THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND GOD'S DISPENSING FOR GOD'S ECONOMY

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

The Eternal Blessing of the Triune God Dispensing Himself into Us for Our Enjoyment and the Accomplishing of His Economy

RA *Hymns*: 737

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:2-7, 9; Rev. 22:1

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.
1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

I. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14)—this is the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself into us for our enjoyment and the accomplishing of His economy:

A. The Holy Spirit as the circulation, the transmission, of the grace of Christ with the love of the Father is the supply in our Christian life and church life.

B. The entire church life depends upon 2 Corinthians 13:14, which is a description of the divine and spiritual circulation within us.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C. The current of the Divine Trinity as the inner circulation of the Divine Trinity revealed in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is our spiritual pulse.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

D. God's intention in His economy is to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into His chosen people; God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day—Psa. 36:8-9.

Psa 36:8 They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures.
Psa 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.

II. In order to enjoy the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself into us, we need to enter into and keep ourselves in the eternal love of God—Jer. 31:3:

Jer 31:3 Jehovah appeared to me from afar, saying, / Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love, /

Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

A. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19); God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers (vv. 20-21).

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.

B. Deuteronomy 30:19 and 20 say, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live, in loving Jehovah your God by listening to His voice and holding fast to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days":

1. These verses reveal that the way to choose life is to love the Lord, and the way to love the Lord is to listen to His voice and hold fast to Him—vv. 19-20; Rev. 2:4, 7; S. S. 3:4; 8:13-14.

Deut 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live,

Deut 30:20 In loving Jehovah your God by listening to His voice and holding fast to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell upon the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Rev 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

S. S. 3:4 Scarcely had I passed them / When I found him whom my soul loves; / I held him and would not let go / Until I had brought him into my mother's house / And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

S. S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.

S. S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

2. Acts 11:23 reveals how we can hold fast to Him; when Barnabas went to Antioch, he "encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart":

a. To hold fast to the Lord is to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart.

b. This is to be persistently faithful to the Lord, cleave to Him, and live in close fellowship with Him.

C. As we love the Lord Jesus, we become the same as He is in His divinely enriched humanity; the bountiful God in His rich attributes is expressed through our aromatic "Jesusly" human virtues—2 Cor. 2:15.

2 Cor 2:15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing:

D. These "Jesusly" human virtues include extraordinary love, boundless forbearance, unparalleled faithfulness, absolute humility, utmost purity, supreme holiness and righteousness, and brightness and uprightness; these virtues describe the actual life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, which is now our indwelling life for us to experience, enjoy, and express—Eph. 4:20-21.

Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,

Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

E. Christ as our indwelling life enables us to live a life that is absolutely for God and for God's satisfaction—our living becomes a reproduction of the human living of Jesus typified by the burnt offering—Lev. 1:4, 13.

Lev 1:4 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make expiation for him.

Lev 1:13 But the inward parts and the legs he shall wash with water. Then the priest shall present the whole and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

F. We all need to spend an adequate amount of personal time with the Lord to have affectionate, private, and spiritual fellowship with Him in our spirit so that we can be filled with His loving essence for Him to shepherd others through us and so that we can be filled with His shining element for others to see Him in us—S. S. 1:1-4; John 4:24; Luke 15:20; Matt. 5:15-16.

S. S. 1:1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.
S. S. 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.
S. S. 1:3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you.
S. S. 1:4 Draw me; we will run after you
John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
Matt 5:15 Nor do men light a lamp and place it under the bushel, but on the lampstand; and it shines to all who are in the house.
Matt 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.

G. The humanity of one who serves the Lord is safeguarded through his loving the Lord; our loving the Lord keeps us in the realm and sphere of Jesus' humanity; if we do not love the Lord, we lose the restraint that comes from His attraction, and we are liable to do anything and everything—2 Tim. 4:10, 14; Eph. 4:17-21.

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas has abandoned me, having loved the present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.
2 Tim 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things to me; the Lord will recompense him according to his works.
Eph 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,
Eph 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
Eph 4:19 Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.
Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,
Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

III. In order to enjoy the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself into us, we need to enter into and keep ourselves standing in the grace of Christ, which is the Triune God as our enjoyment—Rom. 5:2:

Rom 5:2 Through whom also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and boast because of the hope of the glory of God.

A. Day by day we need the Lord to open our ears and cause us to hear the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth so that we can experience the Father's gracing us with His grace in the Beloved and can give grace to those who hear us—Eph. 1:6; Isa. 50:4-5; S. S. 8:13; Luke 4:22; Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:29.

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
Isa 50:4 The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.
Isa 50:5 The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.
S. S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.
Luke 4:22 And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth, and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Acts 20:32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.
Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

B. We need to enjoy the descending dew of the grace of life in the church life to keep ourselves in the genuine oneness for the gradual building up of the Body of Christ in the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity—Psa. 133.

