

HWMR - Thanksgiving Conference 2018

General Subject: The Reality of the Body of Christ

Message Two

Living in Resurrection for the Reality of the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 1:8-9; Rom. 8:28-29; Phil. 3:10-11; 2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:58

- 2 Corinthians 1: 8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our **affliction** which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.
- 2 Corinthians 1: 9 Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that **we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God**, who raises the dead;
- Romans 8:28 And we know that **all things** work together for good **to those** who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- Romans 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- Philippians 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being **conformed** to His death,
- Philippians 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the **out-resurrection** from the dead.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our **outer man is decaying**, yet our **inner man is being renewed day by day**.
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be **steadfast, immovable**, always **abounding** in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

The **inward man** is **renewed** by being **nourished with the fresh supply of resurrection life**. As our mortal body, our **outward man**, is being **consumed** by the **killing work of death**, our inward man, that is, our regenerated spirit with the inward parts of our being (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; Rom. 7:22, 25), is being **metabolically renewed day by day** with the supply of resurrection life. (Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 11, Section 2)

I. In order to live in resurrection, we must see the unveiled **truth concerning Christ's resurrection**:

- A. Christ **in His humanity** was begotten by God in His resurrection **to be the firstborn Son of God** as the Head of the Body—Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29b.
- B. All the believers of Christ were **regenerated** by God the Father through the resurrection of Christ **for the producing of the church** as His Body, His reproduction—1 Pet. 1:3; John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17.
- C. Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit—15:45b.
- D. Without these major items of the Lord's resurrection (the **firstborn Son of God**, the **many sons of God**, and the **life-giving Spirit**), there would be no church, no Body of Christ, and no economy of God—cf. Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4.

II. The **budding rod** signifies that **Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear fruit to maturity—Num. 17:8**:

- A. After the children of Israel rebelled, as recorded in Numbers 16, God commanded the twelve leaders to take **twelve rods** according to the twelve tribes of Israel and put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony (17:4); then He said, "*The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud*"—v. 5.
- B. All twelve rods were leafless, rootless, dry, and dead; whichever one budded was the one chosen by God; here we see that **resurrection is the basis of God's selection** and that **the basis of service** is something apart from our natural life; thus, **the budding rod signifies** our experience of Christ in His resurrection as **our acceptance by God for authority in the God-given ministry**.
- C. **The principle to every service** lies in the budding rod; God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders but kept Aaron's rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial; this means that **resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God**—vv. 9-10:
 1. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us; it means that **God alone is able and that we are not able**—Phil. 3:10-11.
 2. What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection; **a man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness**—Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27.
 3. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability; **resurrection means that we cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything**—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:7.

The **budding rod** of Aaron typifies not a dead Christ but **the resurrected Christ**, the budding Christ, who **imparts life** to others. Christ always flows out life to enliven others. **Christ is the greatest budding rod in the universe**. Today He is still **budding**, and we are a small part, the fruit, the almonds, of His budding. (Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 25, Section 2)

III. In order to be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to be absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ:

- A. The church is **absolutely** of the element of Christ, **absolutely** in resurrection, and **absolutely** in the heavenlies—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6; cf. Gen. 2:21-24.
- B. The **golden lampstand**, typifying the church as the Body of Christ, **portrays** Christ as **the resurrection life**, **growing**, **branching**, **budding**, and **blossoming** to shine the light—Exo. 25:31-40; Num. 17:8; Rev. 1:11-12.
- C. When we do not live by our natural life but **live by the divine life within us**, we are in resurrection; the issue of this is the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11:
1. **We all need to be disciplined by the Lord to be divine and mystical persons, living the divine life by denying our natural life**—cf. John 3:8.
 2. Anything that is carried out in the natural life, even if it is carried out scripturally, is not the reality of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 3:12.



