

# The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 53, SEPTEMBER 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*

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*Dear Life-study Listener,*

Last month we welcomed KPLS 830 AM, a new radio station in southern California, for *Life-study of the Bible*. Our program on this station is a special one-hour program called *On Second Thought*. During the first half, we air a selected *Life-study* program, and afterwards we take live phone calls from listeners. We expect that beginning September 2002, *On Second Thought* on KPLS can be heard on the Internet via streaming audio. Anyone around the country can then tune in using the Internet and call KPLS's toll-free number to participate in the "live" life-study. If you enjoy listening to *Life-study*, you will enjoy participating in our live discussions.

Those of you following our current broadcasts know we have recently finished *Life-study of First Corinthians* and that the concluding message dealt with material offerings. The apostle Paul wrote a marvelous and long chapter concerning resurrection (1 Cor. 15) and then concluded the book by touching the matter of the believers' offering. How we handle our money is a real test to us! Paul makes it clear that when we are truly strengthened by the resurrection life of Christ, we can be saved from the power of material possessions. How different this is from much Christian fund raising that is done in a natural way. May we all see the critical link between the message of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and the word immediately following in 16:1: "Now concerning the collection for the saints."

*Living Stream Ministry*

### **Life-Study of the Bible**

W E L C O M E S

LOS ANGELES, CA  
KPLS 830 AM  
6:00-7:00 P.M. SUNDAY

EDMONTON, CANADA  
CKER 101.9 FM  
7:30 A.M. SUNDAY

## WHAT IS MATERIAL GIVING?

The believers' giving of material offerings is a crucial factor in the life and walk of a Christian and is affirmed by the apostle Paul in chapters eight and nine of 2 Corinthians. There, he thoroughly addresses the principles involved in ministering to the needy saints. To introduce this subject, Paul focuses on the believers' experience of the grace of God: "Furthermore we make known

*(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.

*Within the past year, I have really been fed and watered by the teachings of many dear saints, including Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. This ministry to the Lord, which provides us with a monthly dose of life-based instruction and teaching, has really been an encouragement to me.*

Medina, OH

*The ministry and publications present a crystal clear vision of Christ and the church. I am very grateful to have been born into this age of truth being revealed. Praise the Lord for His recovery of truth!*

Shaker Heights, OH

*My sole desire is that wherever I may be and go, Christ will be more seen than I am. I know it comes with a price tag. Some have run from the cross, but I want to go all the way. I have been listening to the tapes you sent. The more I listen, the more I am able not only to hear but to see what Witness Lee is saying. I go to sleep and wake up listening to them. The riches that flow out of the ministry are truly like rivers of living water and a vast storehouse. I was and still am a very hungry seeker for the things of the Lord. I knew there was more, and I have been finding the more. God is good. I am so glad that God placed you in my path.*

White Plains, NY

## Highlights

### FROM LIFE-STUDY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

*"So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul'; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."*

1 Corinthians 15:45

Verse 45 implies both creation and the new creation. Adam, the first man, was the head of the old creation. When God created him, Adam became a living soul. This means that he became a person, a human being. In Hebrew the word for Adam means man.

Because God created Adam a living soul, his main part was the soul, which is for the old creation.

Today, in principle, if we live in our soul, by our soul, or for our soul, we are in the old creation. The soul is the center and lifeline of the old creation. A person may be moral, but if he lives in the soul, he still belongs to the old creation.

*The life-giving Spirit is the life pulse of Christ's resurrection.*

Christ being the last Adam implies a termination and conclusion of the old creation. The old creation ends with a man, the last Adam. This Man who terminated the old creation became in resurrection a life-giving Spirit. Now this Spirit is the center and lifeline of the new creation.

The old creation was created by God. The new creation, however, comes into being not by creation, but by resurrection. Therefore, verse 45 implies two creations: the old creation with man as a living soul to be the center and lifeline, and the new creation in resurrection with the life-giving Spirit as the center and lifeline.

Many Christians today are short of revelation, of the proper spiritual vision, and oppose us when we say that Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. But to deny that Christ is the life-giving Spirit is equal to denying the reality of resurrection. The life-giving Spirit is the life pulse of Christ's resurrection. If Christ had merely been resurrected with a body and did not become a life-giving Spirit, His resurrection would not mean nearly as much to us. It would simply be an objective fact unrelated to life. It could then be compared to the resurrection of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus was merely an act of resurrection; it did not produce, bring forth, anything related to life. But Christ's resurrection is absolutely a matter related to life, for in resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit...

Resurrection was not merely an objective act accomplished by Christ. It is very much related to us subjectively. Through incarnation Christ became a man; He became us. Therefore, incarnation was much more than an objective fact. It was a process that brought God into humanity. The principle is the same with the process of resurrection. Resurrection was not merely an act in itself; it was a process to bring forth the life-giving Spirit. Through the process of resurrection, the Man who ended the old creation became the life-giving Spirit, the germinating element of the new creation.

