

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 54, OCTOBER 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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Dear Life-study Listener,

We are broadcasting this month from *Life-study of Second Corinthians*. This book is quite unique among the Epistles of the apostle Paul and is considered by some Bible teachers to be his autobiography. In this book, Paul tells us in many details the kind of person who is competent to be a minister of Christ. Because of this particular focus in 2 Corinthians, we encourage you to read the article "What Is the Ministry of the New Covenant?" in this issue and "What Is a Minister of the New Covenant?" in next month's issue. We think it will be new light to many of you to see how God does not want a successful Christian work but a Christian worker who has learned the lesson of the cross. The true Christian ministry is what issues out of these New Testament ministers and not simply anyone who does a Christian work.

From September 30 through October 4 we will make a special promotional offer over the radio for you to receive a free copy of Witness Lee's book *An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit*. Although some of you can no longer hear the program in your area, we are still extending this offer to you, but you must call before October 18. If for some reason mail delivery of this newsletter in your area is delayed and you would like a copy, please do call us.

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT?

In 2 Corinthians 4:1, Paul utters these simple, yet deeply significant words: "Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart." *This ministry* concerning which Paul speaks here is the unique ministry of the new covenant, the ministry initiated by the Lord Jesus

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Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

BATON ROUGE, LA

WSKR 1210 AM
8:00 A.M. SUNDAY

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.

My spirit is thrilled every day as I listen to Life-study of the Bible over Dallas station KSKY. The study in Corinthians has been marvelous! I have never heard anything like this insight. Praise God for His mercy and grace!

Dallas, TX

I cannot improve on the words from your readers—I agree with them all! I learn so much. It's almost like hearing the gospel for the first time, even though I have gone through the Bible at least ten times, reading it by myself and through church Bible studies.

St. Petersburg, FL

I came to know this ministry through the radio. These studies are life changing and life-giving. I can't say enough about this program. There is no wasted utterance or breath. You are doing a marvelous job. I think your guests are wonderful as well.

Rockdale, Texas

I heard Witness Lee speaking on Genesis 49, and I really felt God's heart for me to abide in Him and Him in me. I love it. It is a whole new revelation. You have brought me into the Word of God, and it is becoming alive. I thank you and God's anointing. Continue your ministry of the living Word. This is His life.

Seattle, WA

Excerpt from

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

BY WITNESS LEE

MINISTRY ISSUING FROM REVELATION PLUS SUFFERING

Ministry is the issue of revelation plus suffering. Without revelation one cannot have ministry because he has nothing to minister. But though one may have revelation, if he lacks suffering, he still has no ministry. He may have some sort of teaching or gift, but this is not ministry. There is a difference between teaching and ministry. Ministry is something higher and deeper. Gift is superficial and costs little, while ministry is weighty and costly. If you have received revelation from God, He will put you into suffering in order that you may have ministry.

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From the writings of the apostle Paul, we can see that before he endured suffering, he received revelation. When he received the revelation, he did not immediately go out to pass it on as teaching or knowledge. To do so would not have been ministry; it would have been a sort of teaching or an exercise of gift. But after receiving the revelation, the Lord put him into some suffering. Hence, in all his Epistles we have this sequence: first, the revelation; second, the sufferings; and third, the ministry which came out of the first two. To receive revelation is one thing; to have that revelation wrought into our being is something else.

In the process of producing a porcelain vase, a pattern for a picture is painted onto the vase. The vase is then put into an oven, and the painting is burned onto it. By passing through the oven, the painting and the vase become one. Receiving a revelation is similar to having a picture painted upon us; but this painting must be burned into us to make the painting one with us. When the painting is burned into the vase, no one can erase it; neither can the vase be separated from the painting. If the vase is broken, the painting is broken, for they are one. It is the same with us. The only way for us to be burned is by suffering. No real minister of God can avoid suffering.

The measure of life, the amount of reality, and the riches of Christ we are able to minister to others depend entirely upon two elements: how much revelation we have received and how much suffering we have undergone regarding that which has been revealed to us. When suffering is added to revelation, we have ministry.

Watchman Nee—A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age, pp. 193-194

THE MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT

(continued from page 1)

Himself and then continued by His apostles (Acts 1:17). The ministry of the new covenant, or of the New Testament, is the unique ministry common to all the apostles of Christ. And in principle, if we are faithful to the teaching and fellowship of the apostles (2:42), it should also be the unique ministry carried out by all the believers in Christ today. Although the apostles, as well as the believers, are many, the ministry of the new covenant for the carrying out of God's New Testament economy is uniquely one. It is the ministry of dispensing Christ, imparting Christ, and ministering Christ to others for the building up of the Body of Christ.

