

Week Eight

Carrying Out the Stewardship of God for the One New Man

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:25; Eph. 3:2, 9; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 9:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:10

Outline

Day 1

- I. **In order to carry out His economy, God must have stewards to serve, minister, manage, and execute His economy—1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10:**
 - A. **The Greek word for steward is of the same root as the word for economy in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Ephesians 1:10:**
 1. It means “a dispensing steward,” “a household administrator, who dispenses the household supply to its members.”
 2. A steward is a dispenser, one who dispenses the divine life supply to God’s children—Luke 12:42; 16:1; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10:
 - a. The apostles were appointed by the Lord to be such stewards.
 - b. The dispensing service, the stewardship, is the ministry of the apostles.
 - B. **In God’s economy revealed in the New Testament, there are mainly two mysteries—Rom. 16:25; Rev. 10:7:**
 1. The first mystery, revealed in the book of Colossians, is Christ as the mystery of God—2:2.
 2. The second mystery, revealed in the book of Ephesians and explained in it, is the church as the mystery of Christ—3:4.

- C. In the dispensing ministry it is most important that stewards be found faithful—1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25; Luke 12:42; Matt. 24:45; 25:21; Luke 16:10-12; 19:17; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:12; Rev. 2:10, 13; 17:14.**

Day 2

II. In the New Testament economy of God, there is the desperate need for the stewardship of God—1 Tim. 1:4; Col. 1:25:

- A. The stewardship is God's divine arrangement to carry out His New Testament economy—Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 9:17.**
- B. The economy of God has become the stewardship of God given to all believers—Eph. 3:2, 9:**
1. In Ephesians 3 Paul uses the Greek word *oikonomia* with two denotations:
 - a. In relation to God, *oikonomia* denotes God's economy—v. 9.
 - b. In relation to us, *oikonomia* denotes the stewardship—v. 2.
 - c. The stewardship of God is according to the economy of God; with God it is a matter of economy, and with us it is a matter of stewardship.
 2. The stewardship of grace is the dispensing of the riches of Christ into our being so that we may grow and become the church—v. 8.
- C. The central point of the whole Bible is the desire of God's heart to dispense Himself into man—Phil. 2:13; Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:17a:**
1. God's economy is to carry out the dispensing of Himself into man—v. 9.
 2. The one new man, who can fulfill God's eternal purpose, receives God's continual and eternal dispensing—2:15; 4:24; 3:17a:
 - a. Like a steady stream, God dispenses Himself little by little into those who are parts of the new man—Rev. 22:1.
 - b. God's continual, steady, and eternal dispensing constitutes us, coordinates us, and builds us up together.

Day 3

D. Paul's stewardship was to complete the word of God in order to dispense Christ with all His riches into the churches—Col. 1:25; 1 Cor. 4:1-2:

1. Although Paul was used in the completion of the divine revelation centuries ago, there is still the need for its completion in a practical way today:
 - a. Satan, the enemy of God, is seeking to nullify the completion of the word of God.
 - b. It is the subtlety of the enemy to veil the word, which was completed through Paul—2 Cor. 4:3-4.
 - c. Without the completion of the word of God, God's purpose cannot be fulfilled, and Christ cannot obtain His bride or come with His kingdom.
2. What we are ministering today is the completion of the divine revelation given to Paul.
3. In the Lord's recovery we need more stewards who are able to complete the word of God—2 Tim. 2:2.

Day 4 & Day 5

III. The stewardship of God is the stewardship of grace—Eph. 3:2:

- A. The stewardship of grace is the economy of grace to carry out God's New Testament economy—v. 2.**
- B. Grace is God Himself in Christ as the Spirit given to us, gained by us, and enjoyed by us—John 1:17; Acts 20:24; Eph. 3:2:**
 1. The grace given to us in Christ was bestowed on us before the world began—2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 2:11.
 2. God, who was in the beginning, became flesh in time as grace for man to receive, possess, and enjoy, making God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, enterable, and enjoyable—John 1:1, 14, 16-17.
 3. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the bountiful supply of the Triune God (who is embodied in the Son and realized as the life-giving Spirit) enjoyed by us through the exercise of our human spirit—Gal. 6:18.

