

## CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (2)

### Ministering to the Lord to Enjoy Him as the Hidden Manna, the Budding Rod, and the Law of Life (Message 21)

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 44:10-11, 15-18; Acts 13:1-2; Heb. 9:3-4

- I. “The Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall minister in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them...But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah. It is they who will enter My sanctuary, and it is they who will come near to My table to minister to Me, and they will keep My charge”—Ezek. 44:10-11, 15-16:
  - A. In God’s eyes, not only is there the ministry to the house; there is also a better ministry, the ministry to the Lord.
  - B. God has only one goal: to have men who belong absolutely to “Me”; in other words, He wants us to be before “My” presence and minister to “Me”; God’s unique goal is not in so many things; rather, it is in “Me”—vv. 15-16.
  - C. To minister to the Lord does not mean that we neglect the house; those who minister to the Lord will also preach the gospel to save sinners and help the brothers and sisters to make progress, but their one goal is to be for the Lord, and their focus is the Lord Himself; they treasure men absolutely for the Lord’s sake.
  - D. If we come to the Lord’s presence, focusing only on Him, we will spontaneously be able to minister to the brothers and sisters also; the question of whether or not we are ministering to the Lord hinges on whether or not the Lord occupies the first place in our heart. [228]
  - E. Whatever we do in the Lord’s service should be for the Lord’s sake; it should be for His satisfaction, His heart’s desire, His happiness,

His goal, His pleasure, and His glory.

- F. In the Lord's work there are areas that are appealing and attractive to our flesh because they are solely for the pleasure and glory of our self—cf. [2 Cor. 4:5](#).
- G. No one can minister to the Lord without drawing near to Him, approaching Him in prayer; spiritual power is not in the power of preaching but in the power of praying; how much we pray indicates how much inner strength we really possess.
- H. If we want to minister to the Lord in the Holy of Holies, we must spend time before the Lord and pray more; we need to draw near to Him, stand before Him, and wait for His will.
- I. To pray is to stand before God ([Ezek. 44:15](#)); it is to seek His will before Him in order to be saved from the sin of presumption ([Psa. 19:13](#)).
- J. Those who ministered to the Lord had to present to Him the fat and the blood—[Ezek. 44:15](#):
  - 1. Whereas the fat of the offerings typifies the preciousness of the person of Christ, the blood signifies the redemptive work of Christ.
  - 2. In our service to God we must present both to Him; the blood is for God's holiness and righteousness, and the fat is for God's glory.
- K. Those who ministered to the Lord had to be clothed with linen material, not with woolen garments or with anything that caused sweat—[vv. 17-18](#):
  - 1. Linen garments signify a daily living and walk in the life-giving Spirit by the life of Christ; such a living and walk is pure, clean, and fine.
  - 2. Woolen garments would cause the priests to sweat ([v. 18](#)), a sign of fallen man laboring under God's curse, without God's blessing, by his own energy and strength ([Gen. 3:19](#)).
  - 3. The work that causes sweat is the work that comes out of human effort without the blessing from God the Father; everyone ministering to the Lord must do a work that causes no sweat, a work without human effort and fleshly strength—[Isa. 30:15a](#).
  - 4. If we spend an adequate amount of time in God's presence [229] and deal properly with Him, there is no need to sweat before man; we can accomplish the most amount of work with the least amount of strength—cf. [Matt. 11:28-30](#).

- L. “Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers...As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”—[Acts 13:1-2](#):
  - 1. This is the work of the New Testament and the unique principle for the work of the New Testament—the work of the Holy Spirit can be revealed only at the time of ministering to the Lord.
  - 2. Only at the time of ministering to the Lord will the Holy Spirit send some forth; if we do not place ministering to the Lord as the top priority, everything will be out of order; only the Holy Spirit has the authority to commission men to work.
  - 3. To minister to the Lord is not to forsake all the work on the outside; instead, all the work on the outside should be based on our ministry to the Lord.
  - 4. We go forth, out from our ministry to the Lord, rather than out from our own desires, which have no basis in the ministry to the Lord.
- II. “After the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having...the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant”—[Heb. 9:3-4](#):
  - A. The hidden manna is the portion of Christ that we enjoy in the presence of God when there is no distance between us and Him; when there is no distance between us and the Lord, we enjoy Christ in the most intimate and hidden way; this is the enjoyment of the hidden manna, the hidden portion of Christ—[Exo. 16:31-36](#):
    - 1. To overcome the condition of the church in Pergamos is to separate ourselves from the general practice of today’s Christianity and to remain in the presence of God ministering directly to Him, not to anything else; here we enjoy something of Christ that all those who are far off from His presence cannot taste—[Rev. 2:17](#). [230]
    - 2. If we want to enjoy the hidden manna, there must be no distance between us and God; all the distance between us and the Lord must be eliminated—[Ezek. 1:22, 26](#).
    - 3. When we are ministering to the Lord and enjoying Him as the hidden manna, we have direct fellowship with Him and know His heart and His intention; it is in the presence of the Lord that we can be charged with Him, with His intention, and with all

that He wants us to do.

4. When we are ministering to the Lord, we will have God's commitment because we are in His presence, realizing that there is no distance between us and God.
- B. The budding rod signifies that Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear fruit to maturity—[Num. 17:8](#):
1. After the children of Israel rebelled, as recorded in [Numbers 16](#), God commanded the twelve leaders to take twelve rods according to the twelve tribes of Israel and put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony; then He said, "The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud"—[17:5](#).
  2. All twelve rods were leafless, rootless, dry, and dead; whichever one budded was the one chosen by God; here we see that resurrection is the basis of God's selection and that the basis of service is something apart from our natural life; thus, the budding rod signifies our experience of Christ in His resurrection as our acceptance by God for authority in the God-given ministry.
  3. The principle to every service lies in the budding rod; God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders but kept Aaron's rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial; this means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God—[vv. 9-10](#):
    - a. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us; it means that God alone is able and that we are not able.
    - b. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves; all those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it. [\[231\]](#)
    - c. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation; as long as Sarah could conceive a child, Isaac would not come—[Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-3, 6-7](#).
    - d. What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection; a man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness—[Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27](#).
    - e. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never

experience God's ability; resurrection means that we cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything—cf. [2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:7](#).

