

THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST



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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST

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PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in Los Angeles, California, on August 24 through 28, 1965. Chapter 6 of this book is included also in *Enjoying Christ as the Word and the Spirit through Prayer*.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD

THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES

In this series of messages, we want to cover the enjoyment of the Lord. Among today's Christians there is a real shortage of the adequate knowledge of God as our enjoyment. We may have heard many things about God, but we have to see that the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, shows us that God is our enjoyment. God also has His fullness (Eph. 3:19b). He is full for us to enjoy. His fullness is the expression of the riches of Christ, and the reality of Christ is in the Spirit. We know this by the revelation of the Word. The riches of Christ are revealed in the Word. Furthermore, we can realize God as our enjoyment in our spirit (John 4:24).

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE LORD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The first major thing revealed to us about God in the Scriptures is that He is our enjoyment. Right after God created man, He presented Himself as the tree of life to be eaten by man (Gen. 2:7-9). Thus, God is the tree of life to be enjoyed by us. He presented Himself to man as life in the form of food for man to enjoy.

After the fall of man, God presented Himself to man in the form of a lamb (Exo. 12:4). Through this passover lamb, fallen man could be redeemed back to God. The redeemed people of God ate the meat of the lamb for their enjoyment.

Following the eating of the meat of the passover lamb, the children of Israel were also to eat the unleavened bread with bitter herbs (v. 8). This is the enjoyment of God by His redeemed people.

Then in the wilderness the children of Israel enjoyed the manna (16:14-15) and the living water (17:6). These are two other aspects of Christ as our enjoyment.

When the people entered into the good land, they enjoyed the riches of the produce of this land (Deut. 8:8-9). The produce of the good land is the different aspects of the riches of Christ for the redeemed ones to enjoy.

Also, with the tabernacle there were all the offerings for the priests to offer and enjoy by feasting (Lev. 6:8—7:34). All the different items of the offerings typify different aspects of Christ for our enjoyment.

Psalm 23 says that the Lord is our Shepherd (v. 1). He is also the green pastures and waters of rest (v. 2). He is the table before us in the presence of our adversaries (v. 5). This means that we enjoy Him as our feast on the battlefield. This psalm also speaks of the dwelling place of God (v. 6). God Himself is our dwelling place for us to enjoy Him. Psalm 90:1 says that the Lord is our habitation, our dwelling place, in all generations.

Psalm 34 says that we can taste the Lord (v. 8). To taste the Lord is to enjoy Him. Psalm 36 says that we can enjoy the fatness of the Lord's house and drink of the river of God's pleasures (v. 8). We can drink of the river of the joy of God (46:4).

Jeremiah 17 says that we can be like a tree planted by the waters. We are the tree, and God is the living water to us (vv. 7-8). We can enjoy God just as the tree enjoys the water of the river. All these passages from the Old Testament show us how God is our enjoyment in many aspects.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE LORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now we come to the New Testament. In Matthew the Lord Jesus likened Himself to the bread on the table. He told the Canaanite woman that it was not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs. She responded by saying that even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table (15:21-28). As a Gentile dog, the Canaanite woman could still enjoy the Lord as the crumbs for her portion. Even in Matthew we can see that the Lord is our enjoyment. We must enjoy Him as the bread.

Matthew 22 says that the gospel is a feast (vv. 1-14). Luke 15 tells us that when the prodigal son returned home, he not only was clothed with the best robe but also sat down at the table to feast on the fattened calf with his father (vv. 22-23).

Hymns, #187 has twenty-six stanzas which speak of all the items of Christ as our enjoyment in the Gospel of John. The twenty-one chapters of the Gospel of John are full of the riches of Christ for our enjoyment. Christ is the tabernacle (1:14), the Lamb (v. 29), the ladder (v. 51), the living water (4:14), the bread of life (6:35), the light (8:12), the way, the reality, the life (14:6), the door (10:9), and the Shepherd (v. 11). One of the first items of Christ in John is that Christ came as the Lamb. This was the first testimony given to Him by John the Baptist, who said, “Behold, the Lamb of God” (1:29). Eventually, John testified in the book of Revelation that this One will be the Lamb of God on the throne for eternity (Rev. 22:1). The Lamb is the opener for us to enter into the enjoyment of God. If fallen man wants to enjoy God, he needs to pass through the entrance of redemption. He needs the redeeming Lamb as the entrance into the enjoyment of God.

In John the Lord told us that He is the great I Am. The Lord referred to Himself in this way three times in John 8. In verse 24 He said, “Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins.” In verse 28 He said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am.” Finally, in verse 58 He said, “Before Abraham came into being, I am.” As the great I Am, He is what we need. It is as if the Lord were saying, “I am what you need.” We can fill in the blank after the phrase *I am* for whatever we need. The Lord said, “I am the light, I am the way, I am the life, I am the truth, I am the door, I am the Shepherd, I am the ladder, I am the bread of life, I am the living water, etc.” The Gospel of John reveals the wonderful fact that Christ is the great I Am. This means that He is everything to us for our enjoyment. The message of the Gospel of John is that God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is our enjoyment.

The first verse of this book says, “In the beginning was the Word,...and the Word was God.” In this Word, who is God Himself, is life, and this life is the light. The Word became incarnated to tabernacle among us, so He is also the tabernacle. The tabernacle is not only God’s dwelling place but also the place where the priests dwell. We cannot exhaust all the aspects of God as our enjoyment.

The same thought is in the Epistles of Paul. First Corinthians is a book on the enjoyment of Christ (see footnote 2 on 1 Corinthians 1:9, Recovery Version). Chapter 5 speaks of Christ as our Passover and our unleavened bread (vv. 7-8). Chapter 10 speaks of Christ as the manna and the living water (vv. 3-4). It also speaks of the Lord’s table (vv. 14-22). The table is for our

enjoyment. Chapter 11 speaks of the bread and cup of the table for us to enjoy (vv. 23-26).

