

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 55, NOVEMBER 2002

“He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:5

In

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Therefore
HAVING THIS
MINISTRY
AS WE
HAVE BEEN
SHOWN MERCY,
WE DO NOT
LOSE HEART.

2 COR 4:1

Dear Life-study Listener,

We hope you are enjoying *Life-study of 2 Corinthians*. It is genuinely a sister book to the book of Philippians, which is on the experience of Christ. In Philippians, the apostle Paul described the believers’ experience of Christ by our taking Christ as our living, pattern, goal, power, and secret. In 2 Corinthians, he showed us ones, including himself, who lived in that way as patterns to us.

Paul forgave in the person of Christ (2:10), his life was a fragrance of Christ (2:15) and he spoke in Christ (2:17). He wrote letters of Christ into the believers (3:3) and entreated the Corinthians with the meekness and gentleness of Christ (10:1). The apostles preached Jesus Christ (1:19), not themselves (4:5), and they were His ambassadors (5:20). Paul was a man in Christ (12:2) who spoke in Christ (12:19).

Thank the Lord that in His wisdom He gave us the Epistles in the New Testament that not only explain the experience of Christ but also portray this unique life of living and experiencing Christ as seen in the faithful pattern of the Apostle Paul. May we all be encouraged and exhorted to follow this pattern.

We always desire your prayers for our work to bring to you and other lovers and seekers of Christ this newsletter, the life-study program on the radio in this country and around the world in several languages, and the broadcasts over the Internet. Thank you for standing with us in prayer.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS A MINISTER OF THE NEW COVENANT?

The Recovery Version of the New Testament concisely states that the subject of 2 Corinthians is the new covenant ministry and its ministers. This is a

(continued on page 3)

RESPONSE *from* LISTENERS

We invite you to share your comments with us and other listeners so we all may be encouraged in the Lord. Responses should be addressed to *The Hearing of Faith*, "Response from Listeners," 2431 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 or radio@lsm.org. Responses are subject to editing for the sake of space and clarity.

I heard a preacher speaking today on Genesis 47:13-26. In reference to verse 19, he spoke of Joseph making the people sharecroppers. He did not seem to see the beautiful picture here of our spiritual life in Christ. There was a time I would not have seen it either, but after listening regularly to Life-study of the Bible for two or more years and having read several books by both Watchman Nee and Witness Lee and several of the life-studies, I can say with joy and thankfulness that I am seeing our precious and all-inclusive Savior throughout the Word.

Thank you so much for the work you do in keeping Life-study of the Bible on the air. The studies offer great nourishment and enlightenment for spiritual growth. It is a comfort and encouragement to know that there are many other seekers like myself who are thrilled to come to a deeper understanding of God's economy in Christ and the church.

Grand Prairie, TX

I am on message four of the radio broadcast of Life-study of Genesis. I am being so blessed. I cannot believe I have been saved for twenty-five years and am just now beginning to understand His Word. Thanks so much for having these on-line [on the Internet] Bible studies on life. I appreciate so much the riches of Witness Lee and Watchman Nee. May the Lord continue to bless the radio broadcasts.

Omer, MI

Excerpt from

WATCHMAN NEE—A SEER OF THE DIVINE REVELATION IN THE PRESENT AGE

BY WITNESS LEE

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GIFT AND MINISTRY

We may illustrate the difference between gift and ministry by the example of Balaam's donkey. One day the donkey of the Gentile prophet suddenly spoke with human language (Num. 22:28-30). Could that be called ministry? Certainly not! That was a gift. A ministry is the expression of what we are, while a gift is merely a performance. When you behold a man speaking, walking, and gesturing, you do not imagine that he is a horse or some other kind of animal. Since he is a man, whatever he does is just the expression of that man; that is his ministry.

Consider monkeys for example. Sometimes their trainers can entice them to perform like men, but that is entirely a gift or performance. In today's Christianity there is much acting. Much of it is performance. If the apostle Paul were to visit us for one month, we would exclaim, "He is really what he ministers!"

What he has seen has been wrought into his being; hence, what he ministers is what he is. The person is the message. Today we have those who are eloquent and learned, those who have degrees after their names, those who dress in a certain way, stand upon a platform, and with a certain tone deliver a sermon. That is merely a performance; it is not the ministry. The apostle Paul was different, and Watchman Nee was also different.

