

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Six : Life in the Land and the Issue of the Land — the Church as the Temple, the Dwelling Place of God, and as the City, the Kingdom of God

I. Overview:

We need to see how to live a life in the eyes of God that will enable us to enjoy the all-inclusive Christ typified by the good land. We need to live a life of laboring upon Christ as our good land, to gain Christ as our enjoyment. We meet together to have an exhibition of the Christ upon whom we have labored, the Christ whom we have enjoyed and experienced. The issue of our enjoyment of the all-inclusive riches of Christ as the good land is the church as the temple, the dwelling place of God, and as the city, the kingdom of God. When we enjoy Christ personally in our daily life for our collective enjoyment of Him in our meeting life, God is among us, and we are His dwelling place and His kingdom. The main aspects of God's house, His dwelling place for His expression, speak of God's presence. The main aspects of God's city, His kingdom for His dominion, speak of God's authority. The ultimate issue of our enjoyment of Christ as the land is the divine- human incorporation of the processed Triune God with His regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite people as the eternal dwelling place and kingdom of God.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Why are we indeed rich in resource but poor in produce?

We must till our spiritual ground; we must sow the spiritual seed; we must water the spiritual plants—all the time. We cannot rely upon others to do it for us; we must do it ourselves, or it will never be done. We have a very rich land, but we do not work on it, so there is no produce. We are indeed rich in resource but poor in produce.

B. Expound whenever God's people come together, they shouldn't come with their hands empty.

The Lord told His people that they must come together to worship Him at least three times a year. And He told them that they should in no wise come with their hands empty. They must bring something in their hands to Him, something of the produce of the good land. If they were lazy and did not work on the land, not only would they be unable to bring anything to the Lord, but they would have nothing to satisfy themselves.

Day 2 —

A. Testify that we can speak in the meetings depending upon fellowship with the Lord.

We must abide in the fellowship with the Lord daily and hourly. My speaking depends upon my continual and present fellowship with the Lord. Why can we not speak in the meetings? Maybe we have been absent from the Lord's fellowship for three days because we had a quarrel with our spouse. If we are going to speak for the Lord, we have to recover our fellowship with Him by confessing our sin and by making an apology to our spouse.

B. Explain that we must enjoy the Lord in the Word early in every morning for a new start.

According to God's principle in His creation, He ordained to have a new year, a new month or a new moon, and a new day. We may have failed today, but thank the Lord tomorrow is still here waiting for us. Tomorrow morning we will have another chance to have a new start. To have a new start is just to rise up a little earlier and say, "O Lord Jesus." Then we need to pray-read a short portion of the Word enjoying the Lord to have a good, new start.

Day 3 —

A. Expound 2 Corinthians describing a group of people living and enjoying in the land.

Although the term of the good land is not used in this book, spiritually speaking, we can see the good land in 2 Corinthians. The good land in this book is Christ Himself as the very embodiment of the processed Triune God given to us as the divine grace for our enjoyment. In this book we see some persons who possessed Christ as their God-given portion, entered into the land, and enjoyed Christ Himself.

B. Describe the practical example of enjoying grace in 2 Corinthians 12.

The grace that Paul experienced was related to a thorn in the flesh which troubled and buffeted him all the time. The Lord was not willing to take the thorn away but told Paul that His grace was sufficient. If the thorn is taken away, we could never experience the sufficient grace. The grace is simply the Lord Himself within us, supporting us, energizing us, and strengthening us to face the trouble, to meet the situation.

Day 4 —

A. Describe the dimensions of Christ being the dimensions of the universe.

The dimensions of Christ are the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth. These dimensions are the dimensions of the universe. In our experience of Christ, we firstly experience the breadth of what He is, and then we experience the length. This is horizontal. When we advance in Christ, we experience the height and depth of His riches. This is vertical. We experience Him rising up as the height and finally descending as the depth.

B. Why do we need the church life in order to experience Christ in His universal dimensions?

We need to experience Christ with all the members of the Body. In particular, we need the church meetings, for in the meetings we are balanced. Through messages and the testimonies of the saints, we are balanced. If we experience the dimensions of Christ in the church life, we shall gradually be woven into a "carpet." We shall not be thin lines of "thread."

Day 5 —

A. Expound church being the home of God, constituted by Christ.

A certain saint, for example, eats Christ and drinks Christ; Christ is gradually digested by him and mingled with him so that he and Christ become one. Then when he comes together with other saints, they bring Christ as well. Christ becomes their very constitution. When they meet together, they offer Christ to God, they enjoy Christ together, and they exhibit Christ. Everything is Christ. This is the home of God.

B. Explain the authority of Christ enlarging the temple of God.

We not only need Christ as our enjoyment but also Christ as the authority of God. When you and I enjoy Christ together, the authority of Christ is among us. In such an enjoyment, we will be very submissive to God and to one another. True love is in submission. If there is submission among us, the authority of Christ is among us. It is the authority of Christ that enlarges the habitation of God, the temple of God.

Day 6 —

A. Expound how the main aspects of the house speak of God's presence and the city, God's authority.

The house is for the expression of God, and the city is for the dominion of God. The house and the city of God fulfill the purpose of God in the creation of man. The image is for the expression, and the dominion is for the authority. In the house God is a Father, and in the city God is a King. Both of them are the church, or we may say, the local churches. A local church, in one sense, must be the house of God, and in another sense it must also be the city of God.

B. Explain the difference between the city and the house.

A city is much stronger and larger than a house. Therefore, we say that when the house is enlarged, it becomes the city. If when people come to our meeting, they worship and say, "God indeed is among you," this is the house. If, on the other hand, when people come among us and realize that there is not only the presence of God but some kind of divine rule and authority, this is not only the house but the house with the city.

III. Conclusion:

Joshua 5:12 records, after God's people entering into the good land, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, and the manna ceased on that day; they ate of the yield of the land of Canaan that year. Three times a year they must appear before Jehovah in the place which He chose and should not appear before Him empty-handed. Therefore, their lives in the good land were continually laboring, producing something in a mass way. We believers in today's church life must also labor on Christ in our daily life to produce Christ that our meetings may be filled with the produce of Christ with hands full to satisfy God and men, sharing with one another and to share Christ with God. This prevailing life is to be consecrated to the Lord in the morning and enjoy in the word of the Lord and spend time with the Lord and intimate fellowship with Him throughout the day. We also must be ones who deal with our sins thoroughly, cultivating a life of prayer, redeeming the time to be saturated with the word of God.