

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2026**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS**

Message Ten

**The Divine Sanctification for the Divine Sonship—
the Central Thought of the Revelation in the New Testament**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:4-5; 5:26-27; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Thes. 5:23

Eph. 1:4-5—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Eph. 5:26-27—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, ²⁷That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

Heb. 2:10-11—For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

1 Thes. 5:23—And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The most marvelous, excellent, mysterious, and all-inclusive transformations of the eternal and Triune God in His becoming a man are God's move in man for the accomplishment of His eternal economy—John 1:14, 29; 3:14; 12:24; Acts 13:33; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 9:15; 7:22; 8:2:

John 1:14—And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 1:29—The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 3:14—And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

John 12:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Acts 13:33—That God has fully fulfilled this *promise* to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.”

1 Pet. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

Acts 2:36—Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Acts 5:31—This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Heb. 4:14—Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.

Heb. 9:15—And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Heb. 7:22—By so much Jesus has also become the surety of a better covenant.

Heb. 8:2—A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

A. These transformations are the processes through which the Triune God passed in His becoming a God-man, bringing divinity into humanity and mingling divinity with humanity as a prototype for the mass reproduction of many God-men; He became the embodiment of the Triune God, bringing God to man and making God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, enterable, and enjoyable—John 1:14; 12:24; Col. 2:9.

John 1:14—And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 12:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Col. 2:9—For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

B. God speaks of these transformations in Hosea 11:4 by saying, “I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love”; the phrase *with cords of a man, with bands of love* indicates that God loves us with His divine love not on the level of divinity but on the level of humanity; God’s love is divine, but it reaches us in the cords of a man, that is, through Christ’s humanity:

1. The cords (the transformations, the processes) through which God draws us include Christ’s incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; it is by all these steps of Christ in His humanity that God’s love in His salvation reaches us—Jer. 31:3; John 3:14, 16; 6:44; 12:32; Rom. 5:5, 8; 1 John 4:8-10, 16, 19.

Jer. 31:3—Jehovah appeared to me from afar, *saying*, Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

John 3:14—And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

John 3:16—For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

John 6:44—No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up in the last day.

John 12:32—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

Rom. 5:5—And hope does not put *us* to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom. 5:8—But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:8-10—He who does not love has not known God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him. ¹⁰Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:16—And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

1 John 4:19—We love because He first loved us.

2. Apart from Christ, God's everlasting love, His unchanging, subduing love, could not be prevailing in relation to us; God's unchanging love is prevailing because it is a love in Christ, with Christ, by Christ, and for Christ.
3. In spite of our failures and mistakes, God's love is always victorious; love survives everything and holds its place forever; only love is characteristic of a mature man and will last for eternity—Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 13:8-11; Jer. 31:3.

Rom. 8:35-39—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we have been accounted as sheep for slaughter." ³⁷But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers ³⁹Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Cor. 13:8-11—Love never falls *away*. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.

Jer. 31:3—Jehovah appeared to me from afar, *saying*, Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

- C. From ancient times, from the days of eternity, the Triune God was preparing to come forth out of eternity into time, to come with His divinity into humanity by being born in Bethlehem as a man—Micah 5:2:

Micah 5:2—(But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, So little to be among the thousands of Judah, From you there will come forth to Me He who is to be Ruler in Israel; And His goings forth are from ancient times, From the days of eternity.)

1. The purpose of the incarnation was to bring God into man and to make God man that man may become God in His life and in His nature but not in His Godhead; He is the unique God for people to worship in His Godhead, but we are God only in life and in nature, not in the Godhead.
2. God's move is in man and through man to deify man, making man God in life, in nature, in function, and in expression but not, of course, in the Godhead; because "the Spirit the Holy" has been dispensed into our spirit, we and the Spirit are one spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17), and our spirit is now "a holy spirit" (2 Cor. 6:6).

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

2 Cor. 6:6—In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,

3. Thus, as God-men, we should not take any action, face any situation, or meet any need apart from the all-inclusive Spirit; the way that we must take today is the way of moving in the move of the Spirit and of having the Spirit moving in our move—Rev. 22:17a; Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 3:3; cf. Ezek. 1:15-21.

