

**MEETING GOD'S NEED
AND PRESENT NEEDS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

(Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

**Taking, Experiencing, and Enjoying Christ
as Our King, Our Lord, Our Head, and Our Husband
for the Building Up of the Body of Christ
to Consummate the New Jerusalem**

EM Hymns: 960, 500

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:22, 26-28; 2 Cor. 5:14-15;
Rom. 14:7-9; Col. 2:19; S. S. 1:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3

- Ezek 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.
- Ezek 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.
- Ezek 1:27 Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw something like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him.
- Ezek 1:28 Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.
- 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
- 2 Cor 5:15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.
- Rom 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself;
- Rom 14:8 For whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's.
- Rom 14:9 For Christ died and lived again for this, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- S. S. 1:1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.
- S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
- S. S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
- S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
- 2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
- 2 Cor 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

I. We must take, experience, and enjoy Christ as our King:

- A. The highest point in our spiritual experience is having a clear sky with the throne above it—
Ezek. 1:22, 26-28:
- Ezek 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.
- Ezek 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.
- Ezek 1:27 Then I saw something like the sight of electrum, like the appearance of fire encased all around, from the appearance of His loins and upward; and from the appearance of His loins and downward, I saw something like the appearance of fire. And there was brightness all around Him.

Ezek 1:28 Like the appearance of the rainbow that is in the cloud on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the brightness all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and I heard the voice of someone speaking.

1. The kind of sky we have as Christians depends on our conscience; our conscience is connected to our sky—Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12.

Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 Cor 1:12 For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

2. When there is nothing between us and the Lord and nothing between us and one another, our sky will be crystal clear, and we will have not only a good conscience but also a pure conscience—Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; cf. Matt. 5:8; Prov. 22:11; 2 Tim. 2:22.

Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;

1 Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Prov 22:11 He who loves pureness of heart / And whose speech is gracious will have the king as his friend.

2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- B. The throne is the center of the universe, and it is the Lord's ruling presence; the throne in our spirit is actually Christ Himself—Isa. 22:23; Heb. 4:16; Rom. 5:21; Rev. 22:1:

Isa 22:23 And I will drive him as a peg into a sure place, / And he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Rom 5:21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

1. If we have a clear sky, the throne will be present, and we will spontaneously be under the ruling and reigning of the throne; for God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us—cf. Dan. 4:17, 25-26; 5:18-31; Isa. 6:1-8.

Dan 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High is the Ruler over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills and sets up over it the lowliest of men.

Dan 4:25 You shall be driven out from among mankind, and with the beasts of the field shall your dwelling place be; and you shall be made to eat grass as bulls do and shall be wet with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you come to know that the Most High is the Ruler over the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills.

Dan 4:26 And in that it was commanded that the stump of roots of the tree be left, your kingdom will be assured to you after you have come to know that the heavens do rule.

Dan 5:18 Regarding you, O king, God the Most High gave to Nebuchadnezzar your forefather kingship, greatness, glory, and majesty;

Dan 5:19 And because of the greatness which He gave to him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; whomever he wished he slew, and whomever he wished he kept alive, and whomever he wished he raised up, and whomever he wished he brought down.

Dan 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so arrogant that he conducted himself in pride, he was deposed from his royal throne, and his glory was taken away from him.

Dan 5:21 And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like that of the beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys; men fed him with grass as they do bulls, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he came to know that God the Most High is the Ruler over the kingdom of men and sets over it whomever He wills.

Dan 5:22 And you his descendant, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this;

Dan 5:23 But you have exalted yourself against the Lord of the heavens; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and of gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see nor hear nor know. But the God in whose hand is your breath and to whom all your ways belong, you have not honored.

Dan 5:24 Then that part of the hand was sent from before Him, and this writing was inscribed.

Dan 5:25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

Dan 5:26 This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE-God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end;

Dan 5:27 TEKEL-You have been weighed in the scales and found to be lacking.

Dan 5:28 PERES-Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

Dan 5:29 Then Belshazzar commanded; and they clothed Daniel in purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and they made the proclamation concerning him that he should rule as the third ruler in the kingdom.

Dan 5:30 In that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.

