

WEEK 7 — OUTLINE

Being Fully Reconciled to God and Enlarged in Heart to Represent God Rightly in His Economy

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 6:11-13; 10:8; 12:15; 13:4, 10

<< DAY 1 >>

I. In order to represent God in His economy, we need to be fully reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20):

- A. *The ministry of reconciliation is to bring us back to God fully, thoroughly, completely, and entirely (v. 18):*
1. The ministry of reconciliation is not merely to bring sinners back to God but, even the more, to bring believers absolutely into God (vv. 19-20).
 2. Until we are wholly one with the Lord, being in Him and allowing Him to be in us absolutely, we will need the ministry of reconciliation.

<< DAY 2 >>

B. *Two steps are required for us to be fully reconciled to God (vv. 19-20):*

1. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 it is the world that is reconciled to God, but in verse 20 it is the believers, who have already been reconciled to God and are to be reconciled further to God.
2. The first step of reconciliation is to reconcile sinners to God from sin (v. 19):
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for our sins that they might be forgiven by God (1 Cor. 15:3; Luke 24:46-47; 1 John 2:12).
 - b. This is the objective aspect of Christ's death; in this aspect He bore our sins upon Himself on the cross that they might be judged by God for us (1 Pet. 2:24;

Isa. 53:11-12; Heb. 9:28; Col. 1:22; Rom. 8:3).

3. The second step of reconciliation is to reconcile believers living in the natural life to God from the flesh (2 Cor. 5:20):
 - a. For this purpose Christ died for us—the persons—that we might live to Him in the resurrection life (vv. 14-15).
 - b. Because we are still separated from God and because we are not fully one with God and altogether in harmony with Him, we need the second step of reconciliation.
 - c. The subjective aspect of the death of Christ needs to be applied to our situation and to our natural life (Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:24):
 - (1) In order that we may be reconciled to God in full, the Father exposes our natural life and unveils our real situation to us (1 John 1:5, 7):
 - (a) As a result, we condemn our natural being and apply the cross subjectively, and this application of the death of Christ crucifies our natural life.
 - (b) As our natural man is crossed out, we experience the second step of reconciliation; in this step the veil of our natural man is rent so that we may live in God's presence.
 - (2) Instead of taking place once for all, the second step of reconciliation is continuous.
4. By the two aspects of His death, Christ fully reconciles God's chosen people to God (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19-20).

« DAY 3 »

II. Being fully reconciled to God causes us to be enlarged in our heart (v. 20; 6:11-13):

- A. *How large our heart is depends on the degree of our reconciliation to God.*

- B. Narrowness of heart is a strong indication that we have been reconciled to God only partially and that the percentage of our salvation is quite low (v. 12; Rom. 5:10).*
- C. In order to be strict with ourselves and not with others, we need to be enlarged; those who are constricted are usually narrow as well, and thus they need to have their heart enlarged (2 Cor. 6:12-13).*
- D. Wisdom and largeness of heart are two aspects of one thing; the secret of wisdom is to have a large heart (1 Kings 4:20, 29).*

« **DAY 4** »

III. When we have been fully reconciled to God and have been enlarged in heart, we can represent God rightly in His economy (2 Cor. 5:20; 10:8; 12:15; 13:4, 10):

- A. Because the apostle Paul had been fully reconciled to God and enlarged in heart, he was qualified to be an ambassador of Christ, representing God (5:20):*
1. An ambassador of Christ is one who represents God, the highest authority in the universe:
 - a. God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ (Matt. 28:18).
 - b. Jesus is the Christ—the Lord of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords—the highest authority (Acts 2:36; 10:36; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
 - c. The Lord needs some ambassadors on earth who are qualified to represent Him (Matt. 28:19).
 - d. A new covenant minister is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to represent the highest authority (2 Cor. 3:6; 5:20):
- (1) The apostles were commissioned to represent Christ to accomplish God's purpose (Matt. 10:40; John 13:20; Gal. 4:14b).

(2) All the members of the Body are representatives of the Head, His ambassadors (Acts 9:6, 10-17; 22:12-16).

