

Crystallization-Study of Ecclesiastes

Week Twelve

Vanity of Vanities, the Reality in Jesus, and the Revelation of the Sons of God

Hymns: 970

Scripture Reading: Eccl. 1:2-11, 14; 2:17, 22; 3:11; 12:8; Psa. 39:4-6;
Eph. 4:17-21, 24; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 8:19-22

Outline

§Day 1

- I. **“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity”—Eccl. 1:2b:**
 - A. **In Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 we see that the theme of this book is vanity of vanities:**
 1. The central thought of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of vanities of human life under the sun in its falling away from God—v. 2.
 2. The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description of the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, a life in the corrupted world—Eph. 2:12.
 3. The teachings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes show that the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind—1:14.
 4. According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity—12:8.
 5. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun—1:9; 2:11, 17, 22.
 6. Only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun” (1:9), is not vanity but is reality—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24.

B. In Psalm 39:4-6 David realized the nothingness and vanity of his life:

1. In this psalm David was brought by God to realize that he was nothing and vanity; he learned that every man at his best is altogether vanity—v. 5.
2. Our realizing that our condition is sinful (Psa. 38) and that our situation is one of vanity opens the way for Christ to crucify us and enter into us to replace us by living Himself through us and causing us to live together with Him in an organic union, as expressed by Paul in Galatians 2:20.

C. Man was created by God with the highest and most noble purpose, that is, to express God in His image with His divine life and nature—Gen. 1:26:

1. God's enemy, Satan, the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man created by God for His purpose—3:1-6; Rom. 5:18; 3:23; 1 John 3:4.
2. Through this fall of man, man and all the created things that had been committed by God to his dominion were made subject to vanity (Rom. 8:20-21); thus, human life in the corrupted world also became vanity.
3. The way for us to escape this vanity is to come back to God and take God in Christ as redemption, life, wealth, enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction so that we may still be used by God to fulfill His original purpose in creating man for the fulfillment of His eternal economy—Eccl. 12:13-14.

D. Although the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind, we need to realize that God has put eternity in man's heart—3:11:

1. "Eternity" in Ecclesiastes 3:11 is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy" (The Amplified Bible).
2. God created man in His image and formed in him a spirit so that man may receive and contain Him and have a heart that seeks God Himself so that God can be man's satisfaction—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Zech. 12:1.
3. Although man fell away from God, and sin through Satan came in to frustrate man from receiving God for his satisfaction, the desire for God, the seeking for God, still remains in man's heart—Eccl. 3:11.

4. Temporal things can never satisfy man; only the eternal God, who is Christ, can satisfy the deep sense of purpose in man's heart—cf. 2 Cor. 4:18.

§Day 3

II. In Ephesians 4:17-21 and 24 Paul presents the reality in Jesus for a walk that is no longer in the vanity of the mind:

A. In Ephesians 4:17 Paul exhorts the believers to “no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind”:

1. The basic element in the daily life of fallen mankind is the vanity of the mind.
2. The Gentiles, the nations, are the fallen people, who have become vain in their reasonings—Rom. 1:21:
 - a. They walk without God in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts.
 - b. In the eyes of God and of the apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, and do is nothing but vanity.
3. The nations who walk in the vanity of the mind are darkened in their understanding because of the hardness of their heart—Eph. 4:18:
 - a. When the mind of fallen people is filled with vanity, their understanding is darkened in the things of God—Psa. 94:11.
 - b. The hardness of fallen man's heart is the source of the darkness in his understanding and the vanity of his mind—Eph. 4:17-18.

B. In Ephesians 4:17 and 21 there is a contrast between the reality in Jesus and the vanity of the fallen human mind:

1. In the godless walk of fallen man there is vanity, but in the godly life of Jesus there is reality.
2. The reality in Jesus is “the reality” of the new man mentioned in verse 24:
 - a. The deceit (v. 22) is the personification of Satan, and the reality (v. 24) is the personification of God; the deceit is the devil, and the reality is God.
 - b. God as the reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus—v. 21.

