

Message Ten

The Flow of Life with the Ministry of Life out from and for the Magnificent House of God

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 47:1-12; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 9:11; 3:6, 9; 4:15; 3:2, 12

Outline

Day 1

I. In order to participate in God's ultimate move, we need to experience the flow of life out from the house of God—Ezek. 47:1-12:

A. *God's ultimate move is His move in man to deify man by saturating man with all that He is in His life, nature, element, and essence for the glory, the expression, of God—2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.*

B. *The water flows out from under the threshold—Ezek. 47:1:*

1. In order for the water to flow, there must be a threshold, an opening—cf. Psa. 81:10.
2. If we draw closer to the Lord and have more contact with Him, there will be an opening that will allow the living water to flow out from the church—Hymns, #846.

C. *The flow is toward the east—Ezek. 47:1:*

1. The river of God flows in the direction of God's glory—cf. Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2.
2. If everyone in the church seeks and cares for God's glory, the living water will flow out from the church—John 7:18; 1 Cor. 10:31.

D. *The water flows out from the right side of the house—Ezek. 47:1:*

1. In the Bible the right side is the highest position, the first place—cf. Heb. 1:3.
2. The flow of life must have the preeminence within us, becoming the controlling factor in our living and work—Rev. 22:1; Col. 1:18b.

E. The flowing is by the side of the altar, showing that we need the dealing of the cross and a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life—Ezek. 47:1.

Day 2

F. For the increase of the flow of life, we need to be measured by the Lord as the man of bronze—40:3; 47:2-5; Rev. 1:15; cf. John 7:37-39:

1. To measure is to examine, test, judge, and possess—Isa. 6:1-8; Ezek. 42:20.
2. The four measurings of a thousand cubits, which is a complete unit (cf. Psa. 84:10), indicate that as creatures we need to be thoroughly measured by the Lord so that He may take over and thoroughly possess our entire being—Ezek. 47:2-5.
3. The more we allow the Lord to examine, test, and judge us to possess us, the deeper the flow becomes; the depth of the flow depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord—cf. 1 John 1:5, 7.
4. The more we are measured by the Lord, the more we are restricted and limited by the flowing of the grace of life until eventually we are lost in and carried along by the flowing Triune God as a river in which to swim; in one sense we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free—Ezek. 47:4-6.

Day 3

G. The river causes everything to live—v. 9a:

1. Where the river flows, everything shall live and be full of life.
2. The flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle—vv. 7, 9-10, 12.

H. The river waters the desert and heals the Dead Sea—v. 8:

1. The river waters the dry, parched land and heals the death waters.
2. This watering and healing are for the purpose of producing life.

Day 4

I. The river is unable to heal the swamps and marshes—v. 11:

1. A swamp or marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise and lukewarmness—cf. Rev. 3:15-16.
2. For the flow of life and for the church life, we need to be absolute.
3. “If you are in the Lord’s recovery, be in the recovery absolutely, not halfway... The Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness...By being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in. Then everything shall live where the river comes” (Life- study of Ezekiel, pp. 311-312).

Day 5

II. Our enjoyment of Christ as the flow of life, the life-giving Spirit, is for us to be sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, feeders, and builders with the ministry of life for the marvelous organic building of God, the magnificent house of God:

- A. A sufficient minister of the new covenant is a person who ministers life to others in order to help them grow in life—2 Cor. 3:6.*
- B. A minister of life is a sower who sows spiritual seeds:*
 1. In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul says to the Corinthians, “We have sown to you the spiritual things”; the spiritual things refers to spiritual seeds.

2. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a spiritual seed is to impart life in, with, and out of our spirit.
3. The Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race—Matt. 13:3, 37.
4. In the Lord's recovery we, as ministers of the new covenant, need to be sowers who impart life to grow and produce Christ in others.

C. A minister of life is a planter who plants Christ into God's people—1 Cor. 3:6:

1. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, God's farm, in God's new creation—v. 9.
2. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit.

D. A minister of life is a waterer who waters people with Christ—v. 6:

1. Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life—Rev. 22:17.
2. We may liken a waterer in God's farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water; we should be a divine "irrigation system" with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God's farm.
3. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him so that we can be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life—John 4:14; 7:37-39.