C. The tablets of the covenant, which are the tablets of the law, signify the law of the divine life, which is the spontaneous power, automatic function, innate ability, and divine capacity of the divine life—[Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10](#); cf. [Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 10:12-13](#):

1. The law, this divine capacity, of life can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy:
  - a. According to this capacity, we can know God, live God, and be constituted with God in His life and nature so that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression—[Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19-21](#).
  - b. Furthermore, the capacity of the inner law of life constitutes us to be the members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions—[4:11, 16](#).
2. While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—[Rom. 8:2, 29](#):
  - a. The law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life.
  - b. The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do; rather, while life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us, to the image of Christ. [\[232\]](#)
  - c. Through the function of the law of life, we all shall become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal expression.

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## MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

### MINISTERING TO THE LORD TO ENJOY HIM AS THE HIDDEN MANNA, THE BUDDING ROD, AND THE LAW OF LIFE

Ministering to the Lord to enjoy Him as the hidden manna, the budding rod, and the law of life is for God's building, which is for the corporate expression

of the Triune God. To minister to the Lord means that whatever we do in our service for the Lord is for the Lord's sake; that is, it for His satisfaction, His heart's desire, His happiness, His goal, His pleasure, and His glory.

### **THE NEED FOR ALL OUR SERVICE TO BE INITIATED BY GOD**

When I was considering this matter of ministering to the Lord, I could not help thinking about Message 3 from the recent Memorial Day conference. The title of that message was "The Need for All Our Service to Be Initiated by God." That message is a foundational word for this message on ministering to the Lord. Hence, I would like to mention some of the highlights from that message.

### **God's Work Coming from Him according to His Perfect Will, through Him according to His Power, and unto Him for His Glory**

First, we saw that according to [Numbers 18:1](#), it is possible to sin against the Lord in our service to Him. If we do not serve the Lord for the Lord's sake, for His pleasure, satisfaction, heart's desire, goal, happiness, and glory, we can end up committing the iniquity of the sanctuary and sin against Him. To avoid this, we need to always remember that the initiation of the Lord's work should be according to God's perfect will. Then whatever we do to advance the Lord's work should be according to Christ as God's power. Finally, the result of God's work should always be the glory of God, that is, the corporate expression of the Triune God in radiant glory. All our work and service in the church must be initiated by God and must be according to His desire; otherwise, we <sup>[234]</sup> will commit the iniquity of the sanctuary in our service to God. In our serving the Lord, [Romans 11:36](#) is very important: "Out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." We want everything in our service to come out from Him according to His perfect will, to be through Him according to His power, and to be unto Him for His glory, His radiant expression.

Anything that is initiated or started by man, regardless of how much it is for God, is a religious activity devoid of the presence of Christ. Hence, we do not want to initiate anything apart from the Lord. Even if something is very much for the Lord, it will be merely a religious activity devoid of the presence of Christ if we initiate it apart from the Lord. In contrast, we want all that we do

to be filled with the presence of Christ.

**All the Work in the Universe  
Needing to Come from God, Not from Man;  
All That Matters Being What God Does for Man,  
Not What Man Does for God**

Second, in Message 3 of the Memorial Day conference we saw that David was a person who feared God, cooperated with God, and let God work. David was zealous to build a temple for God, but God rejected David's good intention. God sent Nathan the prophet to David to ask, "Is it you who will build Me a house for Me to dwell in?" (2 Sam. 7:5). This question was very pointed: "Is it you?" Our heart to serve God is acceptable, but our decision to do something for God is not acceptable. Hence, God said to David, "Is it you?" God does not want us to decide anything on His behalf. We should love God and wait for His command. We should seek His will and wait for His revelation. Just as the slave in the Old Testament loved his master and allowed his ear to be bored through with an awl in order to hear the words of his master, we must focus on waiting for our Master's command (Exo. 21:1-6).

Because David feared God, he did not react to Nathan; rather, he stopped. The act of stopping the building of the temple was a great matter. David could have told Nathan, "I know the Lord too. I am the king, and I am going to go ahead and build the temple regardless of what you say." However, because David knew that this was the Lord's speaking to him, he stopped. Sister M. E. Barber said something very significant that I hope we would all remember. She said, "Whoever cannot stop working for the sake of God cannot work for the sake of God" (*Knowing Life and [235] the Church*, p. 198). We need to be those who can stop working for the sake of God, that is, those who can sit at His feet and listen to His words so that we can receive His commands, burdens, feelings, intents, and goal for His glory and for His desire. Our stopping our work for the sake of God is so that we can work for the sake of God.

David's stopping established a twofold testimony in the universe. First, all the work in the universe should come from God, not from man. Second, all that matters is what God does for man, not what man does for God. David desired to build a temple for God, but God said that He would build David a house from which a kingdom would come forth. Even after God spoke this word to David, David fell twice. Out of his falling twice and being forgiven of his sins, he obtained a son as the builder of the temple, and he obtained the site

for the temple. We must learn deep within that God wants only our cooperation. He does not need us to do anything for Him. We need to stop all our opinions, decisions, and ideas. We need to let Him speak, come in, and command us.

**Our Life and Our Service to the Lord  
Needing to Be Marked by Two Questions:  
“Who Are You, Lord?” and “What Shall I Do, Lord?”**

Finally, we saw in Message 3 of the Memorial Day conference that Paul served God according to the vision that he received at his vanquishing conversion. It is very interesting that when Paul was converted, he asked the Lord two questions. Paul’s first question to the Lord was, “Who are You, Lord?” ([Acts 22:8](#)). This question was related to Paul’s living, which became a quest to know Christ. In [Philippians 3:8](#) and [10](#) he said, “I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ...to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” Paul’s quest was to know Him.

