

Message Two

God's Good Pleasure

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 2:13;
Matt. 3:13-17; 17:5; Gal. 1:15-16; Rom. 14:17-18

- Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Phil. 2:13 For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
- Matt. 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.
- Matt. 3:14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, It is I who have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me?
- Matt. 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him.
- Matt. 3:16 And having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him.
- Matt. 3:17 And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.
- Matt. 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
- Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
- Gal. 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
- Rom. 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom. 14:18 For he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men.

I. God's good pleasure, His heart's desire, is to meet the demand of this age, which is God's need in this age:

- A. God does not need "spiritual giants" any longer in this age; what He needs is the Body testimony, which is the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem;

this is to fulfill the Lord's heart's desire according to His word concerning the building up of His Body—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:1-16.

Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Eph. 4:1 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,

Eph. 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph. 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Eph. 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Eph. 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."

Eph. 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph. 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

- B. Verses 15 and 16 say that all the members of the Body grow up into the Head and function out from the Head; thus, "all the Body" (with the supplying joints and the functioning of each one part) "causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love."

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

- C. As ministers of the present age, Brother Nee and Brother Lee are patterns to us so that we may be perfected "unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ"; we are being perfected in this present age to become functioning members of the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; 1 Cor. 4:16-17.

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

1 Tim. 1:16 But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.

- 1 Tim. 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
- 1 Cor. 4:16 I exhort you therefore, Become imitators of me.
- 1 Cor. 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

D. "Spiritual giants" are a hindrance to the producing of the church ministry; we need to see what the church is intrinsically; the church as the Body of Christ is brought forth when all the one-talented ones are functioning; talents signify spiritual gifts, and each member of the Body of Christ has at least one talent—Matt. 25:14-30; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4, 12-27; 1 Pet. 4:10:

- Matt. 25:14 For the kingdom of the heavens is just like a man about to go abroad, who called his own slaves and delivered to them his possessions.
- Matt. 25:15 To one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability. And he went abroad.
- Matt. 25:16 Immediately he who had received the five talents went and traded with them and gained another five.
- Matt. 25:17 Similarly, he who had received the two gained another two.
- Matt. 25:18 But he who had received the one went off and dug in the earth and hid his master's money.
- Matt. 25:19 Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.
- Matt. 25:20 And he who had received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents; behold, I have gained another five talents.
- Matt. 25:21 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.
- Matt. 25:22 And he who had received the two talents also came and said, Master, you delivered to me two talents; behold, I have gained another two talents.
- Matt. 25:23 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.
- Matt. 25:24 Then he who had received the one talent also came and said, Master, I knew about you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow.
- Matt. 25:25 And I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours.
- Matt. 25:26 And his master answered and said to him, Evil and slothful slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not winnow.
- Matt. 25:27 Therefore you should have deposited my money with the money changers; and when I came, I would have recovered what is mine with interest.
- Matt. 25:28 Take away therefore the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.
- Matt. 25:29 For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away from him.
- Matt. 25:30 And cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.
- Rom. 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
- 1 Cor. 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit;
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:14 For the body is not one member but many.
 1 Cor. 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
 1 Cor. 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not that because of this it is not of the body.
 1 Cor. 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
 1 Cor. 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
 1 Cor. 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
 1 Cor. 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body one.
 1 Cor. 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
 1 Cor. 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
 1 Cor. 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant comeliness,
 1 Cor. 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
 1 Cor. 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.
 1 Cor. 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.
 1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
 1 Pet. 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

1. For the work of the Lord, we need the talent, the spiritual gift, that we may be equipped as good slaves to accomplish God's eternal economy; surely, we must make all the five-talented ones serve and the two-talented ones serve, but even more, we must make all the one-talented ones serve.

2. When five one-talented ones are put together, they equal one who has five talents; if all the one-talented ones in the church today would bring forth their talents, there would be no need for so many great gifts among us; just by the coming forth of the one-talented ones, the whole world will be conquered (cf. Acts 17:6b)!

Acts 17:6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers before the city officials, shouting, These men who have upset the world have come here also,

3. If our work does not bring out the one-talented ones, our work is a failure; 2 Timothy 2:2 and Ephesians 4:11-12 are the way of our work today; only those who teach others to work will succeed in the work; today the building up of the church hinges on the perfecting, building up, and raising up of the one-talented ones; what is needed today is men who can lead others into their function in serving the Lord for the church, not men who will replace others in their service.

2 Tim. 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also.

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

E. God is recovering the most difficult thing today, which is the fulfillment of Ephesians 4:11-

16; God's ultimate work is the recovery of the Body testimony.

Eph. 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph. 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph. 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph. 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

F. We need to see that the Body can be damaged by the misuse of "spiritual pursuit" (see Brother Lee's testimony about this in *The History and Revelation of the Lord's Recovery*, vol. 2, pp. 346-354):

1. In the twentieth century Mrs. Penn-Lewis and T. Austin-Sparks were people with high spiritual attainment who began to work together, but they were divided and could not be spiritual together; this shows that being "spiritual" can result in division.

