

Week Four

Job and the Two Trees

Hymns: 1143

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9, 17; Rev. 22:1-2, 14; Job 1:1; 2:3; 4:7-8; 42:1-6; Rom. 8:5-6

Outline

§Day 1

- I. **According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations:**
 - A. **The tree of life signifies the Triune God as life to man in man's relationship with Him; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan, the devil, the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God—Gen. 2:9, 17; Psa. 36:9a.**
 - B. **The tree of life is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition—John 1:4; 15:1; 8:44.**

§Day 2

- C. **The first way is the way of life, the constricted way, for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply; the second way is the way of death and of good and evil, the broad way, for men to follow Satan to be his children—Matt. 7:13-14; Acts 9:2; 1 John 3:10a.**
- D. **The first principle is the principle of life—the principle of dependence on God; the second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil—the principle of independence from God—Gen. 4:3-4; Jer. 17:5-8; John 15:5.**

E. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two trees, the two sources, the two ways, and the two principles:

1. The consummation of God's way of life is a city of water of life, the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-11; 22:1-2.
2. The consummation of the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire—19:20; 20:10, 14-15.

§Day 3

II. God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the line of the tree of life:

- A. The logic of Job and his friends was according to the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; they were devoid of the divine revelation and of the experience of the divine life—Job 2:11—32:1.**
- B. Job, like his friends, was halted in the knowledge of right and wrong, not knowing God's economy—4:7-8:**
1. Neither Job nor his friends were in the line of the tree of life as God ordained man to be—Gen. 2:9.
 2. Their concept concerning man's relationship with God was built on good and evil, right and wrong, absolutely according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and absolutely according to the human, ethical concept of fallen man—Job 8:1-20.
- C. Job and his friends were in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; God was trying to rescue them from that realm and put them into the realm of the tree of life—1:1; 2:3; 19:10.**
- D. God's purpose in dealing with Job was to turn him from the way of good and evil to the way of life so that he might gain God to the fullest extent—42:1-6.**

§Day 4

III. We need a vision of the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1-2, 14:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—Gen. 2:9.**
- B. The tree of life is the center of the universe:**
 - 1. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden; hence, the universe is centered on the tree of life.
 - 2. Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life—3:22; Rev. 22:14.
- C. The New Testament reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life—John 1:4; 15:5.**
- D. All the aspects of the all-inclusive Christ revealed in the Gospel of John are the outcome of the tree of life—6:48; 8:12; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6.**
- E. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all of God's redeemed—Rev. 22:1-2, 14:**
 - 1. The tree of life fulfills for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.
 - 2. The fruits of the tree of life will be the food for God's redeemed in eternity; these fruits will be continually fresh, being produced every month—Rev. 22:2.

§Day 5

IV. The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles of living:

- A. The two trees show that a Christian can live according to two different principles—the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life—1 Cor. 8:1.**
- B. Job and his friends pursued something in the realm of ethics, but we, the believers in Christ, should pursue something in the**

realm of God—15:28; Eph. 3:16-21.

C. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life—1 John 5:11-13, 20:

1. When we received the Lord Jesus and gained a new life, we obtained another principle of living—the principle of life; if we do not know this principle, we will set the principle of life aside and follow the principle of right and wrong.
2. In our practical living we may not be in the line of the tree of life but in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Prov. 16:25; 21:2.
3. In our daily living we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but in the realm of the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2.
4. In order to live according to the principle of the tree of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life—v. 6; Eph. 4:18-19; Isa. 40:31:
 - a. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death—Rom. 8:6a.
 - b. The sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace, with a consciousness of strength, satisfaction, rest, brightness, and comfort—v. 6b.
5. When we live according to the principle of the tree of life, we will care not for good and evil but for life, and we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:3.

§Day 6

V. Every genuine believer in Christ is a miniature garden of Eden, with God as the tree of life in his spirit and Satan as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in his flesh—Gen. 2:9; Rom. 8:2, 5-6:

- A. We are a miniature garden of Eden because the triangular situation involving God, man, and Satan is now within us—Gen. 1:27-29; 2:9, 16-17:**
1. Before man fell, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of

life were outside of man—vv. 9, 16-17.