*Life-study of First Corinthians*, pp. 613-615, by Witness Lee

## MATERIAL GIVING

(continued from page 1)

to you, brothers, the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in much proving of affliction the abundance of their joy and the depth of their poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (2 Cor. 8:1-2).

Money is very much used by Satan to corrupt us. Every fallen human being is under the deceiving dominion of mammon and material possessions (Matt. 6:19-21, 24-25, 30; 19:21-22; Luke 12:13-19). How was it possible, then, for those believers in Macedonia even in their affliction and poverty to have the abundance of joy abound unto the riches of their liberality? They overcame the dominion of mammon and were freed from greed by receiving the superabounding grace of God. Thus they gave, even in their poverty, of their own material possessions to the needy believers.

*They overcame the dominion of mammon and were freed from greed by receiving the superabounding grace of God.*

By this we can realize that the grace of God in 2 Corinthians 8 is much more than the unmerited favor we receive from God. The grace of God is Christ Himself in His resurrection coming into us as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) to provide us

with God Himself as our life and our full supply. Under the motivating source and liberating operation of His abundant grace in us, our hearts are opened to seek opportunity to distribute to the needs of others. Our material giving then becomes a spiritual matter full of divine life for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Our experience of the abundance of grace causes us first to give ourselves to the Lord Himself and then to give of our material resources (2 Cor. 8:5). The Lord wants us the believers much more than what we have. Hence, the basic and central principle motivating and governing our giving must be the grace of God.

Furthermore, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:6 that he who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap, and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap. This word, like that given by the Lord Jesus when He said, “Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38), implies that our gathering depends upon our sowing. Through our receiving and enjoying the grace of God, our material giving becomes a sowing of seed for our further supply (9:6). If we sow much, we will gather much. Let us each receive the grace of God to be a cheerful giver, not giving out of sorrow or necessity (v. 7). The apostle Paul encourages us with these words: “God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that, in everything always having all sufficiency, you may abound unto every good work” (v. 8).

For further reading on this subject, please see the footnotes for the above referenced verses in the New Testament Recovery Version; and *Life-Study of Second Corinthians*; *Life-Study of Philippians*, messages 29 and 30, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

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BY WATCHMAN NEE



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# 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.*

## THE SOURCE OF FAITH

Faith has a source. This source is not in the saints but in God. If the source of faith were in the saints, faith would be fragile. Who could have faith? Many children of God sadly sigh over their lack of great faith. Some lack not only great faith but even small faith. We often acknowledge that we have no faith. We wish for greater

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faith so that we can trust God and He can perform daily miracles for us. We wish for practical faith so that we can commit everything into the hand of God with ease and calmness. "If only we could have greater faith, everything would be fine." This is our wish. "If only we could have faith like So-and-so, then everything would be all right." This is our word of admiration. How often have we asked the Lord to increase our faith? But why do we still lack faith? Does faith only belong to a certain privileged class of saints? Is there truly no way for us to obtain greater faith? There is a way in the Lord. But only those who want faith can obtain it.

The cry of the saints today is for greater faith. But where does greater faith come from? The saints aspire to have greater faith in *themselves*. Is this a mistake? Yes, the mistake of saints is that *they* want to have greater faith in *themselves*. They seek faith from the wrong source. No wonder they never get it!

We all ask ourselves, "Do I have faith?" "Can I trust God regarding this matter?" "Is my faith sufficient?" The answers to these questions are always "No" and "I cannot"! What a great grief it is! We should not ask these questions. *We are not the source of faith*, so we *cannot* expect ourselves to have greater faith. The more we ask ourselves and search, seek, and look within ourselves, the more we feel we have *no* faith or very little faith! What is the reason for this? The reason is that we are not the source of faith. Since the source of faith is not within us, we cannot obtain faith if we turn within ourselves to search for it. Therefore, we must learn a lesson: we are not the source of faith. When we examine ourselves, we cannot see or feel that we have faith.

The Word of God tells us what the source of faith really is: "Faith. . . not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). This verse of the Bible is more than clear; faith is given to us by God. A similar word is found in Acts 3:16: "The faith which is through Him." Therefore, we know that the source of faith is in God, not in us. This may seem very common, ordinary, and familiar to us. But there are not many who really understand the importance of the source of our faith. If we really understood that God is the source of our faith, we would never ask ourselves, "Do I have enough faith? Do I have faith?" These questions indicate that we still do not understand that *God* is the source of our faith, because if we did, we would not ask these questions. . . .

. . . We do not have to ask, "Do we have faith? Is our faith sufficient?" These are not the most important questions. These questions will keep

us in darkness and discouragement. We should ask, "Is *God* reliable? Is *God* honest? Is *God* trustworthy? Will *God* break His promises? Are *God's* power and love real?" Because we always pay attention to ourselves, the more we search, the more we are unable to find our faith. If we pay attention to God, we will find that faith comes spontaneously. Faith does not originate in ourselves. No wonder faith cannot be found when we examine ourselves! Faith originates with God. The more we look at God, look to God, and meditate on God, the more we will have faith.

*Fact, Faith, and Experience*, pp. 53-55, by Watchman Nee

## 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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