« DAY 5 »

2. As an ambassador of Christ, Paul was “the acting God” (2 Cor. 1:3-4, 12, 15-16; 2:10; 10:1; 11:2):
 - a. Paul was one with Christ to be the acting God in comforting the believers (1:3-4).
 - b. Paul conducted himself in the singleness of God, for he was an imitator of the simple God, and he lived God (v. 12).
 - c. Paul’s coming to the Corinthians was the coming of God as grace (vv. 15-16).
 - d. Paul forgave a particular matter in the person of Christ (2:10).
 - e. Paul entreated the believers through the meekness and gentleness of Christ (10:1).
 - f. Paul was jealous over the saints with the jealousy of God (11:2).

B. We need to learn a serious lesson from the one time that Moses failed to represent God (Num. 20:2-13):

1. In striking the rock twice and in calling the people rebels, Moses did not sanctify God in the sight of the people of Israel (vv. 10-12):
 - a. To sanctify God is to make Him holy, that is, separate from the false gods; to fail to sanctify God is to make Him common (v. 12).
 - b. In being angry with the people and in wrongly striking the rock twice, Moses failed to sanctify God (vv. 10-11).
 - c. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses failed to represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God’s word in His economy (vv. 10-12).
 - d. Moses offended both God’s holy nature and His divine economy; he condemned the people as rebels, but he was the one who rebelled against God’s word (vv.

10, 24; 27:14).

2. In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy.
3. If we do not sanctify God in our attitude and actions, we rebel against Him and offend Him.

« DAY 6 »

C. A person who represents God rightly must have the following qualifications:

1. He must submit to authority (Matt. 8:8-9).
2. He must realize that in himself he has no authority (28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10).
3. He must know God and God's will (Eph. 1:9; 5:17).
4. He must be one who denies the self (Matt. 16:24).
5. He must be one with the Lord and live in constant and intimate fellowship with Him (1 Cor. 6:17; 1:9; 1 John 1:3).
6. He must not be subjective and not act according to his own feeling (2 Cor. 3:5).
7. He must be kind and gracious in dealing with others (Luke 6:35; cf. Rom. 5:15-16; 1 Cor. 2:12).
8. He must be a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ (2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14; Num. 17:1-10).
9. He must take a lowly place before God (14:5; 16:3-4, 22, 45; Matt. 11:29; Rom. 12:16; Luke 14:7-11; 1 Pet. 5:5-6).
10. He must be able to bear offenses (Exo. 16:7; Num. 14:2, 5, 9, 27; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 4:6-13).
11. He must have a consciousness of his inability and unsuitability (Exo. 3:11; 4:6-7, 10; 2 Cor. 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:10).

12. He must be one who represents God properly (Exo. 32:11-12; 2 Cor. 5:18, 20; Eph. 6:20).

« WEEK 7 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 5:18-20 But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; namely, that God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself, not accounting their offenses to them, and has put in us the word of reconciliation. On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats you through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

It is imperative that an authority represent God properly. Whether in wrath or in compassion, he should be like God all the time. If we are wrong, we should confess that we are wrong; we should never drag God into our mistake. If we do, we will bring judgment upon ourselves....It is a serious thing to drag God into our mistakes. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," p. 254)

Before we were saved, we were enemies of God, and there was no peace between us and God. Instead of peace, we were at enmity with God. But when we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, His blood washed away our sins, and we received God's forgiveness. As a result, we were justified by God and reconciled to Him. Having been reconciled to God in this way, there was no longer enmity between us and God....[However], this understanding of reconciliation...is not the full significance of reconciliation as ministered by the apostle Paul.

The ministry of reconciliation is not merely to bring sinners back to God, but, even the more, to bring believers absolutely into God. Hence, it is not sufficient simply to be brought back to God; we must also be in Him. (Life-study of 2Corinthians, p. 342)

Today's Reading

As genuine believers, we can testify that we are in Him. But are we in Christ in a practical way in our daily living? For example,...when you make a joke, do you have the assurance that you are in Him?...There is no neutral ground: we

are either in Christ or outside of Him. Because we are not always in Christ in a practical way, we need further reconciliation. We need to be reconciled back into Christ.