Day 6

E. A minister of life is a begetter, a father, who imparts life to his children, whom he begets—1 Cor. 4:15:

1. To beget is to generate spiritual children, to bring them forth, through the

impartation of life.

2. We need to have the divine “life germ” in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God.

F. A minister of life is a feeder; feeding is a matter of life; it differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge:

1. To give milk to drink or food to eat is to feed others—3:2.
2. What the apostle ministered to the Corinthian believers seemed to be knowledge; actually, it was milk (not yet solid food), and it should have nourished them.
3. The sound teaching of the apostles ministers the healthy teaching as the supply of life to people, either nourishing them or healing them—1 Tim. 1:10b; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9.

G. A minister of life is a builder who builds with gold, silver, and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12:

1. Gold symbolizes God the Father in His divine nature, silver symbolizes Christ in His redemptive work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work (this is versus wood, which signifies the human nature; grass, which signifies man in the flesh; and stubble, which signifies lifelessness).
2. Song of Songs portrays that in the proper church life the perfected believers coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect Christ’s loving seekers by ministering the Triune God to them for their transformation by the Triune God’s attributes being wrought into them to become their virtues—1:10-11.
3. This is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for the accomplishing of God’s eternal economy—1 Cor. 3:12; Rev. 21:18-21.

WEEK 10 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 47:1 Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

Psa. 46:4 There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

Athanasius, one of the early church fathers, said concerning Christ, “He was made man that we might be made God,” and “The Word was made flesh...that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified.” This is the principle of God’s move on earth. God’s move is in man and through man. God’s move is to deify man, making man God in life and in nature but not, of course, in the Godhead. (Life-study of Job, p. 129)

Ezekiel 47:1a says, “Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east.” In order for the water to flow forth, there must be a threshold, an opening, through which it can flow. This indicates that if we, through Christ, have more contact with God and draw closer to Him, there will be an opening which will allow the living water of God to flow out from the church. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 303-304)

Today’s Reading

The river issues forth from the house and flows toward the east (Ezek. 47:1b). The east is the direction of the glory of the Lord (Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2). The flowing toward the east indicates that the river of God will always flow in the direction of God’s glory. The river cares for God’s glory.

Everything in the church life should be for God’s glory. For example, in our

preaching of the gospel, we should seek the glory of God. If our gospel preaching is for God's glory, there will be an outflow of living water. However, if we do not care for the glory of God, the flow will be limited. Everyone in the church should seek and care for the glory of God. Then the living water will flow out from the church.

Ezekiel 47:1c also tells us that the water flows out from the right side of the house. According to the Bible, the right side signifies the highest position. The flowing of the water from the right side indicates that the flow of the Lord should have the preeminence. We need to give the Lord the highest position, and we also need to give the flow of the Lord the highest position. Then the flow will be prevailing and become the controlling factor in our living and work.

The flowing is by the side of the altar (v. 1d). This indicates that the flow is always by the cross. If we do not have the dealing of the cross, the flow will be frustrated. If we would have the flow, we must have the dealing of the cross. We need to be willing to pass through the cross so that the flow may come forth. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 304)

The flowing is at the south side of the altar. Everything must be put on the altar for the flow of the living water. We do need a full consecration to enjoy the flow of life. We need to consecrate all that we have and all that we are to the Lord.

Water for drinking is always related to either God's house or God's city. Psalm 36:8 says, "They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures." In this verse God's house is mentioned. Psalm 46:4 says, "There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God." In this verse the river is in the city... These two verses in the Psalms show us that the river is in the house within the city. Because the house is in the city, the river in the house is also in the city.

Joel 3:18 tells us that a fountain will go forth from the house of Jehovah. Zechariah 14:8 tells us that living waters will go forth from Jerusalem....In Joel and Zechariah we see again that the river is related to the house and the city. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," pp. 428, 423-424)

Further Reading: Life-study of Job, msg. 24; CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," ch. 5

WEEK 10 – DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 47:3-5 ...The man...measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the knees. Then He measured a thousand cubits and led me through the water, water that was to the loins. Then He measured a thousand cubits, and it was a river that I could not pass through...

