

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message Four : Grafted into Christ to Become Part of the Tree of Life

I. Overview:

The Bible reveals that the relationship God desires to have with man is that He and man become one. The central line of God's economy is to make God and man, man and God, one entity, with the two having one living by one life with one nature. In His incarnation Christ brought God into man, and in His resurrection He brought man into God; by this, He accomplished the mingling of God and man into one. The relationship God desires to have with man is that He and man be grafted together. The grafted life is not an exchanged life; it is the mingling of the two similar lives being joined together organically. In order for us to be grafted into Christ, He had to pass through the processes. Christ as the tree of life is the embodiment of God as life to us, and having been grafted into Christ, we are united to Him organically. The tree of life is for the dispensing of the divine life into us; as we, the branches, abide in the vine, we receive the dispensing of life from the tree of life and live as part of the tree of life. As we abide in the vine, there is a dispensing of God into us, a dispensing of life from the tree of life into the branches; this dispensing makes us God-men.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain in order to understand the Bible, what the principle we should exercise is.

In order to understand the Bible, we must exercise one principle. This principle is that God planned in His economy to make Himself one with man. The basic principle, the main principle, of Christ's birth is that God came to join Himself to man, to be a man, and to be one with man. This is the basic principle of the Bible. God's main purpose is to make Himself one with man and to make man one with Him.

B. Expound the contrast between the human concept in the Psalms and the divine concept in the New Testament.

There is a contrast between the human concept in the Psalms and the divine concept in the New Testament. According to our concept, we may feel that the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, tells us mainly that we have to fear God, to take refuge in Him, to trust in Him, to wait on Him, and to hope in Him. This concept, however, is not the divine concept in the New Testament. What the New Testament shows us is God's economy.

Day 2 —

A. Explain that our Christian life is not an exchanged life, but a grafted life.

Some Christian teachers regard the Christian life as an exchanged life. According to this concept, our life is poor and Christ's life is superior. However, our Christian life is not an exchanged life. It is altogether a matter of the divine life dispensed, infused, into our human life. This is a basic concept in the Scriptures.

B. Explain the meaning of using the three illustrations of vessels, married life, and grafting in Romans.

The illustration of the vessels shows that we are God's containers with God as our content. The illustration of marriage shows that a man and a woman with different minds, emotions, wills, personalities, characters, and dispositions are joined to form one unit. The illustration of grafting shows that two lives are joined and then grow together organically.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the words of the Lord Jesus in John 15:5.

As the many branches of the vine, the believers of Christ are members of the Christ of God to form the organism of the Triune God in the divine dispensing. In John 15:5 the Lord Jesus declared, "I am the vine; you are the branches." Such a statement implies that Christ and His believers are one tree. The vine in John 15, therefore, is a universal vine comprising Christ and His believers.

B. Describe that the vine with the branches portrays the relationship between us and the Lord Jesus.

A branch of a vine cannot live by itself, for it will wither and die apart from the vine. The relationship between the branches and the vine portrays the relationship between us and the Lord Jesus. What we are, what we have, and what we do must be in the Lord and by the Lord in us. As long as we abide in Christ, He will abide in us.

Day 4 —

A. Explain what the effectiveness of the grafting is.

The branch still retains its same essential characteristics after the grafting, but its life is uplifted and transformed by being grafted to the better life. What are the results of the grafting? When the fatness of the better tree supplies the grafted branch, all the negative things are taken away. Then the original function of that branch is restored and strengthened, and our whole being is saturated and transformed.

B. Expound the work of the divine life after the grafting.

As the divine life works within us to transform and conform us, it discharges the negative element within us. The divine life also resurrects us and God's original creation. God created us with a mind, emotion, will, soul, heart, and spirit, and He intends to bring all these aspects of our being into resurrection.

Day 5 —

A. Testify how we have been grafted into Christ.

We have been grafted into Christ, becoming the branches of the vine tree revealed in John 15. We have been grafted into Christ by this all-inclusive Spirit. When we believed into Jesus as the Savior, this all-inclusive Spirit came into us, delivering us from all the negative things on the negative side and grafting us into Christ so that we might become a branch of Christ on the positive side.

B. Expound how we should do if we want to become a part of Him.

We all have to realize that God's intention is to present Himself to us as the tree of life. We not only eat of this tree, but we also are abiding in this tree. Not only do we take something of the tree into us, but we also have become a part of the tree. By drinking of the Lord and by feeding on Him, we become a part of Him; we become the branches of the tree.

Day 6 —

A. Fellowship how we become a God-men.

God wants us to be God-men, those into whom God has been "grafted." He wants us to be filled with God until the living water of life flows out from us like rivers. This is to have the divine life added to the human life, to have God's life grafted into the human life, and to have two lives becoming one life, thus living a mingled living of a God-man.

B. Share that the highest standard of living for a Christian is to live the mingled life of a God-man.

The highest standard of living for a Christian is to live the mingled life of a God-man. God's purpose is to work Himself into us to the extent that He becomes us and we become Him, that we and He become completely identical in life, nature, and image. This is the pinnacle. This is much higher than being good.

III. Conclusion:

The turning point in our experience of living with Christ is the cross. If there is no cross, then we live by ourselves. If there is a cross, Christ lives with us. We must realize that we have been crucified and live by Christ who lives in us. Death terminated the old creation; resurrection germinates a new creation, and the cross is the turning point. In resurrection we no longer live alone. We are now living a grafted life with Christ who lives with us. The life from the tree of life is the life that was crucified and resurrected. The more we enjoy the tree of life, the more will we be crucified and resurrected with Christ. The more we are grafted into Christ, the more our humanity is strengthened to live and manifest the uplifted humanity of Jesus. In order to be grafted into Christ, we must always abide in Him and abide in His love, and let Him with His Word abide in us.