

Week Three

Job's Experience of God's Consuming and Stripping in the Old Testament Being Far Behind That of Paul in the New Testament

Hymns: 622

Scripture Reading: Job 3:1; 2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18; Phil. 1:19-25; 4:4

Outline

§Day 1

- I. **Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity:**
 - A. **When Job cursed the day of his birth, equivalent to cursing his mother, he surely was not perfect and upright, nor did he hold his integrity; rather, he became bankrupt in integrity—Job 3:1.**
 - B. **God's intention was to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes in order to make Job a man of God, constituted with God according to His economy; such a man (like Paul) would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live—Phil. 1:19-25; 4:5-9.**
 - C. **Job was dwelling on his excellent past and sighing over his miserable present (Job 29:1—30:31); he held fast insistently to, and even boasted of, his uprightness, righteousness, integrity, and perfection (27:1-7; 31:1-40):**
 1. **Paul, however, exercised to forget the things that were behind in the past in order to gain the present "today Christ" to the fullest extent—Phil. 3:8,**

13-14.

2. Furthermore, Paul was not a person of yesterday but a person of today (Heb. 3:7-8, 15; Psa. 95:7-8); we should not look ahead to the future and not look back to the past; we are people of today (Matt. 6:11, 33-34; Luke 19:9-10; 23:43).
3. The Christ whom we love is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply, sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth—Matt. 28:20; 1 Pet. 1:8; Heb. 8:2; 4:14-15; 7:26; 2 Cor. 6:2; Rom. 5:10.
4. When we fully become the New Jerusalem, we will have today since every day in eternity is today; the only day we have is today, not tomorrow.

§Day 2

D. Through his eight times of speaking to his three friends, Job exposed himself as a person with the following characteristics:

1. Job was self-righteous (Job 6:30; 9:20; 27:5-6; 32:1); he was darkened by the success and attainments of his natural being, contented with what he had become, yet he was unaware of his miserable situation before God (cf. Phil. 3:9; Rev. 3:17-18).
2. Job acknowledged God in name but not in reality; he was not saturated by God, filled with God, and mingled with God to become one with God—Psa. 92:10; Lev. 2:4-5; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 3:19; 5:18, 26; Heb. 2:10-11.
3. Job did not possess any element that indicated some aspect and some feature of the New Jerusalem as God's organism to live God and to express God for eternity; in contrast to this, the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the name of the Lord are written upon the overcomer, indicating that what God is, the nature of the New Jerusalem, and the person of the Lord have all been wrought into the overcomer—Rev. 3:12.

E. Neither Job nor his friends knew the purpose of God's dealing with him, as the apostle Paul did in declaring to the New Testament believers that the affliction the believers are suffering works out for them an eternal weight of glory, which

is the God of glory to be their glorious portion for them to gain and enjoy unto eternity—2 Cor. 4:17.

§Day 3

- F. If Job and his friends had taken the time to seek God in a spirit of humility and by exercising their spirit in prayer (Isa. 57:15; 66:2; Col. 4:2), God could have shown them that a regenerated, transformed, and glorified saint in Christ has nothing to do with the natural man and does not need to build up himself with the natural virtues.**
- G. This heavenly vision would have saved them from the time-wasting, pain-increasing, and vain debates in thirty-five chapters as a record of a group of blind persons groping in darkness; they talked about God and also referred to their spirit (Job 32:8), but they exercised their mind in three rounds of long debates instead of exercising their spirit to pray for Job and to fellowship with one another so that all of them could touch God and receive God as their life, light, and spiritual supply:**
- 1. If we are going to have vital groups, we must be warned by these talks in the book of Job; the group we see in the book of Job affords us a negative example; it is the kind of group meeting we should not have in the church life today; the first thing that we must do when we come together is to exercise our spirit to pray; the vital groups are groups of vital prayer—cf. Acts 12:5, 11-12; Heb. 10:24-25; 3:13.**
 - 2. The groups are vital in these two spirits—vital in our human spirit and vital in God's divine Spirit; the Christian life is a life of the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God dwelling in and mingled with our regenerated spirit to be one spirit—John 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 3:14; 6:18.**
 - 3. We need to learn to touch the divine Spirit in our spirit; this is the intrinsic significance of the Christian life and work; this is the move of God in man and the move of man in God to fulfill His economy, His plan, to dispense Himself in Christ as the Spirit into man in order to build up His Body and**

prepare His bride to consummate the New Jerusalem—2 Cor. 2:13; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9.