2. Through the fall the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in us, and through regeneration the tree of life is now in us.
3. Our spirit is mingled with the Triune God, and our body, which has become the flesh, is mixed with the sinful element of Satan (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:6, 12); this makes the Christian a miniature garden of Eden.

B. As those who were represented by Adam in Genesis 2, we have the tree of life in our spirit and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in our flesh—v. 9; Rev. 2:7b; 22:14:

1. Whenever we contact the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we become dead; whenever we contact the tree of life, we gain life—Rom. 8:5-6, 10.
2. If we stand on the side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and contact Satan, we will live out the life of Satan, the devil, and the result will be death—2 Cor. 11:3; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4.
3. If we stand on the side of the tree of life and contact God, we will live out God, and the result will be life—John 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 4-5.

C. Romans 8:5-6 shows a miniature garden of Eden, with the flesh and death on one side, the spirit and life on the other side, and the mind in the middle:

1. We learn from Romans 8 that we need to turn our being to the living One who dwells in our spirit and stay one with Him—v. 6b; 1 Cor. 6:17.
2. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have life, peace, light, comfort, and strength; our thirst is quenched, and our hunger is satisfied—Rom. 8:5, 6b; John 4:14; 7:37-38; Matt. 5:6.
3. When we set our mind on the spirit, our mind is full of life and peace—Rom. 8:6b:
 - a. We have peace because there is no discord between our outward behavior and our inner being—v. 6b; Isa. 9:6-7; 26:3.
 - b. When we speak with our mind set on the spirit, life is embodied in our words because we are one spirit with the Lord—Prov. 18:21; John 6:63; Eph. 4:29.

WEEK 4 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

In Genesis 2 there are two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, in Revelation 21 and 22 we see only one tree—the tree of life—in a holy city. In the center of this city is the throne of God and of the Lamb (22:1), indicating God’s administration....Out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, that is, out of the one God, flows a river, and on the two sides of this river grows the tree of life (22:2a). According to the principle, if the tree of life ends in the city of water, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil must end in the lake of fire. All the evil things in Revelation 22 are involved with the lake of fire. Thus, the two ends are the city of water and the lake of fire. Between the two sources and the two ends are two lines, which become two ways. Each source issues in a line that becomes a way consummating in an end. (Life-study of Job, pp. 197-198)

Today’s Reading

The Bible, as a full record of the divine revelation, is a book of signs (Rev. 1:1b)....The tree of life, as the highest sign, signifies God, even the Triune God, as life to man in man’s relationship with Him (Psa. 36:9a)....The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as the highest negative sign, signifies Satan the devil, even the evil one, as death to man in man’s fall before God (Gen. 2:17).

The first tree signifies God only as life, with no implications of other elements....The second tree signifies Satan as death, with the implications of knowledge, good, and evil.

Whereas God is simple, Satan is very complicated. According to the

divine revelation, knowledge is Satan, good is Satan, and evil is Satan. Today the world is in an age that worships knowledge. Before eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were ignorant, not knowing, so they had no sin. After they ate of the tree of knowledge, their eyes were opened, and they became knowledgeable. That was sin. We all consider that to commit sin is sin, but we may not consider that knowing sin is sin.

The genuine good is God Himself (Matt. 19:17a); hence, gaining God equals gaining the genuine good. When the rich young ruler came to the Lord Jesus and called Him, "Good Teacher," the Lord Jesus said, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One—God" (Mark 10:17-18). If besides God we gain any other good, that is terrible. If we touch the good things outside of God, this means that we touch Satan.

