

ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHURCH LIFE SEEN IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Three

The Pearl Gates and the Golden Street

Scripture Reading: Rev. 21:18, 21;
S. S. 2:14; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Pet. 1:4

I. The twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are twelve pearls—Rev. 21:21a:

- A. Pearls are produced by oysters in the waters of death; when an oyster is wounded by a grain of sand, it secretes its life-juice around the grain of sand and makes it into a precious pearl.
- B. This depicts Christ as the living One coming into the death waters, being wounded by us (Isa. 53:5), and secreting His life over us to make us into precious pearls for the building of God's eternal expression.
- C. That the twelve gates of the holy city are twelve pearls signifies that regeneration through the death-overcoming and life-secreting Christ is the entrance into the city.
- D. Just as the grain of sand remains in the inward wound of the oyster, we need to remain in the death of Christ; His death is our abode, our dwelling, our residence, our rest, and our unique place of protection:
 1. As long as we remain and stay in the death of Christ, we will never lose our temper; we can gain the victory over sin, over our temperament, over the world, and over Satan in the death of Christ.
 2. If the grain of sand stays away from the wound of the oyster, it is not in the position to enjoy the secretion of the life-sap of that oyster; this picture shows us that we are imprisoned in the death of Christ by His secreting power and that this secretion is the move of His resurrection life.
 3. As long as we remain in His wound, in the death of His cross, His life reacts, and this reaction is a secretion of His resurrection life; the secretion of His resurrection is in the life-giving Spirit, who is the reality of His resurrection.
 4. Because of His great love with which He loved us, His wound (His death) caused by us became our prison; as we stay in the Lord's death and enjoy His life-secreting resurrection, there is a further entering into and becoming of the New Jerusalem.
- E. Pearls signify the issue of Christ's secretion in two aspects: His redeeming and life-releasing death and His life-dispensing resurrection:
 1. Both kinds of secretion (dispensing) require the seeking believers' daily experience of the death of Christ subjectively by the power of Christ's resurrection that they may be conformed to the death of Christ (Phil. 3:10) and their daily experience of the resurrection of Christ subjectively by the bountiful supply of the Spirit (the reality of resurrection) of Jesus Christ that they may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God (1:19; Rom. 8:29).

2. We can experience His death only by the power of the resurrection of Christ; by the power of the resurrection of Christ, we have the ability and the power to keep our pitiful self on the cross.
 3. Christ's death can be experienced only through Christ's resurrection, and Christ's resurrection can be real to us only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a.
 4. It is only through prayer that we can remain on the cross by touching Christ in our spirit continually as the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit who is the reality of His resurrection—1 Thes. 5:17.
- F. Song of Songs depicts that Christ wants His seeker to remain in the cross, to remain in His death, to remain in a crucified condition continually—2:14; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10-11:
1. To remain in the death of the cross is a difficult matter, like entering into the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice high in the mountains by a rugged road—S. S. 2:14.
 2. In order to empower and encourage His lover to rise up and come away from her low situation in her introspection of the self, Christ empowers her by showing her the power of His resurrection, and He encourages her by the flourishing riches of His resurrection—vv. 8-13.
 3. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection, not by our natural life, that we, the lovers of Christ, determine to take the cross by denying our self—Matt. 16:24.
 4. It is also by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are enabled to be conformed to His death by being one with His cross—Phil. 3:10.
 5. The reality of resurrection is the pneumatic Christ (John 11:25; 20:22), who as the consummated Spirit indwells and is mingled with our regenerated spirit (1 Cor. 6:17); it is in such a mingled spirit that we participate in and experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross in order to be delivered from the self and transformed into a new man in God's new creation for the fulfillment of God's economy in the building up of the organic Body of Christ.

II. The street of the holy city, like the city itself, is pure gold, which symbolizes the divine nature—Rev. 21:18, 21; 2 Pet. 1:4:

- A. Since gold signifies the divine nature of God, the city's being of pure gold signifies that the New Jerusalem is altogether of God's divine nature and takes God's divine nature as its element—Rev. 21:18b.
- B. That the river of water of life proceeds "in the middle of its street," which is of pure gold, signifies that the divine life flows in the divine nature as the unique way for the daily life of God's redeemed people—22:1; 21:21b:
 1. Where the divine life flows, there the divine nature is as the holy way by which God's people walk; and where the holy way of the divine nature is, there the divine life is flowing.
 2. The divine life and the divine nature as the holy way always go together; thus, God's river of water of life is available along this divine way, and we enjoy the river by walking in this way of life.

