

HWMR: EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST (3) (Week 6)

The Church in the Triune God

Scripture Reading: *1 Thes. 1:1, 3-6, 10; 1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12*

- 1 Thes 1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians **in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**: Grace to you and peace.
- 1 Thes 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope **in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father**;
- 1 Thes 1:4 Knowing, brothers, **beloved of God**, your selection;
- 1 Thes 1:5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and **in the Holy Spirit** and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
- 1 Thes 1:6 And you became imitators of us and **of the Lord**, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit,
- 1 Thes 1:10 And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, **Jesus**, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.
- 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which **we have heard from Him** and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- 1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, **abide in Him**.
- 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in **love abides in God and God abides in him**.
- 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that **God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son**.
- 1 John 5:12 **He who has the Son has the life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Day 1

*1 John 4:13-15 - In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. And we have beheld and testify that the **Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world**. Whoever confesses that **Jesus is the Son of God**, **God abides in him and he in God**.*

- I. The Triune God is the structure of the New Testament—Matt. 12:28; 28:19; John 15:26; Acts 2:33; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:4-6; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-5.**
- II. We come to know the Triune God by experiencing Him and enjoying Him—1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12:**
- A. The Triune God is not merely the object of our faith; **He is dwelling in us** as our life and life supply for our experience and enjoyment—4:13-15.
 - B. We need to **know the Triune God experientially** through the inner enjoyment of the subjective God—2:27; 4:4.
 - C. If we would know the Triune God, we must **be in the line of life** and **in the process of the growth in life**; the more we grow in life, the more we will be concerned with the Divine Trinity—2:13-18.

Day 2

*1 John 3:19-21 - And in this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will persuade our heart before Him, because if our heart blames us, it is because **God is greater than our heart and knows all things**. Beloved, if our heart does not blame us, we have boldness toward God.*

III. When the Triune God becomes our experience and enjoyment, He is **not only** the One **on the throne** who is universally vast, but He is **also** the One **in our heart**—Rev. 4:2-3; 5:6; 1 John 3:19-21:

- A. **We know the Triune God** not in the vastness of the universe but **in the personal realm of our heart**—Heb. 8:10-11.
- B. The concern of the New Testament is that **we know the Triune God** who has come to dwell in our being—the One **who dwells in our spirit** and **desires to spread into all the inward parts of our heart**—Eph. 3:14-17a; 1 John 3:19-21.
- C. The New Testament way for us to know the Triune God is **personal, detailed, and experiential**—2:20, 27; Heb. 10:16.
- D. **How precious** is this experiential way of knowing the Triune God!

IV. The New Testament, like the Bible as a whole, is fully composed of and **structured with the Divine Trinity**—Matt. 28:19; Rev. 1:4-5; 22:1-2:

- A. The entire New Testament is related to the Triune God; the **Triune God is the element** for the construction of the New Testament—Eph. 3:16; 4:4-6.
- B. The Bible presents us **a picture** of the move of the Divine Trinity **for the accomplishment of His economy**—Luke 15:3-32; Eph. 2:18.
- C. The Bible was written according to the governing principle of the **Triune God wrought into His chosen and redeemed people** as their enjoyment, their drink, and their fountain of life and light—Psa. 36:8-9.
- D. The revelation concerning the Triune God in the Word of God is for **the dispensing** of God in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people for their **experience and enjoyment** so that they might become **His corporate expression** for eternity—Eph. 1:3-23; 4:16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.

The Christ in whom many of today's Christians believe is a Christ far away in the third heaven. But our Christ is not only the resurrected and ascended Christ in heaven; He is also the One who has descended and **entered into our spirit**. Hallelujah, **Christ is now in our spirit!**

Chapter twenty of John describes how the Lord came to His disciples on the day of His resurrection. John 20:19 says, "*When therefore it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be to you.*" The Lord Jesus appeared in a splendid, excellent way, in a way beyond human ability to understand. The Jews were opposing the disciples and trying their best to destroy them. Therefore, the disciples were afraid and met behind closed doors. Perhaps they were groaning and wondering what to do. Suddenly the Lord Jesus appeared and said, "Peace be to you." This One who appeared to them was not Jesus in the flesh—**He was Christ the Lord**.

According to verse 21, the Lord said to them, “*Peace be to you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*” Then, as we see in verse 22, the Lord breathed into the disciples the **holy pneuma, the Holy Spirit**: “*And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.*” The Lord Jesus in His resurrection is now the pneuma, the Spirit. He appeared to the disciples in the form of pneuma, and He told them to receive the holy pneuma, the holy breath. In the Greek language the word pneuma means both Spirit and breath. Hallelujah, **Christ in resurrection is the breath, the pneuma, the Spirit!** After the disciples received Him as the holy pneuma, He began to live in them.

