

THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Jehovah's Commanded Blessing of Life on Brothers Who Dwell Together in Oneness

Scripture Reading: Psa. 133—134

- I. **The unique ground of Jerusalem, the place where the temple as God's dwelling place was built on Mount Zion, typifies the unique ground of God's choice, the ground of oneness—Deut. 12:5; 2 Chron. 6:5-6; Ezra 1:2-3:**
 - A. In the ancient time all the Israelites came together three times a year at Jerusalem; it was by this unique place of worship to God, Jerusalem, that the oneness of His people was kept for generations—Deut. 12:5; 16:16.
 - B. In the New Testament the proper ground of oneness ordained by God is the unique ground of one church for one locality—Rev. 1:11:
 1. The church is constituted of the universal God, but it exists on earth in many localities; in nature the church is universal in God, but in practice the church is local in a definite place, such as “the church of God which is in Corinth”—1 Cor. 1:2:
 - a. “The church of God” means that the church is not only possessed by God but has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, general, universal, and eternal—v. 2a.
 - b. The church “which is in Corinth” refers to a church in a city, remaining in a definite locality and taking it as its standing, ground, and jurisdiction for its administration in business affairs, which is physical, particular, local, and temporal in time—v. 2b.
 2. Without the universal aspect, the church is void of content; without the local aspect, it is impossible for the church to have any expression and practice; the record concerning the establishment of the church in its locality is consistent throughout the New Testament—Acts 8:1; 13:1; 14:23; Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:4, 11.
- II. **Psalm 133 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning Jehovah's commanded blessing of life on brothers who dwell together in oneness; the blessing that is commanded whenever brothers are united under the anointing is a “life forever,” a full, free, unceasing stream of life:**
 - A. The brothers' dwelling together in oneness is likened to the inestimable goodness of the precious ointment on the head of Aaron and to the incalculable pleasantness of the dew of Hermon on the mountains of Zion—vv. 1-3:
 1. As a person typified by Aaron, the church as the one new man includes the Head with the Body as the corporate Christ, the corporate priesthood—Eph. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:5.

2. As a place typified by Zion, the church is the dwelling place of God—Deut. 12:5-7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:3, 22.
- B. The genuine oneness is constituted of the spreading ointment and the descending dew for the gradual building up of Christ's Body in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity:
1. Psalm 133 is equivalent to Ephesians 4; when we are in the Body and are diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit, we have the anointing of the Spirit (vv. 3-6); the anointing oil as the compound ointment is a type of the processed Triune God, the all-inclusive compound Spirit (Exo. 30:23-25):
 - a. The compound Spirit is the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God with the divine attributes, the human virtues, Christ's death with its effectiveness, and Christ's resurrection with its power—Phil. 1:19.
 - b. We are in the oneness that is the processed Triune God anointed, or "painted," into our being—2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27.
 - c. Day by day in the church life, all the ingredients of the divine and mystical compound ointment are being wrought into us; through the application of these ingredients to our inward being, we are spontaneously in the oneness—Eph. 4:3-4.
 - d. The ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God applied to our being; the anointing of the compound, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is the element of our oneness—v. 4; cf. John 4:24:
 - 1) If we act apart from the Spirit, who is in our spirit, we are divisive and lose the oneness—Eph. 4:3; cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 2:14-15; 3:1.
 - 2) If we stay in the life-giving Spirit, we keep the oneness of the Spirit—cf. John 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - e. The compound Spirit is not for those who are individualistic; He is in and for the Body and for the priestly service that builds up the Body—Psa. 133:2; Exo. 30:26-31; Phil. 1:19; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
 - f. We receive the supply of the Spirit, the supply of the Body, by the intercession and fellowship of the members:
 - 1) When we are dry and have no way to go on, we need other brothers and sisters to intercede for us before we can get through—Phil. 1:19; 1 Thes. 5:25; Job 42:8-10.
 - 2) We cannot live without the supply of the Body; therefore, we must constantly avail ourselves of the fellowship of the Body—1 Thes. 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:16b; 1 John 1:3.
 - 3) If a man wants to see light, he has to enter the church, the sanctuary—Psa. 73:16-17; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
 2. The dew of Hermon descending on the mountains of Zion signifies the descending, refreshing, watering, and saturating grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7), the Triune God as our life supply for our enjoyment (2 Cor. 13:14):
 - a. In typology Hermon signifies the heavens, the highest place in the universe—cf. Eph. 1:3; Matt. 17:1-2.
 - b. The mountains of Zion typify the local churches; there is one Zion, one

