

WEEK 6 — OUTLINE

Keeping Ourselves in the One Flow of the Lord's Work for the Spreading of the Church, and Receiving the Lord's Mercy to Be Saved from Satan's Schemes

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8; 5:20; 6:4, 7; 9:31; 12:24; 19:20

« DAY 1 »

I. The flowing of the divine life, which started on the day of Pentecost and has been flowing throughout all generations to this day, is just one stream for God's goal to build up the church for His corporate expression (Matt. 16:18; cf. Ezek. 47:1-12):

- A. *When we give the Lord the preeminence in our entire being, making Him our first love, He becomes the divine stream to us, flowing within us and out of us as the first works; the first works are works that are motivated by, issue from, and express the Lord as our first love (John 4:14b; Rev. 22:1; 2:4-5).*
- B. *Only works that are motivated by the first love are gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. 2:9; 3:12).*

« DAY 2 »

II. The basic principle of the church is that it is eternal and universal, so the church must constantly spread on the earth; the growth of the church and the building up of

the church are based on spreading (Acts 1:8; 8:1; 9:31):

- A. *The spreading of the church is brought about by the growth in the Lord's life and the flowing out of the Lord's life, the overflow of life (Eph. 4:16; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:42, 46-47; 5:20; 6:4, 7; 12:24; 19:20).*
- B. *When the church begins to spread, erroneous concepts are shattered, regardless of whether the concepts are regional, racial, or mutually discriminatory; it is through spreading that all our close-mindedness is eliminated (cf. 1 Cor. 12:24; Col. 3:10-11).*
- C. *Acts 8 shows that the first step in the church's spread was to Samaria (vv. 1-25), and the second step was to Ethiopia, to Africa (vv. 26-39); this shows that we must preach the gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, because the church is universal and needs to spread (Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9).*

<< DAY 3 >>

- D. *Acts 9 shows God's choosing of Saul (later Paul), which is against the human concept; our narrow, erroneous human concept needs to be broken and shattered through the spreading of the church; we must believe that a person can be persecuting the church one hour and preaching the gospel the next hour (vv. 10-22).*
- E. *Acts 10 indicates that the Lord's evangelistic move on earth is under His administration on the throne in heaven and that the gospel needs to be spread to the four corners of the inhabited earth to collect all kinds of unclean (sinful) people, cleansing them with the redeeming blood of Christ and washing them with the renewing Holy Spirit (vv. 11-12, 15, 28; cf. Heb. 8:1; Acts*

7:56).

F. Acts 13 reveals that in the church in Antioch, the five prophets and teachers who were ministering to the Lord were composed of Jews and Gentiles, each having a different background, education, and status; this indicates that the church is composed of all races and classes of people regardless of their background and that the spiritual gifts and functions given to the members of the Body are not based on their natural status (v. 1; 4:36; Rom. 16:21; Luke 9:7-9; Acts 22:3):

1. Through these five faithful and seeking members of the Body of Christ, the Lord took a great step to set apart Barnabas and Saul for His work and move to spread the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentile world.
2. It was absolutely a move by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and with the Spirit through the coordination of the faithful and seeking members of the Body of Christ on earth with the Head in the heavens (13:1-4).

G. On the apostle Paul's first trip to spread the gospel, he went to Cyprus and then to Asia Minor to establish many local churches (v. 1–14:28; Rev. 1:4).

H. After Paul separated from Barnabas, he went out on his second ministry journey to Europe (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and returning through Ephesus back to Antioch) (Acts 15:35-40; 16:6–18:22).

I. Paul's third journey was from Antioch to Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, and Greece to Jerusalem (v. 23–21:17).

