

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL REVELATION OF LIFE IN THE SCRIPTURES**

Message One

How the Bride of Christ Comes into Being

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:18-25; John 19:34; Eph. 5:25-27, 32

- I. The entire Bible is a divine romance, a record of how God courts His chosen people and eventually marries them—Gen. 2:21-24; S. S. 1:2-4; Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-10; 22:17:**
- A. When we as God's people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam—Gen. 2:21-22.
 - B. It is this flowing, transforming, and building life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—vv. 9-12, 22.
 - C. In order for God and His people to be one, there must be a mutual love between them—John 14:21, 23; Exo. 20:6; Jer. 2:2; 31:3.
 - D. As God's people love God and spend time to fellowship with Him in His word, God infuses them with His divine element, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression—Psa. 119:140, 15-16; Eph. 5:25-27.
- II. In Genesis 2 we see a picture of Christ and the church in the types of Adam and Eve:**
- A. Adam typifies God in Christ as the real, universal Husband, who is seeking a wife for Himself—Rom. 5:14; cf. Isa. 54:5; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 21:9.
 - B. "Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart"—Gen. 2:18:
 - 1. Adam's need for a wife typifies and portrays God's need, in His economy, to have a wife as His counterpart, His complement (lit., His parallel).
 - 2. Although God, Christ, is absolutely and eternally perfect, He is not complete without the church as His wife.
 - 3. God desires to have both Adam, typifying Christ, and Eve, typifying the church; His purpose is to "let them have dominion" (1:26); His purpose is to have a victorious Christ plus a victorious church, a Christ who has overcome the work of the devil plus a church that has overthrown the work of the devil; God wants Christ and the church to have dominion—Rom. 5:17; 16:20; Eph. 1:22-23.
- III. We need to see what God did in order to produce a counterpart for Himself:**
- A. From the ground God formed every animal of the field and every bird of heaven and brought them to Adam, "and the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart"—Gen. 2:19-20:
 - 1. The wife must be the same as the husband in life, nature, and expression.
 - 2. Among the cattle, the birds, and the animals, Adam did not find a counterpart for himself, one that could match him.
 - B. In order to produce a counterpart for Himself, God first became a man, as typified by God's creation of Adam—John 1:14; Rom. 5:14.
 - C. "Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place"—Gen. 2:21:

1. Adam's deep sleep for the producing of Eve as his wife typifies Christ's death on the cross for the producing of the church as His counterpart—Eph. 5:25-27.
 2. In the Bible sleep often refers to death—1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14.
 3. Christ's death is the life-releasing, life-imparting, life-propagating, life-multiplying, life-reproducing death, which is signified by the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die and to grow up in order to produce many grains (12:24) for the making of the loaf, which is the Body, the church (1 Cor. 10:17).
 4. Through Christ's death the divine life within Him was released, and through His resurrection His released divine life was imparted into His believers for the constituting of the church.
 5. Through such a process God in Christ has been wrought into man with His life and nature so that man can be the same as God in life and nature in order to match Him as His counterpart.
- D. "Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man"—Gen. 2:22:
1. The rib taken from Adam's opened side typifies the unbreakable, indestructible eternal life of Christ (Heb. 7:16; John 19:32-33, 36; Exo. 12:46; Psa. 34:20), which flowed out of His pierced side (John 19:34) to impart life to His believers for the producing and building up of the church as His counterpart:
 - a. Out of Christ's side came blood and water, but all that came out of Adam's side was the rib without the blood.
 - b. At Adam's time there was no need of redemption through the blood, because there was no sin.
 - c. However, by the time that Christ was "sleeping" on the cross, there was the problem of sin; thus, the blood that came out of Christ's side was for our judicial redemption.
 - d. Following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life of God for our organic salvation (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; Num. 20:8); this divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam's side (Rom. 5:10).
 2. Genesis 2:22 does not say that Eve was created but that she was built; the building of Eve with the rib taken from Adam's side typifies the building of the church with the resurrection life released from Christ through His death on the cross and imparted into His believers in His resurrection—John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3.
 3. The church as the real Eve is the totality of Christ in all His believers; the church is the reproduction of Christ; other than Christ's element, there should be no other element in the church—Gen. 5:2.
 4. Only that which comes out of Christ with His resurrection life can be His complement and counterpart, the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 5:28-30:
 - a. We need to put off all the natural life until the living Christ can be expressed from within our spirit; then we will be the church in reality—Col. 3:10-11.
 - b. To live out anything other than Christ is not the church; "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20); "to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21)—this is the church!
 - c. Only that which comes out of Christ can be recognized by Christ; only that which comes out of Christ can return to Christ and match Him.
 5. At the end of the Bible is a city, New Jerusalem, the ultimate and eternal woman, the corporate bride, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9; 22:17) built with three precious materials (21:18-21), fulfilling for eternity the type shown in Genesis 2; thus, in