The biblical understanding of reconciliation includes more than merely being brought back to God. It is to be brought back into Him. Therefore, according to the Bible, to bring others to God means to bring them into God and to make them absolutely one with Him,...mingled with Him....Biblical oneness with God is a oneness in which we enter into God and God enters into us. Therefore, the Lord Jesus said, “Abide in Me and I in you” (John 15:4). He did not say, “Abide with Me and I with you.”

Until we are wholly one with the Lord, being in Him and allowing Him to be in us absolutely, we shall continue to need the ministry of reconciliation, the ministry with which Paul was commissioned. Paul was commissioned with the work of bringing the believers into God in a way that was absolute and practical. Once we see this, we are qualified to understand the last part of 2 Corinthians 5 and the first part of chapter 6....The conjunction “and” at the beginning of 6:1 indicates that chapter 6 is a continuation of the last part of chapter 5.

I urge you not to cling to your old, limited concept of reconciliation....I would encourage you to take in this new, fuller understanding of reconciliation and see that to be reconciled is to be brought into God and that the ministry of reconciliation is the ministry of bringing others into God.

There were many problems among the believers at Corinth. All those problems were signs that those believers were not absolutely in God. In many particular matters they were not in God. Although they had been saved and born of God, they were not living in Him. For this reason, concerning many items in their daily living, they were outside of God. Therefore, Paul was burdened to bring them into God. This is to reconcile them to God. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 343-345)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msgs. 37, 39; Life-study of Exodus, msgs.100-102

« WEEK 7 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 5:14-15 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20...Paul's use of the word ambassadors indicates that the apostles are commissioned with a definite ministry; they represent Christ to accomplish God's purpose.

In verse 19 it is the world that is reconciled to God; in verse 20 it is the believers, who have already been reconciled to God, who need to be reconciled to God further. This clearly indicates that there are two steps for men to be fully reconciled to God. The first step is as sinners to be reconciled to God from sin. For this purpose Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3) that they may be forgiven by God. This is the objective aspect of Christ's death. In this aspect He bore our sins on the cross that they might be judged by God upon Him for us. The second step is as believers living in the natural life to be reconciled to God from the flesh. For this purpose Christ died for us—the persons—that we may live to Him in the resurrection life (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This is the subjective aspect of Christ's death. In this aspect, He was made sin for us so that we might be judged and done away with by God in order that we may become the righteousness of God in Him. By the two aspects of His death, He has fully reconciled God's chosen people to God. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, p. 126)

Today's Reading

These two steps of reconciliation are clearly portrayed by the two veils of the tabernacle. The first veil is called the screen (Exo. 26:37). A sinner was brought to God through the reconciliation of the atoning blood to enter into the Holy Place by passing this screen. This typifies the first step of reconciliation. The second veil (Exo. 26:31-35; Heb. 9:3) still separated him from God who is in the Holy of

Holies. This veil needed to be rent that he might be brought to God in the Holy of Holies. This is the second step of reconciliation. The Corinthian believers had been reconciled to God, having passed through the first veil and having entered into the Holy Place. Yet, they still lived in the flesh. They needed to pass the second veil, which has been rent already (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:20) to enter into the Holy of Holies to live with God in their spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The goal of this Epistle is to bring them here that they may be persons in the spirit (1 Cor. 2:14), in the Holy of Holies. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 126-127)

The second step of reconciliation is much deeper than the first step, for it takes place not in the outer court outside the tabernacle but within the Holy Place inside the tabernacle. Instead of taking place once for all, this kind of reconciliation is continuous. If you consider your experience, you will realize that no matter how long you have been a seeking Christian, you still have the sense deep within that you are separated from God's presence by something, mainly by your natural life, your old man, your self. You may be very good, nice, pious, "holy," and "spiritual," yet you know that there is still something separating you from God's presence. You are not fully one with God, altogether in harmony with Him. Instead, because you are still separated from Him, you need the second step of reconciliation. You need the application of the subjective death of Christ to...your natural life....This application...crucifies your natural life, rending the veil that separates you from God's inner presence.

In order that we may be reconciled to God in full, the Father exposes our natural life and unveils our real situation to us. As a result, we condemn our natural being and apply the cross subjectively. Then as our natural man is crossed out, we experience the second step of reconciliation. In this step the veil of our natural man is rent so that we may live in God's presence. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1586-1587)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msgs. 14, 46; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 146; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs," chs. 10-12

« WEEK 7 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 6:11-13 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged. You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your inward parts. But for a recompense in kind, I speak as to children, you also be enlarged.

