

The Exercise of the Heart and Spirit in God's Economy

Message 1

The Inward and Hidden Parts of Man

Scripture Reading: Psa. 51:6; Eph. 1:17-18, 22; 3:14-19

Monday

Eph. 3:8-11 – Footnotes 8³, 9², 10¹, 10³

There is probably no book in the Bible that unveils the matter of God's purpose more than the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians has this phrase in chapter 3: "the eternal purpose" or "the purpose of the ages". This means that this purpose is in every age. No matter what age you are in, this purpose is "the purpose" and in this book we know that the Apostle Paul unveils the matter of the church. Especially in chapter 3 it mentions the church just before it mentions the phrase "the eternal purpose". What we read was the prayer in chapter 1. There is another prayer in chapter 3, but before this prayer verses 10 and 11 say, "In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church, According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord." Do you realize that the church is something according to God's eternal purpose? If you ask people today on the street, "What is the church?" they will generally point to some building somewhere. They may not point to this building because it does not look like a traditional church building. But the church is something according to the purpose of the ages. It is not a small thing that we just gather here. Actually, with us it becomes something that we take for granted: "It's meeting time", but do you realize that what we are doing here is connected to the purpose of the ages. It's something eternal.

Hymn 1134

Tuesday

Eph. 1:17-18 – Footnotes 17³, 17⁴, 18¹, 18²

In the book of Ephesians Paul unveils the matter of the church in quite a number of ways; specifically at two points as he is writing this book, he is led to pray. The first prayer is a prayer for revelation. In Ephesians 1:17 he prays that your eyes would be enlightened, that they would be opened: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him.” It is very interesting that it doesn’t say “in the full knowledge of His purpose”; it says “in the full knowledge of Him.” It says this because actually the purpose of the ages is all wrapped up in His person, not a thing but a person. Ephesians 1:18 says, “The eyes of your heart having been enlightened that you may know...” and then many things. In chapter 2 Paul unveils many aspects of the church: unveiling the church as the kingdom, unveiling the church as the body, unveiling the church as the one new man, unveiling the church as the family of God, and even as the house, the household; and then connecting this with the purpose of the ages. He says that this was not known for a long time but God revealed this to him and then he wrote it down as a letter.

Remember that these are letters that the apostle wrote to a group of believers that he is caring for. As he is writing he is not writing to the church at large. He is not writing with the thought that in the year 2019 this will be part of the scriptures, part of the Bible. To Paul the Bible was the Old Testament. At the time he is just writing a letter. Are our emails that we write worthy of being part of the Bible? When Paul was writing he had some saints in mind whom he knew. There was some history as recorded in Acts 18-20. We know that Paul’s heart was very much for the group of believers in Ephesus. There in chapter 20 of Acts is a heartfelt expression of the apostle, where he tells them with a bit of a background that he will probably never see them again. Can you imagine what it was like there? Paul had a feeling that something was coming. Imagine Brother Terry standing up and sharing “Brothers, I probably will never see you again after today.” There would be a lot of emotion, a lot of feeling, and it even says that they wept. Paul gave this group of believers a warning that “after my departure some will come, fierce wolves in sheep’s clothing.”

Wednesday

Eph. 3:14-17a – Footnotes 17³, 17⁴, 18¹, 18²

He was writing this letter to this group of believers, and as he is writing, he just feels to pray for them. There is a lot of feeling as he is praying for them. In his praying for their experience, he says, “I bow my knees unto the Father, Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, That Christ may make His home in your hearts....” (Eph. 3:14-17a). There is a prayer for the saints and it builds unto all the fullness. In both prayers both the heart and the spirit are mentioned.

The heart and the spirit is also the title of our fellowship in this message—*The Exercise of the Heart and Spirit in God’s Economy*. The burden that the Lord has put on my heart for this weekend seems very basic, but we can never have too much reinforcement of our foundation. For the things of God’s economy, the things of the spiritual life, we need a foundation, and that foundation can never be reinforced too much. What is this foundation? To a great extent that foundation is the proper exercise of our heart and our spirit.

Every spiritual experience begins with love in the heart. Our heart is really the gateway of our inner being. I have some concern that some of the time we try to exercise our spirit because we know that to contact God we must use our spirit, but we neglect our heart. The inward and hidden parts of man are referred to in Psalm 51:6: “Behold, You delight in truth in the inward parts; And in the hidden part You would make known wisdom to me.” All the verses we read are like a jigsaw puzzle. When you put the verses on the outline together, you realize what are our inward and hidden parts. Basically, you can say that our inward parts are all the parts of our soul and our heart, and the hidden part is our spirit. God made us in this way with inward parts so that we can appropriate God.

