

## Message Four

### The Intrinsic Significance of the Christian Life

Scripture Reading: John 14:21, 23; 2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7

#### I. The Christian life is a life of living Christ; our living should be Christ, and the way to live Christ is to love Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; Gal. 2:20:

- A. We can live Christ by loving Christ to the uttermost; if we do not love Christ, we cannot live Him, and loving Him is the best way to concentrate our entire being on Him—2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21a; Mark 12:30; Rev. 2:4-5; John 14:21, 23; 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:9; 16:22.
- B. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life.
- C. When we love Him, “the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10); the Greek word for *searches* is used in reference to active research, implying accurate knowledge gained not by discovering but by exploring; the Spirit of God explores the depths of God concerning Christ and shows them to us in our spirit for our realization and participation.
- D. To live the Christian life is to love Jesus the Son of God so that we will be loved by the Father and the Son and enjoy the Son’s manifestation to us and Their visitation to us for Them to make a mutual abode with us—John 14:21, 23.
- E. The Christian life is a life of loving God and loving one another with God Himself as our love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is in His lost-one-seeking and sinner-saving ministry journey—1 John 4:16-19; Luke 10:25-37; 19:10; Eph. 4:20-21; cf. Gal. 5:13-15.

#### II. To live the Christian life is to do all things in the person of Christ, in the face of Christ—2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6-7:

- A. The Greek word for *person* is literally “face,” as in 4:6; it refers to the part around the eyes, the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person.
- B. The apostle Paul, who was a pattern for the believers (1 Tim. 1:16), was one who lived and acted in the presence of Christ, according to the index of His whole person, expressed in His eyes.
- C. Whenever our heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away from our heart, and we can behold the Lord of glory with an unveiled face; actually, our turned-away heart is the veil; an unveiled face is an unveiled heart to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; 4:6-7; 1 Sam. 16:7; Eph. 1:18a.
- D. The glory of God is in the face of Christ, and His face, His person, is the indwelling treasure in our spirit—2 Cor. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 3:4.
- E. We are earthen vessels who are worthless and fragile, but within our spirit we contain a priceless treasure, the face, the person, of Christ Himself (2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6); in the whole universe there is nothing so precious as to behold the face of Jesus (Gen. 32:30; Exo. 25:30; 33:11, 14; Psa. 27:4, 8; Rev. 22:4):
  1. It is only when we are living in His presence, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is such a treasure to us; if we have some problem, we just need to tell Him; He is right within us, and He is with us face to face—Phil. 4:6.
  2. Seeing God equals gaining God, which is to receive God in His element into us to transform us (Job 42:5-6; Matt. 5:8); the very God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit to absorb the riches of God into our being and be under the divine transformation day by day (2 Cor. 3:18b; Matt. 14:22-23; Col. 4:2).
- F. As we turn our heart to the Lord in our spirit to behold Him face to face and beam Him into others (Isa. 60:1, 5), we are in the process of being transformed into His glorious image unto the day when “we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is”—2 Cor. 3:18—4:1; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4.