4. Paul stresses in the book of Romans that whatever we are (2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (vv. 10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4; 12:11) must be in our spirit; we must be perfected and built up to be persons in the spirit; there is no other way to be a lover of God, to be a seeker of Christ, or to be an overcomer than to be in the spirit (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

§Day 4

II. Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament—1 Tim. 1:16:

- A. **God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to tear down and take away the totality of our natural integrity—our natural perfection and uprightness in our character—that replaces our living out Christ to express Christ—Phil. 1:19-20; 3:4-9a.**
- B. **Day by day and hour by hour, Job was unhappily being consumed, but in the New Testament, God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things; since the day he was converted, Paul was a person under God's consuming and stripping as a prisoner in the Lord, but he was filled with joy and rejoicing—Acts 9:15-16; 2 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 1:19-21a; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phil. 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.**
- C. **Paul was crucified with Christ; to be reborn through termination and germination is to be regenerated crucified (John 3:5; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12); we, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20).**
- D. **Now in our Christian life we are dying to live (v. 20; 1 Cor. 15:31, 36; John 12:24; 2 Cor. 4:11); dying to live is the proper meaning of bearing the cross (Matt. 16:24-26; Hymns, #622).**

§Day 5

- E. In his experience of God’s consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down; Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live; on the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live for the saints’ progress (their growth in life) and for their joy of the faith (their enjoyment of Christ)—2 Cor. 1:8-9; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21-25.**
- F. When Paul was suffering distresses for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 12:10), he was well pleased, he was happy, and he was even rejoicing in the Lord for his experiences (Col. 1:24; Phil. 2:17-18).**
- G. Paul wanted to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings in order to be conformed to Christ’s death (3:10); he took Christ’s death as a mold for his life, and it was his great pleasure to be molded in the death of Christ.**
- H. Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; when God created man, this was the kind of life He wanted man to live—1:19-21a; Gen. 1:26.**
- I. Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body the putting to death, the killing, of Jesus and being delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh; when we are under the killing of the Lord’s death, His resurrection life is imparted through us into others—2 Cor. 4:10-12:**
 - 1. The putting to death of Jesus in our environment cooperates with the indwelling Spirit to kill our natural man (our outer man), comprising our body and our soul; as our outer man is being consumed by the killing work of death, our inner man is being renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life—v. 16.**

2. Paul said that he died daily (1 Cor. 15:31); daily he risked death, faced death, and died to self (2 Cor. 11:23; 4:11; 1:8-9; Rom. 8:36).
3. The application of Christ's death and its effectiveness is in the compounded Spirit, who dwells in our spirit to dispense Christ's death and its effectiveness from our spirit to our soul and even to our mortal body—Exo. 30:22-25; Rom. 8:6, 9-11.
4. This dispensing is the anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), and the anointing is the moving of the indwelling Spirit; our prayer activates the moving of the indwelling Spirit, and within this moving, there is the killing power.

§Day 6

- J. In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul said that our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory; eternal is in contrast to momentary, weight is in contrast to lightness, and glory is in contrast to affliction—2 Cor. 4:16-17; Rom. 8:28-29.**
- K. Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction to be momentary and light; instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of God as the weight of glory within us by our being transformed from one degree of glory to another; as long as we have more of God in us, this is what really matters—Acts 7:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 2:19:**
1. Like Paul, we are in an environment of suffering and pressure that works with the Spirit to kill our natural man; we should cooperate with the indwelling Spirit and accept the outward environment in our spirit, soul, and body, because we do not regard the things of temporary affliction which are seen but the things of the eternal glory which are not seen—Phil. 1:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1, 27; 2 Cor. 5:7.
 2. We need to exercise our spirit to rejoice in the midst of our killing environment (Phil. 4:4); the Lord's sovereignty is operating to put us under the killing of Christ's death so that His life may be manifested in our body in the renewing of our inner man to make us as new as the New Jerusalem

(2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16; 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Rev. 21:2, 5, 10).

