

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2022**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
LIVING IN THE REALITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
BY LEARNING CHRIST AS THE REALITY IS IN JESUS**

Message Three

**Learning Christ as the Reality Is in Jesus to Be the Same as He Is
by Living in This World a Life of God as Love
with Which We Love Him and Love One Another**

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:8, 16-19; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a

- I. The life that we have received from God is a life of love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—1 John 3:14; 5:1; 2:6; 4:17:**
- A. The love of God is God Himself; love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God; we have been regenerated to be God's species, God's kind (John 1:12-13), and God is love (1 John 4:8, 16); since we become God in His life and nature but not in the Godhead, we also should be love; this means that we do not merely love others but that we are love itself.
 - B. We must keep ourselves in the love of God and be constrained by the love of Christ to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers—Jude 19-21; 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:8-9; 2 Thes. 3:5; 1 John 3:14-16; 4:7-21.
 - C. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers (vv. 19-21); to abide in God is to live a life in which we love others habitually with the love that is God Himself, that He may be expressed in us—vv. 16-17; *Hymns*, #546 and #547.
 - D. "Draw me; we will run after you" (S. S. 1:4a); "I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love" (Hosea 11:4):
 - 1. The phrase *with cords of a man, with bands of love* indicates that God loves us with His divine love not on the level of divinity but on the level of humanity; God's love is divine, but it reaches us in the cords of a man, that is, through Christ's humanity.
 - 2. The cords through which God draws us include Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; it is by all these steps of Christ in His humanity that God's love in His salvation reaches us—Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:35-39.
- II. John 21, a chapter on shepherding, is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John—vv. 15-17:**
- A. The Gospel of John is a book on Christ coming to be our life by cherishing and nourishing us; to cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant, and comfortable (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34), and to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ (Matt. 24:45-47):
 - 1. When Christ as the God-Savior was recognized by Nathanael as the Son of God, He told him that he would see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on Him as the Son of Man, like the heavenly ladder seen by Jacob in his dream; this was a kind of cherishing to encourage Nathanael to follow Him so that he might participate in His nourishment with all the divine benefits as revealed in the entire Gospel of John—1:45-51.

2. When Christ as the God-Savior wanted to save an immoral woman of Samaria, He had to travel from Judea to Galilee through Samaria and detoured from the main way of Samaria to the city of Sychar, and He waited at the well of Jacob, near Sychar, for His object to come so that He might cherish her by asking her to give Him something to drink and so that He might nourish her with the water of life, which is the flowing Triune God Himself—4:3-14.
 3. When none of the accusing Pharisees could condemn the adulterous woman, Christ as the God-Savior, in His humanity, said to her, “Neither do I condemn you,” to cherish her that He, as the great I Am, might nourish her with the freedom from sin and enable her to “sin no more”—8:3-11, 24, 34-36.
- B. After His resurrection the Lord shepherded Peter and commissioned him to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep; this is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ’s heavenly ministry to take care of God’s flock, the church, which issues in the Body of Christ—21:15-17:
1. Peter was self-confident in his natural strength and ability, even to the point of thinking that he would follow the Lord both to prison and to death; but he denied the Lord three times, even before a little maid—Luke 22:33; John 18:15-18, 25-27.
 2. Peter was absolutely defeated and became a complete failure so that he might realize that he was absolutely untrustworthy and should no longer have any confidence in himself—Matt. 26:69-75; cf. Phil. 3:3.
 3. The angel’s message to the three sisters who discovered the resurrection of the Slave-Savior was for them to “go, tell His disciples and Peter”—Mark 16:7; cf. 1 Pet. 5:13.
 4. The phrase *and Peter* indicates that although Peter failed, stumbled, and fell, the Lord had not forsaken him; *and Peter* also means *and you*—you who have failed like Peter.
 5. May we all see what kind of heart the Lord has toward us; it is impossible for Him to not love you, for Him to forget you, or for Him to forsake you—Zech. 2:8; Isa. 49:15-16.
- C. Peter was so impressed with this commission of the Lord that in his first book he tells the believers that they were like sheep being led astray, but they have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (Christ) of their souls—1 Pet. 2:25.
- D. He exhorts the elders to shepherd the flock of God among them so that when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, they will receive the unfading crown of glory (5:1-4); Peter’s word indicates that the heavenly ministry of Christ is mainly to shepherd the church of God as His flock, which issues in His Body.
- E. The main purpose and goal of the apostolic ministry incorporated with Christ’s heavenly ministry are to build up the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem for the accomplishment of the eternal economy of God.
- III. Love must be prevailing among us; love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a:**
- A. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like the rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him and love Him to the uttermost beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
 - B. In order to love the Lord to the uttermost and to love one another, we need to be those who are daily infused with God as love, seeking to dwell in the house of God all the days of our life to behold His beauty (loveliness, pleasantness, delightfulness) and to inquire of God in His temple; to inquire of God is to check with God about everything in our daily life—Psa. 27:4.
 - C. The love described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 is the expression of the divine life (vv. 4-8a); furthermore, the fact that love is the fruit of the Spirit indicates that the substance of love