The two trees are not for producing materials but for man to eat their fruit (Gen. 3:3, 6b), the fruit of the tree of life becoming food to man for nourishing, for the dispensing of life, and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becoming poison to man for killing. To eat means to take in something that is outside of us and then digest and assimilate it. We must be careful concerning what we eat. Surely, today's television and so many different kinds of newspapers and magazines are branches of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The two trees, as signs of God and Satan, are the two sources of two categories of men. The first tree is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment, of whom Abel is the leading one (Gen. 4:4). The second tree is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition. (Life-study of Job, pp. 198-200)

Further Reading: Life-study of Job, msgs. 1, 4-7, 9, 12, 15, 21, 23-24, 31, 35-37; CWWL, 1979, vol. 1, "Basic Lessons on Life," ch. 2; CWWL, 1950-1951, vol. 1, pp. 131-135

WEEK 4 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 22:1-2 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month...

Two lines, as the two ways, originate from the two sources. The first way is the way of life, the constricted way (Matt. 7:14), the Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22), the straight way (2 Pet. 2:15), the way of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:21), the way of salvation (Acts 16:17), the way of God (Matt. 22:16; Acts 18:26), and the way of the Lord (Acts 18:25), for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply and unto His eternal life as the goal, that they may be born of God in His life and nature (John 1:12-13), transformed and conformed into His glorious image (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29), and glorified in Him as glory (Rom. 8:30; 1 Pet. 5:10a; Heb. 2:10a) to gain Him and participate in Him to the fullest extent. In this way of life are Abel, Seth, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Samuel, all the Old Testament prophets, and all the New Testament believers (Heb. 11:39-40). God's purpose in dealing with Job was to turn him from the way of good and evil to this way of life that he might gain God to the fullest extent. (Life-study of Job, p. 201)

Today's Reading

The second way is the way of good and evil, the way of death, the broad way (Matt. 7:13), for men to follow Satan to be his children (1 John 3:10a) unto death and his companions in his eternal perdition (Matt. 25:41). In this way of death and of good and evil are Cain, Lamech, Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-cain (Jude 11a; Gen. 4:16-24), Ham, Cush, Nimrod (Gen. 10:6-12), Korah, Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11b), Saul, Absalom, Antichrist and his followers (Rev. 19:19-21), and all unbelievers (Rev. 20:15).

These two ways, the way of life and the way of death, lead men to the

two God-ordained ends—the New Jerusalem and the lake of fire—respectively.

The two ways, the way of life and the way of death and of good and evil, constitute the two controlling, ruling, and regulating principles by which men have their relationship with God. The first principle is the principle of life, according to which all men in the way of life keep their contact with God, and by which they seek God, gain God, possess God, and enjoy God, step by step, until they reach the fullest extent. The second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil, in which all men in the way of death follow Satan either consciously or unconsciously, and through which they reject God and His way of life to be Satan's companions unto death and eternal perdition.

God's purpose in dealing with Job severely was to adjust his logic concerning his relationship with God from the principle of good and evil according to ethics to the principle of life according to God, that he might be one who gained God and participated in God for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy.

The two ends are the two destinations of the two ways men take in their relationship with God. The New Jerusalem, as the best and most glorious end of God's way of life, is a dynamic incentive for us to seek God until we gain Him to the fullest extent according to His love and grace; and the lake of fire, as the worst and most miserable end of Satan's way of death and of good and evil, should be a solemn warning to the men who follow Satan in his way against God's economy, to turn from his way of death to God's way of life that they may escape Satan's eternal judgment and eternal perdition, according to God's righteousness and justice. (Life-study of Job, pp. 201-203)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, "The Tree of Life," chs. 1-10, 14-16; CWWL, 1981, vol. 1, "God's Eternal Intention and Satan's Counterplot," chs. 1-2

WEEK 4 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Job 2:3 ...Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity...

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life...

God's intention was not to have a Job in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but a Job in the line of the tree of life (Gen. 2:9).