Paul’s second question to the Lord was, “What shall I do, Lord?” ([Acts 22:10](#)). This question was related to Paul’s service, which was purely initiated by God. Brother Lee made this statement: “Blessed is he who asks this question!” (*Knowing Life and the Church*, p. 201). We should all ask the Lord, “What shall I do, Lord?” We should never say, “This is what I will do, Lord.” May our life and our service to the Lord be marked by these two questions. [236]

**“THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS...  
WHO KEPT THE CHARGE OF MY SANCTUARY  
WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT ASTRAY FROM ME,  
THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO ME TO MINISTER TO ME...  
IT IS THEY WHO WILL ENTER MY SANCTUARY,  
AND IT IS THEY WHO WILL COME NEAR  
TO MY TABLE TO MINISTER TO ME,  
AND THEY WILL KEEP MY CHARGE”**

[Ezekiel 44:10-11](#) and [15-16](#) say,

The Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who

went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall minister in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them...But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah. It is they who will enter My sanctuary, and it is they who will come near to My table to minister to Me, and they will keep My charge.

In this portion of the Scriptures, we see that the Levites went far from the Lord. We do not want to be those who go far from the Lord; rather, we want to be those who come forward to the Lord. In the Epistle to the Hebrews there are two words that are very particular—*come forward*. [Hebrews 10:22](#) tells us to “come forward to the Holy of Holies,” and [4:16](#) tells us to “come forward...to the throne of grace.” We need to be those coming forward to the Lord.

In contrast, the Levites went far from the Lord when Israel went astray. [Ezekiel 44:10](#) says that they “went astray from Me after their idols.” This word *idols* reminds me of [Ezekiel 14:3](#), which says, “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?” This shows that an idol is not just a statue or a painting but something that can be set up in one’s heart. An idol is anything that we love more than the Lord or anything that replaces the Lord in our life. We do not want anything within us that we love more than the Lord [\[237\]](#) or anything within us that replaces the Lord in our life. This is why the Lord through the apostle John said, “Little children, guard yourselves from idols” ([1 John 5:21](#)). In this verse John is speaking of these kinds of idols. Those who set up idols in their hearts are estranged from the Lord through their idols. All who have idols within and yet seek God in an outward way cannot find Him.

In [Jeremiah 2:13](#) Jehovah said, “My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.” In the book of Jeremiah and in the Old Testament, God’s people did a lot of evil things. However, in God’s eyes all their sins were wrapped up in two evils: forsaking Him and hewing out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which hold no

water. In His economy God's intention is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into us for our satisfaction and enjoyment. The goal of this enjoyment is to produce the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase and enlargement to be God's fullness for His expression. This is God's heart's desire, His good pleasure in His economy. However, the children of Israel forsook God as their fountain, their source, and they turned to a source other than God. It is possible that we might do the same thing. May we not follow their negative example.

The hewing out of cisterns portrays Israel's toil in human labor to make idols to replace God as their enjoyment. That replacement of God as their enjoyment was an idol. Moreover, such cisterns were broken cisterns. That the cisterns were broken and could hold no water indicates that apart from God Himself dispensed into us as living water, nothing can quench our thirst and make us God's increase for His expression. May we not forsake God as the fountain of living waters or hew out for ourselves broken cisterns that hold no water.

In [Ezekiel 44](#) we see that the Levites went far from the Lord when Israel went astray. We do not want to be in this category. They went astray from the Lord after their idols. Moreover, the Lord said in [verse 10](#) that they "shall bear their iniquity." Nevertheless, in [verse 11](#) there is the word *yet*. *Yet* indicates that the Lord had mercy on them, so He said, "Yet they shall minister in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them." Here we see that there is a ministry to the people in the Lord's sanctuary. However, there is another kind of ministry, a better [\[238\]](#) ministry, and that is the ministry to the Lord. [Ezekiel 44:15](#) says, "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah." We all need to pray, "Lord, make me like one of the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of Your sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from You." After the turmoil in 1988, Brother Lee told Brother Francis Ball and me the history of where everyone was in that turmoil, telling us who went astray and who stayed and remained faithful. May we be those who remain faithful and fully committed.

The sons of Zadok kept the charge of the Lord's sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from the Lord. As a result, their portion was to

come near to Jehovah to minister to Him; they were to stand before Him to present to Him the fat and the blood. Moreover, their portion was to enter Jehovah's sanctuary, to come near to His table to minister to Him, and to keep His charge. This is the category of ministry that we want to participate in. When M. E. Barber read this portion of Ezekiel, she knelt down and prayed something like this: "Lord, make me a person who ministers to You. Make me like one of the sons of Zadok."

**In God's Eyes, There Being Not Only  
the Ministry to the House;  
There Being Also a Better Ministry,  
the Ministry to the Lord**

In God's eyes, not only is there the ministry to the house; there is also a better ministry, the ministry to the Lord.

**God Having Only One Goal:  
to Have Men Who Belong Absolutely to "Me";  
in Other Words, His Wanting Us to Be  
before "My" Presence and Minister to "Me";  
God's Unique Goal Being Not in So Many Things;  
Rather, It Being in "Me"**

God has only one goal: to have men who belong absolutely to "Me"; in other words, He wants us to be before "My" presence and minister to "Me"; God's unique goal is not in so many things; rather, it is in "Me" (vv. 15-16).