- type all the precious materials mentioned in Genesis 2:11-12 are for the building of the woman.
6. As Eve was taken out of Adam and brought back to Adam to be one flesh with him (v. 24), so the church produced out of Christ will go back to Christ (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7) to be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17); Christ and the church as one spirit, typified by a husband and wife as one flesh, are the great mystery (Eph. 5:28-32).
 7. In the future, Christ as the holy Bridegroom will present us to Himself as His counterpart for His marriage just as God presented Eve to Adam as his counterpart for his marriage—vv. 27, 31-32; Gen. 2:22-24; Rev. 19:7-9:
 - a. Ephesians 5:27 reveals the beauty of the bride, saying that Christ will “present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.”
 - b. The beauty of the bride comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church—v. 26; Psa. 45:9-14.
 - c. The Lord’s recovery is for the preparation of the bride of Christ, who is composed of all the overcomers—Rev. 19:7-9; Gen. 2:22; Matt. 16:18.
- E. “The man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”—Gen. 2:23-24:
1. In Hebrew *Man* is *Ish*, and *Woman* is *Ishshah*; the church is a pure product out of Christ; the church is “Christly,” “resurrectionly,” and heavenly.
 2. Only those who are regenerated of Christ and who live by Christ as the church can match Christ and complement Him.
 3. When Christ sees this, He surely says, “This time this is bone of My bones and flesh of My flesh”—cf. v. 23; Eph. 5:30.
 4. Just as Eve was the increase of Adam, the church as the bride is the increase of Christ as the Bridegroom—John 3:29-30.
 5. Adam and Eve becoming one flesh, a complete unit, is a figure of God and man being joined as one; the coming New Jerusalem will be the eternal union of God and man, a universal couple as a complete unit composed of divinity and humanity—cf. Gen. 5:2.
- F. Adam and Eve, being one, lived a married life together as husband and wife (2:24-25); this portrays that in the New Jerusalem the processed and consummated redeeming Triune God as the universal Husband will live a married life with the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the wife, forever (Rev. 22:17a):
1. The Triune God, who went through the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and who ultimately became the life-giving Spirit, is joined in marriage to the created, redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite man—composed of spirit, soul, and body—who ultimately constitutes the church, the expression of God.
 2. In the eternity that is without end, by the divine, eternal, and surpassingly glorious life, they will live a life that is the mingling of God and man as one spirit, a life that is superexcellent and that overflows with blessings and joy.

Message Two

A Man of God with the Breath of God

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7; John 20:22; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Ezek. 37:1-14

I. God's ultimate intention is to gain a corporate God-man for His corporate manifestation; God does not desire a good man but a God-man, a man of God with the breath of God—John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17:

- A. "Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—Gen. 2:7:
 - 1. The breath of life breathed into man's body became the spirit of man, the human spirit—Prov. 20:27; Job 32:8.
 - 2. The breath of life breathed into man's body was not the eternal life of God or the Spirit of God; but because the human spirit came out of God's breath of life, it is very close to the Spirit of God—cf. Gen. 2:8-9.
 - 3. Thus, there can be a transmission between God the Spirit and man's spirit, and the human spirit is able to contact God and be one with God—Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. "He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Pneuma"—John 20:22 (lit.):
 - 1. The Holy Pneuma is the Holy Spirit, or Holy Breath.
 - 2. In the Gospel of John there are three wonderful words: *Word*, *flesh*, and *breath*; the Word was God, the flesh is man, and the breath is the Spirit—1:1, 14; 20:22.
 - 3. The Word became flesh to accomplish judicial redemption and then resurrected to become the Holy Breath indwelling us and supplying us for our organic salvation—1:14, 29; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 5:10; 10:12-13; cf. Lam. 3:55-56.
- C. "All Scripture is God-breathed"—2 Tim. 3:16a:
 - 1. The Scripture, the word of God, is the breathing out of God.
 - 2. God's speaking is God's breathing out; hence, His word is spirit, or breath—John 6:63.
 - 3. Thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit; the Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches; we must strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire.
- D. This all reveals that being a man of God with the breath of God requires the exercise of our spirit, the continual receiving of the Spirit, and the breathing in of God's word—1 Tim. 4:7; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 6:17-18a.

II. The antidote of the divine inoculation against the decline of the church is the God-breathed Scripture, which is profitable for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work—2 Tim. 3:14-17:

- A. The Bible is God's breath, this breath is the Spirit, and the Spirit gives life—John 6:63:
 - 1. Our reading of the Bible should be our inhaling of God to receive life, and our teaching of the Bible should be our exhaling of God to impart life—Acts 6:4.
 - 2. We need to read the Bible by means of all prayer and petition in the spirit to inhale God and minister the word as the Spirit to exhale God into others—Eph. 6:17-18a; Acts 6:10; 2 Cor. 3:6; cf. Psa. 119:130, 133, 140.
- B. On God's side, the Bible is God's breathing; on our side, the Bible is for us to receive the breath of God as our profit in four matters: teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness:
 - 1. Teaching equals revelation; to teach is to roll away the veil so that others may see something of the Triune God and His economy—Eph. 1:17; 3:9; cf. Job 10:13.

2. Conviction comes from the revelation we have seen; whenever we see something of God, we realize our mistakes, wrongdoings, shortcomings, and sins, and the result is that we are convicted and reprovved; the more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor and deny ourselves—Isa. 6:1-8; Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24.
 3. Correction follows conviction and is a matter of setting right what is wrong, turning someone to the right way, and restoring to an upright state—7:13-14.
 4. Instruction in righteousness is be divinely instructed to enjoy Christ as our lived-out righteousness and to be divinely disciplined in being right with God and with man—Phil. 3:9.
- C. The issue of God's breathing out of Himself through the Scripture for teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness is that the man of God becomes complete, fully equipped for every good work—2 Tim. 3:17:
1. A man of God is a God-man, one who partakes of God's life and nature (John 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:4), thus being one with God in His life and nature (1 Cor. 6:17) and thereby expressing Him.
 2. God's breathing produces God-men; we need to continually inhale the Triune God by reading the Scripture with prayer to receive revelation, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

III. To receive the word of God as the breath of God in order to be constituted with God is also to receive the word of God as the sword of the Spirit in order to slay God's adversary—Eph. 6:17-18a:

- A. Satan is not only the enemy outside of us but also the adversary inside of us; to deal with this inward adversary, we need to experience the killing power of the word, praying over the constant word of the Bible so that it becomes the instant word of the Spirit for the preparation of the bride of Christ—John 6:63; Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 2:7.
- B. The sword, the Spirit, and the word are one; when the constant word in the Bible becomes the instant word (the applied word spoken at the moment by the Spirit in any situation), that word is the Spirit as the sword that kills the adversary—Heb. 4:12.
- C. The more we take the word of God by means of all prayer in spirit, the more the negative elements in our being are slain; eventually, the self, the worst foe of all, the enemy of the Body, will be put to death—cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:16.
- D. Whenever we are troubled by something negative within us, we should take the word of God by means of all prayer in spirit; when the negative things in us are killed through pray-reading, the Lord is victorious.
- E. We are preserved in the church life and in the ministry by receiving the word as the Spirit to be the killing sword, which is a spiritual antibiotic to kill the "germs" within us so that we can live a healthy Body life, a healthy church life.
- F. The overcomers keep the Lord's word by always coming to the Lord to contact Him as the living Word in the written Word so that He can become the applied word as the dispensing Spirit in them—3:8; John 1:1; 5:39-40; 6:63.
- G. The overcomers are fully constituted with the Spirit as the word of God to be the bride of Christ and the new man, the corporate man of God with the breath of God as the killing sword for the destruction of the enemies of God and the manifestation of the sons of God—Rev. 2:7; 22:17a; 19:13-15; 2 Thes. 2:8.

