

*Our Experience in the Church Life*

**Trading Our Murmuring, Reasoning, Weeping, and Suffering for Our Rejoicing Together**

"All the saints need to think the one thing in order to have the full enjoyment of Christ. Then when they come together, they will be able to offer Christ to God as a sacrifice. Moreover, the church also needs the apostles and the leading ones to have the abundant experience of Christ subjectively to pour out as a drink offering upon the saints' offering. What a rich church life this is! When the children of Israel entered the good land, they had a great deal of wine to drink. Thus, they had the wine to pour out as a drink offering before God. This means that their experience and enjoyment of Christ had become much higher than it was the wilderness. In the church life, we have not only the Christ experienced by the saints and offered to God as offerings, but also upon these offerings the pouring out by the leading ones of the Christ they have experienced. This means that the enjoyment of Christ is poured upon the enjoyment of Christ. This produces a sweet-smelling savor to God. This is the church life that issues out of the full enjoyment of Christ. On the side of the Philippians, it was the sacrifice offered to God. On the side of the Apostle Paul, it was the drink offering. Both are the result of the enjoyment of Christ.

"The result of the pouring out of the drink offering upon the offering of the saints is rejoicing. This is the experience of Christ for the church life. The leaders rejoice with the saints, and the saints rejoice with the leaders. We rejoice with one another, and we rejoice together. Because there is rejoicing, there is no murmuring, reasoning, weeping, or suffering. We all need to say, 'Lord, recover us to such a high degree. Raise our meetings to such a standard that whenever we come together, many sacrifices will be offered to God and much wine will be poured out by the leaders upon the offerings of the saints.' This is possible only by our thinking the one thing and by being one in soul."

*(Witness Lee, The Experience of Christ, Chpt. 5, pp. 49-50)*

**Prayer Burdens**

1. Please pray for the year end Ignite for GLA young people. Many friends have been invited. Please pray that they would hear the Lord speaking in their hearts.
2. We thank the Lord for the over 70 friends that heard the gospel at Hall 1 on December 16th. Please continue to pray for them that the word they heard would continue to work in them. Please also continue to pray that the word would take root in the more than 40 that did receive the Lord that evening.

**Announcements:**

**Book Room**

1. **2007 Calendars ready for pickup**  
The Chinese Gospel Calendars for 2007 have arrived and can be picked up at the Bookroom by those who pre-ordered them.

**Taking Christ as the Pattern and Holding Him Forth (4) — a Drink Offering Upon the Sacrifice of Faith**

*Weekly Bible Reading:*

**Philippians 2:17-18**

*Hymns:*

**911; 778; 878**

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**Monday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

**Philippians 2:17a**

- 17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith...

**Numbers 28:2b**

- 2** ...My offering, My food for My offerings by fire of a satisfying fragrance to Me, you shall be careful to present to Me at its appointed time.

**Numbers 15:11**

- 10** ...you shall present for the drink offering half a hin of wine, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

**The Sacrifice and Priestly Service of Our Faith**

"In 2:17 Paul says, 'But if even I am poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith, I rejoice and rejoice together with you all.' In this verse Paul speaks of 'the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith,' a phrase which is difficult for students of the Bible to understand. Here two matters are related to the believers' faith: the sacrifice and the priestly service. Paul regards the believers' faith as a sacrifice offered to God. The priestly service refers to the offering of sacrifices by a priest. In this verse Paul seems to be saying, 'Philippians, I consider your faith as a sacrifice offered to God, and my offering of this sacrifice to Him is a priestly service.'...

"In the book of Philippians Paul uses certain extraordinary expressions such as 'the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ' (1:19), 'holding forth the word of life' (2:16), and 'the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith.' If we would know the secret of experiencing Christ as revealed in this book, we need to understand these expressions."

*(Witness Lee, Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 50, p. 437)*

**Being Constituted a Drink Offering**

"The drink offering was additional to the basic offerings revealed in Leviticus chapters one through seven (Num. 15:1-10; 28:7-10). The basic offerings were types of various aspects of Christ. The drink offering was a type of Christ as

enjoyed by the offerer, an offering that fills him with Christ as the heavenly wine and even causes him to become wine to God..."