Thursday

Psa. 139:14

1 Cor. 2:16 – Footnote 16¹

How we are made is quite amazing as Psalm 139, verse 14 says, “I am awesomely and wonderfully made.” You can take this chapter and relate it to our physical body, as a baby formed in the womb. God knew us already during the development in our mother’s womb. Our physical body is awesome and wonderful, but our psychological being is even more so. God made us with inward and hidden parts. Why do we have a mind? We talk of the three parts of man—body, soul and spirit, and the three parts of the soul—mind, will and emotion. We have a mind. Our mind is amazing; you can be sitting here but with your mind you can be on the other side of the world. Maybe you were there before I said this. You could be sitting here and thinking about Bolivia or India. Have you done this? Or you could be thinking of the food you have eaten. What a mind we have! We can travel anywhere in our mind. What is in our mind? Sometimes we do not want people to know what is in our mind.

There is a verse in the Bible that says, “But we have the mind of Christ.” It’s possible in our mind to know what Christ is thinking. Isn’t that amazing? He made us in such a wonderful way so we can also share His emotion when He feels a certain way about someone, something, or a certain situation. Actually, that feeling of God can register in our emotion. It is amazing that He made us in such a way that we can be so one with Him. That is actually what it means in Genesis that we are made in the image of God. God even has a sense of humour. We know He does because we are made with a sense of humour and we are a reflection of Him. Of course, we have to say that our sense of humour does not always reflect His sense of humour, atleast not yet. We are on the way.

Friday

Matt. 13:3-8

God made us in a wonderful way, but just as our cars and machinery sometimes need a tune-up or an alignment, so do we. When we drive along sometimes there is a little shake in the car because it needs an alignment. Do you ever feel that way spiritually? Sometimes you need an alignment. You are going on, you are moving on, advancing, but something is not quite right. You can't say that you are not growing or going on, but something is misfiring, something is not quite right, a little off. Our burden this weekend is that we could all get a spiritual alignment so that in our inward and hidden parts we could know truth. We need wisdom from God so that we can have a clear vision of God's economy and we could have a richer experience of God's purpose. This really is our burden. So here again in the outline taken from the book *The Economy of God* are the verses for our mind, emotion and will. All these points and verses are in chapters 1-10 of that book.

When the Lord came in His ministry on the earth, He gave a parable of a farmer. The sower went out to sow. The sower is the farmer. Later in the New Testament He says the church is God's farm, God's building. What's the beginning of a farm? It's sowing. In Matthew 13 the Lord likens Himself to a sower. The sower sows the seed and the seed is the word of God; the soil, the human psychological heart. There are different conditions of the soil that produce different measures. The seed sown is always the same. How much is produced, what comes out depends on the soil, on our heart.

Saturday

Matt. 13:19-23

We have the four conditions of the soil that we are familiar with:

1. Wayside—by the side of the field, where it has been trodden on very much so that it becomes hardened and the seed does not penetrate. The Lord said the birds come and take the seed.

2. Rocky, stony—the seed does penetrate and sprouts right away but it doesn't have much depth of earth; the earth is shallow and superficial. It sprouts and as soon as the sun comes out—trials, persecutions, some other trials because of the word—it withers. Does this happen to you? You came to the meeting and all was well, but on the way home from the meeting someone cuts you off while driving and you react offensively at the other driver. Sometimes right after receiving the word in a meeting or our Bible reading something happens that causes the seed to just be taken away. There was no penetration of the word.

3. Thorns—actually in this case the seed is growing for some time but the Lord says that something grows alongside the good seed. In the second case the growing is short lived, but others grow for some time, then even after years something happens and the seed is choked. Haven't you wondered sometimes how could such a brother turn away and be discouraged after so long? How could such a sister—she was so good in going on in the Lord...? How could that happen? The Lord explained how it can happen. We shouldn't be surprised. How could it happen? Something wrong with the heart.

4. Those with a good and noble heart receive the seed. The Lord showed us here that the kingdom begins with our heart, the word in our heart. Our going on in the church life depends so much on our heart. What is the condition of *our* heart?

Sometimes I have witnessed some saints, some believers trying to go on. They read the word, serve the Lord, prophesy, speak for the Lord, try to exercise their spirit, but maybe become a little loose in the exercise of the heart; sometimes unconsciously allowing other things to come in. The Lord gives us a few categories of the interpretation of the thorns. One is the deceitfulness of riches, a second is the anxiety of the age, another is pleasures of life. The catch-all is the lust for other things—this is the etc.