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!
Psa 133:2 It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments;
Psa 133:3 Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.

IV. In order to enjoy the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself into us, we need to enter into and keep ourselves in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the inner flow of the divine life—2 Cor. 13:14; Num. 6:22-27:

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Num 6:22 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
Num 6:23 Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the children of Israel; you shall say to them,
Num 6:24 Jehovah bless you and keep you;
Num 6:25 Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
Num 6:26 Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
Num 6:27 So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, that I Myself may bless them.

A. The fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possess the divine life; it is illustrated by the flow of the river of water of life in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

B. First John 1:2-3 and 6-7 reveal that the fellowship of the divine life has both a vertical aspect and a horizontal aspect:

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

1. First John 1:2-3 says, "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ":
   a. The vertical aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God; the horizontal aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another.
   b. The initial experience of the apostles was vertical, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship.
2. Verse 6 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth"; this is the vertical aspect of fellowship.

3. Verse 7 says, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another"; this is the horizontal aspect of fellowship.
4. The fellowship of life, the inner flow of life, results in joy and in the inner shining, the inner ruling, of the light of life—vv. 4-5; John 1:4; 8:12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:13.

1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.
1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
2 Cor 5:13 For whether we were beside ourselves, it was to God; or whether we are sober-minded, it is for you.

C. We need to see the relationship between the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship:
1. If we do not have the proper fellowship with the Lord, it is difficult to have fellowship with our fellow believers; in the same way, if we do not have the proper fellowship with our fellow believers, it is difficult to have fellowship with the Lord; the reason for this is that the divine fellowship is one fellowship—Acts 2:42.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2. When we are not in this fellowship in a practical way, we are out of the Spirit, out of the Triune God, and out of the divine life—cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 2:1.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Phil 2:1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,

3. We should try to have fellowship with our fellow believers as much as possible; this divine fellowship not only corrects us, but it also molds us and even reconstitutes us; this fellowship brings the divine constituent into our spiritual being, causing a change in our being.

D. The horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship; this interwoven fellowship is the real fellowship:
1. When we fellowship with one another in a genuine way by exercising our spirit, we are eager to pray and contact the Lord; this shows how close the relationship is between the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship.
2. Our horizontal fellowship with the saints brings us into vertical fellowship with the Lord; then our vertical fellowship with the Lord brings us into horizontal fellowship with the saints.

V. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life; we must realize that when fellowship disappears, God also disappears; God comes as the fellowship:

A. Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the fellowship of the divine life, the flow of the divine life, is the divine life itself.
B. Our Christian life is a life in the fellowship of life; eventually, in this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us; this interweaving is the mingling of God with man.
C. The divine fellowship is the dispensing of the Triune God into us, the tripartite men, making us and God one; the Greek word for *fellowship* means "joint participation," and this joint participation issues in oneness.
D. Actually, fellowship is just oneness; when God is fellowshipping with us and when we are

fellowshipping with God, that makes God and us one; in the whole universe there is a big oneness, and this big oneness is the divine fellowship.

E. The Lord desires to make us all one as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one; in John 17 the Lord prayed, "That they may be one, even as We are one" (v. 22b); the oneness of the Body of Christ is the enlarged oneness of the Divine Trinity (v. 21).

John 17 be omitted.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

F. The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ:

1. The reason that the Lord has not yet come back (Rev. 22:20) is that the believers are individualistic, independent, opinionated, and divided.

Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

2. By being restricted in the divine fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness, and the work of the ministry continues to go on; the thing that makes everything alive is fellowship—Eph. 4:11-12; cf. Ezek. 47:9.

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

Ezek 47:9 And every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes shall live, and there will be very many fish when this water comes there. And the water of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live wherever the river comes.

G. Fellowship also indicates a putting away of private interests and a joining with others for a certain common purpose; hence, to live in the divine fellowship is to put aside our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God's purpose—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; 3:6, 12.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

H. Eventually, the church and the Divine Trinity are one in fellowship—John 14:21, 23.

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

VI. As we are enjoying Christ in the divine fellowship, we continually experience a cycle in our spiritual life of four crucial things—the eternal life, the fellowship of the eternal life, the divine light, and the blood of Jesus the Son of God; such a cycle brings us onward in the growth of the divine life until we reach the maturity of life to corporately arrive at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—1 John 1:1-9; Heb. 6:1; Eph. 4:13.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life

