁷If You therefore worship before me, it shall all be Yours. ⁸And Jesus answered and said to him, It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.”

cf. Matt. 20:20-21—Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, worshipping and asking something of Him. ²¹And He said to her, What do you want? She said to Him, Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your kingdom.

cf. Matt. 20:24—And when the ten heard *this*, they were indignant concerning the two brothers.

cf. 3 John 9—I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.

2. The struggle for power is the result, the issue, of the flesh, sin, Satan, the world, and the ruler of the world—Gal. 5:16-17, 24-26.

Gal. 5:16-17—But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire.

Gal. 5:24-26—But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

3. The law of sin in our flesh is the spontaneous power, strength, and energy to struggle with God; the law of the sin offering is the law of the life of the pneumatic Christ, whom we enjoy, to automatically and spontaneously free us from the law of sin—Rom. 7:23; 8:2; Lev. 6:24-30; cf. 7:1-10.

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

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

Lev. 6:24-30—Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁵Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered the sin offering shall be slaughtered before Jehovah; it is most holy. ²⁶The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the Tent of Meeting. ²⁷Whatever touches its flesh shall be holy. And when any of its blood splashes on a garment, you shall wash whatever was splashed in a holy place. ²⁸But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken; and if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, it shall be scoured and rinsed in water. ²⁹Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. ³⁰And any sin offering of which some of the blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting to make expiation in the Holy Place shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.

cf. Lev. 7:1-10—And this is the law of the trespass offering; it is most holy; ²In the place where they slaughter the burnt offering they shall slaughter the trespass offering, and its blood he shall sprinkle on and around the altar. ³And he shall present from it all its fat: the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inward parts, ⁴And

the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the appendage upon the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ⁵And the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering by fire to Jehovah; it is a trespass offering. ⁶Every male among the priests may eat of it; it shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. ⁷The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them: The priest who makes expiation with it shall have it. ⁸And the priest who presents anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented. ⁹And every meal offering that is baked in an oven and everything that is made in a pot or on a flat plate shall belong to the priest who presents it. ¹⁰And every *other* meal offering, mingled with oil or dry, shall be for all the sons of Aaron, to each alike.

- C. We partake of Christ as our sin offering in the sense of enjoying Him as our life, the life that bears others' sins, so that we may be able to bear the problems of God's people by ministering Christ to them as the sin-dealing life for them to be kept in the oneness of the Spirit—1 John 5:16; Lev. 10:17.

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.

Lev. 10:17—Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make expiation for them before Jehovah.

- D. Through our genuine, intimate, living, and loving fellowship with God, who is light (1 John 1:5; Col. 1:12), we will realize that we are sinful, and we will take Christ as our sin offering and trespass offering:

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.

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. The more we love the Lord and enjoy Him, the more we will know how evil we are—Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Rom. 7:18.

Isa. 6:5—Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Luke 5:8—And when Simon Peter saw *this*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.

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.

2. Realizing that we have a sinful nature and taking Christ as our sin offering cause us to be judged and subdued, and this realization preserves us, for it causes us not to have any confidence in ourselves—Phil. 3:3; cf. Exo. 4:6.

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

cf. Exo. 4:6—And Jehovah further said to him, Now put your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, there his hand was, leprous, *as white* as snow.

3. Man, created by God for the purpose of expressing and representing God, should be for nothing other than God and should be absolutely for God; thus, anything we do out of ourselves, whether good or evil, is for ourselves, and since it is for ourselves and not for God, it is sinful in the eyes of God; sin is being for the self—Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 3:23:

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

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

Rom. 3:23—For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- a. Serving the Lord for ourselves is sin; preaching ourselves is sin—Num. 28:2; 2 Kings 5:20-27; Matt. 7:22-23; 2 Cor. 4:5.

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.

2 Kings 5:20-27—Gehazi, the attendant of Elisha the man of God said, Now my master has spared Naaman this Syrian by not receiving from his hand that which he brought. As Jehovah lives, I will run after him and take something from him. ²¹So Gehazi pursued Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he alighted from the chariot to meet him and said, Is all well? ²²And he said, All is well. My master has sent me, saying, Now at this moment two young men from among the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim; please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes. ²³And Naaman said, Please take two talents. And he urged him and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothes, and gave *them* to two of his attendants; and they carried *them* before him. ²⁴And when he came to the hill, he took *them* from their hand and deposited *them* in the house. And he sent the men away, and they departed. ²⁵And he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, Where have you come from, Gehazi? And he said, Your servant has not gone anywhere. ²⁶And he said to him, Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive silver and to receive clothing and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male servants and female servants? ²⁷Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

Matt. 7:22-23—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? ²³And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.

