

THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—First Morning Session)

Message One

Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel

Scripture Reading: John 18:37; 11:25; 14:6; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5

- I. The Lord's recovery is mainly founded upon four pillars: truth, life, the church, and the gospel—Eph. 1:13; 4:18; 5:23-25, 29, 32; 6:15.**
- II. The first great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the truth—John 18:37:**
 - A. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the divine truths as revealed in the Word of God—2 Tim. 3:16.
 - B. The Lord's word, His truth, is in the Bible, but the Bible needs the proper interpretation—2:15.
 - C. The truth is absolute in itself, and we must be absolute for the truth—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-8.
 - D. The standard of the Lord's recovery depends upon the standard of the truth we put out; the truths will be the measure and the standard—John 18:37.
 - E. The kind of church we build up depends on the kind of truth we teach; thus, there is a desperate need of the living truth to produce the church, to help the church to exist, and to build up the church—1 Tim. 3:15.
 - F. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being—1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2; 3 John 3-4:
 1. To be constituted with the truth is to have the intrinsic element of the divine revelation wrought into us to become our constituent, our intrinsic being, our organic constitution—John 17:17.
 2. The solid truth that is constituted into us becomes in us a constant and long-term nourishment—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Thes. 2:13.
 - G. If the truth is wrought into us and constituted into our being, we will be able to protect the interests of the riches of God's divinity and the attainments of His consummation—Rev. 21:12a, 17.
- III. The second great pillar in the Lord's recovery is life—John 14:6; 11:25:**
 - A. Both the truth and the life are the Lord Himself, but they are two different aspects of what He is—14:6:
 1. The truth is the outward definition and explanation, and life is the inward and intrinsic content—8:32; 11:25.
 2. The Lord is in us as our life, but the experience of life needs an explanation; this explanation is the truth—Col. 3:4; 1:5:
 - a. If we receive the Lord according to this explanation, we have life; in order to experience and enjoy the Lord as life, we must know the truth—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6.
 - b. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth—John 14:6.

3. If we are not clear about the truth and do not understand or know the truth, we will have no way to enjoy the Lord as our life—8:32; 11:25.
- B. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life, and the content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 2:4; John 8:32; 10:10.
- C. Life is the Triune God dispensed into us and living in us—God the Father as the source of life, God the Son as the embodiment of life, and God the Spirit as the flow of life—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; John 5:26; 1:4; 1 John 5:11-12; Rev. 22:1.
- D. Life is the way to fulfill God's purpose; God's desire for man to express Him in His image and to rule in Him with His dominion can be realized only by God's life—Gen. 1:26; 2:9.

IV. The third great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the church—1 Tim. 3:15-16:

- A. The Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life so that He may have the church; the truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church—John 18:37; 10:10; 1 Cor. 10:32.
- B. The church is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:
 1. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—the place where God can have His rest and put His trust—Eph. 2:21-22.
 2. The church as the house of God is the Father's house, the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation—John 14:2; 12:23; 13:31-32.
- C. The church is the supporting pillar and the holding base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15:
 1. *Truth* in 1 Timothy 3:15 refers to the real things revealed in the New Testament concerning Christ and the church—Matt. 16:16, 18; Eph. 5:32.
 2. As the pillar, which bears the truth, and the base, which holds the pillar, the church testifies the truth, the reality, of Christ as the mystery of God and of the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.
- D. The church is the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:
 1. God's manifestation was first in Christ as an individual expression in the flesh—v. 16; Col. 2:9; John 1:1, 14.
 2. God is manifested in the church as His enlarged, corporate expression in the flesh—Eph. 2:19; 1:22-23.
 3. The great mystery of godliness is that God has become man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God in the flesh—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24.

V. The fourth great pillar in the Lord's recovery is the gospel—1:13; Col. 1:5:

- A. The gospel that we preach in the Lord's recovery is the purest, highest, most complete gospel—Rom. 1:1, 3-4; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 20:24; Eph. 3:8; 6:15; 2 Cor. 4:4.
- B. The gospel includes all the truths in the Bible; the entire Bible is the gospel of God—Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5:
 1. The truth is the gospel, and the light of the truth is the light of the gospel—Mark 1:1, 14-15; John 8:12, 32.

