

Announcements:

General

1. Hall 3 Meeting Schedule

The Lord's Day meeting schedule is as follows:

10:00am - 10:30am

Lord's Table

10:30am - 11:00am

Refreshments and informal fellowship

11:00am - 12:00am

Praise, Songs and Message

The church in Toronto

Twelve Baskets Full Week 7

December 10 - December 22, 2007

Living by the Law of Life

Weekly Bible Reading:

Luke 4:14-19; Psalm 24; 100; 113; 117; 146; 150.

Hymns:

1191; 403; 1162; 1141; 737

Monday

Verses for Morning Revival

Romans 7:5, 18

5 For when we were in the flesh, the passions for sins, which acted through the law, operated in our members to bear fruit to death.

18 ...in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Many Christians Live by Their Own Will

"In the Christian life an important principle is to live not by one's own will but by the law of the Spirit of life. Many Christians, especially the young ones, do not see this, nor have they learned this lesson. The strength of their living is dependent upon their will and sustained by their will. They dare not put aside their will for even a moment, because they know that they will stumble and their Christian living will cease. The living of many Christians is dependent upon their will. Brothers and sisters, even if you have been a Christian for many years, do not think that you no longer live by your will. Many still maintain their Christian living by their will. Perhaps you still do not know the extent to which your will occupies your living and how much ground you have given your will.

"The person in Romans 7 is one who lives by his will...He can say, 'I want God's will and I want to please God; I want to do only things that are good, and I will glorify God's name.' He may make many resolutions in his will, but he can do nothing more. There is a gross misconception in his thinking that whether or not a man can do good is dependent on whether or not he wills to do it. He does not see that doing good or evil is a matter of a law, not a matter of the will. He does not see that even if he has decided to do good, he will only experience failure and disappointment.

"...Many brothers and sisters wonder and say, 'Why can't I do what I will, and why do I instead do what I do not will?' Brothers and sisters, God wants to show you one thing in this situation: Your willpower cannot be the power of your living. Perhaps you still do not know how much you live by your will.

Therefore, let us first take a look at how man lives by his will.”
(*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 38, Chpt. 57, pp. 431-432*)

Tuesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Romans 8:1-2

- 1
? There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Zechariah 4:6b

- 6 ...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Jehovah of hosts.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

To Live by the Will Is to Try to be a Certain Type of Person When You Are Not
“A clear sign of living by the will is refusing to let go. Many people refuse to let go of themselves. This does not mean that Christians do not need restrictions. But many Christians hold on to themselves; they will not let go of themselves. It is an arduous task being a Christian who puts a very tight grip on himself, thinking that a Christian must be careful in the way he eats, the way he walks, the way he rides a streetcar, and the way he talks with his family. From morning to evening he keeps a firm hold on himself in order to behave like a Christian and in order to walk, eat, and travel properly. It seems that one can only be a Christian when he firmly holds on to himself and carefully bridles himself! He thinks that once he lets loose of his grip, he will fail. This is the situation of many Christians who live by their will. They firmly hold on to themselves in an effort to live like Christians; they force themselves to act like Christians. This is like trying to make a stream flow upward...Many people ...make the strength of their will the power of their life.”

“Many Christians fear that if they let go or if they do not exercise their will to act like Christians, things will become unpleasant. Many Christians say, ‘I cannot let go of myself. If I let go of myself, things will be unpleasant. Even though I am keeping a tight grip on myself, I still cannot speak or walk properly; I am still weak and failing. What would happen to me if I let go?’ Many Christians are obsessed with this fear and dare not release their grip. But God’s Word is very clear! If we believe in what God has already given us and release our grip, we will not fall to the ground; rather we will fall into a new law.

“May God open our eyes to see that no one can resist the law of sin by his will; nor can anyone resist the law of sin by willing to do good. No one can do the will of God or resist the law of sin and of death by his own will. The will can never contend with the law of sin and of death! Thank and praise God!

that speaks in you. There is no need for your own striving or working.”
(*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 38, Chpt. 57, pp. 442-443*)

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

Suggested Supplementary Reading

Our Experience in the Church Life

“In conclusion, let us return to Romans 8:1-2 ‘There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.’ God uses the first law to deliver us from the second law; God uses a new law to save us from the old law. I would like to ask you a few questions. How much do you know of this new law? Is your Christian life governed by your will or by the manifestation of this new law in you? Are you living your Christian life, or is there a spontaneous law, a spontaneous power of life in you that directs you to live the Christian life in a spontaneous way? Brothers and sisters, you can boast about your knowledge; you can boast about your power; you can boast about your work; you can boast about your sacrifice; and you can boast about your intelligence. You can be proud of all these things, but if you do not have this law, you have nothing to be proud of, because you have not learned the first lesson of the Christian life. The first lesson in the Christian life is that the Christian life is very spontaneous. The life in Romans 8 does not require any effort; everything is spontaneous in this life. Oh, may the Lord grant us grace so that we may truly say to Him, ‘I am willing to live in Your presence. I believe Your Word. I believe that I received the law of life when I was born again. This law is greater than the law of sin and of death. With the law of sin and of death, I sin spontaneously. With this law, I trust You spontaneously, serve You spontaneously, and glorify and praise Your name spontaneously!’ ”

