

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2016**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE TREE OF LIFE**

Message Three

**Eating the Tree of Life
and Living as Branches of the Tree of Life**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2, 14; Matt. 15:21-28; John 6:57; 15:1, 5

I. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God as life to man in man's relationship with Him; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan, the devil, the evil one, as death to man in man's fall before God—Gen. 2:9, 17; Psa. 36:8-9.
- B. The tree of life is the source of men who seek God as life for their supply and enjoyment; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the source of men who follow Satan as their poison unto death and eternal perdition—John 1:4; 8:44; 15:1; Psa. 105:4.
- C. The first way is the way of life, the constricted way, for men to seek God, to gain God, and to enjoy God in His eternal life as the supply; the second way is the way of death and of good and evil, the broad way, for men to follow Satan to be his children—Matt. 7:13-14; Acts 9:2; 1 John 3:10a.
- D. The first principle is the principle of life—the principle of dependence on God; the second principle is the principle of death and of good and evil—the principle of independence from God—Gen. 4:3-4; Jer. 17:5-7; John 15:1, 5.
- E. The two consummations are the final outcome of the two trees, the two sources, the two ways, and the two principles:
 - 1. The consummation of God's way of life is a city of water of life with the tree of life, the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2, 9-11; 22:1-2, 14.
 - 2. The consummation of the way of death and of good and evil is a lake of fire—19:20; 20:10, 14-15.

II. We need a vision to see that the Bible presents us a picture of God in Christ as the tree of life to be our food—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:14:

- A. The tree of life signifies the Triune God in Christ to dispense Himself into His chosen people as life in the form of food—Gen. 2:9.
- B. The Gospel of John reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of the figure of the tree of life; if we put together John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10; and 15:5, we will realize that Christ, who Himself is life and also a vine tree, is the tree of life.
- C. The enjoyment of the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all God's redeemed; the tree of life fulfills for eternity what God intended for man from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:7-12, 22; Rev. 22:1-2.

- D. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the eating of Jesus for the building up of the church; eating is the way to experience God's dispensing for His expression—Matt. 16:18; Gen. 2:9; John 6:57; Matt. 4:4.

III. The believers in Christ have access to the tree of life—Rev. 22:14:

- A. As a fallen man, Adam was separated from the life of God and was not permitted to contact God as the tree of life—Gen. 3:1-6, 11-13, 22-24.
- B. Through the redemption of Christ, the way by which man could touch the tree of life, which is God Himself in Christ as life to man, has been opened again—Heb. 10:19-20; Rev. 22:14:
 - 1. Through Christ's redemption, which fulfilled all the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, the way to the tree of life was opened again to the believers—Gen. 3:22-24; Heb. 10:19-20.
 - 2. Christ died on the cross to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory and was resurrected to become the tree of life to us with Himself as our righteousness, holiness, and glory—1 Cor. 1:30.
 - 3. Those who wash their robes in the redeeming blood of Christ have the right to enjoy the tree of life as their eternal portion in the holy city both today and for eternity—Rev. 22:14.

IV. The heavenly King's ministry in all His visits created opportunities for Him to reveal Himself; in His contact with the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28, the opportunity was created for Him to reveal Himself, the tree of life, as "the children's bread" (v. 26):

- A. The Canaanite woman considered Him the Lord—a divine person—and the Son of David—a royal descendant, great and high in His reign; but He unveiled Himself to her as small pieces of bread, good for food.
- B. This implies that, as the heavenly King, He rules over His people by feeding them with Himself as bread; we can be the proper people in His kingdom only by being nourished with Him as our food.
- C. To eat Christ as our supply is the way to be the kingdom people in the reality of the kingdom.
- D. The Canaanite woman came to ask the Lord to heal her sick daughter, but the Lord said that He was the children's bread to feed her:
 - 1. This shows that whenever we have a need, it is proof that we need to eat the Lord Jesus more; we have to learn this secret in our circumstances—eat the Lord more.
 - 2. We need to take the Lord Jesus into us and let Him become our food and our everything; then our circumstances will change.
 - 3. When we eat more of the Lord Jesus, the churches will be enlivened; this is the central viewpoint of the New Testament (see the excerpt at the end of this outline).

V. In God's economy we are not only the eaters of the tree of life, enjoying the continually fresh fruits—we are also parts, branches, of this tree, abiding in Christ, the tree of life, to enjoy the life-juice—Rev. 22:2; John 15:5:

- A. The Bible reveals that the relationship that God desires to have with man is that He and man become one—1 Cor. 6:17:
 - 1. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined to become one life—1 John 5:11-12; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17.
 - 2. This oneness is an organic union, a union in life—a grafted life—John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 11:17, 24.
- B. Christ as the tree of life is the embodiment of God as life to us, and we are united to Him organically—Col. 2:9; John 15:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17:
 - 1. We not only eat Christ as the tree of life—we are united to Him as one spirit—v. 17.
 - 2. The tree of life is for the dispensing of the divine life into us; as we, the branches, abide in the vine, we receive the dispensing of life from the tree of life and live as parts of the tree of life—John 15:5; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11; cf. Phil. 4:13.
 - 3. To abide in Christ as the vine is to take Him as our dwelling place, which is the highest and fullest experience of God; to dwell in Christ is to have our living in Christ, taking Him as our everything—Psa. 90:1; 91:1, 11.