§Day 4

3. The reality in Jesus is the actual condition of the life of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels:
 - a. The human living of Jesus was according to the reality, that is, according to God Himself—Eph. 4:24.
 - b. The essence of the life of Jesus was reality; He always walked in reality.
 - c. Everything the Lord did in His human life was God expressed and therefore was reality.
 4. The life of Jesus according to reality is the pattern for the believers' life—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4:
 - a. We need to learn Christ and be taught in Him to live a life of reality—Eph. 4:20-21; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24.
 - b. As members of the Body of Christ, we should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God.
- C. We can live in the reality that is in Jesus because “we are in Him who is true”—1 John 5:20:**
1. Him who is true refers to God becoming subjective to us, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience.
 2. To be in the One who is true—the true One—is to be in His Son Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is the true God—v. 20.
 3. The true One is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.

§Day 5

III. Because creation has been made subject to vanity, the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God “in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God”—Rom. 8:19-22:

- A. As a result of Satan’s injecting himself as sin into man, man and all created things were brought into the slavery of corruption and made subject to vanity—5:12; 8:20:**
1. Because creation has been made subject to vanity and to the slavery of

corruption, everything under the sun is vanity—Eccl. 1:2; 12:8.

2. At present the creation is enslaved under the law of decay and corruption; its only hope is to be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed—Rom. 8:20-21.

B. The anxious watching—watching with full concentration—of the creation “eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God”—v. 19:

1. Revelation is an unveiling or an appearing of something previously covered or hidden—Eph. 1:17; 3:5; Gal. 1:15-16; Rev. 1:1.
2. At the Lord’s second coming, when we will be glorified and our bodies will be fully redeemed, the veil will be lifted—Rom. 8:18.
3. The creation, which “groans together and travails in pain together until now” (v. 22), is awaiting the revelation of the sons of God (v. 19).
4. This revelation will be the consummation of the process of designation that we are now passing through—cf. 1:4, footnote 1.

§Day 6

C. Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will bring in His kingdom to deal with the present condition—Rev. 11:15:

1. The coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of the revealed sons of God—Matt. 6:10, 13; Rom. 8:19.
2. God’s glory goes with His kingdom and is expressed in the realm of His kingdom—Matt. 6:10, 13b; Psa. 145:11-13.
3. God has called us to enter into His kingdom and glory—1 Thes. 2:12:
 - a. The kingdom of God is the sphere for us to worship God and enjoy God under the divine ruling with the view of entering into God’s glory—Matt. 6:13b.
 - b. The kingdom is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory—Rev. 5:10, 13.
 - c. The shining of the kingdom is for the glorification of the Father—Matt. 5:16.

4. The kingdom of God is God's manifestation in His glory with His authority for His divine administration; hence, to enter into the kingdom of God and to enter into the expressed glory of God take place as one thing simultaneously—Heb. 2:10; Matt. 5:20; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:10; Rev. 21:9-11; 22:1, 5.
5. The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for God's kingdom to come; at the time of the revelation of the kingdom, the whole creation will be liberated, and the manifested sons of God will be delivered from vanity and “will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father”—Matt. 13:43.

WEEK 12 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Eccl. 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description by Solomon, after his falling away from God and returning back to God, concerning the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, which is in the corrupted world. He set his heart to seek and to search out all that is done under the heavens, and he observed that according to the natural phenomena all the things done in cycle remain the same, generation after generation, all wearisome and nothing new. In his conclusion, this is all vanity of vanities and a chasing after wind to the human life of fallen mankind. Such a conclusion of the wise king by his wisdom may be considered a history of the vain life of a fallen man. His conclusion in this book is like a dirge to a man whose end is in misery. (Life-study of Ecclesiastes, pp. 1-2)

Today's Reading

According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity.... Paul's word concerning this in Romans 8:20-21 corresponds to Ecclesiastes. Today everyone is actually not living but dying. We have been born to die; that is, we have been dying since the day of our birth. From this we see that human life under the sun is vanity of vanities.