How is such a ministry produced and what are its essential characteristics? If we read 2 Corinthians

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from this angle, it will reveal itself as a book of sufferings, consuming pressures, and the experiencing of the putting to death of Jesus that we may know God as the God of resurrection working Himself into us and constituting within us the genuine ministry of the New Testament (1:5-9). To see this is to realize that ministry differs from

mere gift, including spiritual gift. A gift is a capacity, natural or supernatural, to function in a particular way. Ministry is a divine-human constitution. It is the Triune God in Christ as the Spirit wrought into our being through the experiences of the cross, which bring us into the reality of resurrection life. We can see this in chapter four, where Paul speaks of this ministry in his testimony in verses ten through twelve. He speaks of experiencing the putting to death of Jesus and also the life of Jesus so that by death operating in him, and all the other ministers of the new covenant, life would operate in the believers for the building up of the Body of Christ.

This unique ministry, produced through the cross and carried out in resurrection, has two outstanding characteristics according to chapter three. First, it is the ministry of the Spirit (v. 8). Second, it is the ministry of righteousness (v. 9). The ministry of the Spirit equips the believers to experience and enjoy the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit (v. 6; 1 Cor. 15:45). The ministry of righteousness is a ministry that encourages the believers to live out, express, and magnify as righteousness the very Christ (the image of God—Col. 1:15) who indwells them as the Spirit. To come under the genuine ministry of the new covenant is to receive the supply of the Spirit and to be motivated by that supply to live a life of righteousness, a life that is actually Christ living again and expressing Himself for the glory of God and the building up of the Body of Christ.

For further reading on this subject, please see *An Autobiography of a Person in the Spirit*, by Witness Lee; Acts 1:17, note 1; 2 Cor. 3:9, note 2; and 2 Cor. 4:1, note 2, in the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Stream Ministry.

New Book
BY WATCHMAN NEE



FACT, FAITH,
AND
EXPERIENCE

ISBN 0-7363-1873-9

THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY, Watchman Nee demonstrated a proper balance between knowing the objective truths in the Bible and experiencing the subjective realities contained in the divine revelation. Between 1925 and 1934, he released numerous messages related to these points. This book illustrates the balance that is struck in our Christian life when objective facts contained in the Word become alive through faith and operative in our experience.

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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

The Bible not only tells us that God is the source of our faith; it also tells us that *the word of God* is the source of our faith: "So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17)...Here we see the wonder of God's word. How do we know God? We know Him by the word He speaks. The

*Faith is believing
that God will do
what He has said.*

word He speaks represents His heart's desire. When we understand His word, we will realize what God has promised for us and what He does and does not want to do. Only through the Word of God—the Bible—can we know God's promise. When we know His promise, we will trust in Him according to His promise and beseech Him through prayers. If we do not have the word of God, we will have nothing at all. "How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). If we do not have the promise of God, but mindlessly believe in Him, we will fall into a kind of superstition. Faith must be based on something. Mindlessly believing, without a basis, is superstition, and no one will receive anything from this kind of faith. If my father promises me something, I believe he will give it to me. This believing is solid because my faith is based on the promise of my father. If

my father has not promised me anything, but I force myself to believe that he will give me something, then I am not believing but dreaming because I believe in something that is not factual but my own imagination. From this example, we can see the important relationship between faith and promise.

God's promises are only recorded in God's Word, the Bible. To know the promises of God, one must know the Word of God. Without the promises of God, our faith is not real faith. The promises are in the Word of God. "So faith comes...through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). We have said that we need to believe in God's faithfulness, trustworthiness, and reliability. We have also said that if we know God, we will spontaneously have faith. This is related to God's promises, that is, to His words. If God has not promised anything, how can we know that He is faithful? He must promise something before we can talk about His faithfulness.

What is faith? Faith is holding on to what God has said and praying for God's work to be realized. Faith is believing that God will do what He has said. Faith is believing that God is faithful and that He will work out what He has said. Whether our faith is great or small is not the issue. The issue is: if God has promised something, will He lie and change? The only question we should ask is whether or not we believe that God is honest. This has nothing to do with our faith being great or small.

We know that God loves us. Therefore, we should have no doubt that He is for us. The Bible shows us at least two aspects concerning His promises: "What He [has] promised

He [is] able also to do" (Rom. 4:21). God is powerful and His power fulfills His promises. Our God is not a weak and powerless God who cannot do what He says He will do. If this were so, what good would His promises be? All of His promises would be empty words. But God is not only powerful in promising something, He is also powerful in carrying out His promise. Whatever He has promised, He is able to carry it out. "He is able"—this is what the Bible tells us about His person. "For the Lord is *able* to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4). "God is *able* to make all grace abound unto you" (2 Cor. 9:8). "He is *able* to guard. . ." (2 Tim. 1:12).

Fact, Faith, and Experience, pp. 57-59, 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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