

THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

The Will of God—Our Sanctification

EM Hymns: 1135

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:10-11; 12:10, 14; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:26;

1 Thes. 4:3a; 5:23-24; John 17:17

- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb 12:10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- 1 Thes 4:3a For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

I. The will of God is our sanctification; to be sanctified is to be made holy, which is to be separated unto God and saturated with God as the Holy One, the One who is different, distinct, from everything that is common—1 Thes. 4:3a; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:25-27.

- 1 Thes 4:3a For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

II. Ephesians 1:4-5 and Hebrews 2:10-11 show that sanctification is for sonship; actually, sanctification is God's "sonizing":

- Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

A. We were chosen in eternity past "to be holy...unto [for, or, resulting in] sonship"—Eph.

1:4-5; Rev. 21:2, 9-11.

Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

B. The resurrected Christ is the Captain of our salvation, leading many sons into glory by sanctifying them—Heb. 2:10-11.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

III. There are three aspects of sanctification in the Scriptures:

A. There is the Spirit's sanctification in seeking the God-chosen people before they repent and believe—1 Pet. 1:2.

1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

B. There is the positional sanctification by the blood of Christ at the time of the believers' believing—Heb. 13:12; 9:13-14; 10:29.

Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Heb 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who are defiled sanctifies to the purity of the flesh,

Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 10:29 By how much do you think he will be thought worthy of worse punishment who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has considered the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

C. There is the Spirit's dispositional sanctification in the believers' full course of their Christian life—1 Thes. 5:23-24; Rom. 15:16b; 6:19, 22; cf. 5:10; Rev. 22:14; 2 Pet. 1:4.

1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

Rom 15:16b ... a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

Rom 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.

Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.

Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

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.

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

IV. The divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament:

- A. The divine sanctification is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely, making us sons of God that we may become the same as God in His life and in His nature (but not in His Godhead), so that we may be God's expression.
- B. We say that sanctification is the holding line because every step of God's work with us is to make us holy— John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Psa. 73:16-17, 25-26:
- John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
- Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
- 1 Cor 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- 1 Cor 12:3b ... and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.
- Heb 12:4 You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin,
- Heb 12:5 And you have completely forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when reprov'd by Him;
- Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."
- Heb 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline?
- Heb 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all sons have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.
- Heb 12:9 Furthermore we have had the fathers of our flesh as discipliners and we respected them; shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?
- Heb 12:10 For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.
- Heb 12:11 Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.
- Heb 12:12 Therefore set straight the hands which hang down and the paralyzed knees,
- Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather may be healed.
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.
- 1 Thes 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;
- Rev 2:7a He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ...
- Psa 73:16 When I considered this in order to understand it, / It was a troublesome task in my sight,
- Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; / Then I perceived their end.
- Psa 73:25 Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.
- Psa 73:26 My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.
1. The seeking sanctification, the initial sanctification, is unto repentance to bring us back to God—1 Pet. 1:2; Luke 15:8-10, 17-21; John 16:8-11.
- 1 Pet 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

- Luke 15:8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?
- Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost.
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.
- Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!
- Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.
- Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.
- Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
- Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
- John 16:8 And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment:
- John 16:9 Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me;
- John 16:10 And concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer behold Me;
- John 16:11 And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.
2. The redeeming sanctification, the positional sanctification, is by the blood of Christ, to transfer us from Adam to Christ—Heb. 13:12.
- Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
3. The regenerating sanctification, the beginning of dispositional sanctification, renews us from our spirit to make us, the sinners, sons of God—a new creation with the divine life and nature— John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.
- Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
4. The renewing sanctification, the continuation of dispositional sanctification, renews our soul from our mind through all the parts of our soul to make our soul a part of God's new creation—Rom. 12:2b; 6:4; 7:6; Eph. 4:23; Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
- Rom 12:2b ... but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
- Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
- Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.
- Ezek 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.
- 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,

