

Message Two

The Knowledge of Life

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Psa. 36:7-9; John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; Rom. 8:13; Matt. 7:13-14

OUTLINE

Day 1

- I. Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the center of the universe—Gen. 2:9; John 1:4; 10:10; 14:6; 15:1; 6:35, 63; 1 Cor. 15:45b:**
- A. Life is the goal of God's creation—Gen. 1:26-28, 31; 2:7-9.
 - B. God's organic salvation, being saved in Christ's life, is the goal of the process of God's judicial redemption—John 19:34; Rom. 5:10; Col. 3:3-4; Rev. 22:1-2.
 - C. Life is God Himself in Christ as the Spirit flowing out to be enjoyed by man and to please and satisfy man—Psa. 36:7-9; Rev. 22:1; Jer. 2:13.
 - D. God is in Christ, Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit is life—John 14:9-10, 17-19; 6:63; Rom. 8:2.
 - E. Life is the Lord Himself as the bread of life for us to eat—John 6:35, 57, 63; Matt. 15:22-27.

Day 2

- F. Life is the light, light overcomes darkness, and light is in God's word—John 1:4-5; Psa. 36:8-9; John 6:63:**
- 1. If we want to touch life, we need the word, the inner feeling given to us by the Spirit; such a feeling is the living word of God—v. 63; 1 Sam. 3:19-21.
 - 2. If the Spirit in us gives us a word or a feeling to open our mouth and praise the Lord, we should receive this word and open our mouth to praise the Lord; thus, we will have light within, and this light is life, the Spirit, Christ, and God.
 - 3. When we respond to this feeling and offer a prayer of praise to the Lord, we sense the satisfaction of life, the sweetness of Christ, the presence of God, and the moving of the Spirit.
- G. All the beauty, power, brightness, and ability of the church come from the fact that Christ as life is her inward content; the church is the result of life, and life is the content of the church—Gen. 2:22; John 19:34; 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17.**

Day 3

II. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in man:

A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts:

1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18.
2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved, because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.

B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:

1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves rejecting our natural disposition and preference and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.
3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.

Day 4

C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion:

1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27; cf. Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 2 Cor. 2:12-14.

D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:

1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.

E. There is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us; if we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross

and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.

Day 5

III. We need to see the subjective obstacles encountered by God's life in us:

- A. A proper Christian is one whose mind, will, and emotion cooperate with his spirit; an abnormal Christian is one whose mind, will, and emotion cannot cooperate with, and even contradict, his spirit; thus, he lives under a veil.
- B. The first subjective problem is the problem of our mind:
1. If the things we want to do originate from our thoughts, then these things will be nothing more than religious activities, even if they are successful; they are not a testimony of Christ lived out from our spirit—cf. Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2.
 2. Although we have the life of Christ within, we do not cooperate with Christ's life in our thoughts and actions, and so this life cannot be lived out from us.
 3. When our mind is set on the spirit, our outward actions are in agreement with our inner man, and there is no discrepancy between us and God; He and we are at peace, not at enmity; the result is that we feel peaceful within—8:6.
- C. The second subjective problem is the problem of our will:
1. Even though our mind often understands the intention in our spirit, and we know the will of God, we are unwilling to submit and obey.
 2. We may understand, know, apprehend, and deeply sense that the Lord wants us to do a certain thing, but our will refuses to submit and surrender, and we lose the Lord's presence.
 3. Both a strong will and a weak will to carry out the Lord's will are hindrances to God's life; a will that has been dealt with is both strong and pliable by being subdued and resurrected by the Lord; having a will that can cooperate with God is a great matter—Phil. 2:13.
- D. The third subjective problem is the problem of our emotion:
1. Our emotion needs to have God's emotion, and we need to fully enter into God's emotion—2 Thes. 3:5; Phil. 1:8.
 2. We should love whatever God loves, like whatever God likes, and hate whatever God hates; our emotion and His emotion should become one emotion—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 16:24; Rev. 2:6.
- E. From all this we can see that our person is truly an obstacle for the living out of God's life; this is why we need to be broken and why we daily need to be strengthened into the inner man so that Christ can make His home in our heart, the main parts of which are the mind,

will, and emotion—Eph. 3:16-17.

