

THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

The First Great Pillar—Truth

(1)

Being Sanctified by the Truth to Move out of Ourselves and into the Triune God for the Oneness

Scripture Reading: John 17:14-24

I. Truth is the divine light shining on the facts of the Bible and televising a heavenly, spiritual vision of these facts into our being:

- A. In the New Testament, truth denotes this kind of “heavenly television.”
- B. The Lord is the light, the truth, and the Word; the Word, which is also the truth, gives light, for in the Word there is light—John 8:12; 14:6; 17:17; Psa. 119:105.
- C. Truth is the shining of the light, the expression of the light; in other words, truth is light expressed.
- D. The Spirit is called the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of reality (John 14:17); the Spirit of reality is the “heavenly electricity” by which spiritual things are televised into our being.
- E. When the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of reality, shines upon the spiritual facts recorded and contained in the Bible, we receive the truth, reality.
- F. If we read the Word without the shining of the Spirit, we may have doctrine or “news reports” but not the truth, the reality, or the vision.
- G. All the divine facts are contained in the Word and conveyed to us through the Word; when the Spirit shines upon the Word, we have the “heavenly television”; the light shines upon the facts in the Word and conveys a heavenly vision of these facts into our being, and we know the truth—cf. Eph. 1:17-18a.

II. There are two functions of the truth:

- A. The truth sets us free from the bondage of sin, freeing us from all the negative things—John 8:32, 36.
- B. The truth sanctifies us positionally and dispositionally, saturating us with the element of God—17:17; Eph. 5:26.

III. The Triune God in His Word realized by us and being imparted and infused into our being is the truth that sets us free and sanctifies us:

- A. When we are disappointed or depressed, feeling empty within, we can open ourselves and come to the Word; after reading for a while, something within us rises up, and we enjoy the presence of the Lord.
- B. By taking the Word in this way, something of the Lord is wrought into us; this is the reality of the Triune God living, moving, working, and separating us.
- C. Every morning we can touch the living Word and have the divine reality, the Triune God, infused into our being:

1. This transfusion of the element of God frees us from such negative things as temper, jealousy, hatred, and pride; it sets us free from every kind of falsehood, and we have real liberation, real freedom.
 2. As we are being set free, we are also sanctified, separated, made holy to God, not only positionally but also dispositionally; we become one with God because His very essence is wrought into us.
- D. Daily we need to come to the Word in this way; we need to come to the Word every morning and, if possible, at other times as well.
- E. When the Word is mingled with the living Spirit in our spirit, we are sanctified with the essence of God.
- F. By contacting the Word in this way, God is added into us day by day; as a result, we are permeated with God and made one with Him.
- G. Our crucial need is to have the living Triune God infused and wrought into us through the written Word, the living Word, and the applied word of God.

IV. Sanctification through the word of the truth results in oneness by dealing with the factors of division; truth sanctifies, and sanctification issues in oneness—John 17:14-24:

- A. The Lord Jesus, the Son, is the truth; the Spirit is the Spirit of truth; and the Father's word is the truth—1:14, 17; 14:6, 17; 17:17; 1 John 5:6:
1. The Father is embodied in the Son, the Son is realized as the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit is one with the Word—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
 2. Whenever we come to the Word with an open heart and an open spirit, we immediately touch both the Word and the Spirit as the truth.
- B. The sanctifying word, the sanctifying Spirit, the sanctifying life, and the sanctifying God are all one; therefore, if we are being sanctified, we are one spontaneously because all the factors of division are taken away.
- C. In John 17:17-23 we see that sanctification issues in the genuine oneness because this sanctification keeps us in the Triune God; verse 21 says, "That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us":
1. In order to be one, we need to be in the "Us," that is, in the Triune God.
 2. The only way to be in the Triune God is by the sanctifying truth that deals with all the factors of division.
 3. By being kept in the Triune God, we are one, but whenever we are out of the Triune God, we are divided immediately.
 4. We need to contact the Lord every morning, touch the living Word, and have the divine reality infused into our being; as we contact the Lord in this way, the factors of division are overcome.
 5. When the factors of division in us are put to death by the sanctifying truth, we are brought into the genuine oneness, for sanctification keeps us in the Triune God.
 6. Sanctification through the word of the truth results in the oneness of the Body of Christ, which is the enlarged oneness of the Triune God—v. 21.
- D. There are four factors of division:

1. The first of these factors is worldliness; as long as we love the world in a certain aspect, that aspect of worldliness becomes a cause of division—vv. 14-16, 18; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.
2. Another cause of division is ambition; when we contact the Lord through the Word and allow Him to infuse Himself into us, the truth thus imparted into our being kills our ambition—cf. Isa. 14:13.
3. A third cause of division is self-exaltation; we should be willing to be nobody and to exalt Christ as the only Somebody, the One who has the universal preeminence—Col. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:5; 3 John 9-11.
4. The fourth factor of division is opinions and concepts; we should not hold on to our opinion but simply pursue the Lord's goal: the recovery of Christ as life and as everything for the building up of the church—Matt. 16:21-24; cf. Rev. 3:14.

V. When we move out of ourselves and into the Father and into His glory, we are one and are even perfected into one—John 17:21-24:

- A. In ourselves we have the four factors of division; we cannot escape from these four things if we stay in the self.
- B. To be sanctified is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and to allow Christ to live in us; in this way, we are perfected into one—vv. 21-23.
- C. This sanctification takes place by the Word, which is the truth, and by the Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth:
 1. As we come to the Word every morning, outwardly we touch the Word, but inwardly the Spirit touches us; by the Word and by the Spirit, both of which are the reality, we are sanctified.
 2. The more we touch the Word and the more the Spirit touches us, the more we move out of ourselves; we move from one dwelling place, the self, to another dwelling place, the Triune God.
 3. Every day we need to make this move, for in the self there are worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts.
 4. If we continually touch the Word and allow the Spirit to touch us day by day, we shall be sanctified; that is, we shall move out of ourselves, our old lodging place, and into the Triune God, our new lodging place.
 5. Once we are out of ourselves, we are sanctified, separated from the factors of division and separated not only unto God but also into God.
 6. To have the genuine oneness, we must first move out of ourselves and into the Triune God (vv. 17, 21); then we must allow Christ to live in us (v. 23a):
 - a. This perfected oneness is the real building; it is the growth in life—Eph. 4:16.
 - b. To grow in life means that we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us; if we move into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us, we can be one with the saints in any locality.
- D. "I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one"—John 17:23:
 1. To be perfected into one means to be rescued from worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts.
 2. "I in them"—this means that the Son is living and moving in us.

3. “You in Me”—this means that the Father is living and moving in the Son.
 4. In other words, while the Son lives and moves in us, the Father lives and moves in Him; by this twofold living and moving, we are perfected into one, and we express the Father in glory.
- E. Ambition is implied in John 17:21; self-exaltation, in verse 22; and concepts and opinions, in verse 23:
1. In the Triune God there is no ambition, in the glory of the Father there is no self-exaltation, and in the place where Christ lives and reigns there are no opinions.
 2. In the divine and mystical realm of the processed Triune God, ambition is swallowed up, self-exaltation disappears, and concepts and opinions are killed; here there is no evil of division in the Satan-systematized world (v. 15); instead, there is genuine oneness.
- F. Genuine oneness is living in the Father, allowing Christ to live in us, and living in the Father’s glory, His expression—vv. 22, 24:
1. We need to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and remain in Him for the Father’s expression, His glory.
 2. The real building, the oneness, is possible only in the Triune God, and it is prevailing only when Christ lives in us; then we can express the Father in glory and experience the genuine oneness.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

MOVING OUT OF OURSELVES BY BEING SANCTIFIED

When we are with the Lord in the Father and in the glory, we are one. But when we are in ourselves, we cannot be one with others. In ourselves we are one only with ourselves, not with anyone else. If we desire to be one with others, we need to move out of the self and into God the Father. No one can make this move for us; we are responsible to do it ourselves. When we move out of ourselves and into the Father and into the Father’s glory, we are one and are even perfected into one.

The way to make this move is by being sanctified. To be sanctified is to make the move out of ourselves and into the Father. If we remain in ourselves, we are not sanctified and thus we cannot be one with others. In ourselves we have worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. It is impossible for us to eradicate these things from our being. Do you realize that the world is actually yourself? The same is true of ambition, self-exaltation, and opinions and concepts. This is the reason we cannot escape from these four things if we stay in the self. Paul told the Corinthians that among them there was envy, strife, and division (1 Cor. 3:3). These are some of the characteristics of those who are in the self. The church life, however, is a building, and the real building is the genuine oneness. In this genuine oneness there is no room for worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, or opinion.