Rev. 22:17—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

Rom. 8:4—That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Gal. 5:25—If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Rom. 1:9—For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Phil. 3:3—For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

cf. Ezek. 1:15-21—And as I watched the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for *each* of their four faces. ¹⁶The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship were like the sight of beryl. And the four of them had one likeness; that is, their appearance and their workmanship were as it were a wheel within a wheel. ¹⁷Whenever they went, they went in their four directions; they did not turn as they went. ¹⁸As for their rims, they were high and they were awesome;

and the rims of the four of them were full of eyes all around. ¹⁹And whenever the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and whenever the living creatures were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up *also*. ²⁰Wherever the Spirit was to go, they went—wherever the Spirit was to go. And the wheels were lifted up alongside them, for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. ²¹Whenever those went, these went; and whenever those stood still, these stood still; and whenever those were lifted up above the earth, the wheels were lifted up alongside them; for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

4. In the book of Acts man moved in God's move, and God moved in man's move; thus, the apostles became the acting God, that is, God in function—16:6-10. **Acts 16:6-10**—And they passed through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷And when they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸And bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹And a vision appeared to Paul during the night: A certain man, a Macedonian, was standing and entreating him and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. ¹⁰And when he had seen the vision, we immediately endeavored to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to announce the gospel to them.

II. The divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament—Eph. 1:4-5:

Eph. 1:4-5—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

- A. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy in order for us to become God in nature (v. 4); God is the only One who is holy; for us to be holy we need God in His holy nature dispensed into us, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 12:14).

Eph. 1:4—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

1 Pet. 1:15-16—But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all *your* manner of life; ¹⁶Because it is written, “You shall be holy because I am holy.”

2 Pet. 1:4—Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

Heb. 12:14—Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;

- B. He predestinated us unto sonship even before we were created in order for us to become God in life (Eph. 1:5); for us to become sons of God, we must be born of God by the dispensing of God's life into our being (John 1:12-13; 3:6; 1 John 5:11-12):

Eph. 1:5—Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

John 1:12-13—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, ¹³Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 3:6—That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 John 5:11-12—And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

1. Ephesians 1:4-5 reveals that God chose us to be holy for the purpose of our being made sons of God; to be made holy is the process, the procedure, whereas to be sons of God is the aim, the goal, so that our whole being, including our body (Rom. 8:23), may be “sonized” by God (Rev. 21:2, 9-11).

Eph. 1:4-5—Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, ⁵Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Rom. 8:23—And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

Rev. 21:2—And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:9-11—And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. ¹⁰And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

2. Hebrews 2:10-11 reveals that the resurrected Christ as the Captain, the Author, of God’s salvation is leading many sons into glory by sanctifying them.

Heb. 2:10-11—For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

III. The divine sanctification is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely, making us sons of God that we may become the same as God in His life and in His nature (but not in His Godhead), so that we may be God’s expression; hence, God’s sanctification is the divine sonizing:

- A. We say that sanctification is the holding line because every step of God’s work with us is to make us holy; the carrying out of the eternal economy of God is by

the Spirit's sanctification—1 Thes. 5:23; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Psa. 73:16-17, 25-26.

1 Thes. 5:23—And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 17:17—Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Eph. 5:26-27—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, ²⁷That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

1 Cor. 6:11—And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Cor. 12:3—Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus *is* accursed; and no one can say, Jesus *is* Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

Heb. 12:4-14—You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin, ⁵And you have completely forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by Him; ⁶For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” ⁷*It is* for discipline *that* you endure; God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, of which all *sons* have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected *them*; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness. ¹¹Now no discipline at the present time seems to be *a matter* of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it. ¹²Therefore set straight the hands which hang down and the paralyzed knees, ¹³And make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather may be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;

Rom. 8:28-29—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

Eph. 4:30—And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

1 Thes. 5:19—Do not quench the Spirit;

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Psa. 73:16-17—When I considered this in order to understand *it*, It was a troublesome task in my sight, ¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I perceived their end.

Psa. 73:25-26—Whom do I have in heaven *but You?* And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail, *But* God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.

- B. The seeking sanctification, the initial sanctification, is unto repentance to bring us back to God—1 Pet. 1:2; Luke 15:8-10, 17-21; John 16:8-11.

1 Pet. 1:2—Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

Luke 15:8-10—Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds *it*? ⁹And when she finds *it*, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost. ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.

Luke 15:17-21—But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine! ¹⁸I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. ²⁰And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

John 16:8-11—And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment: ⁹Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me; ¹⁰And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me; ¹¹And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

- C. The redeeming sanctification, the positional sanctification, is by the blood of Christ, to transfer us from Adam to Christ—Heb. 13:12; 9:13-14; 10:29.