- church as one Body, but many mountains, many local churches—Rev. 1:11-12.
- c. Grace is God in Christ as the Spirit experienced, received, enjoyed, and gained by us—John 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 5:2, 17, 21.
 - d. By remaining in the church life, we are preserved in the Lord's grace—Acts 4:33; 11:23.
 - e. By the grace we receive on the mountains of Zion, we can live a life that is impossible for people in the world to live—20:32; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.
 - f. The Christian living must be the living of grace, the experience of grace—v. 9; 2 Tim. 4:22:
 - 1) We have faith and love through the Lord's superabounding grace—1 Tim. 1:14.
 - 2) By grace we receive the salvation in life through Christ's resurrection and ascension—Eph. 2:5-8.
 - 3) We have obtained access into and stand in God's abounding grace—Rom. 5:2.
 - 4) In this grace we can enjoy God's eternal comfort and good hope—2 Thes. 2:16.
 - 5) We can come forward with boldness to the throne of grace to find grace for timely help—Heb. 4:16.
 - 6) We can receive God's abounding supply of grace—2 Cor. 9:8.
 - 7) We can constantly enjoy God's multiplying grace—1 Pet. 1:2b; 2 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 22:21.
 - 8) We can enjoy God's greater grace through humility—James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.
 - 9) In our experience of the grace in God's economy, we enjoy the Lord's presence in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; cf. Luke 1:28, 30.
 - 10) We need to live out Christ as God's righteousness by the grace of God—Gal. 2:20-21.
 - 11) We need to experience the perfecting of the Lord's sufficient grace, Christ's overshadowing power, in our weakness—2 Cor. 12:9.
 - 12) By grace we can overcome the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches and become generous in ministering to the needy saints—8:1-2.
 - 13) The God of all grace perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds us through our sufferings—1 Pet. 5:10.
 - 14) We need to be good stewards of the varied grace of God—4:10; Eph. 3:2.
 - 15) Our word should convey Christ as grace to others—4:29-30.
 - 16) We need to experience Christ as grace to be a surpassing one and to labor abundantly for the Lord—1 Cor. 15:10.
 - 17) We need to receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life—Rom. 5:17, 21.
 - g. The grace given to the local churches in the dark age of the church's degradation is for the believers who seek to answer the Lord's calling to be His overcomers—Rev. 1:4.
 - h. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ dispensed to His believers throughout the New Testament age consummates in the New Jerusalem as the

consummation of God's good pleasure in joining and mingling Himself with man for His enlargement and eternal expression—22:21.

3. In the church life we are daily anointed and graced; the anointing of the Spirit and the supply of grace make it possible for us to live in oneness—Eph. 1:13, 6.
4. The more we experience Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the more our natural constitution and disposition are reduced; as they are reduced through our experience of the Triune God with His divine attributes, we are perfected into one—John 17:23; Eph. 4:1-3.

III. As the conclusion to Psalm 133 and as the last of the Songs of Ascents, Psalm 134 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning the charge and the blessing of the children of Israel to the serving priests in the house of God:

- A. This psalm indicates that the highest people, those who are in Zion, can bless everyone and teach everyone—vv. 1-2; cf. Gen. 47:10; 48:20; 49:28.
- B. The blessing comes from Zion, from the highest peak, from the ones who have attained to the top, to the position of the overcomers; in every age and century God's blessing has come to the church because of the overcomers—Psa. 134:3; cf. Rev. 2:7.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

TWO ASPECTS OF ONENESS

[Psalm 133] is so profound that it is difficult to speak about it. Verse 1 says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!" Notice that the psalmist uses two adjectives to describe brothers dwelling together in oneness. He says that this is good and pleasant. The reason two adjectives are used is that in the following verses the dwelling together in oneness is likened to two things: to the precious ointment on the head of Aaron and to the dew of Hermon on the mountains of Zion. These two adjectives point to two aspects of oneness. The oneness is good and pleasant: good as the precious ointment and pleasant as the descending dew.

