

Message Four

The Recovery of the Subjective Truths in the Gospel of John

Scripture Reading: John 1:14, 16; 14:16-20, 6; 20:22; 4:10, 14; 6:35, 57; 12:23-24; 3:29-30

I. The Lord desires to recover the subjective truths in the Holy Scriptures—John 1:14; 14:16-20; 1 Tim. 3:15-16a; 2 Tim. 4:22; 3:15-16:

- A. The truths in the Holy Scriptures are always of two aspects—the objective aspect and the subjective aspect—Rom. 8:34, 10; Col. 3:1; 1:27:
 - 1. God’s salvation has two aspects: the outward, objective aspect, signified by the best robe, and the inward, subjective aspect, signified by the fattened calf; Christ as our objective righteousness is our salvation outwardly, whereas Christ as our subjective life for our enjoyment is our salvation inwardly—Luke 15:22-24; cf. Rom. 5:10.
 - 2. All the objective doctrines are for the subjective experience; the objective Christ is “the best robe” of the God-satisfying righteousness to cover the penitent sinner (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30), whereas the subjective Christ is “the fattened calf” as the rich Christ (Eph. 3:8), killed on the cross for the believer’s life supply and enjoyment in resurrection (John 10:10; 6:63; 11:25; 12:24; 4:10, 14; 20:22).
 - 3. Christ as our objective righteousness enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas Christ as our subjective righteousness enables us to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ—Psa. 45:13-14; Phil. 3:9; Rev. 19:7-9.
 - 4. Justification is “of life” because life is the goal of God’s salvation; our organic union of life with and in the Lord subjectively is an issue of our justification objectively—Rom. 5:10, 17-18; 11:17, 24; John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The subjective truths are linked to the Spirit and life and are constituted with the Spirit and life—John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6:
 - 1. The Spirit and life are the substance of the subjective truths; thus, without the Spirit and life we do not have any subjective truths.
 - 2. When we live by the Spirit and life, we have the experience of the subjective truths, and this issues in the church life—Rom. 8:2, 4; 16:1, 4-5.

II. The Gospel of John—a book on the subjective truths—reveals that we should have subjective experiences of Christ—4:14; 6:57; 20:22:

- A. The Gospel of John is a book on the subjective experience of Christ as life—1:4; 3:15-16; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6a:
 - 1. The Father is the source of life, the Son is the embodiment of life, and the Spirit is the Giver of life—5:26; 1:4; 6:63.
 - 2. The building up and increase of the Body of Christ are the growth and overflow of life—7:37-38; 15:1-8.
 - 3. The overcomers are the receivers, enjoyers, and dispensers of Christ as the green pasture of life—1:12-13, 16; 10:9-10; 21:15-17.
 - 4. The Father is the fountain as the source of life, the Son is the spring as the gushing up of life, the Spirit is the river as the flowing out of life, and this flowing Triune God is “into eternal life,” which is our becoming the New Jerusalem as the totality of the eternal life (with God as the glory of life, the Father as the light of life, the Son as the tree of life, and the Spirit as the river of life)—4:14b; Rev. 21:9b-11, 23; 22:1-2, 5.
- B. Christ as the eternal Word of God is revealed in chapter 1 of John—v. 1:
 - 1. Christ as the Word of God speaks for God through His creation—v. 3.
 - 2. Christ as the Word of God speaks for God through His incarnation as the tabernacle of God—v. 14.
 - 3. Christ as the Word of God speaks for God in His becoming the Lamb of God for redemption—v. 29.

4. Christ as the Word of God speaks for God through His becoming the anointing Spirit for the transformation of God's redeemed people into stones for the building of God's house (Bethel) organically for the New Testament—vv. 32-42, 51; cf. Gen. 28:11-22.
- C. The Word became flesh to make God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, enterable, and enjoyable so that He might work Himself into us—John 1:14; 14:16-17.
- D. Christ became the Spirit as the breath that we may breathe Him, the living water that we may drink Him, and the bread of life that we may eat Him—4:10, 14; 6:32-33, 35, 51, 54-57; 7:37-39; 20:22.
- E. Christ is the true vine, and we are His branches—15:1-8:
 1. The life, the substance, and the nature of the vine are the life, the substance, and the nature of the branches—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 2. The Son as the vine is the center of God's economy and the embodiment of all the riches of the Father; the Father, by cultivating the Son, works Himself with all His riches into the vine, and eventually, the vine expresses the Father in a corporate way through the believers in Christ as its branches.
- F. The subjective experience of Christ is actually Christ Himself entering into us to be our life and the constituent of our being—Col. 3:4, 10-11.

III. The Gospel of John reveals the subjective truths concerning the church:

- A. The issue of our receiving the Lord into us is that we become constituents of the church—12:24; 20:17; 15:4-5; 3:29-30.
- B. The Lord's recovery is to recover the subjective experience of Christ for the practice of the church life—Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; 1:2:
 1. The church, which is the issue of our subjective experience of Christ, is Christ constituted into His believers—Eph. 3:16-19.
 2. The Christ who died and resurrected has been wrought into us to produce the church, which is His Body—Col. 1:27, 18; 2:19; 3:15.
 3. Christ in Himself is the Head, and Christ constituted into us is the Body—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:17; 4:15-16; Col. 1:18, 27; 3:4; 2:19; 3:15.
- C. Although the word *church* is not specifically used in the Gospel of John, the fact of the existence of the church and the constituents of the church are clearly defined, and the church is referred to in seven ways:
 1. The church is composed of many grains, which are the many believers produced through Christ's death and resurrection—12:23-24.
 2. The church is composed of the Lord's many brothers—20:17.
 3. The church is the Father's house—14:2, 23.
 4. The church is the Son's vine with many branches—15:5, 7.
 5. The church is the Spirit's new child, the new man, born by the consummated Spirit—16:20-22.
 6. The church is the bride with Christ as the Bridegroom—3:29-30.
 7. The church is the one flock with Christ as the Shepherd—10:14-16.
- D. The practical church life is an issue of our experience of the subjective truths; when we experience the subjective truths, the church is spontaneously produced—Rom. 8:10-11; 12:4-5; 16:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9, 30; 15:45b; 6:17; 1:2; 12:27.
- E. The issue of our subjective experience of Christ as life is the church life as a house of feasting—John 12:1-11:
 1. In the church life we all must be a triangular member of the church—a "Martha-Lazarus-Mary."
 2. In the real church life the diligent service to the Lord is rendered, the living testimony of the Lord is seen, and the absolute love toward the Lord is poured out; this is the real expression of the Body of the Lord, which is a vessel to contain the Lord and express Him.