4. Grace is the Divine Trinity transmitted into us for our enjoyment, the manifestation of the Triune God in His embodiment in three aspects—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27; Psa. 36:8-9:
 - a. The grace of the Lord is the Lord Himself as life to us for our enjoyment (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:10), the love of God is God Himself (1 John 4:8, 16) as the source of the grace of the Lord, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself as the transmission of the grace of the Lord with the love of God for our participation—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - b. In 2 Corinthians 13:14 the grace of the Lord is mentioned first because this book is on the grace of Christ—1:12; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 9; 9:8, 14; 12:9.
 - c. The Holy Spirit as the circulation, the transmission, of the grace of Christ with the love of the Father is the supply in our Christian life and church life.
 5. Day by day a marvelous divine transmission should be taking place: God is supplying the Spirit of grace bountifully, and we should be receiving and dispensing the Spirit of grace continually—John 1:16; Heb. 10:29b; Gal. 3:2-5; Eph. 3:2; 4:29.
- C. The gospel of the grace of God is the stewardship of grace to dispense God into people for their enjoyment; Paul, in his ministry, solemnly testified of the gospel of the grace of God to minister God into people—3:1-2; Acts 20:24.**
- D. The Christian living is the living of grace, the experience of grace, so that we may carry out our stewardship of grace, the dispensing of grace—2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 3:2.**
- E. The practical life and building up of the Body of Christ comes forth out of the inward enjoyment of Christ as the grace of God—1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:14.**

Day 6

IV. Those who bear responsibility in the churches need to share in the stewardship of God—Titus 1:7, 9:

- A. The elders should take the lead to dispense the riches of Christ**

into others.

- B. **All those who take the lead in the Lord's recovery and bear the responsibility for the care of the churches need to realize that they have a part in such a divine stewardship.**
- V. **Because Paul, a faithful steward in God's economy, was conscious of the one new man, what was in his heart was not simply a particular local church or a certain saint but the universal one new man—1 Cor. 4:1-2; 9:16-17; Col. 3:10-11; 4:7-17:**
 - A. **"If we are conscious of the one new man, we should no longer think that the churches in our country have nothing to do with the churches in other nations. Instead, we shall realize that all the churches are the one new man today. May we look to the Lord that we may not be sectarian in any way. We would not be sectarian either individually as believers or corporately as local churches. On the contrary, all of us, all the saints in all the churches, are just one new man" (Life-study of Colossians, p. 262).**
 - B. **"We also should rejoice that on earth today there is another man, the new man, that includes all the believers. This new man, who is born through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is now spreading and growing throughout the earth. Praise the Lord that we are part of this new man!" (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," p. 444).**

WEEK 8 – DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 4:1-2 A man should account us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, furthermore, it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful.

God's dispensing is fully something that is in His economy, something in His plan, something in His purpose and arrangement. In order to carry out this dispensing and for the execution of this dispensing, the Triune God selected some with whom He was pleased and whom He could use and made them His dispensers, richly bestowing upon them His grace. Through God's rich grace there was an operation of God's power within these people. These apostles and prophets then fulfilled their ministry according to the operation of God. Under such circumstances the ministry of these ones is called the stewardship. They are the stewards because they are there to execute God's dispensing.

Paul says that he received a special commission, a special grace, and a special operation to transmit the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles chosen by God. This was his stewardship. Hence, the stewardship is God's economy. The execution of God's economy depends on the stewardship. Without the stewardship God has no way to execute His economy. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This means that it is built on the revelation and the vision that they saw. (CWWL, 1990, vol. 3, "A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing," pp. 499-500)

Today's Reading

The subject of 1 Corinthians 4 is stewards of the mysteries of God (4:1-21)...The Greek word rendered "stewards" in verse 1 is of the same root as the word economy or dispensation in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Ephesians 1:10. It means a dispensing steward, a household administrator, one who dispenses the household supply to its members. The apostles were

appointed by the Lord to be such stewards....The dispensing service, the stewardship, is the ministry of the apostles.