Solomon had unequalled wisdom, the supreme position, unsurpassed wealth, and hundreds of wives and concubines, and fell in the indulgence of his lust to an unparalleled extent. Through all the positive and negative experiences of the human life under the sun, his thought was deeply

impressed and occupied with the central thought of this book, that is, the vanity of vanities of the human life under the sun in its falling away from God. Man was created by God with the highest and most noble purpose, that is, to express Him in the resemblance of Him in His life, nature, and expression. But God's enemy, Satan the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man created by God for His purpose. Through this fall of man, man and all the created things that had been committed by God to his dominion were brought into the slavery of corruption, made subject to vanity (Rom. 8:20-21). Thus, the human life in the corrupted world also became a vanity, a chasing after wind. The writer Solomon had fully realized this and stressed this to the uttermost in his description. Yet he was not fully disappointed in this, but rather he instructed men that there is a way to get out of this vanity, that is, to come back to God and take God as man's everything, redemption, life, wealth, enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction, that man still may be used by God to fulfill His original purpose in man for the fulfillment of His eternal economy (Eccl. 12:13-14). (Life-study of Ecclesiastes, pp. 2-3)

Proverbs is on the real wisdom, and Ecclesiastes is on the real meaning of the human life under the sun, which is vanity of vanities, a chasing after wind. Song of Songs is the satisfaction of satisfactions. Apart from Christ, there is no satisfaction in the whole universe. The unique Christ, the embodiment of God, is the unique satisfaction not only to man but to the entire universe, which has been made subject to vanity (Rom. 8:20). The fact that the creation is now subject to vanity means that everything under the sun is vanity. Today God is embodied in Christ, and Christ is realized as the compounded, sevenfold, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, who is the consummation of the processed Triune God. This indwelling One is our subjective satisfaction. (Life-study of Proverbs, p. 54)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ecclesiastes, msgs. 1-2; CWWL, 1954, vol. 3, "Gospel Outlines," outl. 41; Life-study of Proverbs, msgs. 1, 4, 8

WEEK 12 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Eccl. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart...

2 Cor. 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

God...has put eternity (an aspiration for the things in eternity) in man's heart...(Eccl. 3:11). In His creation of man, God put something into man which Solomon called "eternity." This means that in man there is a kind of aspiration for God, an aspiration for something eternal. Physical things may be enjoyable, but they are temporal.

Many successful people can testify that when they were endeavoring to advance in their career, they sensed that there was an emptiness within them. They began to realize that they were seeking something eternal. After they gained something they wanted, they felt that it was nothing. This feeling comes from the aspiration in man's heart for something eternal.

According to our own experience, we know that whenever we have a success in our human life, we also have an empty feeling. This indicates that within man there is an aspiration for eternal things. God has put such an aspiration, such a seeking, in man's heart so that he will seek God. Every person, especially every thoughtful person, has within him this longing and seeking for eternity. (Life-study of Ecclesiastes, pp. 5-6)

Today's Reading

God created man in His image and with a human spirit for man to receive and contain Him. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God put eternity in man's heart. The things in this universe are mainly of two categories: temporal things and eternal things. In 2 Corinthians 4:18 Paul says, "We do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen

are eternal.” This verse is the proper explanation of Solomon’s word in Ecclesiastes 3:11. The wise king said that God created everything beautiful in its own time and also put eternity in man’s heart. This matches our human experience. Regardless of how rich or successful a person becomes, he still feels empty. Man has a deep desire for permanent things, and the only things that are permanent are the eternal things. The Amplified Bible says that eternity in man’s heart is “a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy.” We have a sense of a purpose, which nothing can satisfy but God. Only God can satisfy the sense of purpose in our heart.

In God’s creation of man there are three striking things: His image, our human spirit to receive Him, and a divinely implanted sense of a purpose in our hearts working through the ages, which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy. The romance depicted in Song of Songs does not start from the Lord but from the seeker. A person becomes such a seeker because within him there is a sense of purpose to seek something eternal. Nothing can fulfill or satisfy this sense of purpose but God Himself, who is Christ. Many people would think that we are wasting our time, but actually, we are redeeming the time. Those who pursue temporary things are wasting their time. They are busy for nothing. Anything they are busy for is temporary, not eternal. Only One in the whole universe is eternal—the eternal God. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” pp. 444-445)

David said that man goes about as a semblance, an empty show, and that people are bustling about in vain [Psa. 39:6].

