

Christian Gospel Conference

Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ

**October 17-19, 2025
Houston, Texas**

**We need to learn Christ as the secret
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 to practice speaking with the Lord constantly;
then spontaneously, we will live Christ.**



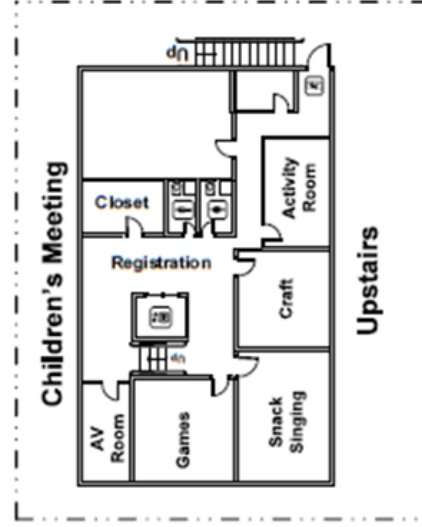
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Conference Schedule

Friday – October 17

7:30 pm - 9:30 pm – Session 1
7:30 – Singing and Message 1 8:30 – Small Groups
9:00 – Greet & Dessert and Hospitality
Dismiss

Saturday – October 18

10:00 am - 12:00 pm – Session 2
10:00 – Singing and Message 2 11:00 – Small Groups
11:45 – Break for Lunch

12:00 pm - 5:00 pm – Break & Gospel Activities 12:00 pm – Lunch
1:30 pm – Gospel Outing / Visitations 4:00 pm – Gospel Reports
5:30 pm – Dinner

6:45 pm - 9:00 pm – Session 3
6:45 – Singing
7:00 – Message 3
8:00 – Ministry Reading in Groups 8:30 – Overflow by Groups
Dismiss

Lord's Day – October 19

9:30 – The Lord's Table
10:00 – Singing and Message 4
11:30 – Overflow
12:00 – Concluding Word
Dismiss

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Message One

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

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:

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

- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 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.

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:

- 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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.
 - 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.

- 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.
 2. In order to preserve our spirit, we need to keep it from all defilement and contamination—2 Cor. 7:1.
 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.
 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.
- 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:
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).
 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:
 - 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:
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.
 2. To preserve our body is to glorify God in our body—v. 20.
 3. To preserve our body is to magnify Christ in our body—Phil. 1:20.

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

Message One Group Reading Excerpts

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

The New Testament emphasizes the matter of a pure heart. The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Paul exhorted Timothy to be with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22). Furthermore, in Psalm 51:10 David prayed that the Lord would create in him a clean heart. Why, then, [in 1 Thessalonians 3:13] does Paul not say, "blameless in purity" or "in cleanness" but instead says "blameless in holiness"? The reason is that the book of 1 Thessalonians is on a holy life for the church life. The conclusion of the first section of this Epistle, composed of chapters 1, 2, and 3, is that the Lord will establish our heart blameless in holiness. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, pp. 173-174)

Instead of having an established heart, most Christians have a changeable, movable heart. We need a heart that is solidly established, not a heart that is changeable. According to our natural birth, however, our heart is changeable...For example, in the morning a brother may be very kind to his wife. But during breakfast he may become bothered by something and treat her in an unkind way. This is an illustration of the changeableness of our heart. Our heart is changeable not only in relation to other people but even in our relationship with the Lord. God is the unchanging One; He never changes. We are the ones who are changeable, and we are changeable in our heart. For this reason Paul was concerned that the hearts of the new believers at Thessalonica would be set, built up, and established. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, p. 175)

Since the heart is so vitally related to life, God has no other alternative but to deal with our heart so that His life might be regulated out from us. Toward God, our heart has four great problems: hardness, impurity, unlovingness, and unpeacefulness. Hardness is a matter of the will, impurity is a matter not only of the mind but also of the emotion, unlovingness is a matter of the emotion, and unpeacefulness is a matter of the conscience. When God deals with our heart, He deals with these four aspects so that our heart may be soft, pure, loving, and at peace. (CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Knowledge of Life," p. 110)

God not only sanctifies us wholly but also preserves our spirit, soul, and body complete...In quantity God sanctifies us wholly; in quality God preserves us complete; that is, He keeps our spirit, soul, and body perfect. Through the fall our body has been ruined, our soul has been contaminated, and our spirit has been deadened. In God's full salvation our entire being is saved and made complete and perfect. For this, God is preserving our spirit from any deadening element (Heb. 9:14), our soul from remaining natural and old (Matt. 16:24-26), and our body from the ruin of sin (1 Thes. 4:4; Rom. 6:6). Such a preservation by God and His thorough sanctification sustain us to live a holy life unto maturity that we may meet the Lord in His parousia. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, p. 204)

Our psychological heart has three main arteries. These arteries, which are also the three parts of the soul, are the mind, the will, and the emotion...The way to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart is to make a thorough confession to the Lord. From experience I have learned that we need to stay with the Lord for a period of time to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, pp. 209-210)

Message Two

The Fellowship of the Eternal Life— the Reality of Living in the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1—2:2

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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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).