IV. Ezekiel 37:1-14 reveals how God's Spirit as the breath comes into us in order to enliven us so that we may become a corporate body, formed into an army:

- A. The vision of the dry bones shows that before God came in to renew and regenerate us, we were not only sinful and filthy (36:25) but also dead and buried in “graves” of various sinful, worldly, and religious things (37:12-13).
- B. We were like dead and dry bones, disjointed and scattered, having no oneness:
 - 1. Whether we were an unsaved sinner or a backslidden believer, this was our situation; not only unbelieving sinners need to be delivered from their graves, but even many brothers and sisters need to be revived and delivered from death and from their graves.
 - 2. Today many Christians are buried in the graves of denominations, sects, divisions, independent groups, and different movements.
 - 3. Formerly, we were in such graves, dead, dry, scattered, disjointed, and not connected to anyone, but the Lord is the Savior of the dead; God’s word here is to cause a dead person to become a living person—John 5:25; Eph. 2:1-8.
- C. Ezekiel’s prophesying in Ezekiel 37 was not a matter of predicting but a matter of speaking forth, declaring, something for the Lord—vv. 4-5:
 - 1. When Ezekiel spoke forth, God gave people the Spirit—vv. 10, 14.
 - 2. The main meaning of prophesying in the Bible is not to predict but to speak forth the Lord, to minister the Lord to people:
 - a. “He who prophesies builds up the church”—1 Cor. 14:4b.
 - b. “You can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged”—v. 31.
 - c. Prophesying, speaking for God and speaking forth God with God as the content, ministers God to the hearers and brings them to God; the church meeting should be filled with God, and all its activities should convey and transmit God to people that they may be infused with God—vv. 24-25.
 - d. Prophesying makes you an overcomer; prophesying is the function of the overcomers—vv. 3, 4b; cf. Matt. 16:18.
 - 3. As Ezekiel was prophesying, God was blowing upon the dry bones, sending the wind, the breath, and the Spirit—Ezek. 37:4-10, 14:
 - a. The Hebrew word *ruach* is variously translated “wind,” “breath,” and “spirit” in verses 5 through 10 and 14.
 - b. In spiritual experience, when God blows on us, His breath is the wind; when we breathe the wind, it is the breath; and when the breath is within us, it is the Spirit.
 - c. When Ezekiel prophesied, God blew the wind, the people received the breath, and the breath became the Spirit, the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.
- D. Prophesying in the meetings of the church fulfills the greatest prophecy in the Bible, which is to build up the church (in oneness as an exceedingly great army)—Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 14:4b; Ezek. 37:4-10.

Message Three

The Key to Being an Overcomer— the Law of the Spirit of Life for the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: Rom. 6:6; 7:15—8:13; 12:1-2

I. The key to being an overcomer is the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8, a chapter for desperate seekers—7:24—8:2, 28-29; Psa. 105:4:

- A. Romans 7 is the experience of being “in the flesh”; Romans 8 is the experience of being “in the spirit” (the divine Spirit dwelling in our human spirit and these two mingled together to be one spirit)—vv. 4, 9-10, 16; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- B. The enjoyment of the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8 ushers us into the reality of the Body of Christ in Romans 12; this law operates within us as we live in the Body and for the Body—8:2, 28-29; 12:1-2, 11; Phil. 1:19.

