

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

## **Message 2**

### **Dealing with the Heart and Spirit**

#### **Monday**

1 John 1:7 – Footnote 7<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes we use the phrase *the spirit of a hymn*. The hymn we just sang (Hymn 378) does not have an author listed, whereas some of the hymns in our hymnal do. We don't know who wrote it. The sister or brother who wrote this hymn had some kind of experience. Hymns really are part of our Christian heritage. We can relate to some hymns when we read the words, even if they were written 200 or 300 years ago. Within us is a "yes" that if we had the skill to write such hymns, we could have written those same words from our experience. We may not have the gift of poetry like some of the other brothers and sisters, but within us is a hymn which is out of a real experience the Lord has given us. Out of our experience we can sometimes write a hymn. Brother R and I wrote a hymn in 1978 after we experienced the Lord together in a specific way when we were shepherding some saints. On our way home, we wrote the hymn that came out of our experience. That hymn has a feeling of joy, but this hymn is a feeling of longing. The writer of this hymn was calling to the Lord "Lord, I have fellowship with You. I love fellowship with You, but I want to go higher. I can't do it. You have to lead me." It's a cry, "Please Lord, lead me higher up the mountain. Give me fellowship, if you don't give me the fellowship, I can't get it." Then, "In Thy light I see the fountain." Here it is not the fountain of the water of life; it is the fountain of blood: "And the blood it cleanses me."

The saint who wrote the song had the experience that when we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. When we have fellowship in the light, how does the blood come in? Because God is light. When we have fellowship with Him there usually are two categories of things we experience: we see the Lord; we see more of Him that we may have never seen before. We

see something about Him and we are drawn to Him, or we see ourselves and we are exposed. This exposing is not, “Oh, I am terrible person.” That is not the purpose of the light. The purpose of the light is to expose us so that we can confess. That is why He provides the blood so that He can wash away our shortcomings and we can have deeper fellowship with Him. But then when we have deeper fellowship with Him, He is more light, and we see more of ourselves and sometimes as a Christian we feel that we are getting worse. Do you sense this? “Oh, I am worse than I was five years ago!”? No, we were always that bad but we never saw ourselves. We thought we were OK. Now we see ourselves because we are deeper in the light. The longer we are with the Lord, the light shines deeper to an area we never let the light into before. This time we allow the Lord to shine in and we realize who we are. There may not even be words to describe who we are, but as the verse says, He cleanses us from every sin! If we did not have this cleansing, there is no benefit to us coming to the meeting; it would then be like playing church. But He forgives and cleanses every sin.

## Tuesday

1 John 1:3-4 – Footnote 3<sup>3</sup>

First John 1:4 says, “These things I write to you that your joy may be made full.” Then the hymn says, “Higher up where light increases.” Sometimes we run away from the light, but not the author of this hymn. “Far above earthly strife. Where the strain of effort ceases....” Seekers of the Lord are sometimes the most frustrated people on the planet. We get frustrated because we love the Lord. If we didn’t care, we wouldn’t be frustrated. We love the Lord, so we try really hard; we strain. Maybe the older saints have seen the law of life. We need to see the matter of the law of the Spirit of life; then our straining will stop. We would stop straining because the life law will produce the proper shape. This plant started from a seed and that law of the plant life was in that seed. We just needed to put the seed into the soil with light and water. As it grows, the law of life shapes the growth of the seed the way it should be. We have the divine life to make us what we need to be. Why do we get disappointed so many times? Because we are trying and we get discouraged. The strain of effort is the story of most believers; we shouldn’t settle for that. We shouldn’t be satisfied with always striving. Paul mentions stretching forward in Philippians, but that is different than straining and striving, trying your best, then hearing another message and trying again. This is actually as if we are spinning our wheels. There is not much joy that; that is not our portion. That is not the normal Christian life. The normal Christian life is higher up where light increases, far above all earthly strife, where the strain of earthly life ceases. Wouldn’t you like a life in the Lord of resting? We are just resting and growing; not passive, exercised but resting. The third stanza begins, “Savior, keep me up the mountain.” My problem is that I don’t stay in the fellowship with You so I may slide down the mountain. The mountain here is not a high peak experience. The mountain here is a matter of fellowship with the Lord. When we enter into the fellowship, we are not running, we are entering calmly.