J. Paul's fourth journey was from Caesarea to Rome (27:1–28:31).

« DAY 4 »

III. We must receive the Lord's mercy to be saved from

Satan's schemes to frustrate the spreading and building up of the church, keeping ourselves in the flow of the age for the building up of His Body (cf. Heb. 4:16; Lam. 3:22-25):

- A. *We must be saved from outward and dead ordinances, human opinions, and the self with its old concepts; whoever receives mercy from the Lord will be saved in these matters; the degree to which we are saved is the degree to which the church can be built up (Rom. 5:10; Phil. 1:19-21a; 2:12-16; Acts 15:1-12; Gal. 2:21; 5:1; 2:4).*
- B. *We must learn from the lesson of Peter to be saved from the veils of our religious traditions and old background so that we may see and live under the vision of God's eternal economy to hold the truth of the gospel (Acts 10:9-16; Gal. 2:11-14).*
- C. *We must learn from the lesson of Barnabas to be saved from human opinions and natural relationships—disputes that arise among the co-workers because of personal relationships are terrible; remember this well (Acts 13:13; 15:35-40; Col. 4:10).*
- D. *We must learn from the lesson of Apollos to be saved from a ministry that lacks a complete revelation of God's New Testament economy and from not being fully one with the ministry of the age (Acts 18:24—19:2; 1 Cor. 1:12; 16:10-12).*
- E. *We must learn from the lesson of Paul in Acts 16:6-12; these verses indicate the problem of workers coming to a place and tending to become set and settled down, not wanting to move; old relationships, old affections, old inclinations, and old concepts keep us from following the inner leading of the indwelling Spirit:*

1. The Holy Spirit forbade Paul and his co-workers, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; the Holy Spirit's forbidding separates us, sanctifies us, and the Spirit of Jesus either allows us or does not allow us.
2. The Holy Spirit says "no" to sanctify us, and the Spirit of Jesus says "go" to send us out in the humanity of Jesus to accomplish the will of God under the cross.

« DAY 5 & DAY 6 »

F. We must learn from the lesson of Paul to practice the Body life and to take the word of the Spirit through the members of the Body, obeying it as a word from the Head (20:23; 21:4, 7-8, 11-14).

G. We must learn from the lesson of the mistake of James and the devastating mixture of the church in Jerusalem (vv. 18-26; Matt. 22:7; 24:1-2):

1. Jeremiah spoke of the law of life that could be written upon our hearts (Jer. 31:31-34), and Paul spoke of the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit (Rom. 8:2, 4, 6), but James treasured and uplifted the law of letters (Acts 21:20).
2. Paul spoke of being crucified with Christ and being conformed to the death of Christ by the power of Christ's resurrection; it is this life that produces the Body life that consummates in the New Jerusalem (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10).
3. In the light of the divine revelation, the greatest lack of James is the cross of Christ; self-cultivation does not carry out God's economy, but self-denial does.
4. James boasted that there were thousands of believing Jews in the church in Jerusalem who were zealous for the law, but Paul was zealous to gain Christ, be found in Christ, know Christ, lay hold of Christ, pursue Christ, and uplift only Christ for the fullest enjoyment of Christ (Acts 21:20; Phil. 3:6-14; Col. 1:18b).

H. We must learn from the lesson of Paul to be saved from the mixing of Judaic practices with God's New Testament economy, which is not only erroneous but also abominable in the eyes of

God (Acts 21:18-27, 31, 36; Heb. 10:29).

I. We must learn from the lesson of Paul's appealing to Caesar, utilizing his Roman citizenship to save himself from his persecutors so that he might fulfill the course of his ministry (Acts 22:25-29; 23:10-11; 25:8-12; 26:32):

1. Paul was willing to sacrifice his life for the Lord, but he still endeavored to live longer that he might carry out the Lord's ministry as much as possible (20:24).
2. God in His sovereignty rescued Paul so that He might separate him from all the dangerous situations and entrapments and sent him to a quiet prison; this was to afford him a quiet environment and give him time, whether in Caesarea (24:27) or in Rome (28:16, 23, 30), so that through his last Epistles he might release exhaustively to the church throughout the generations the revelation of the mystery of God's New Testament economy that he received from the Lord.
3. The benefit and profit that the church throughout the generations has received from these Epistles will take eternity to measure (see Acts 25:11, footnote 1).