WEEK 3 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 1:19-21 ...For me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

In Job chapter 3 Job cursed the day of his birth. He was a good man and he was trying to keep his perfection, uprightness, and integrity, but due to his vexation he could not contain himself, and he did not know what to do. No doubt, he expected to have a time to deal with God, but this was not something that he dared to initiate. Not wanting to lose his perfection, he released his vexation by cursing his birthday.

Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity. When Job cursed his birthday, he surely was not perfect and upright. In doing this... he became bankrupt in integrity....To curse his birthday meant that he cursed his mother. (Life-study of Job, p. 25)

Today's Reading

Job indicated that he preferred death instead of life (Job 3:11-23). It is difficult to believe that Job actually preferred death instead of life.... Perhaps Job did not [put an end to himself] because he wanted to keep his integrity.

Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament. God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to take away our riches from us. First, God stripped Job of his possessions, and then God consumed

him. Job's suffering of the plague on his body was a consuming. Day by day and hour by hour, Job was being consumed. In the New Testament God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things. Since the day he was converted, Paul was a person under God's consuming and God's stripping (2 Cor. 4:16).

Paul was born destined to be crucified, and he was reborn crucified that it would be no longer he who lived but Christ who lived in him (Gal. 2:20a). When we were regenerated, we, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us.

In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down (2 Cor. 4:8-9).... Every day he was cast down, but he did not perish. Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live. On the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live, not to die, because to him to live was Christ (Phil. 1:21-25). Paul's living Christ was for him to magnify Christ. His desire was to magnify Christ whether through life or through death (v. 20).

When Paul was suffering distresses for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 12:10), he was well pleased, he was happy, and he was even rejoicing in the Lord for his experiences (Col. 1:24). Paul's reaction to his sufferings was very different from Job's. Job did not rejoice but was all the time vexed.

Paul pursued to be conformed to Christ's death in the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). He took Christ's death as a mold for his life. To Paul it was a great pleasure to be molded in the death of Christ.

Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus and was always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:10-11). Every day in his Christian life Paul was put to death. The only way for him to manifest Christ's life was to experience Christ's death. (Life-study of Job, pp. 26-28)

Further Reading: Life-study of Job, msgs. 4, 16; Life-study of Philippians, msg. 7

WEEK 3 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith.

2 Cor. 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory.

Through his eight times of speaking to his three friends, Job exposed... many negative things concerning himself... [He] exposed himself as being self-righteous (Job 6:30; 9:20; 27:5-6; 32:1)... [and] as a person...full of reasons. A self-righteous person is always ready to give many reasons regarding his situation.

Job was unaware of his miserable situation before God. He acknowledged God in name but not in reality. He had not been saturated by God and filled with God. He had not been mingled with God and had not become one with God. Furthermore, Job did not possess any element that indicated some aspect and some feature of the New Jerusalem as God's organism to live God and to express God for eternity. Job did not know his situation, and he did not know the New Jerusalem. (Life-study of Job, pp. 126, 128)

Today's Reading

In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul did not lose heart. Though his outer man was being consumed, yet his inner man was being renewed day by day. He said that his momentary lightness of affliction worked out for him an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

[Paul] was such a man [who expected to be consumed every day] because he wanted to be renewed. Renewing can be consummated only by consuming....This kind of renewing by consuming adds to the weight of glory that you will share in the coming ages. We will all share the Lord's glory, but the weight of glory will differ among the believers. Through God's

consuming, the glory that we will share will become an eternal weight. Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction momentary and light. Instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of the weight of glory. How much weight of glory we will have depends on how much we suffer in our present affliction for the Lord's sake. Paul...knew that the more he suffered, the more weight of glory he would share in eternity.

Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19-21a). This is the Christian life. When God created man, this is the kind of life He wanted man to live.

