

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 59, MARCH 2003

"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 THIS ISSUE

- 1 LETTER FROM LIVING STREAM MINISTRY
- 1 WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT? Part 2
- 2 VERSES & FOOTNOTES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT RECOVERY VERSION
- 2 RESPONSE FROM LISTENERS
- 4 THE PATH OF LIFE—KNOWING GOD HIMSELF

Dear Life-study Listener,

Last month the Living Stream Ministry broadcast section was represented at a booth during the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville, Tennessee. During the convention, we introduced *Words of Life & Truth: A One-Minute Scripture Reading with Commentary*. This one-minute feature prepared for radio consists of the reading of a verse from the New Testament Recovery Version followed by its corresponding footnote by Witness Lee. If you have had a chance to study the footnotes in the New Testament Recovery Version, we think you will agree that this radio reading will be a great blessing to all of the Lord's lovers and seekers. It is available in both the English and Spanish languages. Please pray for its distribution to Christian radio stations around the country. We make it available to them free of charge.

This month we will conduct a seminar for radio listeners in the Dallas, Texas, area. All of you on our mailing list in that area should have already received an invitation. For those of you in other parts of the country who would like to have a seminar in your area, please send us a note on the enclosed reply card, or you can e-mail or call us to let us know of your interest.

Living Stream Ministry



WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT?

PART 2

We have seen that the new covenant enacted in the blood of the Lord Jesus is actually now a testament and a will, containing numerous bequests for our experience and enjoyment of Christ that we may carry out God's New Testament economy. We need to go on to see the contents of this new covenant, this new testament.

The first item of the contents of the new testament, and perhaps the most important, is the imparting of God's laws into the inward parts of our being. Hebrews 8:10, quoting Jeremiah 31, tells us that God will put His laws into us

(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 really appreciate your program. Many years ago I had the opportunity to read about Watchman Nee, his life and death. It was very inspiring. So when I heard that Witness Lee was teaching, I stopped to listen in. Many thanks for the insightful truths taught. I would also request the written notes on Matthew that you offer.

Tennessee Colony, TX

I cannot tell you how much it means to me to be able to "click on" to the riches of His Word from your ministry. My whole heart's desire is to be as He is, filled with His Word, and letting God do the piercing I need. God bless all the saints who labor for His glory.

Omer, MI

I would like to take this opportunity to express how much I enjoy this publication as well as the many other items distributed by Living Stream. Many of Brother Nee and Brother Lee's writings as well as the Recovery Version Bible and the music CDs have provided much food and water for my spiritual growth and transformation. May the Lord continue to open more Christians up to the riches of Christ dispensed in this ministry.

Medina, OH

VERSES & FOOTNOTES FROM

The New Testament Recovery Version

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, EPHESIANS 5:26 & JOHN 6:63

2 Timothy 3:16—All Scripture is 'God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

¹This indicates that the Scripture, the word of God, is the breathing out of God. God's speaking is God's breathing out. Hence, His word is spirit (John 6:63), or breath. Thus, the Scripture is the embodiment of God as the Spirit. The Spirit is therefore the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches. We must strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire.

As the embodiment of God the Spirit, the Scripture (God's word) is also the embodiment of Christ. Christ is God's living Word (Rev. 19:13), and the Scripture is God's written word (Matt. 4:4).

Ephesians 5:26—That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the 'word.

¹The Greek word denotes an instant word. The indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit is always speaking an instant, present, living word to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation. The cleansing by the washing of the water of life is in the word of Christ. This indicates that in the word of Christ there is the water of life. This is typified by the laver situated between the altar and the tabernacle (Exo. 38:8; 40:7).

John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the 'words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

¹The Greek word for *words*, here and in v. 68, is *rhema*, which denotes the instant and present spoken word. It differs from *logos* (used for *Word* in 1:1), which denotes the constant word. Here *the words* follows *the Spirit*. The Spirit is living and real, yet He is very mysterious, intangible, and difficult for people to apprehend; the words, however, are substantial. First, the Lord indicated that for giving life He would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life.

NEW COVENANT *(continued from page 1)*

and write them upon us. These laws are not a series of commandments for us to keep. On the contrary, these laws are various aspects of what the Bible calls the law of life, the automatic and spontaneous function of the divine life imparted to our spirit through regeneration (Rom. 8:2). In His covenant, His testament, God has bequeathed to us the law of life, the function of the divine life. As this unique law spreads throughout our inner being, it becomes many laws. The particular goal of the function of this law, which becomes many laws, is that we are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29).

Through the divine life and through the law of the divine life, we have the capacity to know God inwardly and subjectively.

The second item of the contents of the new covenant is that we have God as our God, and we become God's people (Heb. 8:10). This is not merely to believe in God and belong to God in an objective way. Rather, this is to have God imparted into us, to live in us, and be expressed through us. In this way God becomes our God, the God we enjoy, experience, and live. Also, we become God's people, not simply in the sense of belonging to Him through redemption but also in the sense of having God constituted into us to become His corporate expression. Truly these are marvelous contents given to us as bequests for us to experience and enjoy.

