

The
CHRISTIAN
LIFE
and the
CHURCH
LIFE

under the
GOVERNMENT
OF GOD

Gospel Bookroom of the Philippines, Inc.

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PREFACE

This e-book from the Gospel Bookroom of the Philippines, Inc. is published as a compilation of the eight messages given by brothers Ron Kangas, Albert Lim, and Mark Raabe during the Perfecting Training for Elders and Responsible Ones held January 17-19, 2020, in Malabon City, Philippines. The training was attended by about one thousand five hundred elders and responsible ones across the Philippines.

The general subject of these messages is *The Christian Life and the Church Life under the Government of God*. The emphasis is on God's system of government and living our Christian life and church life under His government. To live under His government is to live in the kingdom of God, a realm of life and love, and to be subject to His authority. This issues in God's building and the recovery of the church as the Israel of God, fulfilling God's desire to have a group of people who would corporately represent Him, exercise His authority, and carry out His administration for the fulfillment of His purpose.

We pray that these messages will be a benefit to readers everywhere, to bring us all into a right relationship with Christ the Head, and the church, His body.

Message 1

The Universal Government of God

Scripture Reading: Dan. 4:26, 34-35; 1 Pet. 1:2, 17; 2:21-25; 3:15; 4:12, 15-19; 5:5-8

I. We must come to “know that the heavens do rule”—Dan. 4:26:

- A. The kingdom of the heavens is a realm where the heavens exercise authority—Matt. 4:17; 5:3:
 - 1. God rules and exercises authority from the heavens as His dwelling place—1 Kings 8:39.
 - 2. The throne of God’s authority is in the heavens—Psa. 103:19; Rev. 4:1-2.
 - 3. The kingdom of the heavens is the reign of the heavens where God dwells; it is the rule of the heavens.
- B. God’s “dominion is an eternal dominion: / And His kingdom is from generation to generation”—v. 34:
 - 1. “He does according to His will in the army of heaven / And among the inhabitants of the earth”—v. 35a.
 - 2. “There is no one who can resist His hand / Or say to Him, What are You doing?”—v. 35b.
- C. As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for the preeminence of Christ, we are under God’s heavenly rule; we need to realize this and be submissive to God’s heavenly rule—v. 37.

II. The Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter are on the universal government of God:

- A. The subject of 1 Peter is the Christian life under the government of God, showing us the government of God especially in His dealings with His chosen people—1:2.
- B. The subject of 2 Peter is the divine provision and the divine government, showing us that as God is governing us, He supplies us with whatever we need—1:1-4; 3:13.
- C. God governs by judging; this judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government—1 Pet. 1:17; 4:17:
 - 1. Because 1 and 2 Peter are concerned with the government of God, in these Epistles the judgment of God and of the Lord is referred to

- repeatedly as one of the essential items—1 Pet. 2:23; 4:5-6, 17; 2 Pet. 2:3-4, 9; 3:7.
2. Through various kinds of judgments, the Lord God will clear up the entire universe and purify it so that He may have a new heaven and a new earth for a new universe filled with His righteousness for His delight—v. 13.
- D. The judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, which is carried out by the Father, is not the future judgment but is the present, daily judgment of God's governmental dealings with His children:
1. The Father has regenerated us to produce a holy family—a holy Father with holy children—vv. 3, 15, 17.
 2. As holy children, we should walk in a holy manner of life (vv. 15-16); otherwise, in His government God the Father will become the Judge and will deal with our unholiness—4:17; Heb. 12:9-10.
- E. The disciplinary judgment in the government of God begins from the house of God—1 Pet. 4:17:
1. God judges everything that does not match His government; therefore, in this age we, the children of God, are under the daily judgment of God—1:17.
 2. God uses fiery ordeals to deal with the believers in the judgment of His governmental administration, which begins from His own house—4:12, 17.
 3. The purpose of this judgment is that we would live according to God in spirit—v. 6.

III. In his writings Peter combines the Christian life and God's government, revealing that the Christian life and the government of God go together as a pair—1 Pet. 1:17; 2:21, 24; 3:15; 4:17; 5:5-8:

- A. The Triune God has passed through a long process in Christ and has become the life-giving Spirit to indwell us; this is for our Christian life—John 1:14; 14:17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
- B. At the same time, the Triune God is still the Creator of the universe and its Ruler—1 Pet. 4:19.
- C. Although we have been born of God to have a spiritual life and to be a new creation, we are still in the old creation—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6; 2 Cor. 5:17:

1. For this reason, we need God's governmental dealings—1 Pet. 1:17.
2. In order for the Christian life to grow, we need the discipline of God's government—2:2; 4:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.

IV. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a human life that was absolutely under the government of God, and He committed everything related to Him to God's government—John 6:38; 1 Pet. 2:21-24:

- A. The Lord kept committing all His insults and injuries to Him who judges righteously in His government, the righteous God, to whom He submitted Himself; He put His trust in this righteous One, recognizing His government—v. 23.
- B. When God counseled Christ as a man, Christ's inward parts were one with God and instructed Him through His contact with God—Psa. 16:7; Isa. 50:4.

Message 1

The Universal Government of God

By the will of God and by His sovereign authority, with His grace, He gives me the privilege and the blessing to be with you again to seek the Lord together, to learn whatever He has in His heart for us during this time. It has been a few years since I had been here; but the Philippines, with all the churches and all the saints, have always remained deep in my heart. The Lord has assigned to us the general subject of the training, “The Christian Life and the Church Life under the Government of God.” This is a very particular emphasis and a very particular way of viewing our Christian life and our church life. As we will go on to see, we are viewing this and considering this from the perspective of the government of God in the universe. In this opening word, I want to try my best to lay the foundation in truth so that we are clear based upon the divine revelation concerning what the government of God is.

We start with eleven points I wrote down for myself; and I hope you could take them in. Writing down will help you understand something which is, for almost all of us, something quite new. In the universe created by God, God Himself has two systems. The first is what we call the system of grace; we have properly been experiencing this, enjoying this, receiving blessing from this since the moment we were saved. The system of grace is God’s complete arrangement for us to be redeemed from the fall, to be saved judicially and organically, to be reconciled to God, to have our sins forgiven and forgotten, to be born of God to be His children in life and nature, to be a new creation in Christ. Everything related to the Christian life from the moment we are regenerated until we are mature and ready to be raptured is altogether a matter of God’s grace. But there is another system. It is separate from the system of grace but they work together, and that is God’s government.

The System of Government Operating on a Principle Different from the System of Grace

Our first point is this: The system of government operates on a principle different from the system of grace. It is altogether different. God has this governmental system because He created beings, angels and humans, with the ability to make decisions, to choose. God's government began when He created the angels. The fundamental problem in the whole universe was the rebellion against His government by an archangel and those who followed him. But all of this God foresaw. Because a creature rebelled, God knew it would require a creature to deal with that rebellious creature. Thus, God's intention eventually was to create man in His image with His dominion. But in His foreknowledge, He also realized that the man He would create for His government would likewise rebel, sin and fall; so before the foundation of the world, God formed in Himself the potential for the system of grace—how His only Son would come and personally fulfill God's purpose, then die an all-inclusive death for our redemption and reconciliation, release the divine life, impart this life in His resurrection, become the life-giving Spirit to enter into us. But the system of government preceded that and is distinct from that. There are millions and millions of genuine, dear believers throughout the earth who have never had a thought concerning the government of God and how it relates to them.

In the System of God's Government, God Having an Independent Will and His Operating According to His Pleasure

In the system of God's government, God has an independent will and He operates according to His pleasure. When it comes to grace, the Lord will allow a number of things to take place in His permissive will. But when He exercises His government, He does whatever He wills to do according to His plan, according to His pleasure. He does not have to explain to us. He is not accountable to us—He is God. When, in Acts, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Spirit, deceived the Spirit, God exercised governmental judgment immediately. In Acts 12, after James was put to death and Peter was imprisoned, the church prayed, we believe, governmental prayers—prayers of authority and warfare. We read in that chapter that twice an angel came, commissioned from the throne. The first time was to release Peter from prison. Then when Herod was glorifying himself by his speaking and the

people said, “the voice of a god,” an angel struck him. There is such a system operating in this universe on this earth and in our lives.

God’s Government Referring to How God Works, Manages, and Arranges Things According to His Plan and Will

The third point is a kind of definition of government: God’s government refers to how God works, manages, and arranges things according to His plan and will. In His government, He is free to work, to manage, to arrange according to His plan and will. We will be wise and blessed if we respect this and if we, in any matter of our own life—married life, family life, church life, serving life—would not dare try to work out something, manage something, and arrange something according to our view as if we were the government itself. This is restricted to God.

From the Beginning of God’s Creation, God Having Been Working to Usher in His Government; and He is Continuing This Operation Until the End

From the beginning of God’s creation, God has been working to usher in His government; and He will continue this operation until the end. We will see as we go on in the message that this operation is now focused on the churches. The Lord must accomplish His governmental plan in the churches before He can enlarge that governmental exercise and deal with all kinds of evil, corrupt, and chaotic situations on the earth. The United States, to me, is in a degraded, chaotic, and hateful situation that I have never seen in my eighty years. How we long for the Lord to exercise His authority! But I am realizing that the churches in the United States must take the lead to allow God to be God governmentally, and to do whatever He needs to do with us so that He can do whatever He wills through us.

Our Needing to Learn to Acknowledge God’s Government

We must learn to acknowledge God’s government. Although I am right now emphasizing government, I sense there is mercy and grace flowing right here because I have the sense, my brothers, that before the Lord takes any particular action in any of our lives, or in the way we are serving, or in the church where we are, He is giving us a precious opportunity to learn by ourselves to acknowledge and respect His government. If we are willing inwardly to do this, then there will be blessing. Even beginning right now—

you do not have to wait — you can tell the Lord, “I am willing. I want to learn this. I want to learn to acknowledge Your government;” But if our heart is hardened, if we are so strong in our opinionated self that we will not let go of our concepts, ideas and plans, the Lord will be able to say to us, “I gave you a splendid opportunity, but now I must carry out My will in all the churches in the Philippines and no one and nothing can stop Me.” I have no idea what that is; I am not here acting out the government myself. I am here humbled under the Lord’s hand. I am not here to correct anything nor to judge anyone. I am not aiming my words at any place or at any person. I am just releasing the truth.

**If We Are Oblivious, That Is, Totally Unaware of God’s Government,
Our Being Lawless in the Eyes of God**

If we are oblivious, that is, totally unaware of God’s government, we are lawless in the eyes of God. This is serious. The Lord uses that term in Matthew 7. They did so many works, but they did not do the Father’s will. He said, “Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness.” In 1 John 3:4, the Apostle John defines sin as lawlessness. Suppose you were to fly to Los Angeles, then rent a car, start driving in the freeway system in the Los Angeles area, and then a police car pulls you over and he says, “You did this. You did that. You crossed a line you should not. You made a wrong turn.” Then you say, “I just arrived from the Philippines.” The officer would say, “Ignorance of the law is no excuse.” We cannot hide and excuse ourselves because we are oblivious. The stage of oblivion regarding this matter among us is over.

God’s Intention Being That We Would Respect His Government

God’s intention is that we would respect His government. This is close to the previous point. We do not just “acknowledge” it. We may acknowledge something because we have no choice, but we may not respect it. We need to learn this.

The System of Grace Being Here to Perfect the System of Government

The system of grace is here to perfect the system of government. Because of the sins against God’s government, the system of grace was formed; and apart from grace, none of us could be saved. We were all saved by grace, but we were saved by grace so that we may be recovered to the proper relationship

to God's government; grace is for government. The more grace we have, the more we will be able to recognize and respect God's government.

The System of Grace Bringing Us to Salvation and Restoration So That We Will Obey God's System of Government

The system of grace brings us to salvation and restoration so that we will obey God's system of government. Here is an indicator. You are overseers, are you not? As part of your responsibility, you are watching over the souls of the saints according to Hebrews 13. You care for them; you want to understand them so you can minister to them. And you realize that some have no regard for God's government. It indicates how shallow their experience of organic salvation is. They just revel or rejoice, saying, "If I fail, God is merciful. He forgives. He forgives." But the more we are truly experiencing organic salvation, the more we will obey God's government.

Grace Always Going Along with Government

Grace always goes along with government. You read about this toward the end of 1 Peter chapter 5. This epistle is about the Christian life under God's government, and Peter learned a lot of God's governmental dealings. He said, "Be humbled under the mighty hand of God" (v. 6). Brother Lee would use the expression *active-passive*. We need to be willing and desirous to be humbled. And a verse nearby says, "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*" (v. 5). Be humbled under the mighty hand of God-this is our part. Do not worry about others. Do not compare yourself with others. Do not talk to God about others. Do not dream about your future. Right now, right here, the word is "be humbled". In due time, God will exalt you. He will raise you up but that is up to Him. I do not feel this is the time for me to share much from my personal history with the Lord, but I can assure you, and I say this before the Lord's face, I know what I am talking about. I know what it is to be humbled under the mighty governmental hand of God, and to be under that hand for quite a period of time. Then I learned the grace that comes and flows. I do not want to be one who is proud and is resisted by God. Be humbled, and grace will always go along with government. But if someone disregards God's government then turns around and starts praying for this and that, he may talk all night long, but the heavens will be silent because there is an unresolved issue here.

Grace Giving Us the Ability to Subject Ourselves to Government

I love this last point: Grace gives us the ability to subject ourselves to government. At this point in the message, I sense that our God is giving all of us grace to subject ourselves to government. I mentioned in the fourth point that from the beginning God has been working, operating, to bring everything under His government. I want to end this opening word by reading some wonderful verses that prove this. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, *“Then the end, when He (Christ) delivers up the kingdom to His God and Father, once He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until God puts all His enemies under His feet. Death, the last enemy, is being abolished. For He has subjected all things under His feet. But when He says all that things are subjected, it is evident that all things are except Him who has subjected all things to Him. And when all things have been subjected to Him (Christ), then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who has subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.”* All things are being subjected to the Lord, and He is subject to God Himself. This is the Lord’s move. But right now, as I am speaking this, the heavens are focused, not first on the political situations of countries, on the world economy, or on this and that. The focus of the reigning Christ is on the churches. He must get His way with us first. And brothers, the time is now.

OUR NEEDING TO COME TO “KNOW THAT THE HEAVENS DO RULE”

This section is based mainly on Daniel. We must come to “know that the heavens do rule”— not just believe, but know. We, brothers, often make a mistake that sisters do not make so often. We may just assume we know something, and it is not easy for us to be able to say in response to a question, “I don’t know.” We should have a little doubt at least for ourselves. Know that the heavens rule; it is real to us.

The Kingdom of the Heavens Being a Realm Where the Heavens Exercise Authority

The kingdom of the heavens is a realm where the heavens exercise authority. God rules and exercises authority from the heavens as His dwelling place. The Son of Man is on the throne. His eyes roam over the whole earth. He knows our every personal situation thoroughly. He wills to exercise heavenly authority here and there, in this and in that. He is doing this now.

The throne of God's authority is in the heavens. The kingdom of the heavens is the reign of the heavens where God dwells; it is the rule of the heavens. The New Testament begins with the gospel of Matthew concerning the kingdom of the heavens, which strictly speaking, is a section in the kingdom of God. The church life in its reality is our corporate living under the rule of the heavens. That is the reality of the church.

**God's Dominion Being an Eternal Dominion and His Kingdom
Being from Generation to Generation**

Daniel 4:34-35 says, *"For His dominion is an eternal dominion / And His kingdom is from generation to generation...He does according to His will in the army of heaven/ And among the inhabitants of the earth."* From November, 2016 until now there has been chaos in the politics in Washington D.C. So many people refuse to accept the fact that this man, Donald Trump, got elected to be president. From the day he was elected, some said, "We're going to impeach him and get him out." So now this is what they are working on. My view of this is not Republican, not Democrat, and not political; it is God's government. "God, You put in power the persons You choose." So here I am in the Philippines, I have no opinion about the ruler of the country. I simply respect. This is the man in charge, this is the government, and we believe the heavens rule this. Study Romans 13. Among the inhabitants of the earth, God does this mainly silently. My prayer this morning was just a little prayer: "Lord, do You want to keep this man in office or not? I agree with You. If You want to keep him there, Your will be done. If You want to do something else, Your will be done." I vote for God! I am a theocrat; that is, the "God party".

Daniel 4:35 continues, *"there is no one who can resist His hand / Or say to Him, What are You doing?"* But actually, many rebellious ones in the United States do not realize they are saying this to God. They are godless people whether they are religious or not. Even many of the dear brothers and sisters in the churches, their soul is in this fallen realm. They themselves need to see this is God's government here. Honor God's government.

As Those Who Have Been Chosen by God to Be His People for the Preeminence of Christ, Our Being under God's Heavenly Rule; Our Needing to Realize this and Be Submissive to God's Heavenly Rule

As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for the preeminence of Christ, we are under God's heavenly rule; we need to realize this and be submissive to God's heavenly rule. We were chosen by God to be His people. We are His people so that Christ may have the preeminence in any matter of our personal life, our human life, married life, family life, and church life. Any area where Christ does not have the first place yet is an area that needs God's governmental rule. When I have a failure in this and that or make a mistake in this and that, the core reason, in this instance, is because I was not under the throne and in this matter, I was not under the rule. I need to confess not only the mistake I made and the reaction I had. It could be something elementary like having a quick reaction to my beloved wife. It may have been calm, but I did it. I have to realize that it is because Christ is not yet fully preeminent. We honor the heaven's rule, receive the grace, and humble ourselves. I like to close my eyes and just dream a little bit that throughout the Philippines, Christ has the preeminence — in Luzon, the preeminence; in all the islands in Visayas, the preeminence; and in Mindanao, the preeminence. No matter, no thing, and no person has the preeminence but Christ Himself.

THE EPISTLES OF 1 AND 2 PETER BEING ON THE UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

The Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter are on the universal government of God.

The Subject of 1 Peter Being the Christian Life under the Government of God, Showing Us the Government of God Especially in His Dealings with His Chosen People

The subject of 1 Peter is the Christian life under the government of God, showing us the government of God especially in His dealings with His chosen people. If you read through 1 Peter again from this point of view it will be quite enlightening. Everything Peter covers in this epistle is related to the Christian life under the government of God. Let me just ask you in a friendly, pleasant way. I am sure many of us have had to speak at wedding meetings. Have you ever given a message or fellowship at a wedding meeting that has as its subject "Married Life under the Government of God"? But look

at chapter 3. Here Peter starts talking about this. He addresses the women, the wives, saying, “What you need is a meek and quiet spirit. If you want to gain your husband, it must be without a word; it is your manner of life” (1 Pet. 3:1, 4). Then he says even more to the brothers, the husbands, “You have to live with them according to knowledge” (v. 7a). It does not say love, but knowledge. What is that? Of the female vessel, the weaker vessel, he says, “Give honor to the weaker vessel, you are heirs together of the grace of life; otherwise, your prayers will be hindered” (v. 7b). (We are all weak, but she is weaker and that is why it says “weaker”.) This is a training, and I am applying God’s government but not too heavily. Let me make this general statement first. Only the Lord knows how many married couples have a prayer ministry together as part of their married life. For them, it is just part of their married life; they can pray in harmony at any time about anything. I have no idea what the percentage is. My guess would be maybe about five or nine percent. Because of what goes on in the level of the natural life and the self, the prayers are hindered. In this matter, if we would live under the government of God with its wonderful provision of life, grace, wisdom, and understanding, then we can be enjoying one another in an affectionate way. Then five minutes later I can say to my wife, “I am burdened that we pray about this situation.” Then we just pray. This is just an illustration. We are talking about something real and practical here.

The Subject of 2 Peter Being the Divine Provision and the Divine Government, Showing Us that as God is Governing Us, He Supplies Us with Whatever We Need

The subject of 2 Peter is the divine provision and the divine government, showing us that as God is governing us, He supplies us with whatever we need. Brothers, is this not precious? “Whatever we need!” I do not know how you feel, but from time to time when I fellowship with the Lord, I like to acknowledge and say, “Lord, actually, I really don’t know where I am and what I need. You know what I need. I just ask that You care for me according to Your understanding of what I need.” I have needs different from when I was thirty-five and fifty years old, before and after I became a grandfather. I have needs at every level. Actually, I find that I do not have to pray that much. I just receive the supply to live under His government, and He takes care of all the needs. What a government this is! You are going to hear a wonderful

message on living in the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Oh, this is the most pleasant realm in the universe where you are under the government ruled by love, light, and life. I am looking forward to that message. We need to have this view. Yes, the government is based on righteousness. But once we are in harmony with God's righteous government, the way is opened for this bountiful supply.

God's Governing by Judging; This Judgment of God Being for the Carrying Out of His Government

God governs by judging; this judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government. First Peter 4:17 says that judgment begins at the household of God. Do not try to avoid this. You are elders and responsible ones and part of your responsibility is to take the lead in every aspect of the living out of God's economy and God's purpose. Then the church will be what you are. You may learn that the Lord needs to judge certain matters in your life that are not in harmony with His government. We are still in the old creation and there are certain things in us that the Lord wants to deal with. Then Christ has more room to grow in us and in the church it's the same. We co-workers do not go floating around and governmentally judging anything. We are not the government. We are not the governor. I do not have any authority. The Son of Man has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). I just know to minister life and truth and to enjoy fellowship and shepherding in mutuality.

Because 1 and 2 Peter are concerned with the government of God, in these Epistles the judgment of God and of the Lord is referred to repeatedly as one of the essential items. There is no threatening but there should be a sober thinking here. Judgment starts with the house of God. He cannot go on to bring righteous government to the world, to politics, or whatever it is, if He has not first gained the church. This is parallel to Ephesians 1:10 where all things will be headed up in Christ in heaven and on earth. But first the church must be headed up in Christ, then the Lord can head up countries. Brothers, I have the responsibility along with my fellow serving ones to release as faithfully and as purely as we can this word that the Lord has put in us. Then we will follow that up with personal prayer for you all. But once you have heard this word, there is a responsibility on you that you might never have had before. You should just realize this and accept this as a man with some maturity and say, "Lord, I want to learn to live under Your government in

every aspect of my life and to experience the bountiful supply, then I can shepherd the saints into the same reality.”

Through various kinds of judgments, the Lord God will clear up the entire universe and purify it so that He may have a new heaven and a new earth for a new universe filled with His righteousness for His delight. This is Second Peter. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, a new universe filled with righteousness. This is where God is going.

The Judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, Which is Carried Out by the Father, Not Being the Future Judgment but Being the Present, Daily Judgment of God’s Governmental Dealings with His Children

The judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, which is carried out by the Father, is not the future judgment but is the present, daily judgment of God’s governmental dealings with His children. We will all appear before the Son of Man at the judgment seat. We know this from 2 Corinthians 5 and 1 Corinthians 3. Our life and our work will be tested by fire and that will determine whether or not we will enter the kingdom as a co-king. We are not talking about that aspect of judgment. All that judgment at the judgment seat and the great white throne has been given to the Son, but God the Creator and God our Father is judging here and now. We need to be clear concerning this. It is a present daily judgment of God’s governmental dealings with His children. He does not regard us as mere citizens but as His children.

The Father has regenerated us to produce a holy family — a holy Father with holy children. Let us say in principle at least, in Christ, in your family, you are a holy father and with your wife you are learning to be holy parents. You brought forth children and you love them with your whole being. But you do not want them to grow up wild, lawless, crude, and disrespectful. You educate, supply, train, and at times discipline them, not out of anger but out of love for them. This is the Father’s disciplining of His children.

As holy children, we should walk in a holy manner of life; otherwise, in His government God the Father will become the Judge and will deal with our unholiness. This is just the way it is. Yes, on the side of being saved in life, of organic salvation, life is growing; it is increasing. But along with that, we need the discipline. We need the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

The Disciplinary Judgment in the Government of God Beginning from the House of God

The disciplinary judgment in the government of God begins from the house of God. We should not view this just abstractly. In practicality, it begins with the house of God, your local church. You should not have the thought, “We are exempt. We don’t need any of this.” Only God knows the real situation and He has a way to deal with it. After many years of fellowship under the wise direction of Brother Lee, and after he went to be with the Lord, the Lord led us about 12 years ago to address a certain situation, and none of us did this lightly. My point is that starting with that event, I have observed the Lord dealing with many situations in churches in His sovereign government where there were serious problems, especially among the leaders. I am just in awe. I realize that the God in grace and in mercy, is long-suffering and forbearing. But He is the righteous God with a government, and when He decides to act, nothing will stop Him. This is what we pray for. We would not dare to presume to take some kind of action. Who are we? We are nothing. We are nobody. He is God, He has a government, and He will exercise this.

God judges everything that does not match His government. Maybe some of us will have the leading from the anointing to be with the Lord even this weekend and ask Him, “Lord, am I doing anything contrary to Your government? If so, please let me know. Please deal with it now. Not only for my sake, but for the sake of the church.” Brothers, we must have no trust and confidence in ourselves. Be humble ourselves and say, “Lord, search me. Is there anything that does not match the government in the way I’m taking, the way I speak, or the way we are leading the church? Lord, it is clear that it has to be judged sooner or later. Lord, act now before it is too late for me.” In this age we, the children of God, are under the daily judgment of God.

God uses fiery ordeals to deal with the believers in the judgment of His governmental administration, which begins from His own house. The purpose of this judgment is that we would live according to God in spirit. This is His goal, that we would live according to God. I am thinking of 1 Peter 5 where Peter is speaking to the elders because he himself was one, and he emphasized shepherding. I treasure this phrase he used: “*shepherd...according to God.*” In caring for saints, I have been made quite aware of how saints have suffered when leading ones “shepherded” them according to themselves — their self,

their disposition, their powerful person. This is serious. We know from Acts 20 that Paul gave a word to the elders from Ephesus at Miletus (v. 17) to shepherd the flock of God over whom the Holy Spirit made them overseers (v. 28). It has to be according to God. It is one thing for me to have a failure and, in a sense, damage myself; but for me to deeply wound a brother or sister because I let myself take the lead in contacting with them, this is another thing. Shepherd according to God. Some of us can testify that after we have passed through a particular kind of dealing, we sense our spirit is stronger, more vital; there is more flow, and there is a positive purpose here.

**IN HIS WRITINGS PETER COMBINING THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE AND GOD'S GOVERNMENT, REVEALING THAT THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD GO
TOGETHER AS A PAIR**

In His writings Peter combines the Christian life and God's government. One aspect of the training is that we are combining them. We are looking to the Lord that step by step, not in one weekend, your Christian life will be combined with God's government. You will sense that you are in another realm, a wonderful realm. It is serious but it is blessed; it is wonderful, peaceful, joyful, full of light, and full of life. Peter reveals that the Christian life and the government of God go together as a pair.

**The Triune God Having Passed through a Long Process in Christ and
Having Become the Life-Giving Spirit to Indwell Us; This Being for
Our Christian Life**

The Triune God has passed through a long process in Christ and has become the life-giving Spirit to indwell us; this is for our Christian life. What a process He went through to breathe Himself into us! This is all grace. It is wonderful.

**At the Same Time; the Triune God Still Being
the Creator of the Universe and Its Ruler**

At the same time; the Triune God is still the Creator of the universe and its Ruler. Because physically we are still in the old creation, we are still part of it; we are subject to God's government as every other creature is.

**Although We Have Been Born of God to Have a Spiritual Life and
to Be a New Creation, Our Being Still in the Old Creation**

Although we have been born of God to have a spiritual life and to be a new creation, we are still in the old creation. Here is an instance. You may have the thought, “This person is of Chinese heritage or Chinese culture who speaks Tagalog and Chinese, while we are Filipinos by birth.” Or you may think and attribute certain situations to race, saying, “Oh, it is because of race; it is because of nationality.” That is one hundred percent of the old creation. There is no such thing in the one new man because we are all eliminated, and Christ is all and in all. Just our thinking this, let alone speaking this, is a serious matter. It is potentially a divisive matter. The heavens are watching and will act: “No, I will not allow this to enter into My recovery on the earth. I want to see one new man in reality and practicality.”

