

# **The Bible—the Word of God**

## **Message 3 (Part 2)**

### **Knowing God through the Bible as the Written Word of God and Through Christ as the Living Word of God (1)**

#### **Monday**

John 1:18 – Footnote 18<sup>1</sup>

John 5:39-40 – Footnote 39<sup>1</sup>

#### **I. The Word of God is the definition, explanation and expression of God—John 1:18:**

- A. The Bible is the written Word of God—Heb. 1:1-2; Luke 24:44; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Col. 1:25.
- B. Christ is the living Word of God—John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1 and note 1<sup>5</sup>; Rev. 19:13.
- C. Whenever we read the written Word, the Bible, we should contact Christ as the living Word—John 5:39-40.

Even in our daily reading I want to encourage us. I know many of us have the habit of reading the Word but often this habit needs to be strengthened, reinforced, because things come in. I remember there was a time in the late 70s of the first great turmoil that we experienced in the churches in North America. The Lord's recovery came here in the late 50s and early 60s, and we enjoyed a period of just wonderful going on. Then in the mid-70s something happened and I was stumbled, confused for a time. Even I wondered, could this really be the church? If such things happen, could this really be the church? At that time when this happened I was living in the west coast; I was in Orange County, first in Anaheim and then in Irvine. Neither Brother Witness Lee nor any of the co-workers ever brought anything up publicly during that year when we were going through all those things. No one addressed the turmoil. But rather I remember that our brother, within the course of a year, visited almost every church in North America. If you get *The Collected Works of Witness*

*Lee* and and look at 1977 and 78 you'll be able to follow all the places he went to see, very interesting. I was in some of those conferences in southern California and in New York. The theme of the things he shared was, at least from what I recall, there were other things but the main thing was abiding in the Lord—John 15. There was a turmoil, there were things happening but he was just talking about abiding in the Lord in almost every conference.

This was the first time I ever saw a meeting that ended with questions and responses. I wasn't used to that, usually we have testimonies; but that night, questions and responses. As I recall, both in his sharing and his answers, he emphasized these 3 practices—number one he said, “You have to read the Bible.” Why would a minister of the Lord have a conference and in the conference tell the congregants you have to read the Bible. It is probably because there is a sense that not everyone is reading the Bible. There was a strong encouragement, read the Bible every day, whether 1 chapter, 2 chapters, or 4 chapters. If you read four chapters every day you will finish in a year. Then the second thing was that we should confess our sins. We talked about this yesterday. And the third was, you should have personal morning watch.

## Tuesday

Heb. 1:1-2 – Footnotes 1<sup>1</sup>, 1<sup>2</sup>

In those days the corporate life was so strong; we loved being together. To us, meeting with the saints was the greatest joy on Earth. We had found the Lord's recovery but almost exclusively, our church life was so heavily corporate. I remember in my neighbourhood in New York, we had corporate morning watch. At 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning you would have 25 saints in the living room. Throughout the city we had pockets of saints at 6:00 or 6:30 having corporate morning watch. I was in highschool. When we walked to the bus stop at the corner most of the saints went to work and I went to school. Then of course we had our meetings and often after the meeting we would have an after meeting because we wanted to be together so much! But for many of the saints, the only time they opened the Bible was when we were together. This habit of reading personally, even of having personal time with the Lord, was not so reinforced. Actually, you know who had the personal time with the Lord? The saints who came into the Lord's recovery from Christianity. You know who read the Bible every day? The saints would come into the church life from Christianity. These saints did it because they had the habit from before, not because it was promoted that much. But it seems like our brother discovered this was a weakness. And you know what the evidence was? That turmoil. When something occurred, many of us, the younger ones, were deceived.

Then there was the encouragement to read the Bible and have personal morning watch. A kind of a help was given. In those days we didn't have this book *The Holy Word for Morning Revival* and the churches would just assign some verses for morning watch every day. That was one of my services. I had better writing at that time. The brother encouraged us: one way to have personal time with the Lord is to take a book of the Bible and today pray read chapter 1 verse 1, maybe verse 2. The next day pray read verse 3. The next, pray over 4 and maybe you feel that verse is not so rich; that's okay, read half a chapter, pick one or two verses and read through the whole book.

