

Message Two

Saved in Life from Naturalness, Individualism, and Divisiveness

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 3:15-18; Phil. 4:6-7; Acts 9:1-17; John 17:6-24

I. We need to be saved in life (Rom. 5:10) from naturalness, from our natural disposition; we need to continually behold the beauty of the Lord of glory to keep ourselves in the daily process of “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit”—Psa. 27:4; 2 Cor. 3:15-18:

- A. Our natural disposition is our self; it is in us, and it is us; practically speaking, to deny the self is simply to deny our natural disposition; as Christians, we have to live Christ by continually exercising our spirit to reject our self and live by another life, the crucified and resurrected Christ, signified by the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Phil. 1:21a; Rev. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Tim. 4:7-8.
- B. Whatever we are by birth, whether good or bad, whether useful or not, is natural and altogether a hindrance to the Holy Spirit in constituting the divine life into our being; for this reason our natural strength, natural wisdom, natural cleverness, natural disposition, natural shortcomings, natural virtues, plus our character and habits, must all be torn down in order that the Holy Spirit may form in us a new disposition, new character, new habits, new virtues, and new attributes—Titus 3:4-6; Ezek. 36:25-27.
- C. In order to accomplish the work of reconstitution, the Holy Spirit of God moves within us to enlighten, inspire, lead, and saturate us with the divine life; He also works in our environment to arrange every detail, person, matter, and thing in our situation to tear down all aspects of our natural being in order that He might conform us to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:28-29.
- D. Jacob’s life shows that a natural person must pass through breaking in order to become Israel, a prince of God; what God tears down through our environment is our worthless self, our natural disposition; however, what God builds into us is Himself, the peerless, supereminent, incomparable, and infinite One—Eph. 3:16-17a; 1 Cor. 3:12:
 1. God destined Jacob to live a struggling life all his days; He sovereignly arranged every circumstance, situation, and person in Jacob’s life and caused them all to work together for Jacob’s good so that He could transform Jacob, a supplanter and a heel holder, into Israel, a prince of God—Gen. 25:26; 32:24-32.
 2. *Israel* means “one who struggles with God” (v. 28) and “the prince of God”; the Christian life is a life of struggling with God to be transformed by God into a prince of God—cf. Phil. 4:5-7, 11-13.
 3. Transformation is the metabolic function of the life of God in the believers by the addition of the element of the divine life of Christ into our being, to be expressed outwardly in the image of Christ; Isaac, Rebekah, and Esau were used to put Jacob into the “oven” of transformation, and Laban and Jacob’s wives were the “fire” burning in that oven; Jacob’s history shows that God sovereignly arranges each aspect of the environment of His chosen ones so that He may carry out His work of transformation within them—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; 8:28-30.
- E. We need to behold God’s face (Gen. 32:30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6-7), seek His face (Psa. 27:8, 4), and enjoy His face as our serving supply (Exo. 25:30; 33:11a), doing everything in the face, the person, of Christ for our transformation from glory to glory (2 Cor. 2:10; cf. 13:14); when the Triune God is dispensed into us, we have the face of the Triune God as our grace and His countenance as our peace (Num. 6:25-26):
 1. Seeing God equals gaining God to be constituted with God—Job 42:5-6.

2. Seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- F. We need to learn Christ as the secret (Phil. 4:12) of being transformed, that is, of being metabolically changed in our natural life, in any kind of environment, situation, or circumstance; this practical and simple secret is in verses 6 and 7—“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (see handout of pp. 54-55 of *The Organic Aspect of God’s Salvation*).

II. We need to be saved in life from individualism; everyone in Adam lives as separate individuals; in Christ everything individualistic is ruled out; if we want to know the Body life, we need deliverance not only from our sinful life and our natural life but also from our individualistic life:

- A. Sin hinders us from seeing Christ, and the natural life hinders us from seeing the Body; we all must see our position in the Body of Christ; if we truly see our position in the Body, it will be as though we were saved a second time—1 Cor. 12:18, 24-25.
- B. The Father is versus the world (1 John 2:15), the Lord is versus the devil (Heb. 2:14), the Spirit is versus the flesh (Gal. 5:17), and the Body is versus the individual (1 Cor. 12:21); once a man sees the Body of Christ, he is free from individualism; he will no longer live for himself but for the Body.
- C. The Body of Christ is not a doctrine but a realm; it is not a teaching but a life; only a revelation will usher us into the realm and reality of the Body, and only then will the Body of Christ become our experience.
- D. Those who see that they are members of the Body will surely treasure the Body and honor the other members; they will not see just their own virtues; they will readily see others as being better than themselves.
- E. Wherever there is Body-revelation, there is Body-consciousness, and wherever there is Body-consciousness, individual thought and action are automatically ruled out; as soon as we see the Body, our life and work as individuals cease, and we enter into the commanded blessing of the oneness of the Body—Psa. 133:1-3.
- F. One function of the Body is to protect all the members (Eph. 6:10-20; Deut. 32:30); also, an isolated individual is prone to be deceived, so we should not only honor Christ as the Head of the Body by seeking His counsel (Josh. 9:14) but also consult constantly with our fellow members in the Body (Acts 22:10; Prov. 27:17).
- G. The Body of Christ is also a limitation to all the members; we should learn to be blended with other brothers and sisters; individual dispositions and peculiarities have no place in the church; also, every member should honor the functions and measure of the other members and be faithful to his own; thus, there will be no jealousy, ambition, or craving to do what others can do—2 Cor. 10:13-14; Gal. 5:25-26; 2 Chron. 26:16-21.
- H. On the day that the Lord revealed Himself to and in Paul, the Lord showed him the revelation of the Body and the principle of the Body—Acts 9:1-17.
- I. Our living and serving should be in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body; may the Lord deliver us from individualism into the Body, and may we serve His Body with a ministry that is based on our enjoyment and experience of Christ.

III. We need to be saved in life from divisiveness; the intrinsic nature of many of the problems that we have faced in the Lord's recovery is because of the shortage of the proper understanding of the genuine oneness revealed in John 17:

- A. The first level of oneness is the oneness in the Father's name and by the Father's divine life; the Father's name denotes the person of the Father, the Father Himself as the source of life, the source of oneness—vv. 6-13; 5:26, 43:
 - 1. We must take the Father as the source of life and blessing; we must not live by our human life but by the Father's divine life in our spirit to enjoy our all-inclusive sonship—cf. Matt. 14:19; Rom. 11:36; John 6:57; Rom. 8:15-16.
 - 2. The Father's life with His nature is the element of the oneness—John 17:2; cf. Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The second level of oneness is the oneness in the reality of the sanctifying word—John 17:14-21:
 - 1. The Father's word is the truth (v. 17), and the truth is the Triune God (14:6; 1 John 5:6b); to be sanctified by the reality of the word is to be sanctified by the Triune God Himself.
 - 2. The word, which is the truth, sanctifies God's people from the world (John 17:17) and keeps them from the ruler of the world, the evil one (v. 15):
 - a. The Father's word of reality sanctifies us and makes us pure, delivering us from the mixed-up world to separate us unto our God, the God of purity; the more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—Psa. 12:6; 119:140.
 - b. The Father's sanctifying word is the means of our oneness, bringing us into the sphere of oneness—John 17:21; Eph. 5:26.
- C. The third level of oneness is the oneness in the divine glory for the expression of the processed, mingled, and incorporated Triune God—John 17:22-24:
 - 1. The oneness of all the believers in the divine glory is the oneness in the expressed sonship with the Father's life and nature—v. 22; 5:26.
 - 2. The glory of God is the expression of God; this splendid expression of divinity delivers us from our self and makes us fully one—cf. Rev. 21:11.
 - 3. In this stage of the oneness, the self is fully denied; we must be saved from our self, including ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts—John 17:21-23; Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3 John 9:
 - a. If we would give up the self, lose the self, and turn to the spirit, right away we would be in the reality of the Body; if we live by our life with our nature to express ourselves, there will be no glory of God; in the expression of ourselves there is division—Eph. 2:22; John 16:13.
 - b. To live and act in the Father's life with the Father's nature to express the Father is glory, and it is in this glory that we all are one; our Christian life should be a life of "glory to glory"—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- D. In order to preserve the oneness that the Lord has given us, we need to be constantly mingled with the Triune God (thus nullifying the natural man, the world with Satan, and the self) to satisfy the Lord's desire—Eph. 4:1-6.