We also have received the Lord Jesus Christ as the holy breath, the holy pneuma, the life-giving Spirit, and **now He is actually in us**. I believe that if we have a proper realization of Christ in us, we shall be very excited, even beside ourselves with joy. The fact that we may not be at all excited about this may indicate that we do not realize that Christ is in us.

Where is Christ today? The answer is that **Christ is on the throne in heaven and also living in us**. Oh, we should be able to declare with a strong release of the spirit that Christ is in us. Our Christ today is the One who lives in us! In a very real sense, our Christ is different from the Christ in whom many Christians believe, for they have a Christ merely in heaven, but we have both the Christ in heaven and the Christ who dwells in our spirit. (*Life-Study of First Thessalonians, chapter 9*)

Day 3

- 1 Thes. 1:1** - Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians **in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**: Grace to you and peace.
- 1 Cor. 1:2** - To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified **in Christ Jesus**, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours.

Day 4

- John 1:12-13** - But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to **become children of God**, to those who believe into His name, who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God**.
- John 15:1** - I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.

V. The Epistle of 1 Thessalonians is addressed to “the church of the Thessalonians **in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**”—1:1:

- A. On the one hand, the church in Thessalonica was **of the Thessalonians**; on the other hand, this church was **in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**:
1. Such a church is **born of** God the Father with His life and nature and is **organically united with** the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He is and has done— John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17.
 2. We need to see that the church is composed of human beings who are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, those **who have the life of God** and **who are in the organic union with Christ**—John 3:15; 15:1, 5.

Paul does not merely say that the church is in God; he says that the **church is in God the Father**. Unless God is our Father, we cannot be in Him. We were not created in God; however, **we were regenerated, born again, in Him**. We were created outside of God. This means that in creation we did not have any organic union with God or any life relationship with Him. Instead, there was only the relationship between the creature and the Creator. As a result of creation, we are God's creatures, and He is our Creator. Hence, there is a relationship of creation, but no relationship in life. God's life was not created into our natural being. As God's creatures, we did not have the life of God. We had only our created life, our natural human life.

When we were **regenerated, born of God, our life relationship with God began**. This rebirth brought us into the **organic union with the Triune God**. At the time of our regeneration, our rebirth, we obtained God's life. Now God is not merely our Creator, our God; He is our Father, the One who has begotten us. God is no longer merely our Creator—He is also our Begetter, for He has begotten us with His life. Therefore, He is God our Father.

It is very significant that in [1 Thessalonians] 1:1 Paul inserts the title Father after God and the title Lord before Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient to speak either of God or of Jesus Christ. Rather, we need to say that **God is our Father and that Jesus Christ is our Lord**. If Jesus Christ is not our Lord, then we have nothing to do with Him in a practical way. But when Jesus Christ becomes our Lord, this means that we are in Him, **organically united to Him**.

When we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we should not just say "Jesus"; we should say "Lord Jesus." To call on Him only by saying "Jesus" is to call somewhat ignorantly. The Lord, however, is merciful, and He sympathizes with us. He still responds when we call "Jesus" instead of "Lord Jesus," for He realizes that actually **we are calling on Him as Lord**. Nevertheless, we need the proper knowledge of calling on the Lord. Instead of saying, "Jesus, I love You," it is better to say, "Lord Jesus, I love You." How sweet it is to call on the Lord in this way!

Some Christians like to say, "Praise God!" But in the New Testament the emphasis is on praising God the Father. We need to realize that **for us today God is our Father and Jesus is our Lord**. According to 1 Corinthians 12:3 when we say, "Lord Jesus," we are in the Spirit. This indicates that the Spirit honors the proper calling on the Lord Jesus. Many of us can testify that when we call "Lord Jesus," we sense the anointing of the Spirit within. The same is true of saying, "Abba, Father." If we merely call on God, Elohim, we do not have much anointing. But when we cry, "Abba, Father," we experience the anointing. This is not a matter of terminology; it is a **reality in our experience**. (*Life-Study of First Thessalonians, chapter 1*)

Day 5

John 14:10-11 - o you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves.

- B. When Paul speaks of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually means that the **church is in the Triune God**—1 Thes. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:4-6:
1. The expressions *God the Father* and *the Lord Jesus Christ* both imply the **Spirit**; therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood, and we may speak of the church being in the Triune God.