In God's economy revealed in the New Testament there are mainly two mysteries. The first mystery, revealed in the book of Colossians, is Christ as the mystery of God. In Colossians 2:2 Paul speaks of the "full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ." Christ is God's mystery. In Himself God is a mystery. He is real, living, and almighty; however, He is invisible. Because no one has ever seen God, He is a mystery. This mysterious God is embodied in Christ. Hence, Christ is the mystery of God. Christ is not only God, but He is God embodied, God defined, God explained, and God expressed. Therefore, Christ is God made visible. The Lord Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

The second mystery, revealed in the book of Ephesians and explained in it, especially in chapter 3, is the mystery of Christ. Christ also is a mystery. In Ephesians 3:4 Paul uses the expression "the mystery of Christ." Furthermore, Colossians 1:27 says, "To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" As believers, we have Christ dwelling in us. But this Christ whom we have is a mystery. Although Christ lives in us, worldly people do not realize that He is in us. To them, this is a mystery.... As the Body of Christ, the church is the expression of Christ. When we see the church, we see Christ. When we come into the church, we come into Christ. When we contact the church, we contact Christ. The church is truly the mystery of Christ.

When in 1 Corinthians 4:1 Paul refers to the mysteries of God, he means Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ. Paul and the other apostles were stewards of these mysteries. Paul refers to himself as a steward in God's family. God is exceedingly rich; He has a vast storehouse of goods which He intends to dispense into His children. But this dispensation requires a steward. Thus, a steward is a dispenser, one who dispenses the divine life supply to God's children. (Life-study of 1 Corinthians, pp. 297-299)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Corinthians, msg. 34

WEEK 8 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel.

2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace.

Paul dispensed Christ into all the believers. Receiving such a dispensation through Paul, the believers could then grow with the supply they had received. By this we see that Paul's ministry was a dispensing ministry, a ministry of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ into our being so that we may grow and become the church. Paul dispensed Christ's riches not only into the saints individually, but also into the Body corporately. (Life-study of 1 Corinthians, p. 299)

Today's Reading

The apostle Paul wrote the book of Ephesians in a very meaningful way. In chapter 1 he shows how the Body of Christ is produced and exists out of the dispensing of the Triune God. Then in chapter 2 he begins from another angle to show the history of those who have been worked on by God's dispensing to become the Body of Christ. With that as the background, he shows that the church, a precious thing that was produced out of God's dispensing, is a masterpiece, a most beautiful poem in the universe, that the angels love to sing. Whenever the angels see a sinner saved, they sing. When they see the church, they will surely sing all the more. Then Paul shows that in Christ's death and resurrection He used His divine element as the material to produce a universal new man. Finally, this masterpiece, this new man that can accomplish God's eternal economy, is brought to God in one Spirit, having drawn near to God, without any barrier whatsoever, and remains in the presence of God to receive God's continual and eternal dispensing. Like a steady stream, God dispenses Himself little

by little into those who have a part in this new man. It is this continual, steady, eternal dispensing that coordinates them together, constitutes them together, and builds them up together. This built-up church is God's kingdom on earth for the executing of His administration. It is also the household for the dispensing of His love, and as such, it becomes His eternal habitation in our spirit. (CWWL, 1990, vol. 3, "A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing," p. 499)

Not many ministers or workers in today's Christianity... are actually dispensing the riches of Christ into the members of God's royal family. The stewardship of God is needed for this rich, all-inclusive, preeminent Christ to be dispensed into the members of His Body. This stewardship is the ministry in the New Testament. The New Testament ministry is the dispensing of the unsearchable riches of the all-inclusive Christ into the members of God's family. The stewardship of God is according to the economy of God. With God it is a matter of economy; with us it is a matter of stewardship. All the saints, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, have a ministry according to God's economy. This means that every saint can dispense the riches of Christ into others.

