

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying

Message 1 : The Line of Life and the Line of Death in Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans

I. Overview:

Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans can be called the kernel of the Bible. These two key words—life and death—are mentioned repeatedly, and these are formed two contrasting lines, the line of life and the line of death, showing that man is in a triangular situation between life and death. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge 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 and ends with the New Jerusalem, and death begins with the tree of knowledge and ends with the lake of fire. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be. Our body is “the body of sin” and “the body of this death”. 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, and to keep us watchful to stay in the spirit. In Adam we inherited sin that constitutes us sinners to inherit death. In Christ we have been gifted with righteousness, life, and justification under grace unto life, in which we reign with grace over all things.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the two trees in Genesis 2.

In Genesis 2 life is represented by the tree of life, and death, by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The issue of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is actually death, not knowledge. Therefore, we may call these trees the tree of life and the tree of death. The Bible puts both good and evil in the same category. According to Genesis 2, knowledge and good are put together with evil. The death is, of course, the opposite of life.

B. Explain the seeds of spiritual truths in Genesis with the harvest in Revelation.

In Genesis 2 we have the seed of life and the seed of death. But at the end of the book of Revelation, we see the consummation of these seeds. Death, the last enemy, is cast into the lake of fire. Life abounds in the New Jerusalem, for there we see the river of water of life with the tree of life growing in it.

Day 2 —

A. Fellowship 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. 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.

B. Expound recovering the first love being to consider the Lord Jesus as the first in everything.

Colossians tells us that our Christ must have the first place. He must have the preeminence. Christ must be the first. To recover the first love is to consider the Lord Jesus as the first in everything. If we make Christ everything in our life, that means we have overcome the loss of the first love. The failure of Israel was that they forsook God, the fountain of living waters.

Day 3 —

A. Explain every genuine Christian being a miniature garden of Eden.

As a result of the fall, Satan as the tree of knowledge came into man's flesh. As a result of our believing in Christ, God as the tree of life came into our spirit. Thus, every genuine Christian is a miniature garden of Eden. The mind of your soul represents your self, sin in your flesh represents Satan, and the Spirit in your spirit represents God. As in the garden of Eden, the three parties form a triangular situation within us.

B. Expound that the flesh has two elements.

Our body, which contains our inner being, was created as a pure, clean, and good vessel. But one day God's enemy came in to inject himself into man by the way of man's eating. Man ate of the tree of knowledge, and the man's body has another element, a foreign element, added to it, and it has become flesh. Thus, the flesh has two elements—one element created by God and another element, the element that is Satan himself.

Day 4 —

A. Expound that the flesh is here helping us and forcing us to turn to the spirit.

We should not be disappointed. We have the flesh, but we also have to say, "Praise the Lord! I also have the spirit." We all need to turn from the flesh to the spirit. We need to realize that the flesh is a hopeless case and that it is here for our good. It is here helping us and forcing us all the time, moment by moment, to turn to the spirit, to trust in the Lord, and to no longer have any confidence in our flesh.

B. State the flesh helping us to turn to Christ in the spirit.

We all have to see that judicially the flesh is over because it was dealt with by Christ on the cross, but it still remains with us because of our Father's wisdom. Whether we are happy or unhappy, the flesh helps us to turn to Christ in the spirit and have no more confidence in the flesh. We must be alert all the time to turn to our spirit.

Day 5 —

A. Explain carrying out God's organic salvation, there is the need of two divine transfers.

God's organic salvation is fully revealed in the book of Romans. To carry out God's organic salvation there is the need of two divine transfers. The first transfer is out of Adam into Christ and is factual and positional. The second transfer is out of the flesh into the Spirit of life and is practical and experiential.

B. Expound in Adam what things we inherited from.

The nature of Satan as sin, constituting us sinners in essence and element. We also inherited death, which on the one hand, made us passive, weak, and impotent with respect to the things of God and, on the other hand, reigned first in our spirit, then through our soul, and eventually over our body. Furthermore, in sin and death we became subject to the condemnation of the righteous law of God.

Day 6 —

A. Explain Romans 8:5-6 showing a miniature garden of Eden.

Romans 8:5-6 shows a miniature garden of Eden, with the flesh and death on one side, the spirit and life on the other side, and the mind in the middle. What realm we are in depends on where we set our mind. When our mind is set on the spirit, our mind is full of life. We also have peace because there is no discord between our outward behavior and our inner being.

B. Expound the words in Romans 8:4 and its application.

The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the mingled spirit. If we try to be a Christian, we are in the flesh. That is the old man trying to keep the law. Being a Christian is a living out of the life of God by walking according to the mingled spirit within. If we would see this vision, give up our effort, and simply be in the spirit, another One will live in us.

III. Conclusion:

We must all recover our enjoyment of Christ as the Tree of Life. Today, to overcome means overcoming corrupted Christianity, as well as the good works that apart from a lack of enjoyment of Christ. It is possible for believers to have good behavior and to work diligently and patiently, yet they may still be lacking in their enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life. This is why the Lord has called us to overcome, not just in overcoming minor issues such as temper and pride, but especially in overcoming the works we have done for Him from ourselves. God's economy is a matter of life or death. In life, we are living out God; in death, we are living out Satan. We are the battlefield where the cosmic war between God and Satan rages fiercely within us. If we put our minds on ourselves and separate ourselves from the Spirit, Satan will gain a ground. However, if we remain in the Spirit and set our minds on the Spirit, God will prevail.