II. In order to experience the indwelling Christ as the law of the Spirit of life, we need to see the three lives and four laws in Romans 7 and 8:

- A. The created human life with the law of good is in our soul; this law derives from the natural human life, that is, from man himself—7:21-23; Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 7:29.
- B. The evil satanic life with the law of sin and of death is in our flesh; this law derives from Satan, who as sin dwells in the believers’ flesh—Rom. 6:6; 7:15-20, 23-24; 1 John 3:10; John 8:44; Matt. 13:38; 23:33; 3:7; Rom. 3:13.
- C. The uncreated divine life with the law of the Spirit of life is in our human spirit; this law derives from God, who as the Spirit dwells in man’s spirit—8:2, 9-10, 16; John 1:4; 10:10b; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- D. These three parties with the three laws are now present in the believer in much the same way that they (God, man, and Satan) were present in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3).
- E. In addition to these three laws within the believer, there is the law of God outside of him—Rom. 7:22, 25.

III. The subject of Romans 8 is the law of the Spirit of life:

- A. Every life has a law and even is a law; God’s life is the highest life, and the law of this life is the highest law—cf. John 1:4-5; 12:24; 14:6a; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- B. The Triune God has been processed through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to become the law of the Spirit of life installed in our spirit as a “scientific” law, an automatic principle; this is one of the biggest discoveries, even recoveries, in God’s economy—Rom. 8:2-3, 10-11, 34, 16.
- C. The law of the Spirit of life, the compound Spirit, frees us from the law of sin and of death, solving for us the problem of sin and death—v. 2a; Phil. 1:19.
- D. The law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the divine life; it is the natural characteristic and the innate, automatic function of the divine life—Rom. 8:2; Phil. 2:13; Ezek. 36:26-27; Prov. 30:18-19; Isa. 40:28-31; Heb. 12:2a; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:28-29.
- E. The processed Triune God as the life-giving Spirit installed into our spirit may be likened to electricity; God’s operation as the law of the divine “electricity” within us requires our cooperation to “switch on” this law—Phil. 2:12-13.
- F. While we remain in touch with the Lord, staying in contact with Him, the law of the Spirit of life works automatically, spontaneously, and effortlessly to dispense God as life into our being and to overcome the law of sin and of death—Rom. 8:10, 6, 11:
 - 1. We need to cease from our own struggling and striving—Gal. 2:20a; Rom. 7:15-20:

- a. If we have not seen that sin is a law and that our will can never overcome this law, we are trapped in Romans 7; we will never arrive at Romans 8.
 - b. Paul willed again and again, but the result was only repeated failure; the best that a man can do is to make resolutions—7:18.
 - c. When sin is dormant within us, it is merely sin, but when it is aroused in us by our willing to do the good, it becomes “the evil”—“I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me”—v. 21.
 - d. Instead of willing, we should set our mind on the spirit and walk according to the spirit, looking away unto Jesus—8:6, 4; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 12:1-2.
2. In order to live in our spirit, we need to take time to behold the Lord, praying to fellowship with Jesus to bathe in His countenance, to be saturated with His beauty, and to radiate His excellence—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; *Hymns*, #784.
 3. We need to cooperate with the indwelling, installed, automatic, and inner-operating God by prayer and by having a spirit of dependence, thus maintaining our fellowship with the Lord of life and the Lord of work—1 Thes. 5:17; Eph. 6:17-18.
 4. We need to care for the sense of life in our spirit to remain in the fellowship of life, the flowing of the divine life, for the operation of the law of the Spirit of life—Rom. 8:6, 16; 1 John 1:2-3, 6-7; Mal. 2:15-16:
 - a. The sense of life, on the negative side, is the feeling of death—weakness, emptiness, uneasiness, restlessness, depression, dryness, darkness, pain, etc.—Rom. 8:6a.
 - b. The sense of life, on the positive side, is the feeling of life and peace—strength, satisfaction, peace, rest, release, livingness, watering, brightness, comfort, etc.—v. 6b.
 - c. The sense of life is related to the consciousness of the conscience according to the life of God and the reality in Jesus—Eph. 4:18-21.