Dan 5:31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2 Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3 And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.

Isa 6:4 And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

2. To have the throne above a clear sky is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life; in our spiritual experience, to reach the point of having the throne above a clear sky means that in everything we are completely submissive to God's authority and administration.

C. In Ezekiel 1:26 "the likeness of the throne" is "like the appearance of a sapphire stone"; a sapphire stone is blue in color, which is a heavenly color, indicating the heavenly situation, atmosphere, and condition of God's ruling presence—Exo. 24:10.

Exo 24:10 And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness.

- D. God desires to manifest Himself through man and to reign through man; He wants man to express Him and to exercise His authority; God's complete salvation is for us to be saved in life and to reign in life by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—Gen. 1:26; Rev. 11:15; 3:21; 22:3-5; Rom. 5:17, 21.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.

Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Rom 5:21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. We must take, experience, and enjoy Christ as our Lord:

- A. We must be people who live to the Lord, not merely for the Lord—2 Cor. 5:9, 14-15:

2 Cor 5:9 Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.

2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

2 Cor 5:15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

1. For the love of Christ to constrain us means that it forcibly limits us and shuts us up to one line and purpose, as in a narrow, walled road; in such a way the apostles were constrained to no longer live to themselves but to the Lord—vv. 14-15.

2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

2 Cor 5:15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

2. To live to ourselves means that we are under our own control, direction, and governing and that we care for our own aims and goals; but the apostles were determined to gain the honor of being well pleasing to the Lord by living to Him—vv. 9, 14-15; Col. 1:10; Heb. 11:5-6.

2 Cor 5:9 Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.

2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

2 Cor 5:15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

Col 1:10 To walk worthily of the Lord to please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

3. The love of Christ constrains us to live to the Lord; to live to the Lord means that we are absolutely under the Lord's control, direction, and governing and that we want to fulfill His requirements, satisfy His desires, and complete what He intends.
 4. Paul sought to please the Lord not by doing a work but by living to Him in every aspect of his daily life; likewise, we today should not seek to please ourselves but seek to please the Lord by living to Him; all that we do must be to Him.
- B. "Whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's. For Christ died and lived again for this, that He might be Lord..."—Rom. 14:8-9:
1. Christ died on the cross for our judicial redemption, and He lives again in resurrection within us for our organic salvation so that He might be our indwelling Lord, the Lord Spirit in our spirit, as the One who rules within us.
 2. Because we have been bought with the price of the precious blood of Christ, "we are the Lord's" (v. 8), and we should continually exalt Him as Lord, giving Him the first place in our life and in our work; we are those who labor in the Lord for the work of the Lord, which is the work of the ministry to build up the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 6:19-20; 15:58; 16:10; Eph. 4:11-12.
- Rom 14:8 For whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's.
- 1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
- 1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.
- 1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.
- 1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear; for he is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.
- Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- C. "We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5); among the believers, besides Christ there should be no other lord; all should be servants, even slaves (1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:26-27; 23:10-11).
- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,
- Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;
- Matt 23:10 Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.
- Matt 23:11 And the greatest among you shall be your servant.

III. We must take, experience, and enjoy Christ as our Head:

- A. Our being headed up in Christ rescues us from the heap of the universal collapse in death and darkness, which was caused by the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man; the believers participate in Christ's heading up by being willing to be headed up in the church life, by growing in life, and by living under Christ's light—Eph. 1:10; John 1:4; Rev. 21:23-25; Eph. 5:8-9.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- Rev 21:24 And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- Rev 21:25 And its gates shall by no means be shut by day, for there will be no night there.
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light

- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- B. To hold Christ as the Head is not only to take Him as our unique authority but also to stay intimately connected to Him so that His riches and life supply are dispensed into our being to cause us to grow with the growth of God, growing up into Him in all things and functioning out from Him so that all the Body causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- C. God’s surpassingly great power that is presently being transmitted into us is the transcending Christ Himself as the fourfold power of the Triune God (1 Cor. 1:24); the normal, genuine, proper, and real church comes out of this great fourfold power—resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power—for the building up of the church as His Body (Eph. 1:19-23):
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- Eph 1:19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,
- Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
- Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
1. *To the church* (v. 22) indicates that the divine power, which includes all that the Triune God has passed through, has been installed into us once for all and is being transmitted into us continually, causing us to enjoy Christ richly and to have the proper church life with the reality of the Body of Christ.
 2. The transmitting of the transcending Christ is to transfuse into the church, the Body of Christ, what the Triune God has accomplished, attained, and obtained in Christ; this is not only for producing the church but also for growing, establishing, and building up the church.
- D. We must ask the Father to strengthen us into the inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts through faith with the power that raised Christ from the dead, that seated Christ at the right hand of God in the heavenlies, that subjected all things under His feet, and that gave Him to be Head over all things to the church—3:16-17; 1:19-23.
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- Eph 1:19 And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,
- Eph 1:20 Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,
- Eph 1:21 Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

- E. God is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think concerning the church as the Body of Christ, according to this fourfold power that operates in us, so that God is glorified in the church—3:20-21.

Eph 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

IV. We must take, experience, and enjoy Christ as our Husband:

- A. The romance in Song of Songs portrays that our relationship with the Lord must be personal—1:4a:

S. S. 1:4a Draw me; ...

1. We must follow the pattern of Abraham, who was the friend of God for the desire of God (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; Gen. 18:1-33), and the pattern of Moses, who was a companion of God for the interests of God (Exo. 33:11).

2 Chron 20:7 Did You not, O our God, dispossess the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the seed of Abraham Your friend?

Isa 41:8 But you, Israel, My servant, / Jacob, whom I have chosen, / The seed of Abraham My friend;

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God.

Gen 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.

Gen 18:2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth

Gen 18:3 And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant.

Gen 18:4 Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

Gen 18:5 And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said.

Gen 18:6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make cakes.

Gen 18:7 And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.

Gen 18:8 And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set them before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Gen 18:9 And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent.

Gen 18:10 And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him.

Gen 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women.

Gen 18:12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Gen 18:13 And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old?

Gen 18:14 Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Gen 18:15 Then Sarah denied it, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

Gen 18:16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.

Gen 18:17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

Gen 18:18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?

Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.

Gen 18:20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!

Gen 18:21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Gen 18:22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.

Gen 18:23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Gen 18:24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?

Gen 18:25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?

Gen 18:26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Gen 18:27 And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.

Gen 18:28 Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.

Gen 18:29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty.

Gen 18:30 And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.

Gen 18:31 And he said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the twenty.

Gen 18:32 And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the ten.

Gen 18:33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Exo 33:11 And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

2. We must follow the pattern of David and Asaph, who sought the shining face of God in and for the house of God—Psa. 27:4, 8; 80:3, 7, 14-19.

Psa 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple.

Psa 27:8 When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.

Psa 80:3 O God, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa 80:7 O God of hosts, restore us; / And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa 80:14 O God of hosts, turn, we beseech You; / Look down from heaven and see, / And visit this vine,

Psa 80:15 Even the stock which Your right hand has planted / And the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself.

Psa 80:16 It is burned with fire; it is cut down; / They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.

Psa 80:17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, / Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself;

Psa 80:18 Then we will not turn back from You. / Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Psa 80:19 O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; / Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

3. We must follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived in the presence of God without ceasing—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32.
 - Acts 10:38c [Jesus]... for God was with Him.
 - John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.
 - John 16:32 Behold, an hour is coming, and has come, that you will be scattered each to his own place and will leave Me alone; yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.
 4. We must follow the pattern of Peter, whose love for the Lord was restored for him to shepherd the Lord's sheep and follow the Lord unto martyrdom without any confidence in his natural strength—21:15-19; Mark 16:7.
 - John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
 - John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
 - John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
 - John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
 - John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.
 - Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.
 5. We must follow the pattern of Paul, who was constrained by the love of Christ to live in the person of Christ as an ambassador of Christ to be well pleasing to Christ—2 Cor. 2:10; 5:9, 14, 20.
 - 2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
 - 2 Cor 5:9 Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.
 - 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
 - 2 Cor 5:20 On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats you through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.
- B. The romance in Song of Songs portrays that our relationship with the Lord must be affectionate—1:1-2:
- S. S. 1:1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.
 - S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
1. The Lord who indwells us is our Father, and grace is our mother—Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:24-26; Isa. 66:12-13.
 - Rom 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!
 - Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
 - Gal 4:24 These things are spoken allegorically, for these women are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bringing forth children unto slavery, which is Hagar.
 - Gal 4:25 Now this Hagar is Sinai the mountain in Arabia and corresponds to the Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery with her children.
 - Gal 4:26 But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother;
 - Isa 66:12 For thus says Jehovah, / I now am extending to her / Peace like a river, / And the glory of the nations / Like an overflowing stream; / And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, / And you will be bounced on the knees.
 - Isa 66:13 As one whom his mother comforts, / So will I comfort you; / And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