God wants us to be nothing. God wants us to be replaced by Christ.... I have an organic union with Him. He lives and works, and I live and work with Him. Christ replaces me to live Himself through me. (Life-study of the Psalms, pp. 218-219)

Further Reading: Life-study of the Psalms, msg. 17; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” ch. 1

WEEK 12 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind.

20-21 But you did not so learn Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus.

The Gentiles are the fallen people, who become vain in their reasonings (Rom. 1:21). They walk without God in the vanity of their mind, being controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity, void of reality... Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:17 suggests that we the believers, who once walked in the vanity of the mind before we were saved, may continue to do so after we are saved. Even religious activities and practices among Christians which do not express God—such as Christmas and Easter—are superstition, falsehood, deception, and vanity. As believers, we should no longer walk in the vanity of the mind. Instead, we should allow the new man to live out God; every detail of the living of the new man must be God expressed in our living. This is to no longer walk in the vanity of the mind but to live the life of the new man as the reality is in Jesus. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 3428)

Today's Reading

In Ephesians 4:17-32 we see that Christ is the reality and grace for the living of the new man....When God in Christ was incarnated as a man, He came with grace and reality; that is, when Christ came, grace and reality came with Him. [In John 1:14 and 17] we see that grace and reality are personified in Jesus Christ; grace and reality refer to a person, the Triune God incarnated and expressed in humanity.

Ephesians presents reality and grace as a pair for the living of the new man. Ephesians 2:15 tells us that Christ created the one new man; the new man is on the earth today. Ephesians 4:17-32 goes on to reveal that the way

for the new man to live is by reality and grace.

In Ephesians 4:17-21 and 24, Paul presents the reality in Jesus for a walk that is no longer in the vanity of the mind.

[In verse 21] Paul does not say that the reality is in Christ; rather, he says that the reality is in Jesus. The reason for this is that when the Lord Jesus lived on earth as a man, in Him there was always the reality. In Jesus, that is, in His human living and His daily walk—whether He worked as a carpenter or carried out His ministry—there was the reality at all times. In order to understand the reality expressed in the living of Jesus as a man on earth, we need to read verse 17, where Paul exhorts the believers to “no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind.” Here we see a contrast between the reality in Jesus and the vanity of the Gentiles’ mind. In the human living of Jesus there was no vanity but only the reality; however, in our godless society there is nothing but vanity of vanities. Using a phrase from John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, we may say that, as a whole, today’s world is a “vanity fair.” Wealth, fame, position, entertainment, and material possessions in today’s world are all vanities, but everything in the daily living of the man Jesus is the reality. Whatever He did in His human living is the reality; not one of His words was vain (cf. 1 Pet. 2:22).

Christ is not only life to us but also an example (John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21). In His life on earth He set up a pattern, as revealed in the Gospels. Then He was crucified and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit that He might enter into us to be our life. We learn from Him (Matt. 11:29) according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection. To learn Christ is simply to be molded into the pattern of Christ, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 3425-3426)

Further Reading: *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, msgs. 118, 253, 341; CWWL, 1964, vol. 4, “Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life,” ch. 5

WEEK 12 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

The expression the reality is in Jesus [in Ephesians 4:21] refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. In the godless walk of the nations, the fallen people, there is vanity, but in the godly life of Jesus there is the reality. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God. God was in His living, and He was one with God. This is what is meant by the reality is in Jesus. We, the believers, who are regenerated with Christ as our life and are taught in Him, learn from Him as the reality is in Jesus. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3426-3427)

Today's Reading

In His daily walk the man Jesus was not only great but also very fine. For example, when He fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish,... He instructed His disciples to gather the broken pieces left over that nothing may be lost, which amounted to twelve handbaskets full (John 6:12-13). The four Gospels reveal that in every detail of the Lord's daily living, there is no vanity but only the reality. Moreover, in nearly every page of the four Gospels, we see a striking contrast between the reality in the godly living of Jesus and the vanity in the living of others around Him, such as His opposers as well as His disciples.