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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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.
- 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. 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.
 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.

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:

- 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.
- 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):
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.
 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.
 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.
- 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.
- 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. 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.
 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.
 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 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.
- 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. 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.
 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.
 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.
 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.
 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.

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.

Message Two Group Reading Excerpts

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:1—2:2

The first of the basic matters in this Epistle [of 1 John, is] the divine life. Now we come to the second basic matter, and this is the fellowship of the divine life. Actually, the fellowship of the divine life is the topic of the entire Epistle of 1 John. In the Gospel of John Jesus Christ is revealed as the divine life for us to receive. When we believe in Him, He comes into us, and we have Him as life within. As the continuation of the Gospel of John, this Epistle shows us that after receiving the divine life, we may have the fellowship of life as the issue of the divine life. The fellowship of the divine life is the real enjoyment of the divine life. In other words, if we would experience the divine life, we need to pay close attention to the fellowship of this life.

The Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, means “joint participation, common participation.” Fellowship is the issue of the eternal life and is actually the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possess the divine life. It is illustrated by the flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1). Hence, all genuine believers are in this fellowship (Acts 2:42). It is carried on by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit. Hence, it is called “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14) and “fellowship of [our] spirit” (Phil. 2:11) It is in this fellowship of the eternal life that we, the believers, participate in all that the Father and the Son are and have done for us; that is, we enjoy the love of the Father and the grace of the Son by virtue of the fellowship of the Spirit. Such a fellowship was first the apostles’ portion in their enjoyment of the Father and the Son through the Spirit. Hence, in Acts 2:42 it is called “the fellowship of the apostles,” and in 1 John 1:3 “our [the apostles’] fellowship,” a fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. It is a divine mystery. This mysterious fellowship of the eternal life should be considered the subject of this Epistle.

Fellowship is a common participation, a joint participation. Therefore, to have fellowship is to have a corporate participation in something. The fellowship of the divine life is the issue and flow of the divine life. Because the divine life is organic, rich, moving, and active, it has a particular issue, a certain kind of outcome. The issue, the outcome, of the divine life is the fellowship of life.

The fellowship of the divine life is clearly portrayed in Revelation 22:1. In this verse we see that in the New Jerusalem the river of water of life flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The throne of God and of the Lamb is the throne of the redeeming God, the Lamb-God. In Genesis 1:1 we have God, but in Revelation 22:1 we have God with the Lamb. In Genesis we have the creating God, but in Revelation we have the redeeming God. Out of this redeeming God as the source flows the river of water of life. The flow of the river of water of life is the fellowship of life. This means that fellowship is the outflow of the divine life from within the redeeming God.

According to the picture in Revelation, the river in the New Jerusalem flows downward in a spiral until it reaches the twelve gates of the city. By this we can see that the entire city of the New Jerusalem is supplied by the flow of this living water; that is, it is supplied by the fellowship of life. The fellowship of the divine life flows out of God and through His people in order to reach every part of the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

In the fellowship of the divine life, we join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God’s purpose. John’s word in 1:3 indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose. Hence, to have fellowship with the apostles, to be in the fellowship of the apostles, and to have fellowship with the Triune God in the apostles’ 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. According to John's writings, this purpose is twofold. First, this purpose is that the believers grow in the divine life by abiding in the Triune God (2:12-27) and, based upon the divine birth, live a life of the divine righteousness and the divine love (2:28—5:3) to overcome the world, death, sin, the devil, and idols (5:4-21). Second, it is that the local churches be built up as the lampstands for the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 1—33) and consummate in the New Jerusalem as the full expression of God for eternity (Rev. 21—22). Our participation in the apostles' enjoyment of the Triune God is our joining with them and with the Triune God for His divine purpose, which is common to God, the apostles, and all the believers.

When we enjoy the Triune God in the divine fellowship, we will be brought into a situation where spontaneously we join ourselves to the apostles and the Triune God for a common purpose. God has a purpose, and the apostles work out God's purpose. By enjoying the divine life in the divine fellowship, we participate in this purpose and its outworking. (Life-study of 1 John, 2nd edition, pp. 39-48)

The divine fellowship has two aspects: the vertical aspect between God and us and the horizontal aspect among the believers. The horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship is by the human spirit. The vertical aspect of the divine fellowship is by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22). The word *by* is actually not strong enough to express what we mean. The Spirit is not merely involved, wrapped up, or mingled with the fellowship. The Spirit Himself is the fellowship because the fellowship is the flow, the current, of the Spirit. This is like saying that the current of electricity is just the electricity itself. The current of electricity is electricity in motion. When the electricity stops, the current of electricity also stops. In the same way the fellowship of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Spirit moving. The grace of Christ is Christ Himself enjoyed by us, the love of God is God Himself tasted by us, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself moving within us. The divine fellowship is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Without the divine Spirit there is no fellowship. The Spirit is the very element of the fellowship. When a stand is made of wood, wood is the element of the stand. Likewise, if a stand is made of steel, steel is the element of the stand. If you take away the element, the stand ceases to exist. It is the same with the divine fellowship. If you take away the Spirit, the divine fellowship disappears.