IV. All of us should follow the pattern of the apostle Paul to do the same one work universally for the unique Body (1 Cor. 3:12; 15:58; 16:10; Eph. 4:11-16):

A. The work in the Lord's recovery is for the building up of the local churches unto the building up of the universal Body of Christ (2:21-22; 1 Cor. 16:10).

B. Today there are four kinds of workers:

1. The first kind is the co-workers who match the need of the ministry of God in the present age; this is a small group of people who have been dealt with by the Lord and who are in one accord.
2. The second kind is the younger co-workers; they are willing to receive the direction and to come under the coordination of the older co-workers, and they

are willing to follow and to learn in humility.

3. The third kind is those who are unwilling to submit to the senior co-workers, who do not belong to the denominations, yet who are happy to remain in fellowship with us.
 4. The fourth kind is the preachers and free evangelists among the denominations.
- C. What we need today are the first and second kind of co-workers; concerning the third and fourth kind of co-workers, we can only let them choose their own pathway; with some people God has not assigned them to take the same way as we do, and we dare not say anything to them.*
- D. Whatever the situation may be, we are here to do the work that God has committed to us; we cannot interfere with others' work, and we are not here tearing down others' work.*

« WEEK 6 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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

The flowing of the divine life, which started on the day of Pentecost and has been flowing throughout all generations to this very day, is only one stream. Wherever it goes, wherever it flows, it is not many streams; it is only one. Read the book of Acts, and you will see that there is one stream, one current. This stream started from Jerusalem and flowed to Antioch, and from Antioch it turned to Asia and was flowing there. Then one day the Lord wanted the stream to strike forth into Europe, to Macedonia, but the apostle who was working in the flowing of the stream was not clear about it. Eventually, however, he became clear that the flowing was striking forth from Asia to Europe, and he had to go along with it. It is a familiar story. From Macedonia the stream went in its path to Corinth, to Rome, to Spain, and to all parts of Europe. History tells us that from Europe it flowed to the west, to America; and from the west it flowed to the east and to the south. In reading the history of the church we find that this flowing stream has never been stopped, and we notice that everywhere this stream flowed, it was just one....There is only one stream, and you have to keep yourself in this one stream. (CWWL, 1963, vol. 1, "The Divine Stream," pp. 177-178)

Today's Reading

If you read Acts and the Epistles written by the apostle Paul, you will see that quite a number of people at that time, who were preaching the gospel and working for the Lord, were not in the stream....If you study carefully the history

of the church, you will find that throughout the generations there has been one stream of the Holy Spirit flowing all the time. Many have been working for the Lord, but not all have been in the flowing of that one stream. If you will accept the mercy and the grace of the Lord, you will be brought into that very stream that is flowing today.

The flowing of this stream of the Holy Spirit is the fellowship of the Body of Christ. It is similar to the circulation of the blood in our physical bodies. The blood is flowing all the time from one part to another and then back again. In just such a way the stream of the Holy Spirit as the fellowship of the Body is flowing among the saints upon this earth.

Out of the flowing of the stream come the gold, the pearls, and the precious stones. Look at the picture in Genesis 2. These precious substances are for the building of God's dwelling place. Wherever the flowing is, material will be produced for the building of the church. Look at the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God in the Old Testament. On the shoulder pieces and on the breastplate of the high priest were precious stones set in gold. The apostle Paul tells us that the church is built with gold, silver, and precious stones. These are the materials that come out of the flowing of the current of the Holy Spirit. In Revelation we are told that the entire city, the New Jerusalem, is built with gold, with pearls, and with precious stones. How did all these materials come into being? They came simply from the flowing of the current of the divine life. Where the stream of the divine life is, there some material, some precious material, for the building of the church will come into being. You and I can never produce material for the building of the church. Only the flowing of the divine life, the current of the Holy Spirit, can do this. It has been flowing through the generations and is flowing today, and wherever it goes, gold, pearls, and precious stones are produced for God's building. (CWWL, 1963, vol. 1, "The Divine Stream," pp. 178-181)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1963, vol. 1, "The Divine Stream"; Remaining in the Unique New Testament Ministry of God's Economy under the Proper Leadership in His Move, pp. 25-32, 38-40, 49-54; CWWN, vol. 4, pp. 294-295, 298-299

