

Message Two

**The Beautifying and Killing Functions of the Word of God
for the Church as the Glorious Bride of Christ and the Corporate Warrior of God**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:26-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7-9, 11-16

I. The beautifying function of the word of God is for the church to be prepared to be Christ's glorious bride, and the killing function of the word of God is for the church to function as God's corporate warrior in slaying His adversary—Eph. 5:26-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7-9, 11-16:

- A. In Ephesians 5 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride, but in Ephesians 6 the word is for killing that enables the church as the corporate warrior to engage in spiritual warfare.
- B. The beautifying function of the word of God produces the church in the image of God, and the killing function of the word of God issues in the church with the dominion of God—Gen. 1:26.
- C. The overcomers live by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God in order to be governed, controlled, ruled, and restricted by the Word of God in following Him to become His bride for His expression and to defeat His enemy for His dominion—Matt. 4:4; Deut. 17:18-20; Rev. 19:13-14.
- D. The Lord Jesus came as the Word of God in the flesh to judicially redeem the church (John 1:14), He became the life-giving Spirit as the word of God to organically save the church (1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 5:26; 6:17), and He will return as the Word of God with His overcomers to set up His kingdom on earth (Rev. 19:13-16; 17:14; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45).

II. As the bride, the church must be beautiful, “not having spot or wrinkle or any such things”; the beautifying of the church is by Christ as the life-giving Spirit sanctifying the church, cleansing her by the washing (lit., laver) of the water in the word—Eph. 5:26-27:

- A. The beauty of the bride comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church; our only beauty is the reflection of Christ, the shining out of Christ from within us—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
- B. In the past, Christ as the Redeemer gave Himself up for the church (Eph. 5:25) for redemption and the impartation of life (John 19:34); in the present, He as the life-giving Spirit is sanctifying the church, beautifying her, by the washing (the laver) of the water in the word; and in the future, He as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart for His satisfaction (Eph. 5:26-27; cf. S. S. 8:13-14).
- C. Unless the priests in the tabernacle washed in the laver, there was no way for the tabernacle to operate; likewise, unless we are cleansed by the laver of the water in the word from earthly defilement, there is no way for the church life to operate—Exo. 30:17-21; Eph. 5:26.
- D. The Bible speaks of two kinds of defilement: the defilement that comes from sin and the defilement that comes from the earthly touch, from having contact with the things of the world—cf. John 13:12-17.
- E. The washing at the laver signifies not the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ but the washing away of the defilement that comes from contacting earthly things, by the life-giving, speaking Spirit:

1. The life-giving Spirit is the speaking Spirit, and whatever He speaks instantly and presently (Gk. *rhema*) is the word that washes us.
 2. The way to have the washing of the water in the word is to pray-read the Word—Eph. 6:17-18.
 3. If day by day there is no speaking of the Lord within us, then in our practical experience the Spirit is absent, for the Lord's speaking actually is the Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
 4. As long as we have the Lord's present word, we have the life-giving Spirit; we know that Christ as our person is present with us by His speaking, for His speaking is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit.
- F. The laver typifies the washing power of the life-giving Spirit issuing from the death of Christ; the locating of the laver after the altar signifies that the washing power of the laver comes out of God's judgment at the altar:
1. After passing through God's full judgment at the altar (the cross), the crucified Christ entered into resurrection and became the life-giving Spirit who washes us—1 Cor. 15:45; 6:11; Titus 3:5.
 2. The dimensions of the laver are not given, signifying that the life-giving Spirit is immeasurable, unlimited—John 3:34.
- G. The laver was made of bronze from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting—Exo. 38:8:
1. Bronze signifies God's righteous judgment—cf. Num. 16:38-39; 21:9.
 2. The laver of bronze was a mirror that could reflect and expose, indicating that the word of Christ has the power to expose and judge our uncleanness and show our need to be washed.

III. We need to “receive the...sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit”—Eph. 6:17-18a:

- A. The antecedent of *which* is *Spirit*, not *sword*, indicating that the Spirit is the word of God; both the Spirit and the word are Christ—2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 19:13.
- B. Christ as the Spirit and the word furnishes us with a sword as an offensive weapon to defeat and slay the adversary.
- C. The sword, the Spirit, and the word are one; when the constant word in the Bible becomes the instant word, that word is the Spirit as the sword that kills the adversary.
- D. We should pray-read the Word primarily to experience the sword as the killing instrument to slay God's adversary; since the enemy has injected himself into our being, what we need is for the killing power of the word to be applied to us to deal with the elements of the adversary within us—Eph. 6:17-18.
- E. Pray-reading is a practical way to kill the negative elements within us.
- F. Because the self is the greatest enemy, we need to experience the killing power of God's word; the more we take in the word with its killing power, the more our pride and all the negative elements within us are put to death.
- G. As we pray-read the Word, the battle is raging as the negative elements in our being are slain; eventually, the self, the worst foe of all, will be put to death.