We need to enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit (Phil. 2:1; Rev. 11:10) If we are going to have real fellowship horizontally with one another, we need to exercise our spirit. If we exercise our spirit, we will never talk in a worldly manner or speak negatively about the saints or the churches. A local church can be severely damaged if many of the saints in that locality spend time speaking negative things about other saints and other churches. Such discussions spread gossip and death among the saints. This kind of contact between the saints is not the fellowship of spirit that Paul speaks about in Philippians 2. In Philippians 2:1-2 Paul says, "If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, make my joy full." Paul seems to be saying, "Brothers, if you have any fellowship with me in spirit, your fellowship will be my encouragement and consolation. Then you will make my joy full."

Real fellowship is by our spirit. When we exercise our spirit, we are unable to talk about worldly amusements and entertainment. When we exercise our spirit, the nature of our conversation will change because our spirit is holy (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6). If there are problems in a certain church, we may have a desire to merely talk about the situation, but our spirit within will urge us to pray. Our spirit will not allow us to gossip about others' mistakes and failures. The only way to have the reality of horizontal fellowship is by exercising our spirit.

The two aspects of the divine fellowship require us to be in the two spirits, the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. These two spirits eventually become one (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). When Paul charges us to walk according to the spirit in Romans 8:4, he is speaking of the mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled with our human spirit. When we exercise our spirit to carry out the divine fellowship, we are fully sanctified, rescued, and saved from everything other than Christ. To be victorious, overcoming, sanctified, and transformed, we must exercise our spirit to carry out the two aspects of the divine fellowship. (The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man, pp. 359-360) Our sin, the indwelling sin in our nature (Rom. 7:17), has been taken care of by Christ as our sin offering (Lev. 4; Isa. 53:10; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:26). Our sins, our trespasses, have been taken care of by Christ as our trespass offering (Lev. 5; Isa. 53:11; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 9:28). After our regeneration we still need to take Christ as our sin offering, as indicated in 1 John 1:8, and as our trespass offering, as indicated in 1:9.

The Bible reveals that when the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He was made sin for us. Regarding this, 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Because the Lord was made sin for us, He condemned sin through His [52] death on the cross. Romans 8:3 says, “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Here we see that through the crucifixion of Christ, sin was condemned. For this reason, John 1:29 speaks of Him as the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world, and Hebrews 9:26 says that Christ “has been manifested for the putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself.” This means that Christ offered Himself for sin. As we consider these four verses, we realize that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to deal with sin, the very sin that dwells within us. He became sin, He condemned sin, He took away sin, and He was an offering for sin. Christ as the offering for sin is typified by the sin offering in chapter 4 of Leviticus.

As we have pointed out, we have not only the problem of sin in our flesh but also the problem of the many sins we have committed. We have done many wrong things. For example, instead of honoring our parents, we may have despised them. This is sinful. We all have committed many trespasses, transgressions, offenses, and wrongdoings. All of these are sins. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross to deal with our sin, He also bore our sins. First Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree.” This verse clearly indicates that Christ bore our sins. In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul declares, “Christ died for our sins.” Moreover, in Hebrews 9:28 we are told that Christ was “offered once to bear the sins of many.” By these verses we see that when the Lord was on the cross, He not only dealt with our sin but also bore our sins. Therefore, He is both the sin offering and the trespass offering.

In 1:6 John says, “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth.” To have fellowship with God is to have an intimate and living contact with Him in the flow of the divine life according to the Spirit’s anointing in our spirit (1 John 2:27). This keeps us in the participation and enjoyment of the divine light and the divine love.

It is very important for us to realize that the believers’ relationship in life with God is unbreakable. However, their fellowship with Him is breakable. The former is unconditional; the latter is conditional. Once we have been regenerated, we are children of God, and we have a relationship in life with our Father. This life relationship is unbreakable. However, our fellowship with God is breakable.

We should not confuse our life relationship with God and our fellowship with God. Our relationship with God is based on life and has been settled once for all. But our fellowship with God is based upon the fulfillment of conditions and may fluctuate like the weather. Therefore, the life relationship with God has no conditions and is unbreakable. But our fellowship with God has certain conditions, it is breakable, and it may fluctuate. I hope that we all will be clear concerning the difference between our relationship with God in life and our fellowship with Him. (Life-study of 1 John, 2nd edition, pp. 49-50)

Message Three

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

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:

- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 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.
- C. “If you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth”—Jer. 15:19; cf. v. 16:
 - 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; Psa. 119:103; Deut. 8:8; S. S. 4:11a.
 - 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.