1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:4 And these things we write that our joy may be made full.
1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
1 John 1:8 If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,
Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE VERTICAL ASPECT OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The divine fellowship has two aspects: the vertical aspect between God and us and the horizontal aspect among the believers. The horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship is by the human spirit. The vertical aspect of the divine fellowship is by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22). The word *by* is actually not strong enough to express what we mean. The Spirit is not merely involved, wrapped up, or mingled with the fellowship. The Spirit Himself is the fellowship because the fellowship is the flow, the current, of the Spirit. This is like saying that the current of electricity is just the electricity itself. The current of electricity is electricity in motion. When the electricity stops, the current of electricity also stops. In the same way the fellowship of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Spirit moving. The grace of Christ is Christ Himself enjoyed by us, the love of God is God Himself tasted by us, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself moving within us. The divine fellowship is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Without the divine Spirit there is no fellowship. The Spirit is the very element of the fellowship. When a stand is made of wood, wood is the element of the stand. Likewise, if a stand is made of steel, steel is the element of the stand. If you take away the element, the stand ceases to exist. It is the same with the divine fellowship. If you take away the Spirit, the divine fellowship disappears.

There is a great lack of the experience of the divine fellowship in today's Christianity. For this reason, hardly anything is spoken concerning the fellowship of the divine life. Mostly, people preach the gospel by telling people that when they are saved, they will go to heaven after they die. The word about going to heaven after one dies, however, is completely inaccurate. When a person dies, he does not go to heaven but to Hades (Luke 16:22-23; Acts 2:27, 31). The believers will go to the pleasant section of Hades called Paradise, and the unbelievers will go to the unpleasant section of Hades (2 Cor. 12:4; Luke 23:43; 16:22-23, 25-26).

According to the Bible, the saints do not go to heaven after death but to Paradise. The thought that the saints go to heaven after death is part of the leaven added to the three measures of meal by the woman in Matthew 13:33. This woman is the Roman Catholic Church, which took many pagan practices, heretical doctrines, and evil matters and mixed them with the teachings concerning Christ to leaven the whole content of Christianity. Today most of Christianity preaches a gospel that has been fully leavened.

Today as believers we have been redeemed, but the effect of death still remains with us. Physical death causes our spirit and soul to be separated from our body. This separation is the effect of death.

The spirits and souls of the dead believers are in Paradise waiting for the day of resurrection (John 5:29a), the day in which their bodies will be redeemed and transfigured (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51-52). By resurrection and in resurrection the spirit, soul, and body of each of the dead believers will no longer be separated.

Today the apostle Paul still remains separated from his body. His body is probably buried somewhere around Rome, the place of his martyrdom, but his spirit and soul are in Paradise. This effect of death will be erased by resurrection at the Lord's coming. The Lord will exercise His marvelous, sovereign, mighty power to raise up Paul's dead body from the earth, to change it, and to reunite Paul with his transfigured body. This erases the effect of death. Only resurrection life can conquer the effect of death (vv. 54-55).

In Philippians 1:23 Paul says, "I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better." To be with Christ is a matter of degree, not place. While Paul was desiring to be with Christ in a higher degree, he was already with Him continually. Through his physical death he would be in Paradise with Christ to a fuller extent than he enjoyed in this earthly life. Even with this realization, Paul preferred to remain on the earth for the sake of the Philippian believers (vv. 24-25).

I would prefer not to leave my body through death. I would rather have my body transfigured, having it conformed to the body of His glory (3:21), at the time of the Lord's coming back. At the resurrection of the dead saints or the transfiguration of the living ones, the corruptible and mortal body will put on incorruption and immortality (1 Cor. 15:52-53). At that time death will be swallowed up unto victory (v. 54).

The proper teaching concerning the rapture of the saints is missing in Christianity. The proper teaching concerning the divine fellowship is also missing. The Lord needs a full recovery of all the unleavened divine truths.

THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BY THE HUMAN SPIRIT

We need to enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit (Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10). If we are going to have real fellowship horizontally with one another, we need to exercise our spirit. If we exercise our spirit, we will never talk in a worldly manner or speak negatively about the saints or the churches. A local church can be severely damaged if many of the saints in that locality spend time speaking negative things about other saints and other churches. Such discussions spread gossip and death among the saints. This kind of contact between the saints is not the fellowship of spirit that Paul speaks about in Philippians 2. In Philippians 2:1-2 Paul says, "If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, make my joy full." Paul seems to be saying, "Brothers, if you have any fellowship with me in spirit, your fellowship will be my encouragement and consolation. Then you will make my joy full."

Real fellowship is by our spirit. When we exercise our spirit, we are unable to talk about worldly amusements and entertainment. When we exercise our spirit, the nature of our conversation will change because our spirit is holy (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6). If there are problems in a certain church, we may have a desire to merely talk about the situation, but our spirit within will urge us to pray. Our spirit will not allow us to gossip about others' mistakes and failures. The only way to have the reality of horizontal fellowship is by exercising our spirit.