- 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.
5. The transforming sanctification, the daily sanctification, reconstitutes us with the element of Christ metabolically to make us a new constitution as a part of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- 1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
6. The conforming sanctification, the shaping sanctification, shapes us in the image of the glorious Christ to make us the expression of Christ—Rom. 8:29.
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
7. The glorifying sanctification, the consummating sanctification, redeems our body by transfiguring it to make us Christ’s expression in full and in glory— Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23.
- Phil 3:21 Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.
- Rom 8:23 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.
- C. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit—15:16b; 8:4.
- Rom 15:16b ... a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

V. In order to live a holy life for the church life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness—1 Thes. 3:13:

- 1 Thes 3:13 So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
- A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; John 14:1; 16:22; Acts 11:23)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
- Matt 9:4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?
- Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- John 14:1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe into God, believe also into Me.
- John 16:22 Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
- Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;
- Heb 10:22 Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- 1 John 3:20 Because if our heart blames us, it is because God is greater than our heart and knows all things.
- B. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the “switch” of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by

our small heart—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.

Matt 12:33 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for by the fruit the tree is known.

Matt 12:34 Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt 12:35 The good man, out of his good treasure, brings forth good things, and the evil man, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil things.

Matt 12:36 And I say to you that every idle word which men shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in the day of judgment.

Matt 12:37 For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Ezek 36:27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

C. God is the unchanging One, but according to our natural birth, our heart is changeable, both in our relationship with others and with the Lord—cf. 2 Tim. 4:10; Matt. 13:18-23.

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

Matt 13:18 You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed.

Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.

Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.

Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

D. There is no one who, according to his natural, human life, is steadfast in his heart; because our heart changes so easily, it is not at all trustworthy— Jer. 17:9-10; 13:23.

Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?

Jer 17:10 I, Jehovah, search the heart / And test the inward parts, / Even to give to each one according to his ways, / According to the fruit of his deeds.

Jer 13:23 Can the Cushite change his skin, / Or the leopard his spots? / Then you also may be able to do good, / Who are accustomed to do evil.

E. Our heart is blamable because it is changeable; an unchanging heart is a blameless heart—Psa. 57:7; 108:1; 112:7.

Psa 57:7 My heart is steadfast, O God; / My heart is steadfast. / I will sing, indeed I will sing psalms.

Psa 108:1 My heart is fixed, O God; / I will sing, indeed I will sing psalms, / Even with my glory.

Psa 112:7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; / His heart is steadfast, trusting in Jehovah.

F. In God's salvation the renewing of the heart is once for all; however, in our experience our heart is renewed continually because it is changeable—Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 4:16.

Ezek 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

G. Because our heart is changeable, it needs to be renewed continually by the sanctifying Spirit so that our heart can be established and built up in the state of being holy, separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God—Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Psa. 51:10-12.

Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- Rom 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.
- Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
- 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, / And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- Psa 51:11 Do not cast me from Your presence, / And do not take the Spirit of Your holiness away from me.
- Psa 51:12 Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit.
- H. As our heart is being established blameless in holiness by the continual renewing of the sanctifying Spirit, we are becoming the New Jerusalem with the newness of the divine life, and we are becoming the holy city with the holiness of the divine nature—Rev. 21:2; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
- 1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

VI. “The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it”—1 Thes. 5:23-24:

- A. The God of peace is the Sanctifier; His sanctification brings in peace; when we are wholly sanctified by Him from within, we have peace with Him and with man in every way—vv. 23, 13; 2 Thes. 3:16.
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1 Thes 5:13 And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.
- 2 Thes 3:16 Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace continually in every way. The Lord be with you all.
- B. God desires to sanctify us, and He Himself will do it as long as we are willing to pursue Him as holiness and cooperate with Him; in this way we can be holy as He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16); without holiness we cannot see Him (Heb. 12:14).
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
- C. By sanctifying us, God transforms us in the essence of our spirit, soul, and body, making us wholly like Him in nature; in this way He preserves our spirit, soul, and body wholly complete—1 Thes. 5:23:
- 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1. Through the fall our body was ruined, our soul was contaminated, and our spirit was deadened; in God’s full salvation our entire being is saved and made complete and perfect.