2. We should not think that the gospel is one thing and that the truth is another thing—Eph. 1:13:
 - a. The truth is the gospel, and our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the gospel—Col. 1:5.
 - b. To preach the gospel is actually to speak the truth, because the real gospel preaching is the speaking of the truth—Acts 8:4, 12, 30-35.
3. For the preaching of the high gospel, we have a strong burden to encourage everyone to pursue the knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4:
 - a. We should study the truth to the extent that we can expound the truth and announce the truth; this is to preach the high gospel.
 - b. If we are filled with the truth inwardly, we will spontaneously express it outwardly by speaking the mystery of the gospel to people—1 Thes. 1:8; Eph. 6:19.
4. The commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth; our preaching of the truth is the preaching of the high gospel—Mark 16:15; 1 Tim. 2:4.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE LORD'S RECOVERY BEING THE RECOVERY OF THE TRUTH

Today the whole earth needs the truth of the Lord that is in His Word. Regrettably, however, the Bible, the divine Word, has not been fully opened to the world. Thus, it has not been possible for people to fully know the truth of the Lord. At the most, Christians are able to boast that the holy Word of God has been published into many languages and propagated over the whole earth. Yet they are not able to say that after reading the Bible, regardless of which language, they have been able to truly understand the deep mysteries within it. They have been able to understand the superficial meanings of the things revealed in the Bible according to their own culture, philosophy, tradition, customs, ethics, living, and morality but have had no way of comprehending the mysteries of the truths in it. The mysteries of the truths in the Bible are very deep and profound. We need the spiritual enlightening of the Spirit of God to understand them, and we also need to spend time to dig them out (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

The truths in the holy Word of the Lord were completed approximately two thousand years ago, but over a period of a little more than one thousand years they seemed to slowly vanish. Only in the last few centuries have the truths again been released little by little through the zealous and careful study of many lovers of the Lord. This is what we refer to as the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of all the truths in the Bible that were lost. Thus, the recovery of the truth is one of the great pillars in the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery lies with the recovery of the knowledge of the truth.

**HAVING THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH
FOR THE SPREAD OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

The New Testament says repeatedly that we should know the truth. Moreover, when referring to this matter, Paul repeatedly says that we should come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1). This means that we must know not just a small part or one aspect of the truth but rather the truth in its entirety and in all of its aspects. Paul also said that the church is the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). This implies that the truth in the Bible is like a large building that is not one-sided but complete

on all sides with a foundation and a roof. If we are going to spread the Lord's recovery today, we must know the truth and be able to expound the truth. For this reason, we must know every side of the truth without any biases or particular leanings.

The truth not only has many sides but also includes many crucial items. For example, the Bible speaks about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the believers, the church, the kingdom, and the New Jerusalem. The Bible begins with God, then continues with God's creation, man's fall, God's redemption, and God's entering into man to be man's life for man to be regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed into His own image, and ultimately to be brought fully into glory. In the midst of all these matters, the Bible also shows us the believers and the corporate church. This corporate church brings in the kingdom, consummating in the ultimate expression, which is the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. All of these aspects are included in the truths of the Bible.

Considering the deeper and more detailed truths, the Bible speaks about the two aspects of God's complete salvation of us: redemption and salvation. The aspect of redemption includes forgiveness, cleansing, justification, reconciliation, and acceptance; the aspect of salvation includes His coming to regenerate, sanctify, renew, and transform us, so as to conform us to His image and ultimately to bring us into His glory. This is God's complete salvation. We must diligently learn all of these things, obtain the knowledge of them, and be able to speak them clearly to others.

LEARNING TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE TRUTH

The above points merely show the different aspects of the truth, not the mysteries of the truth in their entirety. What are the mysteries of the truth in the Bible? What is the central mystery of the Bible? In brief, in the holy Word of God there is a central mystery. This central mystery is that the Triune God wants to dispense Himself into man. Our God is the Triune God, and He wants to dispense Himself into His chosen ones to be their life and everything. This is the kernel, the core, of the mystery in the Bible. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 43-45)

THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE DIVINE DISPENSING

Today we enjoy the Lord as the Spirit in our spirit. There will be a day in the future when the Lord will come back to transfigure our body. This will be the redemption of our body. At that time He will come forth from us as glory, and we will also enter into glory (Phil. 3:20-21). Then we will be with Him in the millennial kingdom, enjoying His joy, His presence, His glory, and His authority for a thousand years (Matt. 25:21, 23; Rev. 20:4, 6). After a thousand years of being beside ourselves, a condition that will be full of glory, we will arrive with the Lord at the ultimate manifestation—the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate expression of the mingling of God and man—God living in man and man living out God's glory.

