

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2012**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST**

Message Fifty-Four

In Revelation

(3)

The Tree of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:4-5, 7; 22:1-2; Psa. 36:7-9; 73:25-26

**I. Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the center of the universe—
Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1; 6:35, 63; 1 Cor. 15:45b:**

- A. Life is the goal of God's creation—Gen. 1:26-28, 31; 2:7-9.
- B. God's organic salvation, being saved in Christ's life, is the goal of the process of God's judicial redemption—John 19:34; Rom. 5:10; Col. 3:3-4; Rev. 22:1-2.
- C. Life is God Himself in Christ as the Spirit flowing out to be enjoyed by man and to please and satisfy man—Psa. 36:7-9; Rev. 22:1; Jer. 2:13.

II. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in man:

- A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts:
 - 1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.
- B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:
 - 1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
 - 2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves the rejection of our natural disposition and preference and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.
 - 3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.
- C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion:
 - 1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
 - 2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
 - 3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27.
- D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:

1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
 2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.
- E. There is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us; if we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.

III. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7; John 6:57:

- A. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be, but to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love—Rev. 2:4.
- B. If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us.
- C. These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

IV. To love the Lord with the first love, the best love, is to give the Lord the preeminence, the first place, in all things, being constrained by His love to regard and take Him as everything in our life—v. 4; Col. 1:18b; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Mark 12:30; Psa. 73:25-26; 80:17-19:

- A. The beginning of love in everyone toward the Lord is a vision of His person; the leaving of the first love toward the Lord is the source of and main reason for the failure of the church throughout the ages; nothing but love can keep us in a proper relationship with the Lord—Phil. 3:8; Matt. 26:6-13; Eph. 3:16-19; 6:24; Rev. 2:4-5; cf. 3:20.
- B. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to repent and do the first works; the first works are works that issue from the first love—2:5; 1 Thes. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; 5:14-15; S. S. 2:4-5; Rom. 8:31-39.
- C. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to have a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord—S. S. 1:1-4.
- D. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to live a day-by-day life of morning revival so that we may satisfy Christ by being His young men like the dew from the womb of the dawn (Psa. 110:3), so that we may have the tongue of an instructed one to know how to sustain the weary with a word (Isa. 50:4-5), and so that we may fellowship with God, seeking God's will and pleasure for His gospel service (Mark 1:35).
- E. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to live a day-by-day life of consecration, becoming today's Nazarites, who are fully separated unto God and saturated with God in order to bless the children of God by dispensing God in His Divine Trinity into them—Psa. 110:3; Num. 6:1-9, 22-27.
- F. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to live a life of prayer—1 Sam. 12:23; Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23; Dan. 6:10; 2:17-18; 1 Tim. 2:1; 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Thes. 5:17.
- G. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to love, treasure, and muse on God's word—Psa. 119:11, 14-15, 23, 48, 72, 78, 97, 99, 111, 113, 119, 127, 140, 147-148, 159, 162-163, 165, 167.

- H. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to be governed by the direct, firsthand presence of the Lord—Exo. 33:11, 14; 13:21-22; 2 Cor. 2:10.
- I. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to love the church in the church-loving Christ—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 16:24.
- J. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to love the ministry that builds up the church—2 Cor. 8:5; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 4:11-12.
- K. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to live and walk by the Spirit, to serve by the Spirit, and to minister the Spirit—Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:3; 2 Cor. 3:6; Zech. 4:6; Judg. 9:9; cf. 1 Sam. 2:30b.
- L. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to take Him as the fountain of living waters; God's intention in His economy is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment to produce the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement, to be God's fullness for His expression—Jer. 2:13; John 4:14b.
- M. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to eat Him as the tree of life; eating Christ as the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7.
- N. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to continually come to Him to contact Him, take Him, receive Him, taste Him, and enjoy Him—Isa. 57:20, footnote 1.
- O. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to take Him as our centrality—our holding center—and our universality—our everything; we need to take Him as the center, content, and circumference of our personal universe—Col. 1:17b, 18b.
- P. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to aspire and determine to gain the honor of pleasing Him in all things—2 Cor. 5:9; Col. 1:10; Heb. 11:5-6.
- Q. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to have a clear sky like awesome crystal with God's sapphire throne above it; this means that there is nothing between us and the Lord and that we are filled with the heavenly atmosphere, condition, and situation of His ruling presence—allowing Him to rule and reign within us—Ezek. 1:22, 26.
- R. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to hold Him as the Head, staying intimately connected to Him and enthroning Him as the ruler and decider of everything in our life—Col. 2:19.
- S. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to ask for the counsel of Jehovah in every detail of our Christian life and work—Josh. 9:14; Phil. 4:6-7.
- T. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to give the flow of life, the flow of the Lord Jesus within us, the preeminence in all that we are and do; then He is the shining One, the redeeming One, the reigning One, the flowing One, and the supplying One within us—Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1-2.
- U. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to be dominated, governed, directed, led, and moved by our mingled spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit by being His captives and by praying, "Lord, make me Your captive. Never let me win. Defeat me all the time"—2 Cor. 2:13-14.
- V. To love the Lord with the first love, to give Him the first place in all things, is to enthrone Him with our praises; praise is the highest work carried out by God's children—Psa. 22:3; 119:164; 34:1.