

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF LEVITICUS (1)

Christ as the Peace between God and God's People for Their Co-enjoyment in Fellowship to Have the Vital-group Church Life and to Consummate in the New Jerusalem as the Ultimate Peace Offering (Message 10)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 3:1-2; 6:12; 7:37; Phil. 4:5-7, 11-13; John 12:1-3

- I. The issue of enjoying Christ as our burnt offering, our meal offering, our sin offering, and our trespass offering is the enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering—Lev. 3:1-2; 6:12; 7:37:
 - A. We should not try to have peace by our own effort; the more we try in ourselves to have peace, the less peace we will have; the only way to have peace is to enjoy Christ every day—Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 12:3b; Eph. 3:16-17.
 - B. Having peace is a measurement to show us to what degree we enjoy Christ—1:2; cf. Matt. 11:28-30.
 - C. We should enjoy Christ today and forget about yesterday and about tomorrow—6:25, 34; Phil. 3:13-14; Heb. 3:7-8, 13.
- II. Christ is the peace between God and God's people for their co-enjoyment in fellowship—cf. 1 Cor. 1:9:
 - A. The one who offered the peace offering was to lay his hand on the head of the offering, signifying the union and identification of the offerer with the offering; our fellowship with Christ is a matter of identification, a matter of us becoming Him and of Him becoming us—Lev. 3:2, 8, 13.
 - B. The peace offering is illustrated in Luke 15:23-24 by the fattened calf as a peaceful enjoyment between the receiving father, God, and the returning prodigal son, a sinner.
 - C. We need to learn the secret of enjoying Christ as our peace offering—the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding—Phil. 4:12, 7; John 16:33: [274]
 1. We must learn the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to

live Christ, how to magnify Christ, and how to gain Christ in any environment and in any matter—[Phil. 4:11-13](#):

- a. We need to let our requests be made known *to God*, talking with Him and conferring with Him in everything—[vv. 5-6](#); cf. [Josh. 9:14](#); [Prov. 3:5-6](#).
 - b. “Those who do not know this secret consider to live Christ a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ” (*The Organic Aspect of God’s Salvation*, p. 55)—[Phil. 1:19-21a](#).
 - c. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that the peace of God, God as peace, is infused into us for our enjoyment as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety so that Christ as our forbearance can be known to all men—[4:5-7, 9](#); [1:20](#); [Rom. 8:6](#); [John 16:33](#):
 - (1) Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a river of peace and as a comforting mother—[Isa. 66:12-13](#); cf. [Gal. 4:26](#).
 - (2) Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a refuge from the wind, a covering from the tempest, streams of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land—[Isa. 32:2](#).
2. The virtues of Christ for our experience in [Philippians 4:5-9](#) are the expression of a life that lives Christ as peace—[1:19-21a](#); [2:5-13](#); [3:8-10](#):
- a. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.
 - b. Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers’ life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites.
3. “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near”—[4:5](#):
- a. Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and [\[275\]](#) consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one’s legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due.
 - b. According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for it includes all Christian virtues:

- (1) Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.
- (2) Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things.
- c. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable—cf. [2 Cor. 6:1a](#); [10:1](#); [Phil. 1:19](#); [Isa. 11:2](#).
- d. If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we shall also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it—[50:4-5](#); [Col. 1:28](#).
- e. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say—[2 Chron. 1:10](#).
- f. As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance—[Phil. 1:21a](#):
 - (1) To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men.
 - (2) Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today.
 - (3) To make known our forbearance is to live a life that expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.
- g. Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul says that the Lord is near: [\[276\]](#)
 - (1) With respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help; with regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon—cf. [Rom. 10:8-13](#).
 - (2) The Lord's being near refers primarily to His presence with us—[Matt. 1:23](#).
- 4. “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus”—[Phil. 4:6-7](#):

- a. The words *in everything* refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day.
- b. Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord.
- c. *To God* denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is “in the fellowship with God.”
- d. The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil; a proper Christian life is a life of calm, tranquility, peace, and quiet (1 Tim. 2:1-2; Isa. 30:15a); the first aspect of a life that lives Christ is tranquility—without rivalry, vainglory, murmurings, or reasonings and without debate, arguing, or fighting with others.
- e. *Let your forbearance be known* is parallel to *let your requests be made known*—Phil. 4:5-6:
 - (1) Our anxiety can be turned into forbearance by bringing every need, every request, to God, and by conversing with Him; we should just tell Him what we need; that is, if we have any worry or anxiety, we should just tell Him.
 - (2) Our letting Him know is our motion toward Him; then His response is His dispensing, His mingling Himself with us, even before He answers our request; the practical mingling of divinity with humanity is carried out by the traffic described in [verse 6](#). [277]
- f. If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ—Rom. 8:28-29; Matt. 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

III. We need to learn the secret of how to have the vital-group church life as a house of feasting—a feast of Christ as the peace offering—where He and His lovers can have rest and satisfaction—John 12:1-3:

- A. This church life is produced by the resurrection life—11:43-44.
- B. This church life is composed of cleansed sinners—Mark 14:3.
- C. This church life is outwardly poor and afflicted—John 12:1; 16:33.

- D. This church life is a life of feasting in and with the presence of the Lord—[12:2](#); [Acts 3:20a](#).
 - E. This church life has more sisters than brothers—[John 12:2-3](#).
 - F. In this church life there are the functions of Martha (diligently serving the Lord), Lazarus (testifying of the resurrection life), and Mary (pouring out her absolute love on the Lord)—[vv. 2-3, 9-11](#).
- IV. Our enjoyment of Christ as our peace offering in our daily life and in the church life consummates in the New Jerusalem as the ultimate peace offering—[Rev. 21:2](#):
- A. *Jerusalem* means “the foundation of peace.”
 - B. The New Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety.
 - C. The whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace.

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MESSAGE TEN

CHRIST AS THE PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND GOD’S PEOPLE FOR THEIR CO-ENJOYMENT IN FELLOWSHIP TO HAVE THE VITAL-GROUP CHURCH LIFE AND TO CONSUMMATE IN THE NEW JERUSALEM AS THE ULTIMATE PEACE OFFERING

With this message we come to the matter of the peace offering.