In Peter's first Epistle, we see that as newborn babes, we have to long for the Lord as the milk of the word (2:2). The Lord Himself is milk to us for us to drink and grow by.

In the book of Revelation, Christ is the tree of life promised by the Lord to the overcomers (2:7). He is also the hidden manna for the overcomers' enjoyment (v. 17). In chapter 3 He is the feast for the enjoyment of the overcomers (v. 20). The Lord will dine with us and we with Him. In chapter 19 is the wedding feast, the feast of the Lord's marriage (vv. 7-9). Finally, in chapter 22 there is the living water flowing and the tree of life growing for us to enjoy (vv. 1-2). Actually, we need to have meeting after meeting for many days to see all the items of God as our enjoyment from Genesis through Revelation.

We need to read and study the Bible from the beginning to the end with this point of view. We need to realize from the Bible how God is our enjoyment. No doubt, the Bible tells us that we have to worship and serve God. But the first point in our contacting God is not for us to worship or serve Him but to enjoy Him. We have to enjoy Him first; then we can worship Him. We have to eat Him first; then we can serve Him.

Our human concept is contrary to God's concept that He wants us to enjoy Him. When the prodigal son returned to his father, he intended to say, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:19). Once he has repented, a fallen sinner always thinks of working for God or serving God to obtain God's favor, not knowing that this thought is against God's love and grace and is an insult to His heart and intent. God's desire is for us to enjoy Him. According to human principles, we work first and then we receive payment for our work. The prodigal son also wanted to ask his father to take him as a servant so that he could work for his father and then have something to eat, something on which to live. But the father brought his son to the table right away. This means that the father wanted his son to enjoy first and then work.

In today's Christianity much is said about serving, worshipping, and working for God. But we must see that we need to enjoy God. Some may even

criticize us by saying, “These people do not go out to work for the Lord. They just talk about eating and enjoyment. This is too selfish. They are just for themselves and do not care for others. They do not have the outreach for the salvation of sinners.” We need to see that we can have much service with many programs and activities without much result. The work must be the fruit of the enjoyment of God. In John 15 the Lord said, “Abide in Me and I in you”; then you will bear fruit (vv. 4-5). The work comes out of the full enjoyment of God. We must be brought back to the realization and understanding that we need God as our enjoyment. We have to know the items of God as our enjoyment and the way that we can enjoy Him. We also have to help others to know how to enjoy God. Then we will all be filled with Him, and some fruit will be produced. That will be the proper work, the proper activity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FULLNESS OF GOD AND THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:9-10; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:19; John 16:15

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FULLNESS AND THE RICHES

We need to see the difference between the fullness and the riches of God and of Christ. In John 16:15a the Lord said, “All that the Father has is Mine.” All that the Father God is and has, is the Son’s. This means that the riches of God in His fullness are the riches of Christ. The Lord also said that all that the Son is and has is declared as reality to the believers through the Spirit (vv. 14-15).

Now we need to consider the items of the riches of God. God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. God is also life, power, wisdom, mercy, kindness, grace, peace, faithfulness, patience, joy, glory, and salvation. He is our spiritual food, our spiritual drink, our clothing, our dwelling place, and our healing. He is our hope, honor, glory, and beauty. We need to read the Bible just to find out what God is. He is so many items to us. Whatever God is, is an item of His riches. Hebrews 5 indicates that our faculties need to be exercised and trained to discern what God is (v. 14). Our faculties, or senses, are not trained to know these things.

We need to see that the riches produce the fullness. We enjoy the riches, and we become the fullness. A husky American man is the fullness of America because he has eaten, digested, and assimilated all the riches of America. Ephesians 1:23 tells us that the church as the Body of Christ is the fullness of Christ. The church is the fullness of Christ because the church enjoys all the riches of Christ. The church enjoys Christ as life, wisdom, light, and love. Day by day we feed on Christ and drink of Him to enjoy Him. We enjoy His riches, and eventually, we become the fullness. The riches are the content, and the fullness is the manifestation, the expression. The fullness is the expression of all the riches, and all the riches are the content of the fullness.

God's fullness is the manifestation, the expression, of God's riches (Col. 1:19; Eph. 3:19). All that God is, is manifested, expressed, in Christ the Son. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ (Col. 2:9). What dwells in Christ is not only the riches of the Godhead but also the expression of the riches of what God is. Thus, God's riches have become the riches of Christ. When Christ expresses all these riches, this is the fullness of Christ. John 1:16 says, "Of His fullness we have all received." This does not say that we receive of His riches, but of His fullness. The riches are the content; the fullness is the content with the expression. We receive the riches from Christ's fullness.

The difference between the riches and the fullness can be illustrated by a cup of water. A cup which contains water has the riches of water, but these riches cannot be seen until the water fills the cup to overflowing. Now the riches have become the fullness, which is the expression of the riches. When we drink the water, we receive the riches of its fullness. The riches are the content; the fullness is the expression, the manifestation. We receive the content, not the fullness, but we receive of the fullness, from the fullness.

John 1:14 says that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and reality. Then verse 16 says that of His fullness we receive grace upon grace. We receive grace upon grace, not fullness upon fullness. We do not receive the fullness. We receive the content, the riches. The fullness is the expression, the manifestation, of the riches. The apostle did not preach the fullness. He preached the riches of Christ in a full way to produce the church as the fullness of Christ (Eph. 3:8; 1:22-23). From Christ's fullness we receive His riches, and eventually we become the fullness of Christ. This means that we become the expression, the manifestation, of the riches of Christ. The riches produce the fullness.

When the riches of Christ are full, that is the fullness of Christ. The church receives the riches of Christ from the fullness of Christ. Then these riches fill the church, and the church becomes the fullness of Christ. Actually, the riches of God are the riches of Christ, and the riches of Christ are the riches of the church. The riches of God become the fullness of God. Then Christ receives of this fullness, and the riches of Christ become the fullness of Christ. Then of this fullness, we partake of the riches of Christ to become the fullness of Christ. The fullness of Christ is the Body of Christ, which is the full expression of all that Christ is. All the items of what Christ is are the riches, and the full expression of what Christ is, is the fullness. Always keep in mind that the

riches are the items as the content, and the fullness is the expression of the content.