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

- b. Doing our righteous deeds, such as giving alms, praying, and fasting, for ourselves to express and display ourselves is sin—Matt. 6:1-6.

Matt. 6:1-6—But take care not to do your righteousness before men in order to be gazed at by them; otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. ²Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. ³But you, when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴So that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. ⁵And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. ⁶But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

- c. Loving others for ourselves (for our name, position, benefit, and pride) is sin; raising up our children for ourselves and for our future is sin—Luke 14:12-14; cf. 1 Cor. 7:14.

Luke 14:12-14—And He said also to the one who had invited Him, When you make a morning meal or a dinner, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and it become a repayment to you. ¹³But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they do not have *anything with which* to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous.

cf. 1 Cor. 7:14—For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the brother; otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

- 4. The Lord uses our failures to show us how horrible, ugly, and abominable we are, causing us to forsake all that is from the self and to completely depend on God—Psa. 51; Luke 22:31-32; Rom. 8:28.

Luke 22:31-32—Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you *all* to sift you as wheat. ³²But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.

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.

- E. To take Christ as the reality of the trespass offering is to experience Him as the redeeming One, the shining One, and the reigning One in order to enjoy Him as the supply of life in the fellowship of life—1 John 1:1—2:2; Rev. 21:21, 23; 22:1-2: **1 John 1:1—2:2**—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have

seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write that our joy may be made full. ⁵And 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. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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. ⁸If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

¹My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for *those of* the whole world.

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

Rev. 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. 22:1-2—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. ²And 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.

1. In taking Christ as our trespass offering, we need to make a thorough confession of all our sins and impurity to have a good and pure conscience—Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14; 10:22.

Acts 24:16—Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

1 Tim. 1:5—But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and *out of* a good conscience and *out of* unfeigned faith;

1 Tim. 1:19—Holding faith and a good conscience, *concerning* which some, thrusting *these* away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1 Tim. 3:9—Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2 Tim. 1:3—I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

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. 10:22—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.

2. If we confess our sins, God is faithful in His word to forgive us our sins and righteous in His redemption to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; furthermore, Christ as our elder Brother is our Advocate with the Father to restore our interrupted fellowship with the Father that we may abide in the enjoyment of the divine fellowship—1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1-2.

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 1:9—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1-2—My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for *those of the whole world*.

3. The cleansing of the blood of Jesus the Son of God solves the problem of separation from God, the problem of guilt in our conscience, and the problem of accusations from Satan, thus enabling us to have a daily life full of God's presence—Psa. 103:1-4, 12-13; 32:1-2; Rev. 12:10-11.

Psa. 103:1-4—Bless Jehovah, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name. ²Bless Jehovah, O my soul; And do not forget all His benefits: ³He pardons all your iniquities; He heals all your diseases; ⁴He redeems your life from the pit; He crowns you with lovingkindness and compassions;

Psa. 103:12-13—As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³As compassionate as a father is toward *his* children, So compassionate is Jehovah toward those who fear Him.

Psa. 32:1-2—Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; Whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah does not impute iniquity And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Rev. 12:10-11—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. ¹¹And 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.

4. Taking Christ as our trespass offering with the confession of our sins in the divine light is the way to drink Christ as the living water for us to become the New Jerusalem—John 4:14-18.

John 4:14-18—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life. ¹⁵The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst nor come here to draw. ¹⁶He said to her, Go, call your husband and come here. ¹⁷The woman answered and said, I do not have a husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I do not have a husband, ¹⁸For you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.

5. Taking Christ as our trespass offering to receive the forgiveness of sins issues in our fearing God and loving God—Psa. 130:4; Luke 7:47-50.

Psa. 130:4—But with You there is forgiveness, That You would be feared.

Luke 7:47-50—For this reason I say to you, Her sins which are many are forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little. ⁴⁸And He said to her, Your sins are forgiven. ⁴⁹And those who were reclining *at table* with *Him* began to say within themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins? ⁵⁰But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

IV. As we are enjoying Christ in the divine fellowship, we continually experience a cycle in our spiritual life of four crucial things—the eternal life, the fellowship of the eternal life, the divine light, and the blood of Jesus the Son of God; such a cycle brings us onward in the growth of the divine life until we reach the maturity of life to corporately arrive at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—1 John 1:1-9; Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:13.

1 John 1:1-9—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write that our joy may be made full. ⁵And 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. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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. ⁸If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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

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

Message Twelve

The True One

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:6, 11-13, 20; 1:1-3; 3:24; 4:2, 6

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

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

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

1 John 1:1-3—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:24—And he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.

