

**BEING A PROPER PERSON IN LIFE  
TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN GOD'S ADMINISTRATION**

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six

**Needing to Know the Self and the Old, Natural Being**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:21-26; Luke 9:23-25; John 12:24-26; Gen. 3:1-6

**I. The self is the embodiment of Satan—Matt. 16:21-26; Luke 9:23-25; Gen. 3:1-6:**

- A. The self is the soul plus the satanic mind, the mind of Satan—Matt. 16:23; Gen. 3:1.
- B. Before Eve took the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil into her body, the thought, the mind, of Satan was injected into her soul.
- C. In the process of man's fall, man failed to use his spirit to contact God, thus bypassing God and putting God aside; instead, he exercised his soul—reasoning with the serpent in his mind, desiring the tree of knowledge in the emotion, and deciding in the will to take the fruit and eat it—vv. 1-6.
- D. By this time every part of the soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will—had been poisoned by Satan.

**II. The self is the soul declaring independence from God, and the self is the enemy of the Body:**

- A. Whenever we do something by ourselves without depending on the Lord, we are in the self; because Peter was independent of the Lord, the Lord turned to Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan!"—Matt. 16:22-23a.
- B. We should be dependent not only on the Lord but also on the Body, on the brothers and sisters; when we are independent and isolated from the brothers and sisters, we are independent and isolated from the Lord.
- C. Having the Lord's presence depends on whether or not we are dependent on the Body and rightly related to the Body; if we are rightly related to the Body, we will have the Lord's presence in every place.
- D. If we are independent of the Lord, we are in the self; if we are dependent on the Lord, we are spontaneously dependent on the Body and are full of peace—cf. Col. 3:15.
- E. The world is against the Father (1 John 2:15), the devil is against the Son (3:8), the flesh is against the Spirit (Gal. 5:17), and the self is against the Body (Matt. 16:18, 24; cf. 1 Cor. 12:24-25).
- F. When we are in the self, we are incorporated with Satan; in this corporation the self is the general manager, and Satan is the president.
- G. The greatest problem, the greatest frustration and opposition, to the Body is the self; the self is the independent "I," the independent "me."
- H. If we would be built up in the Body, the self must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced; day by day the self must be renounced in all things—Luke 9:23.

- I. Only when the self is renounced will we have the Body and be genuine members of the Body.

**III. We need to see the distinction between the old man, the “I,” the soul-life, the natural man (natural constitution, natural being), and the self:**

- A. The old man refers to our very being, the created and fallen man—Rom. 6:6.
- B. “I” is the title that the old man calls himself—Gal. 2:20a.
- C. The soul-life is the life of the old man—John 12:25.
- D. The natural man, the natural constitution, the natural being, is our natural ability, capability, strength, talent, methods, wisdom, and knowledge.
- E. The self denotes the soul-life in its opinions, likes, dislikes, and choices; opinions are a matter of the mind; likes and dislikes, or preferences, are a matter of the emotion; and choices are a matter of our will:
  1. When the Lord told His disciples that He would be crucified, Peter’s self was expressed in his opinion—Matt. 16:22.
  2. Immediately after Peter expressed his opinion to the Lord, the Lord said, “If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me”—v. 24.
  3. Eventually, Peter’s preferences and choices would be terminated, and he would be martyred to glorify God—John 21:18-19.

**IV. There is no place in the Lord’s recovery for the self and the old, natural being; in the Lord’s recovery we must crucify, reject, and deny the self with its opinions, preferences, and choices—cf. 1 Cor. 3:12:**

- A. We need to realize that God’s economy is altogether a matter of the new creation; our old, natural being must be put aside—Gal. 6:15.
- B. In the church there is a place for us as regenerated persons who are being sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified, but there is no place for our natural man.
- C. The kingdom of God in this age is the church; the natural man cannot enter into the church, because we must be regenerated to enter into the church—Rom. 14:17; John 3:3, 5.
- D. In order to enter into the practical Body life, which is the real practice of the church life, we need to be transformed—Rom. 12:2.
- E. The will of God is the Body of Christ, and the living of the Body is in the church life—vv. 2-16.
- F. Regeneration is our entry into the church, and transformation is for our remaining and going on in the church life:
  1. Regeneration and transformation nullify our old being; they do not give it any ground.
  2. When the old being has been dealt with, we can practice the proper church life, which is the new creation.
- G. When we realize that our natural being must be put aside and we deny our self, we see much light in the Scriptures.
- H. Second Corinthians 4:16 says, “Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day”:

1. The outer man is the old being, the natural man, and includes any natural ability, strength, eloquence, and talent; the inner man is the spiritual being, the new creation—cf. Ezek. 36:26.
2. We must realize that nothing of our old, natural being should remain in the church life.

**V. The Lord's recovery is a matter of taking up the cross, denying the self, losing the soul-life, and living Christ:**

- A. If we know what the Lord's recovery is and see that in the recovery there is no place for the self, we will take up the cross.
- B. To take up the cross means to remain on the cross; we were crucified with Christ, and we need to remain on the cross—Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:13.
- C. Apparently, the Lord was crucified after the three and a half years of His ministry; actually, He was crucified from the very beginning of His ministry, when His baptism, which signifies death and burial, took place—Matt. 3:16-17.
- D. Throughout the three and a half years of His ministry, He lived a crucified life, continually denying Himself for the accomplishment of the Father's will—John 5:30; 4:34; 6:38; 5:19.
- E. In order to follow the Lord, we must follow His pattern by taking up His cross and denying the self; we need to remain under the killing of the cross by denying our opinions, preferences, and choices.
- F. In order to follow the Lord, we must lose our soul-life; to lose our soul-life is to not live in our old, natural being—Matt. 16:25; John 12:24-26.
- G. We need to see that our old man, our old "I," has been crucified already; based upon that accomplished termination, we deny the self—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.
- H. Because we are regenerated and are being transformed, our natural man will be terminated not by our own doing but by our living another person, Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a.
- I. We need to see that the death in Romans 6, the crucifixion of our old man (v. 6), can be realized and experienced only by the Spirit in Romans 8 (vv. 2, 4, 6, 10-11, 13).
- J. If we truly see the Lord's recovery, we will realize that there is no place for whatever we are, have, or can do in our old being; this vision kills our pretense and kills our selfishness, causing us to lose interest in selfish gain and honor.
- K. The elders need to see this so that it will become a ruling, controlling, and directing vision to them; the church life is altogether of the new creation—2 Cor. 5:17.