IV. In order to live by the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit, we must see what the flesh is—cf. Rom. 8:6, 13:

- A. The flesh is the corrupted, polluted, and transmuted body:
 1. Man’s body was originally pure, but through man’s fall Satan injected himself into man, and man’s body has become the flesh—Gen. 3:6; Rom. 7:18a.
 2. Our body is “the body of sin” (6:6) and “the body of this death” (7:24); the body of sin is very active and full of strength in sinning against God, and the body of this death is weak and powerless in acting to please God (v. 18).
 3. As long as we are still living, until the day of our redemption, the body of sin and death is always with us—cf. 8:23.
 4. The word *flesh* refers also to our entire fallen being; man is totally flesh because the fallen being today is under the dominion of the fallen flesh—3:20; Gen. 6:3a.
 5. The flesh is the “meeting hall” of sin, death, and Satan; the flesh is a hopeless case and can never be improved—Rom. 7:17-18, 21; cf. John 17:15:
 - a. The flesh is at enmity with God and is unable to be subject to the law of God.
 - b. The flesh can never please God—Rom. 8:7-8.
- B. Sin is Satan himself in our flesh:
 1. Sin can deceive us, kill us (7:11), lord it over us, that is, have dominion over us (6:12, 14), and cause us to do things against our will (7:17, 20); all these activities show that sin is a living person.
 2. Sin is the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, who, having injected himself into man through Adam’s fall, has now become the very sinful nature dwelling, acting, and working in fallen man—cf. Matt. 16:22-23.

3. In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me”; in Romans 7:17 he says, “It is no longer I...but sin that dwells in me,” showing that sin is another person within us.
4. In our flesh no good thing dwells, because the flesh is fully possessed, taken over, by Satan as sin—v. 18a.

V. For the sake of His economy, God in His wisdom and sovereignty uses our sinful, ugly flesh to force us to turn to our spirit so that we may live by the law of the Spirit of life and gain more of the Spirit—8:2:

- A. We are either in the spirit or in the flesh; there is no third place for us to be—vv. 4-13.
- B. Judicially speaking, both Satan and our flesh were condemned once for all on the cross (v. 3; John 3:14; Heb. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:21), but God allowed the flesh to remain with us to help us and force us to turn to Christ in our spirit and have no more confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3):
 1. Without the help rendered by the sinful, ugly flesh, we would not be as desperate to gain the Lord or to have Him wrought into us.
 2. Our goal may be holiness, spirituality, or victory, but God’s goal is to work Himself into us; often, when we are in a difficult situation, we are more open to the Lord, more willing to turn to Him, and more willing to allow Him to work Himself into us—Rom. 8:28-29.
 3. Our hardships, defeats, failures, and disappointments force us to realize that there is no hope in the flesh; the flesh is good only to force us to turn to Christ in our spirit, to make us desperate to get into the spirit, and to keep us watchful to stay in the spirit—Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:17-18.
 4. The Lord does not care for whether or not we have a victory; the Lord cares for only one thing—that we gain Christ as the Spirit—Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 3:18.

VI. Today we need to take care of one thing—walking according to the spirit to gain, to win, Christ as the Spirit—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 3:8; Rom. 10:12-13; Eph. 6:17-18:

- A. Our flesh is a compound, compounded with sin, death, and Satan; our spirit is also a compound, compounded with Christ, the Spirit, and grace—2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16; Gal. 6:18.
- B. Only the persons who walk according to the spirit can be the proper members for the building up of a local church; if we do not have such a walk, sooner or later we will be a trouble to our local church—5:16-26.

VII. Our enjoyment of the indwelling Spirit as the automatic law of the divine life is in the Body of Christ and for the Body of Christ with the goal of making us the same as God is in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead and of constituting us the members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions—Rom. 8:2, 28-29; 12:1-2; Phil. 1:19; Eph. 4:11-12, 16.