All the items of what God is are the riches of God, and all these items produce the fullness. Christ received of this fullness to partake of all that God is. Then these riches became the content of Christ to become His fullness. Then of this fullness of Christ, we receive the riches of Christ. When we are filled with the riches of Christ, we become the fullness of Christ. We do not receive the fullness. Instead, from the fullness we receive the riches. So of His fullness we all received, not fullness upon fullness but grace upon grace. When our inner man is strengthened by the Spirit, Christ can make His home in all the parts of our being until we are filled unto the fullness of God (Eph. 3:16-19).

THE RICHES OF CHRIST

Now we need to consider the riches of Christ. The items of His riches in the Scriptures are much more numerous than the items of God. Whatever God is, dwells in Christ, but the Bible does not tell us that God is the door, the Lamb, or the offerings. Christ is the door (John 10:9), the Lamb (1:29), and the reality of all the offerings (Heb. 10:5-10). With Christ we also have the element of incarnation because Christ is not only the complete God but also the perfect man. With Him there are the elements of crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

Christ as the Way

Christ is also the way (John 14:6). This means that He is the way for us to enter into God. Also, He is the way for us to behave as Christians. The way for us to live and to deal with people is Christ. Christ is our way not only for us to enter into God but also for us to live. If we have Christ, we have the way to live, the way to behave, and the way to do things.

Christ as the Door and the Pasture

John 10 says that Christ is the door. According to this chapter He is not the door to heaven but the door to the sheepfold. Judaism as the religion of the law is the sheepfold. Christ was the door of the sheepfold for Moses, David, and all the prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. To them He was the door

through which they entered into the custody of the law. In the New Testament, Peter, John, James, and Paul experienced Christ as the door to come out of the fold of Judaism with its law. Through Christ as the door all the early disciples came out of the custody of the law. The thieves and robbers in John 10 signify those who came into Judaism, but not through Christ (vv. 1, 8). These were the unbelieving Pharisees who opposed Christ.

In John 10:9 the Lord said, “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.” When the pasture is not available, in the wintertime or in the night, the sheep must be kept in the fold. In the Old Testament, before Christ came, it was the time of night. Thus, God’s flock was put into the fold to be kept in custody during the night. When Christ came, the day dawned. Thus, the flock had to be released from the fold into the pasture. Christ is the living pasture as the feeding place for the sheep.

Christ was the door for all the Old Testament sheep to enter into Judaism for protection, for being kept in custody. When Christ came, they needed to be let out of the fold of Judaism to enjoy Him as their living pasture. They entered into Judaism through Christ and were released from Judaism through Christ.

We need to apply this revelation to ourselves. Christ is also the door for us to come out of any religious fold into Himself as the rich pasture. Formerly, this religion may have been our protection. But when we met Christ, it became a bondage. Christ then became the door to us to release us from the bondage of religion so that He could become our pasture. If we are enjoying Christ, He is the door and the pasture to us, and we are out of the fold. Without Christ, we would be kept in the fold. When someone realizes Christ as his enjoyment, he will come out through Christ as the door to enjoy Christ as the pasture.

The sheep to which the Lord referred in John 10 were those in Judaism. He went on to say, “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd” (v. 16). The other sheep are the Gentile believers (Acts 11:18). The one flock signifies the one church, the one Body of Christ (Eph. 2:14-16; 3:6). The Lord would bring the Jewish and Gentile believers together to make them

one flock, one Body. Thus, there should no longer be any fold but only the one flock and the one Shepherd.

The way to get people out of the religious fold is to help them enjoy Christ. When they enjoy Christ, He will become the door to them to release them from the fold. When they come through the door, Christ will become their pasture. The only thing that can keep us from becoming a religious fold is the enjoyment of Christ. Only the enjoyment of Christ can keep us in a proper relationship with the Lord. Without the enjoyment of Christ, we will become a fold. But when we enjoy Him, He becomes the door to release us and the pasture to feed us. Christ is the door for us to be released from bondage and the pasture for us to enjoy.

CHAPTER THREE

ENJOYING THE RICHES OF CHRIST THROUGH THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

THE RICHES OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

First, we want to consider some of the riches of Christ in the Gospel of John.

In chapter 1 He is the Word of God and the very God (v. 1). He is also the tabernacle of God, the only begotten Son of God (v. 14), the Lamb of God (v. 29), the Messiah (v. 41), the King of Israel (v. 49), and the Son of Man as the ladder (v. 51). In chapter 2 He is the temple (v. 21). In chapter 3 He is the bronze serpent (v. 14) and the bridegroom (v. 29), and in chapter 4 He is the fountain of living water (v. 14).

Chapter 5 shows us that Christ is the replacement of religion, of Judaism. Verses 1 through 9 of this chapter say,

After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down from time to time in the pool and stirred up the water; the first then to step in after the stirring up of the water was made well of whatever disease he was being held by. And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness. When Jesus saw this one lying there and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, Do you want to get well? The sick man answered Him, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me. Jesus said to him, Rise, take up your mat and walk. And immediately the man became well, and he took up his mat and walked. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

The items in this portion of the Word—the holy city, the holy temple, the feast, the Sabbath, the angels, and Moses—form a religion. The poor man on

one of the porticoes was weak to the uttermost. His religion afforded him something, but he had no strength to apply it. Although religion can be effective, you still need others to carry you to that effectiveness. Whoever has the strength and can be the first and the best will enjoy the working of religion. Christ, however, came to replace religion. We must come to Him to be enlivened. If we have Christ, we have everything because He is all-inclusive.