2. Mrs. Penn-Lewis knew the subjective experience of the Lord's death, and T. Austin-Sparks saw the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection life; but because he had his own spiritual knowledge and felt that his spiritual knowledge was higher than that of Mrs. Penn-Lewis, he left and started his own work; there was even a sense of rivalry between them.

3. Although T. Austin-Sparks was "spiritual," he was shallow in his understanding of the church; because he did not have a sufficient understanding of the church (the oneness of the church and the ground of the church), during his second and final visit to Taiwan, he expressed dissenting views, and the loss brought about by this was ten times, even fifty times, greater than the help he rendered.

4. Before that time we had the one accord and were in harmony, but those who said that they were "helped" by Brother Austin-Sparks became factors of division.

5. We surely need to be genuine spiritual men, those who are dominated, governed, directed, moved, ruled, controlled, and led by our mingled spirit; a true spiritual man, who lives according to the spirit, will do everything and speak everything not only in his spirit but also in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body; if we are truly spiritual, we will be diligent to "keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace"—Eph. 4:3; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; 3:1, 3.

Eph. 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

1 Cor. 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

1 Cor. 2:15 But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

1 Cor. 3:1 And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly, as to infants in Christ.

1 Cor. 3:3 For you are still fleshly. For if there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and do you not walk according to the manner of man?

II. God's good pleasure, God's heart's desire, is what makes God happy:

- A. God is happy with the creation of the earth; His kingdom will be set up on the earth—Job 38:4, 7; Matt. 6:10; Rev. 5:10; 11:15; 21:1; Zech. 12:1.

Job 38:4 Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? / Tell Me, if you have understanding.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together / And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

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

Rev. 5:10 And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

Rev. 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

Rev. 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.

Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,

- B. God is happy with the creation of man; for each of the items that God had created, He said "good" (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 21, 25), but for the creation of man, He said "very good" because man had God's image and had been given God's dominion for the glory of God and the kingdom of God (vv. 26, 31; Isa. 43:7; Matt. 6:10, 13b).

Gen. 1:4 And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

Gen. 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas; and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed according to their kind, and trees bearing fruit with their seed in them according to their kind; and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:21 And God created the great sea creatures and every living animal that moves, with which the waters swarmed, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind; and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:25 And God made the animals of the earth according to their kind and the cattle according to their kind and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind, and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen. 1:31 And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Isa. 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.

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

Matt. 6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- C. God is happy with the incarnation (Luke 2:9-14); Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace to be the unique Governor, and the government of the Triune God is upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6-7); He is our Savior and our Emmanuel, the God-man, the One who is united, mingled, and incorporated with man (Matt. 1:21, 23; John 14:9-11, 16-20).

- Luke 2:9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they feared greatly.
- Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I announce to you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people,
- Luke 2:11 Because today a Savior has been born to you in David's city, who is Christ the Lord.
- Luke 2:12 And this will be the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.
- Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying,
- Luke 2:14 Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure.
- Isa. 9:6 For a child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.
- Isa. 9:7 To the increase of His government / And to His peace there is no end, / Upon the throne of David / And over His kingdom, / To establish it / And to uphold it / In justice and righteousness / From now to eternity. / The zeal of Jehovah of hosts / Will accomplish this.
- Matt. 1:21 And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.
- Matt. 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel" (which is translated, God with us).
- John 14:9 Jesus said to him, Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father?
- John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.
- John 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.
- John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
- John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.
- John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.
- John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.
- John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
- D. God is happy with Christ's baptism; when He was baptized to begin His public ministry, "the heavens were opened to Him.... And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight"; the Lord Jesus, taking the standing of a typical man, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness and to allow Himself to be put into death and resurrection so that He might live and minister in resurrection—Matt. 3:13-17.
- Matt. 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.
- Matt. 3:14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, It is I who have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me?
- Matt. 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him.

- Matt. 3:16 And having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him.
- Matt. 3:17 And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.
- E. God is happy with the resurrected and glorified Christ; when Christ was transfigured, as a foreshadowing of His resurrection, "behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!" (17:5); God took pleasure in the resurrection and glorification of His Son (Luke 24:26).
- Matt. 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
- Luke 24:26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory?
- F. God is happy when His prodigal sons return to Him; the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 may be called the parable of a happy father; after the father "ran" to his returning son (v. 20), he told his servants to bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and he said, "Let us eat and be merry" (v. 23); here we see the merriment of God.
- Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him.
- Luke 15:2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among themselves, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.
- Luke 15:3 And He told them this parable, saying,
- Luke 15:4 Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
- Luke 15:5 And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- Luke 15:6 And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.
- Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.
- 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 15:11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.
- Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.
- Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.
- Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.
- Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.
- Luke 15:16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.
- 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.
- Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.
- Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,
- Luke 15:24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.
- Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing,
- Luke 15:26 And calling to him one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be.
- Luke 15:27 And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back healthy.
- Luke 15:28 But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and entreated him.
- Luke 15:29 But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me a goat that I might be merry with my friends;
- Luke 15:30 But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf.
- Luke 15:31 And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.
- Luke 15:32 But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

G. God is happy when His Son is revealed in us—"It pleased God...to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15-16)—and when we are fully brought into the sonship of God (4:4-6; Eph. 1:4-5); this fulfills God's good pleasure to have many sons for His corporate expression; the Son revealed in us has brought us into the meaning of the earth, of man, and of the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected Lord.

