

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message Seventeen : Christ as the Image of God and the Treasure

I. Overview:

The image of God refers to Christ as our outward expression, whereas the treasure refers to Christ as our inward content. Our mind needs to be renewed to such an extent that we have a clear view of Christ as the image of God. Paul informs us that the god of this age, the ruler of this world, has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers. If we drop our concepts and turn our heart to the Lord, the veils will be taken away, and the god of this age will have no ground in our being. Christ as the life-giving Spirit in us is the One who shines and works; this is the treasure we have in us. The expression this treasure in 2 Corinthians 4:7 refers to verse 6, where Paul speaks of the face of Jesus Christ. The shining of God in our hearts is to illuminate us that we may know the glory of God in Christ's face. In ourselves we are nothing more than earthen vessels; God has shined the precious treasure into us. Now this treasure becomes the source of the power energizing us and enabling us to shine forth God's glory and manifest the truth.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound Christ being the image of God.

It is exceedingly difficult to understand and to define the image of God. Twice the New Testament tells us that Christ is the image of God. The invisible God has a visible image, and this image is Christ. John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." This means that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, came to man to express what God is.

B. Explain the expression of the image of God.

First, the expression the image of God shows that the image is in apposition to God. Second, as the image of God, Christ is the expression of the invisible God. Third, Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ is the effulgence of God's glory. Fourth, Christ, the glory, is the gospel. The gospel is God Himself embodied and expressed in Christ. Fifth, the gospel is the gospel of the glory of Christ, which illuminates in the heart of man.

Day 2 —

A. Explain what the gospel shining into us.

We need to see that the gospel of the glory of Christ first shines into us, and then it shines out from within us. The more the glory shines within us, the more it penetrates into our being and saturates it. Eventually, the inner glory will consume, swallow up, our entire inward being. Then the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ will shine out through us.

B. Expound the Satan being crouching in the minds of the believers.

Satan is lurking in the mentality of today's veiled Christians. What a pitiful situation that so many genuine believers in Christ are still veiled! We need to be on the alert, for it is possible for anything that is not Christ Himself to be used as a veil by the subtle one. Satan may use even the Scriptures or the law given by God as veils. This indicates that Satan can use even the highest spiritual gift to veil our understanding.

Day 3 —

A. Expound that God's shining in our hearts brings into us a treasure.

The treasure is the embodiment of God to be our life and our everything. Because of the shining in our hearts, we have this treasure, a treasure that is wonderful, precious, and marvelous. The treasure in the weak earthen vessels is the very God in Christ shined into us. A priceless treasure is contained in worthless vessels!

B. Explain the relationship between the expression this treasure in 2 Corinthians 4:7 and the face of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word refers to the part around the eyes, the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person. This indicates that unless we have the index of Christ's face, He cannot be a treasure to us in reality. Only when we are living in the presence of Christ, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is a treasure to us.

Day 4 —

A. Expound what is significant of the words in Second Corinthians 4:4.

This verse refers to four matters: illumination, gospel, glory, and Christ. God's shining in our hearts results in the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, in the enlightenment that causes us to know the glory of the gospel of Christ. God's shining in the universe produced the old creation. His shining in our hearts has made us a new creation.

B. Explain that the shining of God in our hearts is to illumine us.

Jesus Christ is the effulgence of the glory of God; to know Him is to know the God of glory. God shines in our hearts that we may shine on others so that they may have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that is, the knowledge of Christ. In order to experience God's shining, we need to have direct, personal, and intimate contact with Christ to make God also shining in our hearts.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the intention of God's original creating of man.

After God created man, He put him in front of the tree of life. The tree of life was good for food. Whatever we eat is not only contained in us but is assimilated into our very element. It even becomes us. We are not only containing vessels; we are eating vessels, vessels that assimilate what we eat.

B. Expound how we should be as the New Testament shows that we are vessels of God.

The New Testament shows us that God wants a vessel loving Him and keeping itself open to Him. You have to realize that if you love the church but do not open yourself up absolutely, you will still love to do something for the Lord. The proper situation is that I do not need to do anything, yet I need to love the Lord to the uttermost, keeping myself wide open all the time to Him. This is what the Lord wants today.

Day 6 —

A. Explain we as the earthen vessels, having treasure within.

The fact that we are earthen vessels proves that the excellency of the power is of God and not out of us. In ourselves we are nothing more than earthen vessels; we are sinful, fallen, and low. As such, we do not have the power to manifest the truth and shine forth the glory of the gospel. Although we are worthless earthen vessels, God has shined this precious treasure into us.

B. Expound we these vessels being like today's camera.

We are the earthen vessels to contain the Christ of glory as the excellent treasure. These vessels are like today's camera, into which Christ the figure enters through the flash of God's shining...Outwardly we are earthen vessels, but inwardly we have a priceless treasure—Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God to be the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

III. Conclusion:

Christ is the most excellent one in the whole universe; there is nothing more than Him. Since we have Christ as our treasure—the most excellent and lovable one—we do not love the world. It is not that we should not love the world, but because the world is far inferior to this treasure, which is Christ, who is both excellent and lovable. We love the Lord more than the world. Only when we live in the presence of Christ and look at the sign of what He is, do we feel that He is truly our treasure. In the entire universe, there is nothing more precious than seeing the face of Jesus Christ. The more we live in His presence, the more we feel His presence. When we preach the gospel, there should be a kind of light that shines. When we preach, God shines in the hearts of those who hear us. Such preaching is not only a statement of fact, but also a kind of glory.