

**TAKING CHRIST AS OUR PERSON
AND LIVING HIM IN AND FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

**Knowing the Significance of Loving the Lord,
Loving the Lord Jesus Christ in Incorruptibility,
and Walking in Love and Light**

Scripture Reading: Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Eph. 6:24; 5:1-14

I. We need to know the significance of loving the Lord—Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9:

- A. To love the Lord is to allow Him to live in us and for us and is to realize that He desires a dwelling place so that He can be expressed—Eph. 3:16-17.
- B. Our believing into the Lord is for our receiving Him, and our loving Him is for our enjoying Him—Titus 3:15.
- C. To love the Lord is to be stopped from our doing and is to let Him take full possession of our being—Eph. 3:16-19; Gal. 4:19.
- D. The best way to express our love toward the Lord is to say, “Lord Jesus, I open to You. Take full possession of me. Lord, I love You. I present myself to You. I am open to You. Possess me more and more until You reach every part of my being and make Your home in me.”
- E. According to 1 Corinthians, in order to love the Lord, we need to take Him as our portion for our enjoyment (1:2, 9; 5:7-8; 10:3-4), allow Him to grow in us (3:6), and realize that we are one spirit with Him (6:17).
- F. We love the Lord by being fully occupied by Him and loving His appearing—2 Tim. 4:8:
 - 1. To be a lover of God is to be fully occupied, possessed, and taken over by God—Eph. 3:16-19; Gal. 4:19.
 - 2. If we love the Lord in this way, we will love His appearing—2 Tim. 4:8:
 - a. According to Paul’s word, a crown is laid up for those who love the Lord’s appearing—v. 8.
 - b. If we do not love the Lord, His coming will be a matter of judgment (1 Cor. 16:22), but if we love Him and His appearing, we will receive a prize.

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

- A. According to the usage of *incorruptible* in the writings of Paul, this word refers mainly to God and the things of God; everything natural is corruptible, but God, the divine life, and all things that are in resurrection are incorruptible—1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:42, 52-54.
- B. To love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility means to love Him in the new creation and according to all the incorruptible things revealed in Ephesians:
 - 1. We need to love the Lord Jesus in His being the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9); in His being the element of the Body (1 Cor. 12:12); in His

being reality, grace, peace, love, and light (John 1:17; 8:12; 14:6, 27; 1 John 4:8); and in His being the constituent of the one new man (Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10-11).

2. All these things are related to what is revealed in and taught in Ephesians, including the Triune God, Christ, and His Body, the church.
 3. Ephesians speaks concerning the dispensing of the Triune God to produce the church (1:3-23; 3:16-21), concerning what Christ is and has done for the church (1:7; 2:13-18; 5:25-27, 29), and concerning the church being the Body of Christ, being the bride of Christ, and being one with Christ in the heavens (1:22-23; 5:23, 25-27; 2:6).
 4. All these matters are incorruptible, and we need to love the Lord in these incorruptible things:
 - a. If we love the Lord Jesus in all these things, our love toward Him will be incorruptible—6:24.
 - b. Such a love is not a natural love—it is a love in resurrection, the love that God Himself is in His divine essence—1 John 4:16.
- C. In the Lord's recovery we need to love our Lord Jesus Christ in all the divine, spiritual, heavenly, and incorruptible things revealed in Ephesians concerning the Triune God, the divine life, what Christ is to us, what He has done, and the church—1:3-23; 2:5-6, 13-18; 3:16-21; 4:4-6; 5:23, 25-27.

III. The more we love the Lord in incorruptibility, the more we, as children of God, will walk in love and light—vv. 1-14:

- A. As the children of God, we are God-men, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God—v. 1; 1 John 3:1; John 1:12-13:
1. God is our real, genuine, Father, and we are His real, genuine, children—1 John 3:1; Eph. 5:1.
 2. The greatest wonder in the universe is that human beings could be begotten of God and that sinners could be made children of God—1 John 3:1, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; John 1:12-13:
 - a. Since we have been born of the divine life and possess the divine life, we, the children of God, are divine persons—1 John 5:11-13; 3:1, 10.
 - b. As those who have been born of God, we have not only the divine life but also the divine nature—2 Pet. 1:4.
- B. As the children of God, we should walk in love and light—Eph. 5:2, 8:
1. Love is the inner substance of God, and light is the expressed element of God—1 John 4:8, 16; 1:5.
 2. Our daily walk as children of God should be constituted with both the loving substance of God and the shining element of God; this should be the inner source of our walk—Eph. 5:2, 8.
 3. "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor"—v. 2:
 - a. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as the inner substance of God so that we may enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did—v. 25:

- 1) In the condition and atmosphere of love, we are saturated with God to be holy and without blemish before Him—1:4.
 - 2) The love in which we are rooted for growth and grounded for building is the divine love realized and experienced by us in a practical way—3:17.
 - 3) The love of Christ, which is Christ Himself, is immeasurable and knowledge-surpassing, yet we can know it by experiencing it—v. 19.
 - 4) The Body of Christ builds itself up in love; love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—4:16; 1 Cor. 12:31.
- b. As those who have been regenerated to become God’s species, we, the children of God, should be love because God is love; since we become God in life and in nature, we also should become love—1 John 4:8, 16.
4. “You were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light”—Eph. 5:8:
 - a. As God is light, so we, the children of God, are children of light—1 John 1:5; Eph. 5:8; John 12:36.
 - b. We are not only children of light—we are light itself; we are light because we are one with God in the Lord—Matt. 5:14; 1 John 1:5.
 - c. When we are in the light, we are outside the realm of right and wrong—v. 7.
 - d. If we walk as children of light, we will bear the fruit described in Ephesians 5:9:
 - 1) The fruit of the light must be good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression, that God may be expressed as the reality of our daily walk.
 - 2) The fruit of the light in goodness, righteousness, and truth is related to the Triune God:
 - a) God the Father as goodness is the nature of the fruit of the light; therefore, goodness in verse 9 refers to God the Father—Matt. 19:17.
 - b) Righteousness refers to God the Son, for Christ came to accomplish God’s purpose according to God’s righteous procedure—Rom. 5:17-18, 21.
 - c) Truth, the expression of the fruit of the light, refers to God the Spirit, for He is the Spirit of reality—John 14:17; 16:13.
 - d) The proof that we are walking as children of light is seen in the bearing of such fruit.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

LOVING THE LORD BEING NECESSARY FOR THE GROWTH IN LIFE

The way for us to grow in life, which is the way for the Lord to grow within us, is to recover our first love toward the Lord. This love toward the Lord is the basic condition of our growth in Him as love. We grow and enjoy the Lord by loving Him. Two books—Song of Songs in the Old Testament and the Gospel of John in the New Testament—show us how to enjoy the Lord as our life and grow in Him by loving Him.

Song of Songs reveals that we need to take the Lord in whom we believe not only as our life but also our person. We were born with our old person, but we need to take another one—the One whom we love—as our person. Love is the only way that we can take another one as our person. If we do not love someone, we will not want to spend time with him, much less take him as our person. Marriage means to take someone else as one's person. Marriage involves two persons, but the two persons become one (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31). At a wedding the bride's head is covered by a veil, and only one head is visible. In any relationship with two persons, there will be trouble. When a married couple is truly one, they have peace and joy in the Lord. When they are not one—when there are two heads in their family life—there are anger and quarrels. To live with things is easy, but to live with another person is difficult. We can live peacefully only with one whom we truly love. Love is crucial for taking another one as our person.

The Lord loves us all the time, and we need to love Him all the time so that we can spontaneously be one with Him. In this way He will have an opening in every part of our being and will have a way to grow in us. Some think that it is difficult to grow in life. Actually, it is impossible to grow in life if we do not love the Lord.

When I came to the United States, I discovered that some Americans love their pets. When I visited the home of a certain family, the father took me to greet his daughter. I was surprised to see her embracing a dog. I was told that she even allowed the dog to sleep in her bed. Someone who does not love dogs cannot live with a dog, but that girl could live closely with her dog because she loved it. Without love we can do nothing, but with love we can do everything. For instance, a mother is able to care for her young children because she loves them. It is difficult to receive someone whom we do not love as a guest, but it is a joy to receive those whom we love. We are able to care for them without a sense of burden. The difference is whether or not we have love. Love is the key. Love enables us. We should not say that we cannot make it in the Christian life. If we love the Lord, we will be able to learn even the most difficult lessons.

