

Message Five

Eating the Lord as the Tree of Life and Living on the Line of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10b; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2

I. The tree of life signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ as life to man in the form of food—Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10b; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:35, 57:

- A. God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as his life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically so that God might become the very constituent of man's being—cf. 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6.
- B. The tree of life grows along the two sides of the river of water of life, indicating that it is a vine; since Christ is a vine tree and is also life, He is the tree of life—Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2; John 15:1; 14:6a.
- C. Christ was processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection so that man might have life and live by eating Him—10:10b; 6:51, 57, 63.

II. We can eat the Lord as the tree of life, our spiritual food, in the following ways:

- A. We can eat Him by eating His words:
 - 1. "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God"—Matt. 4:4.
 - 2. "How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!"—Psa. 119:103.
 - 3. "Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat. And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate it, and it was like honey in my mouth in its sweetness. Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them"—Ezek. 3:1-4.
 - 4. "Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts"—Jer. 15:16.
 - 5. "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me...It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life"—John 6:57, 63.
- B. We can eat Him by doing the will of the Father to satisfy the hungry and thirsty ones and by glorifying the Father on earth in living the life of a God-man—Matt. 24:45-47:
 - 1. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work"—John 4:34.
 - 2. "I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do"—17:4; cf. Col. 1:9-11.
- C. We can eat Him by contacting the proper people—Lev. 11:1-3, 9, 13, 21:
 - 1. To eat is to contact things outside of us and to receive them into us, with the result that they eventually become our inner constitution.
 - 2. In Leviticus 11 all the animals signify different kinds of people, and eating signifies our contacting of people—cf. Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29.
 - 3. For God's people to live a holy life as required by the holy God, they must be careful about the kind of people they contact—cf. Lev. 11:46-47; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:22:
 - a. Animals that divide the hoof and chew the cud (Lev. 11:3; cf. vv. 4-8, 26-28) signify persons who have discernment in their activities (Phil. 1:9-10) and who receive the word of God with much reconsideration (Psa. 119:15).

- b. Aquatic animals that have fins and scales signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence (fins help fish to move, to act, in water according to their wishes, and scales protect the fish that live in the sea from being salted)—Lev. 11:9.
 - c. Birds that have wings for flying and that eat seeds of life as their food supply signify persons who can live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and who take things of life as their life supply—v. 13.
 - d. Insects that have wings and have legs above their feet for leaping on the ground signify persons who can live and move in a life that is above the world and who can keep themselves from the world—vv. 21-22.
- D. We can eat Him by feasting on Him in the meetings on the unique ground of oneness:
- 1. The children of Israel could enjoy the produce of the land in two ways: the common, private way was to enjoy it as a common portion at any time, in any place, and with anyone (Deut. 12:15); the special, corporate way was to enjoy the top portion, the firstfruits and the firstlings, with all the Israelites at the appointed feasts and in the unique place chosen by God (vv. 5-7, 17-18).
 - 2. Likewise, the enjoyment of Christ by the New Testament believers is of two aspects: the common, private aspect of enjoying Christ at any time and at any place and the special, corporate aspect of enjoying the top portion of Christ in the meetings of the proper church life on the unique ground of oneness, the place chosen by God—Col. 1:12; 1 Cor. 14:26.

III. The principle of the tree of life is the principle of dependence on God, and it is realized throughout the whole Bible by those who lived on the line of life:

- A. Abel contacted God in God's way—Gen. 4:4.
- B. Seth and Enosh called upon the name of the Lord—v. 26.
- C. Enoch walked with God—5:22-24.
- D. Noah walked with God and worked together with God—6:8-9, 14.
- E. Abraham lived in the appearing of God and called upon the name of the Lord—Acts 7:2; Gen. 12:7-8; 17:1; 18:1; James 2:23.
- F. Moses lived in the appearing and the presence of God—Exo. 3:2, 16; 33:11, 13-15; 25:9.
- G. The children of Israel journeyed in the presence of the Lord—13:21-22; Num. 14:14.
- H. Joshua lived and worked in the presence of the Lord—Josh. 1:5-9.
- I. Gideon fought in and with the presence of the Lord—Judg. 6:12, 16.
- J. Samuel prayed and called on the Lord—1 Sam. 12:23; 15:11; Psa. 99:6; Jer. 15:1.
- K. David trusted in God, looked to God, and enjoyed God's life—1 Sam. 17:37, 45; 30:6; Psa. 27:4, 8, 14; 36:8-9.
- L. Daniel prayed constantly and contacted the Lord continually in utter dependence on Him—Dan. 2:17-23; 6:10-11; 9:2-4; 10:1-3, 12.
- M. The Lord Jesus as the tree of life and as the Son of God lived because of the Father—John 6:57; 14:10.
- N. The New Testament believers live because of the Lord by eating Him and by abiding in Him so that He may abide in them—6:57; 15:5.
- O. Paul lived out the Lord for His magnification—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- P. The church as the Body of Christ depends on Christ and lives by Christ as life—Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 3:4.
- Q. The New Jerusalem is sustained by the river of water of life with the tree of life—Rev. 22:1-2, 14, 17.