- Gal. 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
- Gal. 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
- Gal. 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law,
- Gal. 4:5 That He might redeem those under law that we might receive the sonship.
- Gal. 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!
- 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,

H. God is happy to operate in us "both the willing and the working for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13); the Christian life with the supply of the Body life (1:19) is a happy life; our inward joy is an indication that we are living and walking according to God's good pleasure; since the book of Philippians, written by Paul in prison (v. 13; 4:22), is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is a book filled with joy and rejoicing (1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4).

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

Phil. 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Phil. 1:13 So that my bonds have become manifest as being in Christ among the whole Praetorian guard and to all the rest.

Phil. 4:22 All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar's household.

Phil. 1:4 Always in my every petition on behalf of you all, making my petition with joy,

Phil. 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truthfulness, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice;

Phil. 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

Phil. 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

Phil. 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

Phil. 2:18 And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.

Phil. 2:28 I have sent him therefore the more eagerly, so that when you see him again, you may rejoice and I may be less sorrowful.

Phil. 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor,

Phil. 3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, for me it is not irksome, but for you it is safe.

Phil. 4:1 So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, in the same way stand firm in the Lord, beloved.

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

- I. God is happy to have a man of God (Psa. 90, title; Deut. 33:1; Ezra 3:2) who lives God and lives out God in order to gain God by being one with God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 6:11-12; Phil. 3:8, 14); Jesus of Nazareth is the standard pattern of a man of God who lived out God (John 6:57; 5:19, 30; 10:30); the Lord said that He did not come to do His own will or to seek His own glory (5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18); when we take Christ as our crucified life for His manifestation as the resurrection life, we will experience Him as the indwelling and enabling power of resurrection to deny our will and our glory (Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:5-7; Rom. 14:7-9).

Psa. 90 Title A Prayer of Moses, the man of God

Deut. 33:1 And this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death.

Ezra. 3:2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up, along with his brothers the priests and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers, and they built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Tim. 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

1 Tim. 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, meekness.

1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

Phil. 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil. 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.

Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

2 Cor. 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

2 Cor. 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

Rom. 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself;

Rom. 14:8 For whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's.

Rom. 14:9 For Christ died and lived again for this, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

J. God is happy when we eat Christ as our spiritual food in order to live because of Him (John 6:57); to eat Christ is to eat His words by exercising our spirit to both pray-read and muse upon His words so that His words become the gladness and joy of our heart (Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15-16; Josh. 1:8-9); to live because of Christ means that the energizing element of Christ becomes the supplying factor for us to live Christ.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

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.

Psa. 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Psa. 119:16 I will take delight in Your statutes; / I will not forget Your word.

Josh. 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall muse upon it day and night so that you may be certain to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success.

Josh. 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.

K. God is happy when we are daily strengthened into our inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts through faith; our inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God's life as its life (Eph. 3:16-17; John 3:6b; Rom. 8:10).

- Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- Rom. 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
- L. God is happy when we remain in our spirit and pay attention to our spirit (v. 6b); when the Lord says, "Abide in Me" (John 15:4), this wonderful "Me" is in our spirit, and when we are in Him by being in our spirit, in us the ruler of this world has nothing—no ground, no chance, no hope, and no possibility in anything (14:30; cf. 12:31-32).
- Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- John 14:30 I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;
- John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.
- John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.
- M. God is happy when we serve Him as a slave by living in the reality of the kingdom of God in the way of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; this is well pleasing to God and approved by men, and it preserves the oneness of the church for the practical Body life—Rom. 14:17-18.
- Rom. 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom. 14:18 For he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men.
- N. God is happy when we worship Him in spirit; God's eternal economy is focused on and is carried out by our mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled together with our human spirit as one spirit—John 4:23-24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 1:9.
- John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- 1 Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
- 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,
- O. God is happy when we are one with Him in His ministry to carry out His eternal economy; in the Lord's ministry we care only for the divine dispensing of the Triune God, embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit, into His chosen people—Eph. 1:9-11; 3:2, 9-10; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- Eph. 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph. 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph. 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
- Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

- Eph. 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
- 2 Cor. 3:3 Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.
- 2 Cor. 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- 1 Pet. 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
- P. We must be a people in whom, with whom, and through whom God may have His good pleasure; we must be "determined...to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him" (2 Cor. 5:9) by being one with Christ as the One who sacrificed Himself on the cross to produce new wine to cheer God and men (Judg. 9:12-13; Matt. 9:17).
- 2 Cor. 5:9 Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.
- Judg. 9:12 Then the trees said to the vine, You come and reign over us.
- Judg. 9:13 But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?
- Matt. 9:17 Neither do they put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.
- Q. God will be happy with our glorification—"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us. For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.. The creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now. 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"—Rom. 8:18-19, 21-23; cf. Eph. 1:4-5.
- Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us.
- Rom. 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.
- Rom. 8:21 In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- Rom. 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now.
- 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.
- 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,