I was with Watchman Nee for years. He talked about the cross, and in him I saw the cross. He was a person of the cross. The sufferings he received from all directions were just the working of the cross, and the revelation he received concerning the cross was wrought into him. What he did in years past was not merely to teach or exercise a gift. I can testify from the depths of my being that what he did was a ministry; what he did was what he was.

For the building up of the churches, gifts are not as necessary as ministry. What Watchman Nee had was not merely a gift, but a ministry. He had seen something of God and these things were burned into him. Even his presence ministered life to people. His presence always meant a great deal in a meeting. If he was there, the meeting was rich; if he was absent, the meeting was not so rich. His presence, even his silent presence, made a difference. He had a real ministry. It was not his knowledge, his doctrine, nor his gift, but something of God wrought into his being so that his very presence in the meeting made a difference. Sometimes when the troubled saints brought their problems into his presence, there was no need for him to say a word; their problems were solved. In his presence they received the light they needed. His presence became their enlightenment, for God's light had been wrought into his being. They saw light in his light. How much we need such a ministry in the church today!

*The
person
is the
message*

Watchman Nee—A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, pp. 194-195

A MINISTER OF THE NEW COVENANT

(continued from page 1)

compound subject indicating that 2 Corinthians is a book concerned with the ministry of the new covenant and also with the ministers of the new covenant. In actuality, the ministry and the ministers are one. The new covenant ministry is the living of the new covenant ministers. We have pointed out elsewhere that the new covenant ministry is produced in the believers as they pass through consuming pressures under the cross and are brought into an experiential knowledge of God as the God of resurrection (1:8-9). This constitutes within them the ministry of the Spirit and the ministry of righteousness (3:8-9). This also makes them certain kinds of persons.

In 2 Corinthians we have ample testimony concerning the person of the new covenant ministers. We see in chapter two that they have

In actuality, the ministry and the ministers are one.

been defeated and captured by Christ and are led by Him in His victorious train of vanquished foes (v. 14). In chapter three, they are mirrors beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord as they are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory (v. 18). In chapter four, they are earthen vessels conscious of their innate weakness yet boasting not in themselves but in the glorious dynamic treasure that resides within them (v. 7). As such vessels, they do not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord (v. 5). According to chapter five, these ministers of the new covenant are also God's ambassadors, His representatives, who preach the high and complete word

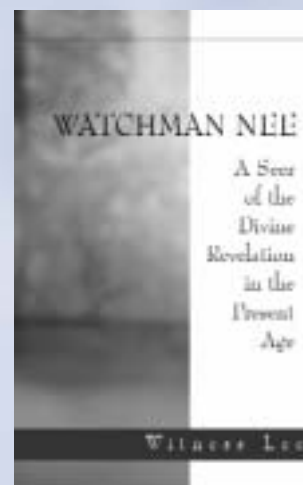
concerning reconciliation (v. 20). To unbelievers, these ministers announce the gospel that appeals to them to be reconciled to God by believing in the Christ who died for their sins (v. 18). These ministers of the new covenant, however, carry out their ministry not only to unbelievers but in a sense, even more, to the believers, the members of the church. Paul, as one of these ministers, knew well that the Corinthian believers still suffered from serious discrepancies and distance between them and God. On the one hand, they had been reconciled to God to a certain extent. On the other hand, they needed a further reconciliation to Him that they would be altogether one with Him for His corporate expression. For this reason, Paul spoke to the believers saying, "Be reconciled to God" (v. 20).

The ministers of the new covenant who carry out such a ministry and announce the word of reconciliation are themselves reconciled persons. This means they are one with God. They are in harmony with Him and live in the closest contact with Him in Christ as the Spirit. As we see in the picture of the tabernacle, these ministers no longer reside in the outer court nor even in the holy place. They have entered into the holy of holies and enjoy the Triune God in glory, being one with Him. From this position of oneness, harmony, and reconciliation with God, they appeal to us on behalf of Christ, "Be reconciled to God." It is a testimony to the triumphant grace of God that we may experience, enjoy and participate in the unique ministry of the new covenant and become in Christ ministers of the new covenant.

For further reading on this subject, please see *An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit*; and *The Experience and Growth in Life*, message 18, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

WATCHMAN NEE— A SEER OF THE DIVINE REVELATION IN THE PRESENT AGE

ISBN 0-87083-625-0



I CONSIDER WATCHMAN NEE TO BE A UNIQUE GIFT TO THE BODY....The revelations concerning Christ, the church, the Spirit, and life which I saw through Watchman Nee, the infusions of life which I received from him, and the things concerning the work and the church which I learned from him will require eternity to evaluate their true worth.

