

Message Six

Gaining God to Be Transformed by God for the Purpose of God

Scripture Reading: Job 42:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 4:10-12, 16-18; 5:18-20

I. God's intention with Job was for him to become a person who lived in the heavenly vision and the reality of God's economy:

- A. Job's experience was a step taken by God in His divine economy to carry out the consuming and stripping of the contented Job in order to tear Job down that God might have a way to rebuild him with God Himself and to usher him into a deeper seeking after God so that he might gain God instead of His blessings and his attainments in his perfection and integrity—Phil. 3:10-14; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; Exo. 20:6; 1 Chron. 16:10-11; 22:19a; 2 Chron. 12:14; 26:3-5; 34:1-3a; Psa. 24:6; 27:4, 8; 105:4; 119:2, 10; Heb. 11:6.
- B. The one who does not care for God may gain many things and may seem to prosper (Psa. 73:1-15); however, the one who cares for God will be restricted by God and even stripped by God of many things; God's intention with His seekers is that they may find everything in Him and not be distracted from the absolute enjoyment of Himself (vv. 16-28).
- C. God's purpose in dealing with His holy people is that they would be emptied of everything and receive only God as their gain (Phil. 3:8; cf. Psa. 73:25-26); the desire of God's heart is that we would gain Him in full as life, as the life supply, and as everything to our being (Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; cf. Col. 1:17b, 18b).
- D. In order to live in the reality of God's economy with His divine dispensing, we need God to build Himself into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ:
 1. As unveiled in Paul's Epistles, God's purpose in dealing with us is to strip us of all things and to consume us so that we may gain God more and more—2 Cor. 4:16-18.
 2. The building up of the church is by Christ's making His home in our hearts, that is, by His building Himself into us, making our heart, our intrinsic constitution, His home—Eph. 3:16-21.
- E. In Christ God was constituted into man, man was constituted into God, and God and man were mingled together to be one entity, the God-man; this implies that God's intention in His economy is to make Himself man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Rom. 1:3-4; Matt. 22:41-45; John 14:6a; 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 John 5:16a.

II. God's economy is God becoming a man in the flesh through incarnation that man might become God in the Spirit through transformation for the building of God into man and man into God to gain a corporate God-man:

- A. The most marvelous, excellent, mysterious, and all-inclusive transformations of the eternal and Triune God in His becoming a man are God's move in man for the accomplishment of His eternal economy—Micah 5:2; John 1:14, 29; 3:14; 12:24; Acts 13:33; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 9:15; 7:22; 8:2:
 1. These transformations are the processes through which the Triune God passed in His becoming a God-man, bringing divinity into humanity and mingling divinity with humanity as a prototype for the mass reproduction of many God-men; He became the embodiment of the Triune God, bringing God to man and making God contactable, touchable, receivable, experienceable, enterable, and enjoyable—John 1:14; Col. 2:9; Rom. 8:28-29.
 2. God speaks of these transformations in Hosea 11:4 by saying, "I drew them with cords of a man, / With bands of love"; the phrase *with cords of a man, with bands of*

love indicates that God loves us with His divine love not on the level of divinity but on the level of humanity; God's love is divine, but it reaches us in the cords of a man, that is, through Christ's humanity:

- a. The cords (the transformations, the processes) through which God draws us include Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; it is by all these steps of Christ in His humanity that God's love in His salvation reaches us—Jer. 31:3; John 3:14, 16; 6:44; 12:32; Rom. 5:5, 8; 1 John 4:8-10, 16, 19.
 - b. Apart from Christ, God's everlasting love, His unchanging, subduing love, could not be prevailing in relation to us; God's unchanging love is prevailing because it is a love in Christ, with Christ, by Christ, and for Christ.
 - c. God's everlasting love is always victorious; eventually, in spite of our failures and mistakes, God's love will gain the victory—Rom. 8:35-39.
- B. The transformation of the tripartite man is God's move to deify man, to constitute man with the processed and consummated Triune God; in God's appearing to him, Job saw God in order to gain God to be transformed by God for the purpose of God—Job 38:1-3; 42:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Heb. 12:1-2a:
1. Seeing God issues in the transformation of our being into God's image; hence, the more we look at Him as the consummated Spirit in our spirit, the more we receive all His ingredients into our being as the divine element to discharge our old element so that our whole being becomes new; our Christian life is not a matter of changing outwardly but of being transformed from within—2 Cor. 3:18; Psa. 27:4; Gal. 6:15-16.
 2. We can remain in the daily process of transformation by turning our heart to the Lord so that we can behold and reflect Him with an unveiled face; an unveiled face is a heart that turns to the Lord—2 Cor. 3:16, 18:
 - a. To turn our heart to the Lord is to love the Lord; the more we love the Lord, the more our heart will be open to the Lord, and He will have a way to spread out from our spirit into all the parts of our heart.
 - b. To turn our heart to the Lord, to open our heart to the Lord, is the key to our growing in life; we can open our heart to the Lord simply by telling the Lord, "O Lord, I love You; I want to please You."
 - c. As we behold the Lord day after day in all our situations (Psa. 27:4), we will reflect the Lord's glory and be transformed into His image from glory to glory.
 - d. Many Christians are not joyful because the Spirit within them is not joyful (Eph. 4:30; cf. Psa. 16:11; 43:4; Acts 3:19-20; Exo. 33:11, 14-17; Heb. 1:9; Jer. 15:16; John 15:9-11; 1 John 1:3-4; 2 John 12; Phil. 4:4); if we do not turn our heart to the Lord to let the Spirit of the Lord spread out of our spirit into our heart, we will feel restrained and depressed.
 - e. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17); if someone says that a meeting is boring, we must realize that it is he himself who is bored within; but when we turn our heart to the Lord, we enjoy the Spirit as our freedom.
 - f. Once the liberating Spirit has the way to spread into all the parts of our heart, we are released, transcendent, and free; this freedom is glory, which is the presence of God and the expression of God; we feel noble, honorable, and glorious because we are being transformed into His image—v. 18; Gen. 1:26.
- C. Transformation transfers us from one form, the form of the old man, to another form, the form of the new man; the Lord accomplishes this transformation work by the killing of Christ's death—2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18:

1. In 2 Corinthians 4:10 Paul says that we are always bearing about in our body the putting to death of Jesus; *putting to death* means killing; the death of Christ kills us—1 Cor. 15:31, 36; John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
 2. The death of Christ is in the compound Spirit; the Spirit is the application of the death of Christ and its effectiveness—Exo. 30:22-25; Rom. 8:13.
 3. The Christian life is a life that is all the time under the killing by the compound Spirit; this daily killing is carried out by the indwelling Spirit with the environment as the killing weapon.
 4. Under God's divine and sovereign arrangement, everything works for our good, for our transformation, through the killing of Christ's death; the "good" in Romans 8:28 is not related to physical persons, matters, or things; only One is good—God—Luke 18:19:
 - a. All persons, all matters, and all things related to us are the means of the Holy Spirit to work good for us so that we can be loaded with good (Psa. 68:19a), with the Triune God Himself (cf. Gen. 45:5; 50:20).
 - b. All persons and all situations related to us are arranged by the Spirit of God to match His work within us so that we may be transformed and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—cf. Matt. 10:29-31.
- D. Transformation is carried out in us as we experience the discipline of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 8:2, 28-29; Heb. 12:5-14:
1. The work of the Spirit within us is to constitute a new being for us, but the work of the Spirit without is to tear down every aspect of our natural being through our environment—cf. Jer. 48:11.
 2. We should cooperate with the inner operating Spirit and accept the environment that God has arranged for us—Phil. 4:12; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:24.

III. Ministry is the issue of revelation plus suffering—what we see is wrought into us through suffering; hence, what we minister is what we are:

- A. Although the ministers are many, they have only one ministry—the ministry of the new covenant for the accomplishing of God's New Testament economy; our working together with Christ is to carry out this unique ministry, the ministering of Christ to people for the building up of His Body—Acts 1:17; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor. 4:1; 6:1a.
- B. As a whole, the Body has one, unique corporate ministry, but because this ministry is the service of the Body of Christ and because the Body has many members, all the members have their own ministry for the carrying out of the unique ministry—Acts 20:24; 21:19; 2 Tim. 4:5; Col. 4:17.
- C. The ministry is for ministering the Christ whom we have experienced, and it is constituted with, and produced and formed by, the experiences of the riches of Christ gained through sufferings, consuming pressures, and the killing work of the cross—Acts 9:15-16; Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Cor. 1:4-6, 8-9, 12; 3:3, 6:
 1. The ministry of the Spirit is for us to arrive at the high peak of the divine revelation by our ministering Christ as the Spirit, who gives life—vv. 8-9, 6, 3; Rev. 22:17a.
 2. The ministry of righteousness is for us to enter into the God-man living by our ministering Christ not only as our objective righteousness but also as our subjective and lived-out righteousness for the genuine expression of Christ—Rom. 5:17; Phil. 3:9; Rev. 19:8.
 3. The ministry of reconciliation is for us to shepherd people according to God (in oneness with Christ in His heavenly ministry of shepherding) by our ministering Christ as the word of reconciliation so that we can bring God's people into their

- spirit as the Holy of Holies for them to become persons in the spirit—2 Cor. 5:18-20; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2-4; 2:25; Rev. 1:12-13; Heb. 10:19, 22; 1 Cor. 2:15.
4. By our fully entering into such a wonderful ministry in its three aspects, the Lord will have a way to bring the churches into a new revival.
- D. Tribulation is the sweet visitation and incarnation of grace with all the riches of Christ; grace visits us mainly in the form of tribulation—2 Cor. 12:7-10:
1. Through tribulations the killing effect of the cross of Christ on our natural being is applied to us by the Holy Spirit, making the way for the God of resurrection to add Himself into us—1:8-9; 4:16-18.
 2. Tribulation produces endurance, which brings forth the quality of approvedness—an approved quality or attribute resulting from the enduring and experiencing of tribulation and testing—Rom. 5:3-4.
- E. God poured out Himself as love in our hearts with the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, as the motivating power within us, that we may more than conquer in all our tribulations; therefore, when we endure any kind of tribulation, we are not put to shame but live Christ for His magnification—v. 5; 8:31-39; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Phil. 1:19-21a.