2. The Lord who indwells us is our Husband (Matt. 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:2-3) and our Brother (John 20:17; Rom. 8:29).
 - Matt 9:15 And Jesus said to them, The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.
 - 2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
 - 2 Cor 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
 - John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 3. The Lord who indwells us is our Friend (Matt. 11:19; John 15:12-17) and our Counselor (Isa. 9:6).
 - Matt 11:19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking; and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Yet wisdom is justified by her works.
 - John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.
 - John 15:13 No one has greater love than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
 - John 15:14 You are My friends if you do what I command you.
 - John 15:15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all the things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.
 - John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
 - John 15:17 These things I command you that you may love one another.
 - Isa 9:6 For a child is born to us, / A Son is given to us; / And the government / Is upon His shoulder; / And His name will be called / Wonderful Counselor, / Mighty God, / Eternal Father, / Prince of Peace.
 4. The Lord who indwells us is our Advocate (1 John 2:1), our Comforter (John 14:16; 16:7, 13), and our Shepherd (Psa. 23:1; 1 Pet. 2:25).
 - 1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;
 - John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
 - John 16:7 But I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.
 - John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
 - Psa 23:1 Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing.
 - 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- C. The romance in Song of Songs portrays that our relationship with the Lord must be private—1:3-4:
- S. S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
 - S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
1. We must contact the Lord and spend time with Him privately in a secret, definite, and prevailing way, opening our entire being to Him for His enlightening and infusing, so that we can glow with God and shine forth God—Matt. 6:6; Exo. 33:11; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Isa. 60:1, 5a; Matt. 14:22-23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28.
 - Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Exo 33:11 And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Isa 60:1 Arise! Shine! For your light has come, / And the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you.

Isa 60:5a Then you will see and you will beam, / And your heart will be in awe and will swell with joy, ...

Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

Mark 1:35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.

Luke 5:16 But He Himself often withdrew in the wilderness and prayed.

Luke 6:12 And in these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Luke 9:28 And about eight days after these words, He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

2. We must experience and enjoy Christ as our hiding place, our dwelling place, and our secret of sufficiency—Psa. 90:1; 91:1; 31:20; 18:1-5; Phil. 4:7-13.

Psa 90:1 O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations.

Psa 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psa 31:20 You hide them in the hiding place of Your presence / Apart from the conspiracies of men; / You lay them away secretly in a shelter / Apart from the contention of tongues.

Psa 18:1 I love You, O Jehovah, my strength.

Psa 18:2 Jehovah is my crag and my fortress and my Deliverer; / My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; / My shield and the horn of my salvation, my high retreat.

Psa 18:3 I called upon Jehovah, who is worthy of praise, And from my enemies I was saved.

Psa 18:4 The cords of death encompassed me; / And the torrents of destruction assailed me.

Psa 18:5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; / The snares of death confronted me.

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.

Phil 4:9 The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

Phil 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because now at length you have caused your thinking for me to blossom anew; for which matter you had indeed taken thought, but lacked opportunity.

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.

Phil 4:12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.

Phil 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

3. We must ask for the counsel of the Lord related to every problem that we encounter; we must bring every matter to the Lord and consider, examine, and determine things before Him and in fellowship with Him—cf. Josh. 9:14.

Josh 9:14 And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

4. In this respect every believer needs to be weak to the extent that he does not have his own ideas, make his own decisions, or take any action related to what he encounters without contacting the Lord and consulting with Him, allowing Him to make the decisions; this is the sweetest living of a Christian—2 Cor. 12:9-10.