Of these aspects, the first—Aaron—is a person, and the second—Zion—is a place. Have you ever seen that the church has these two aspects? On the one hand, the church is a person; on the other hand, the church is a place. As a person, the church includes the Head with the Body. As a place, the church is the dwelling place of God. Elsewhere in the Bible we see that the church is the bride, the new man, and the warrior. These, however, are aspects of the church as a person. Actually, the church has just two main aspects: the aspect of a person and the aspect of a dwelling place. Related to these two aspects of the church are the ointment and the dew.

THE SPREADING OINTMENT AND THE DESCENDING DEW

Although in verse 2 the King James Version speaks of ointment, most other versions use the Hebrew word for *oil*. This oil refers to the anointing oil described in Exodus 30. That anointing oil was a compound ointment formed by blending four spices with olive oil. Aaron, his sons, the tabernacle, and everything related to the tabernacle were anointed with this ointment. According to Psalm 133, this ointment, this compound anointing oil, was upon a

person, Aaron. We have pointed out that, by contrast, the refreshing, watering, and saturating dew was on a place, the mountains of Zion.

Neither the anointing oil nor the saturating dew moved quickly. The dew did not fall down like rain; it descended, came down, in a gradual way. In like manner, the ointment did not actually run down upon Aaron's beard; it spread upon his beard and then ran down to the hem of his garments. The Hebrew root means "to strew," as to strew over a surface. It also means "to spread," like to spread a cover, a bedspread, over a bed. Hence, the anointing oil upon Aaron's head spread upon his beard; it did not swiftly run down upon the beard. Gently and slowly, the ointment spread.

In the same principle the dew came down upon the mountains of Zion. In our hymnal there is a hymn about "showers of blessing" (*Hymns*, #260). Such spiritual showers are somewhat Pentecostal in nature. I have a greater appreciation for the spreading of the ointment and the descending of the dew than for the showers of blessing. Showers are not related to oneness. The genuine oneness is constituted of the spreading ointment and the descending dew.

ANOINTED WITH THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

We have pointed out emphatically that real oneness is the mingling of the processed God with the believers. Although this is revealed in the New Testament, we do not see in the New Testament the way to practice this oneness. The way to practice this mingling is in Psalm 133. The ointment in verse 2 is a type of the processed Triune God who today is the all-inclusive compound Spirit. According to Exodus 30, the anointing oil is a compound formed by blending four spices with a hin of olive oil. This compound typifies the all-inclusive Spirit who is the processed God for our enjoyment. In this compound Spirit we have not only divinity but also Christ's humanity, the effectiveness of His death, and the power of His resurrection. In other words, the compound Spirit is the processed God with the divine attributes, the human virtues, the effectiveness of Christ's death, and the power of Christ's resurrection. In the church life this compound Spirit is continually anointing us.

The ointment can be compared to paint, and the anointing to the application of the paint. When you paint a chair, you may put on one coat of paint after another. As the compound Spirit anoints us, He "paints" us, and the "paint" is the very Triune God. In this paint we have the humanity of Christ, the effectiveness of Christ's death, and the power of Christ's resurrection. We also have Christ's divinity and human living. As all these ingredients of the ointment are applied to us, we are painted with the processed Triune God and with all the elements in the compound ointment. The proper church life is a life in the oneness that is the mingling of the processed Triune God with the believers. As we remain in this oneness, we are painted with the ointment. The more we are painted in this way, the more our natural constitution, temperament, and disposition are eliminated. What remains is the mingling of the processed Triune God with our uplifted humanity. This is the oneness.