« WEEK 6 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

8:1 ...And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Once the church spreads, problems will disappear. Because of the spreading to the household of Cornelius, the Jews expanded their narrow view. Their narrow view, prejudiced hearts, regional concepts, and things not up to the standard of the Body were eliminated. The church was still not fully formed on the day of Pentecost. After the household of Cornelius was saved, however, it was fully formed.

Because the church is universal, it is also spreading. The most blessed church is the church that spreads the most. If there is a local church that never spreads, it will have more and more problems until it becomes very weak. On the one hand, we must be careful and serious about the spreading of the church, not being loose or careless and using human methods to promote it. We must allow the Lord to work. On the other hand, we must be clear that the church needs to spread, and we must do our best to raise up churches in every place....The basic principle of the church is that it is eternal and universal; the church must constantly spread on the earth. The growth of the church and the building up of the church are based on spreading. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 32-33)

Today's Reading

If a local church does not spread, the nature of that church is too low, and it will lose its universal and eternal character....This spreading is not promoted

by human methods, nor is it worked out by human hands. The spreading of the church is brought about by the growth in the Lord's life....Not long after the church in Jerusalem was raised up, God caused His children to be scattered to various places by persecution.

The spreading of the church can break through many barriers and eliminate many undesirable practices. In many places where the church is raised up, however, the saints may be narrow-minded. This was the case in Jerusalem. They had many Old Testament traditions and teachings that caused them to close themselves off from others....They sealed themselves up and despised other people; moreover, they did not communicate with others.

When the church begins to spread, erroneous concepts are shattered, regardless of whether the concepts are regional, racial, or mutually discriminatory.

It is through spreading that all our close-mindedness is eliminated. The New Testament shows that not long after the church in Jerusalem was raised up, God seemed to throw a huge stone into her midst; it seemed like a big "bomb," scattering the saints by its impact and forcing them to leave Jerusalem. God intervened because the church is neither of the Jews nor of Jerusalem; the church is universal.

Acts 8 shows that the first step in the disciples' scattering—that is, the first place to which they were scattered—was not to Bethlehem but to Samaria (vv. 1-25). Samaria lies between Judea and the Gentile lands, and the Samaritans were a racial mixture of Jews and Gentiles....After the Samaritans were saved, the saints in Jerusalem were very surprised and sent the apostles to visit them. When the apostles came and prayed for the Samaritans, the Holy Spirit immediately descended; thus, God Himself confirmed this spread (vv. 15-17)....From Acts 8 the second step of the church's spread was through Philip's preaching of the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch; thus, the gospel spread to Africa (vv. 26-39). (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 26-28)

Further Reading: Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, ch. 2

« WEEK 6 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 9:20-22 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, that this One is the Son of God. And all who heard him were amazed and said, Is this not the one who ravaged those who call upon this name in Jerusalem and came here for this, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests? But Saul was all the more empowered, and he confounded the Jews dwelling in Damascus by proving that this One is the Christ.

Acts 9 shows God's choosing of Paul, who was called Saul at that time. He did not choose someone who was sympathetic to Christians and a believer in Christ; on the contrary, He chose a person who persecuted Christians and opposed the Lord...and inflicted harm on Christians.

Ananias could not understand why the gospel should be preached to Saul. This is the human concept; therefore, God did something to shatter this concept. Our narrow, erroneous human concept needs to be broken and shattered through the spreading of the church.