In John 5:24 the Lord said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.” Christ as the replacement for religion comes to impart life to people. In verses 39 and 40 the Lord said, “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” This shows that when the Scriptures are separated from Christ, even they can become an item of religion. The Scriptures testify concerning Christ and should not be separated from Him. We may contact the Scriptures yet not contact Christ. Only Christ can give life.

In chapter 6 Christ is the bread of life (v. 35). The background of chapter 7 is the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39-43). This was the last feast of the year for the Jews, implying the completion and success of man’s life (Exo. 23:16), which will end and will result in man’s thirst. At the end of such a feast, Christ cried out the promise of the rivers of living water, which satisfy man’s expectation for eternity (John 7:38). He was the cleft rock which flowed out the living water for the people to drink (1 Cor. 10:4). Chapter 7 of John also shows us the glorified Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, to be the Spirit (v. 39).

In chapter 8 Christ is the light (v. 12) and the great I Am (vv. 24, 28, 58). In chapter 9 we see Him as the anointing for the healing of the blind. Verses 6 and 7 say, “He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed his eyes with the clay, and He said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is interpreted, Sent). He went therefore and washed and came away seeing.” Clay mixed with the Lord’s spittle became an ointment to anoint the eyes of the blind man. Clay signifies humanity, and the spittle as something proceeding out of the Lord’s mouth signifies the Lord’s words, which are spirit and life (6:63). The Lord’s making clay of the spittle signifies the mingling of humanity with the Lord’s living word, which is the Spirit. This ointment became the medicine and cure for the blind man. By the anointing

of the mingling of the Lord's word (which is His Spirit) with our humanity, our eyes, which were blinded by Satan, can have sight. Christ is the mingling of divinity and humanity to anoint us, to cure us, to bring us sight.

In chapter 10 Christ is the door (v. 9) and the Shepherd (v. 11), in chapter 11 He is the resurrection and the life (v. 25), and in chapter 12 He is the grain of wheat (v. 24). The foot-washing in chapter 13 may be considered the washing in the laver in the outer court of the tabernacle, which washed away the earthly defilement of those who drew near to God, so that their fellowship with God and with one another could be maintained.

Actually, the entire Gospel of John presents a picture of the tabernacle. In chapter 1 the Lord Jesus came as a tabernacle. He was also the Lamb of God, offered on the altar, which signifies the cross, in the outer court of the tabernacle. This offering took away the sin of the world. Chapter 13 presents a picture of the laver in the outer court. In chapters 14 through 16, the Holy Place of the tabernacle can be seen. Christ is the bread of life, signified by the bread of the Presence, and the light of life, signified by the lampstand. His prayer in chapter 17, typified by the burning incense on the golden incense altar, ushers the believers into the Holy of Holies so that they can enjoy Him in the deepest way.

In chapter 14 He is the way, the truth, the life (v. 6), and the Spirit of reality (v. 17). In chapter 15 He is the vine (v. 1). Finally, in chapter 20 He is the breath of life (v. 22).

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

We need to notice that in the Gospel of John the first item of Christ is the Word, and the last item is the breath of life. The breath of life is the Spirit of reality. John tells us that the wonderful Christ is the Word of God who was incarnated to be a man. Then He passed through death and resurrection to become a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). All the items of Christ in the Gospel of John are included in the Word, and the Word is the Spirit. In John 6:63 the Lord said that it is the Spirit who gives life and that the words which He speaks are spirit and life. If we are going to enjoy all the items of the riches of Christ, we must know how to deal with the Word and the Spirit. This is because all the riches are in the Word, and the Word is at the beginning of

John, and the Spirit is at the end of John. Outwardly, we have the Word; inwardly, we have the Spirit. The outward Word is the inward Spirit.

Originally, He was the Word far away from us. Now He is the Spirit within us. Second Timothy 4:22 says that the Lord Jesus is with our spirit. The Word, through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, has become the Spirit who is indwelling our spirit. Praise the Lord that we have the Word in our hand and the Spirit in our spirit. In order to enjoy all the riches of Christ, we have to contact the Word outwardly and the Spirit inwardly. If we do not know how to deal with these two things, we do not know how to enjoy Christ. If we are going to enjoy the unsearchably rich Christ, we have to know that all of His riches are in the Word, and the Word is realized as the Spirit. The right purpose of studying the Word is for us to enjoy Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENJOYING CHRIST BY DENYING THE SELF AND EXERCISING THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: John 12:24-26

ENJOYING THE RICHES OF CHRIST THROUGH THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

The Gospel of John shows us that God in Christ as the Spirit becomes our enjoyment and everything to us. God is expressed and embodied in His Son, who is the Word. When a thought is expressed by a word, that thought is embodied. Our word expresses our concept and is the concrete embodiment of our abstract thought. The very God who intends to be our enjoyment as everything to us is expressed and embodied in His Son. The Son, as the Word become flesh, was God's manifestation on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He was crucified and resurrected. By means of His death and resurrection, He was transformed from the flesh into the Spirit. He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), and this Spirit who gives life is the breath of life breathed into us.

We can realize, enjoy, and experience all the riches of Christ by contacting the life-giving Spirit within us. The Word is the definition and revelation of Christ's riches. By the Word we can know and understand them, but we still cannot realize them. We can realize the riches of Christ in the Word through the Spirit. The Word reveals these riches to us, and by the Word we can know them. In the Spirit we can realize and experience them. Thus, we first have to learn how to read and understand the Word. Then we have to learn how to realize the riches of Christ by contacting the Spirit. If we have merely the Word, we can have only the knowledge of the riches of Christ in our mind. We need to have the realization and experience of them in the Spirit.

Today Christ is not only the Word but also the Spirit. He is the Word for us to understand and the Spirit for us to realize, enjoy, and experience. Thus, whatever is in the Word must be realized in the Spirit. We have to learn how to read the Word and contact the Spirit. By the Word we can know all the

riches of Christ. By the Spirit we can realize and experience all the riches of Christ which are revealed in the Word.