In His thirty-three and a half years on earth, the Lord Jesus formed the mold, the pattern, to which all those who believe in Him are to be conformed. According to the record of the four Gospels, the life of the Lord Jesus was a life of reality. Reality is the shining of light. Light is the source,

and reality is its expression. As Hebrews 1:3 says, the Lord Jesus is the effulgence of God's glory. This means that He is the shining of God who is light. Because in every aspect of the Lord's living on earth there was the shining of light, His life was a life of reality, a life of the shining of God Himself. That life of reality was the expression of God. For this reason Paul says that we learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus. In other words, we learn Christ according to the mold of the life of Jesus, which is the reality.

After Christ established this mold, He passed through death and resurrection, and in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. As such a Spirit, He comes into us to be our life. When we believed in Christ and were baptized, God put us into Him as the mold, just as dough is placed into a mold. By being put into the mold we learn the mold. This means that by being put into Christ, we learn Christ. On the one hand, God put us into Christ; on the other hand, Christ has come into us to be our life. Now we may live by Him according to the mold in which we have been placed by God. We are in Christ as the mold, and He is in us as our life. In this way we learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus.

In Ephesians 4 before Paul mentions grace, that is, the supply, he presents the reality, that is, the principle, the pattern, and the standard. The reality is the shining of light; as members of the Body of Christ under the Head, we should learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus. Yet in order to live out this standard of the reality, we must have grace. In verse 29 Paul relates grace to our speaking. This indicates that we need grace for the details of our daily life, not merely for what we regard as important matters.... For instance, in our daily conversation we may be devoid of grace.... If we have grace in this aspect of our living, we will have grace in every other aspect. In all things we need grace to live a life according to the reality that is in Jesus. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3427-3429)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 46

WEEK 12 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:19-21 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

[In Romans 8:19 “the revelation”] denotes the manifestation or the appearing of the sons of God. We all are the sons of God.... If we tell people on the street that we are sons of God, they will think that we are crazy. They will say, “Look at you and me. What is the difference between us? We are both human beings. You are not different from me. You are just another person. Why do you say that you are a son of God?” However, the day will come when the sons of God will be manifested. In that day there will be no need to make the declaration, “From now on we are the sons of God,” because we all shall be glorified. We shall be in glory, designated as sons by the glory of God. Then all other people will have to admit that we are the sons of God. They will say, “Look at these people. Who are these people so full of glory? They must be sons of God.”...The entire creation is waiting for this with watching eyes, for the creation eagerly expects the revelation of the sons of God. (Life-study of Romans, p. 226)

Today's Reading

The entire creation is under vanity. Everything under the sun is vanity. The wise king Solomon said, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2). Creation is subject to vanity.

We need to notice two...words [in Romans 8:21], “slavery” and “corruption.” In the entire universe there is nothing except vanity and corruption. This corruption is a kind of bondage, a slavery that binds the whole creation. Creation has been made subject to vanity in the hope that it will be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. One day the children of God will be glorified, brought

into glory. With that glory there will be freedom, and that freedom will be a kingdom, sphere, or realm. The whole glory will be a kingdom, a sphere, into which we will be brought. When we are brought into that freedom or kingdom of glory, creation will be delivered from vanity, corruption, and slavery. This is the reason that the entire creation is awaiting that time. We have very much to do with the creation, for the future destiny of the creation rests upon us. If we mature slowly, the creation will blame us and murmur against us. It will say, "Dear children of God, you are growing too slowly. We are waiting for the time of your maturity, the time when you will enter into glory, the time when we will be freed from vanity, corruption, and slavery." We must be faithful to the creation and not disappoint it.

Verse 22 says, "For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now..." Not only does the creation groan together, it also travails as in the pangs of childbirth.