2 Cor 12:9 And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

2 Cor 12:10 Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

5. We have no alternative but to fellowship with God in all things, discuss all things with Him, and allow Him to handle all things, speak in all things, and make every decision; it is glorious for a Christian to be dependent on another One—God—at every moment and in every matter—Phil. 4:5-7; Prov. 3:5-6; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.

Phil 4:5 Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Phil 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.

2 Cor 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.

2 Cor 1:9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

- D. The romance in Song of Songs portrays that our relationship with the Lord must be spiritual—1:4b:

S. S. 1:4b ... we will run after you

1. Christ visits us spiritually because He is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; our spirit is the Holy of Holies, the chambers of the pneumatic Christ as the Lord of lords and the King of kings—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 17:14; 19:16.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Rev 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, will also overcome them.

Rev 19:16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

2. In the book of Ephesians, Paul shows that in order to contact Christ and enjoy Christ for the Body of Christ, we must exercise our spirit—1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

3. In the book of Romans, Paul stresses that whatever we are (2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (vv. 10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4, 13; 12:11) must be in our spirit.
- Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.
- Rom 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.
- Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
- Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
4. The Father is seeking true worshippers, those who will exercise their spirit to contact God the Spirit by drinking of the living water; to drink of the living water is to render real worship to God—John 4:23-24, 10, 14; 7:37-38; Isa. 12:1-6.
- John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- Isa 12:1 And you will say in that day, / I will praise You, O Jehovah. You were angry with me, / But Your anger has turned and You have consoled me.
- Isa 12:2 God is now my salvation; / I will trust and not dread; / For Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, / And He has become my salvation.
- Isa 12:3 Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation,
- Isa 12:4 And you will say in that day, / Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name! / Make His deeds known among the peoples; / Remind them that His name is exalted.
- Isa 12:5 Sing psalms to Jehovah, for He has done something majestic! / Let it be made known in all the earth!
- Isa 12:6 Cry out and give a ringing shout, O inhabitant of Zion, / For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.
5. We must build up the habit of continually exercising our spirit by praying in the Holy Spirit to keep ourselves in the love of God (the Father), awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Son at His second coming—2 Tim. 1:16-18) unto eternal life (to become the totality of the eternal life—the New Jerusalem)—Jude 19-21.
- 2 Tim 1:16 May the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain;
- 2 Tim 1:17 But being in Rome, he sought me out diligently and found me.

- 2 Tim 1:18 May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord in that day. And in how many things he served me in Ephesus, you know best.
- Jude 19 These are those who make divisions, soulless, having no spirit.
- Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
- Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

V. Taking, experiencing, and enjoying Christ as our King, our Lord, our Head, and our Husband is for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-12, 16; Rev. 19:7; 21:2.

- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PURSUING CHRIST

Song of Songs is a book in the Bible that tells us how we can be properly satisfied with God. There is no other way except by pursuing after Christ, because Christ is the very embodiment of the Triune God. He is the reality of God. He is God in reality, God's embodiment, coming to earth to give people the opportunity to receive Him for satisfaction.

Peter may be counted as the first one among the apostles, and Paul was a later one. They were seekers of God, but initially, they took the wrong way. Eventually, both Peter, a fisherman, and Paul, a learned scholar, found the way to seek Christ for satisfaction. Paul tells us in Philippians 3 that we have to pursue Christ to gain Him (vv. 12-14) because He is the most excellent way. All things other than Christ are dung (v. 8). Only Christ is excellent. Whatever we obtain or have obtained other than Christ is vanity. Paul says that it is dung. Do you like dung? But today many worldly people are gaining dung day after day. Dung is their food. Solomon says that they are pursuing vanity. Vanity of vanities is what they are eating. That is their food. Paul's desire was to gain Christ, and he instructs us how to gain Christ as he did.