2. For this, God is preserving our spirit from any deadening element (Heb. 9:14), our soul from remaining natural and old (Matt. 16:24-26), and our body from the ruin of sin (1 Thes. 4:4; Rom. 6:6).
 - Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
 - Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
 - Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
 - Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?
 - 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
 - Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
3. Such a preservation by God and His thorough sanctification sustain us to live a holy life unto maturity so that we may meet the Lord in His coming.
4. Quantitatively, God sanctifies us wholly; qualitatively, God preserves us complete—that is, He keeps our spirit, soul, and body perfect.
5. Although God preserves us, we need to take the responsibility, the initiative, to cooperate with His operation to be preserved by keeping our spirit, soul, and body in the saturating of the Holy Spirit—1 Thes. 5:12-24.
 - 1 Thes 5:12 Furthermore we ask you, brothers, to acknowledge those who labor among you and take the lead among you in the Lord and admonish you,
 - 1 Thes 5:13 And to regard them most highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.
 - 1 Thes 5:14 And we exhort you, brothers, Admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, sustain the weak, be long-suffering toward all.
 - 1 Thes 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always pursue what is good both for one another and for all.
 - 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
 - 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
 - 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
 - 1 Thes 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;
 - 1 Thes 5:20 Do not despise prophecies,
 - 1 Thes 5:21 But prove all things. Hold fast to what is good;
 - 1 Thes 5:22 Abstain from every kind of evil.
 - 1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 1 Thes 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

VII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our spirit in sanctification, we must keep our spirit in a living condition by exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:6-7:

- 1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
- 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
- A. In order to preserve our spirit, we must keep our spirit living by exercising it to have fellowship with God; if we fail to exercise our spirit in this way, we will leave it in a deadened situation—2 Tim. 1:6-7; cf. Jude 19:
 - 2 Tim 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
 - 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
 - Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulless, having no spirit.

1. To rejoice, pray, and give thanks are to exercise our spirit; to preserve our spirit is first of all to exercise our spirit to keep our spirit living and to pull it out of death—1 Thes. 5:16-18.
 - 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
 - 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
 - 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
2. We need to cooperate with the sanctifying God to be separated from a spirit-deadening situation—cf. Num. 6:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:4.
 - Num 6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.
 - Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.
 - Num 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy to Jehovah.
 - 2 Cor 5:4 For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
3. We must worship God, serve God, and fellowship with God in and with our spirit; whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do toward God must be in our spirit— John 4:24; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 2:1.
 - John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
 - Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
 - Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- B. In order to preserve our spirit, we need to keep it from all defilement and contamination—2 Cor. 7:1.
 - 2 Cor 7:1 Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- C. In order to preserve our spirit, we must exercise ourselves to have a conscience without offense toward God and men—Acts 24:16; Rom. 9:1; cf. 8:16.
 - Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
 - Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,
 - Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- D. In order to preserve our spirit, we must take heed to our spirit, setting our mind on the spirit and caring for the rest in our spirit—Mal. 2:15-16; Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13.
 - Mal 2:15 But did He not make them one? And the remnant of the Spirit was His. And why the one? He sought the seed of God. Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one be treacherous to the wife of his youth.
 - Mal 2:16 For I hate divorce, says Jehovah the God of Israel; and he who does it behaves in violence, says Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirit, and do not be treacherous.
 - Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
 - 2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.

VIII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our soul in sanctification, we must clear the three main “arteries” of our psychological heart, the parts of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will—cf. Psa. 43:4; Neh. 8:10; 1 John 1:4; Jer. 15:16:

- Psa 43:4 And I will go to the altar of God, / To God my exceeding joy; / And I will praise You with the harp, / O God, my God.

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way; eat the fat, and drink the sweet wine, and send portions to him for whom nothing has been prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.

Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

A. In order for our soul to be sanctified, our mind must be renewed to be the mind of Christ (Rom. 12:2), our emotion must be touched and saturated with the love of Christ (Eph. 3:17, 19), our will must be subdued by and infused with the resurrected Christ (Phil. 2:13), and we must love the Lord with our whole being (Mark 12:30).

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Phil 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

B. The way to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart is to make a thorough confession to the Lord; we need to stay with the Lord for a period of time, asking Him to bring us fully into the light, and in the light of what He exposes, we need to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins— 1 John 1:5-9:

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. In order to unclog the artery of our mind, we need to confess everything that is sinful in our thoughts and in our way of thinking.

2. In order to unclog the artery of our will, we need to confess the germs of rebellion in our will.

3. In order to unclog the artery of our emotion, we need to confess the natural and even fleshy way that we have expressed our joy and sorrow; also, in many cases we hate what we should love, and we love what we should hate— cf. Rev. 2:4, 6.

Rev 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

4. If we take the time necessary to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart, we will have the sense that our entire being has become living and is in a very healthy condition.

IX. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our body in sanctification, we must present our body to Him so that we may live a holy life for the church life, practicing the Body life in order to carry out God's perfect will—Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:4; 5:18:

Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
- 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- A. Our fallen body, the flesh, is the “meeting hall” of Satan, sin, and death, but by Christ’s redemption and in the regenerated spirit as the “meeting hall” of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, our body is a member of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 6:6, 12, 14; 7:11, 17-25; 8:2-3; 1 Cor. 6:15, 19.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 6:12 Do not let sin therefore reign in your mortal body so that you obey the body's lusts;
- Rom 6:14 For sin will not lord it over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.
- Rom 7:11 For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.
- Rom 7:17 Now then it is no longer I that work it out, but sin that dwells in me.
- Rom 7:18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.
- Rom 7:19 For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.
- Rom 7:20 But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me.
- Rom 7:21 I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me.
- Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man,
- Rom 7:23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.
- Rom 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?
- Rom 7:25 Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.
- Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- 1 Cor 6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Absolutely not!
- 1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
- B. To preserve our body is to glorify God in our body—v. 20.
- 1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.
- C. To preserve our body is to magnify Christ in our body—Phil. 1:20.
- Phil 1:20 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.
- D. To preserve our body, we must not live according to our soul, the old man; then the body of sin will lose its job and become unemployed—Rom. 6:6.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- E. To preserve our body, we must not present our body to anything that is sinful but instead present ourselves as slaves to righteousness and our members as weapons of righteousness—vv. 13, 18-19, 22; 1 Thes. 4:3-5.
- Rom 6:13 Neither present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God.
- Rom 6:18 And having been freed from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.
- Rom 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.

- Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
- 1 Thes 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication;
- 1 Thes 4:4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,
- 1 Thes 4:5 Not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;
- F. To preserve our body, we must buffet it and lead it as a slave to fulfill our holy purpose to become the holy city—1 Cor. 9:27; Rev. 21:2.
- 1 Cor 9:27 But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest perhaps having preached to others, I myself may become disapproved.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

GOD THE FATHER'S DISPENSING IN CHOOSING THE BELIEVERS TO BE HOLY BY PREDESTINATING THEM UNTO SONSHIP

The first item of the spiritual blessings is the Father's choosing. We may think that God's choosing is one thing, and God's predestinating is another thing, but this is wrong. We need to look at the grammar of Ephesians 1:4-5. These verses say, "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." These verses do not say that He chose us *and* predestinated us. Instead, they say that He chose us, predestinating us. *Predestinating* in verse 5 modifies the predicate *chose* in verse 4, so these are not two things. These are one thing. God chose us. How did He choose us? God chose us by predestinating us, by marking us out. To predestinate is to mark out. God chose us to be holy for the sonship. The choosing of God's people for them to be holy is for the purpose of their being made sons of God, participating in the divine sonship.

