

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK OF GOD

Message Six

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Shepherding the Flock of God into a Life of Living through Dying

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Rom. 6:4-5; 8:13; 2 Cor. 4:10-12

- I. The Bible reveals that God's plan was to create for Himself a group of people to be His vessels to contain Him so that He could enter into them to be their life and content and so that they could live Him out to be His corporate expression—Gen. 1:26; 2:7, 9.**
- II. We need to see a vision of the cross—Gal. 2:20; 3:1; 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2:**
 - A. The cross is the center of God's government and His way to accomplish His economy—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.
 - B. In order to progress spiritually and have the proper church life, we need to experience the cross—Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27; Col. 3:12-15.
 - C. We experience the cross in a particular way when we come to the altar at the center of God's building—Ezek. 43:13-27.
 - D. In our fellowship with the Lord, we are eventually brought to the point where we touch the cross in a definite way and realize that God will no longer allow us to live in our natural man; this causes us to have a major breakthrough and an absolute submission to the cross—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14.
- III. According to the New Testament, the Christian life is a life of living through dying; this is a life that expresses the resurrection of Christ through being crucified—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:11:**
 - A. God's way of salvation is to terminate us by the cross of Christ and to resurrect us by His Spirit of life—Rom. 6:6.
 - B. Baptism is a declaration that the Christian life begins with the death of Christ; in baptism we grew together with Him in the likeness of His death to walk in newness of life—vv. 4-5.
 - C. Through the death of Christ we are dead in Him, and now through His resurrection He is living in us—2 Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:19.
 - D. The Christian life is a life of being put to death to receive resurrection life; it is not a life of good and evil—2 Cor. 1:9-10; 4:14:
 1. The Christian life does not emphasize the removal of evil and the practice of good but emphasizes us dying and God living—Rom. 6:8-11.
 2. We should behave not merely according to the standard of morality but according to the standard of crucifixion—Matt. 16:24.
 3. The basic principle in the living of believers is not the rejection of evil and the practice of good but is remaining in the death of Christ—Phil. 3:10.
 4. Our daily life ought to be a life under the cross, in which our soul-life is continually put to death, so that we may live by the life of God—John 12:25.

- E. The putting to death of Jesus destroys the natural man, the outward man, and the flesh, with the result that the inward man is given the opportunity to develop and be renewed to live out the resurrection life—2 Cor. 4:10-12.
- F. All the work that the Lord is doing on us is to destroy our outward, natural man so that we can live out the life of God within us; this is the deepest thought in the New Testament concerning the life of a Christian.
- G. Resurrection is the life of Jesus manifested through His death—vv. 10-11:
 1. Resurrection is also the life of Jesus working in others through His death working in us—v. 12.
 2. Where the death of Christ is, there the resurrection of Christ is also manifested—Phil. 3:10-11.
 3. In the Spirit there is the resurrection of Christ, and the Spirit is the reality of the resurrection of Christ—Rom. 8:11.
- H. We should be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, without our own choice or inclination and seek only God and His will—Phil. 2:5-8:
 1. This willingness to be put aside is the highest definition of death, a death in which the life of God is manifested—2 Cor. 4:10-12.
 2. We need to be one with God, take Him as our life and person, put ourselves aside, and be obedient unto death so that God may live out from within us—John 12:24-26.
 3. Regardless of our circumstances, we should voluntarily put the self to death so that the life of God will live out from within us.
- I. Putting to death by the Spirit the practices of the body is to deny whatever we are and do apart from the Spirit; the result is that the power of resurrection will give us the strength of life to make us live—Rom. 8:13.
- J. Remaining in the death of Christ and walking in His death is a profound principle of the Christian life—6:4-5; Phil. 3:10:
 1. If we remain in the death of Christ which He has accomplished for us, the life of God will continually supply us and will be lived out from within us.
 2. When we remain in the death of Christ and walk in it, we will enjoy the power of Christ's resurrection—Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 1:9-10; 4:14.
 3. The termination of the cross eventually causes the manifestation of the resurrection life.
 4. The more a believer loves the Lord, the more he likes to remain in His death—Phil. 3:10.
- K. The Lord Jesus always put Himself in the place of death so that He would lose His soul-life—John 12:24:
 1. To follow the Lord and to always take the way of the cross mean to always remain in the death of Christ—vv. 25-26.
 2. As the many grains of wheat, we should lose our soul-life through death so that we may enjoy eternal life in resurrection; this is to follow the Lord and walk with Him on the way of losing the soul-life and living in resurrection—v. 25.
 3. The more we die with Christ this way, the more His resurrection power will be manifested in us—11:25.

- L. We need to pray unceasingly, contact the Lord, enjoy the Lord's love, and remain in the Lord's death so that the power of His resurrection can be manifested; this is a life of living through dying—2 Cor. 4:10-12.