This is the central mystery in the Bible. This central mystery is that the Triune God is working Himself into tripartite man so that God and man can be mingled and become one—God in man and man in God. This is a mystery that cannot be described with human words. We absolutely believe that in that day when we are in the New Jerusalem, we will all be "crazy" and beside ourselves because we will all be exulting without end.

Although the millennial kingdom and the New Jerusalem have not come, today in the church life we can have a foretaste of this in miniature. When we call on the Lord, speak the Lord, and enjoy the Lord, we become beside ourselves and are filled with the Triune God inwardly and outwardly.

PREACHING THE CENTRAL MYSTERY AS THE GOSPEL

For this reason, we must speak the truth of the central mystery in the Bible everywhere. We should no longer speak the superficial gospel of peace and prosperity. Do not tell others that if they are suffering, they should believe on Jesus so that they will have peace, or that if their business is bad, they only have to believe in Jesus and pray to Him, and then they will get rich. That is not the gospel. The proper gospel is to tell others that the only God, who is the Triune God—the Father, Son, and Spirit—became flesh, died on the cross to accomplish redemption, and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is the processed Triune God. He went through incarnation, death, and resurrection to become the all-inclusive Spirit. When man repents and believes into Him, immediately He enters into man to be man's life and life supply. He is in man as the essential Spirit and upon man as the economical Spirit. In this way He becomes one spirit with man and man also becomes one spirit with Him. The result is that man possesses real joy, satisfaction, and the true meaning of human life. This is the high gospel that we should announce everywhere.

When we preach and speak in this way, the essential Spirit will fill us inwardly, and the economical Spirit will fill us outwardly. In other words, we will have the Spirit within and without. We will become one spirit with God and will be filled with God. At this juncture, the life we live will be a life of love, light, holiness, and righteousness, and we will spontaneously live out God's image. This is true spirituality, true holiness, and true overcoming. Ultimately this is glory, which will expand to become the kingdom, consummating in the New Jerusalem. This will be the completion of the truth of God's central mystery. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 52-53)

THE LORD JESUS BEING THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

The Lord's recovery is mainly founded upon four pillars: the truth, life, the church, and the gospel. The reason Christianity is degraded is that it has lost the truth and is short of life. The Bible tells us that the Lord Himself is the truth and the life. In John 14:6 the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way and the reality and the life." In this verse the reality is the truth. Thus, the Lord said that He Himself is the life and the truth.

Both the truth and the life are the Lord Himself, but they are two different aspects of what He is. The difference is that the truth is an outward definition and explanation, and life is the inward and intrinsic content. The Lord is in us as our life, but the experience of life needs an explanation. This explanation is the truth. If we receive the Lord according to this explanation, we have life. Hence, in order to experience and enjoy the Lord as life, we must know the truth. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth. If we are not clear about the truth and do not understand or know the truth, we will have no way to enjoy the Lord as our life. For this reason we must spend an adequate amount of time to learn the truth.

EXPERIENCING LIFE BY KNOWING THE TRUTH

The Lord has not left us in darkness. Today all of His truths are contained in the Bible, which He has given to us. We must realize that the Bible is a book of life. The reason the Bible is a book of life is that its entire content is truth. All experienced Christians confess that no one can enjoy Christ as life if he does not know the Bible or understand the truth in the Bible. We need to go to the supermarkets to buy food for our physical body to be fed and sustained. In like manner, we must come to the Bible to receive the truth that is in it if we want to receive and enjoy the Lord as life. All the truths in the Bible are food for our spiritual life.

The Bible is not merely a book of knowledge. All the knowledge contained in the Bible is in fact truth, and in this truth, life is concealed. When we read the Bible, if we study only the

letter but not the intrinsic truth within, we will not receive life. Hence, every Bible reader has to see the truth that is conveyed through the letter of the Word. Once we see the truth, we will spontaneously touch life. The life-studies have been published to help us enter into the depths of the letter of the Word. Therefore, all those who carefully study the life-studies will surely gain a certain amount of experience. The life-studies bring us into the biblical truths, from which we may receive the genuine life supply.

