

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message Five : The Tree of Life

I. Overview:

Christ as life is the reality of the tree of life, which is the centre of the universe; life is the goal of God's creation and the goal of God's complete salvation. The tree of life always signifies Christ, and God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to eat of Him as man's life that God might become the very constituent of man's being. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts; the second problem is hypocrisy; the third problem is rebellion: Christ operates and moves in us if we do not obey being rebellion; the fourth problem is our natural capability. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed. In order for us to eat Christ as the tree of life, we must give Him the first place in all things, which is to love Him with the first love. Eating Christ as the tree of life should be the primary matter in the church life. The intrinsic reason for the desolation and degradation of the church is that Christ is not exalted by God's people.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain that from the Bible God's purpose and center is life.

The Old Testament speaks of creation, and the New Testament speaks of redemption. Both in creation and redemption God's purpose and center is life. Although God created many things of such diversity and variety, His purpose and final goal are simply life. If we read the first two chapters of Genesis and meditate quietly before God on His creation, we will see that God's creation involves life and produces life. Life is the center and goal of God's creation.

B. Why was man the highest level of life created by God?

In the orderly process of His creation, God first created inanimate objects, and then He created organic things. Furthermore, the creation of living beings started at the lowest level of life and advanced step by step to higher levels of life. Ultimately, the highest level of life created by God was man. Man is the highest life in God's creation, because the Bible says that God created man in His own image and according to His own likeness.

Day 2 —

A. Explain that we need the eating of the Lord as our bread of life.

For the proper church life and the recovery of the church life, that is, for the proper growth in the Christian life, what we need is not merely the mental apprehension of teachings but the eating of the Lord as the bread of life in our spirit. Even the words of the Scripture should not be considered merely as doctrines to teach our mind but as food to nourish our spirit.

B. Expound the word for tree in Revelation 2:7.

In Greek the word for tree in Revelation 2:7, as in 1 Peter 2:24, means "wood"; it is not the word usually used for tree. In the Bible the tree of life always signifies Christ as the embodiment of all the riches of God for our food. In Revelation 2:7 it signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood) and resurrected (implied in the life of God) Christ.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the first problem that God's life encounters in us.

The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts. Most Christians think that they should be zealous and forsake the world once they become Christians. From man's view, this sounds very logical. But without God's life, this is not practical. The day we were saved, we received a living Christ, who became our life in us.

B. Explain the third problem that God's life encounters in us.

Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.

Day 4 —

A. Expound God's original intention being that man should eat of the tree of life.

God's original intention was that man should eat of the tree of life. Because of the fall the way to the tree of life was closed to man. Through the redemption of Christ the way by which man could touch the tree of life, which is God Himself in Christ as life to man, was opened again. But in the church's degradation, religion crept in with its knowledge to distract the believers in Christ from eating Him as the tree of life.

B. State the primary matter in the church life.

Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ. But to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. The first love will bring us to the tree of life. When we give our first love to the Lord Jesus, He will give us to eat of the tree of life.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the words of the "good works" in Ephesians 2:10.

In Ephesians 2:10 "good works" are just Christ. The goal of God's work is Christ, and we should walk in this work. We often work because of our interest, not because of Christ. Many times men run to and fro to work for a name for themselves. They have worked, but they have not served God. Therefore, our work should also be for Christ.

B. Why do we say that the cross is the center of God's work?

The cross is the center of God's work. The work of the cross is to accomplish God's goal. The cross works to eliminate all that issues from the flesh in order that Christ may have the first place. The centrality of God is Christ. After a person is saved, we should help him to consecrate himself to be a slave of Christ, so that he receives Christ as his Lord in all things.

Day 6 —

A. Expound that only Christ the King can solve the problems of the world.

No one can solve the problems of today's world. Only Christ the King can solve these problems. When Christ reigns on earth, the overcomers will be His helpers in the kingship, His co-kings. The sons of Christ, the overcomers, will be the princes reigning with Christ over the nations.

B. State the victorious Christ as the King of in God's kingdom.

Psalm 24:7-10 shows us the victorious Christ as the coming King in God's eternal kingdom. Verse 7 says, "Lift up your heads, O gates; / And be lifted up, O long enduring doors; / And the King of glory will come in." The gates are of the doors indicate cities of the nations. The doors are of the houses of the people. The long enduring doors indicate waiting and expecting with long endurance.

III. Conclusion:

In order to enjoy Christ, we must love Him with the first love. The first love brings us to the Tree of Life. This is like an exchange; when we give our first love to Jesus Christ, He will give us the tree of Life to eat. Our love is His enjoyment, and the fruit of the tree of Life is our enjoyment. To love Him with the first love, which is the best love, giving Him the preeminent of all things. In order to make Him the preeminent, we have to pray: "Lord Jesus, I love You with the first love. I attribute my best love to You. I prioritize my love for You." Today, our paradise is in the church life; every local church is God's paradise, where Christ is the tree of Life, providing enjoyment for the overcomer. Anyone who enjoys the tree of Life in the local church, God's paradise, will be an overcomer.