(*ibid.*, pp. 443-444)

Prayer Burdens

1. Pray for the young peoples' "Ignite" gathering in Toronto from Dec. 27th to 30th. May the Lord encourage more young people to participate in the event for their advancement in the church life. Also, pray for the needs of hospitality, practical preparations and other services, e.g., transportation, food preparation, security, activity helpers, financial offerings, etc.
2. Pray for the Eastern Canada Chinese-speaking perfecting training from Dec. 22nd to 26th. May the Lord use this crucial gathering to perfect the saints for the growth in life and the building up of the churches. Also, pray for the needs of hospitality and other practical services during the training.
3. The Grade 6 children will beginning another period of weekly Saturday evening meetings starting in February 2008. Pray for the present crop grade 6 children in the church, and specifically that they would be brought to a clear touch with the Lord in their personal experience of salvation.

Friday & Saturday

Verses for Morning Revival

Acts 5:41-42

- 41 So they went...rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the Name.
- 42 And every day...they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

The Most Damaging Thing to the Christian Life

"O brothers and sisters, we can say much more about this matter. We can relate innumerable experiences to prove this point. Our victory is not a victory of the will but a victory of the law of life. When we need knowledge, there is a law in us that continually gives us knowledge of what is right and wrong. When we are faced with a task, there is strength within us which carries us through in a very spontaneous way. In all of our living, we see the effects of this law. Many Christians live in too much pretension and performance. Many Christians 'act out' their Christian life. Their daily life is nothing but a performance. Oh, the moment we see the law of life, the first thing we will do is drop our own work! Many people use spiritual terms and adopt spiritual behavior, yet they are the ones who are doing these things. Once a person sees the law of life, the first thing he will do is drop his own work. Performance is the most damaging thing to the Christian life. Many Christians who perform think that the better they perform, the better Christian they will be. The outward expressions of spirituality of many Christians are artificial; they are the work of the will. When we see the law of the Spirit of life, we will cease all of our outward performance. All of our expressions will be spontaneous; all of our words will be spontaneous; all of our prayers and our living will be spontaneous. With this law in us, how spontaneous our living will be! We will not need to expend any effort; our will will not be required to purpose anything; we will live very spontaneously. After going through a day this way, we will say when we lie down at night, 'Today I did not try to be a Christian, yet I lived as a Christian. Today I did not try to do anything, yet the Lord brought me through.' Brothers and sisters, when you put aside your will, you will not be any worse than you are today. When you throw aside the crutch of your will, you will not fall. On the contrary, you will become very spontaneous. Formerly, you prayed and asked for this or that from the Lord, just as Jacob did when he wrestled with God. But when you walk before God, you will see that you have become a soft person in His hand. You will not have to pretend to be soft; you are soft already. You will live a simple Christian life, yet throughout your life the Lord's name will be glorified. The Lord has given you life. It is a life that operates in you, a life

There is another new law that can contend with the law of sin and of death. Thank and praise God! This is not only a new life; this is also a new law."

The Law of the Spirit of Life

"Oh, what a joy that this life is a law! God has given us not only the Holy Spirit but also the law of the Holy Spirit. God has given us not only life but also the law of life... The law of sin and of death still exists, but we are no longer living under its power. We are living under another law.

"Brothers and sisters, if you want to know what the law of life is, simply lift up your eyes and look at the birds in the air. How do they fly? They fly because their life has a law of flying. They have a life, and in their life there is a law. This law enables them to fly...God has indeed given us grace and dispensed a new life as well as a new law to us. This renders the law of sin and of death of none effect. It is not destroyed; but it is rendered of none effect. God did not eradicate the force of 'gravity'; rather, He gave us another law of life, so that the 'birds' can now overcome the law of 'gravity.'..."