After God created Adam, He placed him in front of two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil....God wanted Adam to eat of the tree of life. If Adam had eaten of the tree of life, this tree would have entered into him and then would have grown within him. However, Adam ate instead of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was thus sown into Adam and grew within him, and it has been growing in all of Adam's descendants. At Job's time the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was only two thousand years old, but now it is six thousand years old. Today the entire human race is a race constituted according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In every human society, regardless of the kind of ethics it has, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is growing. As long as this tree is growing among the human race, there will be no peace. (Life-study of Job, pp. 29-30)

Today's Reading

Before we were regenerated, we were in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we were regenerated, Christ planted Himself into us as the tree of life [cf. John 15:5; 11:25]. However, in our practical, daily living, are we in the line of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or in the line of the tree of life? In our married life, for example, we may be in the line of the tree of knowledge, and by the way we talk with our spouse we may not only grow this tree but also water it and fertilize it. What, then, should we do? We need to remember Paul's word in Galatians

2:20—"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me"—and turn from the tree of knowledge to the tree of life. If we do this, we will live Christ and grow Christ as the tree of life.

Job, like his friends, was halted in the knowledge of right and wrong, not knowing God's economy, not realizing in an adequate way the purpose of God's creating of man. He and his friends were devoid of the divine revelation and of the experience of the divine life. He had no idea that God had no intention to increase his perfection, uprightness, righteousness, and integrity. Rather, God's intention was to strip all these human virtues which he had as his contentment, that he could seek and gain only God Himself. Neither his friends nor he were in the line of the tree of life as God ordained man to be.

In our daily living we should not be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but should be in the realm of the life-giving Spirit. We should not do anything according to good and evil. Instead, we should do everything according to the Spirit by being one spirit with the Lord. For instance, we need to be one spirit with the Lord in our speaking. Before I speak for the Lord, I pray one simple prayer: "Lord, be one spirit with me that I may be one spirit with You. Lord, speak in my speaking and make my speaking Your speaking." This is to live in the dispensing of the eternal economy of God. When we live and speak in this way, we enjoy the divine dispensing, and Christ increases within us. Christ grows in us and we grow in Christ.

Suppose there is a problem between you and your spouse. You should not do anything, for whatever you do will be in the realm of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You should simply pray-read Galatians 2:20.... Do not care for the problem or your anger—just care for Christ living in you. This should be our way in everything. (Life-study of Job, pp. 30, 40, 72)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 1, "The Flesh and the Spirit," ch. 2

WEEK 4 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

John 6:48 I am the bread of life.

The tree of life is the center of the universe. According to the purpose of God, the earth is the center of the universe, the garden of Eden is the center of the earth, and the tree of life is the center of the garden of Eden.... Nothing is more central and crucial to both God and man than the tree of life. The tree of life in the garden was an indicator that God desires to be our life in the form of food. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 429)

Today's Reading

The New Testament reveals Christ as the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life. Speaking of Christ, John 1:4 says, "In Him was life." Since John 1:3 refers to the creation in Genesis 1, the mention of life in verse 4 should refer to the life indicated by the tree of life in Genesis 2. This is confirmed by John's mention of the tree of life in Revelation 22. The life displayed by the tree of life in Genesis 2 was the life incarnated in Christ. The Lord told us that He Himself is life (John 14:6). Furthermore, John 15 reveals that Christ is a tree, the vine tree. On the one hand, He is a tree; on the other hand, He is life. If we put together John 1:4 and 15:5, we shall realize that Christ is the tree of life. The fact that He said in John 6 that He is the bread of life indicates that He has come to us as the tree of life in the form of food. Therefore, Christ, the embodiment of God, is the tree of life.

Concerning Christ as the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life in Genesis 2:9, Revelation 2:7 says, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." It was God's original intention that man should eat of the tree of life. Due to the fall, the tree of life was closed to man (Gen. 3:22-24). Through the redemption of Christ, the way to touch the tree of life, which is God Himself in Christ as life

to man, has been opened again (Heb. 10:19-20). However, in the church's degradation religion crept in with its knowledge to distract the believers in Christ from eating Him as the tree of life. Hence, in Revelation 2:7 the Lord promises to grant the overcomers to eat of Himself as the tree of life. The word for tree in Revelation 2:7, as in 1 Peter 2:24, is wood in Greek, not the usual word used for tree. We have seen that the tree of life refers to Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God to be our life in the form of food. Here in Revelation 2:7 this expression refers to the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood—1 Peter 2:24) and resurrected (implied in the zoe life—John 11:25) Christ who is in the church today, the consummation of which will be the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the enjoyment of all God's redeemed people for eternity (Rev. 22:2, 14). The eating of the tree of life not only was God's original intention concerning man; it will also be the eternal issue of Christ's redemption. For eternity God's redeemed people will enjoy the tree of life as their portion.