We must believe that a person can be persecuting the church one hour and preaching the gospel the next hour. God is able to do this because He wants to spread. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 29-30)

Today's Reading

[Acts 10 indicates] that the Lord's evangelistic move on earth is under His administration on the throne in heaven (cf. Heb. 8:1; Acts 7:56). All the apostles and evangelists were and still are carrying out the heavenly commission on earth for the spreading of the gospel of the kingdom of God. (Acts 10:11, footnote 1)

The gospel [is] spreading to the four corners of the inhabited earth to collect all kinds of unclean (sinful) people (Luke 13:29). (Acts 10:11, footnote 2)

In Matthew 16 the Lord said that He would give the keys of the kingdom of the heavens to Peter (v. 19)...On the day of Pentecost he opened the door for the Jews; however, in the house of Cornelius he opened the door for the Gentiles....At this time the Holy Spirit officially spread the church to the Gentiles and broke down the wall.

The church in Antioch was also part of the story of the church's spreading (Acts 13:1). (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 32-33)

The five prophets and teachers recorded [in Acts 13] were composed of Jews and Gentiles, each having a different background, education, and status. This indicates that the church is composed of all races and classes of people regardless of their background, and that the spiritual gifts and functions given to the members of the Body of Christ are not based on their natural status. (Acts 13:1, footnote 9)

The good situation in Antioch, however, was still not enough, so the Holy Spirit came and sent forth Barnabas and Paul to the work; their goal was the spreading of the church (Acts 13:2-12).

On the apostle Paul's first trip to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to establish churches among them, he went to Cyprus. He did not stay there long before continuing on to Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey. In Asia Minor he established many local churches, which represents a further step in the spread of the church (Acts 13—14).

On his second ministry journey, Paul originally thought that he would work in the region of Asia Minor, but the Holy Spirit gave him a vision and wanted him to go to Macedonia, which is in Europe.

The first church that Paul established in Macedonia was in Philippi (16:12)...After Thessalonica, the apostle Paul went on to Berea (17:10), to Athens (v. 15), and then to Corinth (18:1)...Paul then passed through Ephesus (v. 19) on his way back to Antioch (v. 22). (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 34-36)

Further Reading: Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, ch. 2

<< WEEK 6 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Acts 15:19 Therefore I judge that we do not harass those from the Gentiles who are turning to God.

39-41 And there was a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; and Barnabas, taking Mark along, sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and went out, having been commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers. And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

When the church was spreading, Satan created three problems through various people. These three problems limited the spread of the church.

The first problem encountered in the spread of the church was the limitation and bondage of Judaism (Acts 15:1-34). The believers in Judea were Jews who still kept the traditions of Judaism; they looked at the church from a Jewish viewpoint....The Jews believed that their law, ordinances, and rituals were from God and pertained to piety; therefore, they considered themselves as those best able to keep God's word. Satan used this thought to severely limit the church.

Throughout church history, each time the church has spread, it has been through a group of people whom God empowered to break through religious rituals, ordinances, and dead letters.

On the one hand, we should obey the Bible, walk in its light, and comply with the teachings of the truth....On the other hand, however, we must ask ourselves whether our Bible knowledge and our light of the truth are dead or living. If we have only dead doctrines, this will limit and frustrate the church. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 37-38)

Today's Reading

Acts 15 opens the eyes of the church and allows the church to escape the

bondage of Judaism and the rule of Jerusalem. Thus, the church can spread freely. Satan wanted to use Judaism and Jerusalem to control, limit, prohibit, and restrict the spread of the church. But God wanted to spread to the Gentiles, to the uttermost part of the earth. God wanted the whole earth to have the testimony of His Son. Paul had this vision. In his Epistle to the Ephesians he wrote that God wanted to make both Gentiles and Jews into the Body of Christ (3:6).

After the problem of the Jewish religion was resolved, Paul and Barnabas immediately went out to the Gentile lands to preach the gospel. The problem of outward religion had been solved, but now they encountered an inward, subjective problem—Barnabas and Paul could not be in one accord (Acts 15:35-41). Barnabas wanted to take Mark to visit the brothers, but Paul felt it was not suitable, and an argument arose between them. Their argument was the work of Satan. The spread of the church was greatly damaged because Barnabas and Paul could not be in one accord....When brothers who are co-workers have a difference of opinion, the spread of the church is limited.