"...the drink offering signifies that the offerer himself becomes the drink offering. However, this does not mean that the offerer can be such a drink offering according to his own natural constitution. Rather, he must enjoy Christ to such an extent that Christ fills him, saturates him, and permeates him. Christ is the heavenly wine for our enjoyment. When we enjoy Him by taking Him into us, we shall become filled with Him and thoroughly saturated with Him. In this way we shall become the wine to be poured out as a drink offering upon the offerings we present to God.

"With the typology in the Old Testament as a basis, Paul came to regard himself as a drink offering poured out upon the sacrifice and priestly service of the believers' faith. For years Paul had been drinking of Christ and enjoying Him so that he came to the point that he was filled with Christ and saturated with Him. Eventually, Christ as the heavenly wine caused Paul to become a constitution of wine in his very being. This was the reason Paul could consider himself wine poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice he offered to God as a priest."

*(ibid., Msg. 14, pp. 115-116)*

## Tuesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 2:17a

**17** ...I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith...

### 2 Peter 1:1

**1** Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

### 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

**13** Watch, stand firm in the faith, be full-grown men, be strong.

**14** Let all your matters be done in love.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### Our Faith Is a Constitution of Our Enjoyment of Christ

"In 2:17 Paul speaks of 'the sacrifice and priestly service of your faith.' The sacrifice of the believers' faith means that the faith of the Philippian believers was considered by Paul a sacrifice offered to God by him as a priest (Rom. 15:16), and his offering ministry was considered a priestly service. The issue, the result, of Paul's ministry was the faith of the believers. Faith in 2:17 is all-inclusive. It refers to much more than the act of believing. Faith here includes all the believers have received and enjoyed. Ultimately it includes what the believers themselves are. This faith was the result of Paul's ministry. Paul's ministry resulted in the all-inclusive faith of the believers, the faith which Paul offered to God as a sacrifice.

"To be sure, the sacrifice of the believers' faith was full of Christ. It included Christ as the basic offerings. When we experience Christ in these different aspects and enjoy Him as these basic offerings, this experience and enjoyment become our faith. Experientially, the enjoyment of Christ as the basic offerings eventually becomes our faith. Hence, this faith is constituted of the Christ we experience and

**16** ...He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

**17** That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

**18** May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are

**19** And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### We Can be Strengthened by the Element of Faith into the Joy of Faith

"Ephesians 3:16-19 says that when the Father grants us according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into our inner man, Christ will make His home in our hearts by faith. Then, being rooted and grounded in love, we shall be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, length, height, and depth, and know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God. If we take time to pray-read these verses and to muse upon them, our faith will be strengthened. Something within us will be strengthened to realize that Christ is making His home in our hearts, that we are being rooted and grounded in love, that we are apprehending the dimensions of Christ, and that we are even being filled unto all the fullness of God. A certain element has been infused into us to strengthen us, and this element is faith.

"Before we pray-read these verses, we may feel weak. But after we pray-read them, we shall be empowered. We shall be like an automobile tire that has been filled with air. In our experience we shall realize that faith, the word, and the Spirit are truly one as our portion. Furthermore, we shall have the enjoyment of Christ in faith. We shall enjoy being strengthened with power, having Christ make His home in our hearts, being rooted and grounded in love, experiencing the dimensions of Christ, and being filled unto all the fullness of God."

"To have the enjoyment of Christ is to have the joy of faith. Paul speaks of the joy of faith in Philippians 1:25: 'And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith.' Paul was constrained by two things: the desire to depart and be with Christ and the need to remain in the flesh for the sake of the saints (vv. 23-24). Eventually he concluded that he would remain and continue with the believers for their progress and enjoyment of faith. Paul's expectation was that he would minister more of Christ to the saints so that they would have more experience of Him. Through Paul's ministry they would receive more infusion and as a result would have more faith. This faith would then bring them a greater enjoyment of Christ. In this way they would have the progress and joy of the faith."

*(ibid., pp. 440-441, 444)*

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

### Suggested Supplementary Reading

**16a** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...

**2 Corinthians 13:11**

**11** ...rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

**Gaining Faith by Our Practical Receiving of the Word through the Spirit**

"...Ephesians 1:13 says, 'In Whom you also, hearing the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise.' As a result of hearing the word of the truth and of believing in Christ, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit. In this verse we have the word, faith, and the Spirit. By hearing the word and believing it, we receive the Spirit. The word, faith, and the Spirit are one."