How can we remove these four things from us? In ourselves, it is impossible. There is no way for us to eliminate them. As fallen people we are constituted with worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Even little children know how to exalt themselves; at an early age they also become ambitious. Furthermore, children do not need to be taught worldliness, for they are worldly by nature. As long as we are alive, we are subject to worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Although some of us are gentle and meek because of our natural disposition, this does not mean that we are not ambitious or opinionated. With some, ambition is expressed in an outward way and is quite obvious, whereas with others, ambition

is a hidden matter concealed in the heart. But everyone is ambitious; ambition is a constituent of our being.

The Lord Jesus knows our problem. In John 15:5 He said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." He is the vine, and we are the branches. We must remain in Him, that is, abide in Him. To remain in Christ as the vine means that we move out of ourselves and into Him. Since the Lord is in the Father, we also may be in the Father by being in Him. In John 17:21 the Lord prayed, "That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us." This is the oneness in the Triune God. In order to be in the Triune God, we must move out of ourselves. John 17:22 says, "And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one." When we move out of ourselves and remain in the Triune God, Christ lives in us. In this way we are perfected into one.

Only by our being sanctified can we abide in Christ and can Christ live in us. Again I say, to be sanctified is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and to allow Christ to live in us. According to chapters fourteen through seventeen of John, this is the proper concept of sanctification. The more we are sanctified, the more we are out of ourselves and in the Triune God.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

This sanctification takes place by the Word, which is truth, and by the Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth. In these four chapters of John the Word and the Spirit are mentioned again and again. Actually, the Word and the Spirit are one. I thank the Lord that so many of us have come back to the Word and are getting into the Word every day. As we come to the Word every morning, outwardly we touch the Word, but inwardly the Spirit touches us. By the Word and by the Spirit, both of which are the reality, we are sanctified.

To be sanctified is not merely to be separated from the world; it is to move out of ourselves and into the Triune God. If you check with your experience, you will see that the more you touch the Word and the more the Spirit touches you, the more you move out of yourself. You move from one dwelling place, the self, to another dwelling place, the Triune God. Every day we need to make this move. If we do not move out of ourselves, we are wrong; for in the self there is worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion.

LEARNING TO DEAL WITH OUR OPINIONS

We may apply this to the practical situation in the church life. Now is the time for the church in Anaheim as well as for all the other churches to be built. In order for the church to be built, we need to come together for the church service. Regarding this, the leading ones are quite cautious because they do not want the saints to be offended. Do you know what causes the saints to be offended? It is the self with its ambition and self-exaltation. Suppose you are troubled because someone else is made a leader instead of you. If you are troubled in this way because of your ambition, you should get into the Word right away and allow the Spirit to touch you. Then you will be able to move out of yourself and declare, "Angels and demons, I do not care who the leader is. I will not remain in myself. Instead, I will move out of myself into the Triune God and remain in Him."

In the service of the church the most damaging element is not ambition nor self-exaltation; it is opinion. Apparently, opinion is not as ugly as self-exaltation. We may express our opinion in a meek and humble way. Nevertheless, in the service of the church the first lesson we need to learn is to say, "I don't know." If you say that you already know what to do in the church service, it indicates that you have an opinion. But if you say, "I don't know," it reveals

that you are willing to serve, but do not know how to serve. How wonderful it would be if we all could say, "I don't know!"

In 1928, at the beginning of the work in Shanghai, a certain brother who had been a post-master became a co-worker. Not knowing what to do when he was first invited to a particular place to work for the Lord, he asked Brother Nee for advice. Brother Nee replied, "Simply learn to say, 'I don't know.' If you say this whenever people ask you something, you will be the best co-worker." However, it is very difficult for us to say this. When we come to the service of the church, we all have the assurance that we know something. Nevertheless, our need is to learn to say, "I don't know."

We learn to do this only by moving out of ourselves. If we remain in ourselves, we shall always think that we know a great deal. But if we move out of ourselves into the Triune God and remain in Him, we shall regard ourselves as knowing nothing. To know nothing means to have no opinion. When we are in the Triune God, we have no opinions.

