

Living According to God's Economy

I. God wants man to express Him with His image and represent Him with His dominion (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 5:9b-10), but this is not something that man can do.

- A. Every life expresses its own characteristics.
 - 1. Dogs bark, cats hunt prey.
 - 2. People express themselves.
- B. In ourselves and by ourselves we cannot express God.
 - 1. Our fallen self, our flesh, taints everything that we do.
 - 2. It is always seeking its own advantage and glory.
 - 3. The sinful nature within man is the evil nature of the devil.
 - 4. No matter how good we are or hard we try, we can never come up to the standard of expressing God.
 - 5. For example, if we discipline ourselves to a high human standard, we inevitably will look down on others who do not match our standard. That attitude is sinful.

II. God is not defeated; He still has a way to gain His purpose in and with man.

- A. He put on humanity through incarnation; He became a man.
- B. As a man He went through all the trials of human life and was tempted in every way like us, yet without sin—Heb. 4:15.
- C. He went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and crucify our old man—Rom. 6:6; 1 Pet. 2:24.
- D. In resurrection He overcame death and we also were raised up together with Him—Eph. 2:6.
- E. He ascended to the heavens and we also are seated with Him there—Eph. 2:7.
- F. He became the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b) to enter into us as our life—2 Cor. 13:5.
- G. Now He is working Himself into us through the processes of:
 - 1. Sanctification—1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Thes. 5:23; Rom. 6:19, 22.
 - 2. Renewing—Titus 3:5; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10.
 - 3. Transformation—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 4. Conformation—Rom. 8:29.
 - 5. Glorification—Rom. 8:30, 17.

III. God uses all things to work together for our good—Rom. 8:26.

- A. On the positive side:
 - 1. He draws us with His love—2 Cor. 5:14.
 - 2. He empowers us in His grace—2 Tim. 2:1.
 - 3. He lives in us as the Spirit—2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- B. On the negative side:
 - 1. We need the cross to operate in us to conform us to the death of Christ—Phil. 3:10) in order to attain to the out-resurrection from the dead—v. 11.
 - 2. We need to suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him—Rom. 8:17.
 - 3. Our faith needs to be tested by various trial in order for us to receive praise and glory and honor when the Lord Jesus comes again—1 Pet. 6-7.
 - 4. Even stumbling blocks are needed, including vain talk and false teachings—Matt. 18:7; 1 Tim. 1:6-7; 6:20.
- C. Persecutions, temptations, sufferings, trials and stumbling blocks all are useful for exposing when we are trusting in ourselves rather than turning to the spirit and relying on the Lord.

1. Without them we often would feel as if we are fine even though we are not living in the Lord's presence.
2. Every weakness and failure is a reminder that we need the Lord and His salvation moment by moment.

IV. He who endures to the end will be saved—Matt. 24:13.

- A. No one can endure all these things by himself.
- B. We all need to be constantly turning to the Lord so that He can be all that we need in our daily lives so that He is the One living in us in our daily lives—Gal. 2:20.

V. The Lord is calling us to overcome—Rev. 2 & 3.