Let’s sing hymn 378 again:

1. Savior, lead me up the mountain,  
Where the Lord alone is seen,  
Where we hear the voice from heaven,  
Where the air is pure and clean.

Lead me higher up the mountain,  
Give me fellowship with Thee;  
In Thy light I see the fountain,  
And the blood it cleanses me.

2. Higher up where light increases,  
Far above all earthly strife,  
Where the strain of effort ceases,  
Where in Christ we reign in Life.

3. Savior, keep me up the mountain  
Pressing on toward the goal,  
Till, as one, we share Thine image,  
And Thy love and grace extol.

## Wednesday

Isa. 55:10-11 – Footnote 11<sup>2</sup>

Every spiritual experience begins with love in the heart. In Matthew 13, when the Lord came, He came as a sower, He came as a farmer. Later on in the New Testament it says that we are God's farm, God's building. How did the farm start? It started when He came to sow a seed. The Lord Himself interprets that the seed is the word of God and the soil is the human heart. Our experience of God's economy begins with receiving something into our heart. At the end of the New Testament, there is a reaping; it talks about firstfruits and a harvest. This means the New Testament age is one of growing. The concern or issue is—how are we growing? How is the seed growing in our heart? In the parable in Matthew 13, the Lord talks about different conditions of the soil. Our heart can be in different conditions, but our experience of God's economy begins with our heart.

When I came into the church life in Lord's recovery I was already a believer. I received the Lord when I was 7 years old. I was born into a family who was meeting with the brethren denomination. My sister preached the gospel to me and I got saved, and at 12 years old I got baptized. No one pushed me; it was my desire to get baptized. Those around me, including the shepherding of my sister and my mom, really helped me to love the Lord and His Word. I don't know where the desire came from, but I just had a desire to read the Bible. Nobody had to tell me. I just liked to read the Bible. On the day of my baptism my sister gave me a new Bible, my first ever new Bible. The Bible I had before was second hand. It still was a Bible but it wasn't "my Bible". I still have that Bible in my study. I don't use it too much because it is in pieces, but I loved that Bible. The help I received was mostly in the realm of my heart. I was helped to read the word, to confess my sins, and to spend personal time with the Lord even as young as 12 years old.

## Thursday

Psa. 116:2, 4, 13, 17 – Footnote 13<sup>1</sup>

At fourteen I came to the church life in Los Angeles. It was very dynamic. When I touched the church I wrote a letter to my cousins and friends back home in New York who were all very active in the denomination. I wrote, “I found heaven! It’s in Los Angeles!” because I could not imagine that heaven could be better than this. I was referring to the church life. I had always been with saints who loved the Lord, but these people were Christians all day long and every day. Not that my friends were not. Don’t misunderstand. I loved them but the main thing was that we did not know our spirit. We did not know this diagram with the three circles. We thought that there were only two parts to man. Once I came into the church, I realized that I had a spirit. To know that we are made with three parts: our body, soul and spirit is a big deal. We may take this too much for granted. When I came into the church I found out about my spirit, and I found out about calling on the name of the Lord. When we are asked, “How do you exercise your spirit?” most of us say, “By calling on the name of the Lord” or “By praying.” Our experience is that to enjoy the Lord, we exercise our spirit. In my first meeting saints were saying “Amen” and “Oh Lord Jesus” all the time. I was bothered. Saints would stand up and say, “Lord Jesus” and then talk. I was thinking, “Why did you have to say that? Just talk.” Then outside the meeting: “Oh Lord Jesus.” At the church in Los Angeles there was a five block radius where only saints lived. So when you went for a walk you would hear out of their window the singing, “It is joy unspeakable.” You never ended up arriving at the meeting by yourself. My sister lived three blocks away, but by the time I arrived at the hall there were twelve people arriving together. This atmosphere made it seem like heaven to me. But I did not appreciate calling on the Lord. I was 14 and I thought, “Are these people using the name of the Lord in vain?” Then the Lord spoke to me. I had already been reading the Bible for two years. What I read the most was Psalms, the Lord shined on me and showed me how many times in the Psalms was the term “Oh Lord”. This caused me to repent.