Day 6

IV. We need to see the pathway of life—Matt. 7:13-14:

- A. A part of God's work in His salvation is to pave a clear way for His life in us; this work is accomplished through the death of the cross—Phil. 3:10.
- B. There is life in a grain of wheat, but unless the grain falls into the ground and dies, the life within the grain will not be released—John 12:24-26.
- C. The way of life is the way of death; when there is the death of Christ operating in us, there is a way for the life of Christ to come out of us—2 Cor. 4:10; Phil. 3:10; Gal. 2:20.
- D. The cross of Christ is experienced by us through the Spirit—5:16, 24; Rom. 8:13-14; Exo. 30:23-25; Phil. 1:19.
- E. The stronger the Holy Spirit's work in us is, the stronger our experience of the cross will be; wherever the Holy Spirit works, there is a putting to death by the Spirit, and resurrection life can be manifested in and through us—2 Cor. 4:11-12.
- F. The discipline of the Holy Spirit also carries out the work of the cross in us:
 - 1. For our spiritual understanding, it is not enough only to know the Holy Spirit; we must also know the "all things" in our circumstances (Rom. 8:28); a Christian who is spiritual and lives before God needs to "read" three things every day: first, he needs to read the Bible; second, he needs to read his inward sense of the spirit; third, he needs to read his environment and circumstances, which are the persons, matters, and things around him; God arranges our environment and circumstances to cause all persons, matters, and things to work together for good, that is, for transforming and conforming us to the image of God's firstborn Son—vv. 28-29.
 - 2. The environment that the Lord has created for us causes us to know the Lord's grace and experience the Lord's power—2 Cor. 12:9.

V. We need to see a vision of how the life of God can be lived out of us:

- A. We need to realize and know that the life of God is in us—Col. 3:4; Rom. 8:10.
- B. We need God to open our eyes to see that our natural man, our very person, is a hindrance to the life of God.
- C. We need to see that we have been crucified on the cross, and we must hate our self; the more we see God, know God, and love God, the

more we abhor ourselves and the more we deny ourselves—Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6; Job 42:5-6; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

VI. “What every church today needs most is the things of life. All our work and activity must come out of life...Unless it comes out of life, our work and service will neither last nor bear much weight. If we want our work to bear abundant and lasting fruit, we must have a foundation in life...Our work should just be the releasing of the life of the Lord, the imparting and supplying of the Lord’s life to others. May the Lord have mercy upon us and open our eyes to see that the central work of God in this age is that man may gain His life and grow and mature in His life. Only the work which comes out of His life can reach His eternal standard and be accepted by Him”—The Knowledge of Life, pp. 57-58.

WEEK 2 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

The tree of life is the center of the universe. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden. We must realize that the whole universe is centered on this tree of life: nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than this tree. It is very meaningful to see man in the garden standing before the tree of life. (Life-study of Genesis, p. 140)

Today's Reading

The Old Testament speaks of creation, and the New Testament speaks of redemption. Both in creation and redemption God's purpose and center is life. If we look at the first two chapters of Genesis under God's light, we can clearly see that life is the goal of His creation. Although God created many things of such diversity and variety, His purpose and final goal are simply life. If we read the first two chapters of Genesis and meditate quietly before God on His creation, we will see that God's creation involves life and produces life. Life is the center and goal of God's creation. In the beginning God created all things out of nothing.

After God created man, He put him in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8). In the center of the garden was the tree of life (v. 9). The tree of life is very special. The first time life is spoken of in the Bible is in relation to the tree of life. This shows that God was still not satisfied, because He had not yet reached His goal, even though He had created everything and even though man had been prepared to express and represent God. What is God's goal? God's goal is life. God brought the man that He created to the tree of life and put him in front of life.

If man does not come to life and life does not come into man, God's creation of man would have no meaning, purpose, or result.