1 John 4:2—In this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

1 John 4:6—We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

I. In 1 John 5:20 we have the crucial conclusion of the entire Epistle of 1 John:

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

A. This Epistle reveals that now we are truly one with the Triune God, and He becomes true, real, to us—1:3; 3:24; 4:2.

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:24—And he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.

1 John 4:2—In this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

B. He becomes reality and life to us because we are in Him—5:6; 2:24-25; 4:13.

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

1 John 2:24-25—As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, let it abide in you. If that which you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, the eternal life.

1 John 4:13—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.

II. We come to know the Triune God by experiencing and enjoying Him—1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12:

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 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 4:16—And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

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

A. The concern of the apostle John in writing his Epistles was the experience and enjoyment of the Triune God—2 John 8.

2 John 8—Look to yourselves that you do not lose the things which we wrought, but that you may receive a full reward.

B. The Triune God is not merely the object of our faith; He is dwelling in us as our life and life supply for our experience and enjoyment—1 John 4:13-15.

1 John 4:13-15—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

C. We need to know the Triune God experientially through the inner enjoyment of the subjective God—2:27; 4:4.

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 4:4—You are of God, little children; and you have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

D. If we would know the Triune God, we must be in the line of life and in the process of the growth in life; the more we grow in life, the more we will be concerned with the Divine Trinity.

III. The Epistles of John reveal the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—1 John 1:1-2; 2:23-24; 3:24; 4:2, 6, 13-14; 5:6, 11-12; 2 John 9:

1 John 1:1-2—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 2:23-24—Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, let it abide in you. If that which you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

1 John 3:24—And he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.

1 John 4:2—In this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

1 John 4:6—We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

1 John 4:13-14—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world.

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

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

2 John 9—Everyone who goes beyond and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

A. To know the Father is to know Him as the source, the unique Initiator, the One who plans, originates, and initiates; everything originates with Him, and everything proceeds from Him—1 John 1:2-3; 2:23-24; 4:2, 6, 13-14; 2 John 9:

1 John 1:2-3—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:23-24—Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, let it abide in you. If that which you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

1 John 4:2—In this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

1 John 4:6—We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

1 John 4:13-14—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world.

2 John 9—Everyone who goes beyond and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

1. The Father is the source of the eternal life; from Him and with Him the Son was manifested as the expression of the eternal life for those the Father has chosen to partake of and enjoy this life—1 John 1:2-3; 5:11-12.

1 John 1:2-3—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); ³That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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

2. The title *Father* refers to the impartation of life; through Christ's resurrection the Father imparts His life to His children—3:1; 1 Pet. 1:3.

1 John 3:1—Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

1 Pet. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- B. In 1 John 1:1-2 both *the Word of life* and *life* denote the divine person of Christ, the Son, who was with the Father in eternity and was manifested in time through incarnation—John 1:1, 14:

1 John 1:1-2—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life ²(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

John 1:1—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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

1. Christ the Son is the eternal, preexisting One who is the word of life from the beginning—1 John 2:13a, 14a.

1 John 2:13—I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, young children, because you know the Father.

1 John 2:14—I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one.

2. The Son of God was manifested that He might undo and destroy the works, the sinful deeds, of the devil—3:8b.

1 John 3:8—He who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

3. God sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins—4:10.

1 John 4:10—Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

4. God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him—v. 9.

1 John 4:9—In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him.

5. The Son of God is the means through which God gives us His eternal life—5:11-12.

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

6. Our Advocate with the Father is Jesus Christ the Righteous; when we sin, the Lord Jesus, based on the propitiation that He accomplished, takes care of our case by interceding and pleading for us—2:1; Rom. 8:34.

1 John 2:1—My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

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.

- C. The Spirit of truth in 1 John 4:6 is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of reality—John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13:

1 John 4:6—We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

John 14:17—*Even* the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know *Him*; *but* you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

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

John 16:13—But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.

1. The Spirit is the reality; this means that the Spirit is the reality of all that Christ as the Son of God is—1 John 5:6.

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

2. By the Spirit whom Christ gave to us, we know that the Triune God abides in us—3:24.

1 John 3:24—And he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And in this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us.

- D. First John 4:13-14 reveals that we are abiding in God the Father and He in us, that God the Father has given to us of His Spirit, and that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world:

1 John 4:13-14—In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. ¹⁴And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world.

1. *Out of His Spirit* (lit.) in verse 13 implies that the Spirit of God, whom God has given to us, is bountiful and without measure; by such a bountiful, immeasurable Spirit we know with full assurance that we and God are one and that we abide in each other—Phil. 1:19; John 3:34.