Heb. 13:12—Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Heb. 9:13-14—For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who are defiled sanctify to the purity of the flesh, ¹⁴How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb. 10:29—By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

- D. The regenerating sanctification, the beginning of dispositional sanctification, renews us from our spirit to make us, the sinners, sons of God—a new creation with the divine life and nature—John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

John 1:12-13—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, ¹³Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Cor. 5:17—So then if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

Gal. 6:15—For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation *is what matters*.

- E. The renewing sanctification, the continuation of dispositional sanctification, renews our soul from our mind through all the parts of our soul to make our soul a part of God's new creation—Rom. 12:2b; 6:4; 7:6; Eph. 4:23; Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

Rom. 12:2—And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Rom. 6:4—We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

Rom. 7:6—But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

Eph. 4:23—And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Ezek. 36:26-27—I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

2 Cor. 4:16-18—Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- F. The transforming sanctification, the daily sanctification, reconstitutes us with the element of Christ metabolically to make us a new constitution as a part of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18.

1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- G. The conforming sanctification, the shaping sanctification, shapes us in the image of the glorious Christ to make us the expression of Christ; our conformation is our maturity in the divine life through which we participate in

God's divinity in full and are solidified in the possession of His divine element—Rom. 8:28-29; Heb. 6:1a.

Rom. 8:28-29—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

Heb. 6:1—Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

- H. The glorifying sanctification, the consummating sanctification, redeems our body by transfiguring it to make us Christ's expression in full and in glory—Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23.

Phil. 3:21—Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

Rom. 8:23—And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

IV. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the life-giving, sanctifying, and speaking Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 5:25-27; S.S. 8:13-14:

1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul”; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

1 Thes. 5:23—And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. 5:25-27—Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her ²⁶That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, ²⁷That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

S.S. 8:13-14—O you who dwell in the gardens, / *My* companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear *it*. ¹⁴Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

- A. Christ as the life-giving Spirit sanctifies the church by cleansing her according to the washing of the water in the word; according to the divine concept, water here refers to the flowing life of God typified by flowing water (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17); we are now in such a washing process in order that the church may be holy and without blemish.

Exo. 17:6—I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

1 Cor. 10:4—And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed *them*, and the rock was Christ.

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Rev. 7:17—For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Rev. 21:6—And He said to me, They have come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to him who thirsts from the spring of the water of life freely.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev. 22:17—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

- B. The Greek word for *washing* in Ephesians 5:26 is literally *laver*; in the Old Testament the priests used the laver to wash away their earthly defilement (Exo. 30:18-21); day by day, morning and evening, we need to come to the Bible and be cleansed by the laver of the water in the word.

Eph. 5:26—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word,

Exo. 30:18-21—You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. ¹⁹And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it; ²⁰When they go into the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water, that they may not die; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to Jehovah, ²¹They shall wash their hands and their feet, that they may not die. And it shall be a perpetual statute to them, for him and for his seed throughout their generations.

- C. Paul uses the Greek word *rhema* when he speaks of the word with its washing process (Eph. 5:26); *logos* is God's Word objectively recorded in the Bible; *rhema* is the word of God spoken to us on a specific occasion (Mark 14:72; Luke 1:35-38; 5:5; 24:1-8).

Eph. 5:26—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word,

Mark 14:72—And immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered the word, how Jesus had said to him, Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And thinking upon it, he wept.

Luke 1:35-38—And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, Elizabeth your relative, she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who is called barren, ³⁷Because no word will be impossible with God. ³⁸And Mary said, Behold, the

slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke 5:5—And Simon answered and said, Master, through the whole night we toiled and caught nothing; but based on Your word I will let down the nets.

Luke 24:1-8—Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb; ³But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴And while they *stood* perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling clothing. ⁵And they became frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, and *the men* said to them, Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? ⁶He is not here but has been raised. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, ⁷Saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise up. ⁸And they remembered His words.

- D. As the life-giving Spirit, Christ is the speaking Spirit; whatever He speaks is the word that washes us; this does not refer to logos, the constant word, but to rhema, which denotes an instant word, the word that the Lord presently speaks to us—**Matt. 4:4**; **John 6:63**; **Rev. 2:7**; **22:17a**; cf. **Isa. 6:9-10**; **Matt. 13:14-15**; **Acts 28:25-31**. **Matt. 4:4**—But He answered and said, It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.”