In the New Testament we can see more clearly that life is the incarnated Christ (John 1:1, 4, 14). In John 14:6 the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way and the reality and the life." He Himself said that He is life. God's being life means that life is not simply something that comes from God, but life is God Himself. John 1:4 says that life and light are one. John 8:12 connects life and light and speaks of the light of life. In 10:10 the Lord Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly." In 6:63 He said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; ...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." Verse 63 begins by saying that the Spirit gives life, and it ends by saying that the words the Lord spoke to us are spirit and life. Romans 8:2 refers to life, Spirit, and law when it speaks of "the law of the Spirit of life."

So where is God? God is in Christ. The Me in "the Father is in Me" [John 14:10] is the Christ who is the incarnated Word. Where is Christ? In John 14 the Lord Jesus said that the Father is in Him, and then He said that He would leave the disciples in a little while...but would come again (vv. 18-19, 27-28). He came as the Spirit, "even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him" (v. 17). This shows that God is in Christ, and Christ is the Spirit.

Where is the Spirit? The Spirit has a very special name; He is called the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), which means that the Spirit gives life to people. John 6:63 says that the words that the Lord speaks are spirit and are life. The Spirit is life...Life is God, God is in Christ, Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit is life. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 7-9, 18, 23)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, ch. 1; Life-study of Genesis, msg. 11; The Knowledge of Life, ch. 2; The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation, ch. 1

WEEK 2 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

John 1:4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Psa. 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

Life is the light of man [John 1:4]. Psalm 36:9 says, “For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.”...Life is in the light, and this life is the light of man. Wherever the light shines, life comes in. Wherever life comes, the Spirit is also there. Wherever the Spirit is, Christ is there. Wherever Christ is, God is there. Wherever God is, life is there. Life is in the light.

Where is the light? The light is in the word of God. The words that the Lord speaks to us are spirit and life (John 6:63). We minister God’s word because we hope that God’s word will enter into everyone. As soon as God’s word enters into man, it becomes light. As soon as we receive light inwardly, we have life. When light is received by man, it becomes life. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 23-24)

Today’s Reading

Whenever we touch the Lord’s word, the word becomes light in us, and the word becomes life to satisfy our hunger... When God’s word operates and starts to have an effect on us and if we willingly obey, we are immediately filled with light, life, the Spirit’s presence, Christ, and God. In this way, people sense God, Christ, the Spirit, life, light, and God’s word in us when they contact us. We should always remember that life is God, God is in Christ, Christ is the Spirit, the Spirit is life, life is light, and light comes from God’s word.

When we fellowship with the Lord in the morning, we may sometimes get a sense of receiving a word from God...It is the speaking through the moving of the Spirit in us, and its purpose is for us to contact and touch life. But how do we handle this word? Many people listen to messages, but they do not touch God’s word. Many people read the Bible, but they do not hear God’s word. Some people read spiritual books, but they never touch the Lord. This is because they disobey, ignore, and even reason and argue with the Lord. This is the reason that their light is lost and the reason that life and Christ disappear.

This is true not only in our daily living; we frequently have this kind of experience in the bread-breaking meeting. If the Spirit in us gives us a word or a feeling to open our mouth and praise the Lord, we should receive this word and open our mouth to praise the Lord. Thus, we will have light within, and this light is life, the Spirit, Christ, and God. When we respond to this feeling and offer a prayer of praise to the Lord, we sense the satisfaction of life, the sweetness of Christ, the presence of God, and the moving of the Spirit. Even after we go home, we will still sense God’s sweet presence inwardly.

Thus, if we want to touch life, we need the word, the feeling given to us by the Spirit. Such a feeling is the living word of God. Although it is silent, it is indeed a living word. We should accept and obey it. If we do this, the word in us will become light.

