CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

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CWWN, The (Set 2) Vol. 36:

Central Messages, Chap. 1

Scripture Reading: John 14:6

The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (KJV). This shows us something very clearly. What is the way that God has given us? It is Christ. What is the truth that God has given us? It is Christ. What is the life that God has given us? It is Christ. Christ is our way, Christ is our truth, and Christ is our life. Through Christ we go to the Father. In God's eyes, everything that has to do with God is Christ, who is His Son. This is why our Lord said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." What God has given us is just Christ; He has not given us many things apart from Christ. Many times, in spiritual matters, we see only things, and what we touch are merely things. These things are merely terms and letters to us; they do not have any spiritual value. May the Lord open our eyes so that we may know the Son of God. The characteristic of Christianity, the root of Christianity, and all its depth and riches are contained in the knowledge of the Son of God. It is not a matter of how many methods we know or how many doctrines we have or how much power we possess. It is a matter of how much we know God's Son. If we know God's Son, we have the way, we have the truth, and we have the life. Our power comes from our knowledge of the Son of God. God has given us His Son, not many individual items apart from His Son. The crux of the matter lies in our knowledge of the Son of God. Let us now consider the meaning of "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

CHRIST IS THE WAY

"I am the way." A way can be considered as a method. The Lord meant that He is the way for us to go to the Father; He is the method by which we can go to the Father. If we have Him, we have the way. If we do not have Him, we do not have the way. If we have Him, we have the method. If we do not have Him, we do not have the method. Every true Christian has learned the lesson at least once that the Lord Jesus is the way; He is the method. If you are saved, you have gone to the Father through the Lord Jesus as your way. You at least have this experience. The Lord Jesus is the way, and no one can go to God except through Him. Every genuinely saved Christian knows that this is the only way that can be taken. Thank the Lord that many genuine Christians have at least learned one lesson, which is to go to God through His Son, Jesus of Nazareth. He is our way. We have taken this way at least once. This way is just Christ Himself; it is not a method apart from Christ. We need to see that not only do we have to come to God through the Lord Jesus when we are saved, but that the Lord Jesus is still the way any time we go to God; there is not some method outside of the Lord Jesus.

Some Christians are merely seeking for some methods to spirituality. Once a man was preaching on the subject of victory through Christ versus victory through ourselves. After his message, another brother shook his hand and said, "I have failed all these years. But today, everything is well." When the first brother asked why, he answered, "I have been seeking a method of victory. Thank the Lord. I have found the method! Victory is through Christ, not through ourselves!" The first brother told him bluntly, "If you have found a method, you will still fail." What does this mean? The Lord Jesus told us, "I am the way." In other words, the Lord Jesus is the method. A method is not something apart from the Lord Jesus. The method is the Lord Himself. If what we have is merely a method, it will not work. God has not given us a method; He has given us His own Son. We often hear of others' experience and admire it. But we do not realize that they have touched the Lord, while we have only seen a method. As a result, we fail again and again. The basic reason for this is that we do not realize that the Lord Jesus is the way.

We must remember that believing in the Lord and believing in a formula are two different things. Some Christians experience God's grace, and their eyes are opened. They see the kind of persons they are, and they drop themselves and believe in the Lord. They trust the Lord to do what they themselves cannot do. As a result they are satisfied in God, and they are liberated. A little while later, another person may come and, upon hearing the

testimony of the first group, ask for God's enlightening also. He asks for God to show him his worthlessness, and he learns to trust in God, to be humble, and to deny himself. But strangely, the first group of people experiences deliverance, while the last man does not. One group is liberated, but the man is not. This happens because the first group of brothers have faith in God; they have touched the Lord. However, the last brother does not have faith; he is merely copying the formula of faith. He has not received God, but a formula of faith. In other words, the last brother has received a method from the first group of brothers; he has not received the Lord. There is no power in methods; methods will not work. They are dead because methods are things; they are not Christ Himself.

We have to remember that in spiritual matters, everything apart from Christ is death. Some brothers and sisters say, "It is so strange that when others have the faith, God answers their prayer. I believe just the same, but God has not answered my prayers. When others go to the Lord, the Lord is gracious to them. I do the same thing as they, but God does not grant the same grace to me." It seems as if they are putting the blame on God. They do not realize that they are believing in a thing; therefore, it is dead. A formula is worthless, and a method is useless. Only when we have Christ will everything be living. Even if you have learned all the methods, that will still not make you a Christian. God's children are produced by begetting; they are not produced by teaching.