The main point for us in Ezekiel 47 is that we all need to be willing to be measured. There is no need for us to struggle, to strive, or to exercise our effort to do anything. The only need is...to be willing to be measured again and again and again and again. We need to tell the Lord, “Lord, I am willing to be measured.” Then the flow will eventually become the river. If the saints in a local church are willing to be measured again and again and again and again, four times to one hundred percent, there will be a river to water the parched desert, to heal the dead sea, to grow the trees and produce the fish, and to produce the kids and the calves. What we need is to be measured for the Lord’s move. We need to be tested, examined, taken over, and possessed by the Lord.

When the water is to the ankles, that means that only a small part of our being is possessed by the Lord. When the water is risen to the loins, part of our being is possessed by the Lord, but another part is still free. If we are willing to be measured up to one hundred percent, we will be fully swallowed up by the living water. Then in one sense, we lose all our freedom, but in another sense we are really free. When we are fully possessed by the Lord, we will be fully freed. The flow of the living water will carry us on forward toward the goal. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, “The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures,” pp. 436-437)

Today’s Reading

When this man first measured the river, there was only a trickle coming out

from the house. Then he measured a thousand cubits, and the flow became deeper, up to the ankles (Ezek. 47:3). Again he measured a thousand cubits, and the flow became deeper, up to the knees (v. 4). After this the man measured yet another thousand cubits, and the flow became even deeper, up to the loins (v. 4). When he for the fourth time measured a thousand cubits, the flow became a river which could not be passed over, and the river became waters to swim in.

In the Bible the number one thousand signifies a complete unit. For example, in Psalm 84:10 the psalmist says that a day in the Lord's courts is better than a thousand outside. Since one thousand signifies a complete unit, to measure a thousand means to measure a complete unit; it is a complete measuring.

As we are judged by the Lord, we need to make a thorough confession. We need to allow the Lord to be our Judge and let Him bring us into His light and expose us.

We can determine how much we have been measured and possessed by the Lord...by the depth of the river. If the river is only up to our ankles, this proves that we have not been measured fully by the Lord. The depth of the river depends on how much we have been measured by the Lord. There is no need for us to argue and justify ourselves. Instead, we should simply consider the depth of our flow. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 305-307)

Brothers and sisters, if we want God's life to flow out, we have to be measured by Him.... Many...prefer to walk freely by themselves; they do not want to be restricted by God's life. Therefore, they do not want to be measured by God. Once a person is measured by God, however, his feet will not be free to walk about at will.... In the final step, the river of John 7 comes, and the water becomes so deep that a man can swim in it. At this point, one is fully carried along by the flow of the water. This is Madame Guyon's final experience—being lost in God. This is the deepest step. (CWWN, vol. 38, "Measure and Flow," p. 472)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 38, ch. 61, "Measure and Flow"

WEEK 10 – DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 47:8-10 ...This water flows out toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah and goes to the sea....And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish when this water comes there....And fishermen will stand beside the sea from En-gedi even to En-eglaim; it will be a place for the spreading of nets...

The river in Ezekiel 47:8 goes down into the Arabah, [which] means the wilderness, the dry land, the parched land that grows nothing; hence, the desert. This land needs the watering. The river is for watering the dry land and healing the Dead Sea.... Joshua 3:16 refers to the Dead Sea as the sea of the Arabah. The Dead Sea, or the Salt Sea, is near the Arabah. Because of the flow of the river into the sea, the salt water in the sea is healed. The sea now becomes fresh water because the salt has been swallowed up. The river comes first to water the dry land that grows nothing and to heal the death waters. This watering and healing is for the purpose of producing life. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," p. 435)

Today's Reading

Where the river flows, everything shall live and be full of life (Ezek. 47:9). This river is the river of life, and only life can cause things to live.

In this flow the trees live and bear sweet, delicious fruit every month (v. 12). Also, the water brings forth an abundance of fish (v. 9). Cattle are implied by the names of two cities—En-gedi and En-eglaim (v. 10). En-gedi means "the fountain of the kid," and En-eglaim means "the fountain of the two calves." These fountains are for the young cattle, the kids and the calves. From all this we see that the flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle.