For a person to have sons, he has to beget them by imparting his life into them. This imparting is dispensing. Without the dispensing of life, no children can be produced. Without God's dispensing, how could God have sons? For God to have sons means that there has been the dispensing of His life. This is fully unveiled in John 1. Christ came to be received. Whoever receives Him, He will give that one the right, the authority, to become a child of God. The right, the authority, to be a child of God is the very divine life dispensed into us. We receive the life of God, and this life is our authority to be the sons of God. We are sons of God because His life has been dispensed into us.

God dispenses Himself in a sanctifying way. God's chosen ones are made His sons by His sanctifying Spirit. God sanctified us to become His sons. He chose us to be holy for sonship. John Wesley said that sinless perfection is holiness, but the Brethren showed that this was wrong. They taught that holiness, sanctification, is not sinless perfection but is a transfer of our position. In Matthew 23 the Lord Jesus said that the gold is made holy, sanctified, by the temple (v. 17) and that the gift is made holy, sanctified, by the altar (v. 19). When the gold was in the market, it was common and worldly. But when the gold was separated unto God through the temple, it was sanctified because its position changed. Likewise, when the gift's location changed from a common place to a holy place, it was sanctified. The teaching of the Brethren concerning positional sanctification is scriptural, but this is not the entire truth concerning sanctification.

Sanctification is to separate God's people unto God for God to work on them and to work in them to make them His sons. God had an intention and made an economy to get many sons. Then the Spirit came to separate the chosen ones unto God so that God could beget them. First, they were sanctified unto God; then through this sanctification they became the object of God's begetting. God came to beget them, making them His sons, and this was through the sanctification of the Spirit. Verse 4 of Ephesians 1 says that God chose us to be holy. Then verse 5 says that He did this by

predestinating us unto sonship. Thus, sanctification is unto sonship, for sonship. First, the Spirit comes to sanctify God's chosen people. Then they are ready to be begotten by God into His sonship.

For us to be holy and for us to be sons both require God's dispensing. Without God dispensing His holy nature into our being, how could we be holy? God is the only One who is holy. For us to be holy we need a holy element dispensed into us. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He brings God's holy nature into us, and that holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. Stanza 1 of *Hymns*, #841 says, "By Thy holy nature / I am sanctified; / By Thy resurrection, / Vict'ry is supplied." His holy nature makes us holy, and His resurrection power makes us victorious. We have God's holy nature imparted into our being, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which we are made holy. Our being made holy is for us to be sons. The imparting of God's holy nature into us and His begetting us are His dispensing.

SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP IN OUR DAILY LIFE

We may wonder what sanctification has to do with our daily life. This is my burden. We have to realize that sanctification for sonship is still going on. It is not a once-for-all matter. Every day we have to remember that God the Spirit is sanctifying us for God to impart more of His holy nature and holy life into our being to cause us to grow. We all have to grow in the divine life.

Now we need to consider how we can grow. In order for us to grow physically, we need the life within plus the nourishment. A young child has inherited a life from his parents. In other words, his parents have imparted their human life into this child. Then the mother feeds him every day, and he grows with the nourishment in the human life. In principle it is the same in the Christian life. We were born of God. God has imparted Himself into us as life. Now we need to grow by being nourished in the life of God. Our birth is a beginning, not a graduation. After our birth we need to grow in the life of Christ, in the divine life, in the eternal life, with the proper nourishment in the Spirit.

Both sanctification and the sonship are always carried out by the Spirit. This is why Ephesians 1:3 calls this a spiritual blessing, a blessing by the Spirit. Today we must learn to live by the Spirit, to act according to the Spirit, to have our being altogether by the Spirit, with the Spirit, and according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). As long as we have our being by the Spirit and act according to the Spirit, we are ready to grow in the divine life. Then we need some nourishment. We can be nourished in these three ways: by reading the holy Word, by listening to the spiritual speaking, and by coming to the meetings. This nourishment causes us to grow.

