

Message 4

Becoming a Reproduction of Christ as the Tree of Life for the Ministry of Life

Scripture Reading: John 1:4; 12:24; 15:1, 4-5; 1 John 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:12

I. In God's economy we are not only eaters of the tree of life, but we are also branches of this tree, and we may eventually become a small tree of life, a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life—1 Pet. 2:21; John 1:4; 12:24; 15:1, 4-5:

- A. God's intention is that all the believers in Christ become a reproduction of Christ, the God-man—12:24; Rom. 8:29:
 - 1. Becoming a reproduction of Christ requires that we be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit and then be gradually transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul—John 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 2. We become Christ's reproduction by a process that involves the riches of the divine life being dispensed into us and experienced by us—Eph. 3:8; Col. 3:4, 10-11.
 - 3. In order to become a reproduction of Christ as our model, we need to experience Christ as the One living in us, being formed in us, and making His home in our hearts—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a.
 - 4. As we become a reproduction of Christ, spontaneously we will live Christ by the bountiful supply of His Spirit—Phil. 1:19, 21.
- B. In Genesis 2:9 the tree of life was unique, but the tree of life has been planted into us and is growing in us, causing us to become a small tree of life.

II. As a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we have the ministry of life—1 John 5:16; 2 Cor. 4:12:

- A. Because we are believers in Christ and children of God, we not only have eternal life and may experience eternal life, but we also can minister this life to other members of the Body of Christ—1 John 5:11-16.
- B. To minister life is to impart life; when we have a surplus of life, we can minister from this supply to others—1:1-2; 2:25; 5:11-13, 16.
- C. The service in the church is a life-ministering service—a service of supplying others with the divine life—2 Cor. 4:12:
 - 1. We need to be impressed with this point and look to the Lord that our service would become an outlet for His life—John 11:25; 1 John 1:2.
 - 2. The life that we supply to others is in the Spirit, the Spirit is mingled with our spirit, and the life of God is located, abides, and grows in the mingled spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Rom. 8:4:
 - a. If we would supply the saints with life, we must release our spirit, for the divine life is in our mingled spirit—7:6; 1:9.
 - b. If our spirit cannot be released, the divine life has no way to be released—8:10.

- D. If we would live as a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we need to be deeply impressed with the necessity of being able to minister life—1 John 5:11-16:
1. The service that God wants from us does not focus on doing a work but on ministering life—v. 16.
 2. In order to minister life to others, we need to be joined to Christ, abide in Christ, and give Him the ground in us to fill us so that His life, nature, likes, and inclination become our life, nature, likes, and inclination—2:27; Eph. 3:16-17.
- E. To minister life is to have the outflow of life; our service is God's flowing out to supply others with the divine life—John 19:34; 7:37-39:
1. Life is the content of God and the flowing out of God; God's content is God's being, and God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us—Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1.
 2. In order for life to be released from our spirit, our outer man must be dealt with and broken—2 Cor. 4:16; Heb. 4:12:
 - a. If our outer man is not broken, there cannot be a pure flow of the divine life—John 7:38.
 - b. If we want the divine life to be released from within us, we must be subdued in our soul and let our spirit dominate and rule over every matter; then the Lord's life will be able to flow out—Eph. 3:16-17.
 3. Having the outflow of life requires that we be one with Christ in His life-releasing death; this is to be identified with the smitten Christ typified by the smitten rock—John 19:34; Exo. 17:6:
 - a. When we are one with Christ as the smitten rock, the divine life as the living water flows out of us—v. 6; John 7:38.
 - b. Our human life, our natural life, must be smitten so that the living water may flow out from within us—2 Cor. 4:10-11, 16.
 - c. If we are one with the smitten Christ, we will experience the crucifixion of our natural life, and then as Christ's divine life flowed out as living water through the smiting of His human life, we also will experience the flow of the water of life through the smiting of our natural life—vv. 10-12.
- F. If we would minister life to others, we need to be aware of the attack upon the church by death, the gates of Hades—Matt. 16:18; Rom. 5:17:
1. What is of God is characterized by life, and what is of Satan, by death; in the church everything that issues from God is life, and everything that issues from Satan is death—John 11:25; Heb. 2:14.
 2. Satan's greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—2 Tim. 1:10.
 3. The eternal life within us can overcome death both in ourselves and in other members of the church—1 John 5:11-13, 16.
 4. As a reproduction of Christ as the tree of life, we need to experience eternal life and minister this life to others by being a channel through which eternal life can flow—John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:24-25.