HOW TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY CHRIST

The Gospel of John shows us that God is expressed and embodied in Christ and that Christ becomes the reality as the Spirit for us to partake of and enjoy. Now we need to consider the way to enjoy Christ revealed in John. John 3:6 speaks of our regenerated spirit: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If we are going to partake of and enjoy this wonderful One, our spirit has to be regenerated. This is the initiation. John not only shows us how God in Christ as the Spirit becomes our enjoyment but also tells us the organ we need to enjoy this One. This organ is our regenerated spirit.

John 4:23-24 says clearly that God is Spirit and that we must worship Him in our spirit. Whatever He is, is in the Spirit because He is Spirit. Although God is many items, He is one substance. God is light, but the substance of this light is Spirit. God is life, but the substance of this life is Spirit. If we are going to contact Him, worship Him, enjoy Him, and experience Him, we must do this in our spirit. First, our spirit must be regenerated; then we must have our spirit exercised that we may contact God.

John 4:14 goes on to tell us that when we drink of Christ as the living water, He becomes within us a fountain of water springing up into eternal life. In us, that is, in our spirit, there is Christ as the fountain of living water. John 7:38 says that out of the innermost being of the one who drinks of Christ shall flow rivers of living water. Our innermost being is our spirit. Thus, in the Gospel of John the human spirit is revealed as the very organ by which we can enjoy this rich Christ.

Now we need to consider how the soul is mentioned in John's Gospel in relation to our enjoyment of Christ. John 12:25 says, "He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life." We have to hate our soul, to lose our soul. This shows us the big difference between the spirit and the soul. The spirit has to be regenerated and exercised to contact the Lord, but the soul has to be lost, that is, to be denied. This shows us the way to enjoy the Triune God. We have to use our spirit and deny our soul.

To lose our soul, to deny our soul, is to experience the cross. We can see the work of the cross in 12:24, where the Lord said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." A grain of wheat put into the earth to die is a picture of the work of the cross to put us into death. Verse 25, which tells us to lose and hate our soul, shows the experience of the cross. Verse 26 says, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be." This means that we have to follow the Lord to the cross. The Lord was crucified on the cross, and we have to be crucified there also. As the many grains, we also must lose our soul-life through death so that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection. This is to follow the Lord so that we may serve Him and walk with Him on the way of losing our soul-life and living in His resurrection. The way to experience Christ is to experience the cross by exercising the spirit and denying the soul.

The Gospel of John shows us how God was processed so that He could enter into man. The Father is the very source. One day He was expressed in the Son, who was incarnated as a man living on earth. The Son is the embodiment and expression of the Father. He spent three and a half years to reveal Himself to His disciples, but at that time they could not inwardly experience and realize Him. Through His death and resurrection, Christ was transfigured into a life-giving Spirit. He breathed Himself as the life-giving Spirit into the disciples, that is, into their spirit. They had this wonderful, rich One in their spirit, so they needed to exercise their spirit to contact Him. In order to do this, they had to deny their soul.

We have to learn the lesson to always deny our soul, our self, and pay attention to our spirit as the innermost part of our being by exercising our spirit to contact the Lord. We need to deny ourselves, on the one hand, and exercise our spirit, on the other hand. Suppose I am somewhat in darkness and not clear about certain things. The Word tells us that Christ is the light (John 8:12), but how can we experience Him as the light? First, we need to deny our soul by denying our thinking, our likes and dislikes, and our decisions. This is the losing of our soul. Then we need to exercise our spirit to contact Him. If we do this, we will experience an inner enlightening from Christ as our light.

We also need to experience Christ as our door (John 10:9). Christ is the door through which we can come out of the fold of religion into Himself as the

rich pasture. Under God's sovereignty, in our past the Lord used something to hold us for God's purpose. Before the foundation of the world in eternity past, God chose and predestinated us (Eph. 1:4-5). Even the time and place we were born were predetermined by God. Acts 17:26 says, "He made from one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, determining beforehand their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwelling." A number of years ago I was inspired when I read this verse, and I wrote a note in the margin of my Bible which says, "Lord, I praise and thank You that I was born in an age in which the gospel was brought to the place where I was born." I realized that the Lord had chosen and predestinated me. If I had been born in China many years ago or even in a different part of China, there would have been no possibility for me to contact the gospel. I praise and thank the Lord that I was born in the twentieth century in a particular province on the seashore of China.

I was in the fold of a denomination, and in that fold I was kept for God's purpose and eventually brought into God's pasture. In the wintertime or at night the sheep must be kept in the fold until the pasture is available. The early disciples were kept in the fold of Judaism until Christ as the pasture became available to them. Then He became their door for them to come out of this fold. God uses different kinds of things to keep, to protect, and to hold His chosen people until they get to know Christ. Then Christ becomes the door for these chosen people to come out of the fold and into Him as the pasture.

A number of us have had this experience. In principle, we denied ourselves and exercised our spirit to contact the Lord as our door. We may have said, "Lord, I love You. I give myself to You and will give up everything to follow You." This means that we contacted the Lord and denied our self. We wanted to follow the Lord at any cost, so we put ourselves to death and took care of our innermost part. Then we came out of the fold and into the flock to enjoy the Lord as our pasture. The unique way for us to enjoy the Lord is to deny our soul and take care of the inner sense within our spirit, our innermost part. Then we experience the Lord as what we need. In order to enjoy the Lord as the pasture, we have to daily deny the soul and take care of the inner sense of our spirit to follow the Lord in an inner way.

There is always something competing with Christ. In John 12 the Lord said that as a grain of wheat He was falling into the earth to die. When the Lord

spoke this word, He was under a kind of temptation, because at that time all the people were extolling, welcoming, and praising Him, saying, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (v. 13). His disciples told Him that even the Greeks sought to contact Him, but the Lord said that He had to die. When people welcome us, that is the time for us to die. We should not be tempted by people’s welcome.