The Lord's disciples afford us a good example of moving out of the self and into the Triune God. Before the Lord's resurrection, the disciples stayed in themselves and were very opinionated. Peter, Martha, and even Mary had opinions. But in Acts 2 we see that the disciples had lost their opinions. In the Gospels they were in themselves, but in the Acts they had moved out of the self and into the Triune God. A big move took place between the Gospels and the Acts. Although an important work began in Acts 2, there were no conferences or discussions about it. When people are opinionated, they need conferences and discussions. But in Acts 2 there was no such need.

Not many Christians know how to be free from opinions. When we come together to serve with the saints, we all must learn to have no opinions. How can we be without opinions? It is not by adjusting ourselves or by improving our behavior. It is by moving out of ourselves and into the Triune God. This is a deeper understanding of sanctification. Once we are out of ourselves, we are separated from worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion. Then we are separated not only unto God, but also into God.

ONE IN THE TRIUNE GOD

When we are in the Triune God, we are one. When we are in ourselves, however, we are divided. Outward teachings concerning oneness do not make us one. The more today's Christians talk about oneness, the more divided they are. Like the Corinthians, they are still in themselves; hence, they are through with the genuine oneness.

We have pointed out that in John 14 the Lord Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for us. This place is God the Father Himself, and the way there is the Lord Jesus. In John 14:6 the Lord said, "I am the way, and the reality, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." Christ, the Son, is the way, and the Father is the place. Although unbelievers can lodge only in themselves, we have a choice between dwelling in ourselves and dwelling in the Triune God. We do not need to remain in ourselves; we can move into the Triune God. A place has been prepared for us, and a choice is presented to us. The Lord said that after He prepared a place for us in the Father's house, He would come to receive us into that place. Therefore, where He is, we may be also. The Lord is in the Father, and He desires that we too be in the Father. Now that the place has been prepared for us in the Father, we can move into Him by being sanctified through the truth. This involves both the Word and the Spirit. If we continually touch the Word and allow the Spirit to touch us day by day, we shall be sanctified; that is, we shall move out of ourselves, our old lodging place, and into the Triune God, our new lodging place. By making this move, worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, and opinion are left behind.

PERFECTED INTO ONE

John 17:23 says, "I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one." Not only have we moved into the Triune God, but the Lord is also in us. His being in us is a matter of living. We move out of ourselves in order to be in the Triune God. When we are in the Triune God, Christ can live in us. When we remain in the Triune God and when Christ lives in us, we are perfected into one.

If we come together for the church service in ourselves, it will be impossible for us to be one. In order to serve in oneness, we must move out of ourselves. We serve by moving into the Triune God. However, as we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God, we need to let Christ live in us. His living in us perfects us into one. By moving out of ourselves and into the Triune God, we have oneness. However, this is not yet the perfected oneness. Only when Christ lives in us do we sense the reality of the genuine oneness. The more the Lord lives in us, the more His living perfects us with others into the genuine oneness.

Genuine oneness is not merely a matter of meeting together. To have the genuine oneness, we must firstly move out of ourselves and into the Triune God; secondly, we must allow the Lord to live in us. Then we are not only one, but also perfected into one. Here in this genuine oneness there is no worldliness, ambition, self-exaltation, or opinions. Instead, there is just the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

REAL BUILDING

This perfected oneness is the real building. In 1954 I first began to speak of the building. I told the saints in Manila that they had to know who was above them, under them, and beside them. Later I learned by experience that this concept of building is not accurate, for it applies only to a building with lifeless material that does not move from place to place, not to us as living ones who may move from one city to another. I asked the Lord to show me what the practical building was. Gradually, mainly from Ephesians 4, I saw that real building is the proper growth in life. When we grow in life normally, we get out of ourselves and into the Triune God, and Christ lives in us. When this is our experience, we have the genuine oneness and we are perfected into one. When we are perfected into one, there is no problem with building. Wherever we go, we are one with the saints. But if we remain in ourselves, we shall have problems no matter where we may be.

Real oneness is not merely relatedness, nor is it merely coordination. It is the growth in life. To grow in life means that we move out of ourselves and into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us. If we move into the Triune God and allow Christ to live in us, we can be one with the saints in any locality. If you have problems in the church, do not blame your environment or the saints. Instead, blame yourself for not moving out of yourself and into the Triune God and for not allowing Christ to live in you. (*Truth Messages*, pp. 56-62)