For this reason, we need God’s governmental dealings. In order for the Christian life to grow, we need the discipline of God’s government. I say this again, and the Lord, the Spirit, can bear witness with me: in all my travels for the last twenty-five years, I do not have a judgmental attitude or a critical spirit toward anyone or anything. I do not come to examine or keep a record of defects. If I am aware of a shortage, the response is to minister life, truth, and Christ. But there is a particular matter that saddens my heart, and I am not alone among the serving ones. Brother Lee sent some of us here to fight and to preserve the churches in Mindanao. It could happen here or in any other country. Let us just say that over the twenty-five years since I began coming here, I just have the sense that this brother is so dear but he has not grown an inch in twenty years. That is just a discernment. It does not lead to judgment and criticism. If you have a little boy who is now twelve but whose body is the same as a seven-year old, what parent would not be more than desperate and say, “I just want my son to grow normally?” We need God’s governmental dealing for our growth in life. I can say two things honestly about the Lord’s governmental dealings with me to the extent to which I understand them. Without these dealings, I would not still be alive physically, and I would not have grown however I have grown. This is part of the Father’s care. We should not pray for dealings; we do not need to. We should pray for normal growth and the Lord will supply grace upon grace; but from time to time, there will be governmental dealings so we can grow.

**WHEN THE LORD JESUS WAS ON EARTH, HIS LIVING
A HUMAN LIFE THAT WAS ABSOLUTELY UNDER THE
GOVERNMENT OF GOD, AND HIS COMMITTING EVERYTHING
RELATED TO HIM TO GOD’S GOVERNMENT**

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a human life that was absolutely under the government of God, and He committed everything related to Him to God’s government. *“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps; Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth; Who being reviled, did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously”* (1 Pet. 2:21-23). How He was reviled and blasphemed, rejected, treated at His trial, and mocked. They put a crown of thorns and a purple garment on Him and mocked and slapped Him, yet He did not do anything to vindicate Himself; He kept on continually referring everything to God. This is the Christian life. What do you do if you are attacked? If you are accused, or if you are wrongly slandered, what will you do? The Lord cover me. Many years ago, I was in a certain place and I had to share something with the people there in that country and warn them about a certain destructive person. One of the brothers there violated the confidentiality of that fellowship and recorded it illegally and sent it to this destructive brother. He put it online and then filed a lawsuit against me. It was ridiculous, and it was thrown out. As soon as I heard it, I just said, “Lord, I offer this to you. You are the righteous Judge; I don’t have to worry about this.” I could not have done this twenty years ago. I would have said, “Don’t you call me that.” But God’s government enables us to allow Christ to live again.

**The Lord’s Committing All His Insults and Injuries to Him
Who Judges Righteously in His Government, the Righteous God, to
Whom He Submitted Himself; His Putting His Trust in This Righteous
One, Recognizing His Government**

The Lord kept committing all His insults and injuries to Him who judges righteously in His government, the righteous God, to whom He submitted Himself; He puts His trust in this righteous One, recognizing His government. This is the Christ in all of us.

When God Counseled Christ as a Man, Christ's Inward Parts Being One with God and Instructing Him through His Contact with God

When God counseled Christ as a man, Christ's inward parts were one with God and instructed Him through His contact with God. The Lord will lead us by giving us certain deep senses within as His government is directing, and we inwardly just say, "Amen, Lord. You are the Lord; You are on the throne. I live under the government of God." — **(R. K.)**

Message 2

The Christian Life under the Government of God

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:6-8, 17; 4:13-19; 5:6

I. As believers in Christ and children of God, we should live a Christian life under the government of God—John 3:15; 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:13-19; 5:6-8.

II. The Epistles of Peter reveal the Christ who enables us to take God’s governmental dealings administered through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:6-8; 2:3-4, 19, 21-25; 3:18, 22; 4:1, 15-16; 5:8-9.

III. We should be humbled under the mighty hand of God, which carries out the government of God—v. 6:

A. In verse 6 *the mighty hand of God* refers to God’s administrating hand seen especially in His judgment—1:17; 4:17.

B. To be humbled under God’s mighty hand is to be made humble by God; however, we must cooperate with God’s operation and be willing to be made humble, lowly, under His mighty hand—5:6.

IV. As we live under the government of God, we will be made sorrowful by various trials and experience the proving of our faith—1:6-7:

A. The trials in verse 6 are sufferings that test the quality of our life as believers.

B. These trials are used by God to prove and try our faith to see whether we will follow Christ in suffering for doing good—2:19-23; 3:14-18.

C. The emphasis in 1 Peter 1:7 is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings.

V. Although we have not seen the Lord Jesus Christ, we love Him, and although we do not see Him at present, we believe, exulting with “joy that is unspeakable and full of glory”—v. 8:

A. It is a wonder and a mystery that we, the believers, love One whom we have not seen.

B. We love Him whom we have not seen because of believing, because of the faith that has been infused into us through hearing the living word of God—Gal. 3:2.

- C. This faith is under the proving, the trying, mentioned in 1 Peter 1:7.
- D. Joy full of glory is joy immersed in glory; it is joy that is filled with the expression of Christ—v. 8.

VI. We should commit our souls to the faithful Creator—4:19:

- A. God can preserve our soul, and His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice in His governmental administration.
- B. While God judges us in His government, He cares for us faithfully in His love; as we are suffering His disciplinary judgment, we should commit our souls to the faithful care of our Creator—Matt. 10:28; 11:28-29.

VII. In the death of Christ we have died to sins so that in the resurrection of Christ we might live to righteousness under God's government—1 Pet. 2:24:

- A. God's government is established upon righteousness (Psa. 89:14a); as God's people living under His government, we must live a righteous life.
- B. The expression *live to righteousness* is related to the fulfilling of God's governmental requirements—1 Pet. 2:24:
 1. We were saved so that we might live rightly under the government of God, that is, in a way that matches the righteous requirements of His government.
 2. In Christ's death we have been separated from sins, and in His resurrection we have been enlivened so that in our Christian life we might live spontaneously to righteousness under the government of God—Rom. 6:8, 10-11, 18; Eph. 2:6; John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:11.

Message 2

The Christian Life under the Government of God

The general subject of this perfecting training is “The Christian Life and the Church Life under the Government of God”. We do not talk about this much but it is very important. We praise the Lord that He is the God of love, the God of grace, and the God of glory who wants to shine upon us and express Himself, but we should also remember that He is a God of government. We are God’s chosen people, so He will deal with us first before He deals with others. As I was reading all these outlines, I was very much before the Lord. I do not even know how to share these messages, because this is something that is most serious. Peter was very serious in considering this matter. May the Lord be merciful to us that we too would consider this very seriously before Him.

The subject of 1 Peter is “The Christian Life under the Government of God”. This subject shows us that the government of God is especially for His dealing with His chosen people. First Peter 1:2 has a marvelous footnote on “chosen”. I hope that we would read it and would also try to memorize it. It tells us that God needs to exercise His governmental dealing on us as His chosen people so that we can represent Him on the earth.

Second Peter is also on the universal government of God. Its subject is “The Divine Provision and the Divine Government”, showing us that as God is governing us, He supplies us with whatever we need. Peter is actually very balanced. Firstly, he talks about how God needs to govern us and deal with us. He chose us so that we can be dealt with by Him. But 2 Peter talks about His divine provision and His divine government. Thus, as God is governing us, He supplies us with whatever we need.

In 1961, even before I was baptized, there was a great rebellion in the church in Manila. I do not know if anybody here still remembers that time, but I remember it very well, because that rebellion actually separated our family. Part of our family rebelled and another part remained in the recovery. During those times, I still remember how my mother repeatedly said, “In everything that we do, we must be under the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, because one day we have to face Him as the Judge.” He governs us by judging us, and it will be much better for us if He were to judge us today. If we submit ourselves to His judgmental discipline today, we can become the overcomers who will receive Him back.

Maybe I can share a little bit before I get into the outline. At that time, I had one relative who was older than my dad, and he was the one who brought my dad to the Lord. He was also the one who brought my dad into the recovery. He was also the one who brought Brother Lee into this country in the first place. But one day, he was affected and he rebelled against Brother Lee and the recovery. At that time, my family was in turmoil and we did not know what to do. There were so many accusations and insults that were hurled against my father and mother, and we suffered quite a bit. But my mother kept reminding us that we need to live under the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ. I praise the Lord very much that our family stood firm with the recovery. I am not saying all of this to make you fearful. Rather, what happened to our family really helped me in my Christian life. Shortly after that rebellion, something happened to this relative of ours and to his family. His wife got sick and died of cancer. Her cancer was not hidden in her body but it was a growth out of her throat. On the same day that we brought her to the cemetery for burial, her husband, the rebellious one, felt something wrong with his abdomen. When we heard about this, we brought him to the hospital. He never left that hospital. Within thirty days, he also went to be with the Lord. When he was still in the hospital, he asked my mother for some fellowship. He told my mother, “Please pray for me, please pray for me. I realize that I have sinned against God. I should never have rebelled against Brother Lee. So please pray.” And he said, “If the Lord would be willing to heal me, I will bring my whole family back into the Lord’s recovery.” I was hopeful that with such a prayer, maybe the Lord would heal him, but the Lord did not. His whole family was in shock. Some of their children were still very young and could not take this. They lost both parents within thirty

days. I am not joyful about such discipline, but this is the serious discipline that I observed. This has been very much within me, that we ought to live a Christian life under the government of our God.

He is not merely the God of grace, the God of love, and the God of glory. He is a God of government. Because of His will, His good pleasure, and His desire, He will accomplish things according to His holiness and righteousness. When we talk about our Christian life, let us not forget that this Christian life must be under the government of God. I have seen many rebellions in my church life. The first one was in 1961, in the church in Manila, and I think that was the first rebellion in the Lord's recovery outside of mainland China. But after that, there were quite a few more. By going through those rebellions, I really saw that our God is a God of government. We should never forget that. As we go through our Christian life, may the Lord remind us again and again that He has two systems: the system of grace and the system of government. He would have to deal with us for the fulfillment of what is in His heart.

The subject in 1 and 2 Peter is on the government of God but this subject is actually not our focus. Our focus must be the economy of God. God is doing all these things in order to build Himself into us so that we can be His corporate expression. This is what the Lord is after. In order for us to express Him, He has to deal with us in a proper way.

**AS BELIEVERS IN CHRIST AND CHILDREN OF GOD,
OUR NEEDING TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN LIFE UNDER THE
GOVERNMENT OF GOD**

As believers in Christ and children of God, we should live a Christian life under the government of God (John 3:15; 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:13-19; 5:6-8). John 3:15 says, "*That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.*" John 1:12-13 also says, "*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" Praise the Lord that we are believers! We are begotten of God. We are children of God. Don't you think this is wonderful? We are born of God! But as children of God and believers of God, we should live a Christian life under the government of God. We probably pay a lot of attention to the Christian life. After we believe in the Lord, we at least have some knowledge

or some consciousness that we are children of God and that we should live our life just like a Christian. But we often neglect the fact that we must live under the government of God. This is what the Epistles of Peter are telling us.

Here we are talking about two things. Firstly, the Triune God has gone through a process to become the life-giving Spirit. As the life-giving Spirit, He is also the Spirit dwelling within us to make us a Christian and a believer of God, so that we can have His divine life and so that we can live a proper Christian life. But we must also be cognizant of the fact that this Triune God is the Creator and the Ruler of the universe. He is not only the life-giving Spirit who came into us to be our life. He is also the Creator of the universe and the Ruler of the universe. As the Ruler of the universe, He has His divine government. I am really glad that we have Peter's Epistles. It seems as if Peter is the only one who connected these two things: the Christian life and the government of God. I hope that we would all see both the Christian life and the government of God. We should also see how these two things go together. First Peter 4:13 says, "*But inasmuch as you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice exultingly.*" In 4:16, it says, "*But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.*" Then verse 17 says, "For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?" Also, in verse 19, it says, "So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator." We will speak further about this later.

First Peter 5:6-8 say, "*Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you. Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.*" When we talk about the government of God, on the one hand we need to have the fear of God. But Peter also talks about the need to be humbled under the mighty hand of God and the need to cast all of our anxiety on the Lord. Many Christians have told me that they do not like to read the book of Revelation because it is a book on judgment. But Peter, in telling us about this judgment, also reminded us that we can cast all our anxiety on the One who cares for us. It matters to Him concerning you. As we go through these messages concerning God's government, we must remember to turn to the Lord. Yes,

He is a God of government, but He is still the God of grace. We need to turn to Him and pray that He would continue to guide us through this, so that we can be useful to Him for the fulfillment of His economy.

**THE EPISTLES OF PETER REVEALING THE CHRIST WHO
ENABLES US TO TAKE GOD’S GOVERNMENTAL DEALINGS
ADMINISTERED THROUGH SUFFERINGS**

The Epistles of Peter reveal the Christ who enables us to take God’s governmental dealings administered through sufferings (1 Pet. 1:6-8; 2:3-4, 19, 21-25; 3:18, 22; 4:1, 15-16; 5:8-9). We have Christ! On the one hand, this Christ is the one who judges us, but on the other hand, He is also the one who enables us to take God’s judgmental dealings.

I hope you will not think that we are aiming at some particular people. We are not saying that certain people have to be careful or otherwise they will be under God’s government. I have no such thought, because I feel that I myself have to be careful. I need to subject myself to all these serious words that Peter wrote in his Epistles. We need to listen to these messages for ourselves. We need to go to the Lord and pray for His mercy. If not for the mercy of the Lord, I do not think that anyone would be able to stand before the Lord. I hope that we all would take this matter seriously before the Lord. May the Lord deal with us, His chosen people who are regenerated with His life. He will enable us to take God’s governmental dealings administered through suffering.

First Peter 2:3 says, “If you have tasted that the Lord is good.” Peter starts by telling us that we have to taste that the Lord is good. Then verse 4 says, “*Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious.*” We are chosen and precious to the Lord. I believe this is why He wants to deal with us and judge us first. I praise the Lord that He cares for us, that He has chosen us, and that He has determined that we are precious to Him. He wants to deal with us so that we can be buildable as living stones for His building. First Peter 2:19 says, “*For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly.*” Then verse 21 says, “*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps.*”

Some of us might be going through some kind of suffering, but 1 Peter 2:21 tells us that we should be able to go through this, because there is One within us who has already gone through this kind of suffering. This One is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our model. As He lived here on earth, He subjected Himself to the government of God. He subjected everything to the government of God. Verse 22 and 23 go on to say, *“Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth; who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously.”* These verses are very important. Yes, He was reviled and was suffering, but He threatened no one. The only thing that He did was that He kept committing all these insults, injuries, and sufferings to Him who judges righteously. These verses prove to us that the Lord recognized the government of God while He was living His human life here on earth. While He was going through sufferings, He was committing it all to this God who judges everything righteously. Then verse 24 says, *“Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.”* He died for us so that we can die to sin. We can be taken away from sin. First Peter 3:18 says, *“For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit.”*

In our Christian life, what do we do when we suffer? I believe we would usually commit ourselves to the Lord whom we think is faithful, merciful, and kind. Isn't this true? When we go through certain things, we commit them to the Lord. We say, “Lord, You are the merciful One. You are the faithful One. You are the kind One. We want to bring all these matters to You.” But in 1 Peter 2:23, the Lord did not commit all to the merciful God. Rather He committed all to Him who judges righteously. When we experience suffering, to whom should we commit all things? Is it to the merciful God or to the God who judges? As a model to us, the Lord Jesus Christ committed all things to the God who judges righteously. When we pray, we may express our self and do it in a traditional way. But if we see the model that the Lord Jesus has given us, it is actually contrary to our concept. By being in our tradition, we are actually kept from applying the thoughts and utterances in the pure word of God. Today, we must turn to the Lord and ask Him to open our eyes. We

must follow the model of our Lord, so that we too can commit all things to the Judge who judges righteously.

OUR NEEDING TO BE HUMBLD UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, WHICH CARRIES OUT THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

We should be humbled under the mighty hand of God, which carries out the government of God (v. 6). This is found in 1 Peter 5:6.

In Verse Six the Mighty Hand of God Referring to God's Administrating Hand Seen Especially in His Judgment

In verse 6 *the mighty hand of God* refers to God's administrating hand seen especially in His judgment (1:17; 4:17). We know that the Lord's judgment is for Him to carry out His government. First Peter 1:17 says, "*And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.*" This means that we should pass our time on this earth in fear. The word "fear" is used quite a few times in the Epistles of Peter, since they are books on the government of God (1 Pet. 1:17, 2:17-18, 3:2, 16). Philippians 2:12 tells us that we need to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. If you read the footnote, it tells us that we cannot do this by ourselves. We can only let God do it for us. Praise the Lord that God operates in us both the willing and the working. Hence, in response to this word, "pass the time of your sojourning in fear", we must pray, "Lord, keep us in the fear of God."

In the recent crystallization-study of Deuteronomy, the brothers spoke of the need to fear Jehovah. Last December, all my children came to Anaheim and they all participated in this training. Then on the last day of the year, we knelt before the Lord together and prayed that the Lord would keep us in the fear of God. I told my children and their wives that we must always remember to be in the fear of God.

If you look at the situation in society today, people say things and do things as if there is no God because they have no fear of God. The fear of God is very much related to the government of God. The Lord will do what He wants to do in His government, and there is no room for negotiation. Just like my earlier example, according to my experience, when we have offended the government of God, we may pray for deliverance but the Lord may not answer us because we are under His governmental discipline.

Many of us are saddened by the end of Moses. He committed one mistake in the entire forty years of his serving life. Can you imagine this? After forty years of serving the Lord, he made the mistake of calling the people of the Lord “rebels” and then he struck the rock with his rod. He had struck the rod once before so he might have thought, “Since I did it before, I can do it again.” But his actions were against what the Lord was doing. Moses called God’s people rebels, but the Lord was not calling them rebels. Because of this, Moses was not allowed to enter into the good land. Moses even tried to negotiate with Jehovah to see if he could enter the good land just for a short time, but the Lord would not reconsider. If the Lord can discipline Moses in this way, will He not discipline us much more? Thus, we should consider much before the Lord how we are living our church life today. We should pray for the Lord to be so merciful to us. Many of us have been in the church life for a number of years and we have been serving the Lord. May the Lord save us from doing things that would require His governmental discipline. Even I myself am praying for this because after seeing the example of Moses, I believe we all need to be careful.

The fear of God requires our deep realization of the redemption of Christ. If we have a deep realization of the redemption of Christ, it will lead us to the real fear of God. If we recognize how our God has paid the highest price with His own blood to save us and redeem us, then we would become fearful of this Person. This is why after verse 17, verses 18 and 19 speak of our redemption.

To be Humbled under God’s Mighty Hand Being to Be Made Humble by God; However, Our Needing Also to Cooperate with God’s Operation and to Be Willing to Be Made Humble, Lowly, under His Mighty Hand

To be humbled under God’s mighty hand is to be made humble by God. The Lord judges us and disciplines us because we do not become humble by ourselves (5:6). We are made humble by God. God uses many things in our environment so that we can be humbled. However, we must cooperate with God. He may use things in order to humble us, but we may remain very strong against Him. Hence, we must cooperate with God’s operation and be willing to be made humble and lowly under His mighty hand.

If we go back to 1 Peter 5:5, Peter tells us that we need to gird ourselves with humility towards one another. In our church life under God’s government,

this is very much needed. Perhaps Peter remembered how the Lord girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5). The Lord did not say, "I am the Lord, so I am much higher than you", but He girded Himself with humility. He lowered Himself and became meek and lowly for His disciples. Today as we serve the Lord under the government of God, I hope that we will all remember this pattern that the Lord has given us. We need to gird ourselves with humility, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). If we want to continue receiving grace and enjoying God, we must gird ourselves with humility.

**AS WE LIVE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, OUR BEING
MADE SORROWFUL BY VARIOUS TRIALS AND EXPERIENCING
THE PROVING OF OUR FAITH**

As we live under the government of God, we will be made sorrowful by various trials and experience the proving of our faith (1:6-7). Paul went through all kinds of suffering. This is why he could say in Romans 5:3 that tribulation brings forth endurance. In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul says that he despaired even of living. I do not know if we have ever gone through the same sufferings that Paul did. But after such suffering, he could say in 2 Corinthians 4:16, that although the outer man is decaying, the inner man, the new man, is being renewed day by day. As we go through various trials, which we will, all of these trials will allow us to experience the proving of our faith. But what does the proving of our faith mean?

**The Trials in Verse Six Being Sufferings
That Test the Quality of Our Life as Believers**

The trials in 1 Peter 1:6 are sufferings that test the quality of our life as believers.

**These Trials Being Used by God to Prove and Try Our Faith to See
Whether We Will Follow Christ in Suffering for Doing Good**

These trials are used by God to prove and try our faith to see whether we will follow Christ in suffering for doing good. First Peter 2:20 says, "*For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God.*"

The Emphasis in 1 Peter 1:7 Being Not on Faith but on the Proving of Faith by Trials That Come through Sufferings

The emphasis in 1 Peter 1:7 is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings. We go through trials and sufferings in order to prove our faith.

Recently, I have been considering what my service life should be. Since I am getting a little old, I was considering if I should still be traveling this much. Some of you may think that traveling is very nice. Actually, traveling is a suffering. I was thinking about the places where I have been serving. Some places are very encouraging, while some places are a real suffering. But I praise the Lord that He has put us through many things in order to prove our faith. The faith that we have is actually the faith that the Lord has infused into us. We do not have faith in ourselves, but as we come to the Lord and spend time with Him, He infuses us with His faith. As we go through sufferings, we can come to the Lord and His faith will enable us to go on day by day.

First Peter 1:7 says, *“So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* This verse implies that everything we are going through is actually hidden in God. It has not yet been revealed. But one day it will all be revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, God is hidden; but on the other hand, because of the faith that He has infused into us, we can see Him and we can love Him, so that we can go on with Him.

**ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
OUR LOVING HIM, AND ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT SEE HIM AT
PRESENT, OUR BELIEVING, EXULTING WITH JOY THAT IS
UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY**

Although we have not seen the Lord Jesus Christ, we love Him, and although we do not see Him at present, we believe, exulting with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory (v. 8). Don't you think this is wonderful? There is this kind of faith within us. When I read this verse, I was really full of joy. I do not know if worldly people can be full of joy as they are going through suffering. To them, these are two opposite things. But right after Peter spoke about suffering and the proving of our faith, he talks about this joy in verse 8.

The joy that we have is a joy permeated with God's glory. It is a joy covered by God's glory, a joy that is full of the expression of God.

It Being a Wonder and a Mystery That We, the Believers, Love One Whom We Have Not Seen

It is a wonder and a mystery that we, the believers, love One whom we have not seen. I've always wondered how we could love Someone so much for so long without ever seeing Him. But this is the faith that is in us.

Our Loving Him Whom We Have Not Seen Because of Believing, Because of the Faith That Has Been Infused into Us through Hearing the Living Word of God

We love Him whom we have not seen because of believing, because of the faith that has been infused into us through hearing the living word of God (Gal. 3:2).

This Faith Being under the Proving, the Trying, Mentioned in 1 Peter 1:7

This faith is under the proving, the trying, mentioned in 1 Peter 1:7.

**Joy Full of Glory Being Joy Immersed in Glory;
It Being Joy That is Filled with the Expression of Christ**

Joy full of glory is joy immersed in glory; it is joy that is filled with the expression of Christ (v. 8).

**OUR NEEDING TO COMMIT OUR SOULS
TO THE FAITHFUL CREATOR**

We should commit our souls to the faithful Creator (4:19). First Peter 4:19 says, "*So then let those also who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator.*" This does not refer to those who suffer because of certain things that they do, but to those who suffer according to the will of God. These commit their souls in well-doing to a faithful Creator. The Creator here does not refer to the Creator of the new heaven and the new earth, but it refers to the Creator of the old creation, which is where we are today in this age.

God Being Able to Preserve Our Soul, and His Loving and Faithful Care Accompanying His Justice in His Governmental Administration

God can preserve our soul, and His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice in His governmental administration. Don't you think this is wonderful? On the one hand, we are fearful of His governmental administration but on the other hand, God can preserve our soul. His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice in His governmental administration.

While God Judges Us in His Government, His Caring for Us Faithfully in His Love; As We Are Suffering His Disciplinary Judgment, Our Needing to Commit Our Souls to the Faithful Care of Our Creator

While God judges us in His government, He cares for us faithfully in His love; as we are suffering His disciplinary judgment, we should commit our souls to the faithful care of our Creator (Matt. 10:28; 11:28-29). Let us cooperate with the Lord by our faithful commitment. Let us commit our souls to Him. Matthew 10:28 says, *“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”* Then 11:28-29 also say, *“Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST OUR HAVING DIED TO SINS SO THAT IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST WE MIGHT LIVE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS UNDER GOD'S GOVERNMENT

In the death of Christ, we have died to sins so that in the resurrection of Christ we might live to righteousness under God's government (1 Pet. 2:24). First Peter 2:24 says, *“Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.”*

**God's Government Being Established upon Righteousness;
As God's People Living under His Government,
Our Needing to Live a Righteous Life**

God's government is established upon righteousness (Psa. 89:14a). As God's people living under His government, we must live a righteous life. Psalm 89:14 tells us that righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

The Expression “Live to Righteousness” Being Related to the Fulfilling of God’s Governmental Requirements

The expression *live to righteousness* is related to the fulfilling of God’s governmental requirements (1 Pet. 2:24). The life-giving Spirit whom we have received into us is the Triune God Himself having gone through all the processes to become the life-giving Spirit that could indwell us. This One is working within us continually, so that the subjective work of the cross could be carried out in our being. We are daily undergoing the inward working of the cross and we are being made alive so that we may live to righteousness.

Our Being Saved So That We Might Live Rightly under the Government of God, That Is, in a Way That Matches the Righteous Requirements of His Government

We were saved so that we might live rightly under the government of God, that is, in a way that matches the righteous requirements of His government.

In Christ’s Death Our Having Been Separated from Sins, and in His Resurrection Our Having Been Enlivened So That in Our Christian Life We Might Live Spontaneously to Righteousness under the Government of God

In Christ’s death we have been separated from sins, and in His resurrection we have been enlivened so that in our Christian life we might live spontaneously to righteousness under the government of God (Rom. 6:8, 10-11, 18; Eph. 2:6; John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:11). In Christ’s death we have been separated from sin. If we are in Christ’s death, it is not difficult to overcome sin, because we are not only separated from sin but also in His resurrection. In His resurrection, we have been enlivened so that we might live our Christian life spontaneously to righteousness under the government of God. Romans 6:18 tells us that we have been enslaved to righteousness. This is part of our salvation.

I hope that we would be touched by the Lord and that we would seriously consider this matter of the God of government. In God’s government, we are responsible to Him. — (A. L.)

Message 3

Living under the Direct Rule of God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33; John 3:3, 5-6, 15; Acts 24:16;
Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 2:11

I. As those who have been born of God to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to be recovered to the direct rule of God by the intuition of our spirit—Matt. 5:3; 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8:

- A. In the dispensation of innocence, we see the principle of God's rule; in the dispensation of conscience, the principle of self-rule; and in the dispensation of human government, the principle of man's rule:
 - 1. Before the fall, man was ruled directly by God; he lived before God and was responsible to God—Gen. 2:16-17.
 - 2. From the time of Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden to the time of Noah's departure from the ark, God established the conscience within man to represent Himself in ruling over man—Acts 24:16.
 - 3. After the flood, because man was subject neither to God's rule nor to self-rule, God authorized man to represent Himself in ruling over man—Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1.
- B. From the point of view of government, man's fall was a fall from God's rule to self-rule and then from self-rule to man's rule.
- C. Because man has been degraded from God's rule to human rule, God, in saving man, must recover him from human rule to divine rule so that once again man may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority—Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33.
- D. In God's plan of recovery man must retrace his steps from human rule to God's rule, passing through self-rule in between.
- E. The final goal of dealing with the conscience is not merely to restore us to self-rule but to bring us back to God's rule and to recover us to God Himself and, thus, to live in the presence of God—5:3.
- F. There is a great difference between self-rule and God's rule:
 - 1. Self-rule means that we live by the feelings of our conscience, being responsible to our conscience—Acts 24:16.
 - 2. God's rule means that we live by the intuition of our spirit, being

responsible to the intuition, that is, being responsible to God:

- a. Within our spirit there is a function to have a direct sense, to realize, discern, and perceive things; this is the intuition in our spirit—1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8.
 - (1) Intuition is a direct sense of God and a direct knowledge of God.
 - (2) The intuition in our spirit is the feeling of God, and it accepts only that which is of God, of the Spirit, and of life—Rom. 8:2.
- b. When we live by our intuition and are controlled by our intuition, we are living in the presence of God and are ruled directly by Him.