II. Peter saw that Christ Himself is the preciousness to His believers—2:7; cf. Phil. 3:8:

- 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:

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. 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).
- B. The precious stone for God's building is Christ Himself—1 Pet. 2:4, 6-8.
- C. The precious blood of Christ has redeemed us from our vain manner of life—1:14, 18-19.
- 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:
 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; Psalms 116:12-13.
 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.
- E. God has allotted to all the believers equally precious faith—v. 1; Rom. 12:3.
- F. The precious proving of our faith is by various trials that come through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:6-7.

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:

- 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.
- C. The One who was seen by Isaiah was Christ—Isa. 6:5b; John 12:38-41:
 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.
 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).
- 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.

- E. Isaiah saw Christ in His holiness based on His righteousness—Isa. 6:2-3:
 - 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.
- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 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.
 - 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.

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:

- 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.
- B. Christ appeared in His kingship in His divinity, signified by the girdle of gold, for ruling over all the peoples—Dan. 10:5b.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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:

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.
 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.
 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.
 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.
- 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.**

Message Three Group Reading Excerpts

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

A person often measures the value of something according to the amount of knowledge he has of it. In Matthew 23:16-26 we find some people whose eyes were on the splendor of the temple and how it was built mostly with gold. They considered the temple to be most valuable. Some saw the altar and compared it with the oxen, lambs, and turtle doves offered on it. They reckoned the altar to be of little value but the oxen and lambs and turtle doves to be of much value. Some offered a tenth of the mint, anise, and cummin, yet they neglected the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Some were very careful about everything. They strained out the gnat, but they swallowed the camel. Some were in a hurry to use the cup and the dish. They cleansed the outside of them, but inwardly there was filth. We can ask a new believer, “How would you evaluate these different kinds of people if you met them? What do you think of their concept of value?” In Matthew 23:16-26 the Lord Jesus called these people fools, blind men, and hypocrites because they did not know the true concept of value. Their concept of value was all wrong.

Before a person believes in the Lord, his concept of value is perverted. But once a person is saved, his concept of value changes. He no longer cherishes what he once cherished, and he treasures what he once despised. This is a change in his concept of value. Anyone who has not witnessed such a change in concept is not a genuine Christian.

The Bible has much to say concerning a change in one’s concept of value. Such passages on this change can shed light to the new believers. These passages show us the proper concept of value for a Christian. Let us consider a few examples to prove our point.

Psalm 118:22 says, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.” This is a change in valuation. In the eyes of the builders, they rejected what they considered to be a useless stone. In the eyes of the Jewish leaders, Christ was something redundant, and they wanted to get rid of Him. Yet this rejected stone was chosen to be the cornerstone of the newly enacted salvation. A cornerstone must be flat on at least two or three sides. Actually, it should be flat on all six sides. God treasured the cornerstone which was rejected by the Jewish builders and used it for the building of His salvation. How different are these two kinds of valuation! We have to bring new believers to such a change in valuation. We have to ask how they viewed Christ before and how they view Christ now. We have to show them that what was once worthless is now priceless. What was once untrustworthy is now trustworthy. Others have rejected Christ, but we treasure Him.

Matthew 10:37-38 says, “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; and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” A father, mother, wife, and children are the most precious things to a man. They are the most important things a man has in this life. When these are not compared with the Lord, there is nothing wrong in loving them. But when a situation arises where we have to choose between the two, which one will we choose? A man always chooses what is more precious to him, but which of the two is more precious? We have to help the brothers and sisters know the real precious thing. We can ask new believers, “Whom will you choose?” If they are not clear about this, they will be lost when they face temptations in the future. The responsibility of providing proper guidance is on our shoulders. We have to tell the new believers, “If, for the Lord’s sake, you have to draw a separation line between yourself and your parents, wife, and children, will you choose Him? For His sake, that is, for the sake of the Lord who died for us, we should choose to be

His disciples and follow Him.” Our own kin are precious, but they are no comparison to the Lord. Our Lord is more precious than any of our kin.