I am concerned that many dear ones among us are seeking after the Lord, but they still are not on the way of the growth in life. If we are driving a car for a long distance, we need to find the freeway and get on it. Once we get on the freeway, we have to be careful about the direction we take. If we get on the right freeway with the right direction, then our driving is okay. We need to get on the way of the growth in the divine life in the right direction. We still need some revelation to see the right way to grow in the divine life according to the New Testament teaching.

In order to grow, we must deal with the Spirit. We must get ourselves right with the Spirit. We must have our entire being in the Spirit, and walk, behave, and act according to the Spirit all day long. When the parents are with their children, they have to behave themselves according to the Spirit in order to be kept in the divine life. Many times the parents are too free and unrestricted in what they say to their children. They may be afraid of making mistakes when they talk to others, but they do not have any care when they speak to their children. This is wrong. We should not say anything according to our taste. Instead, we have to be regulated, corrected, and adjusted by saying everything and doing everything according to the Spirit.

It is the Spirit who sanctifies us unto sonship. It is the Spirit who begets us that we may be born of God (John 3:6). God chose us to be sanctified unto sonship. To be sanctified unto sonship is altogether a matter by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and with the Spirit. I am concerned when I see a number of dear saints who have been in the recovery for many years with no growth. Although they may meet,

read the Bible, and listen to the messages, they do not care for the Spirit. Instead of taking care of the Spirit when they speak, they freely gossip and criticize others. Although they say that they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church life, they do not care a bit for the Spirit. This is wrong. We have to take care of the Spirit. Today this Spirit, who is wrapped up with sanctification and with God's sonship, is in our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). If we desire to take care of the Spirit, we should first take care of our spirit.

The Bible says that we should not provoke our children to anger (Eph. 6:4). When we are angry with our children, we often provoke them. In dealing with our children, we have to take care of our spirit. We need to check, "Does our spirit agree with us, or are we acting according to our emotion?" We should deny our emotion and turn to our spirit. Then in our spirit, the Spirit will speak to us. When we are becoming angry with our children, the Spirit may say, "Go into your room and pray. Don't talk to your children at this time." That is a kind of sanctification. When we pray, the speaking Spirit will continue to speak. He may lead us to read a portion of the Word. Then we are nourished, and we grow in the divine life with the spiritual nourishment. If we do not care for our spirit in our family life, we surely cannot have a pleasant household, and God cannot sanctify us for His sonship and His household.

We need to take care of our spirit in everything. When a brother buys a necktie, he should not buy it according to his taste. If he buys it according to his taste, this is wrong. Even in buying a tie, he should take care of his spirit. What would our spirit say to us when we go shopping? If we would listen to our spirit, the Holy Spirit will speak more in us.

Today we are promoting the prophesying of all the saints. We want to see the saints speak for the Lord. Some saints, however, have determined not to speak in the meetings. They come to the church meetings, but they sit at the back in silence. The leading ones who are taking care of the saints may be afraid to say anything to these ones about speaking, because they are afraid they will stop coming to the meetings. Thus, they may come to the meetings for years without speaking anything for the Lord. They have been regenerated, and they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church, but they just would not speak. Be assured that if this is your case, you will not grow at all in the Lord.

You must take care of your spirit. Get down on your knees in your bedroom to pray, and see what your spirit would say to you. Your spirit will tell you that you are stubborn and that you should go along with the church to speak for the Lord. If you take care of your spirit, the divine Spirit will take the opportunity to speak many more things to you. Then you will come to the meeting by taking care of your spirit. You may even confess to the saints, "Dear saints, I regret that I have not spoken for the Lord in the meetings." The whole church will be happy. Then as you continue to speak, the Holy Spirit will speak to you so that you have even more to speak. Then you will see that the speed of your growth in life will fly like an airplane. Within half a year, you will grow much in Christ and be much more sanctified unto much more sonship. By your growth in life, you will become not just a son but an heir of God to inherit the riches of God (Rom. 8:17). Then you will be so useful in the church life. You will become a supplier to supply, to minister, the bountiful supply of the Spirit to all the congregation.