II. When we are under God's rule, we live by the intuition of our spirit according to the sense of life—v. 6:

- A. The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling (Eph. 4:18); this feeling is the sense of life.
- B. The sense of life makes us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life, whether we are living in the flesh or in the Spirit—Rom. 8:6.
- C. The sense of life guides, governs, controls, and directs us—v. 4.
- D. We live in the reality of the kingdom of God by the sense of life, with the positive feelings of peace, rest, strength, satisfaction, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort—v. 6.
- E. The divine life in our spirit knows the government of God in the kingdom of God—John 3:3, 5-6, 15.
- F. The government of God in the kingdom of God has its reality, and this reality is the living of the divine life under the direct rule of God—Matt. 5:3, 8, 20; 6:33; 7:21; Rom. 5:17.

Message 3

Living under the Direct Rule of God

We just had a wonderful semi-annual training on the book of Deuteronomy. I hope you were able to hear it. I was so impressed this time as we went through the book on Deuteronomy. Its main thought is that God would rule His people in a kind of theocracy. There are no theocracies on the earth today. There are democracies, there are autocracies, but there are no theocracies. Some religions talk about forming a kind of theocracy, which has never happened. With Israel as a type of us, God intended that He would rule His people in His own kingdom. After God created man, he should have lived under God's direct rule. This was God's intention after He created man.

The way man could live under God's direct rule was to take God in, to eat God Himself as the tree of life and that would cause man to be ruled inwardly by God. However, man did not do that but instead fell from God's rule. Eventually, we came under the rule of man, where we still are today. I am not going to speak anything political, but I believe we can all agree that the rule of man does not work. It does not matter whether we are talking about the Philippines or the United States; the rule of man does not work because man was never supposed to rule another man. This is the reason the political situation is always chaos. In the United States today, politically, it is utter chaos. Why is this? Because man cannot rule man. Whenever man tries to rule man, there is this kind of chaos.

The subject of this training is the government of God. The government is not the same thing as the kingdom. Like a country, a kingdom is a realm. For instance, we have a country here called the Philippines which we can liken to the kingdom. But within this kingdom there is a government. The government has a location which is in Manila. In the United States, the location of the government is in Washington D.C., which is on the East Coast. I live on the

West Coast, which is really far. It will take me five hours just to fly there. I live in the realm of the United States but the government of the United States is quite a long distance away from me. The same is true with you here. Some of you brothers are from Mindanao. You live in the Philippines, but those from Mindanao are away from Manila. They are far away from the government and may have no consciousness about it. They might not even think about the fact that there is a government in this country. But when they violate the law, that is when they will know that there is the government. They will come into contact with the government and it does not matter how many thousands of miles away they live; they will come in contact with the government if they violate the law.

I appreciate very much that the Lord led us to this subject after the book of Deuteronomy, which is a type. Types are wonderful but they always come short of the reality. So where can we find or see the reality of living in a theocracy? We can see it in 1 and 2 Peter and also in the God-man living of the Lord Jesus. He was a man who lived under the direct rule of God at all times. But like you, looking at the Lord's God-man living, we somewhat excuse ourselves, thinking that He could live that life but we cannot. It is very significant that the person the Lord used to unveil this truth is neither Paul nor John, but Peter. I am a lot more like Peter than Paul or John, and maybe you are too. We need to learn it the way Peter learned it.

One of the reasons that human government does not work is that it is outside of us. Like I said, I live 3000 miles away from Washington D. C., yet I never think about Washington D. C. because it is quite objective to me and it has nothing to do with me. But what if the ruler of a country, instead of administrating from a distance, could enter into us? Humanly speaking this would be terrible. I do not want anyone else living in me other than Jesus Christ. But let us just talk about it. What if the ruler himself could enter into us? Now we have a very different kind of rule. We have something in our very being that regulates us and controls our actions. This is the way to accomplish a government. Humanly speaking that would never happen. But thank the Lord, in God's divine government, this is how He does it. We might think that God is in the third heavens on the throne overseeing the universe. Although it is not wrong to think that, it is not actually right either. He is not administrating from a distance. God's way of governing, especially His own

people, is to enter into them. The King comes into the kingdom. He lives in the kingdom; He lives in the people whom He rules. This is His way of governing, and it is very effective. We can never escape; we can run away from human government. But we cannot run away from the government that is in our spirit. Wherever we go, that government goes with us. This is God's way and we want to speak about it in a more subjective way.

The universal government of God has an objective aspect. Right now, at this very moment God is sitting on the throne administrating and governing the entire universe. We cannot see it for it is invisible, but it is very real. Whether we see it or not, whether we believe it or not, there is a God who rules the universe - the heavens rule. Most men believe that man is ruling the earth. This is not true. Every human government is under the divine government and is authorized by the divine government. This is the teaching of the Bible. This is why we respect human government because God determines who will rule and it is not often according to our own thought. We have some examples in the Bible like Pharaoh. The Bible tells us very clearly that God raised up Pharaoh. If you and I had lived in Egypt, we would not vote for Pharaoh. We would never elect Pharaoh. We would say that Pharaoh is a terrible man. But let us be careful because God raised him up for His economy. Another example in the Bible is Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. No one would vote for Nebuchadnezzar but God raised him up for His purpose, for His economy. Brothers, let us not get involved in the realm of human politics. We do not care about man's view of human government; we care for God's interests. So even when we pray for human government we can say, "Lord, put the person in office who would be the best one for the church life, for the gospel, for the spread of the truth, and for Israel." When we pray this way, we are praying according to God's intention. We do not pray from an earthly view saying, "Oh, we want this person and not that person." If we do that, we are living the same way as the unbelievers.

We do not only want to understand God's government as something objective. There is an objective aspect but there is also a very subjective aspect, which is living under the direct rule of God. In the beginning when God created Adam and Eve, they were in the garden of Eden. Before the fall, they were innocent. Even the conscience that God created within them was not activated yet. They actually had no awareness of sin nor of their

nakedness until the fall. At the very beginning how were they living? How were they governed? They were governed directly by God. That is what God intended, that man would live under His direct rule. But due to the fall, the first step away from the direct rule of God, was the rule of man's conscience. After Adam and Eve fell, they became aware of sin and their conscience was activated. Now they had the opportunity and the possibility to live under the rule of the conscience. But of course, we know they did not do this. In our own experience, we do not live under the rule of the conscience very well. Man's conscience was not sufficient enough to have the divine government established over man. Eventually because of this, man fell under the rule of man, of human government. That is where we live today. But let us consider our situation. Brothers, if we live in our mingled spirit, if we live according to the Spirit, we actually do not need man's rule. Whenever we fall under man's rule, it means we have already failed to live according to God's rule in our spirit. For example, you may be driving a car and there is a speed limit. If you exceed the speed limit, you may fall under man's rule. You might get a speeding ticket. Actually, that is already an indication that we are not living by the divine rule. If we live by the divine rule in our spirit, we will not fall under man's rule.

Our desire, which is also God's desire, is that we would live under the direct rule of God. Most people would be very happy if they could just live under the human government without getting into trouble. This is a very low kind of living. Human government only prohibits us from doing terrible things. Most believers would be happy if they could live under the rule of their conscience. They would consider it a great victory and wonderful thing if they can live under their conscience. But we need to see that there is a higher kind of living than living under the conscience. The conscience functions with respect to right and wrong. It tells us when we are wrong, it tells us when we have sinned, and it tells us when we have violated the divine principles. But even an unbeliever has a conscience; hence, he could live, in theory, by that standard. However, there is another kind of living that goes far beyond the realm of right and wrong. If I speak a falsehood to you or if I speak a lie to you, my conscience will condemn me. But if I speak a factual truth to you, yet I speak it out of myself, the divine government in me will condemn me. Can you see the difference? It is a very different standard if we are just to live by our conscience and to live under the direct rule of God.

The King, the ruler of the divine kingdom, has come into us as life. The way He rules us is not by making decrees, commandments, and proclamations outside of us. His way of ruling us is to live in us, to cause us to have a sense of life that comes from the divine life within us. This must be our ruling. This is the highest standard of morality, the highest standard of living in the universe, and the reality of the kingdom of God. This is what we need to live in. When we are living in the reality of the kingdom, we will bring the realm of the kingdom of God to the earth. Then the word “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ*” in Revelation 11:15 is fulfilled. How does it happen? It happens as we live in the reality of the kingdom in the church life today.

AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BORN OF GOD TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, OUR NEEDING TO BE RECOVERED TO THE DIRECT RULE OF GOD BY THE INTUITION OF OUR SPIRIT

As those who have been born of God to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to be recovered to the direct rule of God by the intuition of our spirit (Matt. 5:3; 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8). Within the human spirit there are three parts or three functions created by God. The leading part of the human spirit is our conscience. It is the leading part because we are fallen human beings so the conscience becomes the leading part. But the conscience is not the goal.

After the conscience, we have fellowship. The purpose of the conscience within the human spirit is to keep us and to preserve us in the fellowship of life. That is the purpose of the conscience. The purpose of the conscience is not to condemn us but to restore our fellowship with God. This is why we have a conscience. It is to maintain, restore, and preserve the fellowship. The fellowship of life is the real reason man has a spirit. John 4:24 says, “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.*” The nature of God’s being is Spirit. God cannot be contacted physically. I can contact you physically, such as by shaking your hands. But I cannot contact God physically because the nature of His being is Spirit. However, God gave us a spirit. He gave us a spirit with the innate ability to fellowship with God. For instance, we have ears and the innate ability of our ears is to hear. I do not have to try to hear you. I have ears; I can hear you. The innate ability of our human spirit is to contact God, to receive God, to contain God, and to fellowship with God. Our spirit already knows how to do all of those things. It was created that way. In fact, this is the purpose of our spirit.

Moreover, there is another function within the human spirit which we call the intuition. We can see it very clearly in the living of the Lord Jesus in the four gospels. In the past we always say that the Lord always lived a life in fellowship with the Father. But in reality, the Lord always lived a life by the intuition of His spirit. That means He always lived a life under the direct rule of God. He did not only live by the conscience. Of course, He never violated His conscience, not even once. The three parts or functions of the human spirit cannot be separated. They are just like cogs in a wheel; they affect each other. They can never be separated. If there is a problem with the conscience, then there is also a problem with the fellowship. When there is a problem with the fellowship, then there is also a problem with the intuition. The divine mechanics of the human being tell us that these three parts are operating together and affecting one another.

The Lord Jesus in His God-man living never violated His conscience, not even once. He lived a life of continual fellowship with God the Father. He was always in fellowship with God. The secret of the God-man living of the Lord Jesus is John 6:57, which says, "*As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.*" The context of John 6 is to eat Christ as the Word of God by contacting Him as the Spirit. Deuteronomy mentions that Christ is the Word that proceeds out through the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3). Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). Those words are Christ. The law, in Deuteronomy, is the second law, or the repetition of the law, or the recitation of the law. The law is a type; the reality of that law is Christ. He is the commandment, He is the statutes, He is the ordinances, He is the word that proceeds out through the mouth of God. Now, when we live by those words we are living in the theocracy. We are living under the rule of God. This is how He lived His human life. He lived by His intuition.

Mark 2:8 says, "*And immediately Jesus, knowing fully in His spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, 'Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?'*" This verse tells us that Jesus perceived in His spirit. There are many such verses in the gospels in which people were talking and the Lord knew what was in their heart; He knew

what was in their mind (Matt. 9:4; 12:15; 16:8; 22:18; 26:10; Mark 8:17; Luke 5:22; Jn 6:15, 61). Everybody can hear the words but He knew what was in their heart and in their mind. How could He do that? This is through the intuition. The intuition is a direct sense from God Himself. It does not need to be a teaching that passes through our mind. It is a direct feeling in our spirit. We all have this kind of experience. There is a little difference with the conscience. The word conscience means *with knowledge*. If there is no knowledge in our mind with respect to good and evil, right and wrong, sin and other things, the conscience cannot operate so well. But the intuition is different. It is a direct sense of God. We all know what that is. It is not according to reason. In fact, sometimes, it does not make sense to our human reason or human logic. It makes no sense because it is another realm and this is the realm where the Lord lived in all the time. Mark 2:8 says, “*And immediately Jesus, knowing fully in His spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?’*” If I had been there, I would say, “Who is this person? He knows what I am thinking in my heart.”

When I leave the Philippines, I’m going to go to Guam and Saipan. The last time I was in Saipan, I was preaching the gospel to a woman and one of the sisters was translating for me. As I was preaching the gospel this woman said to me, “Stop. Are you reading my mind?” I said, “No. I don’t know how to read anyone’s mind.” Then she said, “But what you are saying is exactly what I’m thinking.” I told her, “That is the Lord. He knows your heart. He knows everything about you.” Through that experience she received the Lord because it surprised her. Of course, I had no consciousness of that. I was just speaking like we always do. This is the intuition of our spirit.

In the Dispensation of Innocence, Our Seeing the Principle of God’s Rule; in the Dispensation of Conscience, the Principle of Self-Rule; and in the Dispensation of Human Government, the Principle of Man’s Rule

In the dispensation of innocence, we see the principle of God’s rule; in the dispensation of conscience, the principle of self-rule; and in the dispensation of human government, the principle of man’s rule. The dispensation of innocence was the time that Adam and Eve lived before the fall of man. They were living in innocence so they were living under the direct rule of God. Then because of the fall, they had to begin to live by the conscience.

In the dispensation of conscience, we see the principle of self-rule. First you have God's rule, then you have self-rule, and then after a further fall, in the dispensation of human government, we have man's rule. Hence, we have God's rule, self-rule, and man's rule. But the Lord wants to recover us not to live under man's rule, which is very low, nor to live under self-rule, which is better than man's rule. But the Lord wants to recover us to live under God's rule.

***Before the Fall, Man Being Ruled Directly by God;
His Living before God and Being Responsible to God***

Before the fall, man was ruled directly by God; he lived before God and was responsible to God (Gen 2:16-17). As for the life that Adam and Eve lived before the fall, we do not know how long it lasted. But from the time they were created until the fall, they lived in fellowship with God. Jehovah would come and be with them there in the garden fellowshiping with them. Because they were in that kind of fellowship, they had the direct rule of God in their intuition, but they lost it.

***From the Time of Adam's Expulsion from the Garden of Eden to the
Time of Noah's Departure from the Ark, God Establishing the Conscience
within Man to Represent Himself in Ruling over Man***

From the time of Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden to the time of Noah's departure from the ark, God established the conscience within man to represent Himself in ruling over man (Acts 24:16). God foreknew that man would fall, so when He created man, one of the functions within man's spirit was the conscience, and that conscience actually represents God Himself, God's ruling. Whatever our conscience says, God is saying. We need to help the young people to understand this. Our conscience is there to represent God and to speak what God would speak. Therefore, when the conscience speaks, we should consider that God is speaking. Actually, it is there to lead us back to the direct rule of God.

***After the Flood, Because Man Was Subject Neither to God's Rule Nor to
Self-Rule, God Authorizing Man to Represent Himself in Ruling over Man***

After the flood, because man was subject neither to God's rule nor to self-rule, God authorized man to represent Himself in ruling over man (Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1). This is the reason we respect the human government. We do not consider human government to be the best but we respect it because

God established the human government due to the fall of man. Romans 13:1 says, *“Let every person be subject to the authorities over him, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are ordained by God.”* Here it does not say that all of the good human rulers are ordained by God. All of them are ordained by God including the ones that we do not consider good. We can never say that because this human ruler is not a good person, then we do not need to subject ourselves to the authority of this ruler. We must still subject ourselves to this ruler because by doing so, we are actually subjecting ourselves to God and to our conscience.

From the Point of View of Government, Man’s Fall Being a Fall from God’s Rule to Self-Rule and Then from Self-Rule to Man’s Rule

From the point of view of government, man’s fall was a fall from God’s rule to self-rule and then from self-rule to man’s rule. Man began under God’s rule. Then due to the fall, the conscience was activated. Now man should live under self-rule. Due to the inability of man to follow the conscience he became subject to man’s rule.

Because Man Has Degraded from God’s Rule to Human Rule, God, in Saving Man, Needing to Recover Man from Human Rule to Divine Rule So That Once Again Man May Live before God in Simplicity and under His Direct Authority

Because man has been degraded from God’s rule to human rule, God, in saving man, must recover him from human rule to divine rule so that once again man may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority (Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33). We are being recovered. The kingdom life came into us to rule in us and to recover us. We have to go back to God’s direct rule. As man fell, he went from God’s rule to self-rule to man’s rule. Now we need to go the opposite direction from man’s rule to the rule of the conscience and eventually to the rule of God directly in the intuition of our spirit.

In God’s Plan of Recovery Man Needing to Retrace His Steps from Human Rule to God’s Rule, Passing through Self-Rule in Between.

In God’s plan of recovery man must retrace his steps from human rule to God’s rule, passing through self-rule in between. We go back the same way that man fell. This is why we teach a new believer or a young believer to deal with the conscience. Dealing with the conscience is a very elementary stage

of the growth in life. When we look at the book *The Experience of life*, we see the four stages of the experience of life. Dealing with the conscience is very early, because this is an elementary stage. Nevertheless, it is a necessary one. Before we can get recovered back to God's direct rule we have to get recovered back to the rule of the conscience. We do not belittle the dealing of the conscience. We teach this and we have to help people know this. This is the way back. First, do not violate man's rule. We know what this is – this is on the first stage of the experience of life. When I became a believer in Christ, I was a college student. As soon as I became a believer, I became aware of the number of things in my past where I violated man's rule. The Lord touched me that I have to correct certain things. Just like with Zaccheus, when he became a believer, the first thing he took care of was the problem with man's rule. He extorted money so now he needs to give it back. Now that he has taken care of man's rule, he needs to deal with his conscience. This is something finer, something more inward. Then once we learn to deal with our conscience, we go further to live in the fellowship of life in our spirit to receive a direct sense from God in our intuition to live under the direct rule of God.

The Final Goal of Dealing with the Conscience Being Not Merely to Restore Us to Self-Rule but to Bring Us Back to God's Rule and to Recover Us to God Himself and, Thus, to Live in the Presence of God

The final goal of dealing with the conscience is not merely to restore us to self-rule but to bring us back to God's rule and to recover us to God Himself and, thus, to live in the presence of God (Matt. 5:3).

There Being a Great Difference between Self-Rule and God's Rule

There is a great difference between self-rule and God's rule.

Self-Rule Meaning That We Live by the Feelings of Our Conscience, Being Responsible to Our Conscience

Self-rule means that we live by the feelings of our conscience, being responsible to our conscience (Acts 24:16). In principle, even a non-believer could live under self-rule but not God's rule. Paul could testify in Acts 24 that he exercised to have a good conscience. No matter where we are in the growth and development of the divine life, even if you are the Apostle Paul you need to exercise yourself to have a good conscience before God and man.

Sometimes we can deceive ourselves, and say, “I’m living by my spirit, I’m living by life,” but we never graduate from dealing with our conscience.

In the book *The Experience of life*, the four stages of the growth in life, in one sense are progressive but, in another sense, they are not. In other words, just because we have dealt with our conscience at a certain point in time, it does not mean that we never have to deal with our conscience again or with the world, sin, flesh, or the self. These are things that are repeated many times. Therefore, we have to take care of them.

God’s Rule Meaning That We Live by the Intuition of Our Spirit, Being Responsible to the Intuition, That Is, Being Responsible to God

On the other hand, God’s rule means that we live by the intuition of our spirit, being responsible to the intuition, that is, being responsible to God. Just as our conscience represents God within us, much more the intuition. The intuition, feeling, sense, or understanding that comes from our intuition is God’s feeling. Oh, we have to learn to live by this. I am learning just like you. In the beginning we do not know anything about the intuition. We do not even know anything about the conscience. But we become aware of the conscience and then we deal with the conscience, and through the dealing of the conscience, we begin to learn how to fellowship with the Lord. And in that fellowship, we develop a sense of the intuition that is in our spirit. In the beginning it is not very clear. However, the more we live in that fellowship and the more we exercise under the direct rule of God, the keener that sense becomes. The God-man living of the Lord Jesus is the best example of living under the direct rule of God. He always knew what was the thought, what was the feeling, what was the direction of God the Father. This is how we want the Lord to recover us.

Within our spirit there is a function to have a direct sense, to realize, discern, and perceive things; this is the intuition in our spirit (1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8). We need to discover what is in our spirit because there is something wonderful there. When I was a young person, I heard the gospel on the university campus. The brothers who preached the gospel to me told me that man has a human spirit. I grew up in religion like many of you and yet they did not teach me about the tripartite man. They just said that man has a body and a soul. When the brothers preached the gospel to me, I was so surprised saying, “Do you mean there is a part in my being that I didn’t

know was there?” They said, “Yes, there is.” I was an 18-year-old young man then. I got mad at why religion did not tell me that I have a spirit. Then the brothers helped me to exercise my spirit to receive the Lord, which I did. But do you know that our spirit is a realm? This may not be doctrinally correct but experientially it is. Our spirit is the kingdom, a realm that we need to live in. It is the divine and mystical realm. There is a lot to our spirit that we have not even touched yet, including the intuition. We need to live there; we need to be recovered back to our spirit, to that realm, to live under God’s rule. Then we will discover the capacity of our spirit.

When I was young, I suffered from asthma which caused me to not be able to run for a long distance. But as I grew older, the asthma disappeared and I was able to run a long distance. In the beginning I could only run a mile. But then I was able to run five miles, and then ten miles. Although today I cannot even run one mile. Eventually I learned that I actually have the capacity to run twenty miles and there was no problem. This is like our spirit! We have a tremendous capacity in our spirit but we have not stretched out to reach it yet. Our spirit can go “twenty miles” and there is no problem. Our spirit has the capacity to fellowship with the Lord all the time. Our spirit does have the capacity to pray unceasingly (1 Thess. 5:17). Why would the Lord command us to pray unceasingly if our spirit did not have the capacity to do it? Actually, we just have to discover that.

Furthermore, we also need to discover that our spirit is a realm of the intuition, which is the reality of the kingdom – God’s direct ruling within us. Intuition is a direct sense of God and a direct knowledge of God. The intuition in our spirit is the feeling of God, and it accepts only that which is of God, of the Spirit, and of life (Rom. 8:2). When we live by our intuition and are controlled by our intuition, we are living in the presence of God and are ruled directly by Him. These things are equal to living by our intuition to live under the direct rule of God.

WHEN WE ARE UNDER GOD’S RULE, OUR LIVING BY THE INTUITION OF OUR SPIRIT ACCORDING TO THE SENSE OF LIFE

When we are under God’s rule, we live by the intuition of our spirit according to the sense of life (Rom. 8:6). Here is where we sometimes have the difficulty. Our spirit has this tremendous capacity but our ability to interpret what our spirit is telling us is something that we have to learn.

It is not that easy because the way it is communicated to us is by the sense of life. Sometimes I ask the Lord, “Lord, couldn’t you just speak to me in plain words? Speak out of the heavens or something.” But the Lord does not do this. Even the way He speaks to us inwardly is not in words like I am speaking to you. I can communicate with you in a very direct way when I speak to you. But what the Lord within us does is that the divine life gives us a sense and we have to actually interpret that sense to know what exactly it means and we make a lot of mistakes. At least I do. This is our learning to live under the direct rule of God. The human life has senses. We talk about the five senses. You may touch something that is hot. For instance, you may put your hand on a stove, then right away you have to remove your hands. You have the sense that it is hot. The human life has a sense. The divine life has a sense too.

The Divine Life Being the Highest Life, with the Richest, Strongest, and Keenest Feeling; This Feeling Being the Sense of Life.

The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling (Eph. 4:18); this feeling is the sense of life.

The Sense of Life Making Us Know Whether We Are Living in the Natural Life or in the Divine Life, Whether We Are Living in the Flesh or in the Spirit

The sense of life makes us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life, whether we are living in the flesh or in the Spirit (Rom. 8:6). This is also where we have our difficulty. Because we do not know the sense of life well, because we have not lived that much under the direct rule of God, sometimes we misinterpret. Actually, we are in the flesh but we think we are in the spirit. Actually, we are in the natural life but we think we are not. The older you get, the easier it is to misinterpret. It is a danger. The purpose of the sense of life is different from the conscience. The purpose of the conscience is to tell us right from wrong while the purpose of the sense of life is to tell us how we live. Are we living in the flesh or in the spirit? Are we in our natural life or in the divine life?

The Sense of Life Guiding, Governing, Controlling, and Directing Us

The sense of life guides, governs, controls, and directs us (v. 4).

Our Living in the Reality of the Kingdom of God by the Sense of Life, with the Positive Feelings of Peace, Rest, Strength, Satisfaction, Release, Liveliness, Watering, Brightness, and Comfort

We live in the reality of the kingdom of God by the sense of life, with the positive feelings of peace, rest, strength, satisfaction, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort (v. 6). Here is the interpretation of the sense of life. There is a feeling; there is a sense. It is peace, rest, strength, satisfaction, release, liveliness, watering, brightness and comfort. When we have this inner sense then we know that we are living under the rule of God. This is our guideline.

The Divine Life in Our Spirit Knowing the Government of God in the Kingdom of God

The divine life in our spirit knows the government of God in the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5-6, 15). The life knows.

The Government of God in the Kingdom of God Having Its Reality, and This Reality Being the Living of the Divine Life under the Direct Rule of God

The government of God in the kingdom of God has its reality, and this reality is the living of the divine life under the direct rule of God (Matt. 5:3, 8, 20; 6:33; 7:21; Rom. 5:17). Matthew 5 through 7 is a description. We should not read it as a demand that we have to try to fulfill. Matthew 5 through 7 is a description of a life under the direct rule of God. These chapters are to tell us whether we are living under the direct rule of God or not. If we are, our life should look like Matthew 5 through 7. Those chapters are to describe the living under the direct rule of God. May we pray over these matters.
– (M. R.)

Message 4

The Church as the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18-19; 18:15-22; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 1:6;
Col. 1:12-13

**I. The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church—
Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19.**

**II. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life—Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19;
Rev. 1:4-6, 9:**

- A. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.
- B. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life—Rom. 14:17.
- C. A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church—Eph. 2:22.

III. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up—Matt. 16:18-19:

- A. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.
- B. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible—v. 19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.
- C. When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.

**IV. The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church—16:18-19; 18:17-18;
13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6.**

V. The Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love—Col. 1:12-13:

- A. The kingdom of the Son of God's love comprises three ages: the present age, in which the church is; the coming age, in which the millennial kingdom will be; and the eternal age with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth—v. 13:
1. The stress in Colossians 1:13 is the kingdom of the Son of God's love in this age, which is the reality of the church.
 2. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is—4:15-16.
- B. We need to understand the intrinsic significance of the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love—1:13:
1. The Son of God is the embodiment and expression of the divine life; hence, the kingdom of the Son is a realm of life—
1 John 5:11-12; John 1:4.
 2. The kingdom into which we have been transferred is the kingdom of the Son of God's love; this realm of life is in love, not in fear—
Col. 1:13.
 3. The kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love—1 Pet. 2:9.
 4. The Son of the Father is the expression of the Father as the source of life—John 1:18, 4; 1 John 1:2:
 - a. The Son of the Father's love is the object of the Father's love to be the embodiment of life to us in the divine love with the authority in resurrection—Matt. 3:17.
 - b. The Son, as the embodiment of the divine life, is the object of the Father's love—17:5:
 - (1) The divine life embodied in the Son is given to us in the divine love—1 John 5:11-12; John 3:16.
 - (2) The object of the divine love becomes to us the embodiment of life in the divine love with the authority in resurrection; this is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.
 5. To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, who is life to us—1 John 5:11-12:
 - a. The Son in resurrection is now the life-giving Spirit, and He rules us in His resurrection life with love—1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 6:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:45b.

- b. When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love; here we have the church life—Col. 3:4; John 6:57.
- c. Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant thing, a matter of delight—Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

Message 4

The Church as the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

Praise the Lord! I was really touched by what Mark shared in the last message, which is living under the direct rule of God. I really praise the Lord that the Lord can rule us directly through our intuition. If my forefather did not receive such a direct rule, I would not be here today. My grandfather was on a boat one time going from one place to another. He was a very good friend of the captain. As the captain prepared a very good room for him, right away something within him told him, "Leave this boat." He loves the Lord very much, so he felt the need to obey the feeling. He left the boat. The boat never arrived at the next port. That was quite something.