John 12 shows us the glory from all the people for the Lord and also the death awaiting Him. If we choose the glory, we do not lose our soul by denying our self. That means that we choose our own way and would not take care of the inner way. But the Lord Jesus chose the inner way. He said that He came to be a grain of wheat, not to be exalted but to be put to death. Then this grain could be multiplied into many grains by the impartation of life. The one grain became many grains. This shows us that the way to enjoy Christ is by resurrection through death. On the one hand, we have to deny ourselves to pass through death. On the other hand, we have to take care of the inner spirit, which is in resurrection. The way to experience and enjoy Christ is in the spirit by denying the soul.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXERCISING THE HEART TO ENJOY THE LORD

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 1:22; Rom. 8:23

CHRIST AS THE SPIRIT

FOR OUR ENJOYMENT IN OUR HEART

In this chapter we want to continue to see how Christ as the Spirit can be our enjoyment. In particular, we want to see how the exercise of our heart is crucial for our enjoyment of Christ.

We have pointed out that the Spirit of God is in our spirit. Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit witnesses with our spirit, and 1 Corinthians 6:17 says, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” These two verses prove that the Holy Spirit is working in our spirit.

We also need to see the move of the Spirit in our heart. Galatians 4:6 says, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!” Romans 5:5 says that “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” These verses tell us that the Spirit is moving in our hearts. Ephesians 3:17 says that Christ is making His home in our hearts, and 2 Corinthians 4:6 says that God is the One who shines in our hearts.

Second Corinthians 1:22 says that God has “sealed us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” Ephesians 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit is the “pledge of our inheritance,” and 2 Corinthians 5:5 says that God “has given to us the Spirit as a pledge.” The pledge is the down payment, guarantee, earnest, or foretaste. The first part of the payment is the foretaste of all the payment. In ancient times the Greek word for “pledge” was used in the purchasing of land. The seller gave the purchaser some soil from the land as a sample. Hence, a pledge, according to ancient Greek usage, is also a sample. The Holy Spirit is the sample of what we will inherit of God in full.

Romans 8:23 says, “And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting

sonship, the redemption of our body.” The thought in this verse is also that the Holy Spirit has been given to us for our enjoyment. Today the Spirit is the firstfruits of the coming harvest, the foretaste of our full enjoyment of God. We have not enjoyed the main part yet. The main part is the harvest. Today we just have the foretaste and enjoy the firstfruits. Hebrews 6:4 says that we are those who have “been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” Again we see that Christ as the Spirit is given to us for us to enjoy.

Because the Spirit is for our enjoyment, He is involved with our heart. Romans 5:5 shows that our enjoyment of the Spirit is a matter of love in the heart. The Spirit’s working is in our spirit, but the Spirit for our enjoyment is in our heart. Our spirit is not an enjoying organ but a working organ. The enjoying organ is the heart. Thus, the spirit is the working organ to receive and contact God for our heart to enjoy Him. We contact God with our spirit, but we love and enjoy Him with our heart.

There is a big difference between the spirit and the heart. Ezekiel 36:26 says that we have been given a new spirit and a new heart. We can say that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit, but we cannot say that he who is joined to the Lord is one heart. Our spirit is a receiving and contacting organ, and our heart is a loving and enjoying organ. We receive and substantiate psychological and physical things—such as music, scenery, thoughts, and ideas—through the organs of the soul and the sensory organs of the body. But we receive the spiritual things of God by our spirit as an organ and enjoy all these spiritual things by the heart. We have received Christ as the living Spirit into our spirit for us to enjoy in our heart.

When we are fellowshiping with the Lord in our spirit, we enjoy Him in our heart. If we have no fellowship with the Lord after receiving Him into our spirit, we will not enjoy Him. We must love the Lord with our heart and give the Lord more ground within us. Then we will enjoy Him. We cannot enjoy Him until we love Him with our heart and give Him the ground to take over all the parts of our heart. We have to realize that Christ as the Spirit is given to us as the foretaste, as the firstfruits, for our enjoyment.

We have to exercise our spirit to receive Him, to absorb Him, and we also have to exercise our heart to love Him. Then we will enjoy Him. Mark 12:30 tells us to love the Lord from our whole heart. The heart is the loving organ.

For example, many of the Chinese do not enjoy American food, because they do not have the heart for it. But we enjoy American food, because we have a heart for it. In the same way, many have received the Lord into their spirit, but not many have the enjoyment of Christ, because their heart is not for Him.

Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of a new heart and a new spirit. We need a new loving ability with a new receiving ability. We need a proper heart to love Him and to seek Him. We also need a spirit to receive Him. We must learn to contact and receive Him by exercising our spirit and to love, treasure, appreciate, and seek Him by exercising our heart. Then He will become our enjoyment in our heart.

In Mark 12:30 the Lord Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.” The heart includes the soul and the mind. The mind is in the soul, and the soul is in the heart. Our whole strength refers to our physical strength. We love the Lord our God with all our being, that is, from our heart, through our soul, our mind, to our body. We have to love the Lord in such a specific and detailed way.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16 Paul says, “We have the mind of Christ.” Christ must saturate our mind from our spirit, making our mind one with His. We must give Him more and more ground to spread out of our spirit into our mind. This means that our mind will be saturated with His mind, and we will have His mind. In the same principle, our emotion will be saturated with His emotion. In other words, our love will be saturated and permeated with His love. Thus, we will have His love in our love. Also, our will must be saturated with His will. Eventually, we can say that we have His heart as our heart because He has made His home in our heart. Our mind, emotion, and will must be thoroughly saturated, renewed, and transformed with Christ. Then we will have the heart of Christ as our heart.

In order for Christ to be our enjoyment, He must be the Spirit. John 6 says that He is the bread of life and that it is the Spirit who gives life (vv. 35, 63). Christ must be the Spirit to be the bread of life, the heavenly food, for us to enjoy. In John 7 He is the Spirit as the living water for us to enjoy (vv. 37-39). If Christ were merely the Word, He could never be our enjoyment. He must

be the Spirit in order to be our enjoyment. The Spirit is given to us as the foretaste, the firstfruits, for us to enjoy in our heart.

