

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2017**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL REVELATION OF LIFE IN THE SCRIPTURES**

Message Thirteen

The Desire of God's Heart—Many Sons for His Corporate Expression

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:4-5, 9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:14, 28-30; 12:4-5

- I. God's eternal purpose is to produce many sons for His corporate expression—Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9:**
- A. God predestinated us unto sonship according to the good pleasure of His will—the desire of His heart—Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13.
 - B. According to the Bible, the spiritual significance of sonship is that a son is the expression of his father.
 - C. God desires to have many sons because His intention is to have Himself expressed in a corporate way.
 - D. God does not want simply an individual expression in the only begotten Son but a Body expression, a corporate expression, in many sons—John 1:18; Heb. 2:10:
 - 1. God's intention is to make the only begotten Son the Firstborn among many brothers—Rom. 8:29.
 - 2. Before the resurrection of Christ, God had only one Son; that is, He had an individual expression.
 - 3. By means of Christ's resurrection, God has a multitude of sons (1 Pet. 1:3; John 20:17); that is, He has a corporate expression.
 - E. For eternity God will be expressed through a corporate Body of glorified sons; this is God's intention—Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:7, 10-11.
 - F. Sonship, therefore, is the focal point of God's economy, which is the dispensing of Himself into His chosen people to make them His sons—Eph. 1:5; 3:16-17a.
- II. According to the book of Romans, the gospel of God is a gospel of sonship for the reality of the Body of Christ—1:3-4; 8:14; 12:4-5:**
- A. Romans explains how the individual Christ revealed in the four Gospels could become the corporate Christ revealed in Acts, collectively composed of Himself with all the believers—Acts 9:4.
 - B. In Romans Paul shows us that God's New Testament economy is to make sinners sons of God and members of Christ to constitute the Body of Christ in order to express Him—12:4-5.
 - C. The gospel in the book of Romans is the gospel of the One who is now indwelling His believers as their subjective Savior; the gospel of God, as the subject of Romans, concerns Christ as the Spirit within the believers after His resurrection—1:1, 9; 8:9-11.
 - D. The purpose of God's salvation is to have Christ, the firstborn Son of God, reproduced in millions of believers, the many sons of God so that they may become

the members of His Body, not separate and complete individual units but parts of a living, functioning, coordinated, corporate whole—12:4-5.

III. Christ has already been designated the Son of God, but we are still in the process of designation, the process of being “sonized,” deified—1:3-4; 8:29:

- A. In resurrection Christ’s humanity was sonized, deified, meaning that He became the Son of God not only in His divinity but also in His humanity:
 - 1. In resurrection He was designated the Son of God, made the firstborn Son of God, possessing both divinity and humanity.
 - 2. The humanity of Christ was designated, marked out, by the Spirit of holiness and brought into divinity; that is, in resurrection Christ was begotten in His humanity to be the firstborn Son of God—Acts 13:33.
 - 3. As the firstborn Son of God, He is the prototype for the mass reproduction, which is the many sons of God—Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29.
- B. In resurrection Christ in His humanity was designated the Son of God, and by means of such a resurrection, we also are in the process of being designated the many sons of God—v. 11:
 - 1. Christ was designated by resurrection, and we shall be in the likeness of this resurrection—6:5.
 - 2. As we share in Christ’s resurrection, we undergo a process of being designated the sons of God:
 - a. We are designated the sons of God by a change in life through the process of resurrection—8:2, 6, 10-11.
 - b. In this process of resurrection there are four aspects: sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification—6:19, 22; 12:2; 8:29-30.
 - 3. The process of resurrection will continue until we are sons of God in full.

IV. All the believers in Christ, all the sons of God, need to be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—v. 29:

- A. God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son so that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers—v. 29; 1:4; Eph. 1:5.
- B. As the divine life grows within us and transforms us, it spontaneously shapes us into the form, the image, of the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:2; Heb. 8:10:
 - 1. To be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son is to be saved in Christ’s life from self-likeness, that is, from the expression, the appearance, of the self—Rom. 5:10b; Matt. 16:23-24.
 - 2. We are to be conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son, Christ as the first God-man, that we may be a group of God-men who are exactly like Him—Rom. 8:28-29:
 - a. Such a conformation makes us the reproduction of God’s firstborn Son that we may be exactly like God in His righteousness and holiness—Eph. 4:24.
 - b. In this way Christ can be the Firstborn among God’s many sons so that God may obtain the corporate expression of His firstborn Son with the many sons to accomplish His eternal purpose—1:11; 3:11.