THE ISSUE OF ENJOYING CHRIST AS OUR BURNT OFFERING, OUR MEAL OFFERING, OUR SIN OFFERING, AND OUR TRESPASS OFFERING BEING THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS THE PEACE OFFERING

The issue of enjoying Christ as our burnt offering, our meal offering, our sin offering, and our trespass offering is the enjoyment of Christ as the peace offering ([Lev. 3:1-2](#); [6:12](#); [7:37](#)). [Leviticus 6:12](#) says, “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.” The fire on the

altar came from the heavens, that is, from God, and the first duty of the priests every morning was to keep that fire burning. Likewise, our first duty in the morning is to spend time with the Lord to keep the fire burning. The priests were to burn wood on the altar every morning. This signifies that we put ourselves on the altar of burnt offering every morning; we take Christ as our burnt offering. Thus, we put ourselves daily on the altar of burnt offering, taking Christ as our burnt offering, which means that we take Christ as our absoluteness, as the One who is absolutely for God's satisfaction. Our taking Christ as our burnt offering issues in our taking Him as our peace offering. He is our peace toward God and our peace toward man. As we will see in this message, He is the One who gives us peace in our hearts and who mounts patrol over our hearts. [Philippians 4:7](#) says, "The peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." The burnt offering is for our absoluteness for [\[279\]](#) God; the peace offering is for our fellowship with God. If we take these offerings every morning, the fire in us will burn continually, and we will maintain our zeal for the Lord's house.

**Our Needing to Not Try to Have Peace by Our Own Effort;
the More We Try in Ourselves to Have Peace,
the Less Our Having Peace;
the Only Way to Have Peace
Being to Enjoy Christ Every Day**

We should not try to have peace by our own effort; the more we try in ourselves to have peace, the less peace we will have; the only way to have peace is to enjoy Christ every day ([Rom. 14:17](#); [1 Cor. 12:3b](#); [Eph. 3:16-17](#)). Although we may be in need of peace, the more we strive to have peace by our own effort, the more anxious we become. We need to give ourselves to enjoy Christ, not occasionally but every day. Every day we need to enjoy Christ, and then we will have Him as our continual peace.

[Romans 14:17](#) says, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom of God is peace in the Holy Spirit, but how can we get this? [First Corinthians 12:3b](#) says, "No one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit." To call on the Lord is not merely to practice a form. When you call on the Lord's name, you may say, "Lord Jesus, I love You. Lord Jesus, I need You. Lord Jesus, be with me." You should never say, "Oh, I am so tired." Instead, say, "Lord Jesus, I am so tired." This makes a big difference. Then He will say, "I will be your energy." Whenever you say, "Lord Jesus!" you

are in the Holy Spirit, and when you are in the Holy Spirit, you have Christ as peace in the Holy Spirit. Never graduate from calling on the name of the Lord. We need to call on the name of the Lord continually.

[Ephesians 3:16-19](#) says, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” We need to pray this prayer every day. If we do this, we will have Christ as peace in our hearts. [280]

Having Peace Being a Measurement to Show Us to What Degree We Enjoy Christ

Having peace is a measurement to show us to what degree we enjoy Christ ([1:2](#); cf. [Matt. 11:28-30](#)). Peace is a measurement to show how much we are enjoying Christ. I hope that all of us have Christ as peace and are enjoying Christ to the uttermost. [Ephesians 1:2](#) says, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that the Greek word translated “grace” is in an objective sense “that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard.” Based on this understanding, we may say that subjectively grace is God in Christ as the Spirit for our pleasure, delight, and enjoyment. In [Ephesians 1:2](#) grace is followed by peace, and peace is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Matthew 11:28](#) says, “Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” Two important words in the New Testament are *come* and *go*. We first need to come to Him. Here is His promise that if we come to Him, He will give us rest. Thus, every day we need to come to Him and pray, “Lord, give me rest.” He will answer this prayer based upon His word. He Himself is our real rest. When we have Him, we are on a real vacation and have real rest. We enjoy Christ as our Sabbath rest.

[Verse 29](#) says, “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.” The real rest is for our souls. At times we can be outwardly at rest yet not at rest in our soul. In our mind, emotion, and will we are uneasy. We need Christ as rest for our souls.

[Verse 30](#) continues, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” The yoke

here is the Father's will. The Father's will is something easy. If we feel that something is too hard or that we are getting burned out in our Christian life, we need to turn to the Lord and say, "Lord, I like taking Your yoke upon me. Your yoke is easy, and Your burden is light." The burden here is the work to carry out the Father's will. As we take the Father's will upon us and share in His work, we are His co-workers to carry out His will. His burden is light.

Our Needing to Enjoy Christ Today and Forget about Yesterday and about Tomorrow

We should enjoy Christ today and forget about yesterday and about ^[281] tomorrow (6:25, 34; Phil. 3:13-14; Heb. 3:7-8, 13). Otherwise, we may be counting the days before a certain event and miss the enjoyment of Christ today.

Our beloved Brother Dave Higgins, now with the Lord, had a framed quote in his office that said, "You only have today; you do not have tomorrow." This was a word that Brother Lee gave to the first group of trainees who went to the former Soviet Union. What he said to them was so simple yet so profound. Satan, God's enemy, always likes to tempt us with questions regarding tomorrow: "How are you going to get through tomorrow? How are you going to pass the test tomorrow? How are you going to give the message tomorrow?" He tries to tempt us and cause us to be anxious about tomorrow. However, we are not people of tomorrow; we are people of today. We only have today; we do not have tomorrow.

In [Matthew 6:25](#) the Lord said, "Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing?" Then in [verse 34](#) He said, "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its own evil."

In [Philippians 3:13-14](#) Paul testifies, "Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward." Let us simply forget everything behind and stretch forward to the things which are before. We should stretch forward to the vast, unexplored territory of Christ before us in our spirit. There is a vast, unexplored territory of Christ waiting for us to discover every day.

As he stretched forward, Paul pursued. The Greek word for *pursue* is the

same as the word for *persecute*. Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christ in a negative way before his conversion, but after his conversion he “persecuted” Christ in a positive way. He pursued Christ with his whole being. He says, “I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.” The goal toward which we pursue is the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ. If we pursue with this goal, our prize will be the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom. We pursue toward the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ in this age and toward the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the next age.

In the book of Hebrews there is frequent use of the word *today*. [282] Hebrews 3:7-8 says, “Therefore, even as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of trial in the wilderness.’” Then verse 13 says, “Exhort one another each day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Praise the Lord for today, and praise the Lord that His name is I Am! He is the present tense; He is the God of today.