ENJOYING CHRIST AS THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT BY EXERCISING OUR HEART AND OUR SPIRIT

We have to learn how to enjoy Christ as the life-giving Spirit by exercising our heart and our spirit. In the Lord's decree of the kingdom's constitution in Matthew, He dealt with these two organs. He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens," and "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (5:3, 8). Our heart must be pure, and we must be poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit is to have the capacity in the spirit for the Lord to come in. If we are rich in spirit, it means that we are filled up and do not have the capacity to receive the Lord in a fresh way. We need to be emptied in our spirit to have more capacity to receive the new things of Christ. We also need to be pure, single, in our heart so that we may see God. We have to exercise our spirit so that we may contact and receive the Lord and deal with our heart so that we may enjoy and experience Him more and more as the Spirit.

CHAPTER SIX

ENJOYING CHRIST THROUGH PRAYER

Scripture Reading: Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; Rom. 8:26; Psalms 27:4, 8

Revelation 5:8 says, “When He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which bowls are the prayers of the saints.” The bowls are the prayers of the saints, and within the bowls is the incense. This means that something as the incense, so sweet to God, is in the prayers of the saints. The prayers of the saints are the container, and the incense is the content.

Revelation 8:3 and 4 say, “Another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.”

Romans 8:26 says, “In like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Even though we know not for what we should pray, the Spirit intercedes within us and for us, many times with unutterable groanings.

Psalms 27:4 says, “One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.” *The house of Jehovah* has two meanings. The church today is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and our human spirit is also the dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:22).

Psalms 27:8 says, “My heart said for thee, Seek ye my face. Thy face, O Jehovah, will I seek” (Darby’s New Translation). I would also like to read this verse from the Berkeley Version: “In Thy behalf my heart proclaims, ‘Seek ye My face’; Thy face, Lord, I will seek.” This shows that the psalmist’s heart within him said something for the Lord. His heart said, “Seek ye My face.” Within his heart there was a cry and a proclamation that he had to seek the Lord’s face. Then his response was, “Thy face, Lord, I will seek.”

MINGLING OUR READING OF THE WORD WITH PRAYER

In this chapter we want to have more fellowship concerning enjoying Christ in an intimate way. There are always many ways to do a certain thing, but we want to know the best way. The best way to pray is to mingle our reading of the Word with our prayer. We should read the Word to enjoy the Lord. When we come to read the Word, our mind should not take the lead. As we are reading, we will spontaneously understand something. Then we can consider what we read. After our consideration, we can transfer what we understand and consider into prayer. We should pray by exercising our spirit.

We should not exercise our mind to compose a prayer. Instead, we must learn to pray with broken sentences and phrases. When we are speaking intimately to those who are close to us, we do not compose something in a formal way, yet many of us do not pray and talk to the Lord intimately. Instead, we compose something formal. This kills our spirit and helps us to exercise our mind. We must learn to pray in a very spontaneous way with terms and phrases but without any formal composition. We should learn to be spontaneous with the Lord. As we are praying, we are reading the Word, and as we are reading, we are praying. Our praying and reading are mingled together. This is the way to deal with the Word in order to enjoy Christ.

Christ is life and everything to us for our enjoyment. On the one hand, the Lord is the Word and is in the Word. On the other hand, the Lord is the Spirit and is in the Spirit. Also, the Word is the Spirit. John 1:1 reveals that Christ was the Word in the beginning. John 6:63 shows that the Word is the Spirit. Ephesians 6:17 shows that the Spirit is the Word. We have the Word in our hand and the Spirit in our spirit. These are the two means for us to contact and enjoy Christ. The Christian life is not a religious life but a life of enjoying Christ all the time.

Our Christian daily walk and all the virtues of the proper Christian life come out of the enjoyment of Christ. Ephesians 5 and 6 speak of wives submitting to their husbands, husbands loving their wives, children honoring their parents, fathers caring for their children, servants faithfully serving their masters, and masters treating their servants properly. Such a proper human living comes from the infilling of Christ (5:18), which is the enjoyment of Christ. Even the fighting of the spiritual warfare at the end of Ephesians comes out of the enjoyment of Christ.

First, we can enjoy Christ by dealing with the Word. If we are going to enjoy Christ, we must know how to deal with the Word. If we do not know how to deal with the Word in a proper way, in the way of life, we can never enjoy Christ adequately. We also have to learn how to pray. To pray is to drink of Christ as the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). It is also to inhale Christ, to breathe Christ (John 20:22; Lam. 3:55-56). We all have to learn how to deal with the Word and how to pray, to inhale Christ as the Spirit. In praying, we work together with Christ, giving Him the ground and the opportunity to work out something through us. Thus, we may say that there are two ways to enjoy Christ. One is to read the Word; the other is to pray. We need to mingle our reading of the Word with our prayer.

ENJOYING CHRIST BY PRAYING

In order to learn how to enjoy Christ by praying, we must drop the old way of prayer. Also, we should not pray for business affairs or personal concerns. Instead, pray to praise Him, to adore Him, to thank Him, to behold His beauty, and to inhale Him. Many times we have to pray by groaning, saying, “O Lord, O Lord...” This is the best prayer. Real prayer is not out of us so that the Lord would do something for us. Real prayer is the Spirit, who is Christ Himself, working and moving within us so that we would open to Him to breathe Him out and breathe Him in (see *Hymns*, #255). We must offer Him the free way to go out and to come in to express something of Himself.

To pray is not to take care of many things. To pray is to spiritually breathe the spiritual air, which is the Lord Himself. Day by day, even several times throughout each day, we have to learn to breathe the Lord as the spiritual air. Even while we are driving our car or cooking in the kitchen, we can breathe by calling from deep within, “O Lord.” This is the best prayer.