The church is a corporate entity of life. The characteristics, marvelousness, and intrinsic mystery of the church depend on God’s life. The church is the church because she has God’s life. If life is taken away from the church, the church would become ugly, withered, and dead. All the beauty, power, brightness, and ability of the church come from the fact that the life of God is her inward content. This life is the life of Christ; Christ is God becoming flesh and coming into us through the Holy Spirit to be our life. God’s life is in the Holy Spirit, and this life is the God who was in the beginning and the Creator who existed in the beginning. Through the Holy Spirit, the life in the incarnated God came into us. Thus, we have the life that created the universe and the life that is able to do great things in us. This life is the greatest, highest, and most vital life. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 24-25, 12-13)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, ch. 2

WEEK 2 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Phil. 1:20-21 ...My earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but...as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ...

We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in us. I believe that many brothers and sisters know and have seen a little about life. The brothers and sisters also have some understanding concerning the way to obtain life and the issue of obtaining life. However, from our experience, we know that God's life also faces obstacles and difficulties in us. Every part of our entire being, both inwardly and outwardly, presents some obstacles to life. (Knowing Life and the Church, p. 27)

Today's Reading

The first problem that God's life encounters in man is the problem of ignorance....Everyone has human concepts. However, all human concepts are in darkness. It does not matter whether we are wise or foolish, whether we are highly educated or uneducated, all our human concepts are in darkness, and they prevent us from knowing life and Christ....The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts. We do not realize that our concepts, even though they seem proper and upright, are actually full of darkness and without life. Most Christians think that they should be zealous and forsake the world once they become Christians. From man's view, this sounds very logical. But without God's life, this is not practical.

Being a Christian is not a matter of zeal, nor a matter of spreading the gospel, nor a matter of forsaking the world, nor even a matter of not caring for material enjoyment....Being a Christian depends upon how we take care of the Christ in us. The day we were saved, we received a living Christ, who became our life in us. From that day forward, our being a Christian has not depended on anything other than taking care of the living Christ in us. The only thing that matters is how we take care of the living Christ in us.

It is difficult to change our concepts, but we will not have a way to go on unless we put aside our own concepts and opinions. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim. Many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life.

The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy. There was a sister in the church in Nanking who spoke slowly and walked softly; everything she did was soft and gentle. Consequently, all the responsible brothers in the church in Nanking thought that she was very spiritual. However, strictly speaking, this was a false spirituality. We need to see that being slow is not necessarily of life and being quick is not necessarily of life. Whether or not something is of life is not determined by whether it is quick or slow. These have nothing to do with life.

Some people may be naturally gentle, modest, uncontentious, caring, willing to shed tears for others, sympathetic, and self-sacrificing. They have many good points and virtues. After they become Christians, they bring these natural virtues into the church. They think that these virtues are of life and that Christians should have them....From the point of view of morality, people should have these virtues, but from the point of view of life, these virtues are false. Life is God Himself, life is Christ, and life is the Holy Spirit.

The expression of life involves the rejection of our natural disposition and preference, and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us. Then our actions through the inner operation of Christ will be of life. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy. We must see this matter clearly. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 28-30, 32, 34-35)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, ch. 3

WEEK 2 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.

The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion. In this case, we may have our freedom and choice, but we will not have the way of life. (Knowing Life and the Church, p. 35)

Today's Reading

Many times, we think that we are obeying the Lord, but actually we are rebelling against the Lord. For example, we may want to preach the gospel, but the Lord's operation in us is to pray. Since we do not like to stay at home and pray, but instead prefer to speak to gospel friends and fellowship with the brothers and sisters, we may simply act according to our desires. This is to act in rebellion. Nevertheless, we may think that we are following God by visiting people for the gospel and fellowshiping with the saints.... At such a time we should realize that our outward work of preaching the gospel is merely a religious activity.

Visiting gospel friends and fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters are very pleasant things to do. However, we may be very active and zealous in doing those things but still may imprison the living Christ within us by ignoring Him. Thus, we are actually disobeying the living Christ in us. He wants us to do things in a certain way, but we refuse to follow His way. Our unwillingness to do things according to His will is clearly rebellion. Many of us commit this sin every day. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not an outward and visible sin; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us. Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life. We should obey Him, but we often disobey Him. We often do not do what He wants us to do, and we often do what He does not want us to do. We often rebel against Him. Rebellion continually creates obstacles for His life in us.