There is another instance. I was in Europe travelling with my brothers, and we were going from Hanover to Munich in Germany. I had a feeling within me that I should not go on that plane, but I felt very good for my brother to go on that plane. I told my brother, "I don't know why but deep within me something is bothering me. I feel peaceful for you to go, but I cannot go." My brother said, "Where are you going to go?" I said, "I don't know, but I know I need to cancel this trip first." I went to the travel agency, and as I went there, there was a deep feeling within me that I need to fly to Washington, D.C. instead of Munich. I was so glad that I followed the feeling. When I landed in Washington, D.C., my mother was there to meet me. She said, "I was praying so much that you would pass through Washington, D.C. so you can bring me back to the Philippines." At that time, we did not have email or cellphones, so my mother could talk to the Lord, and the Lord can talk to me. Don't you think that was something?

One more thing, then we can go to the message. In the 1990s, I was in Huntington Beach. The turmoil was over at that time, and the saints in Irvine wanted me to go there. They told me they talked to Brother Lee, who said

he felt it was good for me to go to Irvine. I said, "Okay, if Brother Lee felt good, then I will go to Irvine." But when I said that, I felt I needed to go to Brother Lee directly instead of going through a third party. I went and asked Brother Lee. Brother Lee answered, "Huntington Beach is good, and Irvine is also good." Then I asked, "Where do I go?" He said, "Both of them are good, so you have to decide." I said, "Brother Lee, would you please decide for me?" I thought that he is much closer to the Lord. He could talk to the Lord first then tell me where to go. For six months, Brother Lee did not do that. Finally, I went to Brother Lee and told him, "You must tell me. Irvine is asking me when I am moving there." Brother Lee said, "I am not going to tell you. You have to go to the deepest part of your being, where the Lord is. He is the Lord; I am not the Lord. To me, Huntington Beach is good, and Irvine is also good." He told me not to talk to the Lord about this thing, that thing, or about my feelings. Just tell the Lord, "Where do you want me to go?" When I did that, after a week Brother Lee called me again. He said, "What did the Lord say?" I said, "I went to the Lord and expected Him to tell me Irvine or Huntington Beach, but it seems like another city kept coming up." He said, "Which city?" I said, "Anaheim, California." He said, "So Anaheim you go." Don't you think that is wonderful? We can have a direct rule from the Lord. I just felt I needed to share this with you so you would have no doubt that we have an intuition within us. We can come back to the direct rule of the Lord. Praise the Lord! We can come back to the direct rule of the Lord.

The Church as the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

Message four is about the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love. When I read this outline, I was wondering where in the ministry we could see very carefully how the church is the kingdom. When we talk about the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love, it means the church is the kingdom. I would like to introduce you to this book written by Brother Lee called *The Kingdom and the Church*. I went and read this small book of four chapters. The title of chapter three is "The Relationship between the Kingdom and the Church." I was enlightened by what I read, and I will tell you three sentences that showed me something.

The kingdom produces the church. That is why in the New Testament, the first thing presented is the kingdom, then the second thing is the church. But that is not all. The second sentence I read is: *The church brings in the*

kingdom. The kingdom produces the church, and the church brings in the kingdom; because it is the church that will defeat the enemy and cast out the evil one. There is one more sentence. *The ultimate issue is the kingdom and the church.*

This is consummated in the New Jerusalem. When you look at the New Jerusalem, there are these two aspects. First, the New Jerusalem has been renewed to become the bride of Christ. Second, the New Jerusalem is a city, a kingdom. In the New Jerusalem, there is both the church and the kingdom. Don't you think this is wonderful for us to see? This is the church we are in. This church should be a kingdom. This church should be a realm where God can rule. Nobody should rule in the church except God. God is the supreme leader of the church.

Something also touched me very much. In the New Jerusalem, you have the nature of the church and you also have the condition of the kingdom. In the New Jerusalem, God can express His sovereignty fully, and can therefore execute His will and display His glory. This is what the church should be. The church is the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

We come to the scripture reading. Matthew 16:18 says, "*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*" Even while the Lord was revealing the matter of the church, right away He says there is an enemy who is going to attack the church. There is another kingdom that will try to defeat the church. But He says the church He is building will not be defeated by this other kingdom.

Verse 19 says, "*I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.*" This means whatever you condemn on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens. You can also say, "Whatever you forgive on the earth shall be forgiven." This church has the power to bind and to loose.

We know that Matthew 16 is talking about the universal church, but in chapter 18, He talks again about the church. Matthew 18:17a says, "*And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.*" Verse 18 says, "*Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and*

whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” If you see these cases, both in the universal church and in the practice of the church life in the local churches, both of these have the way to bind and to loose, which means that both of these belong to the kingdom. Only the kingdom could bind and loose. The church represents the kingdom of the heavens, having the authority to bind and loose.

Later, we would see Romans 14. Romans 14 talks about the receiving of the believers. The outline of the *Recovery Version* regarding these verses talks about receiving the believers firstly according to God's receiving. It does not depend on us. It depends on God's receiving. The second thing is receiving in the light of the judgment seat. We receive believers in the light of the judgment seat. Thirdly, we receive in the principle of love. In verses 13-15, one thing touched me. Verse 13 says, “*Let us judge one another no longer.*” We may think that since we are serving the church, we should judge people. But here it talks about no longer judging one another. The fourth point talks about receiving people for the kingdom life. We receive people not for our kingdom, but for the Lord's kingdom, for the kingdom life. We receive people for His kingdom.

Romans 14:17 says, “*For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*” The kingdom of God is referring to the church, because this section is talking about the church receiving the believers. When Paul comes to verse 17, he says the church is actually the kingdom of God. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (v. 17). This verse strongly tells us that the church in this age is the kingdom of God. It has two aspects: full of grace and life and full of exercising discipline. This is the kingdom of God. Today, the church is the kingdom of God.

I will read a footnote from this verse, because this verse has a very good footnote. Romans 14:17 footnote 2 is on the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is the sphere in which God exercises His authority so that He may express His glory for the fulfillment of His purpose. In such a kingdom, what matters is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Righteousness denotes that which is right and proper. Those who live in the kingdom of God should be right and proper toward others, toward things,

and toward God; with them there should be nothing erroneous, improper, crooked, slanted, or biased. This requires that they be strict in dealing with themselves. Peace is the fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11 and note). It characterizes the relationship that those who live in the kingdom of God should have with others and with God. If we are righteous, right, and proper toward others, toward things, and toward God, we will have a peaceful relationship with others and with God. Thus, we will have joy in the Holy Spirit and, in particular, before God. In this way we will be filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52) and will live out righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, which are the reality of the kingdom of God.

According to the context of this chapter, this verse was written for our receiving of the believers. If we receive the believers according to the apostle's instruction in this chapter, we will be right and proper toward those whom we receive and will have peace with them; thus, we will have joy in the Holy Spirit, proving that we are living in the reality of God's kingdom and are under God's rule. Otherwise, we will not be right or proper toward those whom we do not receive and will not have peace with them; thus, we will not have joy in the Holy Spirit before God, proving that we are not subject to God's authority in the kingdom of God. (Rom. 14:17, footnote 2)

Don't you think this is a wonderful footnote? I hope we would all read this to help us go on in the church life. I suppose you have heard one of Brother Lee's testimonies. Once, he went back to Shanghai, and the church in Shanghai has already forbidden Watchman Nee to minister there. So those brothers were coming to Brother Lee, trying to get him on their side. Brother Lee told them, "Before you began to think all these things about Brother Nee, how was your church life?" They said, "The church life is wonderful. We were full of joy." Brother Lee said, "Now that you think Brother Nee is not so good anymore and you stopped him from ministering, how is your church life?" They said, "It is not good. We have no joy." Brother Lee told them, "Since you have no joy, then forget about all these things you are thinking. Return to the original." Brothers and sisters, the church life should be something that

is very delightful. It is the church of the Son of His love. It should be full of joy, joy in the Holy Spirit. It is not joy in the flesh, but joy in the Holy Spirit.

The footnote of Revelation 1:6 is also on the kingdom:

The believers, redeemed by the blood of Christ, not only have been born of God into His kingdom (John 3:5) but also have been made a kingdom for God's economy. This kingdom is the church (Matt. 16:18-19). John, the writer of the book, was in this kingdom (v. 9), and all redeemed and reborn believers also are a part of this kingdom (Rom. 14:17).

One of the main aspects of this book is that God is recovering His right over the earth in order to make the whole earth His kingdom (11:15). When Christ came, He brought the kingdom of God with Him (Luke 17:21; Matt. 12:28). This kingdom has been enlarged into the church (Matt. 16:18-19), which will accomplish the establishing of the kingdom of God on the whole earth. On one hand, the kingdom of God today is in the church, but on the other hand, the kingdom of God is coming through the overcoming believers (12:10). Then Christ and the overcoming believers will reign over all the nations in the millennial kingdom (2:26-27; 12:5; 20:4, 6). (Rev. 1:6, footnote 1)

This is the kingdom that we are talking about.

**THE BIBLE FIRST PRESENTING THE KINGDOM AND
THEREAFTER PRESENTING THE CHURCH; THE PRESENCE OF
THE KINGDOM PRODUCING THE CHURCH**

The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church. In Matthew 4:23, when the Lord Jesus came, He proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom. In Matthew 16, He talks about the church. That is why we say the Bible presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church.

**THE KINGDOM BEING THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH;
THEREFORE, APART FROM THE KINGDOM LIFE, OUR NOT
BEING ABLE TO LIVE THE CHURCH LIFE**

The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life. Matthew 5:3 says, "*Blessed*

are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." I do not know if you notice that out of the four gospels, only Matthew mentions the kingdom of the heavens. All the others mention the kingdom of God. Have you noticed this? The kingdom of God is from eternity to eternity. If you go into the context of Matthew, the book is talking about the kingdom of the heavens, which refers to the church life and the heavenly part of the millennial kingdom. This is what the kingdom of the heavens is talking about. But if you go through some of the verses in the other gospels, when they are talking about the kingdom of God, it seems as if they are referring to the kingdom of the heavens. Have you noticed this?

For some time, I was wondering why Matthew talks about the kingdom of the heavens, and the other gospels talk about the kingdom of God. Then, I read something by Brother Lee. He said that the kingdom of God is like the United States, and the kingdom of the heavens is like the state of Texas. When you say Texas is the United States, it is okay. The kingdom of the heavens is the kingdom of God. But you cannot reverse it. The United States is not Texas. You can be in other parts of the United States, which is not in Texas. This is the difference in the kingdom of the heavens, which is like Texas, and the kingdom of God, which is like the United States. When we read Matthew 5:3, what the Lord is saying is something very specific within the kingdom of God.

The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life. If we study a little bit about the kingdom of the heavens, we see three particular aspects of the kingdom of the heavens: the reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5-7), the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13), and the manifestation of the kingdom (Matt. 24-25). There are these three things, the reality, appearance, and manifestation.

Today in the church life, we could be in the reality or we could also be in the appearance. Christendom is mainly in the appearance. Matthew 13 talks so much about this, how the mustard seed became a tree. Many people in Christianity think this is very good, a small mustard seed became a big tree; but actually, that is very negative, because birds dwell on the tree. Birds are evil birds. We in the church should really pay attention to the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. This is what we want, to have the reality of the

kingdom of the heavens. What is this? This reality of the kingdom of the heavens should be the content of our church life. Mark mentioned this in the previous message. The content is spoken by the Lord in Matthew 5-7; that is the content. If you are really in the kingdom of the Lord, what you will manifest is what the Lord has described in Matthew 5-7.

Coming back to Matthew 5:3, this verse tells us that if we are poor in spirit, the kingdom of the heavens is ours. Brothers, we need to pray very much. I hope we do not think that because we are in the church life for many years, we know everything. We should ask the Lord to give us a spirit that is so open for His speaking. This is what it means to be poor in spirit. When we are poor in spirit, opening our entire being to the speaking of the Lord, then the kingdom of the heavens is ours. Then, we can be in its reality, not only in the future, but in this age, in the church age. We will also share in its manifestation in the coming age, the kingdom age.

**The Reality of the Kingdom of the Heavens Being
the Content of the Church Life; Without the Reality of the Kingdom,
the Church Being Empty**

The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty. I don't know if you really have some feeling. If you do not have the reality of the kingdom, then your church life is just a façade. It is just an appearance, but it is actually empty.

**Since the Kingdom Life Issues in the Church Life, As We Live
Corporately in the Kingdom Life, Spontaneously Living the Church Life**

Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life.

**A Believer Who Does Not Live in the Reality of the Kingdom Not Being
Able to Be Built into the Structure of the Church**

A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church.

**WITHOUT THE KINGDOM AS THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH,
THE CHURCH NOT BEING ABLE TO BE BUILT UP**

**The Church Being Brought into Being through the
Authority of the Kingdom**

Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.

**The Keys of the Kingdom Being Given to Make
the Building of the Church Possible**

The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible. This is why after the Lord said, "*I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18); He said, "*I will give you the keys*" (v.19).

**When the Kingdom of the Heavens is Able to Assert
Its Authority over a Company of Believers, Those Believers Being
Able to Be Built Up into the Church**

When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church. When I came to this point, I was really considering my church life in Anaheim. How much of the authority of the Lord is being taken by us? The point says, "When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers." Yes, we can be a company of believers, but are we allowing the Lord to assert His authority on us? If we are able to allow the Lord to assert His authority on us, then we have the kingdom of the heavens. Then we, as the believers who are under the authority of God, can be built up into the church. It will be very, very sad if after years and years of trying to build up the church, we find out in the judgment seat that what we are doing are all wasted time. What we are doing is not building up the church, because we are not doing it under the authority of God.

I really love all the outlines we are speaking this time, because it really reminded me so much that if we want to serve the Lord, we have to serve Him under His authority. There is no other way. We are serving the Lord. This Lord is the Almighty God. He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We cannot serve Him in our natural life. We have to serve Him under His authority.

How do we serve Him under His authority? Colossians 2:19 says that we need to hold on to the Head. Colossians talks about Christ, but when Paul came to Colossians chapter 2, right away he seems to switch. He does not say we need to hold on to Christ, but that we need to hold on to the Head, because Paul wanted to make sure that we understand that we are members of the Body of Christ. When we say we are building up the Body of Christ, we must

be under the Head, we must hold on to the Head, we must never let go of the Head, and we must allow the Head to be the Head. He is the Head. We are just members of the Body of Christ. We are all just members. Don't forget. Don't think that now after serving for so long, you become the Head. There is only one Head, which is Christ. We need to hold on to this Head.

Ephesians 4:15-16 says that if you really want to hold on to the Head, you need to hold to truth in love. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). This is the Lord; this is the Head. Practically speaking, when you say you hold on to the Head, that means you hold on to the truth in love. Brothers, I am so glad I am in the Lord's recovery today, where the whole Bible is open to us. Don't you think that is wonderful?

I have read so much Christian history. There were many who were good in their era, but they only had the Bible partially opened. Today, it seems the whole Bible is open to us. We do not just have the written Word, we have the interpreted word. We have the translated word and interpreted word. We have so much ministry that explain the truth to us. Today, brothers, we do not have an excuse of not knowing the truth. It is all in the books. You just have to turn to the books. Recently I have been enjoying so much the 136 volumes of the *The Collected Works of Witness Lee*. We have been fellowshiping about this. Even with some Christian leaders, it seems like in the history of mankind, there is no writer who can write that much in a lifetime. One hundred thirty-six volumes of 400-500 pages each. This is really something. Just to be able to write so much is a miracle, but if you see the content of all those, you must bow down to the Lord and praise the Lord that we are born in this age, that we can all hold on to the truth in love. I hope you do not let those books gather dust, but you would actually dive into it, so you can hold on to the truth. By holding to truth in love, you will be holding to the Head, and allow the Head to be the deciding one, to be the one that has the final word in everything we are doing in our church life, in our family life, in our daily life, in our working life, in our school life. The Lord has to be the Head.

THE GENUINE CHURCH BEING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THIS AGE; TODAY THE BELIEVERS LIVING THE KINGDOM LIFE IN THE CHURCH

The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church. I really love these three words, "in this age." I heard a person who once said, "In this age we do not have the genuine church. The genuine church is in heaven, but it is not here on earth." But praise the Lord, if we go back to the Bible and see what the Bible is saying, there is a genuine church, which is the kingdom of God in this age! Today the believers live the kingdom life in the church, in this age.

If you look at the kingdom of the heavens that Matthew speaks about, we should realize that the kingdom of the heavens should be our incentive. By looking at the kingdom of the heavens, we should all desire to have the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom of the heaven should also tell us that we need to exercise our kingdom life, and if we are willing to do that, then this kingdom of the heavens will be our reward in the coming age. That is why we read that the kingdom of the heavens is here; the kingdom of the heavens is also coming. If we exercise ourselves to be in the kingdom of the heavens today in the church life, in our lifetime, in this age, we will receive the kingdom of the heavens as our reward in the coming age, which is the kingdom age.

THE FATHER HAVING DELIVERED US OUT OF THE AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS AND TRANSFERRED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE

The Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. We talked about the kingdom of the heavens as the incentive and exercise we need to have today, but how do we do this? How do we realize the kingdom of the heavens? This point tells us that in order for us to realize the kingdom of the heavens, we need to see that the Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Isn't this wonderful? The Father has delivered us! He has already done this. He has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

These two wonderful verses are in Colossians 1:12-13, which says, "*Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light; Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*"

We need to pray-read these verses many times in order for us to really enjoy what these two verses are talking about. Paul says we need to give thanks to the Father; it is the Father who qualified us for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light. Light is very important. This portion that we have is in the light, and this light is versus the darkness in the next verse. You have light, and you have darkness. Light is the kingdom of our Lord; darkness is the kingdom of Satan. In these two verses, you are actually talking about these two kingdoms: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of our Lord which is the kingdom of the Son of His Father's love and the kingdom of Satan. Paul is telling us that we have the allotted portion in the kingdom of light, which is having God as our life. We have been delivered out of the authority of darkness, out of Satan, and we have been transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

When we come to this, it is good for us to understand how the Lord has delivered us out of the authority of darkness. On one hand, He delivered us out of the authority of darkness through His death. We could see this in Colossians 2:14-15. These two verses talk about how the Lord has gone to the cross and died for us, so He delivered us out of His death. If you go on, He also delivered us through the life of Christ. We see this in John 5:24. John 5:24 talks about how the Lord brings us out of death into life. The Father has delivered us through the death of Christ, through the life of Christ, out of the darkness, out of the authority of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Praise the Lord!

The Kingdom of the Son of God's Love Comprising Three Ages: the Present Age, in Which the Church Is; the Coming Age, in Which the Millennial Kingdom Will Be; and the Eternal Age with the New Jerusalem in the New Heaven and New Earth

The Stress in Colossians 1:13 Being the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love in This Age, Which Is the Reality of the Church

The Church Life Today Being the Kingdom of the Son of the Father's Love, Which Is as Delightful to God the Father as the Son of God Is

The kingdom of the Son of God's love comprises three ages: the present age, in which the church is; the coming age, in which the millennial kingdom will be; and the eternal age with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. The stress in Colossians 1:13 is the kingdom of the Son of God's love in this age, which is the reality of the church. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is.

We know that the Son of God is so delightful to the Father, but this point shows us that the church life because of the Son is also as delightful to God the Father. These two verses mentioned here, Colossians 4:15-16, says, "*Greet the brothers in Laodicea, as well as Nymphas and the church, which is in his house. And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.*"

It took me some time to understand why these two verses were placed here, but when I was reading the ministry, I realized that these verses talk about the traffic between the churches. Apparently, there is quite a lot of traffic between Laodicea and Colossae. They have this traffic, they know each other; that is why Paul could say read their letter and allow them to read your letter. According to the ministry, such traffic of the church actually expresses in a practical way the living of a new man. Such a living has Christ as its reality. Praise the Lord! I am so glad that Brother Lee talked about blending before he went to be with the Lord. Today, we are still here together because of such blending. That is why this banner is still there, maybe for twenty to thirty years, "God has blended us together." That is very significant. It is through this blending that we become so delightful to the Lord. Praise the Lord for our blending! Our blending is producing the church that the Lord wants. If we do not have such blending time, I think we would all return to Babylon. We would all be separated and scattered. Praise the Lord for such a blending!

I am so glad that in this time, even if the PTERO is held in the North, a lot of brothers from the southern part of the country came. Don't you think that is wonderful? When I heard that Taal Volcano erupted, I was wondering if I should come. This is dangerous. But the Lord touched me, in such a blending time, we should all come so we can be delightful to the Lord.

Needing to Understand the Intrinsic Significance of the Church as the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

The Son of God Being the Embodiment and Expression of the Divine Life; Hence, the Kingdom of the Son Being a Realm of Life

We need to understand the intrinsic significance of the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love. The Son of God is the embodiment and expression of the divine life; hence, the kingdom of the Son is a realm of life. The kingdom is a realm of life. It is not a realm of death of but a realm of life.

The Kingdom into Which We Have Been Transferred Being the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love; This Realm of Life Being in Love, Not in Fear

The kingdom into which we have been transferred is the kingdom of the Son of God's love; this realm of life is in love, not in fear. We can understand it in this way. If our church life is full of fear, we are not in the realm of life. Because if we are in the realm of life, we are in love and not in fear.

The Kingdom in Which We Find Ourselves Today Being a Realm Full of Life, Light, and Love

The kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love. I also feel that if we find ourselves departing from such a realm, may the Lord enable us to make a big turn back to this realm, the realm of life, light, and love.

The Son of the Father Being the Expression of the Father as the Source of Life

The Son of the Father's Love Being the Object of the Father's Love to Be the Embodiment of Life to Us in the Divine Love with the Authority in Resurrection

The Son, as the Embodiment of the Divine Life, Being the Object of the Father's Love

The Son of the Father is the expression of the Father as the source of life. The Son of the Father's love is the object of the Father's love to be the embodiment of life to us in the divine love with the authority in resurrection. The Son, as the embodiment of the divine life, is the object of the Father's love. The divine life embodied in the Son is given to us in the divine love. The object of the divine love becomes to us the embodiment of life in the

divine love with the authority in resurrection; this is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.

***To Be Transferred into the Kingdom of the Son of the Father's Love
Being to Be Transferred into the Son, Who Is Life to Us***

The Son in Resurrection Now Being the Life-giving Spirit, and His Ruling Us in His Resurrection Life with Love

Living by the Son as Our Life in Resurrection Being Living in His Kingdom, Enjoying Him in the Father's Love; Here Having the Church Life

To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, who is life to us. The Son in resurrection is now the life-giving Spirit, and He rules us in His resurrection life with love. When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love; here we have the church life.

This is the church life we are talking about. These two verses are very precious to me. Colossians 3:4 says, "*When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.*" John 6:57 is one of my favorite verses. The verse says, "*As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.*" It cannot be clearer. If you want to live because of Him, you need to eat Him. Just as the Lord ate the Father, we need to eat the Lord. We need to eat Him so that we can live not just by Him, but because of Him. He becomes the energy within us to cause us to be able to live Him out, to be able to walk in Him, to be able to walk or live in this realm of life full of love.

Because the Father Delights in His Son, the Kingdom of the Son of the Father's Love Being a Pleasant Thing, a Matter of Delight

Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant thing, a matter of delight. The first part talks about the Father's delight in His Son. Both of these were recorded in Matthew. Matthew 3:17 recorded that after the Lord was raised up from the baptismal water, the Father spoke. The verse says, "*And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.*" When the Lord started His ministry, after He came out of the water, the Father wanted to make sure they all know that this Son is actually His delight. When the Lord brought the three disciples out to the Mount of

Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared. Peter made a mistake, proposing to make three tents, one each for the Lord, for Moses, and for Elijah. When God the Father saw this, God the Father spoke again. We see this in Matthew 17:5, "*While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!*"

When we come to this point, because the Father delights in the Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant thing, a matter of delight. When I come to this last portion of the outline, I dwelled there for quite a while, because it talks about the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love as a pleasant thing, a matter of delight. I was wondering, how is our church life? When we first came into the church life, it could be very pleasant, but as we stay on for a while, it may not be that pleasant. But the Lord is trying to remind us that this church life we are in is the church life in the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love. It should be a pleasant thing, a matter of delight. I think when it becomes not so pleasant, and we become not so delightful, we need to all go back to the Lord and repent and pray, "Lord, this is Your church. This is Your kingdom. This should be pleasant. This should be delightful." We should pray that the Lord would recover such a situation in all our church life. In all the churches in the Philippines and all the churches in the whole world, this church that we are in should be the kingdom of the Son of His love. It should be delightful. It should be a very pleasant thing. May the Lord really recover us back to the kingdom of the Son of His love. – (A. L.)

Message 5

**Growing in the Divine Life for a Rich Entrance
into the Eternal Kingdom**

Scripture Reading: 2 Pet. 1: 5-11

I. We need to experience the growth of the divine life so that we may have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom—2 Pet. 1:5-11.

II. To supply virtue in faith is to develop virtue—the energy of the divine life issuing in vigorous action—in the exercise of the equally precious faith; this faith needs to be exercised so that the virtue of the divine life may be developed in the succeeding steps and reach maturity—v. 5a:

- A. Virtue needs the bountiful supply of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; the knowledge which we should develop in our virtue includes the knowledge of God and of our Savior, the knowledge of God's economy, the knowledge of what faith is, and the knowledge of the divine power, glory, virtue, nature, and life—v. 5b.
- B. Self-control is the exercise of control and restraint over one's self in its passions, desires, and habits; such self-control needs to be exercised in knowledge for the proper growth in life—v. 6a.
- C. To exercise endurance is to bear with others and with circumstances—v. 6b.
- D. Godliness is a living that is like God and that expresses God—v. 6c.
- E. Brotherly love (*philadelphia*) is brotherly affection, a love characterized by delight and pleasure; in godliness, which is the expression of God, this love needs to be supplied for the brotherhood, for our testimony to the world, and for the bearing of fruit—v. 7a; 1 Pet. 2:17; 3:8; Gal. 6:10; John 13:34-35; 15:16-17.
- F. The ultimate development of the divine nature within us is love—*agape*, the Greek word used in the New Testament for the divine love, which God is in His nature—2 Pet. 1:7b; 1 John 4:8, 16:
 - 1. Our brotherly love needs to be developed further into a nobler and higher love—2 Pet. 1:7b.

2. In our enjoyment of the divine nature, we need to let the divine seed of the allotted faith develop to its consummation in the divine and nobler love—vv. 5-7.
 3. When we partake of the divine nature to the uttermost, we are filled with God as love, and we become persons of love, even love itself—Eph. 3:19.
- G. To develop the spiritual virtues in the divine life and thus to advance in the growth of the divine life makes God's calling and selection of us firm—2 Pet. 1:10.

III. We should be diligent to pursue the growth and development of the divine life and divine nature for a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom—vv. 10-11:

- A. The bountiful supply that we enjoy in the development of the divine life and divine nature (vv. 3-7) will bountifully supply us a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord.
- B. This supply will enable and qualify us to enter into the coming kingdom by all the riches of the divine life and divine nature as our excellent virtues (energy) unto the splendid glory of God—v. 3; 1 Pet. 5:10.
- C. Apparently, it is we who enter into the eternal kingdom; actually, the entrance into the eternal kingdom is supplied to us richly through our growth in life and through the development of the divine life within us.

Message 5

Growing in the Divine Life for a Rich Entrance into the Eternal Kingdom

Second Peter 1:3-11 writes, *“Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue, through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust. And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness; and in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love. For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins. Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble. For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.”*

In this title, it talks about our need to grow; we need to grow in the divine life. The reason for this is so that we can have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom. I remember when Brother Ron shared the first message, he mentioned that it will be so sad if after many years in the Lord’s recovery, we find ourselves to be the same as the time when we entered into the recovery. We need to grow and it is normal for us to grow. If we do not grow, this means something is wrong. Recently in a restaurant, I saw a little guy, and I thought he was a little boy. But when he turned, he was an old person, maybe about three to four feet high. I suppose he knows that something is wrong with him.

