

**Outline of  
the Messages for the Full-time Training  
in the Spring Term of 2007**

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**GENERAL SUBJECT: THE BELIEVERS**

Message Fifteen

**Their Symbols—Letters of Christ, Mirrors, and Earthen Vessels**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:1-3, 6, 16-18; 4:1, 6-7

**I. The believers in Christ are letters written with Christ as the content to convey and express Christ—2 Cor. 3:1-3:**

- A. Christ is written into every part of our inner being with the Spirit of the living God to make us His living letters, that He may be expressed, read, and known by others in us—vv. 2-3; cf. Eph. 3:17.
- B. The Spirit of the living God, who is the living God Himself, is not the instrument, like a pen, but the element, like ink used in writing, with which the apostles minister Christ as the content for the writing of living letters that convey Christ—Phil. 1:19; Exo. 30:23-25.
- C. The heavenly, compound ink is the compound Spirit, the essence of this Spirit-ink is Christ with all His riches, and we are the pen; to have this ink in our experience, we must enjoy and be thoroughly saturated with Christ as the life-giving Spirit; then we will spontaneously minister Christ to those whom we contact, making them living letters of Christ—Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 3:6.
- D. On the one hand, the believers were the letter of Christ; on the other hand, they were the letter of the apostles inscribed in the apostles' hearts—vv. 2-3:
  - 1. While we are ministering Christ to others, Christ is simultaneously written in the ones to whom we are ministering and also in us.
  - 2. The one writing produces two original copies of the one letter; one copy is in our heart, and the other copy is in the heart of the ones to whom we are ministering.
  - 3. They become a letter of Christ, and this letter is also written in us, the writers; such a ministry involves two hearts becoming one.
  - 4. We can never forget the ones to whom we have ministered Christ and the ones who have ministered Christ to us—7:3.

**II. The believers in Christ are mirrors, beholding and reflecting the glory of Christ in order to be transformed into His glorious image—3:16—4:1:**

- A. Whenever our heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away from our heart, and we can behold the Lord of glory with an unveiled face—3:16.
- B. The very God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit to absorb the riches of God into our being and be under the divine transformation day by day—v. 18.
- C. Beholding is to see the Lord by ourselves; reflecting is for others to see Him through us—v. 18—4:1; Phil. 1:19-21a.

- D. Transformation is not an outward change or correction, but spiritual metabolism; it is the metabolic function of the life of God in the believers.
- E. Metabolism includes three matters:
  - 1. The supplying of a new element.
  - 2. The replacing of the old element with the new element.
  - 3. The discharge or removal of the old element so that something new may be produced—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Col. 3:10-11.
- F. As we receive the Lord as the new element into us, a spiritual metabolism takes place within us to be expressed outwardly in the image of Christ, manifesting the metabolism in life.

**III. The believers in Christ are earthen vessels to contain the Christ of glory as the excellent treasure—2 Cor. 4:7:**

- A. These vessels are like today's camera, into which Christ the figure, enters through the flash of God's shining—vv. 6-7.
- B. Christ as the priceless treasure is contained in us, the worthless and fragile vessels; this makes the worthless vessels ministers of the new covenant with a priceless ministry—v. 7; cf. Gen. 4:26.
- C. This treasure, the indwelling Christ, in us, the earthen vessels, is the divine supply and power for the Christian life; God's power is manifested in man's weakness, and man's weakness cannot limit God's power—2 Cor. 4:7; 12:10.
- D. The new covenant ministers are Christ's chosen vessels to contain and express Him—Acts 9:15; cf. Dan. 5:2-3, 23:
  - 1. We are vessels containing Christ as mercy—Rom. 9:16, 23:
    - a. We were chosen by God according to His sovereign mercy; it is altogether a matter of mercy that we are believers and that we are in the church life—vv. 11-16, 20-21.
    - b. The goal of God's selection in His sovereign mercy is to have many vessels to contain Him and eternally express Him; this is the climax of our usefulness to God—v. 21.
  - 2. We are vessels containing Christ as honor—v. 21:
    - a. We are vessels unto honor through our cleansing ourselves from the vessels unto dishonor—2 Tim. 2:20-21.
    - b. We are vessels unto honor by being filled with Christ as the Spirit to honor God and by ministering Christ as the Spirit to honor man—Judg. 9:9; cf. John 7:37-39a.
  - 3. We are vessels containing Christ as glory—Rom. 9:23:
    - a. Instead of living by our life with our nature to express ourselves, we must live by the Father's life with His nature to express Him; this is glory, and in this glory we all are one—John 17:22-24.
    - b. We have been prepared by God unto glory through glorification—the last step of God's full salvation—Rom. 8:21, 23, 29-30; Phil. 3:21.