"The first function of the Word is to infuse us with faith. I do not believe it is possible for someone to repeat a Bible verse ten times without being infused with faith. Suppose an atheist reads John 3:16 and repeats this verse again and again. Even this atheist would be infused with faith through the Word.

"The faith infused into us through the Word is the function of the Spirit. Faith is both the issue of the Word and the function of the Spirit. When the Word comes to us and is contacted by us, we receive the Spirit. This means that when the Word reaches us and we touch it, the Word becomes the Spirit in our experience. Thus, the Word first comes to us and then it becomes the Spirit in us.

"The Word becoming the Spirit in our experience can be illustrated by the lighting of a match. The head of a match is a ball made of phosphorus. When we strike a match in a proper way, the phosphorus bursts into flame. Is the flame different from the phosphorus? No, it is simply the explosion of the phosphorus. In like manner, the Spirit is the 'explosion' of the Word. When we experience this explosion, we are 'burned' by the 'fire.' This burning is faith.

"As a young Christian, I earnestly desired to have faith. I read a number of books about faith. However, none of these books told me what faith is in actuality. Only in recent years have I discovered through my experience what faith is. Faith comes out of the word that infuses us with the divine element. Hence, faith is the issue of the word and of the Spirit's function. When we have the word with the Spirit, we spontaneously have faith. As we have pointed out, faith, the word, and the Spirit are one.

"If you consider this definition of faith in the presence of the Lord, you will worship Him. You will see that whenever there is genuine faith in you, the word is implied and the Spirit is realized. Apart from the word and the Spirit, it is impossible for us to have faith."

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 50, pp. 439-440)*

**Saturday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

**Ephesians 3:16-19**

enjoy.

"We must not make the mistake of understanding the faith spoken of in 2:17 in a shallow, superficial way. Faith is a constitution of our experience of Christ. As such, it could be viewed by Paul as a sacrifice to be offered to God. The faith which can be offered to God as a sacrifice is a constitution of our enjoyment of Christ. The amount of faith constituted in us is in proportion to our enjoyment of Christ. The more we enjoy Him, the more we have the faith which is constituted of the enjoyment of Christ."

*(ibid., Msg. 14, pp. 116-117)*

**An Illustration of the Constituting of Faith into Us**

"The like precious faith, allotted to us by God through the word of God's New Testament economy and the Spirit, responds to the reality of such a content and ushers us into this reality. It makes the substance of God's economy the element of our Christian life and experience. Such a faith is allotted to all the believers in Christ as their portion. This faith is objective to us in the divine truth, but it brings all the content of its substantiation into us. The substantiating is the faith, and this faith brings into us whatever it substantiates. In this way, faith causes everything substantiated by it to become subjective to us in our experience.

"We may use a camera as an illustration. Suppose you want to photograph a particular scene. The scene corresponds to the truth, and our experience of seeing this scene corresponds to faith. Both the scene and the seeing are objective to the camera, for neither has come into the camera. But light makes it possible for the scene to be impressed on the film. The light corresponds to the Spirit, and the film corresponds to our spirit. In this way both the scene and the seeing enter into the camera and become subjective to it. The camera 'clicks,' the light gets in, and the scene is brought into the camera and impressed on the film. We are the 'camera,' and our spirit is the film. Now the scene and the seeing are subjective to us. This is faith. Faith implies all the items in the 'scenery' of the New Testament inheritance according to the New Testament economy. In the New Testament we see a complete picture of this scenery. But this scenery is outside of us. How can it get into us? It comes in through our seeing and through the Spirit's work. This was our experience when we were saved and regenerated. We heard the preaching of the gospel, there was a 'click' of the shutter of the 'camera,' and the light came into us. As a result, the divine scenery was impressed on our spirit."

