

**KEY STATEMENTS FOR THE 2024 THANKSGIVING BLENDING
CONFERENCE**

**Although the subject of 1 and 2 Peter is God's
government, we need to see that everything
concerning God's government
should bring us back to the central focus and basic structure of these
Epistles—the Triune God as our full enjoyment to carry out the
economy of God.**

**The preciousness of Peter's writing is that
he combines the Christian life and God's government,
revealing that the Christian life and the government of God go
together as a pair.**

**“The God of all grace”—who has called the believers into His
eternal glory— perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds
them through their sufferings; this “all grace” is the “true grace
of God,”**

into which the believers should enter and in which they stand.

**As believers in Christ, we may become a reproduction of Christ as
our model, and we can experience and enjoy Christ as the
Shepherd of our souls.**

**HWMR: LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHURCH LIFE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF
GOD FOR THE ECONOMY OF GOD (Week 3)**

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:8; 2:1-5, 9; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

Life and Building in Peter's Epistles

- 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 1 Pet 2:1 Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings,
- 1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,
- 1 Pet 2:3 If you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- 1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,
- 1 Pet 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

Day 1

1 Peter 1:3-4 - Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue, Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

I. The central thought of Peter's Epistles and of the entire Scripture is **life and building—1 Pet. 1:23; 2:2-5; 2 Pet. 1:3-4:**

- A. **Life** is the **Triune God** embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit dispensing Himself into us for our enjoyment, and **building** is the **church**, the Body of Christ, God's spiritual house, as the enlargement and expansion of God for the corporate expression of God—Gen. 2:8-9, 22; Matt. 16:18; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16.
- B. Christ as the **seed of life** is the **power of life** within us that has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness for the building up of the church as the rich surplus of life and the expression of life through the growth and development of life—2 Pet. 1:3-4; cf. Acts 3:15; *Hymns*, #203, stanza 4.

After the basic categories of faith, the divine power, and the precious promises, there are also five groups of things for the experience of life in 2 Peter. First, we have all things that relate to life and godliness. Life is within, while godliness is without. Life is the inward substance, and godliness is the outward expression. Godliness, according to its New Testament usage, refers to our Christian living, our Christian daily walk. It is the outward expression of the inward life. It is a living that is the expression of God (1 Tim. 2:2). Godliness is God-likeness. The Christian life should be a life which expresses God and bears God's likeness in all things. The divine power has given to us all things relating to our inward life and our outward living.

Second, through the promises we become the partakers, or enjoyers, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Third, there are the spiritual virtues (vv. 5-7), which are the issue of the development of the divine life. These divine virtues are virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly love, and love. Fourth, God has called us not merely by His gospel, His grace, or His mercy, but He has called us by His own glory and virtue (v. 3). Fifth, there is the entrance into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ. Second Peter 1:11 says, "In this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you." The entrance is conditional; it will be supplied based upon certain terms and conditions. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," ch. 16)

Day 2

1 Peter 2:4-5 - Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious, You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

II. God's goal is to have a spiritual house built up with **living stones**—1 Pet. 2:5:

- A. As life to us, Christ is the incorruptible seed; for God's building, **He is the living stone**—1:23; 2:4.
- B. At Peter's conversion the Lord gave him a new name, Peter—a stone (John 1:42); when Peter received the revelation concerning Christ, the Lord revealed further that He was the rock—a stone (Matt. 16:18); by these two incidents Peter received the impression that **both Christ and His believers are living stones** for God's building (1 Pet. 2:4-8; Acts 4:20; Isa. 28:16; Zech. 4:7).
- C. We, the believers in Christ, are living stones as the **duplication** of Christ through **regeneration** and **transformation**; we were created of clay (Rom. 9:21), but at regeneration we received the seed of the divine life, which by its growing in us transforms us into living stones (1 Pet. 2:5).

The principle in the experience of transformation. If we long for the milk of the word, this milk will be like a current of living water flowing within us. As we stay in this flow, the current will carry away our natural substance and replace it with heavenly, divine minerals. These minerals are actually Christ. Gradually, over a period of time, we shall be transformed or "petrified"; that is, we shall become precious stones.

If we would be transformed, every day we need to come to the Lord as milk. We have pointed out that the way to come to Christ as the living stone is to drink the guileless milk of the word. This means that we come to Christ by drinking Him. As we daily drink in the milk of the word, we shall be transformed. (*Life of Study of 1 Peter, message 18*)

Day 3

Ephesians 2:21 - In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.