THE LORD BEING UNIQUELY RECEIVABLE AND LOVABLE

Not one of the great philosophers in history, such as Confucius or Plato, told his followers to love him and receive him into them. They were not qualified to say this because they were not lovable or receivable. They may have deserved the respect and honor of their disciples because of their wisdom, but none of them was worthy of love. The Lord did not demand honor or respect from His disciples, but He often exhorted others to receive Him by believing into Him (e.g., Mark 16:16; John 1:12; 3:15; 7:38). Only the Lord is worthy to be received, and He alone is receivable. We can receive Him inwardly as food, water, and air (6:57; 7:37; 20:22). Moreover, after His resurrection He appeared to the disciples and asked three times, "Do you love Me?" (21:15-17). The Lord is worthy of our love. He is altogether lovely, which is to be lovable.

The Gospel of John reveals that God became a man in order to present Himself to man (1:1, 14). As a man, He asked us to do two things—first to receive Him into us by believing into Him and second to love Him (v. 12; 14:21, 23; 21:15-17). Our believing into the Lord is for our receiving Him, and our loving Him is for our enjoying Him. Receiving and enjoying are not the same thing. We receive food when we buy groceries, but we must prepare and eat the food in order to enjoy it. Every believer has received the Lord. Although we have already received Him, we still need to love Him. We should tell the Lord that we love Him every day, morning and evening. It is good to pray each morning, "Lord, I still love You. I love You more today than yesterday." Throughout the day, although we may not have a burden to pray for anything in particular, we should often pray, "Lord Jesus, I love You. I still love You. I love

You more than ever. You are so lovable.” No other kind of prayer will stir us up as much as telling the Lord that we love Him. After the day has passed, when we get into bed, we should say, “Lord Jesus, now that this day has passed, I tell You that I still love You. I love You. I love You more than anything.” The more we tell the Lord that we love Him, the more He will show us how lovely He is until we realize that He is altogether lovely.

Believing into the Lord and loving Him are the two basic requirements for us to participate in His riches. We must first receive Him into us and then love Him continually. For this reason, the apostle Paul says, “The grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:14). Faith and love are like our two hands, which enable us to embrace, grasp, or hold something. We need both hands. We have faith in the Lord, but we must consider whether our love toward the Lord is adequate. Trying to enjoy the Lord and take Him as our life without loving Him is like trying to work or hold something with one hand. We need to believe into the Lord and love Him continually in order to receive Him and enjoy Him.

Song of Songs is a love story that typifies the relationship between Christ and His believers. It begins in this way: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine... / Your name is like ointment poured forth” (1:2-3). Verse 4 says, “Draw me.” The Lord reveals Himself to us in order to draw us. Once we see His beauty, we will be attracted to Him. No one can resist Him when He reveals His beauty. It is not that we are able to love but that He is altogether lovable. We may find it impossible to love an object that is ugly and worthless, but we may immediately be attracted to a beautiful diamond and desire to have it. We will love the diamond not because of our ability to love but because the diamond is lovable.

We need to see Christ so that we will be attracted to Him and love Him absolutely. His beauty will be unveiled to us if we ask Him in prayer to reveal Himself to us. If we desire for the Lord to grow within us, we need to give Him more ground, more room, within us. The way to do this is to come to Him at any time and in any place and pray, “Lord Jesus, I love You. Show me Your loveliness. Unveil Yourself to me so that I will be attracted by Your beauty.” If we pray in this way, the Lord will answer our prayer, and our love for Him will be stirred up.

THE LORD NOT REQUIRING THAT WE DO THINGS FOR HIM BUT DESIRING ONLY THAT WE TAKE HIM AS OUR PERSON

We should not think that if we love the Lord, we must do something for Him. Trying to do something for the Lord may quench our love toward Him. Instead of trying to do things for the Lord, we simply need to love Him and take Him as our person. The Lord has come into us and is waiting not for us to do something for Him but for us to give Him the opportunity to live for us. He only wants us to say, “Lord Jesus, I present myself to You. I am an empty vessel. Fill me and live out of me.” This will make Him happy.

A wife who loves her husband may do many things for him that he does not like. Although he is pleased by her love, he may prefer that instead of doing many things for him, she take him as her person. To take someone else as our person is to be crucified. Although we love someone and are willing to do many things for him, we may not be willing to take him as our person, because this requires that we be put to death.

If we tell the Lord that because we love Him, we want to do many things for Him, He will tell us, “Forget about that. Do not do anything. I can accomplish anything simply by speaking. I do not need you to help Me. What I need is for you to take Me as your person. Give Me the ground in you. Let Me take over your whole being so that I can live in you, for you, and

out of you.” This is the way to let the Lord grow in us as life. To take Christ as our person is quite difficult, but love makes everything easy.