In the proper church life there are many trees producing fruit, and thus there

is no lack of fruit. If the church in your locality is living, there will be trees bearing fruit. Trees producing fruit are an indication that there is a flow in your church. The trees grow by the living water. If there is a flow in your local church, there surely will be the trees bearing an abundance of fruit.

With the flowing of the river, there is also fishing (v. 10). Fishing signifies the increase in numbers. If the number of people in your local church does not increase year after year, this means that there is no fishing, and no fishing means that there is no flow. If we would have fishing, we must have the flow.

In the church life we also need some fountains of kids and fountains of calves for feeding. Thus, we need food, we need the increase in numbers, and we need the feeding. This will bring in the mending, the building up.... All these matters depend on one thing—the flow of the river...of God. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 309-310)

Thus, the flow of the river produces trees, fish, and cattle. The fishermen spread their nets on the land from En-gedi to En-eglaim. They spread their nets on the land between these two fountains. The trees, the fish, and the cattle in Ezekiel 47 are mentioned according to the order in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 the plant life is first, the fish are second, and the cattle are third.

We need En-gedi, and we need En-eglaim, the fountains of the kids and the calves. We must realize that the potential with the Lord's recovery is with the young people. I am happy to see so many "kids" and "calves" in the church life. I am an older saint, and I am also very thankful for all the older saints among us. All the "kids" need the care of the older saints. Although I love and appreciate all the older saints, deep within me I realize that the future, the prosperity, and the potential of the Lord's move is with the young ones, with the kids and with the calves. The many young people among us who are full of life are evidence that the local church is the fountain of the kids and the fountain of the calves. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," pp. 435-436)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," ch. 6

WEEK 10 – DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 47:11-12 But its swamps and its marshes will not be healed; they shall be left for salt. And on the banks on both sides of the river will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail; but they will bring forth new fruit every month, because the water for them flows out of the sanctuary. And their fruit shall be for food, and their leaves for healing.

Ezekiel 47:8 says that the river flows toward the East Sea. According to the map, the East Sea is the Salt Sea or the Dead Sea. By the flowing of the river out of the house, the salt water of the Dead Sea will be healed. This means that death will be swallowed up by life. When there is a rich and deep flow of life in a local church, much death will be swallowed up by life. However, if there is no flow in a particular church, that church will become a “dead sea” full of salt. But if there is the flow of the river, deadness is swallowed up by life, and then the “dead sea” will be made alive.

Although the Dead Sea and the dry places can be made alive and deadness can be swallowed up by life, the marshes cannot be healed (v. 11). A marsh is a place that is neither dry nor flowing with water. Consisting partly of mud and partly of water, a marsh is neither wet nor dry. A marsh signifies a situation that is full of compromise. This means that wherever there is a compromising situation, there is a marsh. We should never become involved with any situation that is a “marsh.” (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 310)

Today’s Reading

The Lord Jesus rebuked the church in Laodicea for being lukewarm and neither hot nor cold. He told those in Laodicea that they should be either hot or cold but not lukewarm. He also said that if they remained lukewarm, He would spew them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:15-16). To be lukewarm is to be in a compromising

situation, to be in a marsh.

Our stand concerning the church must be absolute. If you stand in a denomination, you should stand absolutely. If you stand with an independent group, you should stand with that group absolutely. If you stand on the ground of the church, you must stand absolutely. You should be either cold or hot, but you should not be lukewarm. To be lukewarm is to be in a marsh. If you give up the denominations and the independent groups yet are not absolute for the proper ground of the church, you are in a marsh. It is possible for one to be in the church life without being absolute. Such a person is a marsh.

Not even the Lord can heal a marsh. A marsh is a neutral place, a halfway place, a place of compromise. Certain saints are neither in Babylon nor in Jerusalem but in a halfway place between Babylon and Jerusalem. This means that they are in a marsh and even that they are a marsh.