CHRIST BEING THE PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND GOD’S PEOPLE FOR THEIR CO-ENJOYMENT IN FELLOWSHIP

Christ is the peace between God and God’s people for their co-enjoyment in fellowship (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9). First Corinthians 1:9 says, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” We were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Greek word for *fellowship* here is *koinonia*, which means “joint participation.” We jointly participate in Christ for our enjoyment. Even now, we are in a joint participation in Christ for our enjoyment.

God is faithful. What does it mean to say that God is faithful? We might think that certain material blessings show that God is faithful. Actually, *God is faithful* means that He is faithful to take away all our idols. God is faithful to take away everything within us that replaces Christ or takes precedence over Christ. Sometimes our safety, our security, our health, or our possessions can become idols to us. God does not want those things to become idols to us. He wants to be our safety, our security, our health, and our possession, so He is faithful to take away all our idols and lead us into the joint participation of Christ in which we enjoy Him with one another to the uttermost.

**The One Who Offered the Peace Offering
Laying His Hand on the Head of the Offering,
Signifying the Union and Identification
of the Offerer with the Offering;
Our Fellowship with Christ
Being a Matter of Identification,
a Matter of Us Becoming Him and of Him Becoming Us**

The one who offered the peace offering was to lay his hand on the head of the offering, signifying the union and identification of the offerer [283] with the offering; our fellowship with Christ is a matter of identification, a matter of us becoming Him and of Him becoming us ([Lev. 3:2, 8, 13](#)). Of course, we do not become Him in the Godhead; such a thought is heretical. We do, however, become Him in life and nature, so it is a matter of us becoming Him. We become a peace offering to God, and He becomes us.

**The Peace Offering Being Illustrated in Luke 15:23-24
by the Fattened Calf as a Peaceful Enjoyment
between the Receiving Father, God,
and the Returning Prodigal Son, a Sinner**

The peace offering is illustrated in [Luke 15:23-24](#) by the fattened calf as a peaceful enjoyment between the receiving father, God, and the returning prodigal son, a sinner. We all love this story in [Luke 15](#). Only the Lord Jesus could have told a parable like this about a prodigal son who receives his inheritance and then goes away and spends all his money on profligate living. A father is also there, and he is no doubt praying for the son. Sometimes when we pray for someone, his circumstances become worse. When the son had spent everything, a famine came upon the land. The famine came at the worst time. Then the prodigal had to go and work at a pig farm and eat the pigs' food. This caused him to come to his senses. [Verse 17](#) says, "He came to himself." Then he said, "I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants" ([vv. 18-19](#)). Knowing that his father's hired servants ate better than he did, he returned to his father's house.

[Luke 15:20](#) says, "He rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with

compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.” This shows that the father had been waiting every day for him to return. When we make a turn to the Father, He runs toward us. This is the one illustration in the Bible where the Father ran. The father recognized the son from a long way off. We can identify even from far away someone whom we know and love.

The peace offering is illustrated in this parable by the fattened calf. As the son started into the speech that he had prepared, the father interrupted him and said, “Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet” (v. 22). The best robe [284] signifies Christ as the God-satisfying righteousness to cover the penitent sinner. This is Christ for our judicial redemption. The ring signifies the sealing Spirit, and the sandals signify the power of God’s salvation to separate us from this dirty earth. Although the prodigal son was qualified through Christ’s judicial redemption, he still was hungry. Then the father went on to say, “And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry, because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found” (vv. 23-24). This fattened calf signifies the rich Christ killed on the cross for our enjoyment and for our organic salvation, our “Christification.” We eat Him, we enjoy Him, and we become what we eat.

Our Needing to Learn the Secret of Enjoying Christ as Our Peace Offering—the Peace of God, Which Surpasses Every Man’s Understanding

We need to learn the secret of enjoying Christ as our peace offering—the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding (Phil. 4:12, 7; John 16:33). Paul was in prison when he wrote Philippians, yet Philippians is a book of joy and rejoicing. Paul was enjoying the law of rejoicing while he was in prison. The words *joy* and *rejoice* occur repeatedly in Philippians (cf. 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10). This indicates that Paul was full of joy and rejoicing. For example, he says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice” (v. 4). To us it would have been sufficient to simply say, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” However, Paul adds, “Again I will say, rejoice.” That he said this from prison is really quite remarkable. Do not bemoan your situation. You are surely not in a Roman prison. Remember what Paul says: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”

In [verse 12](#) Paul refers to the secret he had learned: “I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I

have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.” We also need to learn this secret, that is, the secret of enjoying Christ as our peace offering.

***Our Needing to Learn the Secret
of How to Take Christ as Life, How to Live Christ,
How to Magnify Christ, and How to Gain Christ
in Any Environment and in Any Matter***

We must learn the secret of how to take Christ as life, how to live [285] Christ, how to magnify Christ, and how to gain Christ in any environment and in any matter (vv. 11-13). In any environment and in any matter, we need to learn the secret. The Greek phrase translated “I have learned the secret” can also be translated as “I have been initiated.” It is somewhat like being initiated into a secret society. We have been initiated into a society where we learn how to enjoy Christ, live Christ, magnify Christ, pursue Christ, gain Christ, and be found in Christ. We are learning the secret of enjoying Christ, gaining Christ, and being found in Christ so that Christ can be everything to us.

***Our Needing to Let Our Requests Be Made Known to God,
Talking with Him and Conferring with Him in Everything***

We need to let our requests be made known *to God*, talking with Him and conferring with Him in everything (vv. 5-6; cf. Josh. 9:14; Prov. 3:5-6). We should never take these verses for granted. Paul says in [Philippians 4:5-7](#), “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” The peace of God here is the peace offering. We all need this every day.

We need to let our requests be made known to God, talking with Him and conferring with Him in everything. [Psalm 62:8](#) says, “Trust in Him at all times, O people; / Pour out your heart before Him; / God is a refuge to us. Selah.” Learn to talk to the Lord. One of the best ways to enjoy the divine dispensing is to learn to talk to the Lord regarding everything.

Our tendency is to talk to people about anything and everything. Especially when something is bothering us, we may go to a brother and tell

him how bothered we are or how difficult our circumstances are. Instead of talking to others, what we need to do is tell the Lord all that is bothering us. We need to confer with the Lord, to make our requests known to God. We need to turn our anxiety into forbearance by talking to the Lord, by conferring with Him in everything. I am not saying that we should not fellowship with one another. We need to do that, but first we need to go to the Lord and talk to Him about our anxieties. We can talk to Him about anything and everything that is bothering us.