- C. The divine nature is what God is: God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is love (1 John 4:8, 16), and God is light (1:5); Spirit denotes the nature of God's person, love denotes the nature of God's essence, and light denotes the nature of God's expression:
 - 1. When we partake of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), we enjoy God as the Spirit, as love, and as light.
 - 2. If we spend an adequate amount of time with the Lord in the morning, we will have the sensation that we are enjoying the Lord as the Spirit, and we will become a person of love; furthermore, whatever we say will be light, and whatever we do will be transparent as crystal.
- D. The divine life and the divine nature are inseparable; the divine nature is the substance of the divine life and is within the divine life—1 John 1:1-2; 5:11-13.
- E. As the children of God, we are God-men, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God—3:1; John 1:12-13.
- F. A partaker of the divine nature is one who enjoys the divine nature and participates in the divine nature:
 - 1. To partake of the divine nature is to enjoy what God is; to be a partaker of the divine nature is to be a partaker of the riches, the elements, and the constituents of God's being.
 - 2. If we would be partakers of the divine nature, we need to live by the divine life within which is the divine nature—v. 4; 10:10; 11:25; 6:57b.
- G. We enjoy the divine nature through God's precious and exceedingly great promises, such as in Matthew 28:20; John 6:57; 7:38-39; 10:28-29; 14:19-20, 23; 15:5; 16:13-15; 2 Corinthians 12:9; and Ephesians 3:20.
- H. Being a partaker of the divine nature has a condition—that we escape the corruption which is in the world by lust; we need to live in the cycle of escaping and partaking and of partaking and escaping—2 Pet. 1:4.
- I. If we enjoy God and partake of the riches of His being, we will be constituted with the divine nature, becoming the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead and expressing Him in all that we are and do—v. 3.
- J. As we partake of the divine nature, enjoying all that God is, the riches of the divine nature will be fully developed so that we may have a rich entrance into the kingdom of God—vv. 5-11.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

ITS GATES BEING PEARLS

Now we come to the second application of the New Jerusalem, which is altogether related to the gates. Its gates are pearls (Rev. 21:21a). As we have seen, the entire New Jerusalem is a great sign. Its twelve gates are twelve big pearls. It is impossible for natural pearls to be so big that they can be the gates of the city. The pearl in the city is not a natural pearl but is used by God as a sign.

The Issue of a Twofold Secretion

When an oyster is wounded by a grain of sand, it secretes its life-juice around the grain of sand and makes it into a precious pearl. Pearls signify the issue of Christ's

secretion in two aspects: His redeeming and life-releasing death and His life-dispensing resurrection. Without God's revelation we can never realize that the death of Christ secretes, dispenses, to produce the gates of the city. The twelve gates are the issue of Christ's secretion also in His life-dispensing resurrection. He resurrected to be the life-giving Spirit to dispense the divine life into the believers (1 Cor. 15:45b). This is a kind of secretion issuing in a big pearl to be the gates of the city. Both Christ's death and resurrection have an issue, a secretion.

Requiring the Seeking Believers' Daily Experience of the Death and Resurrection of Christ

Both kinds of secretion (dispensing) require the seeking believers' daily experience of the death of Christ subjectively by the power of Christ's resurrection that they may be conformed to the death of Christ (Phil. 3:10). We have to put not just Christ's death itself but the secretion of His death into our daily experience subjectively. We may know that we have been crucified with Christ, but we need to experience this. When a couple is quarreling, is that the talk of ones who are being crucified? When a brother talks to his wife, he has to consider that he is a crucified person.

Stanza 2 of hymn #938 (*Hymns*), a short song for baptism, says, "No longer I! No longer I! / Christ in me I'll testify!" In our baptism we declared that we were finished. It is no more I, but Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20). In our subjective experience, we should be on the cross. We may know this teaching, but in our daily experience we are short. In our daily life, we do not practice being crucified with Christ.