We need either to be absolutely in the flow or stay on dry ground. If we remain in a marshy or “muddy” situation, the Lord cannot do anything with us. It is very easy to get into a marsh, but it is very difficult to get out of one. The church must be in a place of absoluteness. Thus, for the church life we need to be absolute. If you are in the Lord’s recovery, be in the recovery absolutely, not halfway. Come back all the way from Babylon to Jerusalem. If you stop halfway, you will become a marsh, and you will not have any flow, not even a trickle. Rather, you will have just enough water to make you “muddy.” You will be a marsh, and a marsh cannot be healed. Throughout all my years in the Lord’s recovery, I have never seen a marsh that was healed.

In Revelation 22:11 the Lord Jesus says, “Let him who does unrighteousness do unrighteousness still; and let him who is filthy be filthy still; and let him who is righteous do righteousness still; and let him who is holy be holy still.” Here we see that the Lord Jesus desires and requires absoluteness. We must learn to be absolute. By being absolute we will be in the flow, and the flow will not be a trickle but a river to swim in. Then everything shall live where the river comes. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 310-312)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 26

WEEK 10 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

1 Cor. 3:6-7 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

A sufficient minister of the new covenant is a person who ministers life to others in order to help them grow in life (2 Cor. 3:6)... [There are] six statuses of a competent minister of the new covenant as revealed in 1 Corinthians: a sower, a planter, a waterer, a begetter, a feeder, and a builder. These six statuses are related to the matter of life, that is, to our experience and enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, "The Spirit and the Church," p. 577)

Today's Reading

In 1 Corinthians 9:11 Paul says to the Corinthians, "We have sown to you the spiritual things." The spiritual things refers to spiritual seeds.... The first thing a new testament minister does is not to pass on doctrinal teachings but to sow spiritual seeds. A seed is a container of life, and to sow a seed is to impart life. Hence, sowing the spiritual things is a matter of life. According to Matthew 13, the Lord Jesus came as a Sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the human race (vv. 3, 37)... In the Lord's recovery we as ministers of the new covenant need to be sowers who impart life into others.

To be a sower is much more difficult than to be a teacher. In order to be a teacher, a person simply needs to go to a Bible school where he may be trained to

be a good speaker, learning not only biblical doctrines and parables but also how to use one's voice, tell stories, speak eloquently, and use gestures. However, in order to be a sower, one must have seeds of life that can grow and produce Christ in others. Such spiritual seeds are not mere doctrines or letters; instead, they are something of life in our spirit. They are spiritual things, things that are in, with, and out of our spirit. To acquire teachings is easy, but to obtain these seeds is difficult.

In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul says, "I planted." Planting is also a matter of life, for it involves sowing seeds, the containers of life, or placing herbs, plants, or trees in the ground, all of which are living things that grow. Verse 9 tells us that we, the believers in Christ, are "God's cultivated land," that is, God's farm. The believers, who have been regenerated in Christ with God's life, are God's cultivated land, a farm in God's new creation. Corporately, we as the church of God have Christ planted in us. In order for us to plant Christ into others, we need the genuine experience of Christ as life in our spirit. If we grow and produce Christ within us, we will have something of Christ to plant into others. Again, spiritual planting is not a matter of doctrines but of life.

In 3:6 Paul continues, "Apollos watered." We should not only be planters but also waterers. Once we plant Christ into others, we need to water them with the water of life (Rev. 22:17). Day by day we should water the dear saints, who are plants in God's farm that need watering. We may liken a waterer in God's farm to an irrigation system with a reservoir that supplies a farm with water. We should be a divine "irrigation system" with a reservoir of living water stored within us to water the church as God's farm. We need to have the genuine experience of Christ as the water of life and a living contact with Him. Consequently, we will have a fountain of life bubbling within us constantly (John 4:14), and we will be a channel of living water, a divine irrigation system, that can supply others with the water of life (7:37-39). We need to be waterers, those who are filled with the water of life and who water their fellow believers for their growth in life. If we do not have the sufficient experience of Christ as the living water, it will be difficult for us to water others. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, "The Spirit and the Church," pp. 577-578)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, "The Spirit and the Church," ch. 7

WEEK 10 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 4:15 ...In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

3:2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it...

