

## Message Five

### The Secret of Living the Christian Life to Be an Overcomer— Taking the Way of Eating and Enjoying Christ as the Tree of Life

RA Hymns: 1145, 509

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4

- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- 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 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- 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.
- Ezek 3:1 Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.
- Ezek 3:2 So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat.
- Ezek 3:3 And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate it, and it was like honey in my mouth in its sweetness.
- Ezek 3:4 Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

#### **I. The secret of living the Christian life to be an overcomer is for us to take the way of eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life; God does not intend for us to do anything for Him; His only desire is to give Himself to us as food for our enjoyment; only those who take the way of enjoying Christ as the tree of life will see their life and work remaining in the New Jerusalem—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7.**

- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

#### **II. We can eat the Lord Jesus as our spiritual food for our enjoyment, receiving Him as the Spirit who gives life through eating His words of spirit and life by means of all prayer and by musing upon His words—John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16 and footnote; Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15 and footnote; Matt. 4:4; Psa. 119:103:**

- 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 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I <sup>1</sup>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.
- Note 1 According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God's words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3). God's word is the divine supply as food to nourish us. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element. This is a crucial aspect of God's economy. When we eat God's words, His word becomes our heart's gladness and joy.

- Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
- Psa 119:15 I will <sup>1</sup>muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
- Note 1 Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for muse (often translated meditate in the KJV) implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word. To muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.
- Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
- Psa 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste! / Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- A. When we eat the Lord Jesus by eating His words of spirit and life, we live *because of* Him (John 6:57, 63); we live not *by* Christ but *because of* Christ as our energizing element and supplying factor; we live Christ in His resurrection, and we live Christ by eating Him (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a).
- 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 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
  - Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
  - 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 1:20 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.
  - Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...
- B. As we eat the Lord Jesus by eating His words, we need to have proper spiritual digestion—Ezek. 3:1-4; Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:9-10:
- Ezek 3:1 Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.
  - Ezek 3:2 So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat.
  - Ezek 3:3 And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate it, and it was like honey in my mouth in its sweetness.
  - Ezek 3:4 Then He said to me, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.
  - 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.
  - Rev 10:9 And I went to the Angel and told Him to give me the little scroll. And He said to me, Take it and devour it, and it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.
  - Rev 10:10 And I took the little scroll out of the hand of the Angel and devoured it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth; and when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.
1. If we have good digestion, there will be a thoroughfare for the food to get into every part of our inward being; by eating we have digesting, by digesting we have assimilation, and by assimilation we get the practical nourishment of the riches of Christ into our being—Eph. 3:8, 16-17a.
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
  - 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 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
2. Indigestion means that there is no way for the Lord as the spiritual food to get through into our inward parts; when there is no free course for the food to get into our inward parts, we will have indigestion—Heb. 3:12, 15; 4:2.
- Heb 3:12 Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.
- Heb 3:15 While it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation."
- Heb 4:2 For indeed we have had the good news announced to us, even as they also; but the word heard did not profit them, not being mixed together with faith in those who heard.
3. We need to keep our whole being, with all our inward parts, open to the Lord so that the spiritual food will have a thoroughfare within us; if we do this, we will have proper digestion and assimilation, we will absorb Christ as spiritual nourishment, and Christ will become our constituent for the expression of God—Eph. 3:16-17a; Col. 3:4, 10-11.
- 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 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

### **III. We can eat Him by doing the will of the Father to satisfy the hungry and thirsty ones and by glorifying the Father on earth in living the life of a God-man for the glory of the processed Triune God—Matt. 24:45-47; Phil. 1:19-21a:**

- Matt 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?
- Matt 24:46 Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.
- Matt 24:47 Truly I say to you that he will set him over all his possessions.
- 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 1:20 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.
- Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...
- A. “I have food to eat that you do not know about...My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work”—John 4:32, 34.
- B. “I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4); to glorify God is to express God in all things (cf. Col. 1:9-11).
- Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- Col 1:10 To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,
- Col 1:11 Being empowered with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy,
- C. In His human living the Lord ate butter (the richest grace) and honey (the sweetest love), which gave Him the power to always choose the Father’s will—Isa. 7:14-15, ASV 1901.
- Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.
- Isa 7:15 He will eat curds and honey until he knows how to refuse evil and choose good.

- D. We are those who are learning Christ as “the reality is in Jesus”; *the reality is in Jesus* refers to the actual condition of the life of the Lord Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, a life in which He glorified the Father on earth to set up a pattern for His believers—Eph. 4:20-21:

Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,

Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

1. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God in order to glorify God; God was in His living, and He was one with God; in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit so that He might enter into us to be our life; we learn from Him (Matt. 11:29) according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection (Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

2. The Lord Jesus never did anything out of Himself (John 5:19); He did not do His own work (4:34; 17:4), He did not speak His own word (14:10, 24), He did not do His own will (5:30), and He did not seek His own glory (7:18).

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 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.

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 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

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 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.

3. To learn Christ is simply to be molded into the pattern of Christ, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ; He Himself as the indwelling Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life, with all the riches of His life, reproduces Himself in us—Rom. 8:2, 28-29.

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 8:28 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;

- E. Isaiah 43:7 says, “Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory”; the highest service we can render to God is to express His glory—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 9:23.