At the beginning of [Psalm 73](#), Asaph the psalmist says, “Surely God [\[286\]](#) is good to Israel, / To those who are pure in heart. / But as for me, my feet were nearly turned aside; / My steps had almost slipped. / For I was envious of the arrogant, / When I saw the prosperity of the wicked” ([vv. 1-3](#)). Then in [verses 14 and 15](#) he says, “I have been plagued all day long / And chastened every morning. / If I had said, I will speak thus; / Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children.” In other words, he could not tell anyone about what he was going through, how he regarded the prosperity of the wicked and how he was bothered that they did not suffer the way he did.

[Verses 16 and 17](#) say, “When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight, / Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.” We need to go into the sanctuary of God. What happens then is that we get the solution to our perplexities. The sanctuary of God is our spirit where the Lord dwells. The Lord is with our spirit. The sanctuary of God is also the church as the temple of the living God. When we get into our spirit and especially into the meetings of the church, we receive divine revelation, and we obtain the explanations to all our problems. Even though our problems might not be specifically addressed, we still receive divine revelation and the explanation and solution to all our problems.

The way the psalm ends is amazing. When you read the beginning, the psalmist was one way, but after he went into the sanctuary of God, that is, after he got into his spirit, into the church, and into the meetings, the entire psalm makes a turn. In [verses 22 through 24](#) the psalmist says, “I was brutish and knew nothing; / I was like a beast before You. / Nevertheless I am continually with You; / You have taken hold of my right hand. / You will guide me with Your counsel, / And afterward You will receive me in glory.” He turned because he talked to the Lord. He conferred with the Lord. He did not just keep the matter inside of himself, nor did he talk with his neighbors about everything. He talked to the Lord. The psalmist continues in [verses 25 through 28](#), “Whom do I have in heaven but You? /

And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth. / My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever. / For behold, those who are far from You will perish; / You destroy all who go about as harlots away from You. / But as for me, drawing near to God is good for me; / I have made the Lord Jehovah my refuge, / That I may declare all Your works.” We should all speak this to the Lord.

In [Joshua 9](#) the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites. The Gibeonites [287] were Hivites, and God’s command to the Israelites was to destroy the Hivites, one of the pagan tribes, because of their idolatry and their terrible situation. Here the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites, with Joshua taking the lead. [Verse 14](#) gives the reason that the Israelites were deceived: “They did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.”

In everything we do, in every detail of our life, we should ask for the counsel of Jehovah. We should never be on autopilot. We may decide to get a car, and we simply get one without ever checking with the Lord. We should ask, “Lord, what car do You want me to get? What car is best for the church life?” We should forget about our concept and open to the Lord. Likewise, regarding where to live, we should ask, “Where should I live, Lord? Where do You want me to live, Lord Jesus? What is best for Your interests, Lord?” We are wholly given to the Lord for His interests, for His economy, and for Christ and the church. Thus, we seek His counsel in everything.

*“Those Who Do Not Know This Secret
Consider to Live Christ a Difficult Thing.
Actually, You Just Need to Practice
Speaking with the Lord Constantly;
Then Spontaneously, You Will Live Christ”*

“Those who do not know this secret consider to live Christ a difficult thing. Actually, you just need to practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ” (*The Organic Aspect of God’s Salvation*, p. 55) ([Phil. 1:19-21a](#)). This is a wonderful secret. To live Christ is not a difficult thing. Practice speaking with the Lord constantly; then spontaneously, you will live Christ. Spontaneously, unconsciously, and effortlessly, you will live Christ if you practice speaking with the Lord constantly in all things.

The Result of Practicing Fellowship with God in Prayer

*Being That the Peace of God, God as Peace,
Is Infused into Us for Our Enjoyment
as the Counterpoise to Troubles
and the Antidote to Anxiety
So That Christ as Our Forbearance
Can Be Known to All Men*

The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that the peace of God, God as peace, is infused into us for our enjoyment as the [288] counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety so that Christ as our forbearance can be known to all men (4:5-7, 9; 1:20; Rom. 8:6; John 16:33). The word *counterpoise* means “a counteracting weight.” In other words, our anxiety may be tipping the scales one way, but when we pray ourselves into the Lord and enjoy Him as peace, the scales go the other way. The peace of God overcomes and swallows up all our anxiety. Romans 8:6 says that “the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” We have to pay attention to the Spirit in our spirit. Then we will have life and peace, which is a sense of ease, of enlightening, of watering, of brightness, and of inner harmony. We want to maintain the inner sense of life and peace.

*Through Our Fellowship with God in Prayer,
Our Enjoying the Lord as a River of Peace
and as a Comforting Mother*

Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a river of peace and as a comforting mother (Isa. 66:12-13; cf. Gal. 4:26). Isaiah 66:12-13 says, “Thus says Jehovah, / I now am extending to her / Peace like a river, / And the glory of the nations / Like an overflowing stream; / And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, / And you will be bounced on the knees. / As one whom his mother comforts, / So will I comfort you; / And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.”

Babies love being bounced on the knees. This can turn a frown into a smile and can make them laugh. This is what the Lord does to us. We may come to a meeting with a frown, but then we are “bounced on the knees.” He is a river of peace to us, and through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy Him as a comforting mother.

Through Our Fellowship with God in Prayer,

*Our Enjoying the Lord as a Refuge from the Wind,
a Covering from the Tempest, Streams of Water in a Dry Place,
and the Shadow of a Massive Rock in a Wasted Land*

Through our fellowship with God in prayer, we enjoy the Lord as a refuge from the wind, a covering from the tempest, streams of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land (32:2). We enjoy Him in all these ways.

*The Virtues of Christ for Our Experience in Philippians 4:5-9
Being the Expression of a Life That Lives Christ as Peace*

The virtues of Christ for our experience in [Philippians 4:5-9](#) are the [289] expression of a life that lives Christ as peace ([1:19-21a](#); [2:5-13](#); [3:8-10](#)). [Philippians 4:5-7](#) says, “Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Sometimes we see a saint whose circumstances are not so agreeable, yet they are fully enveloped in the peace of God. This peace surpasses every man’s understanding.