The desire of God's heart is to dispense Himself into man. This is the central point of the whole Bible. God's economy is to carry out the dispensing of Himself into man. We share in this economy through our stewardship, our ministry of dispensing the riches of Christ. After the riches of Christ have been dispensed into us, we need to take up the burden to dispense them into others. With God these riches are His economy; with us they are the stewardship; and when they are dispensed by us into others, they become God's dispensation. When God's economy reaches us, it becomes our stewardship. When we carry out our stewardship by dispensing Christ into others, it becomes the dispensation of God into them. Hence, we have the economy, the stewardship, and the dispensation. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 90-91)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1990, vol. 3, "A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing," ch. 13

WEEK 8 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Col. 1:25-27 Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship of God, which was given to me for you, to complete the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations but now has been manifested to His saints; to whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The word of God is the divine revelation, which was not completed until the New Testament was written. In the New Testament the apostles, especially the apostle Paul, completed the word of God in the mystery of God, which is Christ, and in the mystery of Christ, which is the church, to give us a full revelation of God's economy. According to Colossians 1:26, the word of God is the "mystery...." This hidden mystery is related to Christ and the church, the Head and the Body. The unveiling of this mystery through the apostle Paul is a major part of the completion of the word of God as the divine revelation....The mystery concerning Christ and the church was hidden from eternity and from all the times until the New Testament age, when it is being manifested to the saints, including all of us, the believers in Christ. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 93-94)

Today's Reading

Prior to the time of Paul, the divine revelation had not been completed. Before Paul came forth to minister, God's revelation had already been given in the Old Testament. Furthermore, God had revealed Himself through the events recorded in the Gospels and in part of the Acts. However, it was necessary for Paul to write a number of Epistles concerning Christ as the mystery of God and concerning the church as the mystery of Christ in order for the divine revelation to be complete. This completion of the divine revelation is seen especially in four of his Epistles: Galatians, Ephesians,

Philippians, and Colossians.

Although the divine revelation was completed through the apostles, especially through Paul, in a practical sense it also needs to be completed through us today. This means that as we contact people, we must progressively, continually, and gradually preach the word in full,.... [which] is to complete the word. The word that needs to be completed is “the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations” [Col. 1:26].....This concealed mystery, which has been made manifest to God’s saints, is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (v. 27).

In the Lord’s recovery we need more stewards who are able to complete the word of God. We all must bear the burden for this. We need to spend more time in the Lord’s presence so that He may become our portion for our enjoyment and so that we may have the riches of Christ to minister to others. In this way we shall become those who complete the word of God.

The Body is built up as all the members carry out the stewardship of ministering the riches of Christ. May there be such a mutual stewardship among us. You minister the riches of Christ to others, and they minister Christ to you.

Although Paul was used in the completion of the divine revelation centuries ago, there is still the need for its completion in a practical way among Christians today. In most Christian groups there is very little ministry of Christ as life. Furthermore, not many dare to face the issue of the church. Through his subtlety, Satan, the enemy of God, is seeking to nullify the completion of the word of God. The enemy may allow Christians to preach what is revealed in the Old Testament, in the Gospels, and in the Acts. But he cannot tolerate the teaching concerning Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit or concerning the church as the mystery of Christ. Anyone who ministers along this line will be attacked by the enemy. It is the subtlety of the enemy to veil the word which was completed through Paul. For this reason, we are burdened for the completion of the word of God. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 94-96, 109-110)

Further Reading: Life-study of Colossians, msgs. 11, 13

WEEK 8 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you.

8-9 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is...

In Greek, the word rendered “stewardship” in Ephesians 3:2 is the same word rendered “economy” in 1:10 and 3:9. The stewardship of the grace is the dispensing of the grace of God into God’s chosen people for the producing and building up of the church. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostle, who is a steward in God’s house, ministering Christ as God’s grace to God’s household.

The Greek word translated “stewardship” in verse 2 is *oikonomia*. According to ancient usage, *oikonomia* denoted a stewardship, a dispensation, or an administration. At the time of Paul, many rich families had stewards whose responsibility was to distribute food and other necessities to members of the household. Our Father has a great family, a divine household. Because our Father has such vast riches, there is the need in His household for many stewards to dispense these riches to His children. This dispensing is the stewardship. Hence, a stewardship is a dispensation....This dispensation is the stewardship with the dispensing ministry of the ministers of God. This ministry of dispensing is also God’s administration. Today God administers by dispensing Himself into us. This stewardship, this dispensation, this administration, is God’s economy. In the New Testament economy of God there is the desperate need for the stewardship of grace. (Life-study of Ephesians, pp. 241-242)

Today’s Reading

The stewardship of the grace is the dispensing of the riches of Christ.