The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability. Our natural being, disposition, and self are all problems that prevent God's life from coming out of us. However, the problem of our natural capability and ability is even more serious, and it is a strong obstacle that prevents God's life from flowing out of us. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly. Nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities. Consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.

There are many brothers and sisters like this among us. They are capable and talented, but they do not consider these things as sin or filthiness. They even think that these are good and useful things to the church. They think that they need such capabilities and talent in order to serve God. They do not despise their natural capabilities; instead, they treasure them. If these capabilities remain unbroken in them, they will become a problem to Christ's life.

May the Lord have mercy on us so that we would be enlightened to see how many obstacles there are in us and how much these obstacles restrict God's life. Actually, the obstacles in us are not limited only to these things. Nevertheless, there is one solution to all these obstacles in us—we must pass through the cross and let the cross break us. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed. This will allow Christ's life to be lived out from us. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 35-37)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," Isn. 20; The Knowledge of Life, ch. 5

WEEK 2 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

1:8 For God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.

A proper Christian is one whose mind, emotion, and will cooperate with his spirit. An abnormal Christian is one whose mind, emotion, and will cannot cooperate and even contradict his spirit. Thus, he lives under a veil. If our mind, emotion, and will cannot adequately cooperate with our spirit, we will have problems.

If the things you want to do originate from your thoughts [even preaching the gospel, and doing other things for the Lord], then they will be nothing more than religious activities even if they are successful. They will not help people see and gain Christ, because they are merely religious activities that originate from your thoughts; they are not a testimony of Christ being lived out from your spirit.... Although we have the life of Christ within, we do not cooperate with Christ's life in our thoughts and in our actions, and so this life cannot be lived out from us. This is the problem of our mind. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 43-45)

Today's Reading

There is also the problem of our will. Even though our mind often understands the intention in our spirit and we know the will of God, we are unwilling to submit and obey. For example, consider the brother who...prays and the Lord gives him a feeling in his spirit to apologize to his wife; his mind has no difficulty in understanding this feeling, but his will is stubborn and unwilling to submit. This shows the problem of the will... We may understand, know, apprehend, and deeply sense that the Lord wants us to do a certain thing, but our will refuses to submit and surrender. Our will is stubborn and hard, and we refuse to be softened, to let God break us, and to submit to Him....Because of [a] refusal to apologize, [we] can lose the Lord's presence....A will that has been dealt with is both strong and pliable. Being pliable is not the same as being soft. Being pliable means that one is not insistent or stubborn. However, when a need arises, one can be strong and bold.... A person with this kind of will allows the Lord's Spirit to come out of him as life. Having a will that can cooperate with God is a great matter.

Furthermore, our emotion is also a big problem to God.... Second Thessalonians 3:5 says, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." This means that our emotion needs to have God's emotion and that we need to fully enter into God's emotion. We should love whatever God loves, like whatever God likes, and hate whatever God hates. Our feelings of love, anger, sorrow, and joy should be God's feelings of love, anger, sorrow, and joy. Our likes and dislikes should be God's likes and dislikes. Everything of God is ours because His nature has been wrought into us. Our emotion and His emotion have become one emotion.

We need to see a great principle: In order for God's life to have a way in us, we need to turn from our emotion, have a strong and pliable will, and be renewed in our mind. We need to drop our concepts and views, and we need to read the Bible and allow the Lord's Word to renew our mind and thoughts so that we will think and see things according to God's view in the Bible. In this way, our mind can cooperate with God's life. At the same time, we need to learn to surrender our will to the Lord so that our will would be...strong and pliable, and we will be able to cooperate with the Lord. Furthermore, our emotions and tastes need to match the Lord's.

When we consider the problems related to our mind, emotion, and will together, we can see that our person is the problem; our person is truly an obstacle for the living out of God's life.... All of our problems are due to our person, which has never been broken by God....In order for God's life to come out of us, we need to exercise to have our person broken and shattered. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 45-49)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, ch. 4; The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups, msg. 13

WEEK 2 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

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.

