

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

Message 1 (Part 2)

The Inward and Hidden Parts of Man

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

Monday

Luke 3:4-6 – Footnote 5¹

Mark 1:3 – Footnote 3³

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?"

Tuesday

Eph. 1:22-23 – Footnote 22³

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.

Wednesday

Eph. 3:17 – Footnote 17¹

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 of the footnote 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.”

Thursday

1 Timothy 1:1 – Footnote 1¹ paragraph (7)

John 16:8 – Footnotes 8¹, 8²

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.

Friday

1 Tim. 3:8 – Footnote 8²

James 3:2

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. .

Saturday

Psa. 51:10 – Footnote 10²

Psa. 34:18

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?

Hymn 744