A number of times when I was irritated at my wife, I tried to argue with her. But when the word of my argument came to the tip of my tongue, I was reminded—"Is this being crucified on the cross?" Right away I stopped. I went to my study room and prayed, "Lord, forgive me. I know I have been crucified, but I don't practice it. What a shame, Lord! I have been following You for over sixty years, yet I would still try to argue with my dear wife. Still I live and not Christ. I have been teaching others about this for more than sixty years, but I did not apply what I taught."

Dear saints, the second application of the New Jerusalem is for us to experience subjectively the death of Christ in our daily life. We cannot do this in and by ourselves. None of us can practice such a thing. Everybody likes to argue. Argument comes from our natural life, from "I" not Christ. But we should have this "I" all the time crucified on the cross. We have to put this application of the subjective death of Christ into our daily experience. We can experience His death only by the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The chorus of hymn #631 says, "If no death, no life." This life comes to us not by our natural life but by the power of Christ's resurrection. Yes, we have been crucified, but how can we keep ourselves on the cross all the time? No human being can do it except those who know the power of the resurrection of Christ; they have the capacity, the ability, to practice this. By the power of the resurrection of Christ, we have the ability and the power to keep our pitiful self on the cross. How can a sister be a good wife? A good wife is a crucified wife, a wife on the cross.

We are required to remain on the cross under the crucifixion all the time. Sometimes I went to the Lord and said, "Lord, I cannot carry out this kind of Christian life. I thought that after I believed in You, You would do good things for me." The Lord answered, "Yes, I will do everything good for you, but you have to remain on the cross. As long as you live by yourself, I can do nothing for you. I can do something for you only if you remain on the cross." I said, "Lord, how can I do it? I have no power to do it." The Lord said, "I am in you, I am the resurrection, and I have the power to enable you to remain on the cross." Stanza 1 of hymn #631 says, "If I'd know Christ's risen power, / I must ever love the Cross." Life is Christ. If I am going to live Christ out, I have to remain on the cross to die there. This is the second application of the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem has twelve gates, and they should be applied to our daily life by our keeping ourselves crucified all the time in our daily experience that we could be conformed to Christ's death.

The believers also should seek the daily experience of the resurrection of Christ subjectively by the bountiful supply of the Spirit (the reality of resurrection) of Jesus Christ that they may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God (Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:29). We are required to do two things: to experience Christ's death subjectively in our daily walk and also to experience the power of resurrection in our daily walk. How can we experience Christ's death in our daily walk? By the power of resurrection. How can we experience Christ's resurrection in our daily walk? By the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the reality of His resurrection. By His resurrection we can experience His death. Then how can His resurrection be applied to us? His resurrection can be applied to us only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Now the Spirit is here. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit, who is the reality of the resurrection of Christ.

Christ's death can be experienced by us only through Christ's resurrection, and Christ's resurrection can be real to us only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has become the life-giving Spirit, and He is within us. When we turn to our spirit, we meet Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is the very reality of Christ's resurrection. It is by this Spirit that we experience Christ's resurrection. To experience Christ's resurrection is to contact the life-giving Spirit.

In order to apply this we have to remain in our spirit all the time to meet Christ as the Spirit, who is the reality of His resurrection. Then we have the power to remain on the cross. The application of the gates of the city is first to remain on the cross by the power of Christ's resurrection. Second, we have to apply Christ as the life-giving Spirit living in our spirit. We have to touch Him all the time. This is why the Bible tells us to pray unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). It is only through prayer that we can touch Christ in our spirit as the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit who is the reality of His resurrection.

When we practice the death of Christ, we will be conformed to His death, having the image of a dead person on the cross. When we touch the Spirit, we touch Christ in His resurrection, and this will conform us to the image of the glory of the firstborn Son of God. His death applied to us will conform us to the mold of His death,

and His Spirit in us will conform us into the glory of His image, the image of the firstborn Son of God. The first application of the New Jerusalem is for us to do everything based upon the divine nature. That is simple. But now we have an application in two aspects: the application of Christ's death and the application of Christ's resurrection as the life-giving Spirit. (*The Application of the Interpretation of the New Jerusalem to the Seeking Believers*, pp. 19-23)

DELIVERED FROM THE SELF

Song of Songs 2:14-15 portrays the lover's deliverance from the self by the cross of Christ.