## Wednesday

1 Cor. 1:7-9 – Footnotes 8<sup>1</sup>, 8<sup>2</sup>, 9<sup>1</sup>

So either in my ignorance or my innocence I chose First Corinthians. The first 9 verses of First Corinthians chapter 1 are outstanding with phrases such as “to the church of God which is in Corinth” and “called saints” and “God is faithful who has called us into the fellowship.” Then verse 10 is “I hear that there are divisions among you.” So anyway, that is what I had chosen, so I prayed, “that there are divisions among you. Oh Lord Jesus, save us from divisions, oh Lord Jesus, divisions among you.” Then when you keep going, you get to and pray-read some verses in chapter 6 that “brother takes brother to court, amen!” Then chapter 5: “There is a sin among you, amen, that is not even mentioned among the Gentiles, amen.” I won’t even mention the sin, but you know what I saw as I was pray reading—that in the first century church there were problems!

And then I was reading in my daily reading and I came to Acts and in Acts chapter 20 do you know what it says? Paul says that after my departure some even from among you, will rise up after to carry people away after themselves, they will be like what, wolves in sheep’s clothing. And I saw, wait a minute, this matches what’s going on. You know what? That reinforced me and I saw that just because there are problems does not mean that this is not the church. We have to be faithful to the vision. We don’t condone the problems; we don’t settle for the problems; we pray, and we take Paul’s way.

What is Paul’s way? Which book in the New Testament has the most problems that it’s addressing? 1st Corinthians, but it also has 19 or 20 items of Christ. Do you realize that if in the New Testament time there were no problems, our New Testament would be very short. Most of the New Testament is the brothers answering the problems, even the gospel of John. John was fighting a battle to show that Jesus is God. If not for that problem, we might only have three gospels. And we might not have 14 epistles of Paul, maybe 3. You see the black background; all the situations give the Lord an opportunity to bring forth Christ.

Do you know how I was strengthened saints? By reading the Bible. And the word spoke to me. I like to encourage you with those three practices—how about we read the Bible every day, confess our sins every day, and have personal time with the Lord every day.

## Thursday

Matt. 15:21-25 – Footnotes 21<sup>1</sup>, 22<sup>1</sup>, 22<sup>2</sup>, 24<sup>1</sup>, 25<sup>2</sup>

### **II. The entire Bible, particularly the four Gospels is a revelation of Christ as God's expression—Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 24:27; Rev. 1:1:**

Then what we have here in this outline, are I believe, 14 cases of the Lord Jesus in His ministry. I don't intend to cover all of them. I just will use a select few, and I just leave this with you. All of these show us something concerning our Lord that maybe we didn't know before; not by His plain word, but more either by His action or sometimes His inaction. You know that Christ expressed God even when He did nothing. Sometimes in your doing, you express God. Sometimes you express God by not doing.

Matthew 15, verses 21 through 28, is the first case, the case of the Canaanite woman. Most of us are familiar with the story, but there may be some who are not that familiar, so let's take a little time. "And Jesus went from there and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon." If you know this geography, this is far to the north and toward the coast so He is not in Jerusalem or Judea, He's to the north. "And behold, a Canaanite woman came out from those borders and cried out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter suffers terribly from demon possession. But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying out after us."

Have you ever wondered concerning verse 23? "But He did not answer her a word." Now the second part is, "His disciples came and implored Him saying send her away!" That's not surprising because we've gotten to know these disciples. When some wanted to bring the little children, their attitude was, "He doesn't have time for the little children!" Actually that's another case for later. The disciples had no compassion, no mercy, but our Lord is full of compassion, isn't He? So have you ever wondered about the beginning of verse 23? Do you get the picture? The Lord is walking in this place and around him are the disciples who are sort of like a secret service, bodyguards. And this woman is coming behind and she cries out, which means she said it loud, "Lord, have mercy on me, Son of David. My daughter suffers terribly from demon possession." She is praying for her daughter.

What's the Lord's response? Nothing. Did you ever notice this? Did you ever get bothered? I read this and I said, "Lord, that was kind of mean; that's not like you! Maybe you were having an off day?" The Lord doesn't have off days. Why did He not answer her?

So anyway, the disciples come, "Lord, tell her to go away; she's crying out after us." He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." What's the point here? Isn't He saying, "I didn't come for you" because she is a Canaanite, she's a Gentile. Did you notice this? I think it's better to say nothing! This is even meaner! "Lord, have mercy, my daughter, my daughter!" "I didn't come for you." Can you imagine the Lord saying that to you? "I came for them, I didn't come for you." That's so out of character. Then what happens? "But she came and worshipped Him saying, Lord help me! But He answered and said it's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." Oh my goodness! Then she said, "Yes Lord" and then He said, "Oh woman your faith is great!" What kind of exchange is this?