Job 22:23-28 says, “If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up. / If you put injustice far away from your tents, / And place your gold nuggets in the dust / And your gold of Ophir in the stones of the brooks, / Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets / And precious silver to you. / For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, / And you will lift up your countenance to God. / You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; / And you will repay your vows. / You will also decree something, and it will be established for you; / And light will shine on your ways.” Everything from verse 24 on is based on verse 23. The gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and the precious silver are all related to the injustice spoken of in verse 23. A man places gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and precious silver in the dust and in the stones of the brooks for the sake of dealing with injustice and for the sake of delighting oneself in the Almighty. Here again we have a change in valuation. If we are tested at such a critical juncture, and we are asked to choose between gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, the precious silver, and Jehovah, which one will we choose? Such a choice will separate those who are God’s from those who are not His. All those who belong to God will surely choose Jehovah as their delight. They will be able to lift up their countenance to God and will be blessed by God in three things. First, their prayers will be heard. Those who prefer gold nuggets, gold of Ophir, and precious silver will find that their prayers are not heard. Second, whatever they decree will be established for them because the Lord Jehovah will delight in their choice and decisions. Third, light will shine on their ways. Every step of their way will be filled with light. This is the result of a change in the concept of value with those who turn to God. Sooner or later we have to help a new believer get out of his old realm; we have to rescue him out of his own concepts. When a situation arises, we have to ask him, “What would you choose?” We have to help him to choose God’s justice and to reject the gold nuggets, the gold of Ophir, and the precious silver. The value of justice is more than any treasure.

Philippians 3:7-8 says, “But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. 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.” Here we see that Paul also had a change in his concept of value. What things were gains to him, these he counted as loss on account of Christ. Why was Paul able to reject the things that were gains to him? He was able to consider them as loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He reckoned the Christ whom God had anointed as Lord, as King, and as the most excellent One. For His sake he suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse. This is the kind of change in valuation that happens to a Christian.

Finally, we want to conclude with the words of Jeremiah 15:19 which tell us that if we bring out the precious from the worthless, we will be as God’s mouth. If we cannot tell the proper value of things, God will reject us and cast us aside. He requires that we bring out the precious from the worthless so that we can be His mouth. We have to see the importance of such a change in concept of value. May the Lord grant us the light to have a thorough change in our concept of value so that we will know to choose the most excellent portion. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, , vol. 60. Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (2), pp. 387-396)

In Isa. 6:1-7 we have a vision of Christ in glory. In spite of the rebellion, iniquities, and corruptions of Israel, His chosen and beloved people, Christ is still sitting on a high and lofty throne in glory (vv. 1-4). These verses indicate that no matter what the situation might be on earth and regardless of the corruption and degradation among God’s people, Christ is still on the throne in His glory.

When Isaiah looked at the situation among the children of Israel, he became very disappointed. For this reason, in the first five chapters of his prophecy, he had very little to say that was good about the children of Israel. It was at this point that the Lord brought him into a vision so that he could see the Lord of glory sitting on the throne (v. 1). The Lord seemed to say to Isaiah, “Don’t look down at the situation. If you look down, you will be disappointed. Look up at Me. I am still here. There may be nothing good there, but everything is good here. I am the unique good thing in the universe. Look at Me.”

The people had become fallen, but Christ and His throne remained the same in His glory (v. 1a). On this earth, everything changes and fluctuates, but Christ remains the same today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

The train of Christ’s robe still filled the temple (Isa. 6:1b). Christ’s long robe signifies Christ’s splendor in His virtues. Whereas glory refers mainly to God, splendor refers mainly to man. The splendor of Christ in His virtues is expressed mainly in and through His humanity.

The people had become fallen, but Christ and His throne remained the same in His glory (v. 1a). On this earth, everything changes and fluctuates, but Christ remains the same today and forever (Heb. 13:8). Isaiah went on to say, “For I am a man of unclean lips, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell” (v. 5b). By this we can see that we must pay attention to our lips, to our speaking. Every day we talk too much. A great percentage of the words we speak are evil, because most of our words are words of criticism. Nearly every word that we speak concerning any matter or any person is a word of criticism. This is the reason that our lips are unclean. Unclean things such as gossip, murmuring, and reasoning make the church life taste like vinegar. If we eliminate gossip, murmuring, and reasoning, we may find that we have very little to talk about. Like Isaiah, we need to realize that our lips are unclean.

Everyone who truly sees a vision of the Lord is enlightened. The vision he sees immediately exposes him and brings him into light. When Peter saw the Lord in Luke 5, he immediately said to the Lord, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!” (v. 8).

How much we realize concerning ourselves depends on how much we see the Lord. For this reason, we need a revival every morning. The morning revival is the time for us to see the Lord again. The more we see the Lord, the more we see what we are. We realize that there is nothing good within us and that everything within us is without splendor or virtue. We may desire to go to heaven to see Christ’s glory in His divinity, but in Isaiah’s vision this Christ in glory is full of splendor in His human virtues. When we see Christ in His glory, we will see Him mainly in His humanity, which is full of virtues. All Christ’s virtues are bright and shining, and this shining is His splendor. Christ’s glory is in His divinity, and His splendor is in His humanity.
(Life-study of Isaih, pp. 35-36)

According to Exo. 19:6, the children of Israel were to be unto the Lord a kingdom of priests. As we stay in the Lord’s presence, we become a kingdom of priests to Him. What is portrayed concerning this in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. We, the believers, are a kingdom of priests unto God (Rev. 1:6). As priests, we live in God’s presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure. This is a mutual enjoyment. If such a thing could exist in Old Testament times, how much more should it be our experience in the New Testament age! What is depicted in the Old Testament is merely a picture; in the New Testament we have the reality. Praise the Lord that we are God’s peculiar treasure and priests enjoying Him as everything to us!