Third, through the divine life and through the law of the divine life, we have the capacity to know God

inwardly and subjectively (Heb. 8:11). This is why the Scripture says that we will not need someone to teach us outwardly, and neither will we teach others outwardly to know the Lord. Rather, the Bible says, "All will know me from the little one to the great one among them." In this context, to know the Lord is not to know Him in an objective, theological way; it is to know Him inwardly, personally, experientially, and intimately.

The fourth item is a marvelous bequest concerning the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:12). We might be inclined to list this item as the first. God, however, caring primarily for His economy and secondarily for our fallen condition, placed this item last. But it is most precious. God has bequeathed to us in His covenant a deep assurance concerning the forgiveness of sins. God says that our sins and iniquities He will by no means remember any more. What a marvelous forgiveness this is! This is a divine forgiveness with a divine forgetfulness. God forgives us to the extent that our history of sins is obliterated, and God has no remembrance of them. We are thoroughly and absolutely forgiven.

Since this is our situation, we should enjoy the spreading of the law of life within us. We should enjoy God and become His people. And we should enjoy the inward capacity in the divine life to know Him personally and experientially. These are the contents of the new covenant and they are great indeed. These contents are worthy of our praise and of our opening to the Lord that we may thoroughly experience them for God's economy.

For further reading on this subject, please see *Life-study of Hebrews*, messages 63-69; *Life-study of Jeremiah*, messages 25-26; and *The New Covenant*, published by Living Stream Ministry.

WORDS OF LIFE & TRUTH

A One-Minute Scripture Reading with Commentary

THE RECOVERY VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT contains extensive footnotes stressing the revelation of the truth, light, and life found in the Scriptures. This nourishing content is presented in *Words of Life and Truth*. Living Stream Ministry, publisher of the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, is pleased to make *Words of Life and Truth* available in one-minute portions free to radio stations.

For more information visit

recoveryversion.org,

e-mail radio@lsm.org or call toll

free at (888) 543-3788.

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.

KNOWING GOD HIMSELF

To know God's nature means to know God Himself. It has been mentioned before that every kind of life has its own characteristics. Fish have the characteristics of fish and birds have the characteristics of birds. God's life also has its characteristic. This characteristic is His nature. His nature is goodness, uprightness (Psa. 25:8; 86:5; Matt. 19:17) and holiness (Acts 3:14; 2 Cor. 1:12). This nature will express God Himself through light. When we are born again we obtain God's life and receive God's nature. When we touch His nature in us, we also touch God Himself in us. This is knowing God Himself. For instance, if there is some sin, our conscience feels that it must be dealt with, and only if it is dealt with can there be peace. Yet, inside of us there is a holy sense, a sense which is even deeper than the conscience. Deep within there is a disgust and a hatred for the sin itself. This kind of hatred comes from God's holy nature. When man touches God Himself, his knowledge of God's holiness is beyond human description. Sometimes our sensation is the same as Job's: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Under the bright sunlight even the dust will be revealed. Likewise, in God's holiness, our filthiness is always revealed. No wonder that when Peter met the Lord Himself, he fell down at the Lord's knees and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). Many times, both in our words and in our actions, although our conscience may not condemn us, there is still within a sense of discomfort, a sense which does not say "amen." This is the sense

of the nature of God's life, and it exceeds the feeling of the conscience. If we have learned and are willing to obey, it is at such times that we touch God Himself. On these occasions we will know God Himself.

To know God's nature means to know God Himself.

Paul told the Corinthian believers, "We toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now" (1 Cor. 4:12-13). This shows that not only is God's life such, but it also shows that the nature of this life is such. When Paul was so touching God's nature he was touching God Himself. It was then that he knew God Himself.

The following is a true story. Two brothers who were farmers and also Christians planted rice fields. The fields were in the middle of a hill. Every day the brothers pumped the water into the fields with their feet. But every day they found that the farmer whose field was below them always used subtle ways to let the water out of their fields into his field below. For seven or eight days they endured this without saying a word, but inside there was not the joy. Later, they went to have fellowship with a brother who was a servant of the Lord. He told them, "It is not enough for you to endure. You should go and also water the field of him who stole your water. Then pump the water for your own fields." The two brothers went back to their fields and did as he had spoken. It was strange—the more they did this, the more they felt happy. The result

was that the one who stole the water was touched. Not only did he no longer come to steal their water, but he came to apologize to them. Here we see that the reason they could do this, and do it so spontaneously, was because they did it according to God's nature. Otherwise, if they did it only in an outward way, inwardly they would still have the feeling they were being wronged. Later they would still feel distressed within. Only the things which are done according to God's nature make us feel comfortable inside. The more we do things this way, the more we will praise God, and the more we will know God Himself.

The New Covenant, pp. 154-156, by Watchman Nee and 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.

Living Stream Ministry
P.O. Box 2121 • Anaheim, CA 92814
Phone: (714) 236-6020
Fax: (714) 236-6024
E-mail: radio@lsm.org
Web site: www.lifestudy.com

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.

© 2003 Living Stream Ministry. All rights reserved.
No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means – graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval system – without written permission from the publisher.