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**To Minister to the Lord Not Meaning That We Neglect the House;  
Those Who Minister to the Lord Also Preaching the Gospel  
to Save Sinners and Helping the Brothers and Sisters  
to Make Progress, but Their One Goal Being  
to Be for the Lord, and Their Focus Being the Lord Himself;  
Their Treasuring Men Absolutely for the Lord's Sake**

To minister to the Lord does not mean that we neglect the house; those who minister to the Lord will also preach the gospel to save sinners and help the brothers and sisters to make progress, but their one goal is to be for the Lord, and their focus is the Lord Himself; they treasure men absolutely for the

Lord's sake. We can see this in the book of Philippians. In [1:25](#) Paul says, "I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith." In other words, he was going to continue with them because he was a channel of supply. When Paul was with them, they could grow in life, progress, and have the joy of the faith, which is the enjoyment of Christ. Paul was a channel for the saints' growth in life and enjoyment of Christ. However, what he did for the saints' growth in life and enjoyment of Christ was absolutely for the Lord's sake. In [Philippians 3:14](#) he says, "I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward." Paul's goal was the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ. His goal was absolutely centered on the Lord. Our goal in whatever we are doing must be the fullest enjoyment of Christ and the fullest gaining of Christ. In fact, the goal of our life and all our service is the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for God's building. Moreover, in [Philippians 2:2](#) Paul charges the Philippians to think the one thing. Here *the one thing* refers to the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ. Our mind should be set on the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ.

**If We Come to the Lord's Presence, Focusing Only on Him,  
Our Spontaneously Being Able to Minister to  
the Brothers and Sisters Also; the Question of Whether or Not  
We Are Ministering to the Lord Hinging on Whether or Not  
the Lord Occupies the First Place in Our Heart**

If we come to the Lord's presence, focusing only on Him, we will spontaneously be able to minister to the brothers and sisters also; the question of whether or not we are ministering to the Lord hinges on whether or not the Lord occupies the first place in our heart. We need to pray, "Lord, occupy the first place in my heart." [240]

**Whatever We Do in the Lord's Service Needing to Be  
for the Lord's Sake; Its Needing to Be  
for His Satisfaction, His Heart's Desire, His Happiness,  
His Goal, His Pleasure, and His Glory**

Whatever we do in the Lord's service should be for the Lord's sake; it should be for His satisfaction, His heart's desire, His happiness, His goal, His pleasure, and His glory. Whenever we serve the Lord, we need to draw near to Him in prayer. As we approach Him in prayer, we are ministering to Him. To

approach Him in prayer in the way of ministering to Him means that we are determined to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him by being absolutely under His control, direction, and governing and that we care uniquely for His aims and goals. To minister to the Lord means that we are under the Lord's direction and control and that we want to fulfill His requirements, satisfy His desires, and complete what He intends.

**In the Lord's Work There Being Areas That Are Appealing  
and Attractive to Our Flesh Because They Are Solely  
for the Pleasure and Glory of Our Self**

In the Lord's work there are areas that are appealing and attractive to our flesh because they are solely for the pleasure and glory of our self (cf. [2 Cor. 4:5](#)). For example, if we had fed the five thousand, we would have wanted to remain in the glory of that miracle. We would have wanted to bask in that achievement and success. However, [Matthew 14:22-23](#) says that after feeding the five thousand, the Lord, immediately "compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone." The Lord did this so that He could spend more time to pray privately to the Father in order that He might be one with the Father in whatever He was doing for the producing and establishing of the kingdom of the heavens. If the Lord felt the need to have more time to pray privately to the Father, how much more should we feel the need to pray privately to minister to the Father and to the Lord! In *The God-man Living* Brother Lee says,

The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds but went away from them privately to be with the Father on the mountain in prayer. If we go to a certain place [241] and have a great success, would we leave right away or would we remain in this big success to enjoy it? We need to see and follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus. He did not remain in the issue of the great miracle which He performed. Instead, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. The word *privately* is very meaningful. This means He did not let the people know He was going to pray. Otherwise, they would have followed Him. He went away from them privately to be with the Father in prayer. I like these three phrases: *to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*. We should learn from the Lord's pattern here by exercising to be with Him on the mountain in prayer.

His looking up to heaven means that He had no trust in Himself. His going up to the mountain means that He wanted to be with the Father in prayer.

To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves. When we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray we should shut our door privately and pray secretly to the Father who sees in secret ([Matt. 6:6](#)). Then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain.” We have to go higher, far away from the earthly things on a lower level. We need to get to a higher level, separated from the crowd, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him. This is the significance of being *on the mountain in prayer*. (pp. 127-128)

We need to be with the Father on the mountain in prayer.

**No One Being Able to Minister to the Lord  
without Drawing Near to Him, Approaching Him in Prayer;  
Spiritual Power Being Not in the Power of Preaching  
but in the Power of Praying; How Much We Pray  
Indicating How Much Inner Strength We Really Possess**

No one can minister to the Lord without drawing near to Him, approaching Him in prayer; spiritual power is not in the power of preaching but in the power of praying; how much we pray indicates how [242] much inner strength we really possess. Once, a group of brothers came to pray with Brother Lee, and after their prayer he said, “I can tell that you do not pray very much.”

**If We Want to Minister to the Lord  
in the Holy of Holies, Our Having to Spend Time  
before the Lord and Pray More;  
Our Needing to Draw Near to Him,  
Stand before Him, and Wait for His Will**

If we want to minister to the Lord in the Holy of Holies, we must spend time before the Lord and pray more; we need to draw near to Him, stand before

Him, and wait for His will.

**To Pray Being to Stand before God;  
Its Being to Seek His Will  
before Him in Order to Be Saved  
from the Sin of Presumption**

To pray is to stand before God ([Ezek. 44:15](#)); it is to seek His will before Him in order to be saved from the sin of presumption ([Psa. 19:13](#)). The sin of disobedience is the sin of not doing what the Lord wants us to do, but the sin of presumption is our doing what the Lord does not want us to do. In our service we should not commit the sin of disobedience or the sin of presumption.

**Those Who Ministered to the Lord  
Having to Present to Him the Fat and the Blood**

*Whereas the Fat of the Offerings Typifies  
the Preciousness of the Person of Christ,  
the Blood Signifying the Redemptive Work of Christ*

Those who ministered to the Lord had to present to Him the fat and the blood ([Ezek. 44:15](#)). Whereas the fat of the offerings typifies the preciousness of the person of Christ, the blood signifies the redemptive work of Christ.

