

Lesson Eighteen

CONFORMATION

- Rom. 6:3-5** (3) Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have grown together with [Him] in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be [in the] [likeness] of His resurrection,
- 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;
- Phil. 3:10** To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Phil. 3:21** Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.
- 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.
- Eph. 4:20-21** (20) But you did not so learn Christ, (21) If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

Outline

- I. Life-shape, life-power, life-essence
- II. Being conformed to the image of Christ
- III. By the growth of life and environmental dealings
- IV. The mold and the dough
- V. Being conformed to the body of the Lord's glory

Romans 8:29 says, "Because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He should be the Firstborn among many brothers."

I. LIFE-SHAPE, LIFE-POWER, LIFE-ESSENCE

[Every life has its own form. For example, a dog has one form and a chicken has another. The growth of a certain life brings in the full form of that life. Today we are sons of God, but we do not yet have the full form, the complete shape, of sons of God. Therefore, by growth and transformation we need to be conformed to the image of Christ. Eventually, we shall be completely conformed to His image. Then we shall possess the full life-shape which comes from the life-power with the life-essence. A carnation, a chicken, and a dog all have a different life-form according to their life-essence. A carnation has the form of a carnation because it has the life-essence of a carnation. The carnation essence develops into the carnation form by means of the life-power within the carnation. Praise the Lord that we have the life-essence and the life-power within us! This life-power is shaping us into the image of the Son of God. Through this shaping function of the life-power, we shall be fully conformed to the image of Christ.]

II. BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

We have been predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of Christ. One day, we will be like Him inside and out. First, Christ died to take care of our objective problem before God. Second, He regenerated us with the divine life by the life-giving Spirit. Third, He is sanctifying us with His holy nature. Fourth, He is transforming us from an old person into a new person. We are being changed in life and nature, not just in outward form. Fifth, He is conforming us to His own image. What a salvation!

III. BY THE GROWTH OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEALINGS

The life He puts into us grows. As it grows, it sanctifies and transforms us. As we are being transformed, we are being conformed inwardly to His image. On the outside, we have sufferings, but inside of us, the Spirit is working. As we pray or call on His name, we touch Him and He conforms us a little bit more to His image.

IV. THE MOLD AND THE DOUGH

[God's firstborn Son is the prototype, and we are the mass production. Christ is the model, mold, and pattern. God has put us all into Him that we may be molded into the image of His firstborn Son. Eventually we all shall be conformed to the mold. Sometimes when the sisters make cakes they put dough into a mold. By being put into the mold the dough assumes the pattern and image of the mold. Furthermore, the dough must also be baked that the cake may bear the pattern of the mold without any change. If the dough could speak, it probably would cry out, "Sister, have mercy on me. Don't apply so much pressure. I can't bear it. Please keep your hands off." However, the sister would reply, "If I keep my hands off, how will you fit into the pattern of the mold? Dear dough, after my molding you must be put into the oven. You may think that pressure is enough suffering for you, but you also need burning. After you have experienced pressure and intense heat you will bear the pattern of the mold permanently." Likewise, Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the prototype, pattern, and mold, and we are pieces of dough. We all have been put into the mold, and are now being kneaded by the hand of God.]

Christ is the mold and we are the dough. Through the outward situation and the inward working of the Spirit, we get conformed.

V. BEING CONFORMED TO THE BODY OF THE LORD'S GLORY

As this process is accomplished, our body will be conformed to the body of the Lord's glory (Phil. 3:21). That will be the last great step of conformation. At that time, we will be like Him inwardly and outwardly. This will be the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. We will be a corporate man in His image to express Him and with His full authority to represent Him for eternity.

Questions

1. Explain the terms "life-shape, life-power, and life-essence."
2. How is conformation related to sanctification and transformation?
3. What two factors are at work to conform us to the image of Christ? Can you give your experience?
4. What will we be like when conformation is completed?

Quoted Portions

1. *Life-study of Romans (Lee/LSM), pp. 574, 242.*

Further Reference

See Compendium of God's Full Salvation (LSM), Chapter 19.

or

Life-study of Philippians (Lee/LSM), pp. 184-186, 214-215, 459-460, 470.

Life-study of Romans (Lee/LSM), pp. 242, 250-251, 492-493, 496, 574.

Life-study of Ephesians (Lee/LSM), pp. 45, 393-396.

Life-study of Hebrews (Lee/LSM), pp. 388-389.