But what about us? After so many years in the Lord's recovery, do we know whether we are growing or not? This message is very important because if we want to enter into the eternal kingdom, it is necessary that we grow. When we come to 2 Peter, this portion of the Word is telling us that we must grow so that we can have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Lord.

As we come to this verse in 2 Peter 1:4, it says, "*you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.*" It speaks about our need to be partakers. The first word that we need to remember is the word "partakers". We are saved so that we can partake of this rich Christ. We are here to partake of His rich divine nature. If we want to grow, there is no other way but to become a partaker of the divine nature.

Verses 5-7 are the development of what we have enjoyed. As we enjoy the divine nature and as we become partakers of the divine nature, we should go on and develop all these virtues step by step until we reach the end.

The first thing that is mentioned here is "your faith". This "faith" is the faith that has been infused into us. This "faith" is the seed; everything is in this seed. Everything we need is in the seed, but we need to water the seed, to take care of the seed, so that this seed will be able to grow. We need to develop this seed, and at the end of all this, the final thing is love. If we do that, then we come to this point of having a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.

We need to remember these three words: partakers, develop, and entrance into the eternal economy of God. Recently, I was listening to a message regarding these points. Four points were mentioned that touched me very much. The first point is that if we want to grow, if we want to partake, we need to enjoy God! Do not forget that we are here to enjoy God! We were created to enjoy God! We were redeemed to enjoy God! We are here to enjoy God! This very seed entered into us so that we can enjoy God! Second, as we enjoy God, we are becoming God. We are becoming God, not in His deity; we do not become someone that is worshipped. But we can surely participate in His divinity; that is, we can participate in His divine life and His divine nature. In the end, we will become Him. As we gain Him more and more, we will become like Him, so that one day, when we meet our Lord, we will be just like Him. This is our destiny—we are becoming God in life and in nature, but not in the Godhead. Third, we need to grow. We are growing in the divine life. This means that we are growing with the growth of God. We are growing with

God. We can even say that we are growing God. We are being constituted, participating in His divinity, participating in His divine life and nature. And as we participate, we are growing day by day. For us to grow, we need to have an active cooperation in the participation in the life of God, so that we can grow in this life. Lastly, as we enjoy Him, become Him, grow in Him, then we can enter into God as the eternal kingdom. This kingdom is the realm of His rule. We can also say that a kingdom is a totality of a life. Like when we talk about the animal kingdom, we can say that all the animals that have the animal life belong to the animal kingdom. They are born into that kingdom. Praise the Lord! We are born with the life of God! We are actually in the God-kingdom. This is wonderful! We were born into this kingdom because we were born with the life of God.

As we come to these verses in 2 Peter 5-11, they show us development. But let me read to you verse 5 again to see if we actually understand what the verse is talking about. Second Peter 1:5 says, “*And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge.*” The first thing here is, “supply bountifully in your faith virtue.” What does this mean? The way Brother Lee rephrased this, he said it this way, “to supply virtue in faith.” How do we have this virtue? It is by the exercise of our faith. As we exercise our faith, we will gain the virtues. This means that when we say, “your faith virtue”, you exercise faith to develop your virtues. You exercise virtue to develop your knowledge. You exercise your knowledge to develop your self-control. You exercise self-control to develop your endurance. You exercise your endurance to develop your godliness. You exercise your godliness to develop your brotherly love. And you exercise your brotherly love to be love.

When we come to these verses, the final goal of these developments is love. In 2 Peter 1:7, there is a footnote on the word “love”. The love here is different from our natural love. It is different from the brotherly love that was mentioned before this word “love”. This love that we are talking about is the *agape* love. Footnote 2 of verse 7 says,

“The Greek word is used in the New Testament for the divine love, which God is in His nature (1 John 4:8, 16). It is nobler than human love. It adorns all the qualities of the Christian life (1 Cor. 13; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-14). It is stronger in ability and greater in

capacity than human love (Matt. 5:44, 46), yet a believer who lives by the divine life (v. 3) and partakes of the divine nature (v. 4) can be saturated with it and express it in full. Such a love needs to be developed in brotherly love to govern it and flow in it for the full expression of God, who is this love. Faith can be considered the seed of life, and this nobler love, the fruit (v. 8) in its full development. The six steps of development in between are the stages of its growth unto maturity.”

What Peter is talking about in these verses is our need to develop and grow step by step, stage by stage. Starting from the seed of life, which is faith, we can reach maturity, so that we can participate in the kingdom life in the millennium. If not, then we will still participate in the kingdom in the new heaven and new earth. Today, I hope that we would all participate very much in this divine nature so that we can develop step by step until we are mature to enter into the kingdom to be co-kings with our Lord.

We should also consider what we mean by “divine nature”. What do we mean when we say that we need to participate in the divine nature? The divine nature is simply what God is. Brother Lee said, “we can enjoy the divine nature by living the divine life. We live in the divine life by gaining all those great promises that the Lord has given us.” That is why before this portion, it talks about these great promises. By availing ourselves of these great promises, we can live in the divine life, then we can participate in the divine nature. It seems that we are talking about two different things, but actually, the divine life and the divine nature are inseparable. In Revelation, in the New Jerusalem, there is a golden street. Gold is the divine nature of our God. In the middle of the golden street is the river of water of life. This is the divine life. When we are walking in the divine nature, we will actually enjoy the divine life. These two things cannot be separated. That is why we always say that we enjoy the divine nature by living the divine life. We live the divine life by availing ourselves of the great promises of the Lord. These promises have already been given to us. What we should do is to pray to the Lord. We need to pray, “Lord, we need all these exceedingly great promises so that we can enjoy Your divine life so that we can participate in Your divine nature.”

**OUR NEEDING TO EXPERIENCE THE GROWTH OF THE
DIVINE LIFE SO THAT WE MAY HAVE A RICH ENTRANCE INTO
THE ETERNAL KINGDOM**

We need to experience the growth of the divine life so that we may have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.

**TO SUPPLY VIRTUE IN FAITH IS BEING TO DEVELOP
VIRTUE—THE ENERGY OF THE DIVINE LIFE ISSUING IN
VIGOROUS ACTION—IN THE EXERCISE OF THE EQUALLY
PRECIOUS FAITH; THIS FAITH NEEDING TO BE EXERCISED SO
THAT THE VIRTUE OF THE DIVINE LIFE MAY BE DEVELOPED
IN THE SUCCEEDING STEPS AND REACH MATURITY**

To supply virtue in faith is to develop virtue—the energy of the divine life issuing in vigorous action—in the exercise of the equally precious faith; this faith needs to be exercised so that the virtue of the divine life may be developed in the succeeding steps and reach maturity. We have this faith that is infused into us. Today, we need to exercise this precious faith. This faith needs to be exercised so that the virtue of the divine life may be developed. Step by step, exercise our faith. When we say “exercise our faith”, for myself, subjectively, I exercise my faith by spending my time with the Lord. As we come to the Lord, spend time with the Lord, He will infuse Himself into us as faith. This faith is the seed that we need so that we can continue to develop all these things out of this seed of life.

**Virtue Needing the Bountiful Supply of the Knowledge of God and
of Jesus Our Lord; the Knowledge Which We Should Develop in
Our Virtue Including the Knowledge of God and of Our Savior, the
Knowledge of God’s Economy, the Knowledge of What Faith Is, and
the Knowledge of the Divine Power, Glory, Virtue, Nature, and Life**

Virtue needs the bountiful supply of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; the knowledge which we should develop in our virtue includes the knowledge of God and of our Savior, the knowledge of God’s economy, the knowledge of what faith is, and the knowledge of the divine power, glory, virtue, nature, and life. We need to have all this knowledge. This knowledge is the knowledge of God and of our Savior, the knowledge of God’s economy, the knowledge of what faith is, and the knowledge of the divine power, glory, virtue, nature, and life.

Recently, I heard a message of Brother Lee to the graduating class of the FTTA in 1995. At that time, Brother Lee was sitting down and asked a brother to read it. That message is entitled, “Never Forget”. He was telling the graduating class that after going through the two years, after they leave the training, they will not forget eight things. I was touched with the first point which includes almost all eight points: we should never forget the economy of God. If we are burdened to grow, we need to remember that this is the will of God. What He wants to do is to work Himself into us. What He wants to do is to become our constituent. So today, we should not forget. Maybe in the past we were pursuing; in the past we were diligent. But how about today? Are we gaining more of Him? Are we knowing Him more? When I went through the messages in “The Experience of Christ”, it talks about Philippians 3, which Paul wrote at the latter part of His life. He had already done a lot of work. But in Philippians 3:10, he said, “*to know Him.*” After doing a lot of things, Paul still wanted to know Him. Brothers, we need to have such an aspiration—to know our Lord deeper. In the last Thanksgiving conference, we talked about Christ being all-inclusive and all-extensive. He is inexhaustible. He is limitless. His riches are simply unsearchable. Today, do we know Him? We need to know Him. We need to have the bountiful supply of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Self-control Being the Exercise of Control and Restraint over One’s Self in Its Passions, Desires, and Habits; Such Self-control Needing to Be Exercised in Knowledge for the Proper Growth in Life

Self-control is the exercise of control and restraint over one’s self in its passions, desires, and habits; such self-control needs to be exercised in knowledge for the proper growth in life. This knowledge should be under self-control. Self-control is a very important thing. In Galatians 5, self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit. We, human beings, a lot of times have different moods. If something changes, we like it or we do not like it. We are easily controlled by our moods. If we want to grow in life, we need to have such a self-control on our mood. You cannot say, “Today, I am not in the mood.” You are supposed to go and preach the gospel, and you will say that you are not in the mood. When will you be in the mood? This mood needs to be controlled. [Before coming here,] I was just traveling in South America. I went back to Anaheim for less than 24 hours. If I could admit to you, I was in no mood

to come to the Philippines because I was so tired. The people from Ecuador were asking me how I was doing. I said, “*Muy cansado, pero contento*” (very tired, but happy). I am very tired, but I am still happy in the Lord. But if I were overwhelmed by my mood of not traveling, I would not be here today. But the Lord gave me the grace to control this mood. If we want to grow and serve the Lord, self-control is very much needed. Many things in the church life are not really up to what we like. But we cannot say that we will not do it since we do not like it. Self-control is very important.

Another thing is our temper. Brother Lee shared many times about our temper. We need to have control over our temper. I believe Brother Lee said that once you lose your temper, you disqualify yourself. I had heard of this for some time, but one day I saw this with my eyes. There was a serving brother in our locality. One day, when all the serving ones decided to do something that he did not want to do, he really lost his temper and still thought that he was right. When we had fellowship with him about the situation, he still did not agree and wanted to settle the matter by going to Brother Lee. When we met together, Brother Lee told him that he lost his temper and because of this, it would be good for him to depart. This is because he lost his temper. How about in our service? Maybe everything is tranquil, everything is nice, everything is happy, it is delightful. But when we come to a situation that is not delightful, we need to know that our temper should be under control. As serving ones, we do not have the right to display our temper. This is needed for us to grow in life.

To Exercise Endurance Being to Bear with Others and with Circumstances

To exercise endurance is to bear with others and with circumstances. Self-control is with ourselves; endurance is to bear with others and the circumstances around it. If we read 2 Corinthians 12:12, there is a point on endurance. Second Corinthians 12:12 says, “*Indeed the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all endurance by signs and wonders and works of power.*” Endurance is the first sign of being an apostle. This means that if you do not have endurance, you cannot be an apostle. No one without endurance could go into the kingdom. Endurance is something we need to develop. We need to grow until we have endurance so that we can enter into the kingdom.

In the full-time training in Anaheim, we have a class called, “Life of Service”. In that class, one of the things shared to them is the biography of

Watchman Nee based on the book, “Watchman Nee: A Seer of the Divine Revelation”. Every year, I read that book once. It seems like every time I read that book I see something a little bit more. I see that the biography of Watchman Nee was written by Witness Lee to give us insight to what kind of a person Brother Nee is. Watchman Nee is a very particular person. I do not understand why he had to suffer so much for the Lord, and yet you did not hear any murmurings from him. We know some of the people that were with him in the jail house and they said that Brother Nee never complained about the injustice that he was receiving. In 1972, after 20 years of imprisonment, Brother Nee went to be with the Lord. I was visiting Brother Lee at that time, and that was one of the rare occasions that I saw Brother Lee weeping. He was reading the letter that was left under Brother Nee’s pillow. The letter was retrieved by a person who was supposed to pick Brother Nee up, and quickly took the letter and gave it to Brother Lee. And in that letter, Brother Nee said that he maintained his joy and Brother Lee was so comforted. Brother Lee was saying that even with so much injustice, so much suffering, Brother Nee maintained his endurance. This told Brother Lee that Brother Nee went on with the Lord. Even if he was in the jail house for all these years, he has been growing in life. We believe that he has gained a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.

When we come to all these things, I hope they will touch us very much. What we have here is not just doctrine. I hope that the Lord would speak to us, to give us this aspiration to develop all this so that we can reach maturity. If we are burdened and are willing to be one with the Lord, the Lord can do this in us. We could actually enter into the kingdom of the Son of His love. On the one hand, we need to know that we still have some time. Time is given to us because of the mercy of the Lord. We still have some time to develop this. But on the other hand, we also need to realize that we have no time to waste. We have the time to develop, but we do not have the time to waste. Time is of the essence. We need to pray to the Lord that He would enable us to redeem our time so that we can grow day by day unto maturity. I hope we can all do this. As Brother Ron shared in the beginning, this training should touch our life. It should not just increase our knowledge. It should touch our daily life so that we would walk another way, the way that is unto maturity to bring our Lord back.

Godliness Being a Living That Is Like God and That Expresses God

Godliness is a living that is like God and that expresses God.

Brotherly Love (*Philadelphia*) Being Brotherly Affection, a Love Characterized by Delight and Pleasure; in Godliness, Which Is the Expression of God, This Love Needing to Be Supplied for the Brotherhood, for Our Testimony to the World, and for the Bearing of Fruit

Brotherly love (*philadelphia*) is brotherly affection, a love characterized by delight and pleasure; in godliness, which is the expression of God, this love needs to be supplied for the brotherhood, for our testimony to the world, and for the bearing of fruit.

The Ultimate Development of the Divine Nature Within Us Being Love—Agape, the Greek Word Used in the New Testament for the Divine Love, Which God Is in His Nature

The ultimate development of the divine nature within us is love—agape, the Greek word used in the New Testament for the divine love, which God is in His nature. In saying “God is love”, that “love” is *agape*. Our brotherly love needs to be developed further into a nobler and higher love. In our enjoyment of the divine nature, we need to let the divine seed of the allotted faith develop to its consummation in the divine and nobler love. I believe we all have the desire to love one another, but that may only be brotherly love. What is being said here is that we need to continue to develop further until we have the divine and nobler love, until we do not just love with the divine love, but even become that love. We become God in life and in nature. We become this very love. When we partake of the divine nature to the uttermost, we are filled with God as love, and we become persons of love, even love itself.

To Develop the Spiritual Virtues in the Divine Life and Thus to Advance in the Growth of the Divine Life Making God’s Calling and Selection of Us Firm

To develop the spiritual virtues in the divine life and thus to advance in the growth of the divine life makes God’s calling and selection of us firm. Second Peter 1:10 says, “*Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.*” I have seen many people get stumbled. Sometimes I am also on the verge of being stumbled. Maybe I was stumbled and I recovered from being stumbled. So, this verse is very important, showing us how we can be firm and not be stumbled—we need to grow in life. We need to grow in all these virtues; we

need to grow from stage to stage. If we are young and immature, it will be easy for us to be stumbled. But in order for us to participate in the building up of the Body of Christ, we cannot afford to be stumbled.

Recently, I met a few brothers. They have been serving for quite a while. And for some reason, they were stumbled. Maybe while they were serving, they were not really growing. It would be sad if we serve and do not grow. One day, when we meet the Lord, we may tell Him that we did this and that. But what will the Lord say to us? Will He say that we are good and prudent slaves, and that we will enter into the joy of the Master? Or will He say that He does not know us, workers of lawlessness? I just hope that we consider this very much before the Lord. We are here serving the Lord. We are not playing games. As the Lord is speaking this to us, may we all be touched and go to the Lord with much prayer and consideration so that we will be God in life and in nature. We will become the love that is the very nature of God.

After we have lived in the church life for some time, it is easy to fake it. We know exactly how to act, so we can fake it, or we can actually live it. Are we actually comforting a brother out of God who is love? Or are we just being polite? Probably, many times, we are just being polite. It would be quite sad if after we have been here for some time, and because we did not grow in this life and develop in this life, we get stumbled. It is actually a very sad thing. Today, the Lord needs many of us. What the Lord needs is that as we go through life, we need to become more and more mature so we can participate in this great enterprise of our Lord. But if there is a lack of growing, we may get stumbled. The Lord may lose us and we would lose the Lord and the blessing of the Lord.

OUR NEEDING TO BE DILIGENT TO PURSUE THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIVINE LIFE AND DIVINE NATURE FOR A RICH ENTRANCE INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

We should be diligent to pursue the growth and development of the divine life and divine nature for a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom.

The Bountiful Supply That We Enjoy in the Development of the Divine Life and Divine Nature Bountifully Supplying Us a Rich Entrance into the Eternal Kingdom of Our Lord

The bountiful supply that we enjoy in the development of the divine life and divine nature (vv. 3-7) will bountifully supply us a rich entrance into the

eternal kingdom of our Lord. I hope we can remember these two verses. We should see the divine power in 2 Peter 1:3-4. In these verses, we have the word *partakers*. We also need to see that for us to be a partaker, there is a condition. To remain as partakers, we need to escape the corruption which is in the world by lust. So, if we want to continue to be partakers, we should also be an *escaper*. *Partaker* and *escaper* go together. As we partake, we escape; as we escape, we partake. We can partake and we have to escape so that His divine nature could be the substance, the divine life, that will enter into us for us to grow in life.

This Supply Enabling and Qualifying Us to Enter into the Coming Kingdom by All the Riches of the Divine Life and Divine Nature as Our Excellent Virtues (Energy) unto the Splendid Glory of God

This supply will enable and qualify us to enter into the coming kingdom by all the riches of the divine life and divine nature as our excellent virtues (energy) unto the splendid glory of God.

Apparently, It Being We Who Enter into the Eternal Kingdom; Actually, the Entrance into the Eternal Kingdom Being Supplied to Us Richly through Our Growth in Life and through the Development of the Divine Life within Us.

Apparently, it is we who enter into the eternal kingdom; actually, the entrance into the eternal kingdom is supplied to us richly through our growth in life and through the development of the divine life within us. When we come to this last point, it is good for us to remember that growing in life is something that is normal. Do not think that growing in life is not normal. Take the example of a child. If he does not grow, we need to be concerned. But if he grows, he is very normal. When we look at the Bible, there are many examples and patterns that show us that growth in life is very normal. In the New Testament, we see that Paul and John grew. In 1 and 2 Peter, we also see that Peter grew, and that is why he could write these things. He is so different from the Peter in the Gospels, a person who we may think has no hope and always gets into trouble. When we see these patterns before us, we should be very hopeful before the Lord. This very Christ that is in us is the hope of glory.

As we come to the conclusion of this, there is one word that touched me very much: diligence. In 2 Peter 1:5, it says that we need to be diligent. Second

Peter 1:10 also states that we need to be diligent to make our calling and selection firm, that by doing these things we shall by no means ever stumble. So, if we want to avoid being stumbled, we need to be diligent. Second Peter 1:15 says, *“Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.”* For ourselves, we need to be diligent. And for others, we also need to be diligent. One of the brothers gave a definition of diligence: diligence is to be urgent, persistently applying, giving attentive care for a particular thing. I referred to a dictionary and it says that diligence is to be persevering with painstaking effort. Another dictionary says to be diligent is to have a steady attention and effort in an undertaking to accomplish something. Today, we need to be diligent, especially in enjoying the Lord. This is our salvation. The only One that can meet all our problems is the Lord. We need to be diligent to enjoy Him. We need to be diligent to grow and develop this divine life and nature, so that we can have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom. To be diligent means that we cannot be lazy. Are we lazy? When I was growing up, my parents told me stories on how to be diligent. They talked about a particular family. One day, the wife was going to her parents’ place and she was very afraid that her husband may die from starvation. The wife made a big donut that can be hung on his head so that he does not need to even lift his finger to eat. The wife went to her parents’ place and returned to find that her husband had died. She saw that only the front part of the donut was eaten because he does not even want to turn the donut to eat it. This story has been told to so many people, but I do not know if this is how we are in eating Christ. In Proverbs 19:24, it says that a sluggard is one who buries his hand in the dish. He was too tired to bring the food from the dish to his mouth. Are we a sluggard or a diligent person? That will tell how we grow in life. May the Lord speak to us directly and touch our very being. I believe we all have the burden to serve the Lord. We all love the Lord and want to go on in the Lord. We need to be diligent. We need to enjoy the Lord and eat the Lord. We need to develop the divine life and divine nature that we can have a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom. I hope and pray that the Lord would be so merciful to all of us. For the sake of our locality, for the sake of the Philippines, for the sake of the whole world, we must ask for the mercy of the Lord that we would be those that would develop this life. – (A. L.)

Message 6

Living under Authority and Representing God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:18; Rom. 9:21-22; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10

I. God is the supreme authority; He has all authority—Rom. 9:21-22:

- A. God's authority represents God Himself; God's power only represents God's works—Acts 17:24.
- B. God's authority is actually God Himself; authority issues out from God's own being—Rev. 22:1.
- C. All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—derives from God—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; John 19:10-11; Gen. 9:6.
- D. When we touch God's authority, we touch God Himself—Isa. 6:1-5:
 - 1. Meeting God's authority is the same as meeting God—Amos 4:12.
 - 2. Offending God's authority is the same as offending God Himself.
- E. We all must meet authority, be restricted by God, and be led by His delegated authority—Isa. 37:16; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 13:17.

II. There are two great principles in the universe—God's authority and Satan's rebellion; the unique controversy between God and Satan concerns authority and rebellion—Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13:

- A. Rebellion is the denial of God's authority and the rejection of God's rule.
- B. Although Satan rebelled against God's authority and although man violates His authority by rebelling against Him, God will not let this rebellion continue; He will establish His kingdom on the earth—Rev. 11:15.
- C. The center of dispute in the universe relates to who has authority—4:2-3.
- D. We need to set ourselves to submit to God's authority and uphold God's authority—Matt. 11:25.

III. One who has been appointed by God to be a deputy authority must be a proper representative of God—12:3-8; 16:1-5, 28; 2 Cor. 5:20:

- A. In Exodus and in Numbers 12 and 16, Moses represented God in a proper way.
- B. We need to learn a serious lesson from the one time that Moses failed to represent God—20:2-13:

1. In striking the rock twice and in calling the people rebels, Moses did not sanctify God in the sight of the people of Israel—vv. 10-12:
 - a. To sanctify God is to make Him holy, that is, separate from all the false gods; to fail to sanctify God is to make Him common—v. 12.
 - b. In being angry with the people and in wrongly striking the rock twice, Moses failed to sanctify God—vv. 10-11.
 - c. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses failed to represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God's word in His economy—vv. 10-12.
 - d. Moses offended both God's holy nature and His divine economy; he condemned the people as rebels, but he was the one who rebelled against God's word—vv. 10, 24; 27:12-14.
 2. In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy.
- C. The Apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ, representing God—2 Cor. 5:20:
1. A new covenant minister is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to represent the highest authority—3:6; 5:20.
 2. Paul exercised his apostolic authority not for ruling over the believers but for building them up—10:8; 13:10; 1:24.
 3. Paul exercised the authority inherent in his apostleship by teaching, by engaging in spiritual warfare, by moving within the measure of God's rule, and by his jealousy for Christ over the believers—1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 10:3-4, 13; 11:2.
- D. A person who represents God rightly must submit to authority (Matt. 8:8-9), realize that in himself he has no authority (28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), and be a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ (1:9; 4:14; Num. 17:1-10).

Message 6

Living under Authority and Representing God

Living under the authority and representing God—these are two very weighty, crucial, vital, necessary matters. It is not easy to speak along this line, but we trust in the Lord's grace and take Him as our person, and He knows we need His supply to hear purely what the Spirit is saying, and to allow the Lord's word to lodge in our being, and then work out the reality of this word.

I want to spend some time on the subject itself—Living under authority and representing God. I have been considering who is living under authority, and what is it like. And I would suggest this, on the one hand, everybody on the earth is living under authority in some way. We all are under a government in the country where we are, so in one sense, we are all living under authority. But I would point out, on the other hand, no one in the natural life is truly living under authority. Outwardly, it may seem like this; but inwardly, intrinsically, there are issues, there are all kinds of negative things. I was considering, how are the people on earth, without Christ, how are they living under authority? Well, some are living according to ethics. They've been raised concerning, "This is right. This is wrong. You respect this person. You obey that person." And so they are ethically, apparently, living under authority. Others, by their disposition, they are kind of easy-going persons, they give in easily, they do not like any confrontations, they do not like to fight, they just give in. Then others are living under authority out of nothing other than fear. They live under a dictatorship with secret police and people spying on each other, and people being put in prison because they believe in God. In order to preserve their life, they live under authority. In certain countries, I've observed this, the people are trained by their culture to live under authority, and so their submission is actually a cultural reflect. It has

nothing to do with really knowing authority, this is your culture. This brings us to something quite enlightening—the only human being who ever truly lived under authority was the Lord Jesus. And there are two portions in the New Testament that testify of this.

In Matthew 8, a centurion sent a message to Jesus that his servant was very sick and would soon die. He asked the Lord to heal his servant, and the Lord was willing to come. Then the centurion indicated, “*I’m not worthy for you to come to my house, simply speak a word and my servant would be healed.*” And then the centurion said this, “*I also am a man under authority.*” He could direct soldiers under him because he himself was under authority, and he recognized that the God-man Jesus was a man under authority. Because of that, His words spoken would be words of authority. But the main point here is Christ, and Christ alone, as the God-man, is the only person who ever walked on this earth—who outwardly, and inwardly, and essentially—lived under authority, which is God Himself.

Then the other portion is Philippians 2, where Christ laid aside the outward splendor or His deity and became a man, then He humbled Himself to be a slave, and He was obedient unto death. Brother Nee in the book *Authority and Submission* has a wonderful chapter on the submission of Christ. He points out the Lord was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, He established submission—He established obedience. He was under authority, obeying the will of God, obeying the word of the Father, no matter what it was, until the end; therefore, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name. I believe with my whole being the day is coming when every knee will bow, in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue will confess *Jesus Christ is Lord!* He is the pattern of living under authority, doing the will of God, being obedient unto death. Then in resurrection, He appeared to His disciples in Matthew 28—and this word He spoke needs to be written on our heart. He said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth, has been given to Me, the Son of Man.*” All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him by God Himself. Because God is authority, authority only issues from Him, and He bestowed this on His crucified, resurrected, ascended, enthroned Son of Man. Brothers, we need to see what this statement implies—It implies no one in this room has any authority at all! And we never will because all the authority is with the Son

of Man in glory. He may gain us and train us in such a way that His authority may be expressed through us. It may flow through us but it is not us. And He may constitute us into God-men who can represent Him with His authority, yet, we realize that we do not have any authority. This needs to be clear.

In relation to authority, I want to bring in the thought of the Body of Christ being the principle that governs the church, the ministry, and the work. The three—church, ministry, and work—are inseparable, but they are significantly different. Because the Body is the principle that governs the church, the church is directly under the authority of the Head of the Body, who is the Lord of all, who has all the authority, and the elders are directly under this throne. But the church cannot overstep and try to exercise any kind of influence over the work or over the ministry. Those in the ministry also are under the headship of Christ directly and whatever is to be ministered, especially to the Lord's recovery, must originate with the Man on the throne, and then it flows out. The work or the co-workers cannot say, "We do not agree that you are having this subject. We should do that subject." They are overstepping, if the church says, "No, we want this to be the subject." The ministry is for the church as the Body of Christ, and the work is the Body seeking increase.