*In Our Service to God  
Our Having to Present Both to Him;  
the Blood Being for God's Holiness and Righteousness,  
and the Fat Being for God's Glory*

In our service to God we must present both to Him; the blood is for [\[243\]](#) God's holiness and righteousness, and the fat is for God's glory. [Isaiah 53:12](#) says, "Therefore I will divide to Him a portion with the Great, / And He will divide the spoil with the Strong; / Because He poured out His life unto death / And was numbered with the transgressors, / Yet He alone bore the sin of many / And interceded for the transgressors." On the cross the Lord Jesus poured out His life unto death. When the Lord's blood was poured out on the cross, everything of the soul-life and the self was poured out. Brother Nee says, "Thank the Lord, we can be selfless because Christ poured out our self when

He poured out His blood” (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 11, “Ministering to the House or to God?” p. 796). We thank the Lord that He poured out His life unto death so that we could be selfless and deny the self.

**Those Who Ministered to the Lord  
Having to Be Clothed with Linen Material,  
Not with Woolen Garments  
or with Anything That Caused Sweat**

Those who ministered to the Lord had to be clothed with linen material, not with woolen garments or with anything that caused sweat ([Ezek. 44:17-18](#)). This signifies something that applies to our inward being.

***Linen Garments Signifying a Daily Living and Walk  
in the Life-giving Spirit by the Life of Christ;  
Such a Living and Walk Being Pure, Clean, and Fine***

Linen garments signify a daily living and walk in the life-giving Spirit by the life of Christ; such a living and walk is pure, clean, and fine.

***Woolen Garments Causing the Priests to Sweat,  
a Sign of Fallen Man Laboring under God’s Curse,  
without God’s Blessing,  
by His Own Energy and Strength***

Woolen garments would cause the priests to sweat ([v. 18](#)), a sign of fallen man laboring under God’s curse, without God’s blessing, by his own energy and strength ([Gen. 3:19](#)). Man’s sweating is part of the curse after the fall of man. When we serve, we should be serene in our inward being. We need to serve with God’s blessing, and we need to have God as our energy and strength. Whenever we serve, we need to pray, “Lord, I want You to be my blessing, and I want You to be my energy and strength.” [244]

***The Work That Causes Sweat  
Being the Work That Comes out of Human Effort  
without the Blessing from God the Father;  
Everyone Ministering to the Lord  
Having to Do a Work That Causes No Sweat,***

### ***a Work without Human Effort and Fleshly Strength***

The work that causes sweat is the work that comes out of human effort without the blessing from God the Father; everyone ministering to the Lord must do a work that causes no sweat, a work without human effort and fleshly strength ([Isa. 30:15a](#)). In other words, the Lord must be our effort, our strength, our ability, and our power. [Isaiah 30:15](#) is a precious verse that says, “Thus says the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, / In returning and rest you will be saved; / In quietness and in trust will be your strength.” We need to return to Him with all our heart and take Him as our Sabbath rest. Then we need to experience Him as our salvation and as our quietness. Moreover, when we trust in Jehovah, He becomes our strength.

***If We Spend an Adequate Amount of Time  
in God’s Presence  
and Deal Properly with Him,  
There Being No Need to Sweat before Man;  
Our Being Able to Accomplish  
the Most Amount of Work  
with the Least Amount of Strength***

If we spend an adequate amount of time in God’s presence and deal properly with Him, there is no need to sweat before man; we can accomplish the most amount of work with the least amount of strength (cf. [Matt. 11:28-30](#)). In [Matthew 11:28-30](#) the Lord Jesus said,

Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.  
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.

The Lord’s yoke is the Father’s will. When we take the Lord’s yoke upon us, we find rest for our souls. The real rest is in our soul. The burden is the work to carry out the Father’s will. Thus, the Lord’s yoke, which is the Father’s will, is easy, and the work to carry out the Father’s will is light. If we feel that our work is difficult, it means that we have the [\[245\]](#) wrong yoke on us, that we are not taking the Father’s yoke, because His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

**“Now There Were in Antioch,**

**in the Local Church, Prophets and Teachers...  
As They Were Ministering to the Lord and Fasting,  
the Holy Spirit Said, Set Apart for Me Now  
Barnabas and Saul for the Work  
to Which I Have Called Them”**

Acts 13:1-2 says, “Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers...As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” This is the work of the New Testament and the unique principle for the work of the New Testament—the work of the Holy Spirit can be revealed only at the time of ministering to the Lord. Only at the time of ministering to the Lord will the Holy Spirit send some forth; if we do not place ministering to the Lord as the top priority, everything will be out of order; only the Holy Spirit has the authority to commission men to work. To minister to the Lord is not to forsake all the work on the outside; instead, all the work on the outside should be based on our ministry to the Lord. We go forth out from our ministry to the Lord, rather than out from our own desires, which have no basis in the ministry to the Lord.

**“AFTER THE SECOND VEIL, A TABERNACLE,  
WHICH IS CALLED THE HOLY OF HOLIES,  
HAVING...THE ARK OF THE COVENANT  
COVERED ABOUT EVERYWHERE WITH GOLD,  
IN WHICH WERE THE GOLDEN POT THAT HAD THE MANNA  
AND AARON’S ROD THAT BUDDED  
AND THE TABLETS OF THE COVENANT”**

Hebrews 9:3-4 says, “After the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having...the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant.” Within the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, and inside the Ark of the Covenant was the golden pot containing the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. The reality of these three items—the hidden manna, the budding rod, and the tablets of the law—needs to be our daily experience. [246]

**The Hidden Manna Being the Portion of Christ  
That We Enjoy in the Presence of God**

**When There Is No Distance between Us and Him;  
When There Is No Distance between Us and the Lord,  
Our Enjoying Christ in the Most Intimate and Hidden Way;  
This Being the Enjoyment of the Hidden Manna,  
the Hidden Portion of Christ**

The hidden manna is the portion of Christ that we enjoy in the presence of God when there is no distance between us and Him; when there is no distance between us and the Lord, we enjoy Christ in the most intimate and hidden way; this is the enjoyment of the hidden manna, the hidden portion of Christ ([Exo. 16:31-36](#)). Here we see the way to enjoy the incorporated Triune God in the temple. The hidden manna was in the golden pot, the golden pot was in the Ark, and the Ark was in the Holy of Holies. Hence, the hidden manna being in the golden pot refers to the Son being in the Father, the golden pot being in the Ark refers to the Father being in the Son, and the Ark being in the Holy of Holies refers to the Son as the Spirit being in our spirit. The Son is in the Father, the Father is in the Son, and the Son as the Spirit is in our spirit. Therefore, when we eat the hidden manna, we are being incorporated into the Triune God for His building.