If we would be fully reconciled to God, fully saved, we need to be enlarged in our heart. [In 2 Corinthians 6:12-13] Paul appealed to the Corinthians to be enlarged....To be enlarged requires the aspects of the all-fitting life covered in verses 3 through 10. It requires the eighteen items beginning with “in”: in endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in the word of truth, in the power of God. It also requires the three pairs starting with “through”: through the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report. Finally, it requires all the seven pairs beginning with “as”: as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and yet behold we live, as being disciplined and yet not being put to death, as made sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. If we have all these characteristics of the all-fitting life, all the items with “in,” “through,” and “as,” we have truly been enlarged. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 367-368)

Today's Reading

In the past fifty years I have known many dear and precious brothers who were elders and co-workers. A good number of these brothers were very strict and straight. Regarding the Lord's word in Matthew 10:16 to be “prudent as serpents,” these straight ones could not at all be “as serpents.” Neither could they be “as deceivers and yet true” [2 Cor. 6:8]. To be true here means to be straight. The brothers to whom I am referring were not only strict; they were extremely straight. For example, one such brother might say, “Oh, that person shouldn't be in

the church. Cast him out!

How can we possibly accept him? Oh, that sister is awful. She should be condemned.” Many times we tried our best to convince these straight brothers to be more flexible. We might say, “This one is a real brother in the Lord. No doubt, he is wrong in certain things. But we still must embrace him by forgiving him and by giving him an opportunity to improve.” Nevertheless, sometimes a straight brother would respond by saying, “No! That is not the biblical way!” This attitude is a clear indication that those who are strict and straight in this way need to be enlarged.

We need to be straight and strict. However, we should be strict with ourselves, not with others. In order to be strict with ourselves and not with others, we need to be enlarged. Those who are very straight are usually narrow as well. They need to have their hearts enlarged.

When we become enlarged in our heart, we should not become loose. Rather, we should continue to be strict and straight concerning ourselves, but we should not apply this principle to others. If the Lord has done such a work in us, we have been enlarged.

I would ask you to consider once again all the matters covered by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10. If we have all these characteristics and qualifications, we shall have a large heart. We may be outwardly very small, but our heart will be like an ocean. But if we do not have these qualifications, we shall have a very small heart. We may be great in our own eyes, yet our heart may be extremely narrow. For example, our attitude may be that if a certain one makes a mistake, we should have nothing to do with him unless he repents. This is a sign of narrowness. It is also an indication that we are not able to reconcile others to God, for we ourselves have not been fully reconciled to Him. Our narrowness is a strong indication that we have been reconciled to God only partially and that the percentage of our salvation is quite low. How large our heart is depends on the degree of our reconciliation to God. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 368-369)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msgs. 41-42

<< WEEK 7 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Matt. 28:18-19 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Paul and the other ministers of the new covenant, those who had been constituted of the processed Triune God and who were mature in life, were no doubt in the Holy of Holies. They lived in the spirit, and they were ripe, ready to be raptured. Their only goal was to please the Lord by living to Him. Spontaneously, being such persons, they were able to bring others thoroughly back to God....These ministers of the new covenant were qualified to bring back to God anyone who had not been fully reconciled to Him.

As long as we have not been brought back to God fully, we need someone like the apostles to bring us back to Him. It does not matter whether the distance between us and God is great or small. We need to be reconciled to God entirely. The ministry of the new covenant is to bring people back to God in a full and thorough way; it is to reconcile us to God entirely and completely. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, p. 123)

Today's Reading

In both 2 Corinthians 5:20 and Ephesians 6:20 Paul says that he and his co-workers were ambassadors of Christ. An ambassador is one sent by a particular authority to contact certain people. The faithful believers are ambassadors sent by God, the highest authority in the universe. They are one with God, representing God to carry out His purpose in Christ on this earth. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1202-1203)

The apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ. An ambassador is one who represents the highest authority. The United States government has many ambassadors sent out to many different countries. These ambassadors represent the government of the United States. The highest authority in this universe is God, and God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Christ (Matt. 28:18). God has appointed Christ to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14). Today Jesus is the Christ, the Lord of all, the highest authority. For this highest authority there is the need of some ambassadors on this earth who are qualified to represent Him. The Lord's ministry is not a matter of merely being a preacher or a teacher but of being one who is authorized with the heavenly authority, representing the highest authority in the whole universe. First, we need to be captured by Christ, and eventually, we need to become a representative of Christ on this earth to deal with the earthly nations as an ambassador.