Paul goes on to say in [verse 8](#), “Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.” These are the virtues of Christ for our experience and the expression of a life that lives Christ as peace.

*Paul Considering Forbearance and the Lack of Anxiety
as the First Two Aspects
of the Expression of a Life That Lives Christ*

Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ. When others are worrying, we should not say, “Don’t worry. Everything will turn out okay.” Those who are worried need to enjoy the Lord. Only the enjoyment of the Lord can give us peace.

Anxiety, Coming from Satan, Being the Sum Total of Human Life

*and Disturbing the Believers' Life of Living Christ;
Forbearance, Coming from God, Being the Sum Total of a Life
That Lives Christ; the Two Being Opposites*

Anxiety, coming from Satan, is the sum total of human life and disturbs the believers' life of living Christ; forbearance, coming from God, is the sum total of a life that lives Christ; the two are opposites. When we are anxious, we need to remember that anxiety does not come from God but from Satan. However, we can turn our anxiety into forbearance by conferring with the Lord in everything, talking to Him in everything, and having constant conversations with Him.

Once when I was young believer, I was seemingly having many problems, and I went for a long walk to talk to the Lord. I felt that I was ready to "retire" from the church life. I asked the Lord about many things [290] that I felt were problems. While I was complaining to Him, I was calling on His name. I said, "Lord Jesus, I cannot handle this" and "Lord Jesus, this is too much pressure." I went on talking to the Lord for a long time, until I eventually said, "Lord, there is only one problem—I still love You." Eventually, I got through by conferring with the Lord.

***"Let Your Forbearance Be Known to All Men.
The Lord Is Near"***

"Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near" (Phil. 4:5). Footnote 3 on this verse says, "Near in space and time. With respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help. With regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon." He is near because He lives in us.

*Forbearance Being Reasonableness, Considerateness,
and Consideration in Dealing with Others,
without Being Strict in Claiming One's Legal Rights;
Forbearance Meaning That We Are Easily Satisfied,
Even with Less Than Our Due*

Forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one's legal rights; forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due. Seeing brothers like this deeply touches me and convicts me. They are easily satisfied, even with less than their due; this is because they are

enjoying Christ so much. I traveled with another brother to visit Russia for the work, and we stayed in two bedrooms that were separated by a wall. This brother knows how to enjoy Christ in every kind of environment. The first night I did not sleep well because of jet lag. Then around six o'clock in the morning, I heard a voice singing to me through the wall, "Jesus Lord, You're our first love." In response, I sang, "You're the One we love the best." We continued singing back and forth to each other. That brother helped me to be satisfied with Christ in that situation.

*According to Christian Experience, Forbearance
Being All-inclusive, For It Includes All Christian Virtues*

***Forbearance Including Love, Patience, Kindness, Humility, Compassion,
Considerateness, and Submissiveness, a Willingness to Yield;
If We Have Such an All-inclusive Virtue,
Our Also Having Righteousness and Holiness***

According to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive, for [291] it includes all Christian virtues. Forbearance includes love, patience, kindness, humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield; if we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.

***Forbearance Also Including Self-control, Moderation,
Gentleness, Understanding, Sympathy, Wisdom, Mercy, Peacefulness,
Looking to the Lord, and Even the Virtue of Admitting
That the Lord Is Sovereign in All Things***

Forbearance also includes self-control, moderation, gentleness, understanding, sympathy, wisdom, mercy, peacefulness, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things. The concluding seven messages of the *Life-study of Philippians* form a group entitled "A Life Full of Forbearance but without Anxiety." In Message 60 Brother Lee has a section entitled "God's Assignment":

If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God. We need to have this realization with a full assurance. Suppose a brother is in business as a merchant. His business may prosper, and he may earn a good deal of money. Later his business may

fail and he may lose much more than he earned. Both earning money and losing it are God's assignment to him. If this brother has the full assurance that his circumstances come from God's assignment, he will be able to worship the Lord for His arrangement. Perhaps losing money will benefit him more than earning money, for through such a loss he may be perfected and built up.

Likewise, both illness and good health come from God as His assignment. We should all aspire to be healthy. But sometimes good health does not perfect us as much as a period of illness. Furthermore, when our health fails, we may be more inclined to pray than when we are in good health.

The first prerequisite to having no anxiety is to have the full assurance that all the sufferings we experience are God's assignment. What need is there to worry about things? God has assigned them to us. He knows what we need. (p. 531) [292]

God has assigned our sufferings to us, but He has not assigned anxiety to us. Anxiety comes from Satan. Peace is Christ as our peace offering.

Brother Lee continues,

When I was very young, I read a story about a conversation between two sparrows who were talking about the sorrows and the worries common among human beings. One sparrow asked the other why people worry so much. The other sparrow answered, "I don't think they have a Father who cares for them like we do. We don't need to worry about anything because our Father takes care of us." Yes, our Father does care for us. But sometimes He sends us hardships and sufferings to serve in fulfilling our destiny to magnify Christ. We can be freed from worry, not because God has promised us a life without suffering but because we know that all our circumstances come to us as God's assignment. Paul did not care about life or death. He cared only that Christ would be magnified in him. He realized that every circumstance was for his good. This is the way to have no anxiety.

Why do certain saints worry about losing money? Simply because their desire is to have more money. Why are others anxious about their health? They are anxious because they are afraid to die. If we are ill, we need to declare, "Satan, what can you do to me? I am not worried about death. Death does not make

me anxious. Rather, the possibility of dying gives me another opportunity to magnify Christ.” Instead of fearing poverty, illness, or death, we should welcome them if God sends them to us. Then we shall have no anxiety, for we shall know that every circumstance is an assignment from our Father. This does not mean, however, that we should seek suffering for its own sake. We should not do things that will cause us to suffer. Those who are in business should seek to make money, and those who are employees should try to get a promotion. But if we lose money or even lose our job, we need not be anxious. Such a loss comes from God’s assignment, and we need not be anxious about it. (pp. 531-532)

[Philippians 4:6](#) says, “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known [293] to God.” Later in the same series of messages, Brother Lee speaks concerning this verse:

It is significant that in [4:6](#) Paul does not speak of prayer, petition, *and* thanksgiving, but of prayer and petition *with* thanksgiving. Both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord. Recently I once again learned the lesson of being thankful to the Lord. When I asked the Lord to restore my health, I was rebuked by Him for not thanking Him for the measure of health I still had. Whenever we are ill, we need to say, “Lord, I thank You that I am still healthy to a certain degree. Lord, I am ill, but I am not so ill that I cannot minister Christ to the saints. But, Lord, You know that I am not altogether healthy. Therefore, I ask You to improve my health and make me fully healthy again.” We all need to learn to petition the Lord in this way.