1 John 4:13— In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.

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

John 3:34—For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

2. Our God, the Father, has given us the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who is the bountiful supply of Jesus Christ, the Son—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17.

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

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

- E. We know the true One and are in the true One—1 John 5:20.

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

IV. “We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life”—v. 20:

A. “We know”:

1. *We* refers first to the apostles in their teaching and fellowship and then to all the genuine believers as members of the Body of Christ—1:3, 6-7.

1 John 1:3—That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:6-7—If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷But 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.

2. *Know* here refers to knowing by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing the divine reality—3:2, 5.

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

1 John 3:5—And you know that He was manifested that He might take away sins; and sin is not in Him.

B. “The Son of God has come” through incarnation and through death and resurrection as the Spirit to bring God to us as grace and reality so that we may have the divine life and partake of God as love and light—John 1:14; Eph. 2:17; 1 John 1:5; 4:16.

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.

Eph. 2:17—And coming, He announced peace as the gospel to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near,

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 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.

C. “Understanding” is the faculty of our mind enlightened and empowered by the Spirit of reality to apprehend the divine reality in our regenerated spirit—John 16:12-15.

John 16:12-15—I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare *it* to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is Mine; for this *reason* I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare *it* to you.

D. “Know the true One,” or “Know Him who is true”:

1. The Greek word translated “true” (*alethinos*) means “genuine, real,” the opposite of false and counterfeit:
 - a. Actually, the Greek word is simply “the True.”

- b. Only our Triune God is true; everything and everyone else are false.
- 2. The term *the true One* (which is subjective) refers to God becoming subjective to us.
- 3. In this verse the God who is objective becomes the true One in our life and experience:
 - a. The true One is the divine reality, and we know the true One, know the divine reality, by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.
 - b. The Son of God has given us an understanding so that we may experience, enjoy, and possess the true God, the divine reality.
 - c. This verse indicates that God has become our reality in our experience.
 - d. The God who was once objective to us has become our subjective reality.
- E. “We are in Him who is true”:
 - 1. We are in the True, in His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 2. We not only know God—we are in God:
 - a. We not only have the knowledge of Him; we are also in an organic union with Him.
 - b. We are one with Him organically.
 - 3. No longer are we outside the True, and no longer are we outside His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 4. When John says that we are in the true One, he is making a crucial point: *Not only do we know the true One, and not only do we experience, enjoy, and possess Him as the divine reality, but we are in this reality; we are in the true One.*
- F. “We are...in His Son Jesus Christ”:
 - 1. To be in the true God is to be in His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Since Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), to be in Him is to be in the true God; this indicates that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God.
Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
 - 3. Whether we say that to be in the true One is to be in His Son Jesus Christ, or we are in the true One by virtue of being in Jesus Christ, the outcome is the same, and the meaning is actually the same:
 - a. To be in the true One is equal to being in His Son Jesus Christ (for the true One and Jesus Christ are one in the way of coinherence).
 - b. We are in the true One by being in His Son Jesus Christ.
- G. “This is the true God and eternal life”:
 - 1. We need to pay attention to the word *this*.
 - 2. John uses *this* to refer both to the true God and to eternal life; by this we see that the true God and eternal life are one.
 - 3. Doctrinally, the true One and His Son Jesus Christ may be considered two, but when we are in the true One and in Jesus Christ experientially, They are one.
 - 4. For this reason, John uses *this* to refer both to the true One and to His Son Jesus Christ.
 - 5. In our experience of being in the true God and in Jesus Christ, They are one.

H. We need a clear vision of what *this* in 1 John 5:20 refers to:

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

1. The word *this* refers to the very God who has become experiential to us through our being in Him.
2. When we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ, They become one to us; therefore, John says that “this” is the true God, and “this” is eternal life.
3. “This” is the very God and the very Jesus Christ in whom we are.
4. “This” includes the condition of our being in God and Jesus Christ; hence, the true God and eternal life include our being in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ.
5. Now in our experience this true One becomes the true God, and Jesus Christ becomes eternal life.
6. “This” includes the fact of our being in the true God and eternal life.
7. We know that we are in the true God and in eternal life because we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ.
8. When we are in the true One and Jesus Christ, “this,” including the fact that we are in Them, is the true God.

I. The true God becomes our experience as eternal life—v. 20; 1:2; 2:25; 5:11, 13; John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24:

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

1 John 1:2—(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

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

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

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

John 3:15-16—That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

John 3:36—He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

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

John 5:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.

1. This is the basic factor of John's first Epistle.
2. In 1 John we have the enjoyment of the Triune God as eternal life.
3. When we are in the true God, He becomes eternal life to us.