Eventually, we become a holy nation The mutual enjoyment between God and His people separates them unto Himself. Nothing so separates us unto God as this mutual enjoyment. When God enjoys us as His peculiar treasure and we enjoy Him as everything to us, we are absolutely separated from everything other than God unto God Himself. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 590)

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Message Four

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

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

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:

- 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.

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:
 - 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.
 - 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:
 - 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.
 - b. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—2 Chron. 1:10.
- B. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—Phil. 1:21a:
 - 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.
 - 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).
 - 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."
- 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:**
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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).

- 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).

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.
 3. A life that lives Christ is righteous—right before God and man—Phil. 3:9.
 4. A life that lives Christ is pure—single in intention and action, without any mixture—Matt. 5:8.
 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.
- 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:
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.
 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).

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).
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.
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.
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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

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

In Philippians 1:21 Paul declares, "To me, to live is Christ." This statement is a testimony of Paul's inner reality. But what is the real expression of a life that lives Christ? This expression is found in the virtues listed in 4:5-9. In the same principle, in chapter 2 Paul sets forth Christ as our pattern...What will be the expression of a life that lives according to this pattern? The expression is in 4:5-9. The same is true with respect to Paul's word in chapter 3 concerning counting all things as loss, even refuse, in order to gain Christ. What kind of expression will there be in a person's life if that one condemns philosophy, rejects culture, and renounces religion, counting them as refuse in order to gain Christ?...Again...the expression is seen in 4:5-9. (Life-study of Philippians, p. 222)

The first aspect of the expression of a life that lives Christ is forbearance [Phil. 4:5]...A second aspect is the absence of anxiety. In a life that lives Christ there will be forbearance but no anxiety, no worry...A life that lives Christ is calm, tranquil, peaceful, and quiet. A life of turmoil, on the contrary, is a life that lives Satan. Forbearance is the most important element of a tranquil life. Forbearance is reasonableness and consideration in dealing with others. To have forbearance is to deal with others without strictness of legal right.

Forbearance includes patience and moderation but goes beyond them. If you have forbearance, you will not argue with others, fight with them, or debate with them. You may have a great deal to say, but you will have patience and moderation in dealing with others and will not say anything in response to provocation or irritation.

Suppose a group of sisters live together. The most precious sister will be the one who is the most forbearing. When difficulties arise, she will be calm and quiet. Even if others offend her, she will not retaliate. Sisters who lack forbearance, however, may easily react when they are offended...A proper Christian life is a life of calm. To live such a life means that we do not argue with people or fight with them.

Forbearance is versus selfish ambition and vainglory, two negative things mentioned by Paul. Forbearance is also opposed to murmurings and reasonings...Whenever we have selfish ambition, vainglory, murmurings, and reasonings, there is no calm, no tranquility, no forbearance.

If we live Christ, we will not argue with others. We will know what is the right time to speak even a calm word. Even a calm statement made at the wrong time can contribute to an argument...If someone is angry with you, it is best not to say anything. Exercise forbearance and wait for the right time to utter a calm word. It is especially important for married brothers and sisters to practice this. If your husband or wife is argumentative, be careful about the way you speak. It may be wise not even to call on the Lord aloud. Such a calling may stir up trouble. Instead of speaking outwardly, calm yourself, call on the Lord inwardly, and wait until the situation is tranquil before you say anything.

As an elderly person, I have passed through a great many experiences in human life. Under the sovereign hand of the Lord, I have been in a great many different circumstances. I have known poverty, and I have known what it is to have my needs supplied. I can testify that in all the circumstances of human life, anxiety is present. Anxiety is a word that can sum up human life. The totality of human life is anxiety.

Paul speaks of anxiety in 4:6 because he realized that it is the totality of man's life. Paul also realized that forbearance is the totality of a proper Christian life...Thus, to live Christ is to have forbearance without anxiety. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 223-224, 513)

In his *Word Studies* Wuest points out that the Greek word rendered "forbearance" not only means satisfied with less than our due but also means sweet reasonableness. The word includes self-control, patience, moderation, kindness, and gentleness. Furthermore, according to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues. This means that if we fail to exercise forbearance, we fail to exercise any Christian virtue...If by the grace of Christ [a brother] is satisfied with less than his due and exercises forbearance toward his wife, not criticizing her or condemning her, he will show in his forbearance an all-inclusive Christian virtue. His forbearance will include patience, humility, self-control, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 479-480)

The reason we sometimes behave in an unseemly manner is that we lack forbearance. Negative attitudes and unkind words also come from a shortage of forbearance. When we fail to love, it is because we have no forbearance. Likewise, we may be intolerant because we lack forbearance. Even talkativeness may result from having no forbearance...If we do not show forbearance toward the members of our family, there will be no peace in our family life. Peace comes out of forbearance.