Today the Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life. We all know that the decline of Christianity is due to the fact that it has lost both the truth and life. This loss of the truth and life eventually produced many human methods and worldly organizations, which are not what the Lord wants. The Lord does not want any organization or human method. Instead, He wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life. The entire content of the church must be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life. This may be likened to an orchard, the entire content of which is the fruits of life produced from the fruit trees. In an orchard we cannot find any organization or behavior. We can only see the fruit trees growing and bearing fruit as the issue of their growth in life. This should be the situation of the churches in the Lord's recovery today. In the churches we do not want to have any organization or human methods. Rather, we want to minister to God's people for their growth by planting and watering as the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6 and 9. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord's Recovery*, pp. 69-71)

LEARNING THE MYSTERY OF THE TRUTH FOR THE PREACHING OF THE HIGH GOSPEL

For the preaching of the high gospel, we have a strong burden to encourage everyone to pursue the knowledge of the truth. In Texas there are some saints who put the life-studies everywhere in their home—not only in the study, the living room, and the kitchen, but also in the bathroom. They make good use of their time to pursue the truth. Some saints play message tapes in their cars and listen to them while driving. We must have this kind of pursuing spirit in order to know the truth thoroughly. The truth is the gospel. This corresponds to the Chinese saying, "What is real in a person will be manifested outwardly." If we are filled with the truth inwardly, we will spontaneously express it outwardly by speaking the mystery of the gospel to people. May we all one day be able to speak the life-study messages even in our dreams. This would prove that the life-studies have been received and thoroughly constituted into us, because what we dream about at night is what we think about during the day.

We all have the heart to preach the gospel, but if we do not know the truth, we will quickly run out of words as soon as we open our mouths to speak to people. After two or three sentences we will not know what to say. In the end, we will have nothing to say, and people will be unwilling to listen to us. Hence, we must learn the truth. The word of the gospel is the truth. For us to speak the word of the truth, we must first learn the truth. If from now on we would be willing to seriously learn the truth, we all would know how to preach the gospel in two months. To preach the gospel is actually to speak the truth, because the real gospel preaching is the speaking of the truth. To speak the truth is to preach the gospel; thus, we all must learn the truth in a proper way.

THE TRUTH BEING THE URGENT NEED TODAY

Today the truth is needed everywhere. Not only the non-Christians do not know the truth; even many Christians do not know the truth. However, the Lord has given us many rich truths. Even our gospel hymns are full of precious truths. For example, the first stanza of *Hymns*, #1058 says, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee; / Let the water and the blood, / From Thy riven side which flowed, / Be of sin the double cure, / Save me from

its guilt and power.” Here it mentions *the water and the blood, the double cure, and guilt and power*. Even many saints among us may not know the meanings of these phrases. Here the double cure refers to the cure of our outward sinful acts and our inward sinful nature. The blood refers to the precious blood shed by the Lord to deal with our outward sinful acts (John 1:29; Heb. 9:22), and the water refers to the life imparted by the Lord to deal with our inward sinful nature (John 19:34). The precious blood of the Lord redeems us from the eternal punishment we deserve due to our sinful acts, and His life saves us from the power of our sinful nature.

If we have a thorough understanding of this hymn, we will be able to preach the high gospel to people. We may invite someone to sing this hymn with us and then explain it to him. This would be a very good gospel message. After hearing this, he will be surprised and will respect the excellence and mysteriousness of the content of the gospel. When we speak to him, the Holy Spirit will work in him. Then we could sing this hymn with him again. In this way, he would probably be saved in less than half an hour. We should not say anything about perdition and “heaven” or even prosperity and peace. Instead, we should speak only about Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, who was crucified for us, and out from whose riven side came blood for redeeming us from the eternal punishment that we deserved due to our sins, and water for saving us out of the power of sin. This kind of simple but excellent singing and speaking, matched by the working of the Holy Spirit, will lead people to salvation. This is the proper way to preach the gospel today.

First Timothy 3:15b says, “The church...the pillar and base of the truth.” This indicates that without the truth, there would be no church. The truth brings in life, and once we have life, we become the church. In addition, the unique commission of the church today is to preach the gospel, the content of which is the truth. The truth tells us one central point: the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is dispensing Himself into us—sinful, tripartite men—that our sins may be forgiven and that we may receive God’s life and have God Himself in us for our transformation into the sons of God. This is the truth and the gospel. We must learn the truth. (*Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord’s Recovery*, pp. 125-127)