2. Because the three of the Divine Trinity are inseparable, **whenever we have the first**, the Father, **we also have the second**, the Son, and the **third**, the Spirit—Matt. 12:28; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:4-6.
3. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, not three; They are **distinct but not separate**—2 Cor. 13:14:
 - a. We cannot separate the Son from the Father, or the Father and the Son from the Spirit, because all three **coexist** and **coinhere**—John 14:10-11.
 - b. In Their eternal coexistence the three of the Godhead are distinct, but Their eternal coinherence makes Them **one**.

Day 6

Eph. 1:3-5 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who...**chose** us in Him before the foundation of the world..., **predestinating** us unto sonship through Jesus Christ...

Eph. 1:7 - In whom we have **redemption** through His blood...

Eph. 1:13 - In whom you also...were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of the promise

4. In the divine economy the three of the Divine Trinity work and are manifested respectively in **three consecutive stages**—Eph. 1:3-14:
 - a. The **Father** is the One who **plans**, **originates**, and **initiates**—vv. 3-6.
 - b. The **Son** **accomplishes everything** that the Father has planned, originated, and initiated—vv. 7-12.
 - c. The **Spirit** **executes and applies** what the Father has planned and what the Son has accomplished—vv. 13-14.
 - d. **Selection** is of the Father, **deliverance** is of the Son, and **imparting**, or **propagating**, is of the Spirit—1 Thes. 1:3-6, 10.
5. When the Son comes, He comes **with** the Father and by the Spirit; the Son is **realized** as the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the Son with the Father—John 14:26; 15:26.
- C. For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is **in the processed Triune God**—Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6:
 1. According to the Bible, there is no such thing as the church being merely in God; rather, the **church is in the processed Triune God**—2 Cor. 13:14.
 2. In **Genesis 1** God was the **unprocessed God**, but in the **New Testament** He has become the **processed Triune God**—John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:19.
 3. *Processed* refers to the crucial steps through which the Triune God has passed in the divine economy: **incarnation**, **human living**, **crucifixion**, and **resurrection**:
 - a. In **crucifixion** the Lord accomplished **redemption**, the termination of the old creation, and the destruction of Satan and death—Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14.
 - b. In **resurrection** He **germinated** the new creation—2 Cor. 5:17.
 - c. Now He is the **life-giving Spirit** as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17a.
 4. **The church in the processed Triune God** is the church in the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son—John 14:20:
 - a. The processed Triune God **reaches us**, **contacts us**, and is **applied to us** in our experience as the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.

- b. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is **now the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us**—John 14:10-11, 16-17, 20.
- c. When we are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Spirit; thus, **we are the church in the processed Triune God.**
- D. If we see the **vision** of the church in the Triune God, this vision will **control** our thinking, our activities, and our entire life—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19.

The church is in the Lord Jesus Christ. This implies that with respect to the church **everything natural, everything negative, everything of the old creation, has been terminated.** This means that in the church there are no Chinese or Americans, no Japanese or Koreans, no French or Germans. **In the church there is room only for Jesus Christ the Lord.** This is the significance of the church being in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We in the Lord's recovery claim to be practicing the church life. Whenever we make such a claim, however, we need to check to see whether we are still holding to our culture or disposition. Regarding this matter, sometimes we expect others to sympathize with us. On occasion sisters have said to me, "Brother Lee, don't forget that we are sisters. According to the Bible, we sisters are weaker vessels." **But in the Lord Jesus Christ there are no weak vessels.** Therefore, we should not expect anyone to sympathize with our natural disposition. As long as you want others to sympathize with you, that is an indication that in your experience you are not buried with Christ. For the church to be in the Lord Jesus Christ in a practical way, we all need to be **terminated and buried.** We need to die and then be placed in the tomb. This is to be in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important for us all to see that the **church is in the Triune God.** Because I have been naturalized to be an American citizen, in a good sense I have been somewhat Americanized. Actually, however, I do not regard myself as an American or a Chinese, but as someone in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever our status is in regard to earthly citizenship, we all need to realize that our real position is that we are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Being in the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ implies that we have had a **new birth, a new beginning.** We have a new source—God the Father. All the old things, the negative things—sin, the flesh, the self, the old man, the natural life, Satan, death—have been terminated. Our being in the Lord Jesus Christ involves a termination of all these things. This means that in the Lord Jesus Christ there is no sin, death, or Satan. In Him there is no world, flesh, self, or old creation. In **God the Father** we have been **born again, regenerated.** In Him we have a new source and a new beginning. In the **Lord Jesus Christ** we have the **termination of everything of the old creation.** This is the implication of being in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in the Triune God is where the church is today. (Life-Study of First Thessalonians, chapter 8)