The tree of life growing on the two sides of the river [Rev. 22:2] indicates that the tree of life is a vine, spreading and proceeding along the flow of the water of life for God's people to receive and enjoy. It fulfills, for eternity, what God intended from the beginning. In eternity God's redeemed people will enjoy the tree of life; that is, they will enjoy Christ, the Son of God, the redeeming Lamb, as their eternal life supply.

Through Christ's redemption, which has fulfilled the requirements of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness, the way to the tree of life has been opened again to the believers. Hence, the believers who wash their robes in the redeeming blood of Christ have the right to enjoy the tree of life as their eternal portion. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 429-430)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 41; CWWL, 1964, vol. 3, "The Economy of God," ch. 12

WEEK 4 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.

Prov. 16:25 There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end of it is the ways of death.

In Genesis 2...the two trees were put there to show us that man, especially a Christian, can live on earth according to two different principles. Man can live according to the principle of right and wrong or according to the principle of life. Some Christians take the principle of right and wrong as the standard for their living, while other Christians take the principle of life as their standard for living. (CWWN, vol. 56, p. 419)

Today's Reading

Christianity is not a matter of asking whether something is right or wrong. Christianity is a matter of checking with the life inside us whenever we do something. What does the new life which God has given us tell us inwardly about this matter?...Christianity does not require that we ask whether something is right or wrong, good or evil. On the contrary, whenever we do anything, there is a life within us which rises up to speak with us. When we feel right inwardly, when we feel the life inside of us moving, when we are strong within and sense the anointing, we know that we have life. Many times something is right and good in the eyes of man, but strangely the inner life has no response and grows cold and retreats. God's Word tells us that our Christian living is based on an inner life, not an outward standard of right and wrong. Many worldly people, who are not saved, live according to the best standard of living they can attain: the principle of right and wrong. If you or I also live by the principle of right or wrong, we are the same as worldly people. Christians are different from non-Christians because we do not live by an outward standard or law. Our subject is not human morality or concepts. We do not determine whether

something is right or wrong by subjecting it to human criticism or opinion. Today we have only one question: What does our inner life say? If the life is strong and active within us, we can do this; if the life is cold and retreating within us, we should not.

Sometimes we come across a brother who has acted very foolishly. According to what is proper, we should strongly exhort or rebuke him....We prepare ourselves to face the situation.... He acted foolishly, so what can we do but exhort him? We have gone to his door and raised our hand to knock, but inwardly there is a problem. Our raised hand drops to our side. Even though we have convinced ourselves that we are right, this is not a matter of right or wrong. This is a matter of whether or not the life of God allows us. Many times when we go to exhort a brother, he will receive our exhortation with courtesy and promise to do what God says. Yet the more we preach to him, the more our inward being wilts. When we return home, we have to admit that we have been wrong in exhorting the brother! Therefore, it is not a matter of good or bad but a matter of being full of life inwardly.

I met a needy brother a few days ago.... I thought that I certainly should do something for him because there was no prospect of help coming to him from any direction. Just at that point I had no surplus, so it was a great sacrifice to come to his aid. I seemed to be exceeding the limits of my strength to help him.... I should have been happy as I gave him some money. Yet for some unknown reason, I wilted inwardly as I gave him the money which I had promised to give him. A voice within said, "You are just acting on charity. That was not an act of life; it was merely human chivalry and natural kindness. It was not done in life but in yourself." God did not want me to do this.... Even though I had given the brother money, I had to bow before God, confess my sin, and ask His forgiveness when I reached home. (CWWN, vol. 56, pp. 421-422, 429-430)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 3, "Our Urgent Need—Spirit and Life," ch. 2; CWWL, 1950-1951, vol. 2, "Redemption in God's Plan," chs. 2-3