We know from the illustration in Acts 13 that five men were ministering to the Lord, then the Holy Spirit spoke. This is the Lord's Spirit directly leading "Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul unto the work to which I have called them." Once again, the work is not controlled by the church, it is not controlled by the ministry; it is directly under the authority of the Head. But there is an aspect of this truth that must now be clearly defined—and anything in your being that disagrees with this, then be honest, go to the Lord personally, and just work this out in fellowship. The work, the co-workers, have no right or ground to exercise authority over the local churches—There is no such thing! The purpose of the work is to gain increase for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ. This needs to be clear.

We lived for decades under a pattern of a brother who lived under authority and represented God. If anyone was the leading worker, it was Brother Lee. If anyone had the ministry of this age and the vision of the age, it was Brother Lee. He never overstepped, on behalf of the ministry or the work, to control anyone, or any church. Many of us, when we sought fellowship

with him—it might have been hundreds of us, only the Lord knows—seeking Brother Lee’s fellowship, actually his guidance, and his answer was always the same, “*You need to pray.*” He did not have the thought, “*Well, I am the leader, I am the man. You want me to tell you? Okay, go here. Do that. Do not do that. Do this. Marry this person. Take this job. Buy this house.*”—Never! I mentioned in the first message because I had the leading, I sincerely believe, to say it. The Lord is very merciful to us. He is a God of tenderheartedness, of lovingkindness, of long-suffering, of forbearance. He in this training is giving all of us to learn some crucial truths related to the Christian life and the church life under the government of God, so that we may be saved from living in such a way, or doing certain things in our work, that will bring in the righteous judgement of God in His government. The Lord knows I’m not aiming my word at any place or at anyone. My word is for every place and everyone, and the first one to get the word is me. The Lord knows I mean this. This has to become so clear to us.

The second part of this subject is representing God. And we come to that in the outline starting with section three—and that is where the primary burden will be. Representing God—only those who live under authority can represent God. It is a very serious matter to misrepresent God to the saints, to express feelings that are ours but not the Lord’s, to speak thoughts and opinions that are ours but are not the Lord’s; even worse, we make serious decisions involving persons, involving places, involving many things. Then we may realize the Lord will come in and say, “*I do not acknowledge your decision! I do not agree with it. The source is yourself! Those who represent Me are learning deeply not to trust themselves, not to be subjective, but to deny the self in every way, and to receive severe and thorough discipline of the Spirit until they are broken—the self is broken.*” The Christ who lived under authority, who was also the Christ with all authority, lives in this person, yet, this brother, after he has been pursuing the Lord in this manner, still will not trust himself, but will seek out thorough, genuine fellowship. We are having this message because our Lord wants to make us this kind of person. He did not bring us here to tell us, “*You are not this. You are not that. You are short. You are a failure.*” The light must come so we are humbled and we are opened, but the Lord’s heart is to reproduce Himself in us, to live in us, to train us to live under authority, then to train us further to represent Him.

GOD BEING THE SUPREME AUTHORITY AND HIS HAVING ALL AUTHORITY

God is the supreme authority; He has all authority (Rom. 9:21-22).

God's Authority Representing God Himself; God's Power Only Representing God's Works

God's authority represents God Himself; God's power only represents God's works (Acts 17:24).

God's Authority Being Actually God Himself; Authority Issuing Out from God's Own Being

God's authority is actually God Himself; authority issues out from God's own being (Rev. 22:1). The Greek word for the noun authority is *exousia*. *Ousia* means one's being—one's essential being. And *ex* means *out from*. Authority has its source in the inner being of God and when this flows out, that is authority. No angel, no apostle, no elder, no person on the earth dare say, "I am the authority. I have authority and it will now come out of me." That is a Satanic substitute. That is the uttermost of rebellion. That is replacing God with His authority by the self. In Revelation 22, we all know there is a throne of God and of the Lamb and the river of water of life is flowing. And we have a hymn that has this main thought that the river is flowing bringing God's authority wherever it flows.

All Authority—Spiritual, Positional, and Governmental—Deriving from God

All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—derives from God (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; John 19:10-11; Gen. 9:6). When we come to two points on the outline, we will read the word "delegated authority" and later we will read "deputy authority". They are the same. There is no such thing as a class of persons—and it is usually workers who assume this; they say, "We are the deputy authority and the leading ones and elders whom we appoint are delegated under authority." Those who do that have just now established a hierarchy, "We are the deputy authority! The ones we appoint are delegated, so they are under us and then we, for any reason that we want to, can dismiss you!" This happened throughout a whole continent, not just in one city or one country—the whole continent! One defined himself as an apostle, even changed his name to John — "I'm the Apostle John!"— "He has authority."

He openly said, “*I heard these ones criticize me. I am amazed they are still alive.*” He and his followers would appoint elders. If anyone who would not agree, they would fire him and appoint the ones that would agree. This is hideous! This has its source in the Devil himself! We have to be so clear that everything derives from God and even once the apostles appointed the elders in Acts 24 and 1 Timothy 1:5, the apostles realized, “Now you elders are directly under God as the authority. We will shepherd you. If there are unusual needs, we will help you, but we will not now try to control you and check on you, ‘Okay, are you doing what we want?’” What has been happening, I visited this country, where the headquarters was of this person, and the Lord gave me a rather clear, spiritual understanding of this massive, hierarchical structure built-up over the whole continent depriving all the saints from the universal fellowship in the Body. I had this sense, and I began to pray, “Lord, you are going to destroy this entire structure and have a genuine recovery here.” This has been going on for some years.

When We Touch God’s Authority, Our Touching God Himself

When we touch God’s authority, we touch God himself (Isa. 6:1-5).

Meeting God’s Authority Being the Same as Meeting God

Meeting God’s authority is the same as meeting God (Amos 4:12).

Offending God’s Authority Being the Same as Offending God Himself

Offending God’s authority is the same as offending God Himself.

Our Needing to Meet Authority, Be Restricted by God, and Be Led by His Delegated Authority

We all must meet authority, be restricted by God, and be led by His delegated authority (Isa. 37:16; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 13:17). We all must meet authority—yes, we have a personal contact with Him. It is not a theory, it is somewhat like a jolt of electricity, “Whoa, that is what is it? Oh, I will never touch it again!”. We are not ashamed to say, in a proper way, in a pure way, “We were led in many matters in the work, in the ministry by the delegated authority but he did not lord it over us. He was in the spirit of the Body more than any of us. But there is such a leading.”

**THERE BEING TWO GREAT PRINCIPLES IN THE UNIVERSE—
GOD’S AUTHORITY AND SATAN’S REBELLION; THE UNIQUE
CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN CONCERNING
AUTHORITY AND REBELLION**

There are two great principles in the universe—God’s authority and Satan’s rebellion; the unique controversy between God and Satan concerns authority and rebellion (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). This is why I said no one really on the earth, who is not living Christ, is truly living under authority, because the principle and element of rebellion are in us with our fallen nature and the cross needs to touch that and break through that. Then we will have a proper fear of God and respect for His government and stand in awe of His lordship with His authority.

**Rebellion Being the Denial of God’s Authority and
the Rejection of God’s Rule**

Rebellion is the denial of God’s authority and the rejection of God’s rule. This is rampant through the United States now, and deep in my being, and others, we are praying, “*Lord, come in to deal with this.*” But as I have mentioned before, He will deal with it through the church—especially through the prayers of the church, if that church itself is under His governmental rule and authority. He is waiting to gain us.

**Although Satan Rebelled against God’s Authority and Although Man
Violates His Authority by Rebelling against Him, God Not Letting This
Rebellion Continue; His Establishing His Kingdom on the Earth**

Although Satan rebelled against God’s authority and although man violates His authority by rebelling against Him, God will not let this rebellion continue; He will establish His kingdom on the earth (Rev. 11:15). Praise the Lord! Ultimately, we’ve seen this in our history. For some reason in His wisdom, He allowed this to go on, and then He steps in, “No, it is over now. It is over! This will not continue.” We need to give Him the ground to do this whenever He wills, however He wills! Brothers, He is God! —God will not let the rebellion continue; He will establish His kingdom on the earth! We are in the Philippines. I would like to say just the second part: God will establish His kingdom throughout the Philippines! Amen!

The Center of Dispute in the Universe Relating to Who Has Authority

The center of dispute in the universe relates to who has authority (4:2-3). The center of dispute in the universe relates to who has authority, in politics, and even in arguments among brothers. Sorry to say, when certain different brothers get together, they argue. The underlying issue is “I’ve got the authority,” “No, I’ve got the authority.” There is an example, it seems harmless, it seems benign. There are three brothers taking the lead in the church somewhere in the United States. Then one brother, he would do this week after week—he would come to the brothers’ meeting and he would say, “I was with the Lord, then the Lord showed me this. The Lord spoke to me and told me this.” He came there with the final word, “God showed me. God told me.” But the other brothers, as members of the Body, they could not say, “Amen.” They had to be honest and faithful in the fellowship so they shared, “We have a different feeling.” Then the brother being subjective would say, “Well, I guess you are rejecting God.” This is a kind of benign way of usurping authority. The self can be strongest in sisters and in brothers when someone says, “God showed me this! God told me this!” Well, I have learned, I am not going to dispute, I am not going to ask, “God told you?” “God showed you?” The Lord will clear that up between the two of you. We can just say, “We have no echo.” There is the Spirit and there is the Body. Will you honor the Body? Will you honor the Lord’s authority expressed through the Body? But a highly subjective person just trusts his feelings. A brother, John Ingalls (he is with the Lord now)—I’ll mention this just a little bit—ended this way. He fully trusted his subjective feelings and he felt the Lord’s recovery changed in nature, so he had to leave. Well, the Lord’s recovery did not change in nature. John changed in nature. He went off and established another Lord’s table meeting in Anaheim. As far as we know, the Lord gave him more than twenty years—no repentance. I am not his judge but neither am I naive. I do not want to end up like them. That is a negative pattern. We have positive patterns of those that pioneered this way to us. My prayer is when I consider them, “Lord, just do the same in me for the sake of your Body.”

Our Needing to Set Ourselves to Submit to God’s Authority and Uphold God’s Authority

We need to set ourselves to submit to God’s authority and uphold God’s authority (Matt. 11:25)

**ONE WHO HAS BEEN APPOINTED BY GOD TO BE
A DEPUTY AUTHORITY NEEDING TO BE A PROPER
REPRESENTATIVE OF GOD**

One who has been appointed by God to be a deputy authority must be a proper representative of God (12:3-8; 16:1-5, 28; 2 Cor. 5:20). The first thing I want to bring to your attention is a very familiar verse, Genesis 1:26 and 27. I would draw your attention to the sequence or the order here. *“Let us make man in our image according to our likeness and let them have dominion.”* Image is first. That is the expression of God. Only one who expresses God can represent God. Because actually the expression becomes the representation. It is a huge mistake to just leap over to this, “I had this from God. I had that.” Please learn from our history, do not repeat it. Do not self-destruct over this. There is one reason why He created us — He wants us to recover the earth for His kingdom so His will can be done on earth. He wants us to represent Him with His authority to deal with the enemy usurping the earth. He wants us to be His representative properly, but that depends on the *image*. If you express yourself, you cannot represent God. You can use words with doctrinal precision, you can quote this and that from the ministry or a verse chosen selectively for your case, but the more you do that the more you express yourself and disqualify yourself. That is why we need to be transformed into His image from glory to glory.

**In Exodus and in Numbers 12 and 16, Moses
Representing God in a Proper Way**

In Exodus and in Numbers 12 and 16, Moses represented God in a proper way. Now we have a section on Moses’ failure. Most of us are familiar with this but I believe a fresh review will be helpful. Moses was called the “meekest man on the earth.” What a responsibility he had starting at the age of eighty to bring perhaps two million people out of Egypt to the wilderness into the good land. What kind of weight of responsibility is that and the things he went through again and again, and the rebellion against him and Aaron! Then there is the case of Nadab and Abihu. Also, the earth swallowed up and the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty, all of the people rebelled and said, “You killed them.” He humbled himself before God. But he made one mistake and that one mistake was a sin unto death. Let me read it then we can learn from it. In Deuteronomy he refers to it in a very objective way. He

said, “*You know what I did, right? You know what I did. You know the result of what I did; I cannot enter into the good land.*” Then he is telling his spiritual children, “Do not do that!”

**Our Needing to Learn the Serious Lesson from the One Time
That Moses Failed to Represent God**

We need to learn the serious lesson from the one time that Moses failed to represent God (20:2-13).

***In Striking the Rock Twice and in Calling the People Rebels, Moses Not
Sanctifying God in the Sight of the People of Israel***

In striking the rock twice and in calling the people rebels, Moses did not sanctify God in the sight of the people of Israel (vv. 10-12).

*To Sanctify God Being to Make Him Holy, That Is, Separate from All the
False Gods; to Fail to Sanctify God Being to Make Him Common*

To sanctify God is to make Him holy, that is, separate from all the false gods; to fail to sanctify God is to make Him common (v. 12). When Moses lost control of his spirit, he was angry and called the children of Israel rebels, and disobeyed God’s word to speak to the rock. He just gave the impression, “God is angry at you. God is against you. God calls you rebels.” He was a representative. That is why—just applying this very briefly to family life—it is no shock to me that children, their view of God at least for a period of time, is that God is like their dad. We have a weighty responsibility. We represent God in the family, and the children intuitively sense this, and what do they see? Some have grown up fearing God and not wanting to believe in God, “He is a God of anger. God does not like me.” So to not sanctify Him is to put God in the category of the pagan gods that were full of rage and hatred.

*In Being Angry with the People and in Wrongly Striking the Rock Twice,
Moses Failing to Sanctify God*

In being angry with the people and in wrongly striking the rock twice, Moses failed to sanctify God (vv. 10-11).

*In Being Angry When God Was Not Angry, Moses Failing to Represent God
Rightly in His Holy Nature, and in Striking the Rock Twice,
His Not Keeping God’s Word in His Economy*

In being angry when God was not angry, Moses failed to represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God's word in His economy (vv. 10-12).

Moses Offending Both God's Holy Nature and His Divine Economy; His Condemning the People as Rebels, but His Being the One Who Rebelled against God's Word

Moses offended both God's holy nature and His divine economy; he condemned the people as rebels, but he was the one who rebelled against God's word (vv. 10, 24; 27:12-14). God twice at least said, "You are the rebel." Then we know where Moses is in a very special status, he would be one of the two in Revelation 11, but he could not enter the good land. In Deuteronomy he asked the Lord, "Can I just go in and just take a peep and then come out?" "No! And do not ask me about this again." At the age of one hundred and twenty, he did not wear glasses. He was strong. He was energetic. His health was excellent. There is no physical reason for him to die but God said, "Come up to the mountain and you will die." Then we read, "Moses died at the word of Jehovah." That is government. That is a pattern. One time. It is up to God to determine what is a sin unto death, what will cause you this. We do not have a list of things. This is up to God Himself. But if Moses could have that kind of mistake, I should fear and tremble about myself. I am more than able to do that and worse; and then all is lost.

In All That We Say and Do Concerning God's People, Our Attitude Needing to Be According to God's Holy Nature, and Our Actions Needing to Be According to His Divine Economy

In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to God's divine economy. Actions—think actions involving people, involving churches, involving territories. I am speaking in principle. This happened in parts of the United States. It happened throughout South America. It happened in other places. This is a principle. And it is very serious.

The Apostle Paul Being an Ambassador of Christ, Representing God

The Apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ, so he was really representing God (2 Cor. 5:20). He is the pattern in the New Testament. He was out to destroy the church, he was breathing murder against the believers, God made him His representative.

A New Covenant Minister Being One Who Has Been Authorized with the Heavenly Authority to Represent the Highest Authority

A new covenant minister is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to represent the highest authority (3:6; 5:20). He does not have the authority in himself. He represents it.

Paul Exercising His Apostolic Authority Not for Ruling over the Believers but for Building Them Up

Paul exercised his apostolic authority not for ruling over the believers but for building them up (10:8; 13:10; 1:24). So really, authority in the form of the iron rod, that is for the enemy. The exercise of the authority representing God in the church is for building up.

Paul Exercising the Authority Inherent in His Apostleship by Teaching, by Engaging in Spiritual Warfare, by Moving within the Measure of God's Rule, and by His Jealousy for Christ over the Believers

Paul exercised the authority inherent in his apostleship by teaching, by engaging in spiritual warfare, by moving within the measure of God's rule, and by his jealousy for Christ over the believers (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 10:3-4, 13; 11:2). In 2 Corinthians 10, he speaks of this—the measure. I cannot just go anywhere and you refer to God as the God of measure. He limits me. I can testify to you, by the Lord's training and His mercy, in the twenty-five years that I have been traveling, as other brothers do, to minister, I simply minister truth and life and have fellowship with the saints. That is all. I never touched anything in the churches. I never expressed any opinion. I never touched the work here. I have no opinions about the work in the Philippines. The fact that I worked on Life-study messages, as many co-workers of Brother Lee, the fact that I have been here for a long time, does not mean anything, does not give me any entitlement. I am glad to be under a measure. When I went to Russia and fellowshipped with brother Benson, he asked me to go, some brothers went there, co-workers, and they stepped into the work, tried to change things. But within me was this restriction—a blessed restriction. I am just here to serve in spirit, and life, and truth, and to fellowship, and maybe there might be some shepherding, if there is an opportunity for that. That's it. I do not want to know anything about the churches. I do not want to know anything about the work. Do not ask me, refer it to Brother Benson.

The Lord, through Brother Lee, measured that out to him. This is a blessing; it can preserve us.

A Person Who Represents God Rightly Needing to Submit to Authority, Realize that in Himself He Has No Authority, and Be a Person in Resurrection, Living in the Resurrection Life of Christ

A person who represents God rightly must submit to authority (Matt. 8:8-9), realize that in himself he has no authority (28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), and be a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ (1:9; 4:14; Num. 17:1-10). What I am going to do now is an addition to the points under this section. I will read some others and they are all from the second half of the book *Authority and Submission*. That book has probably been misused more than any ministry book published. Those who want to be in authority, who define themselves the authority, they only read the first half of the book about rebellion, and then they go about calling others rebels, and asserting their authority. Even one person said to those that were visiting, “I’m the spiritual authority around here!” But the second half is on how to be a representative of God, what kind of person. Maybe we should just set aside the first half for a while.

In between now and the next time we have a training like this, the Lord wills about this time next year, if God’s government arranges, it would be very good if you would slowly read through that and absorb what Brother Nee had learned—a person who represents God rightly, must submit to authority. That is the first thing. How can you represent authority if you yourself are not under authority? This is a true story. A dad and his son, who is maybe about eight or nine years old, were driving somewhere in the car and the son asked his dad a question, “Dad, we obey the traffic laws, don’t we?” His dad said, “Yes, son. We do.” Then the boy asked, “Dad, why do you have a radar detector on the dashboard?” You see? The father himself was not submitting to authority so how can he represent that to his son? The son could discern, “I love my dad, I respect my dad but he is a naughty dad when it comes to radar detectors.” That means he will break the law, he will break the speed limit. But when he is aware that there might be a police officer, he slows down. He knows I am not in the zone— “Zip! Here I go again.”

Second, he must realize it in himself he has no authority. This means each one of us need to realize this. If Brother A, with discernment, realizes

that brother B thinks he has authority in himself, that does not help. Then Brother A says something, yet Brother B will surely defend himself which is a further indication he is not in authority. We need to realize this. I repeat, no one in this room, and I want to say this, there may have been some who willfully and deliberately stayed away from this training. Well, that is your free decision and I respect your decision. But the words released here are for everyone in the Philippines. Whether you are in this training or not, you are subject to these words because they are words of truth from God.

A Person Who Represents God Being Someone Who Knows God’s Will and God’s Feeling, His Thoughts, Even the Desire of His Heart

A person who represents God is someone who knows God’s will and God’s feeling, His thoughts, even the desire of His heart. How can you express someone if you do not know what that person wants or intends?

Someone Who Represents God Needing to Really Know the Person He Is Representing—God Himself

Someone who represents God must really know the person he is representing—God Himself. How can you represent God if you do not really know Him yourself? Even if you have the heart to represent Him, you do not know what you are doing, what to do.

One Who Represents God Living in Fellowship with God and Living under the Direct Rule of God to Know the Lord’s Feeling, His Intention

One who represents God lives in fellowship with God and lives under the direct rule of God to know the Lord’s feeling, His intention.

Someone Who Represents God Being Not Troubled When He Learns That Others Have Spoken Negatively about Him

Someone who represents God is not troubled when he learns that others have spoken negatively about him. Some would try to find out, “Oh, what do they say in that text or that email? Or what did they say on this and that so-so media?” When they find out, “oh!”. They are enraged. “I’m going to get you!” Well, you disqualified yourself. When the Lord was accused of being one with Beelzebub—of having a demon—it did not bother Him. If they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more the others in the house—that is us—not be accused of anything? Should this bother you? “Say what

you want but I am just going to refer it to the righteous God. He will take care of it.”

One Who Represents God Needing to Be Gracious to Others

One who represents God must be gracious to others. You are strict with the self but you are gracious to others. There needs to be a correction in the speaking about Romans 14:17 on righteousness, peace and joy. Righteousness is first between us and God, then we have peace based on this righteousness with others, then we have joy in the Holy Spirit.

If One Is Representing God, God Needing to Acknowledge That Person’s Decision but His Not Acknowledging Something That Issues from the Self

If one is representing God, God must acknowledge that person’s decision but He will not acknowledge something that issues from the self. Hence, Brother A may say, “Oh, I have the feeling to do this and this is my basis.” You do it and God is observing and He says, “I know the source of that—you. I did not acknowledge it and you will find out that many really know Me for not acknowledging either. Do not try to impose that on the Body. The Body knows and expresses My feeling. When something is truly of Me, the Body will echo it.”

One Who Represents God Needing to Deny the Self and Needing to Experience Thoroughly the Breaking of the Self

One who represents God must deny the self and must experience thoroughly the breaking of the self. Moses needed eighty terms in FTTW, Full-time Training Wilderness. He had to be thoroughly dealt with and be reduced to nothing then he can represent God.

One Who Represents God Never Vindicating Himself

One who represents God never vindicates himself.

One Who Represents God Being a Person in Resurrection, Living in the Resurrection Life of Christ

One who represents God is a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ. Remember, brothers, only after His resurrection and in His resurrection was the Son of Man given all authority in heaven and on earth. This is one of the most crucial points of the person who represents God properly. His rod is really budding. You do not use the rod to strike

someone else. It speaks for itself—if the rod and a brother is budding, it speaks for itself. He may not be aware of it, but we are aware of it. The resurrection is a testimony and the confirmation that this one expresses God, knows God, is in fellowship with God, and represents Him; therefore, I am at peace to receive the word and the fellowship from that source.

Brothers, all the positive points are part of our glorious future. I do believe through the rest of this year—I believe hundreds and hundreds, maybe over fifteen hundred are here—I just had this sense you brothers mean business with the Lord. You loved the Lord with your being. You love the Lord's recovery. You want to be faithful to the end, then be raptured with the overcomers, be in the wedding feast, and reign a thousand years! Me too! Let us give ourselves to the Lord in a brand new way for Him to gain us thoroughly for His will to be done!

Lord, we praise You! You are for us! We present ourselves to You as a living sacrifice! Work in us to the uttermost until we can represent You in a way that glorifies You! Lord it is time to do this in the Philippines—Shock the enemy! Destroy Him! Nullify his work! Glorify Yourself! A new day has come! Hallelujah! — (R. K.)

Message 7

God's Building

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 2:1-9

I. God's goal is to have a spiritual house built up with living stones—

1 Pet. 2:5:

- A. As life to us, Christ is the incorruptible seed; for God's building, He is the living stone—1:23; 2:4.
- B. At Peter's conversion, the Lord gave him a new name, Peter—a stone; and when Peter received the revelation concerning Christ, the Lord revealed further that He was the rock—a stone. By these two incidents, Peter received the impression that both Christ and His believers are living stones for God's building—John 1:42; Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Acts 4:10-12; Isa. 28:16; Zech. 4:7.
- C. We, the believers in Christ, are living stones as the duplication of Christ through regeneration and transformation; we were created of clay, but at regeneration we received the seed of the divine life, which by its growing in us transforms us into living stones —Rom. 9:21; 1 Pet. 2:5.

II. Since God's building is living, it is growing; the actual building up of the church as the house of God is by the believers' growth in life—

Eph. 2:21:

- A. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must love the Lord, take heed to our spirit, and guard our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life—1 Pet. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 3:4, 15; Prov. 4:18-23; Deut. 10:12; Mark 12:30.
- B. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross, the killing death of Christ in the all-inclusive Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of glory, so that the following obstacles within us can be dealt with and removed—1 Pet. 1:11; 4:14; Psa. 139:23-24:
 - 1. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim. The obstacle to this is not knowing the pathway of life

- and not taking Christ as our life—Matt. 7:13-14; Phil. 3:8-14; Col. 3:4; Rom. 8:28-29.
2. The second obstacle is hypocrisy; a person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of Christ—Matt. 6:1-6; 15:7-8; John 5:44; 12:42-43; cf. Josh. 7:21.
 3. The third obstacle is rebellion; we may be very active and zealous in doing things but still imprison and disobey the living Christ within us by ignoring Him—Lev. 14:9, 14-18; 11:1-2, 46-47; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:33.
 4. The fourth obstacle is our natural capabilities; if our natural capabilities remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life—2:14-15; 3:12, 16-17; Jude 19; cf. Lev. 10:1-2.
- C. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must put away "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings"—1 Pet. 2:1.
- D. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must be nourished with the guileless milk of God's word—v. 2:
1. The guileless milk is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind and is assimilated by our mental faculties—Rom. 8:6; cf. Deut. 11:18.
 2. Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually nourishes the spirit, making us not soulish but spiritual—suitable for being built up as a spiritual house of God—cf. 1 Cor. 2:15.
 3. In order to enjoy the milk of the word—to taste God with His goodness in the word—we must receive His word by means of all prayer and muse on His word—1 Pet. 2:3; Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148:
 - a. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering—1 Pet. 2:2-3; Psa. 119:103.
 - b. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word. To muse on the word is to "chew the cud," to receive the word of God through much reconsideration—Lev. 11:3.
 4. By feeding on Christ as the nourishing milk in the word, we grow unto full salvation, unto maturity through transformation for

glorification. Salvation in 1 Peter 2:2 is a matter of transformation for God's building.

5. We enjoy the "milk-Christ" to nourish us so that we may be transformed with Him as the "stone-Christ" and be built up as the "Body-Christ" as God's spiritual house into a holy priesthood—vv. 2-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13.

Message 7

God's Building

I love to have the Lord's table with so many of you. It is quite a testimony and an enjoyment when we all come together to testify that there is one Body in the universe. You can see it and you can sense it. I do not want to underestimate that. But in a training, we have to come to the truth and allow the truth and the ministry to test us and to affect us. In the training, we can ask this question: how much reality of the one Body do we actually have? I do not want to bring you out of the enjoyment of the Lord's table, but I do want to bring you back into the atmosphere of the training. The Lord is recovering the genuine oneness and reality of the Body; He is recovering it, but it is not complete yet. We have not reached the goal yet and that is what we want to do.

Before we get into this outline, I would like to remind you that we already had six very weighty messages. The sequence of these messages is very important. Actually, we cannot talk about these last two messages until we enter into the first six. I hope you can realize this. In the crystallization-study of Deuteronomy, we saw that God wanted His people to be a theocracy - living under His rule. Mankind in general had fallen away from God's direct rule. Even Israel, as God's people, failed to live under His rule. But what was the goal? The goal was not simply to have a people who live under God's rule. The goal was that God wanted His people to be built up as His dwelling place. We must understand that there is a direct connection between living under the government of God and becoming the building of God. In this message, we will talk about God's building. We talk about this subject a lot and we have many books and messages talking about God's building. But have you ever connected these two things: living under the government of God and God's building? This is why the revelation of the building is at

the end of Exodus after the giving of the law. You cannot put the building first. Even in our application in the New Testament, we cannot jump to the building. The underlying reason for the lack of building among us is that we have not entered into the first six points in a thorough way. We have not learned how to live under the government of God in a thorough way. So when we come to the matter of building, we wonder why there are difficulties being built up together. Now we should understand why.

I am not going to review all of the six points, but I am just going to point out the sequence. I deeply hope that you will spend some time to get into these messages. We cannot thoroughly enter into it in this short amount of time. Brothers, we need this word. Do you agree that this word matches our need? We are not just having a study here. We are not just expounding the Bible or expounding 1 and 2 Peter; rather, we are here under the Lord's ministry to receive the word that we need. I genuinely feel that this is the word that we need.

