

**ENTERING INTO THE FOURTH STAGE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE
TO ARRIVE AT A FULL-GROWN MAN
FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PURPOSE**

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

**The Fourth Stage of the Experience of Life
(3)
Reigning in Life**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10, 17, 21; 16:20

- I. In the creation of man, God has a twofold intent and desire: on the one hand, God wants man to possess His image so that man may express God Himself; on the other hand, God wants man to represent Him with His authority in order to deal with His enemy—Gen. 1:26:**
- A. As long as there are men willing to live for God, God desires to grant them authority so that all things might come under their dominion—Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 16:20.
 - B. From the beginning until eternity, God's one intention is that He may gain man to reign for Him in this universe—cf. Matt. 5:3; 13:43; Rom. 14:17.
 - C. From the point of view of authority, reigning is the final goal of God's salvation; it is the summit of our spiritual experience; if any Christian has not yet reached the degree of reigning for God, he is not yet up to the standard—5:17, 21; Rev. 2:26-27; 22:5.
- II. We need to see the vision of reigning in life:**
- A. God's complete salvation is composed of two sections—Rom. 5:10:
 - 1. The judicial section, which is according to the righteousness of God, is the procedure of God's salvation.
 - 2. The organic section, which is through the life of Christ, is the purpose of God's salvation.
 - B. God's complete salvation is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—vv. 17, 21:
 - 1. The gift of righteousness is for God's judicial redemption; grace is for us to experience God's organic salvation.
 - 2. The gift of righteousness is God's judicial redemption applied to us in a practical way; grace is God Himself as our all-sufficient supply for our organic salvation.
 - 3. Reigning in life is the full experience of the organic salvation of God.
 - C. We have been regenerated with a divine, spiritual, heavenly, kingly, and royal life—Mark 4:26; 1 John 3:9:
 - 1. This life enthrones us as kings to reign over all things.
 - 2. In this life we are now able to reign as kings.
 - D. Reigning in life in Romans 5 is the key to everything in Romans 6—16:
 - 1. We need to see everything in chapters 6 through 16 in this light.

2. Reigning in life is defined in chapters 6 through 16; all the matters expounded there are the issue not of our endeavoring but of our receiving the abundance of grace.
3. If we reign in life, we are in all the matters presented in these chapters.

III. We need to enter into the experience of reigning in life:

- A. In experience, to reign in life means to be under the ruling of the divine life:
 1. Christ is a pattern of reigning in life by being under the ruling of the divine life of the Father—cf. Matt. 8:5-13.
 2. Paul is an example of one who, in his life and ministry, was under the ruling of the divine life—2 Cor. 2:12-14.
 3. There is the need for all the believers who have received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to practice the restriction and limitation in the divine life.
- B. To reign is to conquer, subdue, and rule over Satan, the world, sin, the flesh, ourselves, and all the environmental circumstances—Rom. 8:35, 37.
- C. To reign in life is to subdue all kinds of insubordination—5:17-18, 21; 8:2:
 1. A reigning spirit must be strong and living, active and not passive, positive and not negative, diligent and not loose.
 2. One who has such a spirit not only keeps the position of order and submits to God's authority but also has strong faith and exercises God's authority consistently in the position of ascension.
 3. Thus he reigns and rules over his environment, over his work, and over all the meetings and affairs in the church.
- D. When we reign in life by being under the ruling of the divine life, we are delivered from the authority of darkness—Col. 1:13a.
- E. When we are under the ruling of the divine life, we live in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, where we are ruled and restricted in the sweetness of love—v. 13b.
- F. To reign in life is to have our hearts directed by the Lord—Prov. 21:1; 2 Thes. 3:5.
- G. In order to reign in life, we need to receive the abundance of grace—Rom. 5:17, 21:
 1. The enjoyment of the Lord as grace is with those who love Him—Eph. 6:24; John 21:15-17.
 2. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as the bountiful supply of the Triune God is enjoyed by us through the exercise of our human spirit—Heb. 10:29b; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; Philem. 25; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 3. God's word is the word of grace—Acts 20:32; Col. 3:16; cf. Jer. 15:16.
 4. We experience the processed Triune God as the grace of life in meeting with the saints on the ground of oneness—Psa. 133:3; 1 Pet. 3:7; Acts 4:33; 11:23.
 5. We can experience the Lord as our increasing and all-sufficient grace in the midst of sufferings and trials—2 Cor. 12:9.
 6. We need to labor for the Lord in the power of His grace—1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 3:10, 12a.