The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way." Christ is the way; He is the method. Brothers and sisters, is your way Christ? Are your methods Christ? Or is your way just a way, and your method just a method? Praise the Lord. If your method is Christ, everything will work out. But if your method is only a method, even though it may truly be a good method or even the best and most correct method, it is still dead, and it has no spiritual value at all. Many prayers are not answered and many testimonies of believers have no effect on us because we have not touched the Lord; we have merely copied other peoples' methods. We have not touched the Lord ourselves.

Once a brother was preaching on Romans 6—8. After another brother heard it, he said: "Today I know the way to victory. I am clear. I believe that I will no longer fail as I did before." Another brother came up to the preaching one and shook his head. The preacher asked him what he meant, and he said, "I cannot say what the first brother said. The Lord has opened my eyes, but I

dare not say that I have seen Him, and I dare not say that I have not seen Him." The second brother did not receive a method, but the Lord Himself. Eventually, he was able to stand. But the brother who thought that he would never fall eventually failed because he had merely gained a method; he did not gain the Lord. Therefore, it was worthless.

Many times, we are wrong even in the way that we listen to a message. We do not ask the Lord for revelation, and we do not ask to see the Lord. Instead, we exercise our mind to remember a method. Actually, even if we followed the method exactly, we would still not see any result. Sometimes, we may think that we have not seen very much; we may not be so confident as to say that we have seen the Lord. But in fact, we have seen Him. This seeing will bring about a real change in us. Thank the Lord that this is the way. We have not learned a method; rather, we know the Lord. The Lord shows us clearly that He is the method. Every time we hear a message or a testimony, we should ask ourselves, "Have I met the Lord, or have I merely understood a method?" The mere understanding of a method will not save us; only the knowledge of the Lord as our method will save us. A testimony by others of how they have trusted the Lord will not save us; only our own trust in the Lord will save us. The words may be the same in both cases, but the facts are vastly different. The Lord is the Lord of life. Those who touch Him touch life, and only those who touch Him will live.

CHRIST IS THE TRUTH

The Lord said that He is the way, and He also said that He is the truth. Truth is just Christ Himself. Truth is not words concerning Christ. Truth is not doctrines about Christ. Truth is just Christ Himself. Christians often consider expositions and explanations of Christ to be the truth. Actually, truth is not an exposition of a thing. Truth is just Christ Himself. The Lord said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). Brothers and sisters, let us consider how many truths have set us free. God's Word says that the truth shall set us free, that it shall liberate us. But many times, the truth is merely a doctrine to us; it is not Christ. Our eyes have not been opened to see Christ. What a pity that we have been preaching so many doctrines for ten years, yet we still have not seen. We may have heard many doctrines for ten years, yet we still have not seen. Men can speak about the doctrine of co-crucifixion, but others do not see the power of crucifixion in them. They can speak about the resurrection life, but others do not see the

resurrection power in them. If what we preach are merely doctrines, then we only have things that are dead, not something that is living.

Once a person wrote a letter to a brother and said, "A brother has offended me. I do not know if I should forgive him. Therefore, I am writing to you. My heart is unbiased. If you say that I should forgive him, I will forgive him. If you say that I should not forgive him, I will not forgive him." Brothers and sisters, do you think that this sounds like a Christian? Suppose I have a loved one who has died, and I write a letter to others, saying, "My loved one has died. Should I cry? If you say I should cry, I will cry. If you say I should not cry, I will not cry." If you heard this, you would surely laugh, because this is ridiculous. If one cries because others tell him to cry or does not cry because others tell him not to cry, his crying will be a performance, and his not crying will also be a performance. Both will be a performance, and both will be dead works without life. Here is a brother. You either forgive him or you do not forgive him. If you say, "I will forgive him if I know I should forgive him, and I will not forgive him if I know I should not forgive him," this is dead work based on dead teaching; it is even a kind of false performance.