In this chapter our point is that we have to pursue Christ for satisfaction. Song of Songs opens in this way: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" (1:2a). The seeker longs for kisses, not just one kiss. The most impressive thing about weddings in the Western world is the time of kissing. The bridegroom opens the bride's veil to kiss her with his own mouth. He does not kiss the ears or the nose of the bride but her mouth. This is the most personal and affectionate thing. Here is a book in the Bible that opens in such a way: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" This is what it means to pursue Christ.

According to the New Testament, God's ordained way for man to receive Him in this kind of personal and affectionate way is first to believe in Him. To believe in Him is to receive Him as the divine life into us so that we may have an organic union with God in the divine life. Regretfully, very few Christians know what believing in Christ means. They know that they need to take Him as their

Savior and Redeemer, but they do not know that to believe in Christ is to receive Him as the divine life into us so that we can have an organic union with God in His divine life. This is the first step.

Now that we have received Christ into us, what does God want us to do? Many Christian teachers teach people in the wrong way. They say that after one has believed in Christ, he should do many things. This is wrong. According to the New Testament, after we believe in Christ, after we receive Him as the divine life into us, we have to love Him (see 1 Cor. 2:9 and footnote 3, Recovery Version). Paul says that the Lord's grace superabounded to him with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:14). Faith is to receive Christ, and love is to pursue Christ.

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" This word indicates that to some extent the seeker has obtained a part of Christ's love, but now she wants something more intimate. She wants to be kissed not just with one kiss but with the kisses of His mouth. Someone who is affectionate with another may kiss him on the cheek, but this expression of affection is not the first category of love. On the wedding day who would want to see the bridegroom kiss his bride on the cheek? He is expected to kiss his bride on the mouth as the expression of his utmost affection.

In her desire to be kissed with the kisses of His mouth, the seeker goes on to say, "Your love is better than wine" (S. S. 1:2b). She does not say that His love is as good as wine but that it is better than wine. Wine cheers, but Christ's love cheers us in an unrivaled way. No wine can compare with His unrivaled love. Nothing is so cheering as Christ's love.

Verse 3 says, "Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you." Christ's name signifies Christ's person, His being, and Christ is the compound Spirit signified by the anointing ointment in Exodus 30. "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45b). This indicates that Christ's name as His person is the anointing ointment. An ointment is always a compound. Christ is compounded with God, with man, with His death, with the effectiveness of His death, with His resurrection, and with the power of His resurrection. At least these six things are compounded together to be the anointing ointment, signifying Christ in His resurrection as the compound Spirit. If someone says your name, you respond because you are the person of that name. Christ's charming name, His person, is the all-inclusive compound Spirit.

His love is attracting, His name is charming, and His person is captivating. He has drawn and captivated millions of His lovers to pursue after Him and is still doing the same today. Therefore, all His lovers would run after Him for their satisfaction. This is why the seeker prays, "Draw me; we will run after you" (S. S. 1:4a).

THE NEED FOR A PERSONAL AND AFFECTIONATE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Dear saints, in this chapter I want to impress you with something particular. After you have received Christ as your life, you must have a very personal seeking after Christ. No one can represent you or do anything for you in this matter. It must be personal. Every believer's relationship with Christ must be personal and affectionate.

God works in a personal and affectionate way, not in the way of a movement. Mao Tsetung gained the people of China by a movement, not by personal contact and affection. Even many in Christianity like to use the term *movement*. Some say that at John Wesley's time in Oxford there was a movement. They also say that there was a great movement, a great revival, in Wales at the beginning of this century. This concept of having a movement is wrong. We do not want to have a movement in the Lord's recovery. A person can be moved to join a movement and not have any personal contact with the Lord. Recently, we have stressed that God became a man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Although many responded to this truth, I was not very happy, because this response was a movement. In order to practice such a high truth, we need the personal and affectionate experience of Christ.

Since we have been born of God, we have become His children (John 1:12-13). John 3:6 says,

“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Since God is Spirit and we were born of Him, what are we? That which is born of a cow is a cow. That which is born of Chinese is Chinese. Also, that which is born of God as the Spirit is spirit. This is logical. A paraphrased version of John 3:6 could read this way: “He who is born of God the Spirit is the spirit-God.” We were regenerated of God as the Spirit to be a spirit. As those who have been born of God, we are the children of God, the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Therefore, our relationship with God has to be personal and affectionate.