According to the context of Ephesians 3, grace refers to the riches of Christ. When the riches of Christ are enjoyed by you, they become grace. Paul's ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as grace to the believers....This is what we are doing in the ministry today. This stewardship is according to God's economy. With God it is a matter of economy; with us it is a matter of stewardship. All the saints, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, have a stewardship according to God's economy. This means that every saint can infuse Christ into others. Even a young sister in high school can dispense Christ into her classmates. This dispensing of Christ into others is the stewardship according to God's economy.

The desire of God's heart is to dispense Himself into man.... This is the central point of the whole Bible. God does not want to remain in Himself; He wants to get into us. Therefore, in eternity past He purposed to dispense Himself into us....God's economy is to carry out the dispensing of Himself into man. We share in this economy through our stewardship, our ministry of dispensing the riches of Christ. Therefore, the stewardship of the grace is according to God's economy. The apostle Paul was not the only one with a stewardship. In 3:8 he refers to himself as "less than the least of all saints." This indicates that Paul was even smaller than we are. Our concept needs to be radically changed. If Paul could be a steward, then we also can be stewards and dispense the riches of Christ into others.

This stewardship of the grace is for God's dispensation. We have seen that the desire of God's heart is to dispense His riches, which actually are Himself, into His chosen people. After these riches have been dispensed into us, we need to take up the burden to dispense them into others. With God, these riches are His economy; with us, they are the stewardship; and when they are dispensed by us into others, they are God's dispensation. When God's economy reaches us, it becomes our stewardship. (Life-study of Ephesians, pp. 244-245)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 28

WEEK 8 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

2 Tim. 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages.

1 Cor. 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

We should preach the gospel to carry out God's economy by dispensing God into others. Go to school or to work for the purpose of carrying out your stewardship according to God's economy for His dispensation. We are not doing an ordinary work of gospel preaching. We are dispensing God into man. What a glorious ministry! What a wonderful stewardship! Praise the Lord that we all have such a stewardship! We have the privilege of dispensing the unsearchable riches of Christ into others. Since our stewardship is the stewardship of the grace, we need to see what grace is. John 1:17 says that grace came through Jesus Christ. During the time of the Old Testament, there was law, but not grace. Grace did not come until Christ came. (Life-study of Ephesians, p. 246)

The grace given to us in Christ was bestowed on us before the world began. This is a sure and unshakable foundation that stands firm against the downward current and exposes the utter powerlessness of the enemy's efforts to counter the eternal purpose of God. In order to strengthen Timothy, the apostle identified their ministry with this. (2 Tim. 1:9, footnote 3)

Today's Reading

Many Christians think that grace refers mainly to material blessings. But the Bible indicates that grace did not come before Christ. However, God

certainly bestowed material blessings on His people before Christ came. Grace is nothing less than God Himself given to us, gained by us, and enjoyed by us. Before Christ came, God could not be given to anyone. No one could receive God or enjoy Him. But in Christ and through Christ we receive God, and God becomes our enjoyment. Therefore, grace is God Himself as our enjoyment. The stewardship of grace is the dispensing of God into people to be their enjoyment. Dispensing this grace into others is our stewardship according to God's economy. Because we partake of God as our enjoyment, we can dispense Him as grace into others. This is the dispensation of grace. (Life-study of Ephesians, p. 246)

The grace in God's economy in the believers' experience is the processed Triune God. Without being processed, the Triune God could not become grace. God is one, yet He is three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Son is the embodiment and expression of the Father, and the Spirit is the reality and realization of the Son....This Triune God dispenses Himself into us to be our portion as grace to us that we may enjoy Him as our everything in His Divine Trinity.

God, who was in the beginning, became flesh in time as grace for man to receive, possess, and enjoy (John 1:1, 14, 16-17). The first step, which is also the greatest step, of the process that the Triune God passed through was incarnation. God, who was in the beginning, became flesh in time; that was His tabernacling among men. His coming among men in this way was full of grace, and of His fullness we have all received. He came that we might receive grace, even grace upon grace. When He came, grace also came. The law was given to us, but grace came through Jesus Christ. The law could not come by itself; hence, it was given to us, but grace came with Jesus. Actually, grace is Jesus. When Jesus came, grace came. This is the Triune God with His divinity mingled into humanity becoming a God-man. Such a One is grace for us to receive, enjoy, and experience as our supply. This is the real salvation of the Lord. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Law and Grace of God in His Economy," p. 321)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Law and Grace of God in His Economy," ch. 3

WEEK 8 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him.