Dear saints, this is my burden. We should not think that Ephesians 1:4 and 5 transpired once for all. Sanctification for sonship is still going on. Day by day, however, we do not live in our sonship, because we do not care for the sanctifying Spirit speaking and working in our spirit. We must turn to our spirit, realizing that we have been sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit. This sanctifying and regenerating Spirit has much to say to us. He still wants to sanctify us more and more so that we may participate in the sonship more and more. Then we will grow, and the Father will have a pleasant household. If we care for our spirit and let the Spirit speak to us, we will grow as sons to become heirs, grown-up persons, to inherit all the riches of God. Then we can be a part of His pleasant household. The blessings in Ephesians 1 start from God's choosing for us to be sanctified that we might be more and more in the sonship of God. This should be a daily matter.

CONCLUDING NOTES

(1) Without dispensing His holy element into our being, how could God make us holy? Especially for God's sonship, there is the need for God to dispense His life and nature into our being.

(2) The Father's dispensing in His choosing and predestinating of the believers issues in His sonship through His sanctifying of His chosen people, making them holy as He is in His life and in His nature, to make them like God in the divine life and nature but without His unique Godhead. This is the divine sanctification unto (for) the divine sonship. This is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament. Such a divine sanctification is carried out by the sanctifying Spirit (Rom. 15:16). The divine sonship is accomplished by the regenerating Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal. 4:6). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ," pp. 478-483)

THE DIVINE SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP

We also have seen something further concerning the truth of sanctification. This has been a great subject among us in the recovery for the past seventy years. We studied and investigated this, spending much time to get into others' writings. But we were not fully satisfied with what we had seen. It was not until this year, 1993, that I saw the full intrinsic significance of sanctification. I saw this when the church in Anaheim was spending time to review our life-study on Hebrews, which was given in 1975. That life-study was very thorough, yet I did not see fully at that time how the sanctification of the Spirit is related to the sonship. Hebrews 2:10 says that the Lord as the Captain of God's salvation will lead many sons into glory. Then verse 11 speaks of the One who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified. When I considered these two verses, my eyes were opened to see that sanctification is for sonship. This is new light.

When I saw this, I entered into a fuller understanding of Ephesians 1:4-5. Verse 4 says, "To be holy," and verse 5 says, "Unto sonship." We need to put these two phrases together—*to be holy unto sonship*. This shows again that sanctification is for sonship. The Greek preposition for the word *unto* is very profound. It means "resulting in." To be holy results in the sonship. God's sonship comes to us through the Holy Spirit's sanctification. The concluding notes [in the previous "Concluding Notes"] point out that the divine sanctification is unto the divine sonship. I hope that the Lord will have mercy on all of us to pick up this thought. Divine sanctification is not for sinless perfection, nor is it merely for a change of our position. It is for the sonship and results in the sonship. We call it the divine sanctification because it is a matter of the Spirit Himself. It is a matter of the Triune God.

Now I would like to present a full view of the divine sanctification as unveiled in the holy Word. God has a desire. Based upon His desire, He made an intention with a purpose. This is His eternal economy, *oikonomia* (Gk.). This economy was made by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and carried out and applied to us by the Spirit. The carrying out of the eternal economy of God is by the Spirit's sanctification. The Spirit's sanctification is the carrying out of God's eternal purpose in four steps.

Seeking Sanctification

The first step of the divine sanctification by the Spirit is His seeking sanctification. This is the Spirit's coming to seek out God's chosen people who became lost. The seeking sanctification is fully unveiled in the second parable in Luke 15. There the Spirit is likened to a woman seeking a lost coin by lighting a lamp and sweeping the house (v. 8). She sought this lost coin finely. Eventually, she found it. Actually, the lost coin was the prodigal son. Due to the Spirit's seeking and finding, the prodigal son woke up. He came to himself (v. 17). He made the decision to rise up and go back to his father to repent.

John 16 goes on to show that this seeking Spirit is also the convicting Spirit. He convicts all the lost sinners of sin in Adam, of righteousness in Christ, and of the judgment for Satan (vv. 8-11). Man's

full repentance is the result of the work of the seeking and convicting Spirit.