7. We need to be good stewards of the varied grace of God—1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2; 2 Cor. 1:15; Eph. 4:29.
 8. By the power of grace, the strength of grace, and the life of grace, we can be right with God and with one another; grace produces righteousness—Heb. 11:7; Rom. 5:17, 21.
- H. Since we reign in life as God does, we become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—v. 17.
- I. We reign in life in living a grafted life—11:17-24; Gal. 2:20a.

IV. We need to see and arrive at the goal of reigning in life:

- A. God's will is to have the Body life—Rom. 12:2.
- B. When we are reigning in life, living under the ruling of the divine life, the issue is the real and practical Body life.
- C. To see the Body life built up as a practical reality, we must reign in life, that is, be under the ruling of the divine life.
- D. Each item of the living of the Body life in Romans 12—13 requires us to be ruled by the divine life:
1. Being captivated by the compassions of God—12:1a.
 2. Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice—v. 1b.
 3. Not being fashioned according to this age—v. 2a.
 4. Being transformed by the renewing of the mind—v. 2b.
 5. Not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think—v. 3a.
 6. Thinking so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith—v. 3b.
 7. Considering that we have many members in one body and that all the members do not have the same function—v. 4.
- E. We can live a life of the highest virtues for the Body life only by reigning in life:
1. Loving without hypocrisy and loving warmly in brotherly love—vv. 9a, 10a.
 2. Not being slothful in zeal but burning in spirit, serving the Lord—v. 11.
 3. Enduring in tribulation—v. 12b.
 4. Rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep—v. 15.
 5. If possible, as far as it depends on us, living in peace with all men—v. 18.
- F. The Body life is expressed in the church life:
1. We must reign in life in order to live the church life:
 - a. We receive the believers under the reigning in life according to God's receiving—14:1-23.
 - b. We should receive one another according to the way Christ receives us—15:1-13.
 - c. Only by living under the rule of the divine life, by reigning in life, is it possible for us to live the proper church life.
 2. The church is not a police station or a law court but a home, a hospital, and a school.

V. We need to see the consummation of reigning in life:

- A. Reigning in life is "unto eternal life"—5:21:
1. *Unto eternal life* is a particular expression.

2. John 4:14b says, “The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life”:
 - a. *Into* (*unto* in Rom. 5:21) speaks of destination.
 - b. The eternal life is the destination of the flowing Triune God.
 - c. *Into* also means “to become” or “to be.”
 - d. The eternal life eventually will be the New Jerusalem.
 - e. *Into eternal life* means *into the New Jerusalem*.
- B. The New Jerusalem is the totality of the divine life, the totality of the life of God; thus, the issue and consummation of our reigning in life should be uniquely and ultimately the goal of God’s eternal economy—the New Jerusalem.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**GOD CAUSING THE BELIEVERS TO HAVE LIFE
THAT THEY MAY REIGN IN LIFE**

God has not only caused the believers to have life, but He has also caused them to reign in life. Romans 5:17a says, “For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one...” Death reigns as a king in us. This king purposefully puts us to death. Due to the transgression of Adam, we as his descendants have a king in us who has gained control of us and who is reigning in us. Verse 17b says, “Much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” Justification is a gift (v. 16), and grace abounds. From this abounding grace comes a gift. This gift is righteousness. We who have inherited righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. The former king was death. The latter king is those who receive grace to be justified.

But can we reign? Death is more than qualified to reign. We who are the kings do not know how to be kings. We are like the last Chinese emperor Pu-ye of the Ching Dynasty, who became emperor at the age of three. Although he was a king, he did not know how to be a king. He needed a protector to help him to be king. We who have been saved and who are justified are indeed kings, but we do not know how to be kings. Hence, through the One, Jesus Christ, who has put life in us, we are able to be kings. On the one hand, it is through this One. On the other hand, it is by reigning in life.

