

**Outlines of the Messages
for the International Chinese-speaking Conference
February 14-16, 2025**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
CHAPTERS 5 THROUGH 8 OF ROMANS—
THE KERNEL OF THE BIBLE**

**Message One
The Line of Life and the Line of Death
in Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10, 12, 14, 17-18, 21; 6:4, 9, 16, 21-23;
7:5, 10, 13, 24; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 38

- I. Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans can be called the kernel of the Bible, showing its entire theme in a concrete and detailed way:**
- A. These two key words—*life* and *death*—are mentioned repeatedly in Romans 5 through 8; life (5:10, 17-18, 21; 6:4, 22-23; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 38) and death (5:12, 14, 17, 21; 6:9, 16, 21, 23; 7:5, 10, 13, 24; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 38) form two contrasting lines through chapters 5—8, the line of life and the line of death, showing that man is in a triangular situation between God and Satan, life and death.
 - B. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge (the tree of death) issue in two lines—the line of life and the line of death—that run through the entire Bible and end in the book of Revelation; life begins with the tree of life (Gen. 2:9) and ends with the New Jerusalem as the city of water of life with the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2), the light of life (21:23; 22:5), and the glory of life (21:10-11, 23); death begins with the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) and ends with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14).
 - C. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life (Gen. 2:9, 16; Rev. 2:7); the content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be.
 - D. But to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love; if we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us—vv. 4-7.
 - E. To recover the first love is to consider the Lord Jesus as the first in everything; if we make Christ everything in our life, this means that we have overcome the loss of the first love—Col. 1:18b; John 14:21, 23; Psalms 90:1; 91:1; Phil. 3:13-14.
 - F. The Lord's speaking to the church in Ephesus can be summarized with four crucial words that begin with the letter *l*—*love*, *life*, *light*, and *lampstand*; we must give the Lord Jesus the preeminence in every way and in everything to recover the first love; then we will enjoy Him as the tree of life, and this life right away becomes the light of life (John 8:12); then we will be shining in our daily life and corporately as the lampstand (Rev. 2:1-7).
 - G. The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord (cf. Isa. 55:1-2, 6-7; 57:20-21); they do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him; in the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this (Jer. 2:13).

II. Today the believer is a miniature garden of Eden—God as the tree of life is in his spirit, Satan as the tree of knowledge is in his flesh, and his mind is in between; we are either in the spirit or in the flesh; there is no third place for us to be; this is why we must set our mind on the spirit—Rom. 8:6:

- A. Man's body was originally pure, but through man's fall Satan injected himself into man, and man's body has become the flesh—Gen. 3:6; Rom. 7:18a:
 - 1. Our body is “the body of sin” (6:6) and “the body of this death” (7:24); the body of sin is very active and full of strength in sinning against God, but the body of this death is weak and powerless in acting to please God (v. 18).
 - 2. As long as we are still living, until the day of our redemption, the body of sin and death is always with us—cf. 8:23.
 - 3. The flesh is the “meeting hall” and the compound of sin, death, and Satan; the flesh is a hopeless case and can never be improved—7:17-18, 21; cf. John 17:15.
- B. For the sake of His economy, God in His wisdom and sovereignty uses our sinful, ugly flesh to force us to turn to our spirit so that we may gain more of the Spirit for His building by the growth of God in us—Col. 2:19; Zech. 4:6:
 - 1. Judicially speaking, both Satan and our flesh were condemned once for all on the cross (Rom. 8:3; John 3:14; Heb. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:21), but God allowed the flesh to remain with us to help us and force us to turn to Christ in our spirit and have no more confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3).
 - 2. Without the help rendered by the sinful, ugly flesh, we would not be as desperate to gain the Lord or to have Him wrought into us—Rom. 7:24-25; 8:2, 6, 13.
 - 3. Our goal may be holiness or spirituality or victory, but God's goal is to work Himself into us to make us glorious; often when we are in a difficult situation, we are more open to the Lord and more willing to turn to Him and allow Him to work Himself into us—vv. 28-29; Eph. 5:27.
 - 4. If we seek Him, even the sinful compound of the flesh will become a help to us in gaining the Lord; because we fail so often, we are desperate to turn to the spirit, and in this way we gain more of the Spirit—cf. Exo. 23:23, 29-30; Judg. 2:21—3:4.
 - 5. Our hardships, defeats, failures, and disappointments force us to realize that there is no hope in the flesh; the flesh is good only to force us to turn to Christ in our spirit, to press us into the spirit, to make us desperate to get into the spirit, and to keep us watchful to stay in the spirit—Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - 6. The Lord does not care for whether or not we have a victory; the Lord cares for only one thing—that we gain Christ as the Spirit by setting our mind on the spirit—Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Rom. 8:6.