God's intention with Job was to consume this "perfect and upright" person and to strip his attainments, his achievements, in the highest standard of ethics in perfection and uprightness (Job 1:1). God's intention was also to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes. Eventually, God's intention was to make Job a man of God (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17), filled with Christ, the embodiment of God, to be the fullness of God for the expression of God in Christ, not a man of the high standard of ethics in Job's natural perfection, natural uprightness, and natural integrity.... Such a person, constituted with God according to His economy, would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live. (Life-study of Job, pp. 28-29)

In [Hebrews Christ] is the present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister (Heb. 8:2) and our High Priest (4:14-15; 7:26), ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth. He is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne in the heavens, who is our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply. (Heb. 1:3, footnote 4)

Further Reading: Life-study of Job, msgs. 21, 23, 27-28

WEEK 3 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Isa. 57:15 ...I will dwell in the high and holy place, and with the contrite and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Rom. 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son...

Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.

Job was suffering, and his three friends came to comfort him. Elihu was also there to help the situation. However, these godly people did not pray for Job nor did they fellowship with one another by exercising their spirit that all of them might receive a certain amount of spiritual supply. That would have helped them find out the real purpose of God's dealing with Job. They talked about God, and they also referred to their spirit, but in all their debates there is no hint that they were exercising their spirit. Rather, they were exercising their mind, searching for words from the heavens, from the air, from the birds in the air, from the beasts on the earth, and from the fish in the sea, to compose their poetry. (Life-study of Job, p. 149)

Today's Reading

If we would have vital groups today, we need to be warned by these talks. The group we see in the book of Job affords us a negative example, an example of the kind of group meeting we should not have in the church life today.

When we come together in the vital groups, the first thing we must do is to pray. The vital groups are groups of vital prayer. In the vital groups, learn not to pray old prayers with old terms, prayers according to your tradition. Learn always to pray new and fresh prayers. Try to exercise your spirit, because the very God, our present God, our God today, is right in our spirit with all His bountiful supply. Thus, when you come to the vital groups,

you should remain in your spirit and exercise your spirit. In your spirit you will pick up some new terms and new expressions. You can do this because you have the Triune God as the consummated Spirit in your spirit.

The groups are vital in these two spirits.... Acts through Revelation [cover] the matter of the divine Spirit who is now in our spirit to become one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17)...God moves in man and man moves in God in these two spirits. Therefore, when you come to the vital groups, you should turn to the spirit, remain in the spirit, and exercise the spirit.

Do not come to the vital groups to talk naturally yet quite intimately. That kills the groups. Instead, exercise your spirit to praise God or to sing a stanza or a few lines of a hymn. This kind of praising and singing stirs up the spirits of those in the vital group. Then everyone will follow to pray.

After...prayer, we should fellowship...in our spirit by exercising our spirit. Our speaking concerning a saint who is sick should not be in ordinary words but in words from the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit....Try to bring the group into the two spirits. This will make a great difference, and...will help to lay the foundation for the vital group to move in the two spirits. Furthermore, when you visit others, at your home, in their home, or in the meeting hall, exercise your spirit.

Learn to touch the divine Spirit in your spirit. This is the Christian life, and this should also be the Christian work. This is the move of God in man and the move of man in God to fulfill God's economy, His plan concerning Christ with His Body. We are here on earth for this, and for this we should live by the two spirits, follow the two spirits, and do everything according to the two spirits.

The way to be such a person is very simple—the way is to be in our spirit....We all need to learn of John to be in our spirit [cf. Rev. 1:10, 12] to see the vision and to enjoy the Lord, to enjoy the Body, and to enjoy the speaking of the Spirit to the churches. (Life-study of Job, pp. 149-151, 146)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1967, vol. 2, "An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit," ch. 2; CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," ch. 6

WEEK 3 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

When we were regenerated, we were crucified....No one was born crucified in a physical sense, but every believer is regenerated crucified. This corresponds with the Lord's word in John 3:5: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."...The water refers to John's ministry, and the Spirit refers to the Lord's ministry.

