

## RUTH

### Message Twelve

#### **Taking the Way of Life in the Lord's Recovery**

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1:16-17, 20-21; 2:10-16;  
3:1, 7-13; 4:9-15; Matt. 7:13-14

- I. The three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth present a clear picture of the two aspects of God's move: His move in His economical Spirit, the Spirit of power, and His move in His essential Spirit, the Spirit of life—Judg. 13:25; 14:6; John 20:22; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:2:**
  - A. With Joshua, Caleb, and all the judges we see the move of God in power, illustrated by Samson as one who moved in the Spirit of power but not in the Spirit of life—Judg. 14:6.
  - B. In contrast, the book of Ruth is a book of life; the purpose of this book is not to tell us anything about power but to reveal the things of life to the uttermost, using Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz as examples—1:16-17, 20-21; 2:10-16; 3:1, 7-13; 4:9-15.
  - C. In the Lord's recovery we should not take the way of the judges to be powerful and to do a great work; if we take the way of power instead of the way of life, whatever we accomplish will mean nothing.
  - D. It is crucial for us to see that only life can bring forth Christ—Luke 1:35:
    1. Only life can bring God into humanity, produce Christ, minister Christ, and supply the entire human race with Christ—Matt. 1:18, 20-21.
    2. This was accomplished by Ruth and Boaz, persons of life, who took the way of life.
- II. According to the divine and eternal nature of the life of God, God's life is the unique life; only the life of God can be counted as life—John 1:4; 10:10b; 11:25; 14:6:**
  - A. Life is mysterious, for life is God Himself—1:1, 14; 5:26; Eph. 4:18:
    1. The divine life may be considered the first and the basic attribute of God—v. 18; John 5:26; 1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:2.
    2. Life is the content of God and the flowing out of God; God's content is God's being, and God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us—Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1.
    3. Life is Christ, and life is Christ living in us and lived out from us—John 14:6; Col. 3:4; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a.
    4. Life is the Holy Spirit—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6.

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5. Life is the processed and consummated Triune God dispensed into us and living in us—John 1:14; 7:37-39; 20:22; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.

B. God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness was that man would receive Him as life so that man might become a man of life, a God-man, expressing God in His attributes—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.

**III. We need to know the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and turn absolutely from this tree to the tree of life—vv. 9, 16-17:**

A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—v. 9.

B. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:1, 4, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5:

1. Speaking of Christ, John 1:4 says, "In Him was life"; this refers to the life signified by the tree of life.

2. The life portrayed in Genesis 2 is the life incarnated in Christ—1 John 5:11-12; John 1:1, 4, 14.

3. If we put together John 1:4 and 15:5, we will realize that Christ, who Himself is life and also a vine tree, is the tree of life.

C. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death to man—Heb. 2:14:

1. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil also signifies all things apart from God.

2. Anything that is not God Himself, including good things and even scriptural and religious things, can be utilized by Satan, the subtle one, to bring death into the church—Matt. 16:18; Prov. 16:25; 18:21.

D. In John 4, 8, 9, and 11 are four cases that illustrate the principle of life versus good and evil:

1. We should care not for good and evil but for life—4:10-14, 20-21, 23-24; 8:3-9; 9:1-3; 11:20-27.

2. The best way to discern a matter is to discern according to life or death, not according to right and wrong, good and evil—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 11:3.