Brothers and sisters, if we do not have the Lord living within us, and if it is not the Lord who is our truth, a teaching that guides our action is nothing but dead works; it is not life, and it is not living. Do you see the difference? The difference here is too great and too tremendous. Working requires that we exercise our memory, but life does not require us to exercise our memory. When we speak something out of life, we do not speak it because we remembered to speak it. A power within us motivates us to speak. The Lord is controlling us; a doctrine is not coaching or controlling us. The day will come when the Lord will open our eyes to see that spiritual reality is not apart from Christ. We do not present some doctrines to others. Rather, we lead others to Christ Himself. We do not need to remember a doctrine and then act according to it. Rather, Christ is living in us, and Christ is becoming our truth.

Once a brother offended another brother. The offended one could not contain himself, and he gave the other brother a severe scolding. After the scolding, his conscience bothered him, and he felt that he should go and apologize. Yet when he considered how the other brother had offended him, he could not help being angry again. Nevertheless, he felt that he had to apologize. So he prepared a letter to the other brother. The first thing he said in his letter was, "It was wrong for me to scold you." But he again recalled

how the other brother was wrong to offend him, and he became angry again. After a while, he picked up the pen to start writing again. But while he was writing, he could not stop the hate and anger toward the other brother. After he finished the letter, he was still angry when he sent it out. Outwardly, it seemed as though the letter was a very proper Christian letter. But this was merely the result of teachings; it was not the result of life. Although he had written his letter and had apologized, he was still angry at heart. When he saw the other brother, he might be able to greet him and might be able to shake hands with him, but inwardly he had not forgiven him, and his speaking would not be natural at all. Brothers and sisters, do you see the difference here? The Lord is the truth. If what we do is a teaching and not the Lord, it is dead. We should realize that spiritual things are living only when the Lord is there, and they are dead when the Lord is not there. When the Lord shines within us, when He becomes the One working within us, and when we realize this inwardly, what we have will be living.

CHRIST IS THE LIFE

The Lord said that He is the way and the truth. Then He said that He is the life. We have mentioned briefly what it is for Christ to be the way and the truth. Now we have to speak some concerning Christ being our life. Wherever there is life, spontaneously there are works. But works cannot replace life. We have to be very clear that works are not life. Life does not require any effort of our own. Life is just Christ Himself. Many people try hard and exert considerable energy to be a Christian. Daily they strive toward this goal to the point of exhaustion. To them, the doctrines are strict; one has to be humble, meek, loving, forgiving, and enduring. These teachings are truly tiresome. They consider it a hard thing to be a Christian. This is especially true for young Christians, who find that the harder they try, the harder it is for them to live like a Christian. Brothers and sisters, if Christ is not the life, we surely have to do everything. But if Christ is the life, we do not have to do anything. Let me repeat: life is Christ Himself, and works cannot replace life.

Among God's children, the greatest misunderstanding is to think that self-effort is life and that unless one exerts his own effort, he does not have life. But we have to realize that if there is life, there is no need of work. If there is life, everything will be lived out spontaneously. Consider how your eyes see. Consider how your ears hear. Your eyes see spontaneously, and your ears hear spontaneously because they all have life. Life is so spontaneous. We must be

clear that where life is, spontaneously there are works. However, works cannot replace life. Some works on the contrary prove the absence of life, or they prove that the life is weak. If it is life, it will surely result in good moral behavior. But good moral behavior cannot take the place of life. Suppose a brother is very gentle; he does not speak much, and he is neither too soft nor too hard. Some brothers may say, "This brother has quite a good life." But these brothers have actually used the wrong words. The Lord said, "I am the life." Although the brother may be gentle and quiet, his behavior is not life unless it issues from Christ. You can only say that he has a good temper. You can only say that he does not cause much trouble, or that he treats others politely, that he does not argue or quarrel. But you cannot say that this man has a good life. You cannot say that what he has issues from Christ, because what he has is natural; it is not life, and it is not Christ.

Some people hold to another concept. They think that life is power, and the Lord being their life means that the Lord gives them power to make them do good, behave well, and be a good Christian. They think that this is life. But God has shown us that power is not a thing. Our power is Christ; it is a person. Our power is not a drive to accomplish something; our power is a person. Our life is not only a power, but a person. It is Christ manifesting Himself from us, not us utilizing Christ to manifest the goodness that we desire to have. These two things are absolutely different, and we must distinguish between them clearly.

