

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

## **Message 1**

### **The Inward and Hidden Parts of Man**

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.

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 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.” 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. He is praying for 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....” 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.

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.

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. So 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.

Disclaimer: I am not about to talk about anyone in this room; just something I have witnessed over the years, especially with young moms. This is a word to the young moms, sisters whom we consider to be our daughters in the Lord. They may be going on very well; then the Lord leads them

to get married. At the wedding they consecrate their lives and marriage to the church and they really mean it in their hearts. But sometimes after some time, especially after the first child, it is very possible for anxieties and lusts for other things to come, all wrapped up with that little darling baby. They don't intend to slow down spiritually or let the fire be quenched, but little by little, somehow it happens. I'm not picking on the moms; actually I am very concerned for the moms. There is a way for the young moms to go on, even to flourish in this period of life.

Tomorrow evening we will meet with the young adults, which I hope will still include couples, young families. We will talk tomorrow night about the transitions in life, the different stages in life, and how to navigate through them as believers. Sometimes the young moms feel like they entered into a prison because their lives change so much with the responsibility of having a child. They are there all day long with one or two or three little human beings, that take up all their time and consume all their energy. That's not the life they were used to, that's not even the church life that they were used to, but now things are different. How do you survive through that? How do you even thrive through that stage? You can! That is what we want to talk about tomorrow, so we will leave it for tomorrow.

The point is this, that it is a matter of the heart. If you know, just as an example, such a sister in that kind of situation, Don't tell her, "Sister, just exercise your spirit!" No, no, no, that is not what you are supposed to say; especially husbands, don't say stuff like that. Sister, before trying to exercise your spirit, you probably should tell the Lord, "Lord, I am really disappointed with You." Do you know that is a way to open your heart to the Lord? Say, "Lord, this is not what I signed up for, that day when I consecrated myself; this is not what I meant!" Have you ever said to the Lord, "Lord, I am kind of unhappy with You right now, but Lord, I realize these children are from You. So I receive this under Your sovereignty. But Lord, I am not happy. Lord, can You make me happy? Lord, can you fill up the valley?"

Do you know what I am talking about when I encourage you to ask the Lord to fill up the valley? This is from Luke chapter 3 where it mentions John the Baptist. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that John the Baptist would come to do what? To prepare the way of the Lord. What does it mean to prepare the way of the Lord? In Luke 3 it says that he will fill up the valleys, he will bring down the mountains and the hills. He will make the crooked places straight and the rough places smooth, to prepare the way of the Lord. In Isaiah, it speaks of a highway for our God. What is that referring to? It is referring to man's heart.

Every person, all of us have crooked hearts. We might think that some brothers have hearts that are straight, but other brothers have hearts that are crooked. No! All of us have the valleys and hills; all of us have crooked places and rough places. All of us need to turn our hearts, and that is the beginning of every spiritual experience. We need to turn our heart to the Lord. Even, I would say before exercising our spirit, we need to exercise our heart. To turn our heart and to be honest with the Lord, to be open to the Lord. He is the one who can fill up the valley. He is the one who can bring down the high things.

Sometimes, we have mountains, it is not that we are low. Sometimes, we are too proud about something. There is something in my heart that is preventing God's dispensing. What we are talking about really is God's economy. God's economy is what? Yes, it is to produce the church. Yes, but what does it say in chapter 1 of Ephesians? It talks about His great power which is to us, the believers. And then it says, what? He gave Him to be Head over all things to the church! Which

implies what? A kind of transmission, a kind of dispensing. So, what is God's economy? What is His purpose? Basically this—He wants to dispense Himself into us all day long. But the hindrance to His dispensing is not our environment. Sometimes, we blame our environment. “Oh, I can't go on because of this, because of that”. Actually, there can only be one impediment to God dispensing Himself into us and that is our heart, the opening or closing of our heart. We need our heart opened and renewed day by day.

Now I want to switch and go on to the matter of the exercise of the spirit. What is a good way to exercise our spirit? Audience: “Call on the Lord.” What else? Audience: “Sing.” About six years ago I was in Australia and I did this little survey asking what I just did now, except I did it in writing. I asked, “What are the top ways? Give me five ways of exercising the spirit.” Universally, everywhere that I have done this, whether it is younger saints or older saints, everyone says that calling on the Lord is number one. Usually, people would say that number two is to pray, and then number three is reading or pray-reading the Bible. Then number four is singing. Then number five can be an assortment of other things.

My point is this, I'm pointing this out because a sister in the audience said, “Confessing.” It is very rare that someone would say, “Confessing your sins.” But actually, in a good sense, that should be the first matter. If I would ask you of the three parts of the spirit: conscience, fellowship, and intuition, what is the main part? Or what is the leading part? I don't know about you but before I really studied this matter, I confess to you, I would not have said conscience, I probably would have said, fellowship. But I could understand your argument for intuition. Do you understand what I mean? I can understand someone thinking this because the intuition is God's will, God's leading, God's direct speaking. The intuition knows what the soul cannot know to perceive, sigh deeply, and groan. Actually, the intuition is the direct sense from God in our spirit; God's direct speaking. When we say, we have God's presence, that is really a kind of sense of the intuition. So, I could understand that, but I would have probably said fellowship.

I think many of you have the Recovery Version of the New Testament with you. I want to point something out to you. If you could turn to Ephesians 3:17, it says, “That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith.” The first sentence for the word *hearts* reads, “Our heart is composed of all the parts of our soul: mind, emotion, and will, plus our conscience, the main part of our spirit.” One day I saw this note and it made me stop and think: “What? Why would Brother Lee write this? That the conscience is the main part of our spirit? This is contradictory to my thought.”