**IV. Christ is our life—Col. 3:4:**

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- A. The life of God is the life of Christ, and the life of Christ has become our life—v. 4; John 5:26:
    - 1. For Christ to be our life means that He is subjective to us to the uttermost—1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.
    - 2. It is impossible to separate a person from the life of that person, for a person's life is the person himself; thus, to say that Christ is our life means that Christ has become us and that we have one life and living with Him—John 14:6a; Phil. 1:21a.
  - B. The truth that Christ is our life is a strong indication that we are to take Him as life and live Him in our daily life—Col. 3:4; John 6:57:
    - 1. Christ must be our life in a practical and experiential way; day by day we need to be saved in His life—Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 5:10.
    - 2. The new man is the spontaneous issue of our taking Christ as our life and living Him—Col. 3:3-4, 10-11.
- V. There are two possible ways of our life and work before God—the way that leads to life and the way that leads to destruction—Matt. 7:13-14:**
- A. In order to take the way that leads to life, we need to enter in through the narrow gate and then walk on the constricted way—vv. 13-14:
    - 1. The narrow gate deals not only with outward conduct but also with inward motive.
    - 2. The old man, the self, the flesh, the human concept, and the world with its glory are all excluded; only that which corresponds with God's will can enter in—v. 21; 12:50.
    - 3. First, we need to enter in through the narrow gate and then walk on the constricted way, a way that is lifelong and leads to life—7:14.
    - 4. The word *life* in Matthew 7:14 refers to the ever-blessed condition of the kingdom, which is filled with the eternal life of God; this life is in the reality of the kingdom today and will be in the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming age—19:29; Luke 18:30.

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- B. The broad way is according to the worldly systems, satisfying the natural tastes, to get the crowd, to maintain a career of man, and to achieve man's enterprise; the destruction to which the broad way leads refers not to the perishing of a person but to the destruction of a person's deeds and works—1 Cor. 3:15; Matt. 13:31-33; Rev. 2:13, 20; 17:4-5.
- C. The way of the Lord's recovery is the way of life that leads to a living reward in life in the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age—Psa. 16:11; Jer. 21:8; Matt. 19:29; Luke 18:30; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 15:58.

#### **VI. We need to live by the sense of life—the feeling, the consciousness, of the divine life within us—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19:**

- A. The source of the sense of life is the divine life, the law of life, the Holy Spirit, Christ abiding in us, and God operating in us—Rom. 8:2, 10-11; Phil. 2:13.
- B. The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling; this feeling is the sense of life—Eph. 4:18.
- C. The sense of life guides us, governs us, controls us, and directs us, causing us to know whether we are living in the divine life or in the natural life and whether we are living in the flesh or in the spirit—Rom. 8:6.

#### **VII. We need to be victorious over the attack of death upon the church and build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Matt. 16:18; John 11:25; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:**

- A. By the resurrection life of Christ in our spirit, we can be victorious over the attack of death upon the church—Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:24; 2 Tim. 1:10:
  - 1. From Eden onward, God's controversy with Satan has been on the issue of death and life—Rom. 8:6, 10-11; Heb. 2:15.
  - 2. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—"the gates of Hades," that is, death; Satan's special object is to spread death within the church, and his greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—Rev. 2:8, 10-11.
- B. We should be exercised in spirit to build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Eph. 2:6, 21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:18; 2:8; Phil. 3:10:

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1. The nature of the church as the Body of Christ is resurrection, and the reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; Acts 2:24; Eph. 1:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
2. When we live by the divine life within us, we are living a life in resurrection for the building up of the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 3:15.

**VIII. “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers”—1 John 3:14a:**

- A. Death is of the devil, God’s enemy, Satan, signified by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which brings death—Gen. 2:9, 17.
- B. Life is of God, the source of life, signified by the tree of life, which issues in life—vv. 9, 16-17.
- C. Death and life are not only of two sources, Satan and God; they are also two essences, two elements, and two spheres—John 5:24.
- D. To pass out of death into life is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life; this took place at the time of our regeneration—1 John 3:14a; John 3:3, 5, 15.
- E. We know—have the inner consciousness—that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers; love (the love of God) toward the brothers is strong evidence of this—1 John 3:14a:
  1. Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life—John 5:24; 1 John 3:14a.
  2. To have faith is to receive the eternal life; to love is to live by the eternal life and express it—John 3:15, 36; 1 John 3:11, 14-18; 4:7-12, 16, 19-21.