We should not be distracted by wrong understandings, thinking that if we love the Lord, we have to do things for Him. We need to forsake our doings and simply tell the Lord, “I give myself to You and take You as my person, giving You all the ground within me. Every part of my inward being is open to You. Lord, take over, and live in me and for me. I cannot do anything for You, but You can do everything in me to fulfill Your purpose. Lord, I give You the opportunity, the time, and the room in my being to live for me in order to fulfill Your purpose.” If we pray genuinely in this way, our living will change.

Our problem is either that we do not love the Lord enough or that we love Him and are busy trying to do things for Him. Martha had the latter problem. She loved the Lord but was busy doing many things to serve Him and thought that she was the better one. Luke 10:38-42 says, “He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord’s feet and was listening to His word. But Martha was being drawn about with much serving, and she came up to Him and said, Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to do her part with me. But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” The Lord does not want us to do anything other than love Him and give Him the ground in us so that He can live in us, for us, and out of us.

If our love for the Lord has cooled down, we need to be stirred up. However, after we are stirred up, the subtle enemy may tell us, “When you did not love the Lord, you were sloppy in many things. Now that you love the Lord, you need to do something for Him.” If we heed this thought, we will fall into a snare and be trapped. We need to tell the enemy, “Satan, you are a liar. The Lord does not need me to do anything for Him. He can do everything in me. Get away from me.” When Satan tempts us to do things for the Lord, we should not only reject this thought but also open to the Lord and pray, “I am open wide to You, Lord. You have come into me already, but I need You to come in more in order to fully occupy my mind, emotion, and will. Lord, possess my every part.” If we pray in this way, the Lord will grow in us.

NOT LOSING OUR FIRST LOVE TOWARD THE LORD OR BECOMING LUKEWARM

We should not make excuses for not loving the Lord. None of our excuses can stand. No matter what our situation may be, we need to say, “Lord Jesus, I love You.” Any kind of person who contacts the Lord in prayer will be attracted by Him. The Lord is real, living, and patient. Whether we come to Him in a positive way or in a negative way, He will receive us and reveal Himself to us until we cannot help but love Him.

In the seven epistles in Revelation 2—3 the first problem the Lord indicated to the churches was the loss of the first love. The church in Ephesus was sound in the faith and good works and had the knowledge to discern who were the false apostles (2:2). However, the Lord said, “I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love” (v. 4). The first cause of degradation in the seven epistles in Revelation is the loss of the first love. In the last epistle we see the effect of losing the first love, which is lukewarmness (3:16). If we lose our first love toward the Lord, we will inevitably become lukewarm—neither hot nor cold. It is a great peril that a local church may gradually and unconsciously lose its first love toward the Lord and as a result become full of lukewarmness. Without our first love toward the Lord, we quickly become lukewarm, losing the freshness, newness, and living impact.

If we are lukewarm, we are not cold, because we may still attend the meetings; yet in the meetings our spirit is not burning. To come to the meeting only hoping to hear good speaking from others is to be lukewarm. The Lord said that He was about to spew the lukewarm ones out of His mouth (v. 16). To be spewed out of the Lord's mouth is to be rejected by Him and to lose the enjoyment of all that He is to His church. We need to pray, "Lord, save me from losing my first love toward You and becoming lukewarm. Lord, recover my first love toward You. Stir me up within and burn in my spirit so that I may love You more." If we pray in this way, the Lord will gain the ground in us, and what we see in the Word will be a real help to us. Otherwise, what we see will be merely knowledge in letters and will not help us to grow in life.

EXPRESSING OUR LOVE TOWARD THE LORD BY ALLOWING HIM TO MAKE HIS HOME IN US

It is not easy to know how to practically express our love toward the Lord. Many Christians think that to love the Lord is to give everything we have to Him and to do His will, even giving our lives for His purpose. Actually, whatever we have is worthless. In Philippians 3:8 the apostle Paul says that he considered all he had to be refuse. The Lord does not want us to give Him our refuse. We may desire to do something for the Lord because we love Him, but I can say from many years of experience that we can do nothing for the Lord. The more we go on with the Lord, the more we will realize that we can do nothing because we are nothing.

We need to see how to express our love for the Lord. In John 14:21 the Lord said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." In verse 23 He said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." The Lord does not want us to do anything for Him. We need to stop ourselves. What He wants is to manifest Himself to us and make His abode with us. A great tragedy is taking place on the earth. Everyone is busy doing things, but God is homeless. The worldly people and the sinful people are busy in certain things, and the Christians are also busy. Everybody is fully occupied, but the Lord has no place to rest. The Lord is within us, but He may not have the opportunity to move freely within us to make His home in us.

