

**TAKING CHRIST AS OUR PERSON
AND LIVING HIM IN AND FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Three

**Living Christ by Walking
according to the Spirit for the Body Life**

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17a; Phil. 1:21a; Rom. 8:4; 12:4-5

I. We need to live Christ in and for the church life—Gal. 1:2, 15-16; 2:20; 4:19:

- A. The central thought of the Bible is that God desires us to live Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ—Phil. 1:21a; Eph. 4:12, 16:
 - 1. The main point of our Christian life is to live Christ.
 - 2. The climax, the highest point, of the divine revelation in the entire Bible is to live Christ.
- B. In the New Testament there are four main verses that reveal the matter of living Christ—John 6:57; 14:19; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a.
- C. The Christian life is the life in which the believers of Christ live Him—v. 21a.
- D. Our primary concern should not be anything outward but whether we are living the self or living Christ—Gal. 2:20:
 - 1. We are often distracted by outward things, such as our work or the problems in the local churches.
 - 2. Actually, such problems are mainly due to a lack of living Christ.
 - 3. When we are living Christ, we are best able to care for the church.
- E. If we would live Christ, we must take Him as our person and be one person with Him—Eph. 3:17a; Gal. 2:20:
 - 1. He and we must be one in a practical way—1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 2. To live Christ is to live a person; we should live a life that is Christ Himself.
- F. We should focus our whole attention on living Christ and care only to live Christ, not allowing anything to distract us from the direct, personal experience of Christ—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:9-12.
- G. Living Christ requires that we love Him to the uttermost—Mark 12:30:
 - 1. Part of the secret of living Christ is telling the Lord again and again that we love Him—1 Cor. 2:9.
 - 2. If we do not love the Lord, we cannot live Him.
- H. To live Christ means that when Christ lives, we who believe into Him and who are in Him also live—John 14:19:
 - 1. We live in Christ's living, and He lives in our living.
 - 2. If we live in His living, His living will also be in our living—Gal. 2:20.

II. The practical way to live Christ is to walk according to the spirit—Phil. 1:21a; Rom. 8:4:

- A. We need to pay our full attention to walking according to the spirit in order to live Christ.

- B. The word *walk* in Romans 8:4 denotes the general walk in our living, including how we think, speak, act, and move.
- C. The spirit in verse 4 is the regenerated human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Spirit; this corresponds to 1 Corinthians 6:17:
 1. Christ as the Spirit is in our spirit, and we are one spirit with Him—v. 17.
 2. Therefore, we have a mingled spirit—our human spirit mingled with the divine Spirit.
- D. Ultimately, the Bible requires only one thing of us—that we walk according to the mingled spirit—Rom. 8:4:
 1. The key to everything is found in the wonderful Spirit who is in our regenerated spirit and who has become one spirit with our spirit—John 3:6.
 2. To walk in the spirit is to do everything in our daily life according to the spirit—Rom. 8:4.
 3. To live in the spirit is to let Christ fill and saturate us until He permeates our whole being and is thereby expressed through us—Eph. 3:17a.
 4. The mutual abiding in John 15:4-5 is the practice of walking according to the spirit.
 5. When we walk according to the spirit, we spontaneously bear the cross—Matt. 16:24.
 6. All the things that happen to us test whether we are walking according to the spirit or the flesh—Rom. 8:4-5.
 7. The best way to silence Satan is to walk according to the spirit—Rev. 12:11.
- E. We need a clear view from the heavens to see that what the Lord wants is a group of people who walk according to the spirit.
- F. The primary concern of the leading ones should be to help the saints to live Christ by walking according to the spirit in their daily life—Rom. 8:4.
- G. When we are not walking according to the spirit in our daily life, we are walking according to the flesh—vv. 5-6:
 1. According to Romans 8, anything that is not according to the spirit is according to the flesh.
 2. There are only two sources and two conditions of our daily living—the spirit and the flesh.
- H. Other aspects of our Christian life, such as preaching the gospel, should be the result of walking according to the spirit—v. 4:
 1. If we practice to continually walk according to the spirit throughout the day, everything else will spontaneously issue forth.
 2. Our gospel preaching and shepherding should be the issue of our walking according to the spirit—Matt. 24:14; John 21:15-17.
- I. Our primary concern should not be how to do things but to see that God wants a people who live Christ by walking according to the spirit—Rom. 8:4.
- J. In order to exhibit Christ in the meetings, we must gain Christ in our daily life by walking according to the spirit—1 Cor. 14:26; Phil. 3:8, 12; Rom. 8:4.
- K. The leading ones primarily need to walk according to the spirit in their daily life and help other saints to enter into this kind of living—v. 4; Phil. 3:17; Heb. 13:7:
 1. The leading ones need to enter into the actual practice of walking according to the spirit.