Some Christians have the title "Ambassador of Christ" printed on their witnessing card along with their name. Many years ago I had a card that said "Bondslave of Christ—Witness Lee." At that time I did not dare to entitle myself an ambassador of Christ, but now I have a fuller realization that we all have to be ambassadors of Christ on this earth. We are not only the captives of Christ. Eventually, we have to be the ambassadors of Christ representing Him on this earth for His interests. We may think that this is something too great, too big. Maybe some of the sisters would think that they are just the weak vessels. They may wonder how they could be the ambassadors of Christ, representing the highest authority on this earth. Regardless of whether we are a brother or a sister, all of us are members of the Body of Christ. The highest authority is Christ as the Head, and we as members of the Body have to be representatives of the Head. As representatives of the Head, we are ambassadors. We should not consider that we are little or that we are too weak. Being ambassadors is not a matter of whether we are little or weak. Actually, we have to be more weak, even weak in Christ (2 Cor. 13:4). (CWWL, 1967, vol. 2, "An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit," pp. 171-172)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 111; An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit, ch. 6

« WEEK 7 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 1:12 For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God,...in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ.

[In 2 Corinthians 2:10, person literally means] “face” as in 4:6, [referring to] the part around the eyes; the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person. This indicates that the apostle was one who lived and acted in the presence of Christ, according to the index of His whole person, expressed in His eyes....[Paul] wrote this Epistle [of 2 Corinthians] to comfort and encourage the saints in a very personal, tender, and affectionate way, in such a way that this Epistle can be considered to some extent his autobiography. In it we see a person who lived Christ according to what he wrote concerning Him in his first Epistle, in the closest and most intimate contact with Him, acting according to the index of His eyes; a person who was one with Christ, full of Christ, and saturated with Christ; a person who was broken and even terminated in his natural life, softened and flexible in his will, affectionate yet restricted in his emotion, considerate and sober in his mind, and pure and genuine in his spirit toward the believers for their benefit, that they might experience and enjoy Christ as he did for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose in the building up of Christ’s Body. (2 Cor. 2:10, footnote 3)

Today’s Reading

The apostles’ situation of death forced them to be simple, that is, not to base their confidence on themselves or on their natural human ability to work out a solution to their difficult situation. This was the testimony of their conscience and was their confidence (2 Cor. 1:15). (2 Cor. 1:12, footnote 2)

The Bible tells us that Moses was “very meek, more than anyone else who was on the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). A real man of God, Moses fell on his face before God, not saying anything. He had truly learned of God. Nevertheless, such a meek person became angry at the children of Israel. God had told him to take the rod and speak to the rock that it may yield its water. Moses could have gathered the congregation together before the rock and said, “Praise the Lord! He is good and He is gracious. He surely takes care of us. You need water, and He will supply water. We only need to speak to the rock, and the water will flow forth.” How wonderful it would have been if Moses had spoken in this way! However, in his anger Moses said to the people, “You rebels” [Num. 20:10]....Then he struck the rock twice with his rod [v. 11]. It was not necessary for him to strike the rock once, much less twice. The rock had already been struck in Exodus 17, and God did not tell Moses to strike it again. Rather, God told Moses simply to speak to the rock. Although Moses was a faithful servant of God, in Numbers 20 he made a mistake which caused him to lose his right to enter into the promised good land. (Life-study of Numbers, p. 211)

To sanctify God is to make Him holy, that is, separate from all the false gods; to fail to sanctify God is to make Him common. In being angry with the people (Num. 20:10) and in wrongly striking the rock twice (v. 11), Moses failed to sanctify God. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses did not represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God’s word in His economy....Thus, Moses offended both God’s holy nature and His divine economy.