In these days I feel very much that there is a warm, intimate, close affection between me and my God. The seeker said, “Draw me.” She did not say, “Draw us.” *Draw me* is personal. We want a drawing from the Lord that is His personal and affectionate doing. We want Him to be with us in a personal and affectionate way. All the religions, including Christianity, present a portrait of God that is inaccurate. They portray God merely as great, almighty, sovereign, majestic, and even unapproachable; no one can or even dares to touch God. To say that God is majestic is not wrong, but that is only one attribute of the Divine Being. Regardless of how great, sovereign, almighty, and majestic God is, when He wanted to build up His relationship with man, He took the personal, affectionate way. He took the way of becoming a man. If the Lord Jesus had come to Peter in a majestic way, Peter would have felt threatened. But He did not come to Peter as the majestic, untouchable God. Instead, He came to Peter as his countryman. Peter was a Galilean, and Jesus was also a Galilean. This is personal and affectionate.

The Lord Jesus lived among men for thirty-three and a half years. This was the way in which God came to build up His relationship with man. This is the personal, affectionate way recorded in the New Testament from the incarnation to the day of resurrection. On the morning of His resurrection the Lord’s empty tomb was discovered by three sisters (Mark 16:1, 8). When they entered into the tomb, an angel gave them a message from the Lord, saying, “Go, tell His disciples and Peter” (v. 7). Peter’s name mentioned in this way is personal and affectionate. Peter’s intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus was particular, so it was stressed even by the angel. At the beginning of his contact with the Lord, Peter’s response was not too personal, but gradually, Peter’s transaction with the Lord became personal and affectionate.

The apostle John could recline on the Lord’s bosom (John 13:23). How personal and affectionate that was! The very God, the very Lord whom we seek, sets up a feast and invites us to feast with Him (Rev. 3:20). We must have such a personal and affectionate contact with Him. If we mail someone a letter, that affects him in a certain way. But if we come to him with a personal visitation and an affectionate contact, that makes a great difference.

Hymns, #437 (stanzas 1 and 6 with the chorus) says,

Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him?
Is not thine a captured heart?
Chief among ten thousand own Him;
Joyful choose the better part.

Captivated by His beauty,
Worthy tribute haste to bring;
Let His peerless worth constrain thee,
Crown Him now unrivaled King.

'Tis that look that melted Peter,
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
'Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw:

Only the face of tears that Peter saw, only the face of glory into which Stephen looked, and only

the heart that wept with Mary can keep us away from the idols, the attractions, of this world. The Bible tells us that Jesus wept with Mary (John 11:35). Have you ever heard that God weeps? Many say that Jesus came to express God, but they mainly refer to the miracles that He did, not to the tears that He shed.

Dear saints, my burden in this chapter is to share that you have to start seeking the Lord in a personal and affectionate way. I want to stress these two words: *personal* and *affectionate*. The very God whom we pursue is personal and affectionate.

I have been in the Lord's fellowship for about seventy years, but there was one particular occasion when the Lord touched me in the most personal and affectionate way. In 1943 Japan invaded and occupied China. One day the military police of the invading Japanese army arrested me and imprisoned me for thirty days. Every day I was subjected to two very stern and strict examinations. At that time the Chinese knew how cruel the invading Japanese army was. They would kill a Chinese as they would a chicken. I do not believe that there were many Chinese who were arrested by the Japanese army and released after thirty days. All my relatives, friends, and brothers and sisters in the church were very concerned for my life.

On the first day of my imprisonment, the Japanese military police put me into a soldier's bedroom; that night the Lord gave me a dream, indicating to me that the Japanese army would not hurt me. The next day they began to interrogate me. They threatened to pour cold water upon me if I did not tell the truth. I said to myself, "You don't need to threaten me, because I will surely speak the truth. I am a man of truth." After many times of their testing, they could not find anything wrong with me. After fifteen days of being imprisoned, I was alone in my small cell in the night. I stood up and I can testify that the Lord was in my presence embracing me. I said with tears, "Lord, You know why I am here." This experience of the Lord was personal to the uttermost. In my whole life I never had a time like that in which the Lord was so personal to me. I was so personal and affectionate to Him, and He was the same to me.