2. They need to help others to balance their corporate enjoyment of the Lord with a personal daily life of walking according to the spirit—Phil. 3:17.
- L. Unceasing prayer is the way to walk according to the spirit—1 Thes. 5:17:
 1. The way to walk according to the spirit is to pray unceasingly, just as we breathe unceasingly; our walking according to the spirit is our spiritual breathing.
 2. We can walk according to the spirit by consistent, unceasing, moment-by-moment prayer—Luke 18:1.

III. The more we walk according to the spirit, the more the Triune God will live in us so that we may live Him for the Body life—Rom. 8:4; 12:4-5:

- A. When we walk according to the spirit daily and moment by moment, the Triune God as the Spirit will have the opportunity to make His home in us, settle down in us, and take possession of and occupy our entire being—Eph. 3:17a:
 1. We need to live the Triune God by allowing Him to indwell us, make His home in us, and take full possession of our being by our walking according to the mingled spirit—Gal. 4:19; Rom. 8:4.
 2. All we need to do is to live the Triune God; everything else will be a spontaneous issue of our living the Triune God—John 14:19-20; 15:4-5.
- B. Romans 8 reveals that the Triune God lives in us so that we may live Him; this should be the focus of our Christian life.
- C. The Body of Christ in Romans 12 issues from the experience of walking according to the spirit in Romans 8:
 1. All the members of the Body of Christ should be persons who walk according to the spirit—12:4-5; 8:4.
 2. In principle, if we do not walk according to the spirit, we cannot practically have the Body of Christ; the Body life is annulled by a fleshly walk.
 3. All the believers are members of the Body, but the practicality of the Body depends on the believers' walk.
 4. If we truly walk according to the spirit, we will spontaneously be in the Body life—v. 4; 12:4-5.
- D. We need to see one thing—that the goal of the Lord's recovery is to recover Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God to be our life and who is the Spirit to live within us and make us His living members so that His Body will be built up—Col. 2:9; 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:16.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

LIVING CHRIST BY WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

The Lord has shown us much concerning the central lane of Paul's completing ministry. I believe that the revelation and vision concerning God's eternal purpose in the central lane of Paul's completing ministry has never been opened as thoroughly and as clearly as it has been opened today among us. However, it is one thing to see the vision, and it is another thing to live in the vision. We may receive the vision yet not be in the reality of the vision. Today, among the many local churches in the Lord's recovery, there are few problems, and the situation is pleasant and encouraging. Nevertheless, we need to realize that our living does

not adequately match what we have seen. We have seen the central lane of Paul's completing ministry, but we do not have the living to correspond with our vision. This is a great need.

We need to humble ourselves to see that there is a shortage in our daily life of a practical living according to the vision that we have seen in Paul's Epistles. We need to see still more of this vision, but we already see more than we are practicing in our daily living. On the one hand, we have seen something, at least doctrinally, concerning the central lane of Paul's completing ministry, but on the other hand, we are short of a daily living that matches what the Lord has shown us. Although we have seen something, we do not pay adequate attention to what we have seen. As leading ones, we are often distracted by outward things, such as our work or the problems in the local churches. Actually, such problems are mainly due to a lack of living Christ.

Our daily walk does not adequately correspond to our vision concerning the central lane of Paul's completing ministry. When I recently visited a church, a leading brother took me to see the church's new meeting hall. However, my burden is not for the churches to build meeting halls but for all the saints to live Christ. Of course, meeting halls are useful and necessary, but what the Lord wants in His recovery is not our building of halls but our living of Christ. Our primary concern should not be anything outward but whether we are living the self or living Christ.

We should not be satisfied with merely knowing the truth; we must also seek to experience it. Our living should not remain the same after listening to many messages. Some saints begin to talk in a secular way as soon as a meeting is dismissed. This kind of talk is like the birds in Matthew 13:4 and 19 that come to snatch away the word. Recently, based on Romans 8:4, we saw the matter of walking according to the spirit. To see this is a great help, but we need to consider whether we are daily practicing to walk according to the spirit. To walk according to the spirit is to live Christ. The Lord wants a people who have such a walk and such a living.