Suppose a brother prays that the Lord will change his wife. If he prays in this way, the Lord may ask him why he does not offer thanks for his wife. Then the brother should pray, “Lord, I thank You for giving me a good wife.” After offering thanks to the Lord, he then may proceed to ask Him to transform his wife.

Another brother may lose his job and pray to the Lord concerning employment. Instead of saying, “Lord, I have lost my job and I need You to have mercy on me,” he should first thank the Lord. Perhaps he should say, “Lord, I thank You that I did not lose this job before now. Lord, I also thank You for the means I

still have to support my family. O Lord, I have many things for which to thank You.” Then along with his thanksgiving, he may ask the Lord to give him another job. But even as he prays concerning a new job, he should still be thankful and say, “Lord, I believe that You will give me a new job. Lord, You know what I need. I even thank You ahead of time for the job You will give me.”

Let us all learn to pray and petition with thanksgiving. If we are thankful to the Lord, this will keep us from anxiety. But if we pray to the Lord out of worry, our anxiety will increase. Praying about our situation may actually cause our [294] anxiety to grow. But if we pray and petition with thanksgiving, our anxiety will be driven away. (pp. 544-545)

We need to pray and petition with thanksgiving. As Brother Lee continues, he testifies to this out of his own experience:

I must testify that I have learned to pray and petition with thanksgiving not from doctrine, but from my experience with the Lord. When I was ill recently, the Lord did rebuke me for not thanking Him. He reminded me that I am still healthy enough to function by releasing the Word. He rebuked me for allowing a little illness to disturb me and for complaining about my situation instead of exercising forbearance. By rebuking me for not thanking Him sufficiently, the Lord helped me to be satisfied in Him and not to be anxious. I thank the Lord for this training, which has come through a time of illness and through the Lord’s rebuke. (p. 545)

In the following section entitled “Accepting the Lord’s Will,” Brother Lee speaks concerning our experiencing the Lord’s sufficient grace even when He does not answer our prayer and petition:

We have seen that to overcome anxiety we need to pray and have fellowship with the Lord and worship Him. Then with thanksgiving we need to make our petitions known. When we do this, we may think that the Lord will always answer us and give us what we ask. However, sometimes the Lord will say no. Consider Paul’s experience of the thorn in the flesh. In [2 Corinthians 12:8](#) he says, “Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” However, the Lord denied Paul’s request, and said to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness” (v. 9) Therefore,

Paul could declare, “Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.” The crucial point here is that Paul accepted the will of God. He realized that God’s will was to leave the thorn with him so that he could experience His sufficient grace. Because Paul accepted the Lord’s will, he did not have any anxiety.

Yes, we need to pray and petition the Lord with thanksgiving. But when the Lord does not grant our petition, our anxiety may increase instead of decrease. At such a time, we [295] realize that the Lord will not change our situation. Instead, He allows the “thorn” to remain. He knows that we need the thorn. He also needs it that He may reveal His sufficient grace and in addition train us to trust in Him. If we do not accept the Lord’s will but insist on making petitions according to our own will, we shall not be able to escape anxiety.

Suppose you pray to the Lord when you are suffering from a certain illness. The Lord may answer your prayer and heal you. He does this especially on behalf of those who are rather young in their experience of Him. At a later time, however, you may again become sick and ask the Lord to heal you. Instead of healing you suddenly, He may heal you gradually, or He may not heal you at all. Eventually, it may become clear to you that the Lord intends for the illness to remain. If you accept His will in the matter, you will be at peace. You will not have any anxiety.

When Brother Nee was a young man, he suffered from heart disease. Often when he ministered the Word he was in such pain that he had to lean on a stand for support. Although he contracted this disease before he was thirty years of age, he lived with that illness for nearly forty years. Although he knew that he could die from that disease at any time, he accepted the Lord’s will and was not anxious. He realized that his illness was a thorn given him for the fulfillment of God’s purpose. (pp. 545-546)

*A Forbearing Person Being One Who Always Fits In,
Whose Behavior Is Always Suitable*

A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable (cf. [2 Cor. 6:1a](#); [10:1](#); [Phil. 1:19](#); [Isa. 11:2](#)). We need to remember that we have an all-fitting life. I often tell the full-time trainees that when

they return to their locality, they have a life that fits into that locality. They should always honor the eldership in their locality. When they return, they should not say that the church in their locality needs to do things in this or that way, nor should they point out how they did things differently in the training. Instead, they should always honor the leading brothers and fit in with the church in their locality. Our life does not fit in and cannot fit in, but the life that lives Christ fits in any situation and can work in any kind of environment and circumstance. [296]

*If We Are Forbearing, Our Having the Wisdom
and the Ability to Supply Others with What They Need;
Our Also Having the Full Knowledge
of What to Say to Them and When to Say It*

If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need; we shall also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it (50:4-5; Col. 1:28). Isaiah 50:4-5, a description of the Lord's human living, says, "The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back." First, the Lord had the tongue of an instructed one, the tongue of a disciple, so that He could sustain the weary with a word. The reason He had this kind of tongue was that the Father woke Him morning by morning. Before we fall asleep at night, in addition to setting our alarm, we should pray, "Lord, wake me up tomorrow morning. I want to be woken up by You." If we do this, we might wake up before the alarm goes off so that we can hear the Lord. We need to hear as an instructed one, as a disciple, so that we would have a word in season for those who are weary. A brother recently gave a short testimony that had much weight and greatly supplied me even though he spoke only a few sentences. He had the tongue of an instructed one to sustain me and others as the weary ones.

*To Be Forbearing Being to Consider
How Others Will Be Affected by What We Do or Say*

To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say (2 Chron. 1:10). When Brother Lee was a young man, he frequently prayed the words of 2 Chronicles 1:10. He testifies, "The Lord

raised up a church in my hometown when I was young. A year later the Lord led me to leave my job, and after that, He took me to Shanghai. At that time, I prayed that the Lord would give me wisdom to know how to go out and come in among His people (cf. [2 Chron. 1:9-10](#)). I prayed this for at least two or three years” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 2, p. 131). This was Solomon’s prayer when he was a young man. [Verse 7](#) says, “God appeared to Solomon and said to him, Ask what I should give you.” Solomon replied, “Give me wisdom [\[297\]](#) and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?” ([v. 10](#)).

