

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Two : The Two Trees and the Two Principles of Living

I. Overview:

The two trees in Genesis 2:9 represent two principles of living; the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life for living. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life. Our Christian life is based on an inner life, not an outward standard of right and wrong. Our pathway is God's life, not right and wrong; the principle of our living is before God to determine what is of life and what is of death. If we would live according to the principle of life, we need to discern the spirit from the soul and know the spirit. In order to live according to the principle of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life. The sense of life is subjective, personal, and practical; on the negative side is the feeling of death and on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace. If we live according to the principle of life, we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death. The secret of discernment is to discern according to life or death; the genuine ministry always strengthens us in the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the two different principles of living brought in by the two trees.

The two trees in Genesis 2 show us that man, especially a Christian, can live on earth according to two different principles. Man can live according to the principle of right and wrong or according to the principle of life. Some Christians take the principle of right and wrong as the standard for their living, while other Christians take the principle of life as their standard for living.

B. Explain living according to right or wrong and living according to life.

Many people only have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in their lives. Other people have the tree of life in their lives. The Word of God tells us, however, that he who eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil shall surely die, while he who eats of the tree of life shall live. Whoever lives by the knowledge of good and evil will lose his position before God. If man wants to constantly live before God, then he must eat the fruit of the tree of life.

Day 2 —

A. Expound what is to follow by the principle of right and wrong.

When we ask whether it is good, we are, in effect, asking ourselves, "Am I right to do this or not?" Many people consider much whether something is good or evil. By taking care to decide whether or not something is good and right, they consider themselves to be good Christians. At the most, this practice is only a discerning of good from evil. This is not Christianity. It is the Old Testament, the law, worldly religions.

B. Explain Christianity being based on an inner life.

Christianity is life. It is not a matter of asking whether something is right or wrong, but of checking with the life inside us whenever we do something. What does the new life which God has given us tell us inwardly about this matter? Whenever we do anything, there is a life within us which rises up to speak with us. When we are strong within and sense the anointing, we know that we have life.

Day 3 —

A. Explain what the standard of Christian living deals with.

We may say that it is right, but when we begin to do something, do we sense the anointing or do we feel weighed down?. Please remember that life does not make decisions according to outward standards of right and wrong. Matters should be decided according to the sense of God's life or the sense of death. Decisions should be made according to God's life as it rises up or recedes within us.

B. Expound the difference between these two principles of right or wrong with life.

Our pathway is His life, not right and wrong. The difference between these two principles is immense. The one question we must ask today is whether the divine life within us rises or falls. This is what must determine the path we take. Man says that right is good enough, but God says that only life is sufficient. God is not satisfied with being right. He requires us to satisfy the divine life.

Day 4 —

A. What do II Corinthians 3:17, Romans 8:16, and 1 Corinthians 6:17 reveal to us?

These verses reveal that the Lord who is the Spirit is living, dwelling, working, moving, and acting in our spirit. They also show us that if we desire to know the Lord in a practical way and to experience Him in our daily life, we must learn to discern our spirit. If we do not know our human spirit, we cannot understand God's moving within us and cannot follow the Lord, because the Lord today is the Spirit living within our spirit.

B. Expound what the inward parts of our being are.

The mind, emotion, and will, which are all parts of the heart, are also the three parts that make up the soul, that is, the natural life, the self. These three parts are not parts of the spirit. If we are following our mind, emotion, or will, this indicates that we are not following the Lord, because the Lord is not in these parts but in our spirit. Often we think so much that we quench our spirit. The Lord is in our spirit. He is not in our soul.

Day 5 —

A. State that the sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death.

The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death, a kind of negative feeling. This is definitely revealed in Romans 8:6. We have to realize that Romans 8:6 is altogether a verse of sensation because it says that the mind set on the flesh is death. This is not only a fact, but it is also a matter of feeling, a matter of consciousness. When you set your mind on the flesh, you have the sense of death. You feel that death is there.

B. State that the sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life.

On the positive side the sense of life functions to give us a consciousness of the following positive things; strength, satisfaction, peace, rest, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, comfort, etc. Instead of being weak, we are strong. Instead of depression, we have release and liveliness. We have a sense of watering versus dryness, brightness versus darkness, and comfort versus pain. All these are the positive feelings we have from the function of the sense of life.

Day 6 —

A. Expound regarding the tree of life.

The tree of life is simple. With this tree, there is just one element, and that element is life. The tree of life issues in life. The tree of life signifies God in Christ as the Spirit to be life to us. The serpent distracted Eve from the tree of life by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with its complications. The result was that Eve fell, and death came in through the fall. This is the story of how the serpent distracted Eve from God's economy.

B. Why was that happening in Corinth a repetition of taking place in the garden of Eden?

The church in Corinth was a pure virgin betrothed to one husband, Christ. The wife in the garden of Eden was distracted by the subtle serpent. In Corinth the virgin was being distracted by Satan through the Judaizers. Paul associates the Judaizers with Satan. Here we see that the serpent asked, "Did God really say?" This kind of question seems, on the one hand, to recognize what God has said. On the other hand, it undermines God's word.

III. Conclusion:

If we simply live and act according to the standard of good and evil, we are at best a good man and will never transform into a God-man. Good man and God man are quite different. The God-man is the one who has God living in him and is ruled by the law of the Spirit of life. The God-man takes care of the law of life within. The more he cared for this law, the more God transformed him into a God-man. There are many good men in the world, but we Christians are not called by God to be good men. God has ordained us to be God men. We become God-men by letting God live in us, allowing Him to constantly rule us and follow His inner laws. Only then will we be transformed. In order to be transformed into a God-man, it is necessary to distinguish the spirit from the soul and know the Spirit. We also need to follow the feeling of the inner life. When we discern things, we are not according to right or wrong, but according to life or death.