Overcaring for Her Spiritual Condition

The attainment of the lover of Christ in her pursuing after Christ for satisfaction and rest results in a condition in which she overcares for her spiritual condition before Christ concerning whether or not she remains in the perfection she has attained. When I was young, after giving a good message, I could not forget about it. I would remain in it to enjoy it. Eventually, I would make it the standard for my upcoming messages. All the messages had to be as good as that one. This meant that I had attained to a certain condition and that I wanted to remain in it. When some of the sisters give a testimony in the meetings, they are looking for strong "amens" from the saints. One day a sister may give a wonderful word, and the saints may respond with strong "amens" and "hallelujahs." That makes the sister feel that she has been exalted to the third heaven. She would never forget this experience and would make it her standard because that became a condition to which she had attained.

This boasting produces the self. The self is produced by self-boasting, self-exaltation, and self-glorification. The more we boast of ourselves, the stronger our self becomes. Based upon our boasting, we exalt ourselves. Then we glorify ourselves. We may not admit this. Instead we may say, "I gave all the glory to God." But still we received the exaltation. Exaltation means glorification. To exalt God is to glorify Him. This shows that pride is the source of self.

Falling into Introspection

This causes her to fall into introspection, which becomes the seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ (2:9). The Bible tells us to look away unto Jesus (Heb. 12:2), but introspection always directs us to look into ourselves. Introspection is an inward inspection of our inner condition. In our introspection we may ask, "Am I still perfect? Am I still so good in the eyes of God, or have I degraded a little bit?" Such introspection increases the self, resulting in a kind of seclusion as a wall to separate us from the presence of Christ.

Since we have this introspection, there is a wall built up between us and our Lord. We find that He is outside and we are within, and this discovery causes us to be more introspective. We may ask, "Why don't I have the Lord's presence? It seems that I am within the wall, and He is outside the wall. Why?" This becomes a cycle in which the self is growing and increasing. The self then becomes a prison to imprison us.

This kind of spiritual sickness is not experienced by the cold ones but by the ones

who are burning for the Lord. The more burning for the Lord you are, the more your self may be built up. The more you pursue after the Lord, the more you attain to something, the more you may build up your self. Eventually, the self becomes a center. Your whole life with all of its details becomes centered on your self.

**The “Little Foxes” Ruining
the Flourishing Resurrection of Christ**

This peculiarity of introspection becomes one of the “little foxes” that ruin the flourishing resurrection of Christ in the churches (S. S. 2:15). Our peculiarity frustrates our experience of Christ’s resurrection. A brother’s peculiarity may be his quick temperament, which has been built up over many years. But every time we are willing to have our self with our peculiarity crucified, resurrection will follow. Resurrection is signified in 2:11-13 by the passing of winter, the ceasing of rain, the appearance of flowers, the time of singing, the voice of the turtledove, the fig tree ripening, and the vines blossoming and giving forth their fragrance. If we are unwilling to be crucified and we remain in our peculiarity, this “little fox” will destroy our experience of Christ’s resurrection.

BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST

**Christ Coming as a Gazelle and a Young Hart,
Showing Forth His Resurrection Power**

Hence, Christ comes as a gazelle leaping upon the mountains and as a young hart skipping upon the hills, showing forth His resurrection power over difficulties, to call her repeatedly to rise up from her down situation and come away to Him from that situation which separates her from Him (2:8-10, 13b). According to our condition and situation, we surely need to cross out our peculiarity. But to get into the cross and remain there is not easy. If you have a quick temperament and are with a slow person, some may advise you to exercise patience. But the more we exercise our own effort to cross out ourselves, the more Satan will come in to stir up our reasonings. This is related to spiritual warfare. In order to receive the crucifixion of Christ, to be put to death, we need the power of the resurrection of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

It is difficult for us to reach the cross (signified by the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice) and remain there. At this time Christ is seen by His lover as a gazelle leaping upon the mountains and as a young hart skipping upon the hills. The way to reach the covert of the precipice is rugged. To receive the crucifixion of Christ to put us to death is a rugged way, not easy to reach. Even after reaching this place, it is hard to stay there. Do we want to stay in the covert of the precipice? Do we want to stay in the clefts of the rock upon the high mountains? This is why we need the power of the resurrection of Christ. Philippians 3:10 says that we are to be conformed to His death by the power of His resurrection. Christ is a gazelle full of leaping power and a young hart full of skipping power. This is the power of resurrection. Our being crucified is not by our natural life or natural strength but by Christ’s power of resurrection.

