

Message Two

**Christ as the One with the Heavenly-ruled Deeds,
Our Shepherd, Our Rest, and the Sower**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 9:20-22, 36; 11:28-30; 13:3, 18-23

I. Christ is revealed as the One with the heavenly-ruled deeds—the fringe of His garment—Matt. 9:20-22:

- A. Christ's garment signifies His righteous deeds, and the fringe signifies the heavenly ruling: "Speak to the children of Israel and tell them to make for themselves fringes on the borders of their garments throughout their generations and to put on the fringe of each border a cord of blue. And it shall be a fringe for you, so that when you see it you will remember all the commandments of Jehovah and do them...and be holy to your God"—Num. 15:38-40:
 - 1. A cord signifies binding, and blue signifies heavenly.
 - 2. Hence, a cord of blue signifies that, as children of God, our conduct and behavior should be beautiful and should be under the ruling, governing, and binding of the heavenly government, limitation, and regulation.
- B. Garments signify virtue in human behavior; the Lord's garments signify His perfect behavior in His humanity, His human virtuous perfection.
- C. In the human virtue of the Lord Jesus, there was healing power; therefore, when the sick woman touched the fringe of His garment, the power of His virtue went out to her, and she was healed.
- D. Out of Christ's heavenly-ruled deeds issues the virtue that becomes the healing power—Matt. 14:36.
- E. To touch the Lord's garments was actually to touch Him in His humanity, in which God was embodied (Col. 2:9); by such a touch, His divine power was transfused, through the perfection of His humanity, into the one who had touched Him, and it became her healing (Luke 8:45-48; Heb. 12:2a).
- F. The God who dwells in unapproachable light became touchable in the Slave-Savior through His humanity for her salvation and enjoyment.
- G. The pressing crowd did not receive anything from the Slave-Savior, but the one who touched Him did (see *Hymns*, #559, stanza 2 and chorus).

II. The Lord Jesus is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep—Matt. 9:36; Isa. 40:11; 53:6; Ezek. 34:1-5, 11-15:

- A. He shepherds us in the initial stage of the enjoyment of Christ as the green pastures and of the Spirit as the waters of rest—Psa. 23:1-2; 1 Tim. 1:4; Phil. 1:19b; John 21:15; 1 Thes. 2:7; 1 Cor. 12:13b.
- B. He shepherds us in the second stage of the revival and transformation on the paths of righteousness—Psa. 23:3; Rom. 12:2; John 7:38; Rom. 8:4.
- C. He shepherds us in the third stage of the experience of the presence of the resurrected pneumatic Christ while walking through the valley of the shadow of death—Psa. 23:4; 2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 12:7-10.
- D. He shepherds us in the fourth stage of the deeper and higher enjoyment of the resurrected Christ—Psa. 23:5:
 - 1. The Lord spreads a table before us in the presence of our adversaries—v. 5a; cf. 2 Sam. 4:4; 9:7, 13; Gen. 14:18-20; Neh. 4:17.
 - 2. The Lord anoints our head with oil, and our cup runs over—Psa. 23:5b; Heb. 1:9; 1 Cor. 10:16a, 21.

3. In Psalm 23:5 we have the Triune God—the Son as the feast, the Spirit as the anointing oil, and the Father as the source of blessing.
- E. He shepherds us in the fifth stage of the lifelong enjoyment of the divine goodness and lovingkindness in the house of Jehovah—v. 6:
1. Under the organic shepherding of the pneumatic Christ, goodness and lovingkindness will follow us all the days of our life, and we will dwell in the house of Jehovah for the length of our days—v. 6:
 - a. *Goodness* refers to the grace of Christ, *lovingkindness* refers to the love of the Father, and *follow* implies the fellowship of the Spirit; thus, the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit are with us—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - b. The enjoyment of the processed and consummated Triune God ushers us into the enjoyment of God in the house of God (Christ, the church, our spirit, and the New Jerusalem—John 1:14; 2:21; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Eph. 2:22; Rev. 21:2-3, 22) where we will dwell for the length of our days (in the present age, in the coming age, and in eternity).
 2. We need to seek to dwell in the house of God all the days of our life—Psa. 27:4-8:
 - a. To behold the beauty (loveliness, pleasantness, delightfulness) of God—vv. 4a, 8; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - b. To inquire of God, checking with Him about everything in our daily life—Psa. 27:4b; cf. Josh. 9:14.
 - c. To be concealed in God's shelter and to hide ourselves in the hiding place of God's tent—Psa. 27:5a; 31:20.
 - d. To be raised up and have our head lifted up by God—27:5b-6a.
 - e. To offer sacrifices of shouts of joy with singing and psalming to God for the glory of God—v. 6b; Heb. 13:15; Phil. 2:11.

III. The Lord Jesus is our rest—Matt. 11:28-30:

- A. "Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest"—v. 28:
1. The toil mentioned here refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the toil of struggling to be successful in any work; whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.
 2. Rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility, but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
- B. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"—vv. 29-30:
1. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father; it is not to be regulated or controlled by any work, but to be constrained by the will of the Father.
 2. The Lord lived such a life, caring for nothing but the will of His Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38); He submitted Himself fully to the Father's will (Matt. 26:39, 42); hence, He asks us to learn from Him.
 3. To learn from Him is not to imitate Him outwardly but to copy the Lord in our spirit by taking His yoke—God's will; God's will has to yoke us, and we have to put our neck into this yoke to become His duplication—1 Pet. 2:21.
 4. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is for our souls; it is an inward rest and not anything merely outward in nature.
 5. The Lord's yoke is the Father's will, and His burden is the work of carrying out the Father's will; such a yoke is easy (good, kind, mild, gentle, pleasant—in contrast to hard, harsh, sharp, bitter), and such a burden is light, not heavy.

IV. The Sower is the wonderful person of the Lord Jesus, and the seed sown is also the Lord Himself as the embodiment of the Triune God—Matt. 13:3, 18-23:

- A. We need to see the vision of Christ, the Sower, sowing Himself as the seed of life into human beings; this vision is the very heart of the Lord's recovery, for it is related to the desire of the Lord's heart.
- B. He desires to come into us, His chosen people, to be our life in the way of mingling in order to make Himself our element and to make us His expression.
- C. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, a farm in God's new creation to grow Christ so that precious materials may be produced for God's building—1 Cor. 3:9, 12a.
- D. According to the Bible, growth equals building; this takes place by the growth of the divine seed of life within us—1 John 3:9; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
- E. Ephesians 3:17 reveals that the Triune God has come into us to do a building work with Himself as the element and also with something from us as the material; this is illustrated by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:
 - 1. The Lord sows Himself as the seed of life into men's hearts, the soil, that He might grow and live in them and be expressed from within them—v. 3.
 - 2. The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients of the soil; as a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil—v. 23.
 - 3. We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us; God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients along with the human heart as the soil for the divine seed—1 Pet. 3:4.
 - 4. The rate at which we grow in life depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed; the more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow and the more it will flourish—Matt. 5:3, 8.
 - 5. If we remain in our soul, in our natural man, there will not be any nutrients for the growth of the divine seed, but if we are strengthened into our inner man and if we pay attention to our spirit and exercise our spirit, the nutrients will be supplied and Christ will make His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:16-17; Rom. 8:6; 1 Tim. 4:7; cf. Jude 19.
 - 6. If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal thoroughly with our heart—Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23.
 - 7. On the one hand, God strengthens us with Himself as the element, and on the other hand, we afford the nutrients; through these two, God in Christ carries out His intrinsic building—the building of His home—in our entire being.