AVAILABLE AT CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORES
THROUGH ANCHOR, APPALACHIAN,
RIVERSIDE, AND SPRING ARBOR DISTRIBUTORS.
PUBLISHED BY LIVING STREAM MINISTRY
2431 W. LA PALMA AVE.
ANAHEIM, CA 92801
1-800-549-5164 • WWW.LSM.ORG

The PATH OF Life

Below are excerpts focused on matters and practices of the spiritual life as revealed in God's Word. May the Lord show us "the path of life" (Psa. 16:11) that we may have a daily living of enjoying, experiencing, and gaining Christ.

HOW TO BE USEFUL IN THE LORD'S HAND

Whether or not we are useful to the Lord depends solely on whether or not the Lord's life has had the opportunity to grow in us. We should ask ourselves, "Do I love the Lord? Have I consecrated myself to the Lord? Do I give the Lord's life the opportunity to grow? Do I allow the Lord's life to have a place in me? Have I cast aside my future? Am I

*If we limit Him,
we are finished,
and we have
nothing.*

willing to let my natural life and my flesh be broken and dealt with, allowing myself to be put aside?" Whether or not we are useful in the Lord's hand is not a question of whether or not we have the ability and capability to be useful but a matter of whether or not the life in us has grown.

SERVING THE LORD BY RELYING ON THE INNER SOURCE OF LIFE

This one thing is true: the extent to which a person gives place to the Lord's life is the extent of his usefulness in the Lord's hand. Let me share a little testimony. What I am now is altogether different from what I was when I was a boy. In my childhood I was timid and secluded. I did not like to be with others but preferred to sit by myself, always avoiding others. In school I spoke very little with others. I did not enjoy participating in activities, and I had nearly no contact with others. At home when guests came, I would find an opportunity to slip

away because whenever I saw people, I would blush and my lips would tremble when I spoke. That was the natural me. One day, however, the Lord called me to rise up and speak for Him, and from that day on I consecrated myself daily, received dealings daily, and learned to live in the Lord daily. In 1947 while I was in Shanghai, I met a brother who said to me, "Brother Lee, when you were young, you must have been a very popular student and a skillful speaker." I replied, "Brother, you are wrong. If you were to go and ask my school-mates, you would find out that I am altogether different from what I was when I was young. It is like there are two different persons."

Regardless of what you are in your natural man, when you are willing to give place to the life of Christ, then He will live out of you. He will change your being and make you different, even absolutely different, from what you were before. Formerly you disliked activities, but now He wants you to be active. You may have disliked quietness, but now He wants you to be quiet. You may not have liked to speak, but now He wants you to speak. You may not have liked to contact people, but now He wants you to contact people. He will change you thoroughly.

In the early days nearly every time I stood up to speak for the Lord, I had stomach problems, and the pain was indescribable. All I could do was pray and consecrate myself, and then the next time I spoke, I would have to pray and consecrate again. It was by being desperate that in the Lord's hand I was able to break through. This is where our usefulness is. Usefulness is not something we have naturally nor something we have by birth. Rather, it is only when Christ

finds a way, an opportunity, and an outlet to come out of us that we will be useful.

An elderly sister often says to me, "Brother Lee, it seems that you can never finish speaking. After you speak, you have more to speak." Actually, the fact that I can be here is altogether because of the Lord's mercy and grace. I have so many things to speak about because within me there is a source—the boundless source of the eternal life. The only question is whether or not we will limit Him. If we limit Him, we are finished, and we have nothing. What we have learned in our mind is very limited, but the source of life within us is unlimited.

How to Be Useful to the Lord, pp. 63-64,
by Witness Lee

THE HEARING OF FAITH

is a publication of Living Stream Ministry. All subscriptions are free. In addition to portions of ministry, this newsletter features broadcast updates and other items of interest. We hope that this newsletter will not only inform you of current news but will also nourish and refresh your spirit. Please be sure to read our reply card and feel free to use it to make comments or ask questions.

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According to the revelation of the Scripture, we believe that any ministry that comes from God should trust in God for all its needs. Therefore, we have made it our policy not to solicit donations or contributions. However, if any of our listeners are led by the Lord to give, we will accept offerings as from the Lord and will use them for the furtherance of His truth.

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