

The Inward Recovery by Life for the Carrying Out of God's Economy

The preposition **by** is very important in this message title because we may think that we are speaking of a recovery *in* life or *for* life. However, this inward recovery is **by** life, showing that life is not only the essence and content of the Lord's recovery but **the way, the key**, to carry out the Lord's recovery. The Lord's recovery must be **by** life and nothing else.

Life is the very Triune God Himself—the Father in the Son as the Spirit **flowing out**, proceeding out, from the throne as a river of life in which the tree of life grows, making the New Jerusalem a city of life (Rev. 22:1-2). Life is just the **eternal flowing out** of the Triune God. This flow has a goal, and the direction and **destination** of this flow is **man**... By the flowing of God into man, we become possessors of the divine life with its divine nature. We now have the capacity to fulfill God's eternal intention for us to be one with Him and to share the same life and same living of the Triune God. By being one with Him, we are transformed, changed, renewed, sanctified, and shepherded **by** this life, and we are built up **in** this life... The inward recovery of the Lord is **by His life**. Life is not piety or religiosity. Life is not spiritual knowledge or spiritual gifts. Life is not power, although there is a place for power. Life is not good or even saintly behavior. Although we sometimes confuse life with activities, life is not activities. Life is the Father in the Son as the Spirit flowing into us so that by this life God can accomplish and carry out His recovery in **an inward way**.

After chapter 1 of Ezekiel, there is a long section from chapter 2 through chapter 32 concerning God's judgment on Israel, on Jerusalem, and on the heathen nations. His judgment is no longer by a flood but as a consuming fire. All of God's righteous judgment is for the sake of restoration. He judges to restore and to recover. His desire is for recovery, and judgment is necessary in this process. After these thirty-one chapters related to judgment, we come to the vision regarding the Lord's recovery by life in chapters 33 through 39. The issue of this recovery is God's divine and holy building in chapters 40 through 48. Although the portion from Ezekiel 36:21-38 applies **mainly to Israel, it also applies to us**. Even the prediction of the restoration of Israel in the millennium that begins with the Lord's return to this earth is applicable to us. All these visions in Ezekiel should be applied to us as New Testament believers **in our experience of the divine life** in the New Testament age. Ezekiel is very relevant to us and to our situation today. This recovery eventually is for the carrying out of God's economy.

[T]he judgment on Edom is repeated indicates that in the process of God's recovery by life, there is still the need of God's judgment, particularly on Edom, who typifies the old man...Because the old man is very difficult to deal with, the judgment on the old man **must be repeated** again and again,... The repeated dealing with Edom indicates that our old man is still present. Although the old man has been crucified in reality, it is still present in our experience. It still gives us trouble. Consequently, the old man needs to be judged by the cross repeatedly. We will ultimately reflect all of God's rich attributes in our human virtues to be His brilliant and radiant expression in this universe, but until the day of the redemption of our body, the old man is still present and **in need of judgment**. Consequently, in our Christian life and church life today, there is an aspect of **continual judgment** on this old man. This involves putting off the old man and putting on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind.

For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His organic salvation to them to give them **a new heart and a new spirit** so that they may be deified to become a new creation, the New Jerusalem. For the inward recovery of His people, God applies His organic salvation... While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened. This is the condition of a fallen person, and when we are

backslidden from the Lord, we are in a fallen situation of not only being outwardly unclean, filthy, and unrighteous but also of having inwardly a stony and hard heart. Such a heart **loses** its feeling and becomes cold, stubborn, and senseless. Furthermore, when we are in a fallen condition, our spirit is deadened; it is without function because of its lifelessness. With such an inward condition, there is a need for **recovery**. Although outward cleansing prepares the way for life to come in, life is still needed for the work of recovery.

When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, **making our stony heart a heart of flesh**, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him. This is what happened to us. When John Newton, a wicked person living a very low life in an abominable trade, was on a slave ship in the middle of a storm, he cursed God. He had such a hard heart. Nevertheless, the Lord saved and revived him, renewing his heart, giving him a heart of flesh, a heart that was soft and loving toward Him. Such a one could then write the hymn "Amazing Grace." With God's inward recovery by life, there is more than something outward. His recovery begins by His giving us a soft heart. What a salvation that we are given a soft heart, a heart that has the ability to love the Lord, to love God. Now we can love God. Brothers and sisters, the days of saying that we do not love the Lord or cannot love the Lord are over. In the new covenant God has come into us and given us a new heart. We have had a "heart transplant." Now, with a soft and pliable heart, a heart that has the ability to love God, we can love the Lord our God with all our heart. We can do this because of His organic salvation.

Furthermore, **He enlivens and renews our spirit** with His divine life. We have a heart to love Him and adore Him, but even more, we have a renewed spirit to receive Him, to receive His divine life. We should not stop with a heart that merely appreciates God, because we have a spirit that can receive, partake of, and contain the very God as our life. Our heart represents us with regard to our inclination, affection, delight, and desire (cf. Matt. 15:8). Our heart is the organ from which our inclinations, affections, delights, and desires come forth. Our heart is our representative in action, our acting agent... Our heart is a very crucial agent because everything that is in our heart will eventually come out.

The Lord gives us a new spirit to receive and contact Him (John 4:24). The Lord not only gives us a new heart to love Him but also a new spirit to receive and contact Him. It is not sufficient to merely say, "Lord Jesus, I love You." No matter how much we love the Lord with our heart, without our spirit we still have not received, contacted, and gained Him. **It is one thing to love someone; it is another thing to gain that one.** The Lord not only loves us with His love and enjoys our love for Him; He also desires to give Himself to us. Love is the procedure, love opens the way, and love prepares the two parties so that the marvelous dispensing can take place. The greatest divine dispensing take place in the realm of love...

Result

As a result of the inward recovery by life, the desolate and waste places will become like the **garden of Eden** (Ezek. 36:34-36). In Hebrew Eden means "*pleasure*".... The result of the inward recovery by life is that we are in an environment that is full of pleasure, where Christ is our rich supply of life. Surely this is what the church life should be. The church should not be a desolate place but **a garden of Eden**. In His recovery by life, the Lord desires to **increase us "with men like a flock"**. The result and manifestation of recovery by life is His increasing us "*with men like a flock*."...The Lord has promised to increase us, filling the waste cities "with flocks of men" (v. 38), but we still need to inquire of Him, asking Him to do what He desires to do (Luke 10:2). One of the signs of the Lord's blessing and the result of His recovery by life is that **His people will grow and increase**, but we still need to ask Him to do what He desires to do...We need to pray that the Lord will give us the increase and that He will bring in flocks of men. Praise the Lord for His recovery by life! (*Excerpt from the Ministry of the Word: Crystallization-Study of Ezekiel (1), 311-335*)