### III. To live the Christian life is to walk worthily of the calling with which we were called—Eph. 4:1-4:

- A. The first item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to be diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit as the reality of the Body of Christ, with the transformed human virtues strengthened by and with the divine attributes—vv. 1-4:
  1. In the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, there is the transformed humanity of Jesus; to drink of and flow out the one Spirit for the one Body is to drink of and flow out the Spirit of the Man Jesus, to drink of and flow out the humanity of Jesus with His divinely enriched human virtues of lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering for bearing one another in love—John 7:37-39a; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 16:7; Eph. 4:2-3.
  2. If we call on the name of the Lord and feed upon Him, we will enjoy Jesus as a man, and all the virtues of His uplifted humanity will be ours in the Spirit of Jesus for the practice of the recovered church life in the Spirit of reality as the reality of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:3-4, 17; 12:3b, 13; 16:13; Eph. 4:3-4a.
- B. The second item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to grow up into Christ the Head in all things—vv. 15-16:
  1. In order to grow up into Christ in all things for the building up of His Body, we need to enjoy Christ as our all-inclusive, universal replacement for the producing of the one new man, so we must “hear Him” and see “Jesus only”—Mark 9:7-8.
  2. Whatever or whoever is not Christ, God “fires”; God has replaced everything in His Old Testament economy with Christ—1:1-8; Matt. 17:3-5; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:5-10; 11:5-6; cf. Isa. 22:20-25.
  3. When God created us, He “hired” us; when He put us on the cross, crucifying us with Christ, He “fired” us; when He resurrected us together with Christ, He “re-hired” us by making us a new species of God-men, a new invention of God as His corporate masterpiece, bringing us back to His original intention of creating us for His glory, His corporate expression—Gen. 1:26; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6, 10, 15; Isa. 43:7.
- C. The third item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to learn Christ as the reality that is in Jesus—Eph. 4:20-24:
  1. *The reality is in Jesus* refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels; Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God; God was in His living, and He was one with God—vv. 20-21.
  2. In His life on earth He set up a pattern, as revealed in the four Gospels; then He was crucified and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit so that He might enter into us to be our life; we learn from Him, according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection—1 Cor. 15:45b; Col. 3:4.
  3. As we love the Lord, contact Him, and pray to Him, we automatically live Him according to the mold, the form, the pattern, described in the Gospels; in this way we are shaped, conformed, to the image of this mold—this is what it means to learn Christ—Matt. 11:29; Rom. 8:29.
- D. The fourth item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to live in love and light—Eph. 5:2, 8:
  1. We need to be partakers, enjoyers, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); the divine nature is what God is—God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is love (1 John 4:8, 16; Eph. 5:2), and God is light (1 John 1:5; Eph. 5:8); Spirit is the nature of God's person, love is the nature of God's essence, and light is the nature of God's expression.
  2. We all need to spend an adequate amount of personal time with the Lord to privately fellowship with Him in our spirit so that we can be filled with His loving essence for Him to shepherd others through us and so that we can be filled with His shining element for others to see Him in us—John 4:24; Luke 15:20; Matt. 5:15-16.
- E. The fifth item of a walk worthy of God's calling is for us to live by being filled in spirit to overflow with Christ—Eph. 5:18:

1. Speaking, singing, psalming, giving thanks to God, and subjecting ourselves to one another in the fear of Christ are not only the outflow of being filled in spirit but also the way to be filled in spirit—vv. 19-21.
2. To be filled in spirit is to be filled with the riches of Christ to become the fullness of Christ, the overflow of Christ; by calling on the Lord and pray-reading His Word, we can continually receive Him as grace upon grace to become His fullness, His overflow—3:8; 1:23; 3:19b; Rom. 10:12-13; Eph. 6:17-18; John 1:16.

#### **IV. To live the Christian life is for us to accept the discipline of the Holy Spirit:**

- A. God wants to take away our taste and change our scent by our accepting the discipline of the Holy Spirit, which is God's emptying us from vessel to vessel for the removal of the lees, the dregs, of our natural outer man until we have the pure taste of Christ and exude the pure fragrance of Christ—Jer. 48:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-15; S. S. 4:16; 2 Kings 4:8-9:
  1. "The Father of spirits" disciplines us through trials and chastisement "that we might partake of His holiness"—Heb. 12:4-13.
  2. Those who have never gone through trials and chastisement have not been emptied from vessel to vessel; thus, the taste of the lees, the dregs, the sediment, of their natural disposition, their outer man, their self, remains within them and their scent is not changed—Jer. 48:11; Rom. 8:28-29; S. S. 4:16.
- B. Mary had an alabaster flask filled with a pound of ointment of very valuable pure nard; when she broke the flask and poured it out on the Lord, "the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment"—John 12:2-3; Mark 14:3; cf. S. S. 1:12.
- C. The alabaster flask signifies our outer man, which needs to be broken so that the inner man can break forth; the Lord works in us and on us in so many different ways for the purpose of breaking the earthen vessel, the alabaster flask, the outer shell—2 Cor. 4:7; John 12:3, 24; Rom. 8:28-29.
- D. What we are by nature means nothing; only what the Spirit constitutes into our being counts; the discipline of the Holy Spirit destroys our natural disposition and habits and brings in the constitution of the Holy Spirit in maturity and sweetness; God orders everything in our environment to tear down what we are naturally so that He may form in us a new disposition, new character, and new attributes—John 3:6; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- E. There are two main reasons for not being broken:
  1. A person is not broken because he is living in darkness; in all that happens to him, he puts all the blame on other people or the environment; he has no revelation of God's hand and that God is the One who is dealing with him—cf. Job 10:13; Eph. 3:9.
  2. A person is not broken because he loves himself too much; we have to ask God to remove self-love from us; all misunderstandings and dissatisfactions arise from only one thing—secret self-love.
- F. We need to realize that everything through which we pass has only one purpose—that God's life would be released through us and expressed in us; may our outer man be broken to such an extent that the inner man can be released and expressed; this is precious, and this is the way of the servants of the Lord—John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:12.