To be born of water, according to John's ministry, is for the termination of people of the old creation. When we are buried in the water of John's ministry, this indicates that we realize that we are good for nothing but death. When people came to John to repent, John threw them into the water to bury them, to end them, to terminate them. When a sinner repents to God, he should repent to such an extent that he realizes he is good for nothing but death. Thus, he hands himself over like a corpse to the baptizer. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 463-464)

Today's Reading

When we preach the gospel and lead people to repent and believe into Christ, we may tell them, "You have to realize that as a person who has repented and believed into Christ, you, as a person of the old creation, are now a dead person. You have handed yourself over to me as a corpse, and I will now put you into a tomb of water to terminate you." Paul tells us clearly in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 that in baptism we are buried together with Christ into His death. When we raise up a baptized one from the water, that indicates resurrection. In resurrection we are now in the Spirit.

Through the terminating water of death and the germinating Spirit, we are born spiritually. To be reborn through termination and germination is to be regenerated. Thus, every regenerated person is regenerated crucified.

We are regenerated crucified and are dying to live (1 Cor. 15:36). We were born dead, and now we are dying to live. Dying to live means to live under the crucifixion of Christ. Every day we are dying. Paul says that he died daily (v. 31; 2 Cor. 4:11). Our environment is putting us to death every day. Our dying is a continuous matter. The Christian life is a long life of dying. Every day we die to live. We were reborn crucified, and now we are dying to live. This is a living under the crucifixion of Christ. In Galatians 2:20..., on the one hand, Paul had been terminated, but on the other hand, a resurrected Paul, one who had been regenerated, still lived. Paul had been crucified with Christ, yet Christ lived in him and he lived Christ (Phil. 1:21a). Christ and Paul had one life and one living.

Now we need to consider once more who died on the cross. We need to say, "I died on the cross." When Christ was incarnated, He took us upon Himself. He put on blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14). Therefore, when He was crucified, we were crucified with Him. All of us as a part of Christ, received the injection of His death on the cross.

In the phrase regenerated crucified and dying to live the conjunction and conjoins regenerated and dying. We are regenerated, and we are dying. We have been regenerated crucified, and now we need to die that we may live. After our baptism, we live by dying and we die to live. Dying to live is the proper meaning of bearing the cross. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 464-465, 469)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," chs. 9, 12-14

WEEK 3 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 4:11-12 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death operates in us, but life in you.

The putting to death of Jesus in our environment cooperates with the indwelling Spirit to kill our natural man (our outer man), comprising our body and our soul. This is mentioned emphatically in 2 Corinthians 4:10-12. Paul says that he was bearing about in his body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his body. Second Corinthians 4:16 says, "Our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." The word decaying means "being consumed, being wasted away, being worn out."... As our outer man is being consumed by the killing work of death, our inner man is being renewed with the fresh supply of the resurrection life. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 438-439)

Today's Reading

We all like to have a nice environment, with everything smooth, peaceful, sweet, and nice.... [Instead], we are under an environment of sufferings and pressures that works with the Spirit to kill our natural man. Brother Nee referred to this kind of environment as the discipline of the Holy Spirit.... In speaking about the application of Christ's death, Romans 8 refers to the indwelling Spirit, and 2 Corinthians 4 refers to the outward environment. The outward environment cooperates with the inward Spirit to carry out the killing of our natural man.

Second Corinthians 4:10 indicates that the death of Christ kills us. The apostle Paul always was under the killing of Christ's death.... He was continually under the persecution of the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Judaizers.... Daily he risked death, faced death, and died to self (2 Cor. 11:23; 4:11; 1:8-9; Rom. 8:36). He was bearing about in his body the killing of Jesus so that the life of Jesus could be manifested in him.

Christ's death and its effectiveness, with which the Spirit has been compounded, become prevailing in the Spirit.... If we enjoy and experience the Spirit, His death becomes prevailing in us. The death of Christ is in the Spirit.

The compounded Spirit dwells in our spirit to dispense Christ's death and its effectiveness from our spirit to our soul and even to our mortal body (Rom. 8:6, 9-10). This dispensing is the anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), and the anointing is the moving of the indwelling Spirit. Those Christians who love the Lord and maintain fellowship with the Lord, always have the feeling and sensation that something is moving within them. That moving is the anointing, and that anointing is the dispensing of the Triune God, of the death of Christ, and of the resurrection of Christ. That dispensing comprises all these elements: divinity, Christ's humanity, Christ's death, the effectiveness of His death, Christ's resurrection, and the power of His resurrection.