The two aspects of the divine fellowship require us to be in the two spirits, the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. These two spirits eventually become one (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). When Paul charges us to walk according to the spirit in Romans 8:4, he is speaking of the mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled with our human spirit. When we exercise our spirit to carry out the divine fellowship, we are fully sanctified, rescued, and saved from everything other than Christ. To be victorious, overcoming, sanctified, and transformed, we must exercise our spirit to carry out the two

aspects of the divine fellowship.

THE INTERWOVEN FELLOWSHIP INCLUDING THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ASPECTS

The horizontal and vertical aspects of the divine fellowship are very closely related. We can see this from our experience. Sometimes we may talk about other saints under the pretense of having fellowship about their situation, but our conversation is actually gossip. Afterward, we often cannot pray because our praying spirit is quenched by our gossip. But when we fellowship in a genuine way by exercising our spirit, we are eager to pray and contact the Lord. This shows how close the relationship is between the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship. The horizontal fellowship ushers us into the vertical fellowship. If two brothers exercise their spirit to have genuine, proper, horizontal fellowship, they will eventually be ushered into a very honest and sincere intercession. When they pray together, the two aspects of the divine fellowship are interwoven. The horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship. This interwoven fellowship is the real fellowship.

Fellowship cannot have just one aspect alone. You cannot have the vertical fellowship without the horizontal fellowship. If you have a good time with the Lord in vertical fellowship, you will be eager to see the other saints in order to have fellowship with them. Once you have fellowship with the saints through prayer, you are brought into vertical fellowship with the Lord again. Your horizontal fellowship with the saints brings you into vertical fellowship with the Lord. Then your fellowship with the Lord brings you into horizontal fellowship with the saints. Thus, these two aspects are always interwoven; that is, they are always crisscrossing each other.

When we have the proper view of the divine fellowship with its two aspects, we will thank the Lord that we have the opportunity to fellowship with other saints. Every day as we fellowship with the Lord, we are ushered into fellowship with other saints. The more we have this kind of fellowship, the more we will sing and praise the Lord together. There is not much singing and praising among us because we are short of the divine fellowship.

THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BEING EVERYTHING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the fellowship of the divine life, the flow of the divine life, is the divine life itself. We can say that electrical appliances live an "electrical life," a life of the current of electricity. Similarly, our Christian life is a life of the fellowship of the divine life. The New Testament reveals that the Christian meeting, the Christian married life, and the Christian work are just the divine fellowship. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life. Those who were saved in Acts 2 were brought into and continued steadfastly in the apostles' fellowship (v. 42). Later in the New Testament, the divine fellowship is called the fellowship of the Father and of His Son (1 John 1:3), the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14), and the fellowship of spirit (Phil. 2:1).

In John's first Epistle, he speaks of the divine fellowship. First John 1:2-3 says, "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The apostles wanted to have fellowship with the believers; this is horizontal fellowship. Then the apostles stated that their fellowship was with the Triune God; this is vertical fellowship. The vertical fellowship brings us into the horizontal fellowship. The horizontal fellowship then brings us into the vertical fellowship on a larger scale. This larger scale of fellowship is the meetings.

Today we stress the new way, the God-ordained way, to meet and to serve. We must realize that the new way will issue in a different kind of meeting than we presently have. In meetings according to the new way, everyone will be full of the enjoyment of Christ, participating in the vertical and

horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship. The meeting itself will be a fellowship. Today, however, our meetings are not like this. They have not come up to the standard of the vision we have seen concerning the proper meetings.

All the functioning in the meetings should be an expression of the divine fellowship. To prophesy is an expression of this fellowship. To testify is also a part of this fellowship. To read a verse from the Bible to the saints in the Lord's table may also be a small part of this fellowship. The entire meeting should be a fellowship. We should be vertically fellowshipping with the Lord and, at the same time, be horizontally fellowshipping with one another.

Eventually, in this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us. This interweaving is the mingling of God with man. All the meetings should be an interwoven fellowship with both the vertical and horizontal aspects. Our married life should also be an interwoven fellowship. The husband and the wife should be interwoven not only with each other but also with the Lord. The real Christian marriage should be the divine fellowship. Our coordination and work together should also be the divine fellowship.

We must realize that when fellowship disappears, God also disappears. God comes as the fellowship. Today our meetings, our married life, the coordination among the co-workers, and the fellowship among the local churches are abnormal because we are short of this fellowship. Today there is not enough fellowship among the local churches, and the churches are not absolutely one in the fellowship.

The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life. The apostle Paul lived in this fellowship. When we live in the divine fellowship, our Christian life becomes very living, active, and full of impact. We need to fully enter into the experience of the divine fellowship in its two aspects by the two spirits. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1990,* vol. 1, "The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man," pp. 359-365)