The contention between Paul and Barnabas weakened the spread of the church. These two apostles, who had been working together, were now separated; Barnabas took Mark and went west to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas and went north to Syria and Cilicia (vv. 39-41). We must read this portion of the Bible very carefully in order to discover the thought of the Holy Spirit. Paul wanted to stay in Asia Minor where he had labored previously, but the Holy Spirit forbade him to remain there (16:6). Paul considered going to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them (v. 7). For the sake of the spread of the church, the Holy Spirit gave Paul a vision calling him to Europe. After Paul saw the vision, he crossed the sea from Asia Minor to Macedonia (vv. 9-12). Thus, the church spread from Asia Minor to Europe and turned south to the cities of Athens and Corinth (17:15; 18:1). (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 41-43)

Further Reading: Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, ch. 3

« WEEK 6 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 16:6-7 ...Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia,...they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul during the night: A certain man...was standing and entreating him and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

Acts 16:6-12 indicates that even Paul had problems within. The Holy Spirit wanted him to go out to spread the church, but he did not understand the leading of the Holy Spirit. As he vacillated between going forward or going back, a dream came to him in the night telling him to go to Macedonia in Europe (vv. 9-10). This illustrates a common problem among the Lord's workers. Once workers come to a place for a time and settle down, they do not want to move.

If Paul had not been subdued by the Holy Spirit, the church could not have spread to Europe....For the church to spread, the bondage of Jewish religion, human opinions, and the self with its old concepts must be broken. The spread of the church often encounters these three problems. The first problem is outward, the second is between the workers, and the third comes from the self and old human feelings. The church should have spread to Europe much sooner, but these problems delayed its spread. The final problem in the spread of the church is the self. If we stay in our old feelings and relationships, the spread of the church will be delayed indefinitely. To break out of the self, we need a vision. When we break through, the church spreads. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 43-44)

Today's Reading

Paul's old concepts were revealed not only in his second ministry journey but also in his third. When Paul was in Corinth during his third journey, he wrote a

letter to the church in Rome and spoke of his feeling to go to Rome to visit the church there and from there to go to Spain (Rom. 1:15; 15:23-24, 28). This feeling is also mentioned in Acts 19:21. This was the will of the Holy Spirit related to the spread of the church. The Holy Spirit revealed to Paul that he should go west for the spread of the church.

On his third trip Paul went to many of the same places in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece....In principle, Paul did not accomplish much for the spread of the church in his third journey. On his return from his third journey, he decided to pass through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem, and from there he would go to Rome. We must know that this was the will of the Holy Spirit. In Jerusalem he encountered some problems and was seized by the Jews (21:27-30).

In Romans 15 Paul was clear that he should go to Rome and Spain. In Acts 19 Paul said again that he wanted to go to Rome. His feeling was very much related to the spread of the church, because the next step in spreading to Europe—after reaching Macedonia and Greece—was to go to Italy, and specifically to Rome. Then the following step would be to Spain. If the apostle had arrived in Spain, he would have thought that he was at the uttermost part of the earth.

When Paul wrote the book of Romans, he was full of care for Rome, and the Holy Spirit wanted him to go. However, he was held back by the inward entanglement of his fleshly relationship to the Jews. In Romans 9:3 Paul said, “I could wish that I myself were a curse, separated from Christ for my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”...He had not entirely abandoned his Jewish concepts.

If Paul had not been seized at that time, his offering of sacrifices would have confused the Gentile brothers when they heard about it. The line between the Old and New Testament dispensations, between the law and grace, would have been blurred. Therefore, it was certainly wrong for Paul to go back there. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 44-45, 47-49)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1990, vol. 1, “The Spirit,” ch. 12; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 2, “Crystallization-study of the Epistle of James,” chs. 1, 3-4, 6

« WEEK 6 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 20:22-23 ...Behold, I am going bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will meet me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

23:11 But in the night following, the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have solemnly testified to the things concerning Me in Jerusalem, so also you must testify in Rome.