In such a oneness it is not possible to have division, not even dissension. In this oneness there is no room even for our opinion. Although we need much more experience of the divine painting that brings us into oneness, we have had at least some experience of this in the church life. To a certain degree at least, we have all entered into the oneness.

When we were in the denominations or independent groups, we found it easy to be opinionated or critical. But in the church the dissenting element and divisive factors are subdued. This is the effect of oneness. The more the paint of the processed Triune God is applied to our being, the more difficult it is for us to be divided. Through the application of the heavenly paint, we are brought into the genuine oneness, not the superficial oneness that is

according to the natural concept. We are in the oneness that is the processed Triune God painted into our very being.

As we have pointed out, this ointment, this divine paint, does not run down; it spreads. I want my house to be painted with paint that will stick, not with paint that will run down the walls like water. Likewise, when the ointment is applied to us, it sticks to our inner being; it does not run down. The running of the ointment is like the experiences in Pentecostalism or in the charismatic movement. Experiences of that kind pass quickly. In the church life, however, the spiritual blessing comes to us gradually, slowly, and gently. But once it comes, it remains. Once the paint is applied to us, it stays. After we have been coated with the anointing oil, the coat remains forever. Nothing can eradicate it.

The anointing does not cause us to have very much feeling in our emotion. Those experiences that come and go quickly, on the contrary, stir up our feeling. But this is not the normal experience in the church life. In the church life we experience the gradual spreading of the all-inclusive ointment. For example, in the church prayer meeting we may receive one or two coats of paint without having much feeling of it. As we have pointed out, this ointment has many ingredients. How grateful we are to the Lord for His recovery. Day by day in the church life, all the ingredients of the divine ointment are being wrought into us. Through the application of these ingredients to our inward being, we are spontaneously in the oneness. We find it exceedingly difficult to be divisive or even dissenting. How good, lovely, and enjoyable is the oneness in the church! The only way to be divisive is for us to make a strong decision contrary to our inner being. We are one spontaneously because we have been painted with all the elements of the heavenly paint.

THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD APPLIED TO OUR BEING

The ground of oneness is simply the processed Triune God applied to our being. This is the oneness in which we find ourselves today. We are not in a oneness produced by adding together those who believe in Christ. In that kind of oneness it is just as easy to have subtraction as it is to have addition. However, once we have been brought into the oneness produced by the application of the processed Triune God to our being, it is very difficult to have any subtraction. This oneness is altogether different from the oneness in today's Christianity. The oneness in Christianity involves addition and subtraction. But the oneness in the churches in the Lord's recovery involves the application of the Triune God to our inward being.

FOR THE HEAD WITH THE BODY

The ointment is not for individuals; it is for the Body. It cannot be experienced by those who are separate and detached from the Body. According to the picture in Psalm 133, the ointment is upon the head. Then it spreads to the beard and goes down to the hem of the garment. This indicates that if we are individualistic, we cannot experience the ointment. Some may argue that they can contact the Lord alone at home. No doubt they can. The crucial matter, however, is whether or not we are one with the church. If we are one with the church, then we can properly contact the Lord alone at home. But if we separate ourselves from the church, our contact with the Lord will be altogether different. The reason is that the anointing oil is not for individualistic members; it is for the Head and the Body, even for the Head with the Body. Hence, to be painted by the ointment, we must be in the church. Then we spontaneously enjoy the application of the anointing oil with all its elements. How marvelous is the oneness produced by the application of this ointment!

**GRACE—THE TRIUNE GOD
AS OUR LIFE SUPPLY FOR OUR ENJOYMENT**

According to Psalm 133:3, the oneness is also like the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion. The anointing oil is upon the person, Aaron, but the dew is upon the place, Zion. The dew signifies the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). The grace of life is the supply of life. In the church life we are not only under the anointing; we also receive the supply, the grace, of life. As we are anointed, we are also graced.

Suppose two brothers who live together in a brothers' house are having difficulty getting along. However, through their participation in the church life, they are graced and receive the supply of life. Spontaneously they will not only bear one another but truly love one another. This is the experience of the dew, the grace.