We all need this kind of personal, affectionate, intimate contact with the Lord every day. This has become my habit. Every morning after rising up I go to my desk, and the first thing I say is, "Lord Jesus, I love You." I am not just a poor man praying to a merciful God, but I am contacting a Savior who is personal and affectionate to me, as I am personal and affectionate to Him. We all need to take heed to what the seeker says: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!" Right away her tone changes: "Your love is better than wine." This is a personal, intimate prayer. "Draw me; we will run after you." This is personal and affectionate. We need this kind of personal and affectionate seeking after Him, and we need to build up such a relationship with Him that is so personal and affectionate. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs," pp. 255-260*)

THE KING, CHRIST, BRINGING US INTO HIS INNER CHAMBERS, OUR REGENERATED SPIRIT

First, in Song of Songs the Lord captivates His seeker, and she with all her companions follows Him. To pursue Christ for satisfaction is the first "crystal" in Song of Songs. The second crystal is the King bringing His seeker into His inner chambers. Song of Songs is a book of figures. In a figure of speech the king's inner chambers signify our regenerated spirit as Christ's inner chambers.

God created man so that man may become Him by His being received by man so that He can enter into and stay in man. For this reason God created us with a spirit. According to the New Testament teaching, our regenerated spirit is not only for us to have a means to receive Him but also for us to contain Him. Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit." Ephesians 3:16 says that we need to be strengthened into our inner man. The inner man is our regenerated spirit. Ephesians 2:22 shows that our spirit is a habitation, a dwelling place, to God. The real inner chambers to God are our spirit.

Regretfully, the majority of Christians in today's Christianity do not believe that there is such a thing as the human spirit. They say that the human spirit is synonymous with man's soul or heart. The Chinese translation of the Bible mixes up the heart, the soul, and the spirit by using the terms *spirit-soul* or *heart-spirit*. Not many Christians today know definitely that they have a spirit. When I came to the United States in the early 1960s, I began to teach concerning the human spirit. Many told me that before I taught this, they never knew that they had a spirit.

There are three verses in the New Testament that show the divine Spirit and the regenerated human spirit. John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit." In this verse are God the Spirit and our spirit, with which we worship God the Spirit. John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God." I came to the United States with a burden to release all the high-peak truths. One among these is the human spirit. Another is that Christ, as the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit. Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two spirits are mingled together to be one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

In this chapter we want to stress the words *private* and *spiritual*. Christianity preaches the physical Jesus, but we preach the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). This One is private and spiritual. We have seen that the king's chambers signify our spirit. He visits us in our spirit privately, and He comes to us in a spiritual way, not a physical way. He visits us privately as the all-inclusive consummated Spirit.

Christ the King brings His seekers into His chambers, that is, into their regenerated spirit, His dwelling place. Let us consider the application of this. When I was young, I was taught to pray to God as the heavenly Father. I was also told not to pray to the Spirit, because in the entire New Testament you cannot find a verse concerning praying to the Spirit. But the more we pray, the more we have the feeling that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all in us (Eph. 4:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rom. 8:9). According to our experience, our spirit is the Holy of Holies—the dwelling place, the inner chambers, of the Triune God. In this first chapter of Song of Songs He and we have the private and affectionate fellowship.

The seeker in Song of Songs prayed, "Draw me; we will run after you" (1:4a). Then the king drew her and she followed, but she did not know where to go. The King knows where to go. We must go to our spirit. The inner chambers of Christ are His lovers' regenerated spirits mingled with and indwelt by Him as the life-dispensing Spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:11) and are the practical Holy of Holies in Christ's lovers for their participation in and enjoyment of the pneumatic Christ as the consummated Triune God (Heb. 4:16).

After we were saved, we began to pray, and eventually, we realized that the heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit are all in us. But at that time we did not know in what part of our being the Triune God dwelt. We did not know that we had a human spirit, but gradually we found out that the Triune God dwells in our regenerated spirit. The seeker followed the Lord, and He immediately brought her to her regenerated spirit to have fellowship with Him. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs," pp. 263-265)