Paul's return to Jerusalem went against five instances of feeling and teaching concerning the matter. First, the Holy Spirit gave him a positive feeling, but he did not obey it. Second, the Holy Spirit gave him a restricting feeling, but again he did not listen. In every move, if we do not feel the flow, there is a problem with what we are doing. Third, Agabus gave him a prophetic warning, but Paul did not listen. Fourth, he went against the feeling of the Body. Fifth, he went against the clear word of the Lord's teaching. The Lord said that if there is persecution in one city, we should leave it and flee to another city (Matt. 10:23). Paul did not need to return to Jerusalem, he did not have any great purpose in going there, and there were sufferings awaiting him there. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, p. 50)

Today's Reading

Paul's original feeling was that he needed to go to Rome. The Holy Spirit confirmed this by revealing to him that he would testify for the Lord in Rome (Acts 23:11). Ultimately, Paul did go to Rome, but not in a way of convenience. He could have gone to Rome in freedom; now he came in a different way....From this time onward, Paul's movements were greatly restricted.

In spite of the inconvenience of his imprisonment, Paul learned a deep lesson and wrote many precious Epistles while in prison....Paul should have gone straight to Rome from Corinth, but the elements of oldness within him and his

attachments to the ordinances became an entanglement to him, causing him to go backward to Jerusalem.

Over the past two thousand years, if the servants of the Lord had always allowed the Holy Spirit to go forward, the church would have matured long ago....If the Holy Spirit has a straight way in us, the spread of the church would not be limited by us in any way. (Three Aspects of the Church, Book 2: The Course of the Church, pp. 51, 53)

Today there are four kinds of workers. The first are the co-workers who match the need of the ministry of God in the present age. This is a small group of people who have been dealt with by the Lord and who are in one accord. The second kind are the younger co-workers. They are willing to receive the direction and to come under the coordination of the older co-workers, and they are willing to follow and to learn in humility. The third kind are those who are unwilling to submit to the senior co-workers, who do not belong to the denominations, yet who are happy to remain in fellowship with us. The fourth kind are the preachers and free evangelists among the denominations. What we need today are the first and the second kind of co-workers.

When a co-worker is in a certain place, he has to cooperate with the local church in that place. The work and the church cannot be separated one from the other. When a co-worker is working in a certain place, he is at the same time one of the local brothers. When the church assigns work to the saints, the co-workers should stand on the same ground as the local brothers and should accept assignments in the same way.

Concerning the third and the fourth kind of co-workers, we can only let them choose their own pathway. With some people, God has not assigned them to take the same way as we do, and we dare not say anything to them....We are here to do the work that God has committed to us. We cannot interfere with others' work, and we are not here tearing down others' work. (Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, vol. 1, pp. 147-148)

Further Reading: Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, vol. 1, ch. 26

WEEK 6 — HYMN

In the stream! in the stream! let us work

Service — In the Stream

909

1. In the stream! in the stream! let us work for the Lord, By His mind, in His way, as re -
vealed in His Word; In the flow of His life let us work with His pow'r For His King-dom and Church in the
time of His hour. (C) In the stream! in the stream! Let us work in the
stream! In the stream! in the stream! We'll work as in the heav'n - ly team!

Chorus

Chords: D, Em, A7, D, A/C#, Bm, D/A, A/E, E7, A/E, E7, A7, D, A, Em, A7, D, G/D, D, D, A7, D/F#, D7, G, Em, D/A, A7, D, G/D, D

2. In the stream! in the stream! let us work with the Lord

In the flow of the Spirit, as taught by His Word;
Never working by self, independent and free,
But in service related in full harmony.

3. In the stream! in the stream! let us work in the Lord,

With the Church, with the saints, in the light of His Word;
Give the Word, life supply to the people in need,
Thus fulfilling God's plan, in His flow we'll proceed.