In 2 Corinthians 13, the Corinthians were questioning Paul's apostleship. Paul spoke a very interesting word to them in verse 3. He said, "Do you want proof that Christ is speaking in me? The proof that Christ is speaking in me is that when I speak, Christ is powerful in you!" That is the proof. The proof that we are under the genuine ministry is that it touches our inner being. It does not merely interest our intellects, but it touches our being. As I was listening to the messages yesterday, I want to testify to you that Christ was powerful in me. Was He powerful in you? I hope so. Let us consider this sequence briefly.

An Overview of the Christian Life and Church Life under the Government of God

We began with message 1 on the universal government of God. We realized that in the universe, there is a government. It is invisible; people cannot see it. People may not even believe in it, but it is real. Apparently, human beings are ruling over other human beings. That is what it looks like, but in reality, the heavens rule and will rule for eternity. Eventually, every human being will have to come to the realization that the heavens are ruling. Every human ruler will have to come to that realization. King Nebuchadnezzar was probably the most powerful man on the earth at his time. But he came face to face with the government of God, and then he said, "I thought I had

built up this great empire. Now I know that I do not rule. The heavens rule.” Brothers, we all need to understand this. It is a basic principle that in the universe, in the Christian life, and in the church life, there is a government. There is a system of grace and a system of government. But in this training, we are emphasizing the system of government.

Then message 2 was on the Christian life under the government of God. This is to live in the kingdom of God. To live the Christian life is to live the kingdom life, and to live the kingdom life is to live under the rule or the government of God. How do we do that? That is found in message 3. We do it by being recovered back to the direct rule of God in our spirit. Through the intuition in our spirit, we are recovered back to living under God’s direct rule.

Then in message 4, we talked about the church being a kingdom. What kind of kingdom is it? It is a kingdom unlike any kingdom on earth. It is a kingdom of love. God’s way of ruling is love and light. I am so glad that He does not rule by fear. Fear is the way that Satan rules. As those taking the lead in the churches, if the saints fear you, that might not be a good thing. If they fear your kind of exercise of authority, then I do not know what kingdom you are in. I hope we would all be in the kingdom of love—being ruled by the Son of God’s love.

Then in message 5, we saw the way for us to fully enter into this kingdom. As I said at the beginning, we are in the kingdom, but we are not fully in it. How do we fully enter into it? Growing is the way. The divine seed that has gotten into us needs to grow and develop. Everything is in that seed. It is like the genetic material in a human being. Everything is already there, but it still has to grow and develop. It has to mature, and the result is that we will have an entrance into the kingdom. We were regenerated into the kingdom so we are already there, but we have not had a full entrance. In particular, we need an entrance firstly out of the appearance of the kingdom into the reality of the kingdom, and then finally, into the manifestation of the kingdom.

Then message 6 was a very weighty message. I hope you would study this message. If we enter into the truths in these outlines, all the problems in the church life would be solved. You may think this is too much to say. But if we knew what it was to live under authority and how to properly represent God, there would be no problems in the church. Are there any problems? Yes, it is not a secret that there are problems. But why are there problems?

We could identify many reasons, but I would like to emphasize just one point, and that is the shortage of truth. This is an underlying problem. There is a shortage of the proper understanding of the truth. For example, we are short of the truth concerning living under authority and representing God's authority. What a word this is! What if all 1,500 brothers in this training were clear on this truth? If we were all clear about this truth, we could end the training and everyone will have total peace.

Needing to Know the Truth to Guard against Different Teachings

In the past, we have had several turmoil in the United States and I watched how brother Lee responded in his wisdom and experience. One major response was that he said, "If the saints know the truth, this will never happen. This kind of turmoil and rebellion occurs from time to time, but if you had just known the truth, it could not have happened." This is true. If I come here today and I speak to you something that is not according to the Bible, what would you do? Unless you know the truth, you will just say, "Oh yes, amen, amen." I may come to you and say, "Dear brothers, according to the Bible, the way we should administrate the church is to have a hierarchy. This is what the Bible teaches." Or I may say, "Brothers, in the Body we have different levels. We have the ministry and the ministry is in charge of the work, and the work is in charge of the churches, and the saints are under the elders." Even before I finish the sentence you should say, "No! Sit down! The Bible does not teach that!" But if you do not know the truth, especially if I say it in a convincing way, you may just say, "Amen, amen."

The past rebellions all had one common factor: different teachings. We know from 1 Timothy 1 that even in Ephesus there were some different teachings. The Apostle Paul was in Ephesus for 3 years, and he taught and visited the homes of the saints there. Wouldn't you like Paul to stay in your locality for 3 years? But after all of that, some in Ephesus taught differently. Brothers, unless you know the truth, you can be very easily cheated. Knowing the truth must start with the Bible. You must dive into the Recovery Version and into the ministry for your whole life. You cannot do it in a year; it takes your whole lifetime. I would like to recommend the book *Authority and Submission*. Read that book. Read about what the ministry says on the church, the ministry, and the work. There are no levels in the Body of Christ and there is no hierarchy. There are only two levels: the Head and the Body.

You are either one or the other. Are you the Head or are you the Body? The church, the ministry, and the work are all the Body. The church is the Body in expression; the work is the Body seeking increase; the ministry is the Body in function. So, the principles of the Body apply to each of the three. One of the most basic principles of the Body is that we are all directly connected to the Head. My hand cannot say to my foot, "I am closer to the head than you are, so you are under me. I am one level, while you are another level." If my foot could speak, it would say, "I am just as close as you are to the head, because I am directly connected to the head through the flow of the blood in the body." Is there any hierarchy in the Body? There are just two levels: Head and Body. Hence, any teaching that talks about a hierarchy is a different teaching.

You might say to me, "In the ministry, there is also the teaching concerning deputy authority." Yes, there is this teaching and you must study it, because it has been misrepresented. If you study it, then as soon as you hear the wrong presentation, you will say, "No, that is not the teaching." Moses was a deputy authority but he never said so. Rather, he was meek; he never exercised his authority. Actually, he did not even want to be an authority. The ones who tried to exercise authority were Miriam and Aaron, not Moses. This is called rebellion, and not authority. I say again, please get into the truth. If you get into these particular truths here, many problems will be solved spontaneously. I am so glad that I heard that word from brother Lee in 1978. I took that word and I have been pursuing the truth since that time. So, it is really hard to cheat me and it does not take me very long to know when something is wrong. I only need to hear the first sentence and I can say, "No." I hope we all could be like this.

Peter Receiving the Vision of God's Building

These last two messages on God's building and on the recovery of the church as the Israel of God are the issues of the first six messages. We must have the first six, then we can have these last two. God's goal is to have His building, and Peter was the right person to write about this. When he first came to the Lord, immediately the Lord told him, "Simon, son of John, that is the name of your natural man. I am going to make you Peter, a stone." Then in Matthew 16, the Lord asked the disciples, "*Who do men say that I am?*" I think this was the only time Peter ever got a question right in the whole New Testament. He said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" The Lord

responded and said, "*I will build My church.*" I think this made a very deep impression on Peter. When he first met the Lord, the first thing the Lord tells him is "you are a stone." I think Peter must have been shocked. Then the first time the church is revealed, Peter gets the understanding that the church is a building. It is a building made of stones. Actually, Peter does not use the word "church" in his Epistles. Have you noticed this? He uses other words to describe the church, such as a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, a spiritual house. This is because he was deeply impressed by the Lord that God needs a building and that the material for this building will not be natural persons of clay; rather, it will be transformed people of stone. The Lord allowed Peter to have some big failures. Whenever Peter failed, it was a spectacular failure; it was never a small one. It was usually a huge failure and it was usually in public. The Lord allowed these to show Peter that he was so natural and that he lived out the natural life. When he was asked, "Does your master pay the temple tax?" he immediately replied "Yes!" He was living in the natural life. Secondly, the Lord's dealings showed Peter that he was not being ruled by the government of God. Hence, Peter is really the right person to write 1 and 2 Peter; he is our representative. I am so thankful for this. Now in 1 and 2 Peter, we are reading the words of a transformed God-man.

Now we can come to message 7. It is a familiar subject and we can easily finish it in the time we have, but I wanted to put it into this context so that we can appreciate the direct connection between living a Christian life and church life under the government of God and God's building. You have to connect these two.

GOD'S GOAL BEING TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL HOUSE BUILT UP WITH LIVING STONES

God's goal is to have a spiritual house built up with living stones.

As Life to Us, Christ Being the Incorruptible Seed; for God's Building, His Being the Living Stone

As life to us, Christ is the incorruptible seed; for God's building, He is the living stone. His goal is a spiritual house. The Old Testament type was a physical tabernacle, but in the New Testament, it is a spiritual house. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:23 that we were regenerated not of corruptible seed,

but of incorruptible seed through the living and abiding word of God. Peter emphasizes the word. This is part of our basis for emphasizing the truth. Why did he not say that you were regenerated by the Spirit? It would be right, but instead, he emphasizes the word. He said that the incorruptible seed that came into you to regenerate you is the living and abiding word of God, which of course is the Spirit. Then in 1 Peter 2:4, he calls Christ a stone. The Lord had told him, "Peter, you are a stone." Then Peter realized that the Old Testament makes many references to Christ as a stone—He is the foundation stone, He is the cornerstone, He is the topstone. Peter also tells us that He is the living stone. He realized, "This Christ who has regenerated me also wants to make me a stone. Christ is a living stone and He will get into me and make me the same as He is; He will transform me from a man of clay into a stone-man like He is."

**At Peter's Conversion the Lord Giving Him a New Name, Peter—
a Stone (John 1:42); and When Peter Received the Revelation
Concerning Christ, the Lord Revealing Further That He Was the
Rock—a Stone (Matt. 16:16-18); by These Two Incidents Peter
Receiving the Impression That Both Christ and His Believers Are
Living Stones for God's Building**

At Peter's conversion, the first time he came to the Lord, the Lord gave him a new name: Peter—a stone. And when Peter received the revelation concerning Christ, the Lord revealed further that He was the rock. This is in Matthew 16:18 "Upon this rock I will build my church." That rock is Christ and the revelation concerning Christ. A rock is also a stone. By these two incidents, Peter received the impression that both Christ and His believers are living stones for God's building.

**We, the Believers in Christ, Being Living Stones as the Duplication of
Christ through Regeneration and Transformation; Our Being Created
of Clay, but at Regeneration Our Receiving the Seed of the Divine Life,
Which by Its Growing in Us Transforms Us into Living Stones**

We, the believers in Christ, are living stones as the duplication of Christ through regeneration and transformation. The key for us to become these living stones is to experience transformation. That means there should be a change. We can define transformation as an outward change that is the result of an inward change. In other words, we will see the change. It is an outward

change, it is visible, but it is the result of an inward change. This is why it is a serious matter to live in the church life year after year and yet remain the same. This means no transformation is taking place; thus, no growth is taking place. If there is no growth, this means the person has not been receiving the proper nourishment for the growth. I will share this not as criticism but for fellowship. There is a certain brother whom I've known for a long time. I have never seen him eat the Lord. I have never seen him receive the nourishment. Because he has not eaten the Lord, he has not grown and he has not been transformed. And because he is not transformed, he cannot be built up. Do you get the sequence? Eat the Lord! Take in the word of God! Get the nourishment, and not just the teaching. Get the life essence of the word of God everyday and pursue the Lord for the growth in life—for your own growth in life, for the growth in life of the saints, for the growth in life of your wife and children. If you do this, you *will* grow in life. If you grow in life, you *will* be transformed, because under God's government, He will arrange many things in your family life, in your personal life, and in your church life. He will arrange many things in the environment to go along with the inward growth and cause you to be transformed. Then when we come together, it will be very easy for us to be built up. The frustration in the building is due to the lack of transformation.

**SINCE GOD'S BUILDING IS LIVING, IT BEING GROWING; THE
ACTUAL BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE HOUSE OF
GOD BEING BY THE BELIEVERS' GROWTH IN LIFE**

Since God's building is living, it is growing. This building that we are in is much larger now than the last time I was in Malabon; it did not grow because this building is not alive. Somebody just added onto it. I am glad the brothers added onto it. It is a wonderful building. But this is not the way God's building is built. The way to build up God's building is by growing. God's building actually grows organically, like a physical body. How did your body become so big? It started out very small. The body was built up as it grew. This is the concept of God's building; it is a growing building. The actual building up of the church as the house of God is by the believers' growth in life. Let us be those who diligently pursue the growth in life. This should be a major focus in our life. The points in this outline will help us both

on the positive side, how to pursue the growth in life; on the negative side, what may frustrate or hinder our growth in life causing it to be abnormally slow. We will begin with the positive side.

In Order To Grow in Life for God's Building, Our Needing to Love the Lord, Take Heed to Our Spirit, and Guard Our Heart with All Vigilance to Stay on the Pathway of Life

In order to grow in life for God's building, we must love the Lord, take heed to our spirit, and guard our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life. I would like to say something about staying on the pathway of life. There is a path. The other day we had a meeting with the full-time trainees and shared with them concerning the path that we have to follow our whole life. There are lessons that we need to learn, which I like to call "life lessons." I would like to share with you the first point, the primary point, which is to keep ourselves in the divine romance. We need to be people who love the Lord. When you got up this morning, did you tell the Lord Jesus that you love Him? We should be in a romance. The divine romance as revealed in the Song of Songs is progressive. It is always moving forward until we reach the end where we have the building, the city, and the bride. That is the end of the divine romance. We need to be in this divine romance all the time. That is part of the pathway of life.

Another point I would like to share is the need to learn how to have real fellowship with one another, that is, honest, genuine, and transparent fellowship. We know that it is not easy; that is why it is a lifelong lesson. But for the sake of the oneness and of the building, we have to learn this lesson. I am burdened by this because I have been with brothers, who have been in the church life and in the eldership for decades, but still do not know how to fellowship. They know how to argue and how to present opinions, but they do not know how to fellowship. Let us not remain this way. Let us get onto this pathway of life and exercise together to have the oneness and the one accord. May we endeavor to learn how to have real and genuine fellowship.

If We Want Christ's Life to be Unhindered in Us, Our Needing to Experience the Breaking of the Cross, the Killing Death of Christ in the All-Inclusive Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of Glory, So That the Following Obstacles within Us Can Be Dealt With and Removed

There are four obstacles to the growth in life that we need to be very aware of. Remember that we are still talking about living under the government of God for God's building by growing in life and being transformed. Here are four obstacles that will keep you from a proper growth: the first is not knowing the path of life; second is hypocrisy, pretending to be something that we really are not; third is rebellion; fourth is our natural capabilities. I do not love the obstacles but I love these four points, because they are so enlightening. These points match my understanding and observation in the church life among the brothers. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross, the killing death of Christ in the all-inclusive Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of glory, so that the following obstacles within us can be dealt with and removed. If we really grow and experience transformation, these obstacles can and will be removed. These are not mountains that never go away. They can be removed.

Being a Christian Meaning Not Taking Anything Other Than Christ as Our Aim; the Obstacle to This Being Not Knowing the Pathway of Life and Not Taking Christ as Our Life

Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; the obstacle to this is not knowing the pathway of life and not taking Christ as our life. I really think we should pray over this. I know a lot of people who would say, "Oh yes, I am on the path of life; I am pursuing the way of life." But they actually do not know what the pathway of life is. We should not automatically say, "Yes, I am on it." Maybe we are and I hope we are. Actually, it is not that hard to be on this path. We have a lot of reminders. Everyday let us remain on the pathway of life. In the Psalms, we have the phrase, "You will show me the path of life." Let us pray for that.

The Second Obstacle Being Hypocrisy; a Person's Spirituality Not Being Determined by Outward Appearance but by How He Takes Care of Christ

The second obstacle is hypocrisy; a person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of Christ. Hypocrisy means we appear to others as something very different than what we are. Hypocrisy is like wearing a mask, like an actor on a stage. What you see is the mask, but actually behind the mask is something very different. We have to take this very seriously. This will frustrate our growth in life. The opposite of hypocrisy is to be genuine. This is also related to the matter of fellowship.

In genuine fellowship, we can speak to one another in love concerning our actual feeling. We do not have to pretend to have a particular feeling. That is hypocrisy. We must speak our actual feeling. "I could be wrong, but this is actually how I feel." We must not put on a mask and say, "Oh yes, I agree with you." If you do not agree with me, then be genuine, do not be a hypocrite. Then I will be genuine with you, I will not be a hypocrite. We should be able to sit down as brothers and have genuine transparent fellowship. If I do not have the same feeling as you, I should be able to tell you in love, "Brother, I receive your feeling but my feeling does not match it. Could we fellowship in order to become of one accord?" In Acts 15, there was a lot of fellowship, then afterwards it says, "they became of one accord." Can we do this? May we have genuine unhypocritical fellowship without pretending, so that we can be brought into the genuine one accord.

The Third Obstacle Being Rebellion; Our Being Very Active and Zealous in Doing Things but Still Imprisoning and Disobeying the Living Christ within Us by Ignoring Him

The third obstacle is rebellion. The two great principles in the universe are God's authority and Satan's rebellion. You are in one or the other. You are either living under God's authority in His government or you are one with Satan in his rebellion. To say this sounds terrible, but we have to be impressed by this negative point. In Numbers, I was very impressed with the history of Israel and their many rebellions. We must realize these rebellions were not a small thing. They are Satanic. All rebellion has its source in Satan. Hence, it is not a small thing to have a rebellion among us. On the one hand, rebellions should not shock us because it does happen and it is even part of the history of Israel, but on the other hand, we should never consider it a light thing. Anytime there is rebellion, two things are happening. Firstly, the people are not living under the authority of God. Second, their growth in life and their transformation stop. Hence, rebellion is one of the big hindrances to the growth in life.

The Fourth Obstacle Being Our Natural Capabilities; If Our Natural Capabilities Remain Unbroken in Us, Their Becoming a Problem to Christ's Life

The fourth obstacle to our growth in life and transformation for God's building is actually our natural capabilities. If our natural capabilities remain

unbroken in us, they will become a problem to God's life. This is my forty-fifth year in the church life so I have seen a lot of people come and go. Do you know who ends up leaving the church life? I have observed that, more often than not, it is the gifted ones. Some of the people who came into the recovery and eventually left, naturally speaking, were some of the most gifted people I have ever met. The problem was that their gift was unbroken and natural; it did not cause them to grow in life and be transformed. We may easily appreciate gifts because all of us are not so gifted. When we see a gifted person, we are easily impressed. If you are a gifted person or if you appreciate a gifted person, remember what it says here. That gift cannot remain unbroken. What will cause our natural capability to be broken? It is actually not that hard. Just live the Christian life and the church life under the government of God. He will arrange every experience that you need. You can even pray in this way: "Lord, please arrange my environment to give me the experiences that I need. I do not want to live in a natural way. I do not want to serve in a natural way. I want to become a stone. I do not want to be a natural man. So, Lord, give me the experiences I need to be transformed and make me a person who can be built up with others." He would be happy to hear that prayer, because you are asking Him to do exactly what He wants to do.

**In Order To Grow in Life for God's Building,
Our Needing to Put Away "All Malice and All Guile and
Hypocrisies and Envyings and All Evil Speakings"**

In order to grow in life for God's building, we must put away all malice and guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings. This is Peter's utterance and I think he really learned something. Consider the word "malice". Some of our speaking does not have a good intention, but a bad intention. This is malice and guile. Some speaking is designed to trick you and to deceive you. Peter is speaking from a very experiential point of view. He is saying, "Do you want to become a stone for God's building? Do you want to be transformed and built up with others? This is what you need to put away. Put away this kind of evil speaking, then you will be able to do it."

**In Order To Grow in Life for God's Building, Our Needing to Be
Nourished with the Guileless Milk of God's Word**

We will end on a very positive note. We have been speaking in a serious way because we are in a training. This last point will help us to pursue the path

of life in a positive way. We can end with something that gives us hope. This is from Peter's own experience. 1 Peter 2:1-4 says, "*Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good. Coming to Him, a living stone....*" Peter understands that the way to get rid of guile and hypocrisy is to take in the guileless milk of the word. Let us admit that we have guile. We have hypocrisy. But there is a guileless One. There is a genuine One in the word of God and we can receive Him as nourishment like a baby taking in milk. This will remove the guile from your inner being. I am really looking forward to meeting Peter. I want to fellowship with him about 1 and 2 Peter. In 1 Peter 2:2 it says, "*long for the guileless milk of the word.*" But then in 1 Peter 2:3, it says, "*if you have tasted that the Lord is good.*" I might say, "Peter, you have made a mistake. You should have said that the *word* is good. Take the milk of the word and then you will taste that the word is good." Peter might answer me and say, "You should have pray-read the verses. The Word *is* the Lord. When you taste the Word, you taste the Lord!" Then I would say, "Amen, brother Peter, I got it! Yes, the way we taste the Lord is to taste the Word." I long for our young people to have this experience. When I was 18 years old, as a new believer, I came into the Lord's recovery and experienced this. I tasted it! The Lord is good! And I tasted Him in His Word! I like to study. I am just the kind of person who likes to study and to read. But let me tell you, right now I am not talking about studying. I am talking about tasting. We have tasted that the Lord is good through the word.

According to John 6, the way to eat the Lord is to eat the Word. Then the way to eat the Word is to contact the Spirit as the essence of the Word. Also, the way to contact the Spirit as the essence of the Word is to use our spirit to pray. I do not use the word "pray-reading" here because we have concepts of what it means to pray-read. A lot of our pray-reading is simply repeating the word, which is good. We may pray, "Oh, if you have tasted! Amen! If you have tasted! Hallelujah! You have tasted!" This is very good. But that is not really prayer. What is prayer? Prayer is our intimate contact with the Person of the Word. So, we may take the same verse and say, "Oh Lord. I want to taste You. I do not want just knowledge. Lord, I want to taste You. Oh Lord, You are good. Your word is so good." Now I am praying. I am contacting that

Person. It is not hard. Even a newborn babe can do it. Aren't you glad? I did it when I was a newborn babe. As soon as I got regenerated, the brothers taught me how to contact the nourishment in the word of God.

The Guileless Milk Being Conveyed in the Word of God to Nourish Our Inner Man through the Understanding of Our Rational Mind and Being Assimilated by Our Mental Faculties

The guileless milk is conveyed in the word of God to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind and is assimilated by our mental faculties. This may surprise you, because it seems like this point is emphasizing our mind. I have just said that we must exercise our spirit to pray. But we are praying over words and words have meanings. Hence the words must pass through our understanding so that we know what God is saying. In this verse, God is saying that we are supposed to taste Him. He is saying that He is food. He is saying that He is life to man. This is an apprehension, an understanding in the mind that comes from the exercise of our spirit to contact Him. Can you see this? We do not merely use our spirit and not our mind. This is why we should not pray-read by merely repeating the words. Rather, some understanding and some enlightenment should come to our mind. While our spirit is being nourished with the word of God, at the same time our mind is being enlightened and renewed by the divine thoughts, by the divine concept in the word of God.

Although the Nourishing Milk of the Word Is for the Soul through the Mind, It Eventually Nourishes the Spirit, Making Us Not Soulish but Spiritual, Suitable for Being Built Up as a Spiritual House of God

Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually nourishes the spirit, making us not soulish but spiritual, suitable for being built up as a spiritual house of God. This is how we will be transformed from clay to stone. The milk has minerals, and those minerals will transform you into a stone.

In Order To Enjoy the Milk of the Word—to Taste God with His Goodness in the Word—Our Needing to Receive His Word by Means of All Prayer and Muse on His Word

In order to enjoy the milk of the word, to taste God with His goodness in the word, we must receive His word by means of all prayer and muse on

His word. "Muse" is an important word. In Psalm 119:15, there is a very important footnote on the word "muse". Most English versions of the Bible translate this Hebrew word as "meditate". This is not a good translation. The primary difference between meditating and musing is that when you meditate, you can remain in your mind and remain silent. I can be silent and meditating, but musing is not silent. When you are musing, you are speaking. This is a big difference. You should not merely use your mind when you read the word of God. You need to speak out loud! You may say, "The Lord is not deaf; I do not need to speak out loud." Actually, our speaking is not for Him; it is for ourselves.

To Muse on the Word Being to Taste and Enjoy It through Careful Considering

Musing helps us very much. Here is a good definition of what it is to muse. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering. So, as we are praying, we are also considering. We are considering the meaning of the words.

Prayer, Speaking to Oneself, and Praising the Lord Also Being Included in Musing on the Word; to Muse on the Word Being to "Chew the Cud," to Receive the Word of God through Much Reconsideration

Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word; to muse on the word is to "chew the cud". In Leviticus 11, the clean animals all chew the cud. To chew the cud is a type, which means to receive the word of God through much reconsideration. This takes some time. It takes some time to thoroughly consider even just one verse while we are praying over it. But while we are praying, we are getting nourished, we are getting enlightened, we are getting strengthened, and our mind is being renewed. In the end, it is really not a matter of quantity. You can get a lot from one verse if you exercise in this way.

By Feeding on Christ as the Nourishing Milk in the Word, Our Growing unto Full Salvation, unto Maturity through Transformation for Glorification; Salvation in 1 Peter 2:2 Being a Matter of Transformation for God's Building

By feeding on Christ as the nourishing milk in the word, we grow unto full salvation. According to Peter, there is a salvation that you grow into. We grow

unto maturity through transformation for glorification. This is organic salvation. Salvation in 1 Peter 2:2 is a matter of transformation for God's building.

Our Enjoying the “Milk-Christ” to Nourish Us So That We May Be Transformed with Him as the “Stone-Christ” and Be Built Up as the “Body-Christ,” as God’s Spiritual House into a Holy Priesthood

We enjoy the “milk-Christ” to nourish us so that we may be transformed with Him as the “Stone-Christ” and be built up as the “Body-Christ,” as God's spiritual house into a holy priesthood. Isn't this wonderful? This a good summary of Peter's entire thought. You take Christ as the milk, then Christ will be constituted into you as the stone, then you are built into God's building. Hallelujah! — (M. R.)

Message 8

The Recovery of the Church as the Israel of God

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:15-16; 3:6-9, 14, 29; 4:28, 31; 5:16-18, 22-23, 25; 6:8

I. There is the need for the Lord to recover the church as the real Israel of God —6:16:

- A. God's New Testament economy is not only to make us sons of God but also to make us The Israel of God—Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7; 6:16.
- B. Today we need to be such an Israel, a prince, to execute God's government on earth —Matt 6:9-10.

II. The Apostle Paul considers the many individual believers in Christ collectively the Israel of God —Gal. 6:8; 16:

- A. The Israel of God is the real Israel including all the Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ, who are the true sons of Abraham, who are the household of the faith, and who are those in the new creation — Rom. 9:6b; 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 6:15-16, 10; 3:7, 29.
- B. The real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church —6:16; Matt. 16:18.
- C. In God's New Testament economy, we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God —Gal. 3:26; 6:16:
 - 1. We are sons of God, members of God's family, for His expression—v. 10.
 - 2. We are kings-to-be, those destined to be kings; kingship is related to the Israel of God—Rev, 5:10.
 - 3. Our destiny is to be sons of God expressing God and also kings reigning in the kingdom of God —21:7; 22:5b; 12:5a:
 - a. As the sons of God, the new creation, we need to be loving, joyful, peaceful, faithful, and meek—Gal. 3:26; 5:22-23.
 - b. As the Israel of God, princes and victors, we need to walk according to the elementary rules of God's New Testament economy—v. 25; 6:16.
- D. Paul's word about the Israel of God implies that we need to live in a kingly way with a kingly walk —Rom. 5:17- 21.

III. As the Israel of God, we represent God, exercise His authority, and carry out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose—Gen. 1:26, 28; Luke 10:19; Rev. 12:5, 7-11:

- A. God wants His creature, man, to deal with His creature, Satan, in order to bring the earth back to God—Psa. 149:7-9.
- B. God needs man to do the work of God—to reign over His creation, to proclaim His triumph, and to cause Satan to suffer loss—Gen. 1:96.
- C. May God open our eyes to see that His purpose demands that we be wholly and absolutely for Him.