You have to learn to study the Bible in this way. Find out who the two kings are in Romans 5:17. The name of the first king is death. The name of the second king is your name. We are all kings today! The reason we are kings is that we are saved and have been justified. We are not only saved, but we have also received a great gift, the gift of righteousness. The grace that we have received is not a little grace, but abounding grace. It is like the abounding ocean. It is not like a cup of tea, which is gone after two sips. Grace is like an ocean. In this endless grace, God has given us a gift—abounding righteousness. Righteousness is God giving Himself to us in Christ. Furthermore, God wants us to reign. He wants to help us through the one man, Jesus Christ, with His life to reign in life.

When you go to all the villages, you should teach the people in this way. Do not try to cover too much. You will be very successful if you can teach them these ten

outlines in four to six months. This will broaden their view and give them an understanding concerning salvation and the Bible. They will also be able to learn many spiritual terms. This all depends on your speaking these things clearly and accurately.

**Subduing the Insubordination of Sin, Death,
and All the Negative Things Belonging to Sin and Death**

Every kind of addiction, such as alcohol, gambling, and theater-going, comes from sin. Moreover, every kind of addiction is rebellion. When a man is addicted to opium, he cannot live without opium. Opium smoking becomes something of rebellion. For a man to lose his temper is also something of rebellion, something related to sin. When a child refuses to obey and is naughty, we say that such a one is rebellious. According to man's fallen condition, he is rebellious in his nature. He is rebellious in his very bones and even every one of his hairs is rebellious. This rebellion brings in insubordination.

**Sin Reigning unto Death,
and Death Reigning through the Sinner,
Causing Him to Lose All His Rights**

Sin reigns unto death, and death reigns through the sinner. For example, when a couple argues, the man becomes the male king and the woman becomes the female king. Not only have they become kings in their voices, eyes, and eyelashes, even every hair on their body becomes a king. The whole family becomes a band of rebellious kings. By the end of the argument, they do not want to live anymore. This is all due to the reigning of sin and death, which cause a sinner to lose all his rights.

**Grace Reigning through Righteousness unto Eternal Life,
and Eternal Life through Jesus Christ Causing the Believers to Reign**

We all know that grace is sweet. But grace does not have the authority. Hence, grace reigns through righteousness. God gives us grace, and He also gives us righteousness. Today we have both grace and righteousness. Grace reigns through righteousness, that is, through God Himself. The result is that man obtains eternal life. This eternal life causes the believers to reign through Jesus Christ. Romans 5:21 says, "So also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the end, we the believers will reign in this eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Bringing in God's Kingship

When married brothers and sisters are about to clash and argue with each other, they have to declare that they are reigning through Jesus Christ. They have to declare that they will not argue anymore. This will bring in God's kingship. In a family, when the parents argue all the time, the children will become disobedient, and the whole family will be in a situation of rebellion. This family will lose the grace and right to God's blessings. What is true with a family is also true with a church. We should not consider arguments as light matters; arguments are rebellion. Arguments with proper reasons are rebellion. Arguments without proper reasons

are also rebellion. What then is obedience? Obedience is to not argue and to be silent. Because I submit to the authority of the head, all my hair, tongue, lips, and teeth submit to me. They do not argue anymore, and I reign. This brings in God's kingship which expands to become the kingdom of God.

***Expanding to Be the Kingdom of God,
Which Is the Increase of Christ as the Seed of God's Kingdom***

The kingship that is brought in as a result of our reigning in life is the expansion of Christ in us. Christ is in us as life. When your companion or your spouse is arguing, and you refrain from doing the same, you are allowing Christ to reign within, and He is expanding within you.

According to Mark 4 and Matthew 13, the kingdom of God is the Lord Jesus as the seed of life sown into the believers. This seed will develop until it becomes a sphere which is the kingdom of God. This kingdom will expand until the end of the age. At the end of the Gentile rule, we will have the condition described in Daniel 2 concerning the great image. The stone cut out without hands is the Lord Jesus (v. 34). He will come down from heaven, smite the image, and break it into pieces (v. 35). The stone will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth (2:31-35). The great mountain is the expansion of the stone.

We all hope that the Lord Jesus will come back soon. But we need to allow Him to expand His kingship in us. The more He expands in the believers, the sooner He will return. Whether He will come back sooner or not depends on whether we allow Him to expand in us. This is the kingdom of God. (*Salvation in Life in the Book of Romans*, pp. 43-47)