III. Since God's building is **living**, it is **growing**; the actual building up of the church as the house of God is by the believers' growth in life—Eph. 2:21:

- A. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must **love** the Lord, **take heed** to our spirit, and **guard** our heart with all vigilance to stay on the pathway of life—1 Pet. 1:8; 2:2, 5; 3:4, 15; Prov. 4:18-23; Deut. 10:12; Mark 12:30.
- B. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must **experience** the **breaking of the cross**, the killing death of Christ in the all-inclusive Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of glory, so that the following **obstacles** within us can be dealt with and removed—1 Pet. 1:11; 4:14; Psalms 139:23-24:
 1. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; the obstacle to this is **not knowing** the pathway of life and **not taking** Christ as our life—Matt. 7:13-14; Phil. 3:8-14; Col. 3:4; Rom. 8:28-29.
 2. The second obstacle is **hypocrisy**; a person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of Christ—Matt. 6:1-6; 15:7-8; John 5:44; 12:42-43; cf. Josh. 7:21.
 3. The third obstacle is **rebellion**; we may be very active and zealous in doing things but still imprison and disobey the living Christ within us by ignoring Him—Lev. 14:9, 14-18; 11:1-2, 46-47; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:33.
 4. The fourth obstacle is our **natural capabilities**; if these natural capabilities remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life—2:14-15; 3:12, 16-17; Jude 19; cf. Lev. 10:1-2.

We need to pray that the Lord would touch the hearts of many saints. Among us we need this love. The seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3, dealing with the fall of the church, show us that the source, the origin, of the fall of the church is the loss of the first love (2:4). When the love toward the Lord is lost, regardless of what we do for Him, the life eventually is gone. To receive life requires believing, having faith, but to have growth in life requires love. Faith is for life, and love is for the growth of life. If we do not have love, it is hard for us to grow. Therefore, we ourselves must have this experience; then we will know how to help others.

If we do love the Lord, we will spontaneously offer ourselves to Him. When we love the Lord, there is no need for others to tell us that we have to consecrate ourselves. Of the sixty-six books of the Bible, there is only one that deals entirely with the matter of growth, that is, the Song of Songs. This book is a book of growth. Brother Watchman Nee's study of the Song of Songs shows us all the steps for growth. The Song of Songs tells us that after the lover of Christ is saved, she realizes the Lord's love; this is the start. Then at the end of the book we can see maturity and building up. This shows us that growth starts with love, and when we have love, we spontaneously offer ourselves to the Lord. Therefore, I will not say that we have to consecrate ourselves, because consecration is included in our love for the Lord. If we do not have love, regardless of how much we consecrate ourselves, we still have not truly consecrated ourselves. The real consecration comes from love and goes with love. If we do not have such a love, our consecration is not real. This is the first main way to grow. (CWWL Vol. 4, *Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life*, Message 16)

Day 4

1 Peter 2:1-2 - Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,

- C. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must **put away** "all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings"—1 Pet. 2:1.
- D. In order to grow in life for God's building, we must be **nourished** with the guileless milk of God's word—v. 2:
 - 1. The guileless milk is conveyed in the **word of God** to nourish our inner man through the understanding of our rational mind and is assimilated by our mental faculties—Rom. 8:6; cf. Deut. 11:18.
 - 2. Although the nourishing milk of the word is for the soul through the mind, it eventually **nourishes the spirit**, making us not soulish but spiritual, suitable for being built up as a spiritual house of God—cf. 1 Cor. 2:15.
 - 3. In order to enjoy the milk of the word, to taste God with His goodness in the word, we must receive His word by means of all **prayer** and **muse on His word**—1 Pet. 2:3; Eph. 6:17-18; Psalms 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 99, 148:
 - a. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through **careful considering**—1 Pet. 2:2-3; Psalm 119:103.
 - b. **Prayer**, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word; to muse on the word is to "chew the cud," to receive the word of God through much reconsideration—Lev. 11:3.
 - 4. By feeding on Christ as the nourishing milk in the word, we **grow** unto full salvation, unto maturity through transformation for glorification; salvation in 1 Peter 2:2 is a matter of transformation for God's building.
 - 5. We enjoy the "milk-Christ" to nourish us so that we may be **transformed** with Him as the "stone-Christ" and be built up as the "Body-Christ," as God's spiritual house into a holy priesthood—vv. 2-4; 1 Cor. 12:12-13.

To muse upon the Word is to "chew the cud," like a cow eating grass (Lev. 11:3). As we muse upon the Word of God, we should "chew the cud." If we take in the Word too quickly, we shall not have very much enjoyment. But if we "chew the cud" as we take in the Word, our enjoyment will increase.