First Peter 1:2 tells us that this seeking and convicting of the Spirit is the sanctification of the Spirit before the sprinkling of the blood upon the repentant sinners. This shows that the seeking sanctification was before our repentance and believing in Christ. Actually, our repentance and believing were due to the seeking Spirit, the convicting Spirit. We were lost in sin and among a heap of sinners, but the seeking Spirit came to seek us out. As a result, we woke up, repented, returned to God, and asked Him to forgive us. This was the result of our Father's choosing with His predestinating in eternity past along with His Spirit's coming in time to seek us out and convict us. This seeking, this convicting, is the seeking sanctification.

Regenerating Sanctification

At the juncture we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, the same Spirit, the seeking Spirit, sanctified us further by regenerating us. We were born of the Spirit (John 3:5), and God as the Spirit came into our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22). Now we are the sons of God, the children of God. The seeking Spirit woke us up and brought us back to the Father. We repented and believed in the Lord Jesus. We received Christ, and the Spirit sanctified us further, making us the children of God. This is the second step of the divine sanctification, the regenerating sanctification.

The Father put Christ's redeeming blood upon us, just like the loving father put the best robe upon the returned prodigal son (Luke 15:22; Heb. 13:12). Also, the sanctifying Spirit entered into our spirit with God's life to make us children of God. Now we have the blood of Christ without and the life of God within. All our offenses have been forgiven through the blood, the redemption of Christ, and our spirit has been regenerated. The Spirit's regenerating sanctification transpired in our spirit (John 3:6).

Transforming Sanctification

After regeneration, the next step of the Spirit's sanctification is His transforming sanctification. This takes place in our soul. Our regenerated spirit has never been a problem to us. Our problems always come from two sources: our soul (comprising our mind, emotion, and will) and our body. Our untransformed mind, emotion, and will give us much trouble. Following the regeneration of the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit, the sanctifying Spirit carries out His continuous sanctification to transform us in our soul. We were regenerated, sanctified unto God, in our spirit, but we need the sanctifying Spirit's further work to sanctify our soul. This is the transforming sanctification.

This transformation implies renewing and conformation to the image of Christ. While the sanctifying Spirit works to sanctify us, we are being transformed. Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us clearly that transformation is by the Lord Spirit. This is a strong proof that the Spirit's transformation is His work to keep sanctifying us. Romans 12:2 says that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The transformation of the sanctifying Spirit first renews our troublesome mind. For us to be transformed, we need some new element added into us to carry away our old element and replace us with the new element. This is a kind of metabolism, which results in a metabolic change within us. Thus, we become another person in our thinking, in our feelings, and in our intentions. The Bible says that we are being transformed from the old man into the new man. This is a further step of the sanctifying Spirit, the transforming sanctification. Now we have the seeking sanctification, the regenerating sanctification, and the transforming sanctification, which includes the renewing and the conforming to the image of Christ.

Glorifying Sanctification

Our full transformation will one day consummate in our glorification. That will be the work of the sanctifying Spirit to glorify us in our body. Another thing that bothers us besides our soul is our poor, vile body. Lust, weakness, sickness, and death are present in our corrupted body. Our body is

really vile, but one day we will be glorified and transfigured in our body (Phil. 3:21). Our spirit has been regenerated, our soul is being transformed, and our body will be transfigured, changed into a glorious body with no more lust, weakness, sickness, or death. This is the glorifying sanctification.

When all these four steps of the divine sanctification (seeking sanctification, regenerating sanctification, transforming sanctification, and glorifying sanctification) take place, we will be glorified. We will be qualified to meet the Lord. By that time we will be able to shout, “We have been fully sanctified!” Today we are like a butterfly that is still in the cocoon. Eventually, we will come out of the cocoon. We will not walk on this earth; we will fly. This is the consummating sanctification. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, “The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ,” pp. 487-491)