Paul realized that forbearance is an all-inclusive virtue. This is the reason he says, "Let your forbearance be known to all men" [Phil. 4:5]. This forbearance is actually Christ Himself. In 1:21 Paul says, "To me, to live is Christ." Since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance. Paul's earnest expectation was that Christ would be magnified in him, whether through life or through death. For Paul to magnify Christ was for him to make known his forbearance. Thus, for Christ to be magnified in us is equal to making our forbearance known to all men. The reason for this is that forbearance is Christ experienced by us in a practical way. We may speak of living Christ and testify that for us, to live is Christ. However, day by day in our life at home, what we need is forbearance. If we have forbearance, then in our experience we truly have Christ. The key to being a good husband or wife is forbearance. To repeat, forbearance includes much more than gentleness or humility. As an all-inclusive Christian virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself. In both the family life and in the church life, we need to live Christ by living a life of forbearance.

The key to being a good husband or wife is forbearance. To repeat, forbearance includes much more than gentleness or humility. As an all-inclusive Christian virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself. In both the family life and in the church life, we need to live Christ by living a life of forbearance.

The more we consider the significance of forbearance, the more we can appreciate why Paul spoke of it in 4:5. Our failures and defeats in the Christian life come because we are short of forbearance. All the saints, young and old alike, have a tendency to neglect forbearance. If we would live Christ, we must be satisfied with less than our due. We should not make exacting demands on others.

The Lord Jesus lived a life of forbearance when He was on earth. In one sense, He was very strict, but in another sense, He was very tolerant. For example, although He prayed a great deal, He did not make demands of His disciples concerning prayer or condemn them because they did not pray enough. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul goes on to say, "The Lord is near."...According to experience...I would say that this word refers to the Lord's presence with us today. It also strengthens Paul's exhortation that we make our forbearance known to all men. Because the Lord is near, we have no excuse for not making known our forbearance. Often we fail to exercise forbearance because we forget that the Lord is near. We do not even remember that He is actually within us...Because we do not realize that the Lord is near, we do not exercise forbearance. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 480-481)

The Greek word for forbearance...means "reasonable, considerate, suitable, and fitting." A forbearing person is one who always fits in, one whose behavior is always suitable. Certain saints are good, but they do not fit in. They may move from place to place, but no matter where they may go, they are not happy. The reason these saints do not fit in is that they are not forbearing. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable, no matter what the circumstances or environment may be. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 489-490)

Forbearance also includes peacefulness, mildness, and gentleness. If you are reasonable, considerate, and able to fit in, you will no doubt be gentle, kind, mild, and peaceful. You will also be meek and moderate, full of compassion for others...The opposite of forbearance is being just in a very exacting way. A person who lacks forbearance will be exacting and demanding of others. But to be forbearing means that we are satisfied with less than our due...For example, a certain thing may be ours, but we do not claim it according to strict, legal right. This is forbearance.

The life of the Lord Jesus is the best illustration of forbearance. Consider how He spoke to those two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Luke 24:15 says that while these disciples "were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." The Lord Jesus said to them, "What are these words which you are exchanging with one another while you are walking?" And "they stood still, looking sad" (v. 17). With a rebuking tone, one of the disciples answered, "Do You alone dwell as a stranger in Jerusalem and not know the things which have taken place in it in these days?" (v. 18). Appearing not to know anything, the Lord asked, "What things?" (v. 19). Then they proceeded to tell Him about Jesus the Nazarene, One they described as a "Prophet powerful in work and word before God and all the people." They went on to say that the chief priests and the rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death and crucified Him. How forbearing the Lord was to listen to the disciples speak things that He knew much better than they did! After walking quite a distance, "they drew near to the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther" (v. 28). However, "they constrained Him...And He went in to stay with them" (v. 29). The Lord even sat down to dine with them. When He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, "their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him" (v. 31). In all of this we see the Lord's forbearance.

Besides the Lord Jesus, no human being has ever practiced a life of such forbearance. If you study the biographies of famous people, you will see that not one was truly a person of forbearance. However, if you read the four Gospels, you will see that the human living of the Lord Jesus was full of forbearance.

Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today. The best word to sum up the totality of Christ's human virtues is forbearance. To make

known our forbearance is to live a life that expresses Christ; it is to express the Christ by whom we live. Such a life is Christ Himself as the totality of all human virtues.

In Philippians 4:5 Paul...says, "The Lord is near."...He is with us. When we live Him, taking Him as our pattern and counting all things as loss in order to gain Him, we sense that He is present with us. He is near both in space and in time. With respect to space, He is near to us, ready to help; with regard to time, He is at hand, coming soon. Since the Lord is near, what need is there for us to be troubled and stirred up? (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 490-492, 224-225)

In Philippians 4:6 Paul speaks of prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. Prayer is general and includes the essence of worship and fellowship; petition is special and is related to particular needs...Daily we need to have a time to contact the Lord, to have fellowship with Him, and to worship Him. During the course of our fellowship, we may have particular requests. Thus, we not only pray in a general way but make petitions to the Lord in a particular way.