WEEK 4 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:5-6 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Man is tripartite: he has a spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is our innermost part, the body is our outermost part, and the soul, the main part of our being, stands between them. As a result of the fall, Satan as the tree of knowledge came into man's flesh. As a result of our believing in Christ, God as the tree of life came into our spirit. Therefore, the two trees that were once in the garden outside of man are now within us, one in our flesh and the other in our spirit. If we read Romans 7 carefully, we will see that Paul said in his flesh nothing good dwells, only sin. Sin is actually the evil nature of Satan. To say that sin dwells in our flesh means that Satan, the evil one, is in our flesh. Romans 8:16, a verse which proves that God is in us, says that the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirit. Thus, every genuine Christian is a miniature garden of Eden. The mind of your soul represents your self, sin in your flesh represents Satan, and the Spirit in your spirit represents God. As in the garden of Eden, the three parties form a triangular situation within us. (Life-study of Genesis, p. 177)

Today's Reading

The seed of this triangular situation was sown in Genesis 2, and the growth of the seed is found in Romans 8, where we see the outcrop of the two trees. Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the flesh is death and that the mind set on the spirit is life and peace. In Genesis 2 the two trees were objective; in Romans 8 they are subjective. We should never say that these two trees are no longer with us. Even as you read this message, they are within you....Thus, in Romans 8 we find a present-day garden of Eden. Romans 8:2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life, which sets us free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, in Romans 8 we have two laws—the

law of life and the law of death. These two laws are the two principles of the two trees in our subjective experience. (Life-study of Genesis, pp. 177-178)

In the garden man faced the tree of life on the one hand and the tree of knowledge on the other. Now, as those who were represented by Adam in Genesis 2, we have the tree of life in our spirit and the tree of knowledge in our flesh. We need to decide whether we shall set our mind on the flesh and suffer death or whether we shall set our mind on the spirit and enjoy life and peace. By setting our mind on the spirit we abide in Christ who as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our spirit.

We have learned from Romans 8 that all we need to do is turn our being to the living One who indwells our spirit and stay one with Him. When we turn to Him and set our mind on Him, we have life, peace, light, comfort, strength, and all we need. Our thirst is quenched and our hunger is satisfied.

In order to set our being on the mingled spirit, we need to pray. How easily we are distracted from the divine Spirit in our spirit! Our mind is so quickly drawn to other things. Therefore, we need to pray, not mainly to ask the Lord to do things for us, but to keep our mind set on the spirit. Be assured, the Lord will take care of you and do everything for you. Hence, in prayer you need not be occupied with your needs [such as love or patience]. Instead, pray to keep in touch with the living One in your spirit. The more you keep in contact with Him, the more you will enjoy Him...We should simply praise the Lord that He is our love, our patience, and our everything. If we praise Him in this way, declaring how good the Lord is, spontaneously love and patience will flow out of us...The more we set our mind on the living One in our spirit, the more He lives Himself out of us. (Life-study of Romans, pp. 452-454)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msgs. 13-16; Life-study of Romans, msgs. 19, 21, 37, 39; CWWL, 1955, vol. 4, "Further Talks on the Knowledge of Life," ch. 13; CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Knowledge of Life," ch. 9

<< WEEK 4 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #1143 The tree of life, how sweet the fruit

Experience of Christ — As Food and Drink

1

**The tree of life, how sweet the fruit,
With God as life complete.**

**I once was dead, but now I live,
Was starved, but now I eat.**

2

**'Twas God that brought me to the tree,
With Christ Himself as meat;
How precious did that tree become
When I began to eat.**

3

**The Lord Himself is food to me,
He is my life supply;
He will my pure enjoyment be,
None else can satisfy.**

4

**I freely eat this living tree,
For eating is the way
To put God's life inside of me,
To live by Him today.**