The apostle Paul abundantly experienced the Lord's grace. Three times he prayed that the "thorn" that was afflicting him would be removed. The Lord replied that His grace was sufficient for Paul. By this word the Lord indicated that He would not take away the thorn, but He would supply Paul with His sufficient grace.

In 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul blesses the church with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This verse indicates that grace is the Triune God processed to be our life supply. Whereas the ointment signifies the processed Triune God who is painted into our being, the dew signifies the Triune God who is our life supply for our enjoyment. Therefore, in the church life daily we are anointed and graced. We are painted with the processed God, and we are graced with the very same processed God as our life supply. This anointing and this supply make it possible for us to live in oneness. In the words of Psalm 133, this oneness is like the anointing oil and the watering dew. Under the anointing oil and the watering dew, we experience the blessing of life on the ground of oneness. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," pp. 295-300*)

DEW—THE GRACE OF LIFE

In typology Hermon signifies the heavens, the highest place in the universe, and the dew signifies the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Without the New Testament, it would be difficult for us to realize that dew signifies grace. Every Epistle written by Paul opens with a word about grace and closes with some mention of grace. When I was a young Christian in the denominations, I was told that grace denotes unmerited favor. According to this understanding of grace, to receive grace is to receive something that we do not deserve. Many Christians regard such unmerited favor as all the material blessings they receive from the Lord. For example, at the end of the year, some may count all the blessings God has given them that year: a good job, a bigger home, a late-model automobile. However, according to Paul's word in Philippians 3:8, everything apart from Christ is "refuse." He would regard things such as a job, a house, and an automobile as nothing but "refuse" in comparison to Christ. The grace spoken of in the Scriptures does not refer to mere material blessing. As many verses in the New Testament make clear, grace is the processed God as the life supply to be our enjoyment.

Strictly speaking, *grace* is a New Testament term. When used in the Old Testament, it has the meaning of "favor." According to John 1:17, grace came through Jesus Christ. When the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, grace came also. This means that grace came with the incarnated God. Before the incarnation of Christ, grace had not come. Grace came through incarnation.

Many verses in Acts speak of grace. Acts 4:33 says, "With great power the apostles gave

testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” This verse indicates that the great power in resurrection was the great grace. Christ in resurrection is grace. Such a grace is not a good house, job, or automobile. It is God experienced, received, enjoyed, and gained by the believers. In Acts 11:23 we are told that in Antioch Barnabas saw the grace of God; he, of course, did not see material blessings. He saw that the believers in Antioch were experiencing God in Christ as their life supply for their enjoyment.

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul says, “By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.” We may compare this verse to Galatians 2:20, where Paul says, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” It was not Paul himself who labored more than the other apostles; it was the grace of God which was with him. This grace by which Paul labored more than others was no doubt Christ Himself as the life power and life supply to Paul in his experience.

In Romans 5:2 Paul says that through Christ “we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.” The standing about which Paul is speaking here certainly is not something such as a house or a job. It is the Triune God who has been processed to become the all-inclusive Spirit as His ultimate consummation. Through Christ we can stand in the all-inclusive Spirit.

In Romans 5:17 Paul goes on to say that “those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” If we have abundant grace, we will be able to reign in life. This verse implies that grace is life and that life is grace. In 1 Peter 3:7 Peter speaks of the grace of life, the inheritance of both a husband and wife. In Romans 5:21 Paul speaks about grace reigning unto eternal life. All these verses indicate that grace is nothing less than Christ as our life power and life supply for our experience and enjoyment.

If we are clear about this, we can have a greater appreciation of the dew as a type of Christ in Psalm 133. As the dew, the grace, becomes our enjoyment, we share in the genuine oneness. However, if we are not under the dew that waters, refreshes, and saturates us, we cannot be one with other believers. It is on the mountains of Zion that we experience this dew. If we would enjoy the dew, which typifies the all-inclusive grace, we must be on one of the peaks, the mountaintops, of Zion. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1979*, vol. 2, “The Genuine Ground of Oneness,” pp. 306-308)