The best way to express our love toward the Lord is to say, "Lord Jesus, I open to You. Take full possession of me." Rather than needing us to do something for Him, the Lord needs us to be His dwelling place to express Him. He wants us to open to Him so that He can make His home in our heart. In order to properly express our love toward the Lord, we must stop any kind of doing based on good intentions, such as being a proper spouse or bringing many to salvation. We should pray, "Lord, I love You and open up myself to You. I stop my doing. The only thing I can do is to ask You to come in and take over. Occupy, possess, saturate, and permeate me. Take every opportunity to gain more ground in me. Lord, I will not do anything in myself. Do what You will in me and through me. Whether or not I do a certain thing is not up to me but is absolutely Your decision. I ask You to live in me, for me, and out of me."

Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." We need to stop our doing so that it is no longer we who live. We have been crucified, and a crucified person cannot do anything. Not only should we no longer do bad things, but we also should no longer do good things from ourselves. If we do anything, it means that we are not crucified. The way to love the Lord is not to try to do anything but simply to say, "Lord, I love You. I present myself to You. I am open to You. Possess me more and more until You reach every part of my being and make Your home in me."

**LOVING THE LORD BY ENJOYING HIM AS OUR PORTION,
ALLOWING HIM TO GROW IN US, AND BEING ONE SPIRIT WITH HIM**

First Corinthians 16:22 says, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed! The Lord comes!" The imminence of the Lord's second coming is a warning to those who do not love the Lord. This is part of the closing word of 1 Corinthians. The Corinthian believers made a great mistake by not caring for loving the Lord. Instead, they cared for their own desires. They loved certain spiritual things, such as gifts, and had many good things, but they did not love the Lord. Therefore, Paul warned them in the book's conclusion to love the Lord. No matter if they spoke in tongues and had many spiritual things, if they did not love the Lord, they would be accursed.

First Corinthians reveals how to love the Lord. In this Epistle the apostle Paul does not tell us to do many things, such as go to the mission field or give everything to the Lord. According to 1 Corinthians, in order to love the Lord, we first need to take Him as our portion for our enjoyment (1:2, 9; 5:7-8; 10:3-4). We need to say, "Lord, You are my portion. You are edible and drinkable. You are my enjoyment." Second, to love the Lord is to allow Him to grow in us (3:6). We need not only to enjoy Him but also to let Him continually increase in our being. Third, in order to love the Lord, we need to realize that we are one spirit with Him (6:17). Instead of doing things for the Lord, such as exercising spiritual gifts or going to the mission field, we mainly need to pray, "Lord, You are my enjoyment, You are growing within me, and You and I are one spirit. In every aspect of my daily life I enjoy oneness with You in my spirit." This is to love the Lord.

**LOVING THE LORD BY BEING FULLY OCCUPIED BY HIM
AND LOVING HIS APPEARING**

In 2 Timothy Paul says, "In the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, ...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (3:1-2, 4). To be a lover of money is to be fully occupied, possessed, and taken over by money, even dreaming of money. Similarly, to be a lover of God is to be fully occupied, possessed, and taken over by God. In the United States people have many pleasures, such as sports and other amusements. A lover of sports is fully occupied by sports. To love the Lord is to be fully occupied by Him. Even in our dreams we should say, "Lord Jesus, I love You."

To love the Lord is not to do good things or even spiritual things. Instead, to love the Lord is to be stopped from our doing and to let the Lord take full possession of our being. We need to pray, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. Lord, live in me and live for me. I repent that for many years I have not given You the opportunity to live in me and for me. Now I see that I need to love You, give myself to You, and let You have all the ground in me and a free course to live in me and for me."

If we love the Lord in this way, we will love His appearing, which is His coming. Paul says, "Henceforth 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" (4:8). We should pray, "Lord, although I have given You a free course to live in me and for me, I still long for Your outward appearing. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" According to Paul's word, a crown is laid up for those who love the Lord's appearing. If we do not love the Lord, His coming will be a matter of judgment (1 Cor. 16:22), but if we love Him and His appearing, we will receive a prize.

We need to see that to love the Lord is to allow Him to live in us and for us. He desires a dwelling place and a vessel so that He can be expressed. If we sincerely love the Lord, we need to say, "Lord Jesus, I stop all my doing and give You the free way to live in me and to live for me." (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1973-1974, vol. 2, pp. 445-453*)