When we muse upon the Word of God, enjoying it and even chewing it as a cow chews the cud, we shall spontaneously pray. Prayer is also included in musing upon the Word. Furthermore, we may converse with ourselves or begin to praise the Lord. We may be so inspired by the Word that we want to shout our praises to the Lord.

To muse upon the Word of God is to enjoy His Word as His breath. It is to contact God in the Word and to have fellowship with Him, to worship Him, and to pray to Him through and with the Word. By musing upon the Word of God in this way, we shall be infused by God, breathe Him into us, and receive spiritual nourishment. (*Life Study of Exodus, Message 57*)

Day 5

1 Peter 2:5 - For it is time for the judgment to begin from the house of God; and if first from us, what will be the end of those who disobey the gospel of God?

1 Peter 2:9 - Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

IV. The holy priesthood, the coordinated body of priests, is the built-up **spiritual house**; God wants a spiritual house for His dwelling and a priestly body, a **corporate priesthood**, for His service—1 Pet. 2:5; Exo. 19:5-6:

- A. We are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession” (1 Pet. 2:9)—*chosen race* denotes our descent from God; *royal priesthood*, our service to God; *holy nation*, our being a community for God; and *people acquired for a possession*, our preciousness to God.
- B. Our corporate priestly service is to tell out as the gospel the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (v. 9) so that we may “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (v. 5b); these **spiritual sacrifices** are:
 - 1. **Christ** as the reality of all the sacrifices of the Old Testament types, such as the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering—Lev. 1—5.
 - 2. The **sinners** saved by our gospel preaching, offered as members of Christ—Rom. 15:16.
 - 3. Our **body**, our **praises**, and the **things we do for God**—12:1; Heb. 13:15-16; Phil. 4:18.

Day 6

2 Corinthians 4:12 - So then death operates in us, but life in you.

2 Corinthians 10:13 - But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

- C. All our priestly service to the Lord must **originate from Him** as “the God of measure” and **not from ourselves**; all our priestly service must be according to His leading and His limitation, as we allow His death to operate in us, so that His resurrection life can be imparted through us into others—2 Cor. 10:13; John 12:24; 21:15-22; 2 Sam. 7:18, 25, 27; Luke 1:37-38; *Hymns*, #907.

Verse 13 says, “But we will not boast without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.” The apostle is bold, but he is not bold without limit. This shows that he is under the restriction of the Lord. His boasting is according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure, the ruling God, has apportioned to him. Paul’s ministry to the Gentile world, including Corinth, was according to the measure of God (Eph. 3:1-2, 8; Gal. 2:8). Hence, his boast is also within this limit, not without measure, as that of the Judaistic teachers. The word rule in verse 13 literally means a measuring rod, as a rule used by a carpenter.

We should never boast without measure. In giving a testimony of what we have learned of the Lord, we should have a limit, a measure. The word measure in verse 13 indicates being ruled by God. God has allotted us just so much for our work and experience. Furthermore, He has given us just so much to enjoy. Therefore, when we give a testimony about our work, experience, or enjoyment of the Lord, we must testify within measure, that is, within a certain limit.

In giving a testimony or a report we should never exaggerate. However, the reports in certain Christian publications are exaggerations; those reports go beyond measure, beyond limit, without restriction. Thus, in testifying of our experience, we must stay within the measure God has given us. We should not boast without measure, beyond measure, but according to the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us. There is One who is ruling and measuring. This One is the God of measure, the God who rules. Therefore, we must stay within the limits of God’s ruling, of God’s measuring. Paul’s words “reach even as far as you” indicate that his coming to the Corinthians was under God’s ruling and measuring.

Verse 14 continues, “For we do not, as not reaching to you, overstretch ourselves, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.” In contrast to the Judaistic teachers, Paul and the other apostles did not overstretch themselves. They were the first to go to Europe, and hence to the Corinthians, with the gospel. If the Judaizers had gone there first, probably the apostles would not have gone, and that would have been the sign that Europe had not been measured to them under God’s ruling. This is related to Paul’s point in arguing with the Judaizers.

In verses 15 and 16 Paul says, “Not boasting without measure in others’ labors, but having hope, your faith growing, to be magnified among you according to our rule unto abundance, to preach the gospel unto the parts beyond you, not to boast in another’s rule in things made ready.” Here we see that the apostles have hope that through the growth of the faith of the Corinthian believers, their ministry will be magnified (in the sense of praise), by being enlarged and increased abundantly, yet still according to the rule, the measure, that God has apportioned to them. Paul hoped to be magnified among the Corinthians according to the limit of God’s measuring. (*Life Study of Second Corinthians, Message 51*)