God's Way of Salvation Has Nothing to Do With Resolving

"Some have been Christians for twenty or thirty years, yet they still do not know that sin and death are a law and that life is also a law. You need to know that God's way of salvation has nothing to do with resolving to be someone you are not. There is a life in you that delivers you from the law of sin and of death. God has no intention that you will, hope, desire, or purpose to be a certain kind of Christian. If you try to do it by your own will, it will seem as if you are hung up in midair; the endeavor will be quite strenuous. If you have ever seen a talkative Christian, you know how difficult it is for him to try to talk less. He knows that he should not speak so much, yet he cannot refrain from speaking. It is very difficult for him to stop speaking. Have you ever seen a quick-tempered Christian? It is really hard to ask him to be patient. If he tries to practice patience, sooner or later he will become sick from repression. But thank God! The way of salvation is not to be someone you are not; rather, it is living out a new law of life from within. When this law is lived out from within, sin will appear to be nonexistent and annihilated, and the power of death will seemingly disappear. If you are healthy, you will not feel the force of gravity when you are walking. You can lift up your feet because there is a greater power in you. This is the meaning of the law of life."

(*ibid.*, pp. 432-433, 435-438)

Wednesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Romans 8:2

2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Matthew 5:48

48 You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

How the Law of the Spirit of Life Operates Within Us

“...The Lord uses the law of the Spirit of life to deliver us from the law of sin and of death. He uses one law to overcome another law, and He uses today's law to overcome yesterday's law. How does this law manifest itself in a Christian? How can we detect the law of the Spirit of life in a Christian?

“...The law of the Spirit of life will manifest itself in God's children in the way of knowledge. There should not be any ignorant Christians... We may be a weak believer, having just believed in the Lord Jesus and just received life into us. Yet as soon as we believe in the Lord and as soon as the Spirit of life dwells in us, the law will be instructing us within. Many servants of the Lord have met many of God's children in various places, and they have all come to the conclusion that there is not a child of God who does not know His will. There are no ignorant children; there are only disobedient children. When we talk too much, do we not feel something restraining us within? Sometimes when we open our mouth to speak certain things, is there not something within telling us to stop? Do we not have a feeling that we should stop? Brothers and sisters, this life is in us, and it is always manifested through its law.

“...Where there is life, there is also the law of life. If we have God's life, whenever we need knowledge, we will find it within. This is true not only with big matters but also with very small matters, matters that we feel are insignificant. Sometimes when we go to someone's house, our steps may be a little too heavy as we are walking up the stairs. A voice within may say, ‘This is not right.’ Walking up stairs is not a big thing, but when the sound of our footsteps becomes a little too heavy, our inner being will tell us that this is not right. Sometimes we want to take a book from someone else's bookshelf and read it, but inwardly a voice says, ‘This is not right because the book does not belong to you. You have not asked, and you have not been given permission. How can you take it and read it?’ Brothers and sisters, the law of life is in us; indeed, it is in us. The problem is that many are not willing to walk according to this law. If a person lives by this life, his feeling will become very sensitive. We have a law within, and this law will tell us that we cannot trespass against others. It will tell us that we cannot be so loud, that our laughter is not proper, or that our motive in saying a word is wrong. We may encounter tens of thousands of things, but the law within will tell us what we should do in each case. Even if a person is not refined or educated, the law of life will be in him as long as he has the Lord's life. The

law of life will give him knowledge, and through this knowledge he will express God in his living.”

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 38, Chpt. 57, pp. 438-439)

Thursday

Verses for Morning Revival

1 Corinthians 15:56-58

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Living in the Spontaneous Operation of Life

“The biggest failure of many Christians at this point is exercising their will. When you feel that a brother is not lovable, you hastily exercise your will to treat him well. Whenever you have a problem, you exercise your will immediately to try to solve this problem. When you meet a person whom you cannot love, you immediately force yourself to love him. Yet in spite of your great effort, you still cannot love him. At such times, you should stop and say to the Lord, ‘I do not have any strength to love him. Lord, I know that there is a life in me, and this life loves him.’ Simply remain in His presence. There is no need to think or ask. All you have to do is say, ‘Lord, I want to live fully by the law of life.’ You do not need to exert any effort at all, because you believe that there is a law within you, a law that loves the brothers. This gives you the boldness to see him and talk to him. The strange thing is that when you do this, you will unconsciously (note the word unconsciously) converse with him. You will unconsciously love him and unconsciously treat him like a brother. You will talk with him and fellowship with him. Later, even you will be surprised, saying, ‘I did not do anything. Yet the Lord brought me through beyond my comprehension.’ Brothers and sisters, this is the law of life; it enables you to unconsciously overcome, without any need of your willpower. “If we know God, we will realize that the law of the Spirit of life, like the law of sin and of death, is spontaneous. Hallelujah! It is spontaneous. Sinning requires no exercise of the will; the law of sin does it for us. Neither do we need to set our will to do good; it is the law of the Spirit of life that does it for us. Lying, coveting, and losing one's temper require no exercise of the will. There is a law that causes one to lie, covet, and lose his temper. Holiness, righteousness, love, and purity also require no effort of the will; there is a law in us that produces all of these things. The exercise of the will is man's work, not the Lord's work. Herein lies the basic difference. The Lord has given us a law, and this law is spontaneous.”