***To Overcome the Condition of the Church in Pergamos  
Being to Separate Ourselves from the General Practice  
of Today's Christianity and to Remain in the Presence of God  
Ministering Directly to Him, Not to Anything Else;  
Here Our Enjoying Something of Christ That All Those  
Who Are Far Off from His Presence Cannot Taste***

To overcome the condition of the church in Pergamos is to separate ourselves from the general practice of today's Christianity and to remain in the presence of God ministering directly to Him, not to anything else; here we enjoy something of Christ that all those who are far off from His presence cannot taste ([Rev. 2:17](#)).

***If We Want to Enjoy the Hidden Manna, There Having to Be  
No Distance between Us and God; All the Distance  
between Us and the Lord Having to Be Eliminated***

If we want to enjoy the hidden manna, there must be no distance [247] between us and God; all the distance between us and the Lord must be

eliminated (Ezek. 1:22, 26). In *The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ* there is a chapter entitled “Eating and Digestion.” I am not aware of any book in all of Christendom that contains such a chapter that speaks of eating and digestion. This chapter is not about diets or nutrition but about our need to eat the Lord and to digest and assimilate Him. It is possible to eat the Lord and to have indigestion. In this chapter Brother Lee says,

We need to eat Jesus by calling on the name of the Lord. But after we eat, we also need a good digestion. We do not want to have indigestion. Indigestion first causes stomach trouble, and then it may cause a stomach ulcer. This could even lead to stomach cancer, issuing in death. Eating without a good digestion will cause trouble. When we eat Christ, we also need to spiritually digest Him in a proper way. If you have a proper digestion, the food you eat can get into every part of your physical being. There is the thoroughfare for the food to get through. Indigestion means that there is no thoroughfare for the food. The food cannot get through, so you will have problems.

Now we need to consider how this applies to us in a spiritual sense. Some dear saints may enjoy calling on the Lord and pray-reading the Word at first. But after a certain time, they lose their taste and appetite for this. This is because after taking in the Lord Jesus, something happened within them. There was indigestion. There was no thoroughfare for the Lord Jesus to get through. After calling on the Lord Jesus and pray-reading His Word, we have to say, “Lord, be merciful to me. Keep my whole being with all my inward parts open to You.”

I am not speaking something doctrinally but something that is very practical to us in our Christian life. After you call on the Lord, I have the full assurance that He gets into you. But the problem is this—after your calling on the name of the Lord, after the Lord gets into you, you probably would not be so open to Him. You may be open to Him in a little part of your being, but most of your being is closed to Him.

The Lord Jesus is real, living, and practical. When you call, “Lord Jesus,” He gets into you and fills you up. While [248] you are calling “Lord Jesus,” this practical and living Jesus will touch your natural being. But many of you would say, “No, Lord. Don’t touch me here. Stay where You are. You are my guest, and You must stay in the

living room. Don't get into my private bedroom. That's for me, not for You." This means indigestion. There is no way for the Lord as the spiritual food to get through in you. There is no free course for the food to get into your inward parts, so you have indigestion.

Today's Christianity has many teachings, but we do not need these doctrinal teachings. We need to eat the Lord and enjoy the Lord. Suppose I invited you to a dinner, and instead of allowing you to eat and enjoy the food, I taught you about the food. This would be terrible. We do not need the teaching; we need the real nourishment. We need the riches of Christ to get into our being. We can get the riches of Christ into our being simply by calling on Him—"O Lord Jesus." But after calling on Him, the Lord works and moves within us to touch us in our inward being.

After calling on the Lord, a young brother may eventually have some sense within him that he needs to deal with the way he cuts his hair. If he is slow to respond to this sense, this means that he is not allowing the Lord Jesus to get through. Thus, you have to be on the alert. After calling on the Lord Jesus, if you have any sense within you, any feeling within you, that means the Lord Jesus is moving, and that means the digestion within you is going on. You have to go along with this inner sense. If you go along with this sense, you will be joyful and have a better, bigger, deeper, and higher appetite for Christ. This is because a good digestion brings in a better appetite. If you argue with the inner sense, this will result in indigestion. Then you will not be so eager to pray-read the Word, and calling on the name of the Lord will not be so sweet to you.

But when you respond to and go along with the inner sense, your appetite for the Lord Jesus comes back, and your spiritual digestion becomes proper. Then the riches of the Lord Jesus become your cells, and these cells grow into your organic tissues. This causes you to grow in the divine life and makes you strong in the Lord. It is easy for you to stand [249] and not easy for you to backslide, because you are growing in the Lord. It is hard for the grown-up ones to fall down. This is because they have a good digestion to assimilate all the nourishment from the spiritual food that they eat.

By eating we have digesting, by digesting we have the assimilation, and by this assimilation we get the practical nourishment of the riches of Jesus into our being. All the riches of

Christ eventually will grow into our organic tissues. Then we become Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. To me, to live is Christ. The Christian life is not a matter of imitating Jesus. We should not try to learn to be humble the way that Jesus was. This is like trying to teach a monkey to imitate a man. The monkey might be able to do this for a while, but eventually it will go back to being what it is. The Lord's way is not the way of teaching us to imitate Him. The Lord's way is the way of life, and the way of life is to eat.