VI. If we live as parts of the tree of life, we will care not for good and evil but for life, and we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:3:

- A. The Gospel of John emphasizes the fact that the tree of life is versus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that we should care not for good or evil but for life—4:10-14, 20-21, 23-24; 8:3-9; 9:1-3; 11:20-27.
- B. The best way to discern a matter—the secret of discernment—is to discern according to life or death; we must learn to discern, to differentiate, matters by life and death, rejecting any speaking that deprives us of the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply but receiving the genuine ministry of the Lord, which always strengthens us in the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 11:3.

VII. That the one tree of life grows on the two sides of the river signifies that the tree of life is a vine that spreads and proceeds along the flow of the water of life for God's people to receive and enjoy (Rev. 22:1-2); this fulfills for eternity what God intended from the beginning (Gen. 2:9):

- A. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7; John 6:57.
- B. For the proper church life and the recovery of the church life, that is, for the proper growth in the Christian life, what we need is not merely the mental apprehension of teachings but the eating of the Lord as the tree of life, the bread of life, in our spirit (v. 57); even the words of the Scriptures should not be considered merely as doctrines to teach our mind but as food to nourish our spirit (Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; John 5:39-40) that we may grow with the growth of God for the building up of the organic Body of Christ (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16).

NOT MERELY ASKING THE LORD TO DO THINGS FOR US BUT EATING THE LORD

The Canaanite woman came to ask the Lord to do something for her. She begged the Lord to heal her sick daughter. However, the Lord's answer did not give any hint that He was going to do something. He said that He was the bread to feed her. By this we understand that we do not need the Lord Jesus to do anything for us; instead, we need to eat the Lord Jesus. Sisters, is your husband ill? Do not ask the Lord first to heal his sickness. The reason your husband is ill is so that you may eat the Lord Jesus. Take the Lord Jesus into you, and then your husband's illness will be healed. Are you vexed by your children's disobedience? You often pray that the Lord will perform a miracle to make your children obedient. However, the more you pray, the less effective your prayers are; the more you pray, the more disobedient your children are. Now you have to learn this secret: You have to eat the Lord more. Eat the Lord well, and your child will be healed.

Whenever you have a need, it is a proof that you need to eat the Lord Jesus. Have you lost your job? Do not pray to the Lord for a good job. All you need to do is eat the Lord Jesus, and the job will appear. When unbelievers hear these words, they will think that I am talking nonsense, but the experienced ones know that the job comes out of our eating the Lord. Do not ask the Lord Jesus to do something outside of you. Rather, eat the Lord Jesus and take Him into your being.

Brothers and sisters, we have all seen that the Lord Jesus has truly come to be our food. We need to change our concept. The elders in all the localities are faithfully managing the churches, bearing the churches on their hearts, and earnestly hoping that the churches will go on. Being anxious for the churches is good but not effective. Do not ask the Lord to help you take good care of the churches; you have to turn to take a few bites of the Lord Jesus. When you eat more of the Lord Jesus, the churches will be enlivened.

This is the central viewpoint in the New Testament. The Lord came not to work for us but to feed us. It is wrong to ask the Lord to till the ground for you like an ox; it is also wrong to shear the Lord of wool for your beauty. When the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 asked the Lord Jesus to heal her sick daughter, the Lord replied in effect, "Do not ask Me to be an ox to till the ground for you; I am the crumbs for you to eat! Regardless of whether or not your daughter is sick, just eat Me! Eat Me, and your daughter will be healed!"

Brothers and sisters, your family life has problems because you do not eat Jesus. When the wives eat Jesus, the husbands change for the better; when the husbands eat Jesus, the wives change for the better. When the children eat Jesus, the parents no longer are a problem. When the parents eat the Lord Jesus, the children have a turn. You need to take the Lord Jesus into you and let Him become your life, your food, and your everything; then your circumstances will change. Actually, we do not care whether our circumstances are good or bad; we only care to eat and enjoy the Lord. The Lord is for you to eat! You first eat under the table, and then after a while you eat what is on the table. When the Gentile dogs eat Christ, they become the children of God. After the children eat more of Christ, they become the precious stones. In Revelation 2 the Lord told the messenger of the church in Pergamos, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone" (v. 17). The white stone is the one who overcomes. The one who eats the hidden manna eventually becomes the white stone for God's building. (*Eating the Lord*, pp. 22-24)