All the experiences of Christ are related to His death, His resurrection, and His

Spirit. His death goes along with His resurrection, and His Spirit is the realization of His resurrection. In order to know the power of Christ's resurrection, we must learn to turn from our mind to our spirit continually (Rom. 8:6). When we turn to our spirit, we have nothing to do but pray. When we turn to our spirit and pray, immediately the Spirit is with us as the power of resurrection. Then as we take the cross, those around us may not know that we have been crucified and are in resurrection. This may cause us to sing, "Hallelujah, Christ is Victor!" When we enjoy the power of His resurrection, He is the Victor in our experience, and we are the conquerors. The way to experience Christ in His crucifixion by the power of His resurrection is by the Spirit Himself who is in our spirit. Romans 8:6 says, "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace."

In order to experience Christ and to gain Christ, we need to know the all-inclusiveness of Christ. We also need to know that we have a regenerated, human spirit and that today the Spirit of God has become the consummated, life-giving Spirit of Christ as the power of His resurrection. We must know these three things. Then we can experience Christ and gain Him.

Remaining in the Cross

Christ wants His seeker to remain in the cross, that is, to stay in "the clefts of the rock" and in "the covert of the precipice" (S. S. 2:14a). Christ wants us to remain in the cross continually. The brothers need to be crossed out in their relationship with their wives. Christ wants us to remain in a crucified condition all the time. We may say that some of the things which come to us in our environment to trouble us are Satan's work, but they are also God's assignment. God's assignment is to put us to death. In the midst of our troubling environment, we must learn to turn our mind to our spirit to receive the strengthening of the Spirit as the power of resurrection.

Christ wants to see her countenance and hear her voice in the cross as the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice (2:14b). To stay in the cross is a hard matter, like getting into the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice by a rugged road. It could be only by the power of Christ's resurrection shown in the leaping of the gazelle upon the mountains and the skipping of the young hart upon the hills, not by her natural life. This is to "deny" herself as the Lord charges in Matthew 16:24. This is also to be conformed to the death of Christ by the power of His resurrection. It is only in this way that she can be delivered from her self, which frustrates her from experiencing Christ in resurrection.

God's salvation is to transform us, to make us a new man, a part of the new creation. We must be transformed through denying ourselves. To deny the self is to leave the self on the cross so that we can be renewed. Day after day by the crossing out we become newer and newer. Eventually, we mature to be a new man. This is the reason that God deals with us in the way of crucifixion. God's way is not to correct or improve us. God wants to re-create us through transformation, and this transformation is by our being crucified.

Previously, we have seen that we need to perfect others with gold, silver, and

precious stones. The lover needs gold added to her plaits of hair, silver studs to hold the plaits, and strings of jewels, precious stones. We need to experience the Triune God as gold, silver, and precious stones, and then we can perfect others with the Triune God by helping them to deny themselves so that they can be with the Lord in a new way to be renewed and transformed to become absolutely a new man in God's new creation. It is only by being conformed to the death of Christ by the power of His resurrection that we can be delivered from our self to be transformed. Through the crossing-out way, we become completely a new man in God's new creation for God to fulfill His economy so that we can be the organic Body of Christ. The organic Body of Christ comes out of this kind of crossing out.

Stanzas 1 and 2 with the chorus of *Hymns*, #477, speak of the experience of being delivered from the self by the cross of Christ:

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha,
Will never save thy soul;
The Cross in thine own heart,
Alone can make thee whole.

O, Cross of Christ, I take thee
Into this heart of mine,
That I to my own self may die
And rise to Thy life Divine.

What e'er thou lovest, man,
That too become thou must;
God, if thou lovest God,
Dust, if thou lovest dust.
Go out, God will come in;
Die thou and let Him live;
Be not and He will be;
Wait and He'll all things give.

(Crystallization-study of Song of Songs, pp. 54-59)