IV. If we would be the Israel of God, we need to experience the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Exo. 3:6, 15-16:

- A. “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” is Jehovah Elohim, the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—v. 15; Gen. 2:4- 22; Matt. 28:19.
- B. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the foundations of the nation of Israel; without them there would not be the nation of Israel—Exo. 3:15-16.
- C. The experience of Abraham signifies the experience of God the Father, the unique source, in His calling man, justifying man, and equipping man to live by faith and to live in fellowship with Him—12:1; 15:6; chs. 17-18; 19:29; 21:1-13; 22:1-18.
- D. The experience of Isaac signifies the experience of God the Son in His redeeming man and His blessing man with the inheritance of all His riches, with a life of the enjoyment of His abundance, and with a life in peace—22:1-14; 25:5; 26:3-4, 12-33.
- E. The experience of Jacob (with Joseph) signifies the experience of God the Father in His loving man and choosing man (Mal. 1:2; Rom. 9:10-13) and of God the Spirit in His working all things for the good of those who love Him, in His transforming man, and in His making man mature in the divine life that man may be able to bless all the people, rule over all the earth, and satisfy all the people with God the Son as the life supply—Gen. 27:41; 28:1-35:15; chs. 37; 39-49; Rom. 8:28-29.

V. Today’s Israel of God is a miniature of the coming New Jerusalem, which will be the ultimate consummation of the Israel of God—Rev. 21:2.

Message 8

The Recovery of the Church as the Israel of God

In 1988 and 1999, there was a very serious turmoil in the nature of rebellion much worse than the one in 1978. When Brother Lee had the Lord's leading to address the matter, he emphasized again and again the truth concerning the Body of Christ. Brother Lee had a meeting with a group of leading brothers in a certain country, and he pointed out a matter which has had a profound effect on me, personally, for more than thirty years. One characteristic of Brother Lee's speaking was that he was always accurate, faithful to the Scriptures, and never exaggerating; and this was his main point – all the problems among us in the Lord's recovery are caused by not knowing the Body, not caring for the Body, not honoring the Body, and not doing what is best for the Body. That turmoil in 1988 and 1999 was led by some of the more experienced co-workers. Some may use the term *co-workers*, yet I do not know with whom they are working with – I am more inclined to say you are just workers full-time. But anyway, these were very influential brothers and it was by their talking that they damaged lives, churches, even entire countries. And the underlying cause for this was not honoring the Body, not caring for the Body, and not knowing the Body – all because they are not conscious of the Body. Hence, any problem that is taking place anywhere in this country have this as the source.

In the chapter in the book *The Experience of Life* on “Knowing the Body”. this is the first basic matter on the fourth stage in the experience of life. Towards the end of the chapter, Brother Lee points out three things that indicate, even prove, whether or not someone truly knows the Body.

The first proof is that it is impossible for someone who knows the Body to be individualistic. In other words, it is impossible for him to take serious action without thorough fellowship. Some workers are governed by

geography. “I am on this territory physically. It is our realm. I do not need to fellowship with co-workers anywhere else, because we are the ones here.” This is total ignorance and disregard of the Body. If they knew the Body they would consider seriously, “If we do this, if we take this action, how will the whole recovery feel about it? How will the truly mature serving ones feel about this? How will the other churches feel about this?” But some are reckless; they do not know the Body; their growth in life stopped years ago. Instead, what has grown has been the self, the disposition, and peculiarity.

The second characteristic is that those who truly know the Body can discern whether or not a certain one is in the Body or knows the Body. For instance, to use a parallel illustration, if a person is not consecrated – he has never consecrated himself to the Lord – then he cannot recognize someone who has consecrated himself or someone who has not consecrated himself to the Lord. But someone who has truly, seriously, absolutely consecrated himself spontaneously can recognize, by caring for this dear brother, that he has not yet taken this step of consecration. So you do not judge him; you care for him. To the workers, wherever they are throughout the earth, who take actions contrary to the Body – they are oblivious. In their spiritual world there is no such thing as “Body-conscious” and they do not know what to do when they learn that there are brothers and sisters who truly know the Body, live in the Body, and honor the Body. It is crystal clear to these brothers and sisters who are Body-conscious that you do not know the Body, live in the Body or honor the Body.

The third indicator, or proof, that one truly knows the Body is that he recognizes authority. He recognizes it. Brother Lee never, to my knowledge, ever referred to himself as an apostle. He never spoke about having authority himself. But anyone with any sense, spiritually speaking, would recognize the divine authority represented by this brother and flowing through this brother. So some workers – the ones causing the problem – do not recognize authority, and they are not in fellowship. So, the problems come, and they may take certain actions and reach the point that they will insist that everyone everywhere agrees with these actions. “We are the workers. We are over all the churches. What we say goes. We tell some brothers, ‘Remove that one from the Lord’s table. He did something we do not like; remove him.’” Those who do not know the truth blindly follow because he is a worker. This is

very serious stuff we are talking about. Brother Lee again and again and again ministered on this. One day, maybe six or seven of us, who were his co-workers, were having fellowship at his request in his library. He gave us a charge, not advice, but a charge. He said, "Concerning the truth, you need to just dive into this your whole life. Then you need to experience this truth." Then he said this, "You must be an overcomer, keeping every principle of the Body." And I absorbed that. I remember walking and talking with the Lord after that, of course fully agreeing with Brother Lee, but I told the Lord, "I do not think I know all the principles of the Body. I want to follow this word and obey this word, but Lord I need to learn, I need to know, then I need to learn to keep."

I mention again the matter of the church, the ministry, and the work. All three are governed by the principle of the Body. If anyone in the church or in the ministry or in the work violates principles of the Body, the Body will sense this. Those in the church who know the Body will sense it; those in the work or in the ministry, will sense the same. All three – the church, the work, and the ministry, are inseparable, but they are distinct. To my knowledge, and to my memory, in our history (I do not claim it is infallible and complete), I do not recall major problems caused by a church overstepping and trying to direct the ministry on what should be ministered; or a church trying to govern the work in their country. But, for some reason, again and again, those who are workers, whether "co-" or not, they are the ones, I will be frank, that the enemy uses to bring in darkness, death, division, and chaos among us. So I bear responsibility, first to the Lord, whose slave I am. I must be faithful to speak forth according to the sense of the anointing within me. Brothers, when I sit down on that chair, I will be able to say to the Lord and to myself what I now say to you, "I am innocent of your blood. I have been faithful to the Lord and honest to you." I would not take much more time, but I will take the time I need to address this matter again.

A number of times I have been asked by those serving with the young people in the church in Anaheim if I would come to a Saturday night meeting and share something with the young people. Then the serving ones, with the young people in Anaheim, contacted some churches and said, "We invite you to bring your young people to this meeting." No one had the feeling, "Oh, we have to get the permission of the workers. One church does something with

another church – we have to get permission.” There is no such thing! They would just open the matter up and it is up to the elders and the churches what to do.

About four weeks ago, I received an e-mail from the elders of the church in Anaheim. I’m not an elder there. I’m a happy brother just to be there and not have the weight of that responsibility, and I am so thankful. These elders in Anaheim asked me, “Would you consider coming on January 11th to have two special meetings?” Then they said, “We would like to invite other churches to come.” I did have the leading to go, and a few hundred came from Anaheim and from other places. Once again, the elders did not have the thought, “Wait a minute, we have to fill out a form. We have to have the approval of the co-workers.” But some workers do not think that way. I do not know after this weekend if they will repent, meaning, change their mind – that is their responsibility, not mine.

Some leading brothers in churches told us, “If two churches want to come together, have a blending meeting, the workers would say ‘No, this is a matter of the work’” – that is a lie; that is false. This thought, which is not just a fleeting thought, but also a concept wrought into the minds of certain persons, both on the workers’ side and on the side of the dear saints, “The workers are superior. They have authority over the churches. They can direct this and that. They can contact elders that sympathize with them and tell them, ‘Remove that elder from the Lord’s table meeting because we do not agree with what he did.’” Because (as Brother Mark emphasized so clearly and faithfully), the workers did not know the truth, or did not regard it, and the saints were afraid, thinking, “We do not want to touch authority, we do not want to be rebellious,” certain workers can use that to manipulate people. But if we realize the truth – we respect the work, we want the work to be blessed and to increase, we want many, many more to be saved and baptized, we want more churches to be raised up, and we support this work – the work and the ministry are for the church.

In Matthew 16, the Lord did not say, “Upon this rock I will build My work.” He did not say, “Upon this rock I will establish My ministry.” Rather, he said, “*I will build My church.*” Read the New Testament again on how the church is described in its nature. The local church is called the church of God, the church of Christ, and the church of the saints. *Of the saints!* Your church

belongs to you as it belongs to God and to Christ. There is no verse that says “the church of the workers” or “the church of the ministering brothers.”

Our responsibility is to set forth the principles, so I do feel I must follow the Lord in this matter to point out something I’ve never heard in the 53 years I’ve been here. When I heard it, I thought, “This is a joke, you must not be serious. Workers placing a quarantine on a whole church? This is ridiculous!” Eventually you might quarantine the whole recovery in your country, only you and your sectarian followers, and the criterion is: if you do not agree with us, we mark you out, and we will warn the saints to not go. There is no such thing in the Bible, in spiritual reality, in the kingdom of God, in God’s economy, in the Lord’s recovery, as quarantining a church. I do not need to repeat because our Brother Mark clearly presented that this is a very grave matter. When we took action a number of years ago regarding a certain person, it was after many years of attempts and fellowships to resolve the matter, and it involved blending co-workers in the entire earth in one accord. It was a Body matter.

Now, as Mark pointed out, messages seven and eight are based fully on the first six messages. In other words, if we live the Christian life under the government of God and practice the church life under the government of God, there will be a twofold issue.

The first is building. This will bring us into a situation where we will desire to absorb the pure milk of the Word to become “stonized” believers to be built up into God’s spiritual house. The more we live under God’s government with His blessing and provision, and the more our church is under God’s government, the more growth in life there would be, and the more building there will be.

Now in message eight is a second issue, and this will be very new to many of us, that is, the recovery of the church as the Israel of God. Let us admit that we are learners here. Even this expression Israel of God, which is found in Galatians 6, and is used along with the expression *the household of the faith* is something we are not familiar with. The main idea is this – the Israel of God, that real Israel, composed of all believers, Jews or Gentiles, are becoming a corporate entity to carry out God’s government and kingdom rule on the earth.

The church has many aspects. At the basic level it is the assembly of all the believers, *the ekklesia*, those called out of the world to meet in oneness. It is the house and household of God; the church is the new man; the church is the counterpart of Christ; the church is the golden lampstand; and we are quite familiar with aspects of the church as the family of God with all the children of God becoming sons of God for God's expression. But let us remember something foundational revealed in Genesis 1:26-28 – why God created us. On the positive side, we were created in God's image with His likeness to express Him in a corporate way – this is God's eternal purpose, but at the same time, we were created to exercise dominion over the earth, to subdue the earth, because there is an enemy usurping things. This is a very crucial matter which Brother Nee called *the work of God*.

We may do many necessary works that benefit people, as we should and must, like the work of gospel preaching for salvation, but God has a need. A creature has rebelled, and certain creatures followed him to make up his own kingdom. There must be a creature to deal with this rebellious creature; and that is the man who corporately expresses God. Brother Nee points out that there is no room for the self in doing this work. We have this commission to exercise dominion. The Lord Himself, when He came, came as the King, the kingdom, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, teaching the truths of the kingdom, commissioning us to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom; because in God's view, ultimately, our salvation is for the kingdom of God. And through the church as the kingdom of God, God has a way, through the victorious Christ, to deal with his enemy. But remember, the kingdom of God is the realm, and in this realm is the government. We must not only be in this realm, but we must also be under the government in this realm. That will involve, as the Lord wills, His dealing with anything in us personally, and in the church corporately, that is contrary to His government. But simultaneously there will be abundant provision and grace upon grace, blessing upon blessing, for us to grow to maturity. Then the Lord will be able to recover an aspect of the church that still needs to be recovered among us – that is, the church as the Israel of God.

The church has many aspects. At the basic level it is the assembly of all the believers, the ekklesia, those called out of the world to meet in oneness. It is the house and household of God; the church is the new man; the church

is the counterpart of Christ; the church is the golden lampstand; and we are quite familiar with aspects of the church as the family of God with all the children of God becoming sons of God for God's expression. But let us remember something foundational revealed in Genesis 1:26-28 – why God created us. On the positive side, we were created in God's image with His likeness to express Him in a corporate way – this is God's eternal purpose, but at the same time, we were created to exercise dominion over the earth, to subdue the earth, because there is an enemy usurping things. This is a very crucial matter which Brother Nee called the work of God.

**THERE BEING THE NEED FOR THE LORD TO RECOVER
THE CHURCH AS THE REAL ISRAEL OF GOD**

There is the need for the Lord to recover the church as the real Israel of God. Well, who has the need? God. God has the need. Christians have been deceived by the teaching, “You should focus on heaven. You want to be saved for heaven. When you die, you will go to heaven and all the problems will be solved.” But God's focus is on the earth; He taught us to pray, “Your will be done on the earth.”

God has a need for the recovered church on the earth not only to be the family of God, the house of God, the golden lampstand, His loving counterpart, but the Israel of God, who can reign, who can represent God, so that God's will would be carried out on the earth. Then we will bring in the manifestation of the kingdom. This is the goal, really, of the entire training. The Lord has this need. He does not come with a command and say, “Okay, from now on, you must be the Israel of God.” We would say, “We do not know what you mean, and even if we knew we do not know what to do.” The Lord wants to open this up, bring this truth into our being, bring us into this truth, and then shepherd us into this reality.

**God's New Testament Economy Being Not Only to Make Us Sons of
God but Also to Make Us the Israel of God**

God's New Testament economy is not only to make us sons of God, but also to make us the Israel of God. God wants to make us the Israel of God, and He wants to do this throughout the earth.

**Today Our Needing to Be Such an Israel, a Prince,
to Execute God's Government on Earth**

Today we need to be such an Israel, a prince, to execute God's government on earth. The Lord needs a church like this. How wonderful that there are more churches in the Philippines as far as I know as there are in any other country. Back in the 1950's, Brother Lee devoted much time every year to be here. This country matters to the Lord; it just matters to Him. In 1995, the battlefield at that time was in this country, especially in Mindanao. Brother Lee sent some of us there, in person, to fight for the truth of the high peak of the divine revelation.

God needs this kind of church. We should not be content with the church of our choice, the kind of church we want, or the kind of church life we prefer. This is the church of God first, then it is the church of Christ, then we enter into this and now it is ours. It is not the church of the elders or workers, but the saints'. I repeat, we need to be such as Israel, a prince, even a king. A prince is someone being trained for kingship; we need to become this. For what purpose? To execute God's government on earth. We can only execute God's government on earth after we ourselves have settled the matter that we will live, and learn to live, and serve, and work, under the government of God. Then, especially through the prayer ministry of the church, and through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and through the corporate God-man living of the saints, God will have a way through the church to execute His government on earth. This is God's need.

In the Summer or late Spring of 1968, when I have only been in recovery for less than two years, the book *The Glorious Church* came out in English translation. And I read that first chapter when Brother Nee talked about the work of God to cause Satan to suffer loss on the earth, so that the earth would be recovered for God's purpose and will. Brother Nee said that in preaching the gospel you can reserve something for yourself, in teaching the truth you can do that, but in doing this work, there can be nothing reserved for yourself. I read this seriously, thoughtfully, soberly, and then I prayed, I believe in response to His intercession, "I choose to participate in this." This was fifty-one and a half years ago, and since that time especially, God's government in every aspect of my life has been more and more real and practical because He took me at my word that He led me to pray, "Do not spare anything in

me, Lord. I do not want to hold anything back. You have this need. I was created for this. Here is a man, Brother Nee, at that time, in prison, who lived for this. Brother Nee lives for this. This is why I exist as a man – to express You and to carry out this work.” It is the meaning of my life, of my Christian life, of my church life, and I can only worship God in His government for every action he has been taking in response to that prayer. This does not make me anybody. I am not special, I am not super, I am not superior, I am just a brother, a member of the Body of Christ. This is the need in God.

THE APOSTLE PAUL CONSIDERING THE MANY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST COLLECTIVELY THE ISRAEL OF GOD

The Apostle Paul considers the many individual believers in Christ collectively the Israel of God. This is Paul’s view. Now we know what the real Israel of God is – it is all the believers collectively.

The Israel of God Being the Real Israel Including All the Gentile and Jewish Believers in Christ, Who Are the True Sons of Abraham, Who Are the Household of the Faith, and Who Are Those in the New Creation

The Israel of God is the real Israel including all the Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ, who are the true sons of Abraham, who are the household of the faith, and who are those in the new creation. So we are sons of Abraham, sons of God. We are in the faith family. We all have the same last name. I am Ron Faith. Message seven was given by Brother Mark *Faith*. We are a new creation in Christ and all of this so that we may be the Israel of God doing this work.

The Real Israel, the Spiritual Israel, Being the Church

This is a short, but crucial point: the real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church. Brothers, you are hearing this, you can check from Galatians 6 and the Life-study of Galatians, that I am speaking correctly, but just please realize – and this is normal, this is not wrong – right now it is an idea; it is a truth that you are learning and are starting to grasp and understand. But please do not stop here; pray over this, “Lord show me a vision of the Israel of God. Make this a vision to me, Lord.”

In God's New Testament Economy, Our Having Been Made Both the Sons of God and the Israel of God

In God's New Testament economy, we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God.

Our Being Sons of God, Members of God's Family, for His Expression

We are sons of God, members of God's family, for His expression. This is the function of the son. Christ Himself is God's Son. The Father is hidden, and the Son expresses Him. This matches the word "image" in Genesis 1; representation follows expression. According to Romans 8:29, we are sons being transformed who will be conformed to the image of God's Son. He will be the Firstborn among many brothers. But we do not stop at half of Genesis 1:26.

Our Being Kings-To-Be, Those Destined to Be Kings; Kingship Being Related to the Israel of God

We are kings-to-be, those destined to be kings; kingship is related to the Israel of God. We are kings-to-be but not kings yet. I am not "King Kangas". We are young princes. We are not on the throne like in England. I do not know if Prince Charles will ever be a king. His mother is in her late 90's, and she is not going to resign as far as we know. Eventually, will William be a king? But they are princes. Let us realize we are kings-to-be. Do not go back home strutting about and say, "I am a king." You do that one time and you will get some special training from God, governmentally. No. You are a young prince, you are a king-to-be.

We are kings-to-be destined to be kings. Kingship is related to the Israel of God – that is our destiny. If we, by the Lord's mercy, and our faithfulness, are counted as overcomers before the Lord, then we will have the kingship. Now we are princes; we are kings-to-be. But as kings-to-be corporately, we can be the Israel of God, executing God's government. This thought just warms my heart, "Lord, you would have hundreds, even thousands of churches on the earth in absolute oneness and harmony; all the churches executing the government of God. You will be able finally to do on the earth whatever You will. Lord I want to live to see this."

If the Lord arranges, and it is His will, that I return to be with you one year from now, I am full of hope, and full of trust in Christ in you, I believe this year will be one of the best years in your Christian life and church life.

You are going to take this into you, you are going to let the Lord work in you, and when we come together, we are all going to say afresh, "Praise the Lord!" We are kings-to-be, so let us receive training as kings-to-be.

***Our Destiny Being to Be Sons of God Expressing God and Also Kings
Reigning in the Kingdom of God***

Our destiny is to be sons of God expressing God, and also kings reigning in the kingdom of God. Our destiny is not our present situation.

*As the Sons of God, the New Creation, Our Needing to Be Loving, Joyful,
Peaceful, Faithful, and Meek*

As the sons of God, the new creation, we need to be loving, joyful, peaceful, faithful, and meek – the fruit of the Spirit. The first fruit of the Spirit is love, and the second is joy. I was so thankful that our Brother Albert mentioned that letter that Brother Nee wrote which was found, where he said "I maintain my joy," and how that comforted Brother Lee. Prior to those twenty years, Brother Nee was suffering endlessly in so many ways. He almost died at an early age. Then with ill health, he was imprisoned like that for twenty years. A brother, now in Anaheim (he wasn't a brother when he entered prison), who was sharing a room, or a cell, with Brother Nee, was brought to the Lord. When Brother Nee was so weak he could not walk to the cafeteria for food, his roommate asked, "May I bring the food for Mr. Nee?" The guard said, "No, we do not serve them like that; he can come himself." The other brother brought his own food back, half of it, and gave it to Brother Nee. When Brother Nee heard that his [Brother Nee's] wife had passed away, he longed, almost pleaded, "Just give me a few days to be at her funeral," they would not let him. He went through all this, physically, and suffering in the soul, but his testimony is "I have maintained my joy" because during those twenty years he lived under the direct rule of God, under the government of God. It may take eternity to make known how he prayed and how he touched life and told us regarding the ministry of life.

If someone touches life in a new way, as a member of the Body, that life just immediately flows into the Body. He does not have to do anything or say anything. How much we owe, for the life released through him, yet, Brother Nee was not a hero. Surely, Brother Lee, Sister Lee, and others, prayed and prayed earnestly, faithfully, because he is a member of the Body. While he

was supplying the Body, the Body was supplying him. Well, it is not our portion to be the minister of the age, to be the seer of the divine revelation in this age, to suffer in that way, but the pattern is for us to be sons who are loving, joyful, peaceful, faithful, and meek.

As the Israel of God, Princes and Victors, Our Needing to Walk According to the Elementary Rules of God's New Testament Economy

As the Israel of God, we are princes and victors, we need to walk according to the elementary rule of God's New Testament economy. This is the walk like soldiers marching. It is not the general walk in the spirit, but a walk with a goal.

Paul's Word about the Israel of God Implies Our Need to Live in a Kingly Way with a Kingly Walk

Paul's word about the Israel of God implies that we need to live in a kingly way with a kingly walk.

**AS THE ISRAEL OF GOD, OUR REPRESENTING GOD,
EXERCISING HIS AUTHORITY, AND CARRYING OUT
HIS ADMINISTRATION ON EARTH FOR THE FULFILLMENT
OF HIS PURPOSE**

As the Israel of God, we represent God, exercise His authority, and carry out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of his purpose. This point is a crucial point. Brothers, this is the peak; we are now at the peak of this training. We climbed up together and we are all here. There is no hierarchy; we are all here. I read this again, "As the Israel of God – the church recovered to be this – we represent God, we exercise His authority – we do not have it, but He wants us to exercise it – and we carry out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose.

Isn't there suddenly a longing within you for such a church? I just close my eyes and dream for a moment, "I am in the Philippines, from south to north, from Luzon to Mindanao and all the Visayas, hundreds of churches are all in oneness, in one flow, one ministry, one work. We are all under the throne, we are all under the government, and we are all the Israel of God! The Lord is releasing this here. Maybe He wants you to take the first step. There is no competition; we are not in rivalry. But the Lord did not reserve this for some other place, some other time, even for one of the "feasts". He restricted

me, in His wisdom and sovereignty, from speaking this during the last Winter Training. He wants to do this. This not a theory, this is His heart. I believe this is going to happen and we are going to see this happen. We are going to be the Israel of God!

God Wanting His Creature, Man, to Deal with His Creature, Satan, in Order To Bring the Earth Back to God

God wants His creature, man, to deal with His creature Satan, in order to bring the earth back to God.

God Needing Man to Do the Work of God—to Reign over His Creation, to Proclaim His Triumph, and to Cause Satan to Suffer Loss

God needs man to do the work of God – to reign over His creation, to proclaim His triumph, and to cause Satan to suffer loss. You know what I believe is going to happen starting immediately when this training is over? Actually, it has already begun. Satan is going to suffer loss in the Philippines. We do not want people to suffer loss, and we are not fighting any people; we do not fight against blood and flesh. But it is time for Satan to suffer loss, permanent, serious loss in the Philippines.

God Opening Our Eyes to See That His Purpose Demands Our Being Wholly and Absolutely for Him

May God open our eyes to see that His purpose demands that we be wholly and absolutely for Him. Sometimes, dear saints, they have the good heart, during sharing time, they come to the microphone – they think they are consecrating – and they say, “I promise to be the Israel of God.” That is not consecration; that is a promise which you will not be able to keep for more than a couple of days. Consecration is recognizing you belong to the Lord; He purchased you and now with His love He is drawing you, and you are now deciding to give your whole life and your whole being to Him for Him to work in you, on you, and with you, to do whatever He wills, and for Him to direct all your steps. This is what the Lord needs from us – not a promise, not a vow in that sense, but a fresh consecration, especially personally. I am not troubled by something corporate, but I remember at the end of one Elders’ Training, so many brothers there – I knew they were dissenting (we knew this) – they put on a show, with so much excitement, being absolute, “We are for this.” But within a week, they just continued with their divisive and lying

speaking. This is first a personal matter, as your situation allows. Today we are on the way home, as the situation allows, just be before the Lord and offer yourself to Him again as a living sacrifice.

IF WE WOULD BE THE ISRAEL OF GOD, OUR NEEDING TO EXPERIENCE THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

If we would be the Israel of God, we must experience the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember the sequence, there is Abraham, there is Isaac, then Jacob; and Jacob is transformed, his name is change to Israel, then that becomes the name of the people that descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So we really need *Hymns #608*, “*The Triune God has now become our all! How wonderful! How glorious!*” This is reminding us that we need to live under the dispensing of the processed and consummated Triune God, so that we will become the Israel of God to represent God and execute His government.

“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” Being Jehovah Elohim, the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit

“The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” is Jehovah Elohim, the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Being the Foundations of the Nation of Israel; Without Them There Not Being the Nation of Israel

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the foundations of the nation of Israel; without them there would not be the nation of Israel.

The Experience of Abraham Signifying the Experience of God the Father, the Unique Source, in His Calling Man, Justifying Man, and Equipping Man to Live by Faith and to Live in Fellowship with Him

The experience of Abraham signifies the experience of God the Father, the unique source – we need to learn, in everything in our life, in our church life, that God the Father is the source; we have no right and we dare not be the source of anything – in His calling man, justifying man, and equipping man to live by faith and to live in fellowship with Him. You may expect the Lord to perfect your faith, to develop your faith, for you to experience the fiery trial to prove your faith. This is a blessing. We need our faith to be developed. Like the Lord said in the parable in Luke 7, about the widow praying and the judge ignoring, “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

The Experience of Isaac Signifying the Experience of God the Son in His Redeeming Man and His Blessing Man with the Inheritance of All His Riches, with a Life of the Enjoyment of His Abundance, and with a Life in Peace

The experience of Isaac signifies the experience of God the Son in His redeeming man and His blessing man with the inheritance of all His riches with the life of the experience of His abundance, and with a life in peace. We need to be an Isaac, just receiving grace upon grace, blessing upon blessing.

The Experience of Jacob (With Joseph) Signifying the Experience of God the Father in His Loving Man and Choosing Man (Mal. 1:2; Rom. 9:10-13) and of God the Spirit in His Working All Things for the Good of Those Who Love Him, in His Transforming Man, and in His Making Man Mature in the Divine Life That Man May Be Able to Bless All the People, Rule over All the Earth, and Satisfy All the People with God the Son as the Life Supply

The experience of Jacob (with Joseph) signifies the experience of God the Father in His loving man and choosing man and of God the Spirit in His working all things for the good of those who love Him, in His transforming man, and in His making man mature in the divine life that man may be able to bless all the people, rule over all the earth, and satisfy all the people with God the Son as the life supply. Here I would emphasize, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, we are not only transformed, but we reach maturity in life. This should be our personal prayer, “Lord, for the sake of the church, the Body, the new man, the Bride, for the sake of the Israel of God, bring me to maturity. Lord, give me normal growth in life for the rest of my days.”

TODAY’S ISRAEL OF GOD BEING A MINIATURE OF THE COMING NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH WILL BE THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE ISRAEL OF GOD

The last point, today’s Israel of God is a miniature of the coming New Jerusalem, which will be the ultimate consummation of the Israel of God.

I end this message in a very simple way. It is just the hope that is within me: I think, I believe, that when I come to be with you again, I am going to see a miniature of the New Jerusalem because we will become the Israel of God. Thank the Lord for His faithfulness, His mercy, His kindness, His

righteousness. All the glory goes to Him. Glory to God the Father! Glory to God the Son! Glory to the Spirit! Glory to the Three in One! Unto Him be the glory in the church forever! Amen! — (**R. K.**)