

**THE VISION, THE LIVING, AND THE PRACTICE
OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY TODAY**

Afternoon Message Two

**The Experience of the Cross—
For the Proper Expression of the Church Life Today**

- I. God's economy is for the natural created man to die so that the creating God can live within the created man—Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 3:3-4.**
- II. The church as the new man in the new creation is produced out of the cross—Eph. 2:16:**
 - A. The church does not come before the cross; it comes after the cross.
 - B. Sin, sins, the self, the flesh, world, and Satan cannot pass through the cross.
- III. The cross is a test and a checkpoint in the church life—1 Cor. 2:2; Exo. 40:29:**
 - A. At the entrance of the church there is the cross; this is the first item in the spiritual charter of the church, the spiritual rules and regulations for the church.
 - B. If we come into the church without being checked at the cross, we will be a danger to the church.
 - C. When a brother comes to the elders' meeting to suggest something or to raise a point, he must first pass through the cross.
- IV. The building up of the church depends on the shutting up of the gates of Hades through the exercise of three keys—Matt. 16:18-19:**
 - A. Denying the self—v. 24:
 1. Throughout history, the church has been damaged mainly by the self; nothing damages and frustrates the building up of the church more than the self.
 2. The reason we are offended is that the self is so open and prevailing.
 3. To have a favorite among the brothers and sisters is to be full of self.
 4. To be disappointed is a proof that you are in the self.
 5. Whether a situation is for you or against you, whether the brothers love you, welcome you, or hate you and do not welcome you, you still need to lock your self.
 - B. Bearing the cross—v. 24:
 1. To take up the cross simply means to take up God's will.
 2. The church is God's will; we have no choice about it.
 3. Every brother and sister in the church is also God's will.
 4. Do not try to deal with the church, but deal with your taste.
 5. Do not give any ground to your choice or preference; your destiny is God's will. If you exercise your preference, there will not be any building.
 - C. Losing the soul—v. 25:
 1. To lose the soul means to lose the enjoyment of the soul.
 2. To seek a better situation to make things easier for ourselves is to save the soul.

3. To be unwilling to forgive simply because we enjoy being able to condemn others is to save the soul.
4. Losing all our present soulish enjoyment for the Lord's sake, for the sake of the church, and for the sake of all the saints will bring enlightenment, nourishment, and filling to those with us, and will bring in a revival in the church.
5. The elders need to learn to be flexible by taking up as a cross those who may always act contrary to what they say.
6. Our willingness to lose the soul will cause the church to be transfigured; otherwise, the church life will be darkness and gnashing of teeth to us—vv. 27-28.