Message Four

Romans 8—the Focus of the Entire Bible and the Center of the Universe

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 10, 4-6, 11, 13-15, 28-29

- I. Romans 8 reveals that the processed Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life gives the divine life to the believers for their living—vv. 2, 10, 6, 11, 28-29:**
- A. God's desire and goal are that we live by the divine life and minister life to others for the building up of the church; this life is in Christ Jesus, and it is the life of the law of the Spirit of life; the all-inclusive, indwelling Spirit is constantly transmitting this life into each one of us to build up the church, edify the saints, and minister the riches of Christ to everyone who contacts us—v. 2; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 John 5:16.
 - B. We need to see the way to live as a man by the law of the Spirit of life; we must be controlled and directed by the law of the Spirit of life to experience a genuine and normal Christian life—Rom. 8:2:
 - 1. We need to walk according to the spirit—v. 4:
 - a. If we insist on anything for our own sake, interest, or profit, even if the thing itself is not sinful or immoral, we are walking according to the flesh.
 - b. According to the Bible, there is no third choice or neutral ground; everything is according to either the flesh or the spirit—vv. 4, 6, 9; John 3:6; Gal. 5:17; 6:8; 1 Pet. 3:18.
 - c. When we deduct the flesh, what remains is the spirit; since we know what the flesh is, we can walk according to the spirit simply by not walking according to the flesh.
 - 2. We need to be according to the spirit—Rom. 8:5:
 - a. A living according to the spirit and not according to the flesh is the realization of an inward law—the law of the Spirit of life—v. 2.
 - b. Being according to the flesh is like remaining on the ground according to the law of gravity, which may be likened to the law of sin and of death.
 - c. Being according to the spirit is like being on an airplane according to the law of aerodynamics, which may be likened to the law of the Spirit of life.
 - d. The law of the Spirit of life in our mingled spirit has the power to overcome the law of sin and of death in our flesh.
 - e. If we choose to be according to the spirit, the law of the Spirit of life will spontaneously free us from the law of sin and of death; the law of the Spirit of life does not need our help, but it needs our consent—cf. v. 6.
 - f. In every place and at every time, we need to build up a spiritual habit of exercising our spirit to “switch on” the law of the Spirit of life—1 Tim. 4:7.
 - g. The law of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the resurrecting Spirit have been installed into every believer; in order to receive His life supply, we need only to exercise our spirit by calling on the Lord and worshipping, thanking, praising, and exalting Him—Isa. 12:2-6.
 - 3. We need to mind the things of the Spirit, to set the mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:5-6:
 - a. To mind the things of the Spirit is to set our mind on the things of the Spirit, that is, to always have our mind occupied with the things of the Spirit, which are the things concerning Christ.
 - b. The things of the Spirit of God are the deep things of God; to realize and participate in Christ as the deep things of God requires us to love Him—1 Cor. 2:9-11, 14.

- c. We need to exercise to build up a habit of continually having our mind occupied with the things of the Spirit, the things concerning Christ.
- d. According to Song of Songs, the seeker is sick with love for the Lord (2:5; 5:8); within her mind there is nothing but the Lord; we need to have such a mind.
- e. The secret of spiritual warfare is to not allow our mind to be vacant; the two spirits, the divine Spirit with our human spirit, connect all the things concerning Christ to our mind; as long as our mind is connected to the things concerning Christ by the two spirits, we are victorious—Rom. 8:6, 16.
- f. The expression *the mind set on the spirit* in Romans 8:6 is literally “the mind of the spirit”; the mind of Christ, the mind of the spirit, is a mind that is filled, occupied, and saturated with Christ—Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16.
- 4. We need to put to death the practices of our body—Rom. 8:13, 5:
 - a. The practices of the body are our old habits; these practices include not only sinful things but also everything practiced by our body apart from the Spirit.
 - b. We need to coordinate with the indwelling Spirit to take the initiative to put to death the practices of our body; then the Spirit will come in to apply the effectiveness of Christ’s death to these practices, thus killing them.
- 5. We need to be led by the Spirit of God—v. 14:
 - a. We do not need to seek after the Spirit’s leading, since it is already present within us, dwelling in our regenerated spirit; if we live under this leading, we will walk and behave in a way that proves that we are God’s sons.
 - b. The leading here is not merely an action of the Spirit; it is the Triune God Himself becoming the leading in our spirit; if we would care for Him as a person who indwells us, we will spontaneously be led by Him.
- 6. We need to cry, “Abba, Father!”—v. 15:
 - a. *Abba* is an Aramaic word, and *Father* is the translation of the Greek word *Pater*; the combining of the Aramaic title with the Greek title expresses a stronger affection in crying to the Father.
 - b. Such an affectionate cry implies an intimate relationship in life between a genuine son and a begetting father—v. 16; cf. v. 23.