Verse 23 follows, "And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body." Although we have been born through regeneration as the sons of God and have the Spirit as the firstfruits, we also groan because we are still in the body which is linked to the old creation.... Since our body belongs to the old creation and has not yet been redeemed, we are groaning in it as the creation does. However, while we are groaning we have the firstfruits of the Spirit. The firstfruits of the Spirit are for our enjoyment; they are a foretaste of the coming harvest. The firstfruits are the Holy Spirit as a sampling of the full taste of God as our enjoyment, of all that God is to us....The full taste will come in the day of glory. Nevertheless, before the full taste comes, God has given us a foretaste today. (Life-study of Romans, pp. 226-228)

Further Reading: Life-study of Romans, msgs. 19, 21; CWWL, 1985, vol. 3, "Elders' Training, Book 6: The Crucial Points of the Truth in Paul's Epistles," ch. 2

WEEK 12 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:22-23 ...The whole creation groans together... We ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

13 ...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

If you talk with unbelievers, they will admit that, in a sense, they have some enjoyment in their entertainments, like dancing and gambling. However, they will also tell you that they are unhappy....They also are groaning, but only groaning; there is nothing else. We, on the contrary, as we are groaning, have within us the Spirit as the firstfruits, as the foretaste of God Himself. Even as we are suffering, we have the enjoyment. We have the taste of the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord is simply the Spirit as the firstfruits for our enjoyment. So, we are different from worldly people. They experience groaning without the inward enjoyment. We, however, groan outwardly, but rejoice inwardly....We rejoice because we have the firstfruits of the Spirit. The divine Spirit within us is the foretaste of God which leads us to the full taste of the enjoyment of God. This is a great item in the blessings of sonship. (Life-study of Romans, p. 228)

Today's Reading

While we are groaning and enjoying the firstfruits of the Spirit, we are expecting sonship.... Although we have sonship within us, this sonship has not yet become full....What is full sonship? It is the redemption of our body. We have sonship in our spirit through regeneration and we may also have sonship in our soul through transformation, but we do not as yet have sonship in our body through transfiguration. In the coming day we will also have sonship in our body. This is full sonship, our longing expectation.

We come...to the matter of glorification.... [Romans 8:19 says], "For the

anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.”... Revelation means to open the veil.... Although we are the sons of God, we are veiled, not yet revealed. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was the Son of God, but He was veiled by His human flesh. One day on the mountain He was unveiled and revealed (Matt. 17:1-2). It is the same with us. Although we are sons of God, yet we are under a veil. One day this veil will be removed—that will be our glorification....Then the whole universe will behold the sons of God.

The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching to see this revelation of the sons of God, because “the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:20-21)....Creation’s only hope is to be freed from this slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed. Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will bring in a kingdom to replace this present condition. The present condition is a condition of vanity and slavery of corruption; the coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of revealed sons of God. At the time of the revelation of this kingdom the whole creation will be liberated. The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for this kingdom to come. Thus, “the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now” (v. 22). The universe is groaning and travailing in birth awaiting the revelation of the sons of God. Furthermore, we ourselves, “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,” also groan as we expect sonship, the redemption of our body (v. 23). (Life-study of Romans, pp. 228-229, 251-252)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, msgs. 11-12; Life-study of 2 Thessalonians, msg. 1

<< WEEK 12 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #970 For the glorious revelation

Hope of Glory — The Manifestation of the Sons of God

- 1 For the glorious revelation
Of the sons of God to come,
All the creatures wait, expecting,
That they all may free become.**
- 2 All creation groans together,
Subject now to vanity,
Looking for their full deliv'rance
From corruption's slavery.**
- 3 Even we ourselves are groaning,
Till we reach maturity;
We are growing to adoption,
With Christ in conformity.**
- 4 'Tis for this the Spirit groaneth,
That to Christ we be conformed;
All things also work together,
That in life we be transformed.**
- 5 God will bring us into glory,
We will then be glorified;
Fully saturated with Him,
We'll be wholly sanctified.**
- 6 To the freedom of this glory,
All creation will be freed;
With the kid shall lie the leopard,**

**And the cow with bear shall feed.
7 Heirs with Christ in full adoption,
We'll His heritage possess,
Glorified with Him as brethren,
God's full glory we'll express.**