III. In Romans 5 we are in Adam, in Romans 6 we are in Christ, in Romans 7 we are in the flesh, and in Romans 8 we are in the spirit; the Adam in chapter 5 is experienced in the flesh in chapter 7, and the Christ in chapter 6 is experienced in the spirit in chapter 8:

- A. We believers in Christ have a factual and positional transfer out of Adam through Christ's death and into Christ through His resurrection—6:3-8:
 - 1. In Adam we inherited sin that constitutes us sinners (5:12a, 19a); we inherited death that, on the one hand, weakens us, disabling us to do things pleasing God, and that, on the other hand, reigns over us (vv. 12b, 14a, 17a); and we inherited condemnation under the law unto death (v. 16a).
 - 2. In Christ we have been gifted with righteousness, life, and justification under grace

unto life, in which we reign with grace over all things—vv. 17b, 18b, 21.

- B. We believers in Christ have a practical and experiential transfer out of the flesh (the practical and experiential Adam) through our being crucified with Christ (6:6; Gal. 2:20) and into the Spirit (the practical and experiential Christ) through our organic union with Christ as the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2, 16a; 1 Cor. 6:17).
- C. Christ Himself is the life of God, the eternal life (John 14:6a; 11:25; 1 John 1:2); He came that we may have life and may have it abundantly (John 10:10b); He died a life-releasing death and entered into a life-dispensing resurrection (12:24) to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) as the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), giving life to our spirit, our mind, and our mortal bodies so that we might be those who are swallowed up by life to minister life to others (vv. 10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4; 1 John 5:16a; John 6:63; Acts 5:20).

IV. In order for us to stay on the line of life, we must take the way of enjoying Christ as the tree of life; see crucial fellowship from Brother Lee below:

TAKING THE WAY OF ENJOYING CHRIST AS THE TREE OF LIFE— CRUCIAL FELLOWSHIP FROM BROTHER LEE

“In May of 1943...I had contracted a serious case of tuberculosis ...I saw the tree of life during the two and a half years of my illness. During those two and a half years I saw that in the Lord’s recovery and in His work we lacked life. Every kind of problem, regardless of what it may be, is the result of a shortage of life. When I saw this, I was extremely remorseful, I confessed much and had a thorough repentance before the Lord, and I also had many dealings before Him ...The messages on the tree of life saved many saints and also released many of the brothers and sisters in Nanking. Because of the four years of turmoil in the church in Shanghai, the saints had been disheartened and depressed for years and were unable to do anything. These messages released their spirit and enlightened their heart ...I thank the Lord that through the messages on the tree of life, the church in Shanghai was healed ...The messages on the tree of life laid a foundation for the revival of the church in Shanghai”—*The History and Revelation of the Lord’s Recovery*, vol. 1, pp. 130, 133, 135, 138.

“If we want to take the way of enjoying God, we must have a change of concept...If we want to enter into the reality of the enjoyment of God, we must see a controlling vision ...It was not until I was forty years of age that the Lord revealed to me the way of enjoying Him. I was disappointed that for twenty years most of my time and energy had been wasted. Most of my prayers were of no value, and the time that I had spent reading the Bible and other spiritual books was also of no value. This is when I realized that our way of working was wrong and that our way of spiritual pursuit was also wrong.

“Because I suffered a great loss from taking the wrong way, I do not want others to repeat the same mistake. I hope that others can take the way of enjoying God. I implore the saints to no longer take the wrong way. We should consider our former way of pursuit. We must have a drastic change of concept. We need to have a controlling vision”—*The Vision of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, p. 51.