

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2010**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST**

Message Sixteen

In Acts

(3)

The Firstborn of God, the Spirit of Jesus, and the Content of the Gospel

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:33-34; 16:6-7; 26:18

I. Christ is the Firstborn of God in resurrection, the holy and faithful things of David—Acts 13:33-34:

- A. Resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus; He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers—Rom. 8:29:
1. He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity (John 1:18; 3:16); after incarnation, through resurrection, He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son.
 2. The Lord Jesus had two births; first, He was born of Mary to be the Son of Man, and then through resurrection He was born in His humanity to be the firstborn and designated Son of God—Rom. 1:3-4:
 - a. Christ's humanity—the flesh—was not divine but human.
 - b. In His resurrection, His humanity was designated (resurrected, uplifted) into His divinity, that is, into His divine glory—John 12:23; Luke 24:25-26.
 - c. Thus, He was born of God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among His many brothers—the many sons of God—Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29.
 - d. His redeemed believers were born (regenerated) with Him in the same resurrection—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6a.
 3. As the only begotten Son of God, the Lord is the embodiment of the divine life (John 1:4); through resurrection Christ became the firstborn Son of God as the life-dispenser for the propagation of life (12:24; Rom. 8:29-30).
- B. In Acts 13:34 Paul speaks a further word regarding the resurrection of Christ: "As to His having raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He spoke in this way, 'I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things':"
1. The Greek word for *the holy things* here is in the plural; the same Greek word is used for *Holy One* in the next verse, but in the singular—v. 35.
 2. However, it is not the regular word for *holy*; it is a Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *chesed*, which is translated "mercies" in Isaiah 55:3, 2 Chronicles 6:42, and Psalm 89:1, both in the Septuagint and in the King James Version.
 3. In Psalm 89 the word *mercies* in plural in verse 1 (KJV) is the same word as for *Holy One* in singular in verse 19; this Holy One is Christ, the Son of David, in whom God's mercies are centered and conveyed.
 4. Hence, in Acts 13:34 *the holy things of David, the faithful things* refers to the resurrected Christ; this is fully proved by the context, especially by *Your Holy One* in the next verse, and by the verse following Isaiah 55:3.

5. Christ, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, was raised up by God to become the life-giving Spirit as a great gift given by God to His chosen people; this gift is entitled *the holy things...the faithful [trustworthy] things*.
6. The phrase *the holy things...the faithful things* is actually a divine title, a title of Christ; these holy and faithful things are all the aspects of what Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is to us—1 Cor. 2:9-10; 15:45b.
7. In the Old Testament the holy and faithful things are regarded as mercies; the resurrected Christ is all the holy and faithful things as mercies given to us by God as an all-inclusive gift—Isa. 55:3; 2 Chron. 6:42; Psa. 89:1.

II. Acts 16:6-7 indicates that we may experience and enjoy Christ as the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, who guided the apostles in their ministry:

- A. The move of the apostle Paul and his co-workers for the spread of the gospel was not according to their decision and preference or according to any schedule made by human council but by the Spirit of Jesus.
- B. The Spirit of Jesus is the reality, the realization of Jesus; the Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of a man with abundant strength for suffering—vv. 22-34.
- C. The Spirit of Jesus is not only the Spirit of God with divinity in Him that we may live the divine life but also the Spirit of the man Jesus with humanity in Him that we may live the proper human life and endure its sufferings.
- D. Such an all-inclusive Spirit was needed for the apostle's preaching ministry, a ministry of suffering carried out among human beings and for human beings in the human life.
- E. The *Holy Spirit* is a general title of the Spirit of God in the New Testament; *the Spirit of Jesus* is a particular expression concerning the Spirit of God and refers to the Spirit of the incarnated Savior who, as Jesus in His humanity, passed through human living and death on the cross, resurrected from the dead to propagate the divine life by imparting it into all His believers, and ascended to the heavens to be made Lord and Christ; this Spirit is the totality and full realization of the all-inclusive Jesus:
 1. The kind of work we do for the Lord depends on the Spirit by whom we are guided and of whom we are constituted; this Spirit should become our constitution.
 2. Then our work will be the expression of this Spirit, and we will do the work of ministering Jesus as the all-inclusive One and convey Him as such a One to others.

III. The all-inclusive Christ is the all-inclusive content of the gospel:

- A. We need to pray over the contents of our divine commission in Acts 26:18, asking the Lord to make them our experience and reality so that we can bring others into this experience and reality—Eph. 3:8-9:
 1. "To open their eyes":
 - a. We need to continually pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand and to see more and more of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the divine dispensing for the divine economy—1:17; 3:5; cf. Rev. 4:6; 3:17-18; Matt. 6:6.
 - b. We cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
 - c. Being a minister and a witness are not a matter of teaching and knowledge but of appearing and vision; the things in which we have seen the Lord and the things in which the Lord will appear to us are the things that we must minister to others—Acts 22:14-15.
 - d. Once you have seen a vision of God's plan and have been converted from everything to Christ Himself, there will be something within you energizing you to carry out God's plan—Gal. 1:15-16; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 15:10.

2. "To turn them from darkness to light":
 - a. Light is the presence of God—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:5.
 - b. We need to be people who are full of light—Luke 11:34-36.
 - c. The enjoyment of Christ as our God-given portion is "in the light"—Col. 1:12; 1 John 1:5; John 8:12; 1:4; Psa. 119:105, 130; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
 - d. We need to be luminaries in the world by the inner operating God, holding forth the word of life—Phil. 2:12-16.
 - e. We need to tell out the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light—1 Pet. 2:9.
3. "To turn them...from the authority of Satan to God":
 - a. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with the throne above it—Ezek. 1:22, 26:
 - (1) To have the throne above a clear sky is to give the Lord the preeminence in our being and the highest and most prominent position in our life—Col. 1:18; cf. Ezek. 14:3.
 - (2) If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us to bring others under God's authority—2 Cor. 10:4-5, 8; 13:3, 10.
 - b. Our uttermost love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority—cf. John 21:15-17.
4. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins":
 - a. We need to go to the Lord to receive a thorough forgiveness of all our sins—1 John 1:7, 9.
 - b. David begged God to blot out his transgressions, wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, cleanse him from his sin, purge his sin with hyssop, create in him a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within him so that he might enjoy God's presence for the building up of God's house, the church—Psa. 51:1-2, 7, 9-11, 18:
 - (1) Hyssop typifies Christ in His humble and humiliated human nature (1 Kings 4:33a; Exo. 12:22a), implying Christ as our Mediator and sacrifice (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 10:9).
 - (2) Like David, we need to stay in the presence of God to have a thorough and genuine repentance and confession to receive a full forgiveness from God.
 - (3) If we confess our sins to receive God's forgiveness, we will have the gladness of God's salvation and be sustained with a willing spirit; then we can teach transgressors His ways, and sinners will turn back to Him—Psa. 51:12-13.
5. "That they may receive...an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me":
 - a. This inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people.
 - b. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is the portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance—Col. 2:9; 1:12.
 - c. We enjoy the pneumatic Christ as the pledge of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14) "among those," that is, in the church life (cf. 2 Tim. 2:22).
 - d. We need to bring people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ in the church life so that they may enjoy Christ as we do and be sanctified dispositionally with the holy nature of God through the exercise of their spirit—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:13.