In all that we say and do concerning God’s people, our attitude must be according to God’s holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy. This is to sanctify Him. Otherwise, in our words and deeds we will rebel against Him and offend Him. (Num. 20:12, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Numbers, msg. 29; CWWN, vol. 47, “Authority and Submission,” chs. 13-16

« WEEK 7 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 8:8-9 But the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not fit for You to enter under my roof; but only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it.

God's children must learn to know authority and find out to whom they should submit....As soon as we move to a place, we should not expect to be the master, asking others to submit to us. Instead, we should be like the centurion, who told the Lord Jesus, "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me" (Matt. 8:9). Here was a man who truly knew authority. He could submit to authority; therefore, he was able to be a deputy authority himself. We have said that God upholds and maintains the whole universe with His authority. He also begets His children with His authority (John 1:12) and binds them together with His authority. Therefore, if a man is independent, individualistic, and free from any God-appointed deputy authority, he is an outsider as far as God's administration over the whole universe is concerned. He cannot get along with other children of God, and as such, he cannot accomplish God's work on earth today. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," p. 207)

Today's Reading

An elder must not be an arrogant person. If a person becomes proud as soon as he assumes authority, he is not qualified to be an elder. An elder in a local church should feel as if he has no authority at all. If an elder is always conscious of his authority, he is not qualified to be an elder or to handle the affairs of the church. Only the foolish and the narrow-minded are proud. Such ones cannot stand the temptation of God's glory, and they cannot bear God's commission and assignment. Once such ones are entrusted with something, they fall into a snare. This is why a new convert cannot be an overseer (1 Tim. 3:6).

Authority is of God, and we are merely His deputies. All authority belongs to God....We need to live moment by moment in fellowship with Him....We are merely representatives. Authority does not belong to me; therefore, I cannot be subjective. I must live in fellowship. Once fellowship is cut off, authority is gone. Those who are in authority are placed in an awkward position—they cannot quit and they cannot relax....No one who truly knows God would like to be an authority. To be a deputy authority is a great matter; it is a serious thing.

In order to be a deputy authority, we must fulfill the condition of spirituality as well as the condition of humility. The qualification of an authority is based on one's consciousness of his inability and unsuitability. One thing is sure: None of the persons that God used in the Old and New Testaments were proud....We must be conscious of our unprofitableness all the time, because God can only use the unprofitable slaves. We are not saying this to be polite. We honestly should feel that we are unprofitable slaves....We should always stand in the position of a slave (Luke 17:10). God never entrusts His authority to the self-confident and self-assured. We have to reject pride and learn humility and meekness.

Finally the Lord said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). The Lord did not come to be an authority but to serve. The less ambition a man has and the more he humbles himself before the Lord, the more useful he is in the eyes of the Lord. The more a man thinks highly of himself and the more he thinks he is different from others, the less he is useful in the hand of the Lord....We should not try to seize any fleshly authority with fleshly hands. We should be the servants of all. Then when God commits certain responsibilities to us, we will learn to represent Him. The basis of authority is ministry, and there is ministry only where there is resurrection. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," pp. 299-300, 218-219, 286-287)

Further Reading: Authority and Submission, chs. 12, 17-20

WEEK 7 — HYMN

I've believed the true report

Experience of Christ — Fellowship with Him

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1. I've be - lieved the true re - port, Hal - le - lu - jah to the Lamb! I have
passed the out - er court, O glo - ry be to God! I am
all on Je - sus' side, On the al - tar sanc - ti - fied, To the
world and sin I've died, Hal - le - lu - jah to the Lamb! (C) Hal - le -
lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! I have passed the riv - en veil, Here the glo - ries nev - er fail, Hal - le -
lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! I am liv - ing in the pre - sence of the King.

2. I'm a king and priest to God,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
By the cleansing of the blood,
O glory be to God!
By the Spirit's pow'r and light,
I am living day and night,
In the holiest place so bright,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

3. I have passed the outer veil,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
Which did once God's light conceal,
O glory be to God!
But the blood has brought me in
To God's holiness so clean,
Where there's death to self and sin,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

4. I'm within the holiest pale,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
I have passed the inner veil,
O glory be to God!
I am sanctified to God
By the power of the blood,
Now the Lord is my abode
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