One brother went to meet in a place, and an elderly Christian asked him, "Why did you go to that place to meet?" The brother answered, "Because that place has life." The elderly man asked, "Is our place not as noisy as the other place?" The brother responded, "No, it is not noisy at all." The elderly man said, "What do you mean? If it is not noisy, how can it have life?" The brother answered, "It is not at all exciting, yet it has life. Life is not excitement; it is not emotional stimulation. Life is not a warm atmosphere or loud noise." The elderly man said, "Perhaps young people like excitement, but my preference is for thoughtful messages. Whenever I hear a thoughtful message, I touch life. To me this is life." The young brother replied, "I have also heard the kind of thoughtful messages that you speak of. But I did not touch life." Brothers and sisters, this conversation shows us that life is not emotional stimulations, good thoughts, wise words, clever words, logical words, or thoughtful words. All these may not be life.

Some may say, "This is strange. If life is not excitement and it is not thoughtful messages, what is life? What do you consider as life?" We admit that we cannot describe life with any better words. We can only say that there is something deeper than feelings and deeper than thoughts. When we touch this something, we become enlivened. This something is life. Brothers and sisters, what is life? Life is something deeper than the thoughts; thoughts cannot be compared with life. What is life? Life is something deeper than feelings; feelings cannot be compared to life. Thoughts and feelings are outward things. What then is life? The Lord said, "I am...the life." One does not meet life when he walks into some excited atmosphere or some spiritually charged environment. We have to ask what is the source of such an atmosphere. Experience tells us that many people who are very good at creating a noisy atmosphere know very little about the Lord. Many excitable people know very little about the Lord. Christ is life; nothing else is life.

We have to learn to know life. Life is not a matter of excitement or thoughtful ideas. Life is an expression of the Lord Himself. We have to know the Lord. Nothing can be compared to our knowledge of the Lord. Whenever we know the Lord, we touch life. We have to realize before the Lord what it means for Christ to be life. Those who are excitable or who are smart are not necessarily the ones who know the Lord. But when there is a group of people who know the Lord in a particular way, who know what the Lord is like, their spiritual discernment of the Lord and their knowledge of the Lord will tell them that Christ is life. If we have such discernment and knowledge, we will be changed. If we know that the Lord is life, we will realize that in spiritual matters, natural energy is useless. If we know the Lord as life, we will look to Him alone. When we first believed in the Lord, we did not know what it meant to look to Him. But after we have learned some lessons, we begin to look to Him more and more, because we know that everything depends on Christ and not on us. When we first became Christians, we were after individual things, and we did not trust in the Lord. After we learned some lessons, we began to understand a little and began to realize that we have to learn to trust in the Lord. Trusting in the Lord does not mean trusting in Him for individual things, but trusting in Him to do what we cannot do in ourselves. When we first became Christians, we felt that we had to do something, and that unless we did something, things would fall apart, and everything would collapse. We always tried to do everything by ourselves. But after we find out that Christ is our life, we realize that everything depends on

Christ and not on our working. Then we learn to rest and to look to Him alone.

Brothers and sisters, we must remember that God does not give us individual things, one by one. He has given us His Son. We should always lift up our head and say to the Lord, "You are my way; You are my truth; You are my life. Lord, I have to deal with You alone, not with the things that belong to You." Brothers and sisters, may the Lord be gracious to us and show us that spiritual matters are nothing but the Lord, that spiritual matters are nothing but Christ. Day by day, we have to realize that it is wrong for the way to be something that is apart from Christ. It is wrong for the truth to be something that is apart from Christ, and it is wrong for the life to be something that is apart from Christ. Yet how easy it is for us to take the way, the truth, and the life as separate things. We call a noisy atmosphere life. We call clear logic life. We call rich emotions life. We call outward behavior life. Actually, they are not life at all. We have to know that the Lord is the life. Christ is our life. It is the Lord who lives out this life from us. May the Lord deliver us from many fragmentary, outward matters so that we can touch the Lord Himself. May we see the Lord in everything, and may we see that our way is our knowledge of the Lord, our truth is our knowledge of the Lord, and our life is our knowledge of the Lord. May the Lord open our eyes, and may we be delivered from many outward things to see the Son of God. May we live in Him, and may He live in us. Amen!