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev. 22:17—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

cf. **Isa. 6:9-10**—And He said, Go and say to this people, Hear indeed, but do not perceive; And see indeed, but do not understand. ¹⁰Make the heart of this people numb; Dull their ears, And seal their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, And their heart perceive and return, and they are healed.

cf. **Matt. 13:14-15**—And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, “In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you shall see and by no means perceive. ¹⁵For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.”

cf. **Acts 28:25-31**—And when they disagreed with one another, they departed, Paul saying one word *to them*, Well has the Holy Spirit spoken through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, ²⁶Saying, “Go to this people and say, In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you will see and by no means perceive; ²⁷For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them.” ²⁸Let it be

known to you therefore that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also hear *it*. ²⁹And when he had spoken these things, the Jews departed, having much dispute among themselves. ³⁰And he remained two whole years in *his* own rented dwelling and welcomed all those who came to him, ³¹Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

- E. The rhema reveals something to us personally and directly; it shows us what we need to deal with and what we need to be cleansed from (the laver of bronze was a mirror that could reflect and expose—Exo. 38:8); the important thing for each one of us is this—is God speaking His word to me today?—Rev. 2:7; 1 Sam. 3:1, 21; Amos 3:7.

Exo. 38:8—And he made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

1 Sam. 3:1—And the boy Samuel ministered to Jehovah before Eli. Now the word of Jehovah was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

1 Sam. 3:21—And Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh, for Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.

Amos 3:7—Surely the Lord Jehovah will not do anything unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

- F. One thing that we always treasure is that the Lord still speaks to us personally and directly today; true growth in life depends upon our receiving the word directly from God; only His speaking in us has true spiritual value—Heb. 3:7-11, 15; 4:7; Psa. 95:7-8.

Heb. 3:7-11—Therefore, even as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice, ⁸Do not harden your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹Where your fathers tried *Me* by testing *Me* and saw My works for forty years. ¹⁰Therefore I was displeased with this generation, and I said, They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways; ¹¹As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest!”

Heb. 3:15—While it is said, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation.”

Heb. 4:7—He again designates a certain day, today, saying in David after so long a time, even as was said before, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Psa. 95:7-8—For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture And the flock of His hand. Today, if you hear His voice, ⁸Do not harden your heart as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

- G. The central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord’s speaking, which enables us to fulfill the goal of His eternal economy according to His heart’s desire to have His divine sonship—Luke 1:38; 10:38-42; Eph. 1:5.

Luke 1:38—And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Luke 10:38-42—Now as they went, He entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her home. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was being drawn about with much serving, and she came up to *Him* and said, Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to do her part with me. ⁴¹But the Lord answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; ⁴²But there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Eph. 1:5—Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

- H. In a very practical sense, the Lord's presence is one with His speaking; whenever He speaks, we realize His presence within us; Christ's speaking is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit—cf. Exo. 33:12-17; Heb. 11:8.

cf. Exo. 33:12-17—And Moses said to Jehovah, See, You say to me, Bring up this people; but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight. ¹³Now therefore if I have found favor in Your sight, please let me know now Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may continue to find favor in Your sight. Consider also that this nation is Your people. ¹⁴And He said, My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest. ¹⁵And he said to Him, If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶For how then shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, are distinct from all the *other* people who are on the face of the earth? ¹⁷And Jehovah said to Moses, I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name.

cf. Heb. 11:8—By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- I. The speaking of the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit within us is the cleansing water that deposits a new element into us to replace the old element in our nature and disposition; this metabolic cleansing causes a genuine and inward change in life, which is the reality of dispositional sanctification and transformation.

V. Our being sanctified for the divine sonship ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem as the holy city (Rev. 21:2, 10) and the aggregate of the divine sonship (v. 7); this is the ultimate consummation of God becoming a man in the flesh that man might become God in the Spirit to gain a corporate, great God-man (vv. 3, 22) for the corporate expression, the glory, of the Triune God (vv. 11, 23).

Rev. 21:2—And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:10—And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Rev. 21:7—He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be God to him, and he will be a son to Me.

Rev. 21:3—And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Rev. 21:22—And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Rev. 21:11—Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

Rev. 21:23—And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.