2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The [Greek] word for stewardship in Ephesians 3:2 and for economy in 1:10 is *oikonomia*, [which] was first God's plan, God's economy. Then this economy of God became the stewardship that God gave to the apostle Paul. The economy and the stewardship are actually one. This means that what the apostles were doing is what God is doing in His economy. What we are doing should be exactly what God is doing today. We should be those who are carrying out God's economy. The carrying out of God's economy is the stewardship of God's grace. Such a stewardship is for the dispensing of God Himself as grace to all His chosen people. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostles, and this ministry corresponds with God's economy. The ministry we have must correspond with God's dispensing of Himself into His chosen people for the producing of the Body of Christ. This is God's ministry given to us as our stewardship. The ministry revealed in the New Testament is unique. God does not have two economies or two stewardships. God has only one divine economy and one divine stewardship. Out of this stewardship is the one, unique ministry of the apostles to dispense Christ as God's grace into His chosen people for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ to be the organism of the processed Triune God for His full and eternal expression. (CWVL, 1988, vol. 1, "Living in and with the Divine Trinity," p. 288)

Today's Reading

Those who bear responsibility in the local churches need to share in the stewardship of God. This means that the elders should be those who

take the lead to dispense the riches of Christ into others. Although Christ is all-inclusive and preeminent, there is still the need for Him to be dispensed into the members of God's family. This dispensation takes place through the stewardship. Hence, between the unsearchably rich Christ and the members of His Body, there is the need of the stewardship. All those who take the lead in the Lord's recovery and have responsibility for the care of the churches need to realize that they have a part in such a divine stewardship. We are not here to carry on an ordinary Christian work. For instance, we are not concerned merely with teaching the Bible in an outward way. Rather, we desire to serve the riches of Christ to all the members of God's family. In our conversation with one another, we need to minister the riches of Christ. Even when we are invited to the homes of the saints for dinner, we need to dispense the riches of Christ. This is the stewardship of God.

Every member of the Body of Christ has a part in this stewardship. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul refers to himself as "less than the least of all saints." This indicates that Paul was even smaller than we are. If Paul could be a steward, then we also can be stewards and dispense the riches of Christ into others. We have many opportunities to minister the riches of Christ to the saints. Suppose we are helping a family to move. We should not simply move the furniture, but we should supply the riches of Christ to the members of the family.... All our activity with respect to such a service should be with Christ. Another opportunity to minister the riches of Christ to others is in giving or receiving hospitality. Both the hosts and the guests should minister the riches of Christ. May the Lord open our eyes to see that we all have part in the stewardship of God. In every aspect of the practical church life, even in such things as ushering and cleaning the meeting hall, we need to dispense Christ into others. First, we need to be filled with Christ and then minister the riches of Christ to others. This is our stewardship. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 91-92)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 1, "Living in and with the Divine Trinity," ch. 2

<< **WEEK 8 — HYMN** >>

Hymns, #497 Grace in its highest definition is

Experience of Christ — As Grace

- 1 Grace in its highest definition is
God in the Son to be enjoyed by us;
It is not only something done or giv'n,
But God Himself, our portion glorious.**
- 2 God is incarnate in the flesh that we
Him may receive, experience ourself;
This is the grace which we receive of God,
Which comes thru Christ and which is Christ Himself.**
- 3 Paul the Apostle counted all as dung,
'Twas only God in Christ he counted grace;
'Tis by this grace-the Lord experienced-
That he surpassed the others in the race.**
- 4 It is this grace-Christ as our inward strength-
Which with His all-sufficiency doth fill;
It is this grace which in our spirit is,
There energizing, working out God's will.**
- 5 This grace, which is the living Christ Himself,
Is what we need and must experience;
Lord, may we know this grace and by it live,
Thyself increasingly as grace to sense.**