Revelation shows us that the saints’ prayers are the bowls (5:8) and the censer (8:3-4) that contain Christ as the incense. In our prayer there must be Christ as the incense. We have to burn the incense daily by offering prayers with Christ ascending to God. Christ is in us, and we need to have prayer as the censer, the bowls, the container, for the indwelling Christ as the incense. If we do not pray, we have Christ within us, but we do not have Him as the incense ascending to God. Proper prayer is not for our practical needs. Proper prayer is for the expression of Christ. We pray to express Christ, that is, to

give the indwelling Christ the opportunity to be the incense to ascend to God and be expressed in our prayer.

Matthew 6:31 through 33 says, “Do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” We can even say to the Lord, “Lord, there is no need for me to pray for so many things. Matthew 6:31 through 33 says that You already know what I need.” If we are not at peace concerning our personal needs, we can remind the Lord to feed us and care for us according to His Word. We should simply seek the Lord Himself, His kingdom, and His righteousness. All that we need, the Lord will not only give to us but also add to us. We should learn to pray and seek the Lord Himself to behold His beauty.

Then we can go on to learn to inquire of the Lord. This means that we must learn to ask the Lord what we have to pray. Do not pray according to what you think that you have to pray, but ask the Lord what He wants you to pray in your prayer. Sometimes you may have to ask, “Lord, may I now pray for a certain friend? May I now pray for the preaching of the gospel?”

A good illustration of this is seen in Genesis 18 when the Lord came with two angels to visit Abraham. The Bible tells us that Abraham was the friend of God (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). The record in Genesis 18 shows that there was an intimate friendship between Abraham and the Lord. Abraham received the Lord as a friend, a guest, and he served the Lord (vv. 1-8). The Lord and Abraham had a mutual enjoyment. The Lord then asked Abraham, “Where is Sarah your wife?” (v. 9), and He told Abraham that his wife would have a son (v. 10). Abraham did not ask the Lord for a son in Genesis 18. Instead, he allowed the Lord to say something to him. We should not bring many things into our prayer to intrude into our fellowship with the Lord. We should behold the Lord and let Him enjoy us as we enjoy Him. We should let Him ask us something, as He asked Abraham, “Where is your wife?” Then we should let Him say something to us.

After the Lord’s fellowship with Abraham, the Lord and the two angels started to leave. Verse 16 says, “The men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.” Darby’s

translation says, “Abraham went with them to conduct them.” This means that Abraham escorted them. This shows how Abraham treated the Lord as an intimate friend. It was as if he said, “Lord, are You leaving? I am sorry You are going, and I am not willing to leave You. Let me escort You for a certain distance.” Through Abraham’s escorting and conducting the Lord, the burden for intercession came out.

Verse 17 says, “Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” Verse 17 came out of Abraham’s escorting and conducting in verse 16. If Abraham would have just said, “See You again, Lord,” and would not have escorted the Lord for a distance, the Lord would not have had further fellowship with him. The Lord could not hide what He was going to do from His intimate friend. He had to let him know what He was about to do.

Then the Lord told Abraham that He was going to judge Sodom. Actually, at this time the Lord had a real burden for Lot, and He needed someone to pray for Lot. The Lord always needs some intercession so that He can do something for others. Through his fellowship with the Lord, Abraham came to know the Lord’s intention. Because they were intimate friends, there was no need for them to mention Lot by name.

Verses 22 and 23 say, “The men [the two angels] turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?” Even though the two angels left, Abraham was not willing to leave the Lord. He remained standing before the Lord for more intimate fellowship. Abraham began to intercede by asking the Lord if He would destroy the righteous with the wicked. This meant that he was praying for Lot. This shows that the burden for intercession comes from our contact with the Lord. Then the Lord reveals His heart to us, we know His intention, and His intention becomes our burden, which returns to the Lord as our intercession.

The Lord’s desired intention in His heart was to save Lot from Sodom, but the Lord needed someone to pray for Lot. Without someone to pray for Lot, the Lord could not act. This is the principle of incarnation. In the new creation, in the work of the Lord’s grace in salvation, there is always the need of incarnation. This means that there is always the need of someone to cooperate with the Lord. Then the Lord has the ground to do something.

Genesis 19:29 indicates that when the Lord destroyed Sodom, He saved Lot to answer Abraham's prayer.

After Abraham's thorough fellowship with the Lord, Genesis tells us, "Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place" (18:33). By reading Genesis 18, we can see that Abraham spoke, but verse 33 says that as soon as the Lord had ended His speaking to Abraham, He went away. This shows us that the best prayer is not that we speak to the Lord but that the Lord speaks to us. We should let the Lord end His speaking to us. Then we can say Amen to His speaking. We should ask, "When we ended our prayer and said Amen, did we end our speaking, or did the Lord end His speaking?"

Strictly speaking, the proper prayer is the Lord speaking through the one who prays. This is why we must learn to pray to behold His beauty and to inhale Him in order to express Him. If we do not know what to pray, we can groan, saying, "O Lord, I do not know how to pray or what to pray. O Lord..." Then we will have the best prayer.

We need to practice the fellowship in this chapter. We first must learn to read and pray over the Word. We also need to pray to behold the Lord and breathe the Lord as our spiritual air. Perhaps in the morning we can take ten or fifteen minutes for reading and praying over the Word. After this we need another time, perhaps five minutes, simply to pray. We should open ourselves to the Lord, look to Him, and seek His face to behold Him, adore Him, worship Him, praise Him, and thank Him. If we have some feeling within which we do not know how to express, we can groan before Him. If we practice this kind of living and intimate prayer, we will be nourished, refreshed, and strengthened by the Lord not only in the morning but also throughout the day.

We need to learn to pray in this way all the time. First Thessalonians 5:17 charges us to pray unceasingly. It is only by this way of prayer that we can unceasingly pray. To pray in this way is to breathe spiritually. No matter what we are doing, we can pray in the way of spiritual breathing. We should breathe unceasingly, no matter what we are doing. Then we will enjoy Christ continuously.