## Friday

Jer. 15:16 – Footnote 16<sup>1</sup>

Psa. 119:103

I found out about exercising my spirit by pray-reading in my first meeting. At 6:30 in the morning my brother-in-law took me to the meeting hall. This was my summer break. I did not go to Los Angeles to meet the Lord's recovery or to meet the church. I went there to have a vacation and go to Disneyland. The next morning at 6:30 my brother-in-law took me to the meeting hall to the gardening service group. They pray-read for 30 minutes, then went to a diner for breakfast, and then came back to the hall to serve. This was my introduction to the church life. That was the first time I witnessed anyone pray-read: "God is Spirit. Amen. God is Spirit. Amen. Spirit. Amen. Spirit. Amen." I was 14 and sitting there feeling a little sense of peer pressure, so I started saying, "Amen" but I was thinking, "What are they doing?" I thought, "It is the Bible. It's not bad to repeat the Bible." I don't know if it was that day but within a few days this little boy touched his spirit by calling and by pray-reading. It was like getting a new toy, and first thing in the morning I would call "Lord Jesus" and He was still there! I was so infused and helped by calling and pray-reading. As I grew in the Lord, I realized that even with calling and pray-reading there was still something missing until I read the book *The Economy of God* by Witness Lee. The first 10 chapters of the book ushered me into a new realm of experience in my Christian life. The outline that we handed out for the first message is totally based on the first 10 chapters of that book.

The conscience is very particular in the sense that it is part of the human heart and is also a function of our spirit. The role our conscience plays in our experience is very crucial. When I read that book, *The Economy of God*, I realized my lack. I had fallen into a state of trying to exercise my spirit without really opening my heart. I found out that it is possible to do that. Sometimes young people go along with "our program." Some really enjoy the Lord at the beginning of their Christian life. They get saved, they get baptized, they come to the meetings, they really enjoy, but if we do not give them the proper help how to exercise their heart first and then their spirit, there is a problem in their experience. They don't know what the problem is and we may not be attentive to it. Then what happens

is that we unconsciously encourage them to be hypocritical because we expect something of them: “You were so strong. Your singing was so good last conference. Come on.” We might stand up and say, “Young people, sing louder; sing stronger.” I have been in church meetings like this with adults: “Saints, that singing was not so exercised. Let’s try it again. Let’s be more exercised.” Do you know what we mean? “We mean louder. Louder does not necessarily help, sometimes it does. Sometimes to get out of our self it does help to be louder.

## Saturday

Isa. 59:1-2

I remember being in a meeting when I was in high school and a brother was speaking in a monotone. One of the older brothers in the front said, “Brother, exercise your spirit!” The brother didn’t get offended; he started over with a louder voice and all the saints said, “Amen.” I observed this 2 or 3 times where an older brother told someone to exercise their spirit. Then the person spoke louder and moved their right arm. That is what I observed. So I put it together. What does it mean to exercise your spirit? It means to speak louder and if you are really exercised you pump your arm. This could be a help; I am not speaking against this, but that is not an exercise of our spirit. At most, it is a release of the spirit.

What is the exercise of the spirit? It is the exercise of the three functions: conscience, fellowship and intuition. When we call, it is an exercise of the spirit. You are exercising the fellowship of the spirit. You are saying, “Lord I need You. Take me higher up the mountain.” However, as we are praying that, if there is sin in our conscience, there is a problem. Isaiah 59, verses 1 and 2 say, “No, Jehovah’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; / Nor is His ear is so heavy that He cannot hear. But your iniquities have become a separation / Between you and your God, / And your sins have hidden *His* face / From you so that He does not hear.” Why does it seem that He does not hear our prayers? It’s not that He does not hear our prayers; we allowed our sin to be a barrier. As we are praying, our conscience speaks to us. We may be praying about something, “Lord, You are the Spirit. Lord, I want You as my reality; I want You in my life.” As we are praying the Lord may shine, “What about that joke you said yesterday? What about the loose words?” This is the Lord’s shining! When we confess our sins He will forgive and cleanse us. But sometimes we are numb to that little speaking of our conscience.