Both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord. Recently, I once again learned the lesson of being thankful to the Lord. When I asked the Lord to restore my health, I was rebuked by Him for not thanking Him for the measure of health I still had. Whenever we are ill, we need to say, "Lord, I thank You that I am still healthy to a certain degree. Lord, I am ill, but I am not so ill that I cannot minister Christ to the saints. But, Lord, You know that I am not altogether healthy. Therefore, I ask You to improve my health and make me fully healthy again." We all need to learn to petition the Lord in this way. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 529-530)

In Philippians 4:6 Paul...says, "In nothing be anxious."...Anxiety undermines the living of Christ. Instead of being anxious, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God. Then the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The peace of God saves us from worry and anxiety...Being free from anxiety is for the purpose of keeping us calm and tranquil.

In verse 6...the words in everything refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day. Under the Lord's blessing, many positive things happen, and we hear good news. However, we also experience negative things and hear bad news. Nevertheless, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God.

It may seem easy to understand Paul's word, "Let your requests be made known to God."...I have spent considerable time studying the phrase to God. It may also be rendered "before God" or "in the presence of God." The Greek preposition is *pros*, often translated "with" (John 1:1; Mark 9:19; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 16:6; 1 John 1:2). It denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship...We should let our requests be made known to God in such a fellowship, in such a union and communion. This requires that we pray to contact God.

Even if we do not have specific needs, we still need a time of prayer day by day to worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him. As we worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him in prayer, we enjoy communion with Him and practice the organic union with Him.

The issue, the result, of practicing the organic union with the Lord is that the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7). The peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer. This peace is the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33)...The God of peace patrols, or stands guard, before our hearts and thoughts in Christ.

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. We need to have [the] realization with a full assurance...[that our] circumstances come from God's assignment... [Then we] will be able to worship the Lord for His arrangement. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 225-227, 516)

[In Philippians 4:8 Paul gives us] six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ...The first governing aspect of a life that lives Christ is “what things are true.” The word true here means “truthful ethically,” not merely true in matter of fact. In the expression of a life that lives Christ, there can be no falsehood, no lying. Everything we do or say must be truthful...A life that is the expression of Christ is a truthful one.

The second aspect is “what things are dignified.” The Greek word rendered “dignified” means “venerable, worthy of reverence, noble, grave” (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2), implying the idea of dignity, which inspires and invites reverence. A life that lives Christ will be dignified, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and honorable. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 229-230)

We should not think that only older people should be weighty...Even a young brother in junior high school should have dignity, for he has God within him...To have dignity is not to act important; it is to live God...We are a vessel containing Christ. If we live Him, we will have true dignity.

In Philippians 4:8 Paul also speaks of “what things are righteous.” This refers to what is right (not just) before God and man.

The word *pure* in the expression *what things are pure* means “single in intention and action, without any mixture.” To be pure in this way is to have no pretense. Purity is also a governing aspect of the life that lives Christ.

Another governing aspect of such a life is “what things are lovely.” The word lovely means “lovable, agreeable, endearing.”

Next Paul goes on to mention “what things are well spoken of.” This means what things are of good repute, attractive, winning, and gracious. The Greek word means “sounding well.”

If we live Christ, we will surely have a life that is an expression of all these aspects. In our living there will be no falsehood, looseness, or lightness. Instead, our living will be dignified, pure, right, lovely, and well spoken of. Of the many, many Christian virtues, Paul selected these six as governing aspects.

All human virtues were created by God...Our human virtues are a vessel made to contain the divine virtues, just as a glove is made in the image of a hand to contain the hand. The Bible reveals that the image of God is Christ (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4)...To say that man was made in the image of God means that he was made according to the form of Christ...Man was designed by God to bear the pattern of Christ. When Christ comes into a person, that person becomes a vessel containing Christ.

Toward the end of Philippians 4:8 Paul changes his expression and says, “If there is any virtue and if any praise.” The Greek word for virtue here means “excellence,” that is, ethical energy exhibited in vigorous action. Praise refers to things worthy of praise, as the companion of virtue.

Virtue and praise are not two additional aspects but values of the six aspects already mentioned. Virtue is a general term rather than a specific aspect. There is virtue in truthfulness, dignity, purity, loveliness, rightness, and being well spoken of. The principle is the same with praise: there is something worthy of praise in all these six aspects of the Christian life.

How excellent is the expression of the life that lives Christ!...In each of these excellent aspects there is some virtue and something worthy of praise. We should “take account of these things”; that is, we should think on them, ponder them, consider them. (Life-study of Philippians, pp. 230-233)

“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)