First Timothy 1:1 reads, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, according to the command of the God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope”. The very first note in the New Testament Recovery Version, is a very long note. This note is really a kind of study note that highlights seven words or phrases that are used in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. The seventh word is *conscience*. Concerning that it says, “The conscience, the leading part of our spirit, which justifies or condemns our relationships with God and man.” So this note says that the conscience is the leading part of our spirit. When I read that, I had to stop and think, “What is this? What does this mean? Is it true? Is it right?”

In John 16:8 the Lord Jesus spoke of the coming of the Spirit of reality, what is the first thing that He does? He said, “He will convict the world concerning sin”. The first function of the Spirit of reality—please note it's the Spirit of reality—if you want to be led into reality, if you want the Spirit to have this function to you, to guide you into the reality of everything of God and His

economy, then the first thing is to be open to the convicting of the Spirit. Convicting about what? Sin. Which is what? A function of the conscience.

When the Lord comes to a person, an unbeliever, the first time, He comes to him very often with love to touch the heart. But even with His love, He convicts them concerning sin. That is how many of us got saved; it was love and light. The New Testament says that God is Spirit, God is love, and God is light. Was that not your experience? He came as the Spirit but what was the registration? Love and light and we confessed our sins. When we confessed we got filled with that love. In principle, that experience is daily. We need to be sensitive to the Lord's moving in our conscience.

We may try to experience or exercise our spirit in the way of fellowship. We come to the Lord in the morning: "Lord, I want to contact You!" Maybe we come to pray: "What is Your leading about something?" But I tell you that if we are not thorough with the dealing of our conscience, it is no wonder that there is not a strong flow in fellowship, no wonder it takes so long to know the Lord's speaking in our intuition.

I have found in my experience, but also in observation, that maybe the area that we are most loose, or sin the most without realizing, is with our speaking. We sometimes speak things that are inaccurate; it is a lie. We say it was an exaggeration; well an exaggeration is a lie. In the New Testament, in 1 Timothy, it talks about gossip. Do you know that gossip can deaden your spirit? We just talk about someone that is not necessary. We talk about a sister or a brother, about their family or their children or something—it is not necessary. Do you know that could be on our conscience, even right now? We sing the song "Lord, I treasure the sweet flow of life" but actually, you realize well, I do treasure it but it's not as sweet as it was yesterday or last year. Do you ever experience this? It could be, dear saints, because we let some things slide. We didn't realize the Lord was trying to be fine with us, "What about that speaking?"

In 1 Timothy 3:8 Paul also says that the serving ones in the church, the deacons, should not be double-tongued. Do you know what it is to be double-tongued? What animal is double-tongued? A snake! Can you imagine? It says that the serving ones in the church could have a double-tongue. What does that mean? That means that we in the church life could express Satan. How? By speaking one thing here and another thing there. I might say, "Oh Brother Terry, that's a very nice tie" and then I come over here and I say, "I don't like his tie." I say one thing to their face and one thing to their back. Have we never done this? And if we did, did we confess, or does that sin continue with us even to the church meeting, even to our reading the word? Actually, without realizing, we could have accumulated a little mountain of sin. No wonder, things bother us so easily. Things that we know that when we have the flow in our hearts, they don't bother us as much.

I would like to encourage us all; if we are going to exercise our spirit, maybe the first exercise needs to be the exercise of our conscience. I know this sounds very basic, but actually, if we overlook this, we face a big danger. Eventually, we face the danger of really being hypocritical because when the Spirit of reality comes, He will convict. That is His first function. If we don't open to His convicting that means we are not open to reality. That means we could have a church life that is not a church life of reality, a Christian life that could be falsehood. If we want to recover that fellowship, that joy, we need to deal firstly with our conscience.

To me, this diagram is very meaningful. I know that you know that if I begin to draw an arc on the whiteboard, you know what I am going to do next, right? How many circles? Three. Okay, you are all experts on this. Yes, so this is what? Body. This is what? Soul. This is what? Spirit. And this

has how many parts? Everything is three. This is the mind, emotion, and will. And this is the conscience, the fellowship, and the intuition. The heart, according to the final point on the outline is the mind, will, emotion, and conscience. On the outline we have all the verses there to prove this. We don't have the time right now to read the verses. Please notice that the heart is the mind, emotion, will, and the conscience. So, our title here is *The Exercise of the Heart and the Spirit*. Do you see? Our conscience is the only part that is part of both our heart and our spirit. The role of the conscience might be more vital than we give credit to, and it is very possible that there is a key here to our joy in the Lord.

I am taking hospitality here with brother R and sister L. Before the meeting sister L gave me the key. I have a key now! My things are in there, in the back; I have everything that I need, but if I didn't have the key, I can't get in; I can't access what I need. But when you have a key, it's very simple. Actually, I found out from sister L that it's not that simple; there is a little trick: push the door to turn the key. She told me the secret! I shouldn't tell you all the secret. Sorry! She told me the secret. They don't have the key so it doesn't matter if they know the secret. Sometimes, you have the key but you still don't know the secret. I would say that our conscience is a big part of knowing the secret. The conscience is not the goal, the conscience is a means. But without the key, you can't get in. And sometimes, we may have wondered, why can't I get in? You may even have the feeling, "I know all of this", but why don't you get in?

Let's stop here and continue tomorrow. How about we close by singing #744?