

Message Two

The Knowledge of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Psa. 36:7-9; John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; Rom. 8:13; Matt. 7:13-14

I. Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the center of the universe— Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1; 6:35, 63; 1 Cor. 15:45b:

- A. Life is the goal of God's creation—Gen. 1:26-28, 31; 2:7-9.
- B. God's organic salvation, being saved in Christ's life, is the goal of the process of God's judicial redemption—John 19:34; Rom. 5:10; Col. 3:3-4; Rev. 22:1-2.
- C. Life is God Himself in Christ as the Spirit flowing out to be enjoyed by man and to please and satisfy man—Psa. 36:7-9; Rev. 22:1; Jer. 2:13.
- D. God is in Christ, Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit is life—John 14:9-10, 17-19; 6:63; Rom. 8:2.
- E. Life is the Lord Himself as the bread of life for us to eat—John 6:35, 57, 63; Matt. 15:22-27.
- F. Life is the light, light overcomes darkness, and light is in God's word—John 1:4-5; Psa. 36:8-9; John 6:63:
 - 1. If we want to touch life, we need the word, the inner feeling given to us by the Spirit; such a feeling is the living word of God—v. 63; 1 Sam. 3:19-21.
 - 2. If the Spirit in us gives us a word or a feeling to open our mouth and praise the Lord, we should receive this word and open our mouth to praise the Lord; thus, we will have light within, and this light is life, the Spirit, Christ, and God.
 - 3. When we respond to this feeling and offer a prayer of praise to the Lord, we sense the satisfaction of life, the sweetness of Christ, the presence of God, and the moving of the Spirit.
- G. All the beauty, power, brightness, and ability of the church come from the fact that Christ as life is her inward content; the church is the result of life, and life is the content of the church—Gen. 2:22; John 19:34; 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17.

II. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in man:

- A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts:
 - 1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved, because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.
- B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:
 - 1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
 - 2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves rejecting our natural disposition and preference and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.
 - 3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.
- C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion:

1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
 2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
 3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27; cf. Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 2 Cor. 2:12-14.
- D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:
1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
 2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.
- E. There is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us; if we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.

III. We need to see the subjective obstacles encountered by God's life in us:

- A. A proper Christian is one whose mind, will, and emotion cooperate with his spirit; an abnormal Christian is one whose mind, will, and emotion cannot cooperate with, and even contradict, his spirit; thus, he lives under a veil.
- B. The first subjective problem is the problem of our mind:
1. If the things we want to do originate from our thoughts, then these things will be nothing more than religious activities, even if they are successful; they are not a testimony of Christ lived out from our spirit—cf. Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2.
 2. Although we have the life of Christ within, we do not cooperate with Christ's life in our thoughts and actions, and so this life cannot be lived out from us.
 3. When our mind is set on the spirit, our outward actions are in agreement with our inner man, and there is no discrepancy between us and God; He and we are at peace, not at enmity; the result is that we feel peaceful within—8:6.
- C. The second subjective problem is the problem of our will:
1. Even though our mind often understands the intention in our spirit, and we know the will of God, we are unwilling to submit and obey.
 2. We may understand, know, apprehend, and deeply sense that the Lord wants us to do a certain thing, but our will refuses to submit and surrender, and we lose the Lord's presence.
 3. Both a strong will and a weak will to carry out the Lord's will are hindrances to God's life; a will that has been dealt with is both strong and pliable by being subdued and resurrected by the Lord; having a will that can cooperate with God is a great matter—Phil. 2:13.
- D. The third subjective problem is the problem of our emotion:
1. Our emotion needs to have God's emotion, and we need to fully enter into God's emotion—2 Thes. 3:5; Phil. 1:8.

2. We should love whatever God loves, like whatever God likes, and hate whatever God hates; our emotion and His emotion should become one emotion—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 16:24; Rev. 2:6.

E. From all this we can see that our person is truly an obstacle for the living out of God's life; this is why we need to be broken and why we daily need to be strengthened into the inner man so that Christ can make His home in our heart, the main parts of which are the mind, will, and emotion—Eph. 3:16-17.

IV. We need to see the pathway of life—Matt. 7:13-14:

A. A part of God's work in His salvation is to pave a clear way for His life in us; this work is accomplished through the death of the cross—Phil. 3:10.

B. There is life in a grain of wheat, but unless the grain falls into the ground and dies, the life within the grain will not be released—John 12:24-26.

C. The way of life is the way of death; when there is the death of Christ operating in us, there is a way for the life of Christ to come out of us—2 Cor. 4:10; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20.

D. The cross of Christ is experienced by us through the Spirit—5:16, 24; Rom. 8:13-14; Exo. 30:23-25; Phil. 1:19.

E. The stronger the Holy Spirit's work in us is, the stronger our experience of the cross will be; wherever the Holy Spirit works, there is a putting to death by the Spirit, and resurrection life can be manifested in and through us—2 Cor. 4:11-12.

F. The discipline of the Holy Spirit also carries out the work of the cross in us:

1. For our spiritual understanding, it is not enough only to know the Holy Spirit; we must also know the "all things" in our circumstances (Rom. 8:28); a Christian who is spiritual and lives before God needs to "read" three things every day: first, he needs to read the Bible; second, he needs to read his inward sense of the spirit; third, he needs to read his environment and circumstances, which are the persons, matters, and things around him; God arranges our environment and circumstances to cause all persons, matters, and things to work together for good, that is, for transforming and conforming us to the image of God's firstborn Son—vv. 28-29.

2. The environment that the Lord has created for us causes us to know the Lord's grace and experience the Lord's power—2 Cor. 12:9.

V. We need to see a vision of how the life of God can be lived out of us:

A. We need to realize and know that the life of God is in us—Col. 3:4; Rom. 8:10.

B. We need God to open our eyes to see that our natural man, our very person, is a hindrance to the life of God.

C. We need to see that we have been crucified on the cross, and we must hate our self; the more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and the more we deny ourselves—Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6; Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

VI. "What every church today needs most is the things of life. All our work and activity must come out of life...Unless it comes out of life, our work and service will neither last nor bear much weight. If we want our work to bear abundant and lasting fruit, we must have a foundation in life...Our work should just be the releasing of the life of the Lord, the imparting and supplying of the Lord's life to others. May the Lord have mercy upon us and open our eyes to see that the central work of God in this age is that man may gain His life and grow and mature in His life. Only the work which comes out of His life can reach His eternal standard and be accepted by Him"—*The Knowledge of Life*, pp. 57-58.