must be the Spirit (Gal. 5:22); if we do not have love, our speaking is like that of sounding brass and a clanging cymbal, which give sounds without life (1 Cor. 13:1; 14:1, 3, 4b).

D. Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, survives everything, and is the greatest—13:4-8, 13.

E. We should be like God in our love for others, loving people without any discrimination (Matt. 5:43-48); the first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was a criminal, a robber, sentenced to death; this is very meaningful (27:38; Luke 23:42-43).

IV. The law of the Spirit of life in our spirit is the law of Christ as the law of love (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2-3); the law of love must be substantiated by the law of the Spirit of life so that we may be able to bear one another's burdens; but if we are filled with pride, we will be unable to bear others' burdens because we deceive ourselves by thinking that we are something when we are nothing (v. 3):

A. When the law of love is activated within us, we automatically and spontaneously will be shepherds who have the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ—John 21:15-17; Luke 15:3-7.

B. When the law of love is activated within us, our labor in the Lord is a labor of love (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Thes. 1:3) in which we “support the weak” (Acts 20:35) and “sustain the weak” (1 Thes. 5:14); *the weak* refers to those who are weak either in their spirit or soul or body, or are weak in faith (Rom. 14:1; 15:1).

C. Our God-given, regenerated spirit is a spirit of love; we need a burning spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today's church—2 Tim. 1:7.

D. As the branches of Christ, the true vine, we need to love one another in order to express the divine life in fruit-bearing—John 15:12-17.

E. The church life is a life of brotherly love (1 John 4:7-8; 2 John 5-6; John 15:12, 17; Rev. 3:7; Eph. 5:2; cf. Jude 12a), and the Body builds itself up in love (Eph. 4:16).

F. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”; we may listen to the messages of the ministry and become puffed up with mere knowledge—1 Cor. 8:1b; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6.

G. Loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ (John 13:34-35); loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers (3 John 9).

H. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life so that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them with the intimate concern of a ministering life—1 John 3:16; John 10:11, 17-18; 15:13; Eph. 4:29—5:2; Rom. 12:9-13; 2 Cor. 7:2-7; 12:15; Philem. 7, 12.

V. Psalms 22—24 are a group of psalms revealing Christ from His crucifixion to His kingship in the coming age; in Psalm 22 we see Christ's death, His resurrection, and His many brothers produced in His resurrection to form His church; in Psalm 23 we see Christ as the Shepherd in His resurrection; and in Psalm 24 we see Christ as the coming King in His kingdom:

A. These three psalms show that between Christ's death and resurrection in the past and Christ's coming again as the King in His kingdom in the future is the enjoyment, experience, and expression of Christ as our pneumatic Shepherd in the present.

B. This reveals that shepherding is the bridge between Christ's first coming and His second coming; in His heavenly ministry Christ is presently shepherding people, and if we participate in His wonderful shepherding, there will be a big revival, a new revival, in the Lord's recovery to bring Christ back.