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.

Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

- F. First Corinthians 6:20 says, “You have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body”; this is to allow God, who dwells in us (1 John 4:13), to occupy and saturate our

body and express Himself through our body as His temple (1 Cor. 6:19); 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

1 John 4:13 In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit.

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?

#### IV. We can eat Him by contacting the proper people—Lev. 11:1-3, 9, 13, 21:

- Lev 11:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,
- Lev 11:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.
- Lev 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.
- Lev 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.
- Lev 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture
- Lev 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;

A. To eat is to contact things outside of us and to receive them into us, with the result that they eventually become our inner constitution; in Leviticus 11 all the animals signify different kinds of people, and eating signifies our contacting of people (Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29); for God's people to live a holy life as required by the holy God, they must be careful about the kind of people they contact (Lev. 11:46-47; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:22).

- Lev 11 be omitted.
- Acts 10:9b ...Peter went up on the housetop to pray around the sixth hour.
- Acts 10:10 And he became very hungry and wanted to eat. And while they were preparing, a trance came upon him;
- Acts 10:11 And he beheld heaven opened, and a certain vessel like a great sheet descending, being let down by four corners onto the earth,
- Acts 10:12 In which were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of heaven.
- Acts 10:13 And a voice came to him: Rise up, Peter; slay and eat!
- Acts 10:14 But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common and unclean.
- Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he entered and found many who had come together.
- Acts 10:28 And he said to them, You understand that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to join himself to or come near one of another race; yet God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.
- Acts 10:29 Hence, even without objection I came when I had been sent for. I ask therefore, For what reason have you sent for me?
- Lev 11:46 This is the law of the beast and of the bird, and of every living animal that moves in the waters, and of every creature that swarms upon the earth;
- Lev 11:47 To make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.
- 1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.
- 2 Cor 6:14 Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?
- 2 Cor 6:15 And what concord does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?
- 2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."
- 2 Cor 6:17 Therefore "come out from their midst and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you";
- 2 Cor 6:18 "And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty."
- 2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- B. Animals that divide the hoof and chew the cud (Lev. 11:3; cf. vv. 4-8, 26-28) signify persons who have discernment in their activities (Phil. 1:9-10) and who receive the word of God with much reconsideration (Psa. 119:15).

Lev 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.  
 Lev 11:4 However these you shall not eat: of those that only chew the cud or of those that only have a divided hoof: the camel, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.  
 Lev 11:5 And the hyrax, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.  
 Lev 11:6 And the hare, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.  
 Lev 11:7 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, that is, it has its hoof split in two, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you.  
 Lev 11:8 You shall not eat of their flesh, nor shall you touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.  
 Lev 11:26 For every beast which has a divided hoof but does not have its hoof split in two or chew the cud is unclean to you; everyone who touches them shall be unclean.  
 Lev 11:27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all beasts that go on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening.  
 Lev 11:28 And the one who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.  
 Phil 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment,  
 Phil 1:10 So that you may approve by testing the things which differ and are more excellent, that you may be pure and without offense unto the day of Christ,  
 Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

- C. Aquatic animals that have fins and scales signify persons who can move and act freely in the world and at the same time resist its influence (fins helping fish to move, to act, in water according to their wishes, and scales protecting and keeping those fish that live in the sea from being salted)—Lev. 11:9.

Lev 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.

- D. Birds that have wings for flying and that eat seeds of life as their food supply signify persons who can live and move in a life that is away from and above the world and who take things of life as their life supply—v. 13.

Lev 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture

- E. Insects that have wings and have legs above their feet for leaping on the ground signify persons who can live and move in a life that is above the world and who can keep themselves from the world—vv. 21-22.

Lev 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;

Lev 11:22 These of them you may eat: the swarming locust of every kind and the swallowing locust of every kind and the cricket of every kind and the grasshopper of every kind.

## V. We can eat Him by feasting on Him in the meetings on the ground of oneness:

- A. The children of Israel could enjoy the produce of the good land in two ways: the common, private way was to enjoy it as a common portion at any time, in any place, and with anyone (Deut. 12:15); the special, corporate way was to enjoy the top portion, the first-fruits and the firstlings, with all the Israelites at the appointed feasts and in the unique place chosen by God (vv. 5-7, 17-18).

Deut 12:15 Yet you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, in all that your soul desires, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat it as the gazelle and the deer are eaten.

Deut 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.

Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

Deut 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.

Deut 12:17 You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your fresh oil, nor the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vows which you vow or of your freewill offerings or of the heave offering of your hand;

Deut 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.

- B. Likewise, the enjoyment of Christ by the New Testament believers is of two aspects: the common, private aspect of enjoying Christ at any time and at any place, and the special, corporate aspect of enjoying the top portion of Christ in the meetings of the proper church life on the unique ground of oneness, the place chosen by God.

**VI. God's intention for man was to give Himself as the tree of life to man for him to enjoy; to see that God wants us to enjoy Him and that He does not want us to do anything for Him is to see that the Christian life is a matter of enjoying Christ as the tree of life; if our concept is changed so that we see these two points, it will be easy for us to live a life of enjoying God.**