

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying

Message One: The Development of the Kingdom of God into a Realm over Which God Rules in His Divine Life

I. Overview:

The kingdom of God is God Himself; God's kingdom has God as its content. The kingdom of God is Christ Himself as the seed of life sown into His chosen people, and developing into a realm over which God rules as His kingdom in His divine life. We should be diligent to pursue the growth and development of the divine life and divine nature for a rich entrance into the eternal kingdom. As those who have been born of God to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to be recovered to the direct rule of God by the intuition of our spirit. Because man has been degraded from God's rule to human rule, God, in saving man, must recover him from human rule to divine rule so that once again man may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority. When we are under God's rule, we live by the intuition of our spirit according to the sense of life that the kingdom of God has its reality.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain what the relationship between the life and the kingdom is.

We must realize that any kind of life is a kingdom. If you want to enter into a kingdom, you need that kingdom's particular life. We human being are all in the human kingdom because we have the human life. In order to enter into the kingdom of God, we must be born of the Spirit, the divine life. The life of God is our entrance into the kingdom of God.

B. Expound God's kingdom is a divine realm.

God's kingdom is a divine realm, and man must have the life of God to enter into it. Life itself is a kingdom, a world, and a regulating element. Similarly, God's kingdom is God Himself, and God Himself is life, having the nature, ability, and shape of the divine life, which forms the realm of God's reigning. In actuality, God's reigning is not an outward matter but a matter of life.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the kingdom of God in John 3:3 and 5.

John 3:3 speaks of seeing the kingdom, and verse 5 speaks of entering into the kingdom. To see the kingdom we need to be born anew. To enter into the kingdom we need to be born of water and the Spirit. Water signifies the death of Christ, into which we all have been baptized, and the Spirit signifies resurrection. We need to die with Christ and be resurrected to be a new person of another, new species, new kind.

B. Explain the difference between God creating man and the other living things.

Genesis 1 says that each of the living things was created according to its kind. But God created man in God's image and according to God's likeness to be God's kind. Adam had only the outward appearance of God without the inward reality, the divine life. We have the reality of the divine life within us, and we are being transformed and conformed to the Lord's image in our entire being.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the relationship among the life, the kingdom and the church.

The kingdom of God is the life of God, but the church is not the life, nor is the life the church. The church is the product of life. The divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church. Without the kingdom as the reality of life, the church could never be produced or built up. The gospel brings God as life, and life is a kingdom. The kingdom is the realm of life and this divine life with its realm produces the church.

B. Expound Matthew 3:2, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."

The only way to enter into the kingdom of God is to receive God as life and to gain God Himself. This is regeneration. To repent is to have a change in your concept. You have to change your concepts about Moses, the law, and even your worldly, natural concepts about serving God. All these concepts need to be changed. Repentance makes us to turn to the Lord to gain His life, which brings us into His kingdom.

Day 4 —

A. Explain the spiritual meaning of the eternal kingdom in 2 Peter 1:11.

The eternal kingdom in 2 Peter 1:11 refers to the kingdom of God, which was given to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and which will be manifested at His coming back. It will be a reward to His faithful believers, who pursue the growth in His life unto maturity and the development of the virtues of His nature that in the millennium they may participate in His kingship in God's glory.

B. How can we let the seed grow and develop as the seed of life has been sown into us?

If we would have the kingdom develop in us, we need to humble ourselves, empty ourselves, and unload ourselves. We should care only for Christ and for the growth of Christ within us. All the ground within us should be made available for Him to grow in us. We also can have a rich entrance by losing our soul-life today.

Day 5 —

A. Explain how man degraded from God's rule to self-rule and human rule.

From the time of Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden to Noah's departure from the ark, God established the conscience within man to represent Him in ruling over man. This is self-rule, but under which, man again failed; the issue of which was murder, fornication, and fullness of wickedness. Thus, God judged this dispensation by the flood. After the flood, God authorized man to represent Him in ruling over man. This is human rule.

B. How did God recover man from human rule back to the ruling of God?

As man became degraded by falling from divine rule to human rule, passing through the stage of self-rule in between, so in God's plan of recovery he must retrace his steps from human rule to God's rule, passing through self-rule in between. Since self-rule is the step between human rule and God's rule, when a man is saved, he must first be delivered from human rule and return to self-rule.

Day 6 —

A. Compare the difference of human rule with self-rule.

All those who live under human rule are living before man. Whenever they are not under man's jurisdiction and observation, they do as they please. However, those who are under self-rule are controlled by their conscience, they do not need to be ruled by others. They are restrained in all their utterances and behavior, because their conscience is sufficient to rule and control them.

B. Point out what the difference between self-rule and God's rule is.

Self-rule means that man lives by the feelings of his conscience, being responsible to his conscience. The conscience has only the feeling of right and wrong and condemns all that is wrong and evil and justifies all that is right and good. And God's rule means that man lives by the intuition of the spirit, being responsible to God. The intuition is above right and wrong; it accepts only that which is of God, of the Spirit, and of life.

III. Conclusion:

Christ Himself as the seed of life has been sown into us, so we should be diligent to pursue the growth and development of the divine life and divine nature for a rich entrance into His eternal kingdom. From the point of view of government, man's fall was a fall from God's rule to self-rule and then from self-rule to man's rule. As man became degraded by falling from divine rule to human rule, passing through the stage of self-rule in between, so in God's plan of recovery he must retrace his steps from human rule to God's rule, passing through self-rule in between. Self-rule and God's rule differ greatly. Self-rule means that man lives by the feelings of his conscience, being responsible to his conscience; whereas God's rule means that man lives by the intuition of the spirit, being responsible to the intuition, that is, being responsible to God. Hence, when we live by the intuition and are controlled by the intuition, we are living in the presence of God and ruled by Him. Today there is the need to deal with the conscience more thoroughly so that we can, on the negative side, be delivered from human rule and, on the positive side, enter into God's rule to be directly under His control.