Exodus 25:31 says, “*And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold; of beaten work shall the lampstand be made: its base and its shaft; its cups, its knobs, and its blossoming buds shall be from it. And there shall be six branches going out from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from its one side, and three branches of the lampstand from its other side.*”

The **lampstand** consists of a **base**, a **stalk**, and three pairs of **branches**. There were three branches on each side of the lampstand. Underneath each pair of branches there was a **knob** holding the two branches at the stalk. Then on each branch there were three **cups** shaped like almond blossoms with knobs and blossoming **buds**. We have seen that each cup was composed of two layers: a **bottom layer**, called the **knob**, or the **calyx**, the leafy green bottom of the blossom, and a **top layer** of **petals**, which actually made up the blossom, the flower. The bottom layer is called the knob, and the top layer is called the blossoming bud. The whole flower, including calyx and blossom, is a cup shaped like an almond blossom.

As we consider the lampstand as a whole, we shall see that on it there are **twenty-five knobs**. There are three on each branch, three holding one pair of branches each, and four on the shaft of the lampstand, making a total of twenty-five. Since the three knobs which each hold one pair of branches do not have blossoms, the lampstand has a total of **twenty-two blossoms**. The divine thought here is that **the lampstand is actually a tree with calyxes and blossoms**.

If we have a general view of the entire lampstand, we shall realize that it does in fact look like a tree. Furthermore, the lampstand is described in such a way as to give the idea of **growth**. These verses speak of branches, buds, and almond blossoms. **Blossoming** indicates growth. Thus, we must be impressed that **the lampstand is a growing tree**.

As a tree, the lampstand has certain outstanding features. First, it is a **golden tree**. Gold signifies the nature of God. As we pointed out in the previous message, the golden lampstand is the expression of the Triune God. **The Triune God is a living tree, growing, budding, and blossoming**.

We have seen that this golden tree has many **almond blossoms**. In typology almonds **signify resurrection life**. Aaron's rod budding with almonds signifies resurrection life. Hence, the almonds on the lampstand indicate that it is a tree in resurrection. **Resurrection is life that overcomes death without being damaged or injured by death**. Death is powerless to do anything with resurrection life. Death can inflict all kinds of damage on other forms of life, plant life, animal life, and human life. Only one kind of life cannot be hurt by death, and this is resurrection life. Resurrection is life which passes through death and can never be held by it. According to the full revelation of the Scriptures, God Himself is this resurrection life.

The lampstand, of course, gives light. However, the **first significance** of the lampstand is not light, but **life**. The light is at the top of the lampstand and underneath this shining light are the blossoms. The lampstand is something that **grows**. The **calyx** under each pair of branches indicates the **growth of life**. These branches are produced by the growing of life. Thus, **with the lampstand we see the branching out of life which takes place under the shining of the light**. Life grows out light and blossoms with light. This means that the light is actually the blossoming of life. When we grow and blossom, the light shines. Our blossoming is our shining. We grow with life, but we blossom out light.

Thus far, we have seen that with the lampstand we have the **divine nature, resurrection, life, and light**. The seven lamps on the lampstand (v. 37) signify the Spirit. Therefore, with the lampstand there are **five crucial matters**: the divine nature, resurrection, life, the Spirit, and light. The revelation in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, corresponds to the lampstand in these five matters—the divine nature, resurrection, life, the Spirit, and light.

Now we must see that as those who believe in Christ, we are a part of this wonderful tree. Realizing that I am part of this golden tree causes me to be beside myself with joy. Praise the Lord that we are parts of this tree in resurrection and with the divine **nature, life, the Spirit, and the shining light!**

The **lampstand** in Exodus 25 signifies the Triune God **embodied in Christ**. The **lampstand** in Zechariah 4 signifies the Triune God **expressed in the Spirit**. Finally, in Revelation we have the **lampstand reproduced and multiplied**. In both Exodus 25 and Zechariah 4 we have just one lampstand, but in Revelation 1 we have seven. The one lampstand has been reproduced to become seven lampstands. **These seven lampstands are the church**. Because the lampstand has become the church and because we are all parts of the church, we have the ground to say that we are parts of the lampstand. I have the boldness to testify that I am a part of the lampstand. I hope that all the saints can declare this marvelous fact. Do you not have the divine nature? Do you not also have resurrection, life, the Spirit, and the shining light? As true believers in Christ, we have all these things. (Life-Study of Exodus, Chapter 93, Section 1)

IV. In order to live in resurrection, we must know, experience, and gain the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 1:8-9:

- A. God is working through **the cross to terminate us**, to bring us to an end, so that we will no longer **trust** in ourselves but **in the God of resurrection**—v. 9.
- B. Although **the living God** can **perform** many acts on man's behalf, the life and nature of the living God are **not wrought** into man; when the **God of resurrection works**, His life and nature **are wrought** into man—4:16:
1. God is not working to make His might known in external acts, but **He is working to impart and work Himself into man**—Gal. 4:19.
 2. God uses the **environment** in order to work His **life and nature** into us—2 Cor. 4:7-12; 1 Thes. 3:3.
 3. In order to live in resurrection and be constituted with the God of resurrection, we must **be conformed** to the image of Christ as **the firstborn Son of God** through "*all things*"—Rom. 8:28-29; Heb. 12:10; Jer. 48:11.
 4. The **primary purpose of suffering** in this universe, particularly as it relates to the children of God, is that through it **the very nature of God may be wrought into the nature of man so that man may gain God to the fullest extent**—2 Cor. 4:16.
 5. As we pass through afflictions, there needs to be a **continual renewing** taking place in us day by day so that God can accomplish His heart's desire to make us the New Jerusalem—Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:2.
- C. In order **to live in resurrection**, we must **be renewed** day by day by **being nourished** with the fresh supply of the resurrection life—2 Cor. 4:16:
1. **The real Christian life** is **to have the God of resurrection added into us** morning and evening and day by day—Col. 2:19; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11.
 2. In order **to receive the renewing capacity** of the divine life in resurrection, we need to **contact** God, **open ourselves up** to Him, and **let Him come into us** to be a new addition into us day by day—Phil. 2:13; 3:10-11:
 - a. We are **renewed** by the **cross**, the **Holy Spirit**, our **mingled spirit**, and the **word of God**—2 Cor. 4:10; Titus 3:5; Eph. 4:23; 5:26.
 - b. We need to be **revived** every morning—Matt. 13:43; Prov. 4:18.
 - c. We should **come to the Lord's table in the principle of newness by forgiving others and seeking to be forgiven**—Matt. 26:29; 5:23-24; 18:21-22, 35.
 3. The **killing of the cross** results in the **manifestation** of the **resurrection life**; this daily killing is for the release of the divine life in resurrection—2 Cor. 4:10-12.
- D. Our natural strength and ability need to be **dealt with** by the **cross** to become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord—Phil. 3:3:
1. After being **put aside by God** for forty years, Moses **learned** to serve God according to His leading and to trust in Him—Exo. 2:14-15; Acts 7:22-36; Heb. 11:28.
 2. After **becoming a complete failure**, Peter **learned** to serve the brothers by faith and with humility—Luke 22:32-33; John 18:15-18, 25-27; Matt. 26:69-75; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
 3. The **sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit honors** only the things in resurrection; if we do any work that is not in resurrection, the life-giving Spirit will never honor it—1 Cor. 15:58; 3:12.

THE WAY TO ENJOY CHRIST—THE CROSS

We have been **joined to Christ** (1 Cor. 6:17). Our need is to enjoy what He is as the **consummated Spirit**, the consummation of the Triune God. The way for us to enjoy Him is **to bear the cross**. In my youth as a devoted Christian, I spoke a lot about bearing the cross, but like most Christians, my understanding concerning bearing the cross was mainly that of **suffering**. We need to see the **real significance of the cross**. The cross is the centrality and universality of Christ's redemptive work. Christ in His redemptive work first brought us all with Him **to the cross to terminate us**. He terminated us with the whole old creation for **the purpose of germinating us** with Himself as the life-giving Spirit in resurrection. His death was for His resurrection. Christ's death was not the goal. It was the means to reach the goal of resurrection. **His death was the termination of the old creation for the germination of the new creation in resurrection.**

He is the life-giving Spirit within us in resurrection making us the new creation. The turning point of His making the old creation into the new creation is the cross. If we are going **to live a life in the new creation**, **we must bear the cross**. In other words, we must be under the termination of the cross all day long. The termination of the cross is a lifelong matter. Our crucifixion with Christ was accomplished once and for all at the cross, but **the experience of His cross is lifelong**. When we experience the cross terminating us in a daily way, we are eventually led to live not an exchanged life but a grafted life. (The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man, Chapter 10, Section 4)