Through the years the churches have had some growth in life, yet our living of Christ is not adequate. Moreover, our growth is slow because our living is short. Our growth may be helped or frustrated by our living. Thus, we should not be satisfied to see some growth in life; we must seek to have a proper living, which will produce normal growth. Our living needs to match our vision.

When the leading ones meet in the various localities, they should pray and fellowship concerning their living of Christ in their daily lives. Our real responsibility is our living, and our living should be according to the spirit. As leading ones, we know from our experience that when we are living Christ, we are best able to care for the church. We must see the need for our living to match our vision. (*The Importance of Living Christ by Walking according to the Spirit*, pp. 7-9)

NEEDING TO WALK ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT IN ORDER TO LIVE CHRIST

In the past few years we have seen the matter of living Christ (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20). Recently, based on Romans 8:4, we have seen the matter of walking according to the spirit, which is the practical way to live Christ. We are often distracted from walking according to the spirit. We may be distracted even by apparently positive things, such as preaching the gospel. We need to pay our full attention to walking according to the spirit in order to live Christ.

The church fathers taught much about the person of Christ, but most neglected to live Christ. The more they taught about Christ, the more they were divided and fought one another because of different interpretations and doctrines. Christians have emphasized various

kinds of works and teachings throughout the past nineteen centuries, but few have lived Christ.

The Lord has revealed much to us today, but we need to be those who earnestly desire to walk according to the spirit. As elders, we may help the saints to preach the gospel and exercise their spirits in the meetings, but our primary concern should be to help them to live Christ by walking according to the spirit in their daily life. We all need to consider our own situation. If we are honest, we will humble ourselves before the Lord and repent to Him for our lack of walking according to the spirit in our daily life.

When we face serious problems, we often pray desperately to seek the Lord's leading. Before we give a message, it is easy to pray. However, walking according to the spirit is different from praying in difficult situations or before spiritual activities. To walk according to the spirit is to do everything in our daily life according to the spirit. We need to walk according to the spirit moment by moment not only in big things but also in small things, such as writing a letter or talking with our family at the dinner table. If we cannot do or say something according to the spirit, we should not do or say it. We must admit that we are short of such a living. To pray only during the meetings or when we face a great problem is not to walk according to the spirit. Our walking according to the spirit in our daily living should be like our breathing. If we do not live Christ or walk according to the spirit, our spiritual activities may be a performance. We should not act one way in the meetings and another way in our daily life.

WALKING EITHER ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT OR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

When we are not walking according to the spirit in our daily life, we are walking according to the flesh. According to Romans 8:4-9, anything that is not according to the spirit is according to the flesh. There are only two sources and two conditions of our living—the spirit and the flesh. Outward behavior, such as whether we are loving or hating others or praising or criticizing others, does not determine whether we are living according to the spirit or the flesh. Even our love is according to the flesh if it is not according to the spirit. We may rarely speak negatively, but even our positive speech that is not according to the spirit is still according to the flesh.

Perhaps it is difficult to know the spirit, but it is easy to know what is not the spirit. For instance, we know when our speaking is not according to the spirit, even when it is positive. In order to be able to live according to the spirit, it is sufficient for us to know when our speech and actions are not according to the spirit. However, we do not practice such a life. During the meetings we may conduct ourselves according to the spirit, but after the meetings we often feel free to speak and do things according to the flesh. It is not sufficient merely to live morally or ethically or even to decide what to do based on the Spirit's leading, for we may be led by the Spirit to do something but then do it according to the flesh. We need to do everything according to the spirit, thinking, speaking, and acting moment by moment according to the spirit.

THE ISSUE OF A DAILY LIFE OF WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

Other aspects of the Christian life, such as preaching the gospel, should be the result of our living Christ. If all the saints live Christ by walking according to the spirit, there will be a great increase in the church. Much gospel preaching will spontaneously issue from our walking according to the spirit. Several years ago I proposed that the saints in a certain locality go out at least once a week to contact others. Everyone listened and agreed, but eventually no

one practiced it. I found that it does not work to charge the saints to go out regularly to preach the gospel. However, if the elders in a locality take the lead to walk according to the spirit, and they minister such a life to the other saints, the saints in that locality will also walk according to the spirit and regularly preach the gospel. When the meetings are dismissed, the saints tend to talk only with those whom they already know, and new ones are often neglected. When we choose whom we will talk to based on our natural preferences, we are not walking according to the spirit. If we have the time, strength, and desire only to do things that are according to our natural taste, it is because we are not walking according to the spirit.