II. Romans 8 may be considered the focus of the entire Bible and the center of the universe; thus, if we are experiencing Romans 8, we are in the center of the universe:

- A. In eternity past God purposed to enter into His redeemed people so that He could be their life and so that they could be His corporate expression; this is the focus of God’s economy—Eph. 1:3-5.
- B. Man is the center of God’s creation, because God’s intention is to be expressed through man; man can become God’s expression only by God entering into man to be man’s life and content and to make man one with Him so that man may live by Him and even live Him out; in this way God is expressed from within man.
- C. Zechariah 12:1 says, “Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him”:
 - 1. The spirit of man is ranked with the heavens and the earth because our spirit is the location where God desires to dwell—Eph. 2:22; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22.
 - 2. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit so that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God’s purpose for God, and be one with God.

- D. The central focus in the universe is that the processed Triune God has come into us and now dwells in us; this is the greatest miracle; nothing else in the universe could be more important than this—Isa. 66:1-2; John 14:23; 15:4.
- E. We should all be full of joy since the Triune God is indwelling us and is one with us; He is our life and our person, and He is making us His home—Eph. 3:14-17.
- F. The indwelling Spirit in Romans 8 is the Triune God:
1. In the expression *the Spirit of God*, *the Spirit* and *God* are in apposition, indicating that the Spirit and God are one—v. 9.
 2. Similarly, *the Spirit of Christ*, *the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead*, and *the Spirit of life* in Romans 8 indicate that the Spirit is Christ, the resurrecting One, and life; therefore, since the Spirit indwells us, all three of the Triune God are in us as life—vv. 9, 11, 2.
 3. The Spirit in Romans 8 is the all-inclusive Spirit as the ultimate consummation and application of the Triune God; the Spirit is the reaching, the application, of the Triune God to us.
 4. The Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit is within us for us to experience and enjoy by taking Him as our life and our person; we are the container of the Triune God—2 Cor. 4:7.
- G. When Christ enters into us, our spirit is regenerated, making our spirit life (Rom. 8:10); when we love the Lord and set our mind on the things concerning Him, our mind is life (v. 6); furthermore, if the Spirit of the resurrecting One indwells us, He will give life to our body (v. 11):
1. According to God's economy and eternal purpose, what God wants to do in His salvation is to work Himself into us, His redeemed people, as our life; God's desire to work Himself into us as our life is the focus of the Bible.
 2. The life that is given to our spirit, mind, and body is the indwelling Spirit as the ultimate consummation and application of the Triune God.
 3. If we are weak, lacking life, it is because we are short of spiritual breath; to breathe spiritually is to call on the name of the Lord—Lam. 3:55-56; *Hymns*, #73, stanza 2.
 4. As we continually breathe in the Spirit as life and allow Him to spread into all our being, more and more of Christ is added into us; this is to possess, experience, and enjoy the subjective God within our being.
 5. When God is thus added into our being, we will receive the life element that causes us to grow for the building up of the Body of Christ—Col. 2:19.
 6. While we are growing with this life element, the law of the Spirit of life works in us automatically to shape us, to conform us, into the image of Christ; the Body of Christ, the fullness of Christ, the new man, and the mutual habitation of God and man issue from our experience of this life—Rom. 8:29.
 7. Ultimately, this life will prepare the bride of Christ, which will cause the Lord to come back and usher us into the next age; for this reason, the crucial focus of the Bible and the universe is in Romans 8.