It is under this dispensing, this anointing, this moving of the indwelling Spirit, that we experience the death of Christ. When we are about to lose our temper, we may stop ourselves and go to pray. After our prayer, our anger is over. This is because our prayer activates the moving of the indwelling Spirit, and within this moving there is the killing power.

We should cooperate with the operating Spirit and accept the environment in our spirit, soul, and body. In every part of our being, we must be willing to cooperate with the indwelling Spirit and to accept the outward environment....This killing is carried out by the indwelling Spirit with the environment as the killing weapon. We need to experience the Lord's killing, His putting to death, every day. Then we will daily have the victory and joy in Christ's resurrection. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 438-439, 480-481, 437-440)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msgs. 33-35; Watchman Nee—a Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, ch. 15; CWWN, vol. 5, "The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit," ch. 6

WEEK 3 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

16-17 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory.

To us Christians there should be no thought of revenge or avenging ourselves....To forgive and forget others' mistakes is the conformation to the death of Christ.

We have the capacity within us to do this, and this capacity is the power of resurrection....Within a small seed there is not only life but also resurrection. If that seed falls into the earth and dies, a sprout will eventually rise up from underneath the earth. That is the power of resurrection. We are like small seeds. The more we are put into death, the more we have the expression of the power of resurrection. This is why we like to forgive people and forget their mistakes. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 492-493)

Today's Reading

Through our sufferings, we have the opportunity to gain more of God. Eventually, after passing through many sufferings, we have more of God in us. As long as we have more of God, this is what really matters.

For [Paul], to live was Christ, and to live Christ was to magnify Christ (Phil. 1:20-21a). Even when he was in a Roman prison, he did not want to be put to shame.... Even when he was in prison, people saw Christ in him. The manifested Christ is the life that comes out of the killing of Christ. This is what it means to live and walk under the crucifixion of Christ.

If the Christian life were merely a happy life, the apostle Paul would not have needed to charge us to rejoice (Phil. 4:4). While we are suffering

and wiping away our tears, we should rejoice. In order to weep, we do not need any kind of encouragement. Paul does not charge us to weep in the Lord, but he does charge us to rejoice in the Lord. If we do not exercise our spirit to rejoice in the midst of our killing environment, we cannot have any joy.

God in His sovereignty is putting us all the time under the killing of the cross. The apostle Paul was under the killing of the cross, and so are we....This is God's divine arrangement. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," pp. 493, 481-482)

When all of the Lord's children pass through the process of renewing to become the New Jerusalem, they will be in a state of being fully renewed. The holy city is called the New Jerusalem because it has no old element of God's old creation. As we pass through afflictions, there needs to be a continual renewing taking place in us day by day so that God can accomplish His heart's desire. (CWWL, 1989, vol. 2, "Being Renewed Day by Day," p. 363)

In every situation related to our daily living, we need to ask ourselves whether we are living by the divine life or by our natural life. If we do this, quite often we will realize that we are living by our natural life, our self. At such times we need to go to the cross (Luke 9:23). To go to the cross is to be conformed to the death of Christ....We are those who have been chosen, called, and sanctified by God to do His will. Doing the will of God is altogether a suffering to our natural life. Moreover, we are those who have been saved, regenerated, and separated to live not by our natural life but by the divine life....We like to do things by ourselves. To do something not by our life but by the life of another is a suffering. This is the Christian life. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," p. 500)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," chs. 15-16; CWWL, 1989, vol. 2, "Being Renewed Day by Day," ch. 2

<< WEEK 3 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #622 If we take up the cross, will we but suffer pain

The Way of the Cross — The Meaning of the Cross

1 If we take up the cross, will we but suffer pain?

Nay, if we bear the cross, be sure that we will die!

The meaning of the cross is that we may be slain;

The cross experienced the self will crucify.

2 Divine deliverance e'er slays man by the cross;

Though cruel it may seem, it is a grand release.

Christ ne'er will be our life if we escape the cross;

Christ ne'er will be expressed but by our sure decease.

3 The cross's final goal, that God's will be fulfilled;

His will's arch enemy is but the self of man.

If self be done away and all the soul-life killed,

God's will shall then prevail and prospered be His plan.