Our primary concern should not be how to do things such as preaching the gospel and shepherding the new believers. Instead, we need to see that God wants a people who live Christ by walking according to the spirit. If we practice to continually walk according to the spirit throughout the day, everything else will spontaneously issue forth from such a living. The real impact of the Lord's recovery comes from our living. Our gospel preaching and shepherding should not be activities but should be the issue of a daily life of walking according to the spirit. Such a living will also issue in holiness, victory, and spirituality. All such aspects of the Christian life should be part of our living. For instance, a daily life of walking according to the spirit will issue in our functioning with a released spirit in the meetings. If we do not live Christ in our daily life, we will have no surplus of Christ to bring to the meetings. In order to exhibit Christ, we must gain Christ in our daily life by walking according to the spirit. If the saints are living Christ, they will spontaneously function in the meetings.

The corporate aspect of the Christian life is certainly helpful, but what we often lack is a daily life of walking according to the spirit. The saints in a local church may experience a high corporate life for a time, but if they do not enter into the practice of walking according to the spirit, their enjoyment will eventually diminish. Many of us have experienced a high corporate life in the past. Today we need to enter into the actual practice of walking according to the spirit, and as leading ones, we need to help others to balance their corporate enjoyment of the Lord with a personal daily life of walking according to the spirit. Whether or not there is a high atmosphere of corporate enjoyment in our locality, we need to personally walk according to the spirit. Corporate exercise of the spirit helps our walking according to the spirit but cannot replace it. Our walking according to the spirit is our spiritual breathing, which is what enables us to endure. To stop breathing is an indication of death. We need to pay our full attention to walking according to the spirit, because our breathing is what matters.

Many saints need to practice walking according to the spirit in order to become less dependent on corporate help. The Lord may place us in an environment in which we do not have much opportunity to meet with others. The apostle John did not receive corporate help when he was in exile on the island of Patmos, but he was still in spirit (Rev. 1:10). We need to practice to be in spirit when we are alone.

The Bible reveals that the kind of people God desires to gain is a people who live Christ. Because we are still influenced by many other things, such as our background, knowledge, and environment, we miss the mark of living Christ and walking according to the spirit. Because the matter of living Christ pertains to life, which is mysterious and abstract, it is easy for us to miss and neglect this matter. Nevertheless, the Lord has shown us His desire, and He will not let us go. Once we have seen the matter of living Christ, there is nothing else to which we can give ourselves. We must practice this, pay our full attention to this, live this, and minister this to others. Living Christ and ministering such a life to others may

seem to be a slow work, but it is the most effective work because it is a matter of life. Life is never defeated; it always prevails. We need to realize that any kind of organizational work will not last. We must minister life, because life endures.

Our lack today is a daily living of walking according to the spirit. In order to see this matter, we need to be unloaded by setting aside what we think we know. After mentioning walking according to the spirit in Romans 8:4, Paul goes on to describe such a walk. In verses 5 through 17 he does not correct the believers or give them a charge or a command; instead, he explains the genuine Christian walk, which is a walk according to the spirit. This walk involves the Spirit and our spirit, and it affects our mind and our mortal body. The Spirit is in our spirit, forming a mingled spirit, and when we walk according to this mingled spirit, life is imparted to our spirit, mind, and body (vv. 10, 6, 11). After the Triune God in Christ was processed and achieved and attained everything for His purpose, He became the life-giving all-inclusive Spirit, who is the Spirit of God the Father, the Spirit of Christ the Son, and the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead (vv. 9, 11). Therefore, the Spirit is the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God. This Spirit is in our spirit, witnessing with our spirit (v. 16). These two spirits are one. The Triune God mingles with the tripartite man in the spirit. Therefore, what we need is simply to walk according to the mingled spirit. Romans 8 does not teach that we should try to improve ourselves through ethics, morality, or religion; instead, it teaches that we need to walk according to the mingled spirit. The focus of Romans 8 is walking according to the mingled spirit, which is the practical way to live Christ. Such a living is our need today. The outward results of our work may pass away; therefore, what really counts in the eyes of God is our living of Christ. (*The Importance of Living Christ by Walking according to the Spirit*, pp. 11-17)