## Friday

Matt. 15:26-28 – Footnotes 26<sup>1</sup>, 26<sup>2</sup>, 27<sup>1</sup>

Everything turned when she said, “Lord help me.” Then He answered her directly. Please consider that the scripture tells us first that she is a Canaanite and she came saying, “Lord, Son of David.” “Lord, Son of David” is not a title for us as Gentiles to call Him. The title *Son of David* is not for us Gentiles. To call Him “Lord, Son of David” is a title for the Jews. She is a Canaanite; how does she know even to have this phrase *Son of David*? I don’t know for sure, but I think it is something like this. Her daughter is suffering; maybe someone said, “You know that man that we heard about from Judea, that heals people? I heard He’s here.” Can you imagine if she got this news? Really, He’s here? That’s my only hope. I have to go, I have to get Him to heal my daughter. What’s His name? I think His name is Jesus, but I think they call Him “Son of David.” I think someone instructed her that they call him, “Son of David” and she used this term, so formal. When she finally broke down and said “Lord help me!” then He addressed her.

There is dispensational significance in the story but I’m not concerned with that right now. What I like to show is, from what I see here, is the Lord does not appreciate formality. The Lord does not appreciate rehearsed words. When we come to Him, we have to speak from our heart: “Lord help me. Lord help me.” The whole scene changed when she said, “Lord help me.” And then He said, “It’s not right to throw the children’s bread to the dogs.” She got it. The picture He is saying is, “I’m the bread that came for the children,” but she is saying, “But you’re not there on the table in Judea with the Jews. You said that you came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. If that’s the case, what are you doing here? If you just wanted the house of Israel, don’t come visiting us. Why did you come here?” He called her a little dog, then she called Him a little crumb. She said, “Bread, I don’t think over here You are bread; here You are just a crumb.” And He said, “Great faith.” It all changed when she said, “Lord, help me.”

So saints, I think there’s something here that shows that the Lord appreciates when we speak from our heart. Of course, He used this for this great revelation that He is the crumbs. But actually, He didn’t say that first; she said that. He said, I am the children’s bread.” She

said, “The little dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from the master’s table.” So He used that scenario to unveil something about Himself: He is the crumbs under the table. Sometimes we feel that we’re not worthy to have a place at the table, but that’s okay; He comes to where we are. He comes to all the way where we are. When He comes, He doesn’t appreciate formality; He likes us to just tell Him, “Lord, I need You.”



## Saturday

Luke 17:11-19

Mark 1:40 – Footnote 40<sup>1</sup>

G. The case of the ten Samaritan lepers—Luke 17:11-19.

“And as He was going to Jerusalem, He passed between Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, ten leprous men, who stood at a distance, met Him. And they raised their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! And when He saw them, He said to them, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, glorifying God with a loud voice; And he fell on his face at His feet, thanking Him. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they?”

What can we see here? Actually, for this I would like some help. Matthew, could you come, Andrew could you come, Emmanuel, Antonio, all of you go to that corner. Those are the 10 Samaritan lepers in that corner over there. Leprosy is contaminating, it's terrible, it's contagious, and it is a picture of sin. So they see Jesus and they start calling out from a distance. Verse 12 says, “who stood at a distance, met Him.” That was right; they are lepers. They should call out, “Unclean, unclean” so that no one would come close. But they saw Jesus and they called out, “Master, have mercy on us!” And what does He say?

In another case, the Lord touches the one with the leprosy; not here, as He wants to show us something else. He said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” So they all go and on their way to the priests, what happens? They get cleansed. Can you imagine? Maybe they are walking and this one turns to another and says “Hey, you're cleansed!” and another one says, “Hey, what about me?” and they are all so happy! Then one comes all the way back and falls at Jesus' feet, glorifying God, he fell on his face, thanking Him with a loud voice. What does Jesus say? “Were not the ten cleansed? Where are the nine?” But then to the one who returns He says, “Rise, your faith has healed you.”

All of them, they prayed, didn't they? They all prayed at first. But from where, from a distance. Did they get their prayers answered? Yes. Do you realize that the nine got their prayer answered and ended

up going farther away from God. Only one got his prayer answered and his answered prayer brought him closer to the Lord. Do you see something here?

Do you see that sometimes it is possible that God answers our prayers and when we receive the answered prayer, it takes us further away. That is why I think God doesn't answer all of our prayers. When I saw this, I said, "Lord, please do not answer all of my prayers." Sometimes I will pray foolishly. There are a lot of things here, but through the scripture we know God's heart. The more we know the scripture, the more we can know what is in God's heart. So I just want to encourage all of us to read the Word to know our Lord. Let's combine the written Word and the living word so that we can know Him in a richer, fuller way.