Solomon prayed for wisdom and knowledge. In [Colossians 2:2-3](#) Paul speaks of “Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.” Therefore, we need to pray, “Lord, be my wisdom and my knowledge so that I can consider how others will be affected by what I do and what I say.” Whatever we say can have an effect on others that we did not intend. Thus, we need the Lord as our wisdom in contacting others.

In [1 Timothy 5:1-2](#) Paul told Timothy how he should contact the elderly brothers, the elderly sisters, the younger brothers, and the younger sisters in all purity. Contacting others in all purity means that our only motive in contacting them is to minister Christ to them so that they might grow in the Lord. Often, when we contact an elderly brother, we should simply listen. Sometimes, our listening to others can be a great supply to them. When Job’s friends listened to him, they were a comfort to him ([Job 2:11, 13](#)). However, as soon as they began to speak, they became an “un-vital group,” because they expressed many opinions.

*As an All-inclusive Virtue,
Forbearance Being Christ Himself;
Since Christ Is Forbearance,
for Paul to Live Being Forbearance*

As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself; since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance ([Phil. 1:21a](#)). To let our forbearance be known to all men is to let the Christ whom we live and magnify, whom we take as our pattern and pursue as our goal, be known to all men. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today. To make known our forbearance is to live a life that expresses Christ as the totality of all human virtues.

*Immediately after Speaking about Forbearance,
Paul Saying That the Lord Is Near*

Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul says that the Lord is near. With respect to space, the Lord is near us, ready to help; with regard to time, the Lord is at hand, coming soon (cf. [Rom. 10:8-13](#)). The Lord's being near refers primarily to His presence with us ([Matt. 1:23](#)). [298] The Lord's name is Emmanuel, which means "God with us." His presence is with us.

***“In Nothing Be Anxious, but in Everything,
by Prayer and Petition with Thanksgiving,
Let Your Requests Be Made Known to God;
and the Peace of God, Which Surpasses
Every Man’s Understanding, Will Guard Your Hearts
and Your Thoughts in Christ Jesus”***

*The Words in Everything Referring
to the Many Different Things
That Happen to Us Day by Day*

“In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)). The words *in everything* refer to the many different things that happen to us day by day. For example, we might misplace our watch. Instead of being anxious and constantly thinking about where our watch is, we should pray, “Lord, You know where my watch is. Where's my watch, Lord Jesus?” The Lord might not answer this prayer right away, but by calling on His name, we are being mingled with Him, and He is being dispensed into us. It is better to talk to Him about such things than to continually worry about them.

There is a message in *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee* entitled “Tell Him” (vol. 18, pp. 327-331), which has been published as a booklet. Brother Nee's burden is that we need to tell the Lord everything. We need to tell Him our anxieties, sorrows, and worries. We should speak to Him. In [Numbers 20:8](#) Jehovah said to Moses, “Speak to the rock...so that it

yields its water.” If we speak to Christ, whom the rock typifies, waters will flow in our being. We should talk to the Lord not only when we are miserable but also when we are happy. We can say, “Lord, I am so happy!” Brother Nee recounts a story about C. H. Spurgeon, who was a great evangelist in nineteenth-century England:

Mr. Charles Spurgeon once went with a friend to the countryside for a horseback ride after he became exhausted from his preaching. At one point he was elated, jumped off his horse, and invited his friend to do the same. His friend [299] was surprised at his move and asked him what he was going to do. He said, “Since God has given us such joy, let us thank Him at this very minute.” The two of them knelt down by the road and prayed. (p. 330)

There is much to thank the Lord for.

*Prayer Being General,
Having Worship and Fellowship as Its Essence;
Petition Being Special, Being for Particular Needs;
Both Our Prayer and Our Petition Needing to Be Accompanied
by Our Giving Thanks to the Lord*

Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence; petition is special, being for particular needs; both our prayer and our petition should be accompanied by our giving thanks to the Lord. We need to remember to give thanks to the Lord. As we pray with petition and confer with the Lord in everything, we should give thanks to Him. We need to give thanks to Him about everything. We can start with the things that are easy to thank Him for. For example, we can thank Him for the day, praying, “Lord, thank You that I am alive. Thank You for a new day to enjoy You.” Then we will be able to give thanks at all times for all things.

Once, a brother and I traveled to the Dominican Republic together, and our luggage was lost for a few days. It was very hot and muggy there, and we were sharing messages in a place that did not have air conditioning. The only clothes we had were those that we were wearing. I said, “I wish they would find our luggage.” The brother replied to me, “Brother, remember, give thanks at all times for all things.” I answered, “You are right, brother. O Lord, thank You. Thank You for our clothes. I know that You know where they are.” The Lord was merciful to us—I was able to purchase a shirt, and we eventually recovered our luggage.

*To God Denoting Motion Toward, in the Sense
of a Living Union and Communion, Implying Fellowship;
Hence, the Sense of to God Here
Being “in the Fellowship with God”*

To God denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship; hence, the sense of *to God* here is “in the fellowship with God.” When we make a move toward God, Christ as the peace of God will move into us. [300]

*The God of Peace Patrolling before Our Hearts
and Thoughts in Christ, Keeping Us Calm and Tranquil;
a Proper Christian Life Being a Life of Calm,
Tranquility, Peace, and Quiet;
the First Aspect of a Life That Lives Christ Being Tranquility—
without Rivalry, Vainglory, Murmurings, or Reasonings
and without Debate, Arguing, or Fighting with Others*

The God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil; a proper Christian life is a life of calm, tranquility, peace, and quiet (1 Tim. 2:1-2; Isa. 30:15a); the first aspect of a life that lives Christ is tranquility—without rivalry, vainglory, murmurings, or reasonings and without debate, arguing, or fighting with others. In 1 Timothy 2:1-2 the Lord says through Paul, “I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; on behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity.”

In Isaiah 30:15 the Lord said to the children of Israel, “In returning and rest you will be saved; / In quietness and in trust will be your strength; / But you were not willing.” Sometimes we need to return to the Lord. We should pray, “Lord, I want to return to You. I repent and return to You with my whole being. I take You as my Sabbath rest. I take You as my salvation.” We can also pray, “Lord, be my quietness. Even though there is much turmoil going on around me, be my inner quietness. Be my trust in the Father.” If we do this, in quietness and trust will be our strength. We should also pray, “Lord, be my strength.” The children of Israel were not willing to do this, but we need to be willing to take Christ in this way.

