

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Five : A Land of Vines

I. Overview :

Christ is the wine producer, sacrificing Himself to produce wine to cheer God and others.

If in the midst of such a situation we contact the Lord, we will experience Him as the wine-producing vine, as the One who gives cheer to God and to others. The issue of experiencing Christ as the vine is that in Him, we become a vine that produces something to cheer God and man. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as the real wine before God for His satisfaction. We are saturated with Christ as the heavenly wine and are one with the wine and even become wine; in this way we are qualified to be a drink offering. Paul became a drink offering for the church; this indicates that the drink offering is not only for the worship of God but especially for God's building. Based upon the principle that the drink offering required a basic offering, Paul regarded the sacrifice and service of the believers' faith as the basic offering upon which he could pour out himself as a drink offering. Through the enjoyment of Christ, we experience Christ and our being is constituted of Christ; in this way our faith becomes a sacrifice, which can be offered to God and upon which the drink offering can be poured.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound what the vine signifies.

In one sense the vine depicts the sacrificing Christ, the Christ who has sacrificed everything of Himself. But this is not the main point. The main significance is that out of His sacrifice He produced something to cheer God and man—new wine. The vine signifies Christ as the One who sacrificed Himself by being “pressed” on the cross to produce new wine to cheer God and man.

B. Explain how to experience of the vine.

Sometimes under the Lord's sovereignty we are put into a certain situation in which we must sacrifice ourselves to make others happy and the Lord happy. When in this situation we come to contact the Lord, it is then that we experience Him as the wine-producing vine; we experience Christ as the One who gives cheer to God and cheer to others. Out of this experience we become the vine.

Day 2 —

A. Expound Christ being as the true vine.

In John 15:1, the Lord Jesus declared, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.” Such a statement implies that Christ and the believers, the vine with the branches, form the organism of the Triune God in the divine dispensing. The vine, therefore, is a universal vine comprising Christ and His believers as the branches. In this vine, this organism, the Triune God lives, expresses Himself, and dispenses Himself to the uttermost.

B. Why is the most happy person the most unselfish one?

The most selfish people are always the most miserable. We have no energy to sacrifice, for our life is a natural life, a selfish life. Only the life of Christ is a life of sacrifice. If you contact this Christ and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize you; He will strengthen you to sacrifice for God and for others. Then you will be the most happy person.

Day 3 —

A. Expound we as branches of the vine, needed to abide in the vine, the Christ of God.

As branches of the vine, we need to abide in the vine, the Christ of God. The Lord Jesus said, “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. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him.

B. Explain that the branches can do nothing apart from the vine.

A branch of a vine cannot live by itself, for it will wither and die apart from the vine. What we are, what we have, and what we do must be in the Lord and by the Lord in us. Therefore, it is crucial for us to abide in the Lord and for the Lord to abide in us. Abiding in the Christ of God is a crucial matter.

Day 4 —

A. Explain that we should serve Him with both food and the drink offering.

According to the Bible, God also drinks. Exodus 29:40 and 41 mention the drink offering. This drink offering was not for the priests. Rather, it was altogether for God. Thus, because the drink offering was poured out for God, we can rightly say that God drinks. We should not only serve God with food, but we should also give Him something to drink. We need to pour out the drink offering for Him to drink.

B. Expound the wine of the drink offering being for God's satisfaction to Him to drink.

The wine of the drink offering was for God's satisfaction; it was poured out to God for Him to drink. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as real wine before God for His satisfaction. Christ poured out His very being unto God. Isaiah 53:12 says, "He poured out His life unto death." Thus, Christ is the heavenly, spiritual wine poured out to God for His pleasure.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the significance of Jacob twice setting up a pillar in Bethel.

Jacob twice set up a pillar in Bethel. The first time he did not pour a drink offering upon the pillar; he simply poured oil upon it. Oil does not require very much experience on our part, but wine depends upon our experience. But twenty years later, after Jacob had been touched by the Lord and had been somewhat transformed, he returned to Bethel. Then he had wine to pour out upon the pillar as a drink offering to the Lord.

B. Explain how we becoming the wine.

If we experience Christ day after day, eventually the Christ we experience will become wine in us. The more we experience Christ, the "crazier" we will become. If you experience Christ as the sin offering and as the other basic offerings daily, Christ as all these offerings will become wine and cause you to be exceedingly happy and joyful. Thus, whatever we experience of Christ will become our new wine.

Day 6 —

A. Expound the effectiveness of the drink offering.

The drink offering is mainly for the church. The first mention of a matter determines the principle of that matter in the Scriptures. The drink offering is first mentioned in relation to God's building, for this offering was poured out upon the pillar. If we read about the drink offering in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers without having Genesis 35:14 as a basis, we will not realize that the drink offering is for the building of God.

B. Explain that Paul's ministry resulted in the faith of the believers.

Paul regarded the faith of the Philippian believers was a sacrifice offered to God and also became their service to God. The issue, the result, of Paul's ministry was the faith of the believers. Faith here includes all that the believers have received and enjoyed. Ultimately, it includes what the believers themselves are. This faith was the result of Paul's ministry. Paul's ministry resulted in the all-inclusive faith of the believers.

III. Conclusion:

What process must grapes go through to become wine? It must be pressed. In order to make God and man happy, you must go through being pressed. The reason you rejoice is because Christ is the barley, the resurrected Christ in you, and He can handle every situation. You also have to go through pressure. You have to be broken in order to produce something in God's house to cheer people. Both the believer's faith as the basic sacrifice and the drink offering are constituted through a period of time. Faith is constituted by the believer's enjoyment of Christ and his spiritual experience. The sacrifice of the believer's faith satisfies God, and the drink offering pleases God. Here we see that there are two constitutions - the believers' constitution in relation to their faith and Paul's constitution in relation to his being a drink offering, representing the two peaks of the experience of Christ.