Some of the American brothers became big not by being taught but by being fed. It was by their eating that they grew up into big men. No doubt, in another sense, we all need some education, but the basic thing is the growth, and this growth depends absolutely upon eating. Eating is to take some nourishment into you for digestion and assimilation. By this you will get the nourishment into your cells, and this nourishment even will become your organic tissues, your very being.

Christianity has given you the wrong impression that you need doctrinal teaching. We all have to say, "We don't need the doctrinal teaching. We need the nourishment." We need Jesus, not in an objective way but in a very subjective way. We need Jesus to get into us. We need to assimilate Jesus so that He can become our cells and our organic tissues to become our very essence and element. Then we can say, "To me, to live is Christ." Then the content and the container become one. Jesus, after getting into us, becomes us. When you say, "To me, to live is Christ," the Lord Jesus would say, "To Me, to live is you." You may say that you are Jesus, but He would say that He is you. Then who is who? Eventually, the content becomes the container. We all have [250] to see this. All the religious veils have to be removed. We need a clear sky.

From [Genesis 2](#) to [Revelation 22](#), through the whole Bible, you have such a line of eating and drinking. The tree of life and the river of water are seen in [Genesis 2 \(vv. 9-10\)](#). Then Jesus came and said that He is the bread of life which we must eat ([John 6:35, 57](#)). He also said that He is the living water which we must drink ([4:14; 7:37-39](#)). Even in the Epistles, Paul said "I fed you..." ([1 Cor. 3:2—ASV](#)). He also said that we were all given to drink one Spirit ([12:13](#)). We were given to drink, not to think. We all were given not

to think one theology but to drink one Spirit. Then at the end of the Bible, we see the river of water of life and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2). The last promise given by the Lord is, “Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life” (v. 14a). The last call given by the Lord is to come and take the water of life freely (v. 17). Our destiny for eternity will be to eat and drink Jesus. Today we should give ourselves to eat and drink Him.

But we also need to be on the alert. After calling on the Lord, after eating and drinking Him, we have to say, “Lord, be merciful to me. Cause every part of my being to be open to You. Have the thoroughfare within my whole being.” Then we will have a good digestion for a good assimilation, and we will enjoy and absorb all the nourishment of the riches of Christ. Then Christ will become our very being. We are the living containers, and He is the life-giving Spirit. Eventually, the life-giving Spirit as the content will be our element and our essence. We will be one with Him, and He will be one with us in an organic way. (pp. 45-48)

When we have the proper eating and digestion of the Lord, the distance between us and the Lord will be eliminated.

***When We Are Ministering to the Lord and Enjoying Him  
as the Hidden Manna, Our Having Direct Fellowship with Him  
and Knowing His Heart and His Intention; Its Being in  
the Presence of the Lord That We Can Be Charged with Him,  
with His Intention, and with All That He Wants Us to Do***

When we are ministering to the Lord and enjoying Him as the hidden [251] manna, we have direct fellowship with Him and know His heart and His intention; it is in the presence of the Lord that we can be charged with Him, with His intention, and with all that He wants us to do.

***When We Are Ministering to the Lord, Our Having  
God’s Commitment Because We Are in His Presence,  
Realizing That There Is No Distance between Us and God***

When we are ministering to the Lord, we will have God’s commitment because we are in His presence, realizing that there is no distance between us and God.

**The Budding Rod Signifying That Christ, the Resurrected One,  
Should Be Our Life, Our Living, and the Resurrection Life  
within Us and That This Life Should Bud, Blossom,  
and Bear Fruit to Maturity**

*After the Children of Israel Rebelled, as Recorded  
in Numbers 16, God Commanding the Twelve Leaders  
to Take Twelve Rods according to the Twelve Tribes of Israel  
and Put Them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony;  
Then His Saying, “The Rod of the Man Whom I Choose Shall Bud”*

The budding rod signifies that Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear fruit to maturity (Num. 17:8). After the children of Israel rebelled, as recorded in [Numbers 16](#), God commanded the twelve leaders to take twelve rods according to the twelve tribes of Israel and put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony; then He said, “The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud” (17:5).

*All Twelve Rods Being Leafless, Rootless, Dry, and Dead;  
Whichever One Budded Being the One Chosen by God;  
Here Our Seeing That Resurrection Is the Basis  
of God’s Selection and That the Basis of Service Is Something  
apart from Our Natural Life; Thus, the Budding Rod  
Signifying Our Experience of Christ in His Resurrection  
as Our Acceptance by God for Authority in the God-given Ministry*

All twelve rods were leafless, rootless, dry, and dead; whichever one budded was the one chosen by God; here we see that resurrection is the [252] basis of God’s selection and that the basis of service is something apart from our natural life; thus, the budding rod signifies our experience of Christ in His resurrection as our acceptance by God for authority in the God-given ministry.

*The Principle to Every Service Lying in the Budding Rod;  
God Returning All the Eleven Rods to the Leaders  
but Keeping Aaron’s Rod inside the Ark as an Eternal Memorial;  
This Meaning That Resurrection Is an Eternal Principle*

### *in Our Service to God*

The principle to every service lies in the budding rod; God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders but kept Aaron's rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial; this means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God (vv. 9-10).

*Resurrection Meaning That Everything Is of God and Not of Us;  
Its Meaning That God Alone Is Able  
and That We Are Not Able*

Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us; it means that God alone is able and that we are not able.

*Resurrection Meaning That  
Everything Is Done by God, Not by Ourselves;  
All Those Who Know Resurrection  
Having Given Up Hope in Themselves;  
Their Knowing That They Cannot Make It*

Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves; all those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it.