Let Your Forbearance Be Known
Being Parallel to *Let Your Requests Be Made Known*

Let your forbearance be known is parallel to *let your requests be made known* (Phil. 4:5-6). Our anxiety can be turned into forbearance by bringing every need, every request, to God, and by conversing with Him; we should just tell Him what we need; that is, if we have any worry or anxiety, we should just tell Him. Our letting Him know is our motion toward Him; then His response is His dispensing, His mingling Himself with us, even before He answers our request; the practical [301] mingling of divinity with humanity is carried out by the traffic described in [verse 6](#).

*If We Would Have a Life Free of Anxiety,
Our Needing to Realize That All Our Circumstances,
Good or Bad, Have Been Assigned to Us
by God in Order to Serve Us in Fulfilling Our Destiny
to Gain Christ, Live Christ, and Magnify Christ*

If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God in order to serve us in fulfilling our destiny to gain Christ, live Christ, and magnify Christ (Rom. 8:28-29; Matt. 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 4:16-18). Our destiny is to gain Christ, to live Christ, and to magnify Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem. We want to fulfill this destiny.

[Romans 8:28-29](#) says, “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” The good for which all things work together in [verse 28](#) is revealed in [verse 29](#), which is our being conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God. Hence, all persons, matters, situations, environments, and conditions work together so that the Lord has a way to work Himself into us to transform us and conform us to the image of the firstborn Son of God. He uses all things to do this.

[Romans 5](#) may be entitled “In Adam”; [chapter 6](#), “In Christ”; [chapter 7](#), “In the Flesh”; and [chapter 8](#), “In the Spirit.” The experience of being in Adam ([ch. 5](#)) is to be in the flesh ([ch. 7](#)), and the experience of being in

Christ (ch. 6) is to experience the law of the Spirit of life in the Spirit (ch. 8). **Romans 6** speaks of baptism (vv. 3-4), but the experience of baptism is found in **Romans 8** as an “all-things baptism” (v. 28). God uses all persons, matters, environments, and situations to “sink us under the water” and to “sink” us into our spirit by making us desperate to contact Him so that He becomes real to us. The more real and genuine we are with Him, the more real He becomes to us.

Second Corinthians 4:16-18 says, “We do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, because we do not [302] regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” We should regard not the seen things but the unseen, precious, invisible Christ of glory.

**OUR NEEDING TO LEARN THE SECRET
OF HOW TO HAVE THE VITAL-GROUP CHURCH LIFE
AS A HOUSE OF FEASTING—A FEAST OF CHRIST
AS THE PEACE OFFERING—WHERE HE AND HIS LOVERS
CAN HAVE REST AND SATISFACTION**

We need to learn the secret of how to have the vital-group church life as a house of feasting—a feast of Christ as the peace offering—where He and His lovers can have rest and satisfaction (**John 12:1-3**). **John 3 through 11** reveals life, *zoe*, which is Christ as the eternal life of God meeting the need of every man’s case. The issue of Christ as life meeting the need of every man’s case is a house of feasting in **John 12. Verses 1 through 3** say,

Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Therefore they made Him a supper there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of the ones reclining at table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

Our homes should be filled with the fragrance of our loving the Lord Jesus with our whole being.

This Church Life Being Produced by the Resurrection Life

This church life is produced by the resurrection life (11:43-44). Just before the miniature of the church life depicted in 12:1-3, the Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead.

This Church Life Being Composed of Cleansed Sinners

This church life is composed of cleansed sinners (Mark 14:3). The house was that of Simon the leper, a cleansed sinner.

This Church Life Being Outwardly Poor and Afflicted

This church life is outwardly poor and afflicted (John 12:1; 16:33). *Bethany* means “house of affliction.” [303]

This Church Life Being a Life of Feasting in and with the Presence of the Lord

This church life is a life of feasting in and with the presence of the Lord (12:2; Acts 3:20a).

This Church Life Having More Sisters Than Brothers

This church life has more sisters than brothers (John 12:2-3).

In This Church Life There Being the Functions of Martha (Diligently Serving the Lord), Lazarus (Testifying of the Resurrection Life), and Mary (Pouring Out Her Absolute Love on the Lord)

In this church life there are the functions of Martha (diligently serving the Lord), Lazarus (testifying of the resurrection life), and Mary (pouring out her absolute love on the Lord) (vv. 2-3, 9-11). Soon after the Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, “the chief priests took counsel to kill Lazarus also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed into Jesus” (vv. 10-11). Many believed into Jesus simply because they saw

Lazarus. We might think, “I am a Martha—I only serve practically”; or, “I am a Lazarus—I need only to sit in my vital-group meeting. I do not have to say anything, and others will be saved by my testimony”; or we might say, “I am a Mary—I simply sit at the Lord’s feet, listen to His word, and love Him. I do not have to serve practically like Martha or be in resurrection like Lazarus.” However, it is not adequate for us to be like only one of these three. Instead, our name should be “Martha-Lazarus-Mary.” In other words, we need to be those who serve the Lord practically, live in resurrection, and love the Lord absolutely.

**OUR ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AS OUR PEACE OFFERING
IN OUR DAILY LIFE AND IN THE CHURCH LIFE
CONSUMMATING IN THE NEW JERUSALEM
AS THE ULTIMATE PEACE OFFERING**

Our enjoyment of Christ as our peace offering in our daily life and in the church life consummates in the New Jerusalem as the ultimate peace offering ([Rev. 21:2](#)). [Revelation 21:2](#) says, “I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” We need to remember that the New [\[304\]](#) Jerusalem is a person—the bride of Christ, and we are becoming the New Jerusalem. We are being prepared to be His bride.

***Jerusalem* Meaning “the Foundation of Peace”**

Jerusalem means “the foundation of peace.”

**The New Jerusalem Being the Triune God
to Be Our Peace, to Be Our Safety**

The New Jerusalem is the Triune God to be our peace, to be our safety.

The Whole New Jerusalem Being an Entity of Peace

The whole New Jerusalem will be an entity of peace. In other words, the New Jerusalem will be the ultimate peace offering.—E. M.

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