10 According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it.

To beget is to generate something, to bring forth something, through the impartation of life. Like the apostle Paul, who begot the Corinthian believers in Christ [1 Cor. 4:15] by imparting the divine life into them, we should be fathers who beget spiritual children by imparting the divine life into others. Begetting, unlike teaching, is a matter of life. We need to have the divine “life germ” in order to impart the divine life into others so that they may be begotten as children of God. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, “The Spirit and the Church,” p. 579)

Today’s Reading

After begetting spiritual children, we need to feed them with the spiritual milk. Hence, we need to be feeders. In 1 Corinthians 3:2 Paul says, “I gave you milk to drink.” To give others milk to drink is to feed them. Feeding is a matter of life. It differs from teaching, which is a matter of knowledge. Instead of merely instructing others, we need to feed them.... We should be constantly nourished with Christ as spiritual food so that we may be able to feed others. We need to feed on Christ to produce spiritual milk so that we may be able to feed our spiritual children. This is a genuine experience of Christ as life.

In order to practice the proper church life, we need the genuine experience of life.... Paul was not only a father who begot spiritual children but also a mother who fed them. We need to be spiritually strong and healthy so that, like Paul, we

may be able to beget spiritual children and adequately produce the spiritual milk to feed them. Those who take the lead in the churches need to...become fathers who impart life to their spiritual children and mothers who produce the spiritual milk to feed them.

The new covenant ministers as sowers, planters, waterers, begetters, and feeders should eventually become builders. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 Paul speaks of himself as “a wise master builder” who laid the unique foundation, Christ, for others to build upon. Then in verse 12 Paul speaks of building upon the foundation gold, silver, and precious stones. As we carry out the work of sowing, planting, watering, begetting, and feeding, Christ will grow in the believers. This growth of life in the believers will be accompanied by a measure of transformation in them. While the believers grow day by day, they will be transformed (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2). As they grow as plants on God’s farm, they will experience transformation.... Consequently, the believers will be not only mature plants, that is, full-grown men in Christ (Rev. 14:4, 15; Col. 1:28), but also gold, silver, and precious stones, precious materials for the building of God’s house (Rev. 21:2-3, 11, 18-22).

If we would be builders who build with gold, silver, and precious stones, we need to be these precious materials. Gold signifies the divine nature of the Father, silver signifies the redemptive work of Christ, and precious stones signify the transforming work of the Spirit. In building the house of God, the builders are not separate from the materials of the building. In order to be builders, we ourselves need to be the transformed materials by being constituted with the Triune God. We should be both the builders and the building material of the house of God. If we ourselves have not been transformed into precious materials, we cannot help others be transformed into such materials. We ourselves first need to be the precious materials and be built into the house of God. Then we will be qualified to build the house of God with other believers as the transformed materials. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, “The Spirit and the Church,” pp. 579-580)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, “The Spirit and the Church,” ch. 7

WEEK 10 — HYMN

Oh, may my spirit flow

The Church — Her Building

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Musical score for the hymn "Oh, may my spirit flow". The score is written in G-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the melody and the lyrics for the first line: "1. Oh, may my spir - it flow, Oh, may it flow! Now I be - seech Thee, Lord Oh, may it flow!". The second staff contains the melody and the lyrics for the second line: "9 My past I would forsake, The i - ron walls would break, My spir - it free would make; Oh, may it flow!". Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Eb, Bb, Cm, Ab, Eb, F7/Eb, Bb/D, Bb, F, F7/A, Bb in the first staff; C, Fm, Bb7, Eb7, Eb7/Db, Ab/C, Ab, Eb/G, C7, Fm, Bb7, Eb in the second staff.

2. Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
Now I implore Thee, Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
No more self-satisfied,
No more in self-bound pride,
No more my spirit tied;
Oh, may it flow!

3. Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
For this I plead with Thee,
Oh, may it flow!
High-minded not to be,
Pride shall not prison me,
I'd flow unceasingly,
In spirit flow.

4. Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
For this I seek Thee, Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
No more to isolate,
Nor self to perfect make,
My spirit nought abate,
Deeply to flow.

5. Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
I ask Thee, gracious Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
My trust in self o'erthrow,
Down from self's throne I'll go,
That living water flow
In spirit, Lord.

6. Oh, may my spirit flow,
Oh, may it flow!
Answer my prayer, dear Lord,
Oh, may it flow!
Not just commune with Thee,
I long to builded be,
Mingle with others free
In spirit, Lord.