*(Life-study of 2 Peter, Msg. 2, p. 11-12)*

**Wednesday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

**Romans 15:16**

**16** ...I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 12:14m, 15a**

**14** ...I do not seek what is yours but you...

**15** But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls...

### **The Sacrifice of the Believers' Faith Makes God Happy**

"As a result of their experience of Christ and enjoyment of Christ, the believers have a constitution which Paul terms faith. In the eyes of God, this faith is so excellent, beautiful, and marvelous that He considers it a sacrifice offered to Him. Paul, after experiencing the Lord for so many years, especially during his imprisonment, became a constitution of heavenly wine that could cheer God and make Him happy. The sacrifice of the believers' faith was satisfying to God, and the drink offering was cheering to Him. Thus, the drink offering is a cheering offering presented in addition to a satisfying sacrifice. The sacrifices were very satisfying to God. In the Old Testament, the one who offered the drink offering presented something which, in type, came not from the flock or the herd, but out of himself and his experience. In the New Testament we see that through his personal enjoyment of Christ and experience of Him, Paul became cheering wine poured out before the Lord. His experience of Christ constituted him into wine to make God happy.

"In 2:16 Paul expresses his concern about laboring in vain. According to verse 17, Paul realized that his labor among the Philippians had not been in vain. He knew that their faith was the basic offering upon which he could pour out himself as a drink offering. The words, 'if even I am poured out as a drink offering,' indicate that Paul thought of himself as one who was continually being sacrificed for his ministry. His use of the word 'even' suggests that he was sacrificed to the uttermost. He considered martyrdom as a pouring out of himself upon the sacrifice of the believers' faith. From the human point of view, Paul eventually was slain. But from Paul's viewpoint, martyrdom was the pouring out of himself as a drink offering. Throughout the years, he had continually been sacrificing himself for his ministry. However, it was not until the time of martyrdom that he was poured out to the uttermost as a drink offering. Although Paul had made great sacrifices, he had not poured himself out in this way. Now if even he was poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and priestly service of the believers' faith, he could rejoice together with them all."

### **Our Service, Our Ministry is a Matter of Sacrifice, Not of Compensation**

"Paul's word here is very touching. I can testify that time and time again I have been deeply touched by his word. Here Paul implies that he was always a sacrifice for his ministry. We who serve the churches and minister Christ to the saints must learn of Paul to become a sacrifice. If there is no sacrifice, there can be no ministry. We should not think that the more we sacrifice, the greater will be our reward. Ministry is a matter of sacrifice, not of compensation. Eventually, we need to reach the point where we can say that even if we are poured out as a drink offering, we shall be happy and rejoice together with all the saints."

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 14, p. 120)*

## **Thursday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### **Philippians 2:17-18**

**17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

**18** And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.

### **John 4:36**

**36** He who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto eternal life, in order that **he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.**

### **Philippians 4:4**

**4** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **Mutual Rejoicing**

"It is significant that Paul says, 'I rejoice and rejoice together with you.' The reason he speaks of rejoicing and then of rejoicing together with the saints is that two constitutions are involved: the faith of the believers as one constitution, and the apostle as a drink offering as the other. In the pouring out of the drink offering, these two constitutions answer to each other. It is not possible for there to be rejoicing on one side, but not on the other side. The apostle rejoices, and the believers respond by rejoicing with him. This was the reason Paul could say, 'And in like manner you also rejoice and rejoice together with me.'

"It is not normal for one of two parties to rejoice and the other not to respond with rejoicing. If you rejoice before a living person, that person should respond with rejoicing. Here in 2:17 and 18 both parties, Paul and the believers, were rejoicing. When Paul rejoiced, the believers responded with rejoicing. Those who had the constitution of faith rejoiced with the one who had been constituted into a drink offering poured out upon this faith. What a marvelous interchange there was between Paul and the believers in Philippi! What a wonderful fellowship and communication! On the one hand, Paul said, 'I rejoice and rejoice together with you all.' On the other hand, he said, 'You also rejoice and rejoice together with me.' What a marvelous situation with everyone rejoicing together!

"We may be amazed that Paul's approaching martyrdom was a cause of rejoicing. Paul expected that the Philippians would share their joy with him by congratulating him in his martyrdom for the sake of their faith. Paul's martyrdom became a situation filled with rejoicing. This was made possible by the fact that with the believers there was the constitution of faith, and with Paul there was the constitution of the drink offering. As we have indicated, neither of these constitutions can be produced in a quick way. It takes much time to develop them."

*(ibid., pp. 120-121)*

## **Friday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### **Romans 10:17**

**17** ...faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

### **Colossians 3:16a**