[After seeing] the obstacles that the life of God encounters in us, ...we need to see how God deals with these problems and how He opens a clear pathway for His life in us. This pathway is called the pathway of life.... A part of God's work in His salvation is to pave a clear way for His life in us. This work is accomplished through the death of the cross.

In the Bible we can see that God's salvation and life have been concealed in death. John 12:24 says, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." This means that there is life in a grain of wheat, but unless the grain falls into the ground and dies, the life within the grain will not be released. If, however, the grain dies, the life will be released. This shows that death is the way for life to be released. Since death is an outlet for life, life must pass through death.

The way of life is the way of death; wherever there is death, there is a way for life to come out. If there is no death in us, God's life will not be able to find a way to be released from us. Paul said, "Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10). The expression of the Lord's life in us is contingent upon one thing: death. The extent to which death has worked in us is the extent to which the Lord's life has a way to come out of us. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 51, 53-54)

Today's Reading

If we want to walk the way of life and live the Christian life, we need to look to God to open our eyes and show us that our very person is a problem to the life of God.... If God has opened our eyes, we will hate our self ...When we abhor and hate our self, the Holy Spirit will show us that our self, which restricts and opposes God, has been crucified on the cross (Rom. 6:6).

We have been crucified on the cross. According to God's view, reckoning, and judgment, we are already on the cross.

The more we pass through death, the more life will be expressed from us....Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, ...the Spirit [enables us] to cooperate with and submit to the Holy Spirit. Then [others] sense a flavor of Christ... [and] see a little of Christ's life in [us] because the death of the cross has been realized and is being carried out in [us] . The cross brings in both death and the expression of the resurrection life.

A Christian who is spiritual and lives before God needs to "read" three things every day. First, he needs to read the Bible. Second, he needs to read his inward sense. Third, he needs to read his environment and circumstances, which are the people, things, and matters around him. Many people read the Bible well, and they also can read the sense in their spirit, but they are unable to read the people, things, and matters they encounter....Our circumstances and environment are a great means arranged by God for dealing with our person and subduing us....The purpose of all things working together is to gain man's cooperation to conform him to the image of God's Son and to deal with man to the extent that he is exactly the same as God's Son. (Knowing Life and the Church, pp. 57, 59, 71-72, 80)

What every church today needs most is the things of life. All our work and activity must come out of life. This does not mean that we should not engage in much work and activity. It may be that our work and activity later will increase and be even more intensified than today. But unless it comes out of life, our work and service will neither last nor bear much weight. If we want our work to bear abundant and lasting fruit, we must have a foundation in life. (The Knowledge of Life, p. 57)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, chs. 5-7; The Knowledge of Life, ch. 6

WEEK 2 — HYMN

Life is God the Father in Christ Jesus

Experience of God — As Life

1193

1. Life is God the Father in Christ Je - sus As the Spir-it flowing in - to us.
How en-joy - a - ble, this Person wonder - ful! He's our life so rich and boun-ti - ful.

The musical notation is in 2/4 time, D major, and consists of two staves. The first staff is the melody, and the second staff is the bass line. Chords are indicated above and below the notes.

2. We experienced regeneration
When we opened to this living One.
We were born again; another life came in.
Now it floods us till we're full of Him.
3. He within us is the living Spirit
In our spirit, flowing out of it
Into all our heart, transforming every part
By the life which He Himself imparts.
4. Now He must have our cooperation.
We must set our mind upon the Son.
We must turn away from all that leads astray,
Till our mind is set on Him each day.
5. Lord, our human spirit now contains You.
Still Your purpose in us You would do;
If our wandering mind would leave old thoughts behind,
Then Your life and peace in it we'll find.
6. Lord, we would our every thought be captured
By the rich enjoyment in Your Word.
In it we're supplied, our mind there will abide,
Till our thoughts are wholly sanctified.
7. Let's keep practicing the application
Of this life by minding just the Son.
Praise Him for the way to live by Him today!
Lord, on You our minds will ever stay.