*As Long as the Natural Strength Remains,  
the Power of Resurrection Having No Ground for Manifestation;  
as Long as Sarah Could Conceive a Child, Isaac Not Coming*

As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation; as long as Sarah could conceive a child, Isaac would not come (Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-3, 6-7). In Genesis 18 the Lord visited Sarah and Abraham. In verse 10a Jehovah said to Abraham, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son." Verses 10b through 15 go on to say, [253]

Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And Jehovah said to

Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

The phrase *too marvelous* is the same Hebrew word translated “Wonderful” in [Isaiah 9:6](#). Then [Genesis 21:1-7](#) says,

Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah did to Sarah as He had promised. And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised Isaac his son when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. And Sarah said, God has made me laugh; everyone who hears will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.

Here we see two laughs. The first laugh means that it is impossible with man, and the second laugh means that it is possible with God. Perhaps when some who are today in the full-time training were told that they would be in the full-time training, they laughed inwardly. But at their graduation they really laugh because God brought them through term after term. This is resurrection. God made them laugh the second laugh. What is impossible with man is signified by the first laugh, but what is possible with God is signified by the second laugh. Regarding this, Brother Nee says,

The name *Isaac* means “laughter.” Why did Abraham call his son “laughter”? He called him Isaac for two reasons. First, God promised Abraham that Sarah would give birth to a son. When Sarah heard, she laughed. It was natural for [\[254\]](#) her to laugh. When she looked at herself, she could not help but laugh. Her time of childbearing was past, and her womb was closed. How could she ever bear a child? She thought that this was impossible. Therefore, when God told Abraham that she would have a child, she laughed. Second, when Sarah brought forth a son a year later, she was indeed laughing for joy. Hence, God called the child’s name *Isaac* ([Gen. 18:10-15](#); [21:1-3](#), [6-7](#)), which means “laughter.” The first time she laughed because of the impossibility of the promise. The second time

she laughed because she discovered to her surprise that it was possible. If a man has never experienced the first laughing, he can never experience the second laughing. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability. Sarah knew herself; she had full knowledge of herself. She knew that she could not make it. But as soon as she looked to God's work, she was able to laugh. What is resurrection? Resurrection means that God has given us something that we did not have in ourselves. The Bible testifies again and again that man cannot make it by himself. But many people think that they can make it. In the matter of service, if some would truly laugh at themselves, saying, "I cannot make it," they would find themselves laughing again, saying, "I did not make it. I have seen through myself. The Lord has made it for me." If there is any manifestation of authority in us, we should say to the Lord, "You are the One who has done it. It is none of my business." Resurrection means that you cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," p. 248)

*What We Can Do Belonging to the Natural Realm,  
and What Is Impossible for Us to Do  
Belonging to the Realm of Resurrection;  
a Man Having to Come to the End of Himself  
before He Will Be Convinced of His Utter Uselessness*

What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection; a man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness ([Matt. 19:26](#); [Mark 10:27](#); [Luke 18:27](#)). [255]

*If a Man Has Never Realized His Own Inability,  
His Never Being Able to Experience God's Ability;  
Resurrection Meaning That We Cannot Make It  
and That God Is the One Who Has Done Everything*

If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability; resurrection means that we cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything (cf. [2 Cor. 1:8-9](#); [4:7](#)).

**The Tablets of the Covenant, Which Are the Tablets of the Law,  
Signifying the Law of the Divine Life,  
Which Is the Spontaneous Power, Automatic Function,  
Innate Ability, and Divine Capacity of the Divine Life**

The tablets of the covenant, which are the tablets of the law, signify the law of the divine life, which is the spontaneous power, automatic function, innate ability, and divine capacity of the divine life (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; cf. Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 10:12-13). Praise the Lord for the law of the divine life in our spirit! This law is the spontaneous power of the divine life. The Triune God embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit is an automatic function within us. He is an innate ability and the divine capacity of the divine life within us. When this law is switched on, the Lord dispenses Himself into our being.

Romans 8:10 says, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." Verse 6 says, "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace." Verse 11 says, "If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Altogether, these verses reveal that the dispensing of the divine life begins from our spirit through our soul and into our mortal body.

***The Law, This Divine Capacity, of Life  
Being Able to Do Everything in Us  
for the Carrying Out of God's Economy***

The law, this divine capacity, of life can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy. According to this capacity, we can know God, live God, and be constituted with God in His life and nature so that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19-21). Furthermore, the capacity of [256] the inner law of life constitutes us to be the members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions (4:11, 16).

***While the Divine Life Grows in Us,  
the Law of Life Functioning to Shape Us, to Conform Us,  
to the Image of Christ as the Firstborn Son of God***

While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:2, 29). Transformation is to be metabolically changed in our natural life, and maturity is to be filled with the divine life that changes us. What is conformation? Near the end of his ministry Brother Lee gave the following definition of conformation: “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” (*The Experience of God’s Organic Salvation Equaling Reigning in Christ’s Life*, p. 36).

To be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God is to be saved in Christ’s life from self-likeness. We need to be saved from being like the self, from self-likeness, that is, from the expression, the appearance, of the self. When we are shaped into the image of the firstborn Son of God, we are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God and thereby saved from the likeness of the self, from self-likeness. Simultaneously, we are also saved from vainglory, from outward show, from ambition for leadership, from self-confidence, from self-righteousness, from self-justification, from self-vindication, from self-exaltation, from being opinionated, from murmurings, from reasonings, from gossiping, and from rivalry.

*The Law of Life Not Regulating Us from Doing Wrong;  
Its Regulating the Shape of Life*

The law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life.

*The Law of Life Not Primarily Functioning  
in the Negative Sense of Telling Us What Not to Do;  
Rather, While Life Grows, the Law of Life Functioning  
in the Positive Sense of Shaping Us, That Is,  
Conforming Us, to the Image of Christ*

The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of [257] telling us what not to do; rather, while life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us, to the image of Christ.

*Through the Function of the Law of Life,  
Our All Becoming the Mature Sons of God,*

*and God Having His Universal Expression*

Through the function of the law of life, we all shall become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal expression.

Praise the Lord for the matter of ministering to the Lord to enjoy Him as the hidden manna, the budding rod, and the law of life.—E. M.