

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message

Three : The Kingdom and the church

I. Overview:

The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up. The purpose of the vital groups in the church life is to live the kingdom life. The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age. We are in the reality of the kingdom only when we have our being in the spirit. The Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, which is a pleasant thing, having the reality and practicality of the organic Body of Christ, and also having the reality and practicality of the universal one new man.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain the relationship between the church and the kingdom.

Although the church and the kingdom are interrelated, there is nonetheless a difference between them. Because any kind of life is a kingdom, the kingdom is the life itself. The life of God is the kingdom of God. The church, however, is not the life, nor is the life the church. Rather, the church is the product of life. The divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church.

B. Why is it that apart from the proper kingdom life, we could not live the church life?

When God regenerated us, He regenerated us into His kingdom. The reality of the kingdom is actually Christ Himself as our life; that reality is fully revealed and described in chapters 5 through 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. These chapters are a complete message on the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens, and this constitution is the reality of the kingdom life. This reality is the genuine content of the church life.

Day 2 —

A. Explain Where the kingdom of the heavens is in authority, there a church will be built up.

A church has been secured through the sovereign rule of heaven. Because the kingdom of heaven is able to assert its authority over a company of men, that company of men can be built up into a church. How was the church brought into being? It was by means of the authority of the kingdom. God's purpose was to bring His heavenly dominion to the earth, and apart from the church His goal could not be attained.

B. Expound in Ephesians 4, the building up of the church with its primary importance is to grow up into Him.

When we have all things submit to the authority of the Head, the government of the Head, there will be the genuine building. If we have subjection to the authority of the Head, we have the building up of the Body. Where the government of heaven is secured, there the church is secured. The extent to which the church is built up in our midst will depend entirely upon the place given in our midst to the church's Head.

Day 3 —

A. Explain being in the kingdom in reality only when we live and walk in spirit.

Whenever we behave according to the old man or live in the flesh or the self, we, in a practical way, are out of God's kingdom. Therefore, a genuine Christian, if he lives in the flesh instead of in the spirit, may actually live in the kingdom of Satan. Only when we live, walk in our spirit, are we in the kingdom of God in reality.

B. Expound the words in Romans 14:17 and its application.

The kingdom of God as the living of the church is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. When the authority of God's kingdom operates in us, righteousness, peace, and joy will characterize our daily life. These three items are actually the expression of Christ. When Christ is expressed, He is our righteousness toward ourselves, our peace toward others, and our joy with God.

Day 4 —

A. What are the three ages the kingdom of the Son of God's love comprising?

The kingdom of the Son of God's love comprises three ages: the present age, in which the church is; the coming age, in which the millennial kingdom will be; and the eternal age with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth as the consummation of the church and the kingdom. In each of these three sections the kingdom of the Son of God's love is a matter of delight.

B. Explain whenever we live in the self, we are in darkness. So how should we do?

Our experience testifies that whenever we live, walk, and behave in the self, we are in darkness. Whenever we are in the natural man, we are in darkness, for it causes us to be separated from Christ. We must remember that He alone is light. He must saturate and prevail in every aspect of our daily living.

Day 5 —

A. Describe what realm we are in the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

According to the New Testament, the Son of God is the expression of the divine life and its embodiment. This means that the kingdom of the Son is a realm of life. The fact that the kingdom into which we have been transferred is the kingdom of the Son of God's love indicates that this realm of life is in love, not in fear. The kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love.

B. Expound how we are ruled and restricted in the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

As we began to love the Lord Jesus, we have come under His rule. This rule is not harsh; on the contrary, it is sweet and pleasant. Oh, we are restricted and ruled in such a sweet way! Because of the pleasantness of the Lord's rule in us, we are ruled and restricted to the uttermost in the sweetness of love.

Day 6 —

A. Explain what indicates the authority of darkness in Colossians.

The authority of darkness refers to the good aspects of culture and of our character, disposition, and natural being. The authority of darkness includes our virtues, religion, philosophy, observances, ordinances, principles, and ethical standards. God has delivered us out of all this and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, where we live under a heavenly rule and restriction.

B. How will our reading of the Bible not be in darkness but in light?

Many believers insist that the Bible is full of light. But if we do not read the Word in the Lord's presence, even our reading of the Bible will be in darkness. The religionists thought they were in light because they had the Scriptures in their hands. But actually they were blind because they did not have Christ, who alone is the light of the world. Any place where the Lord Jesus is not present is under the authority of darkness.

III. Conclusion:

The gospel brings in the divine life, and the divine life has its realm. This is the kingdom. The divine life with its realm produces the church. The gospel brings in the kingdom of God, and the gospel also brings forth the church of God. For this reason, in the New Testament the gospel is called the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of life. The kingdom of God is the living of the church. According to the context of Romans 14, which speaks of receiving the believers, the kingdom is today's church life. The reality of the church life is the kingdom. Romans 12 speaks of the Body life, and Romans 14, of the kingdom life. In a sense, it is correct to say that the present age is the church age and that the coming age will be the kingdom age.