

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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"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,

We have been busy conducting radio seminars. In July we were in Tampa and Jacksonville, Florida. In August there was a seminar in Lagos, Nigeria. On September 21 we will be at the University Plaza Hotel in Seattle, Washington. Then we will travel to London, England for our largest radio seminar ever at Wembley Stadium on October 5. We are also working out details to visit Houston, Texas and to conduct the first seminar in southern California at our offices here in Anaheim. It is always a special treat for us to meet you in person. If you have not attended a seminar, we hope one comes to your area so you can join in. Please pray that enlightenment and inspiration would continue to fill these times.

This month we start *Life-study of 1 & 2 Kings*. These books are not merely storybooks; they contain an intrinsic revelation of God's economy. God's eternal economy focuses on the Person of Christ and His kingdom. Concerning the Person of Christ, Kings shows how His lineage was maintained in the midst of a degraded situation. Concerning His kingdom, we see how the Lord preserved the land in the midst of a Satan usurped earth. The picture at the end of Kings is a tragic one: the blessed kings were unfaithful to their inheritance and caused God's people to be carried away captive into an idol-worshipping world. May this be a warning to all of God's people today that will work out an extraordinary soberness and faithfulness to Him for His economy.

Living Stream Ministry

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

LAGOS, NIGERIA

METRO 97.6 FM
9:00 P.M. SUNDAY

WHAT IS THE SELF?

To understand what the self is, we must consider the creation and fall of man. God created man with a spirit, a soul, and a body (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12). He made man's spirit with the capacity to contact, receive, and contain God (John 4:24; 3:6; Rom. 8:16). God formed man's soul with the faculties of mind, emotion, and will so he could express Him. God created man's body so he could contact the physical world. God's intention was for

(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 am very grateful to the Lord Jesus for the radio program "On Second Thought." This is the only program I've heard speak on God's New Testament economy. Without a clear and high vision regarding God's desire and purpose, we'll never grow in life to maturity. "On Second Thought" provides that vision. I never miss a program. Additionally, the Recovery Version New Testament sent to me has cleared up so much for me. Thank you, dear brothers.

Norco, CA

*I am always glad to hear from you, brethren. We are so much nourished by the books of Brother Watchman Nee and Brother Witness Lee. It is our joy to have fellowship with brothers who know the Lord in such a spiritual way. Three years ago, I bought the wonderful book by Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, which shook my spiritual life and changed it tremendously. I thank the Lord for this wonderful man of God.*

Safat, Kuwait

I am a pastor of a small country church (non-denominational) and have been reading material by Mr. Lee and Mr. Nee for about two years. They were certainly used by God in bringing light and understanding to this seventy-year-old preacher. Praise God.

Magee, MS

RADIO SEMINAR

SEPTEMBER 21, 2003

University Plaza Hotel
Seattle, Washington

FOR DETAILS, CALL

1.888.543.3788

Highlights

FROM LIFE-STUDY OF 1 & 2 KINGS

THE MAIN STRIKING POINT OF THE HISTORICAL BOOKS CONCERNING ISRAEL

The main striking point of these historical books concerning Israel is to show us in detail, in the way of typology, how to experience Christ as the good land given to us by God as our portion (Col. 1:12). First, the book of Joshua shows us how to gain, to take possession of, and to

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keep the good land. Then the books of Judges, Ruth, and 1 and 2 Samuel give us pictures of certain persons, showing us how they remained in the good land and enjoyed the good land after they took possession of it. The record of quite a few judges in the book of Judges, of Ruth and Boaz in the book of Ruth, and of Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel presents us vivid pictures of how those persons remained

in and enjoyed the good land. Even though those pictures were painted in detail, there is still the need of 1 and 2 Kings to give us pictures of more persons showing us how they remained in and enjoyed the good land.

Christ is the good land given to us by God, and we need to enjoy this good land. We should ask ourselves how much we have enjoyed Christ. It is not sufficient simply to experience Christ; we must also enjoy Christ. Have you enjoyed Christ today? I can testify that today I have enjoyed Christ as my life supply, my strength, my living faith, my joy, and my peace....

The two books of Kings present us a full picture of the details by which God's elect remained in and participated in the good land. It depicts, as an x ray, in detail, the character, the intention, the preferences, the habits, the morality, and the actions of all the kings as the descendants of David the king. By such a picture we can see that what we are, what we desire, what we intend to do, what we want, and how we behave ourselves have very much to do with our remaining in Christ and participating in all His unsearchable riches for our enjoyment. This picture concerning Israel ends with a tragedy of all the kings who were put into the blessed situation of the Davidic kingship and who were not faithful to God and did not take good care of their inheritance: they lost the good land and were carried away as captives to the idol-worshipping world. This should be a solemn alarm and warning to us in our relationship with Christ. If we are wrong in any of the matters mentioned above, we will suffer the loss of Christ as our enjoyment. I hope that we all will see this and be deeply impressed with it.

Life-study of 1 & 2 Kings, pp. 3-4

man to be filled in his spirit with God's divine life to express Him through the organ of his soul. Man's soul would be dependent upon and subordinate to his spirit, which would be his real person. But instead of taking God into his spirit, man took in the enemy of God, Satan. Because of the fall, man's entire being was damaged and rearranged. His spirit was deadened (Eph. 2:1); his soul, saturated with Satan's evil word and thought (Gen. 3:1-5), was corrupted and became the self, independent of God and in oneness with Satan; and his body was transmuted and became the flesh of sin (Rom. 7:18a; 8:3). God

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still needs the faculties of man's soul for His expression, but the independent life of the soul, the self, must be denied (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

Self and *soul-life* are often used interchangeably in the New Testament. For example, in Matthew 16:24-26 the Lord Jesus says, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for

My sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?" (emphasis added). Passages such as this and Luke 9:24-25 indicate that the self and the soul-life are identical. The soul-life is embodied in the self, and the self is just the soul-life.

In our practical experience, we need a further realization: the expression of the self is in human opinion, thoughts, and concepts. Self, soul-life, and human opinion are three sides of one entity. This is illustrated in the exchange between the Lord Jesus and Peter in Matthew 16:21-23. In verse 21 the Lord revealed that He was going to the cross to die according to God's ordination from eternity (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). But Peter rebuked the Lord, saying, "God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You!" (v. 22). Such a word seemed to be a good, sympathetic, and loving expression uttered out of concern for the Lord's well being. But the Lord turned and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men" (v. 23). Peter's concept, idea, and opinion expressed through his mind were actually Satan. Thus, in the subsequent verses, the Lord spoke of denying the self (v. 24) and of losing the soul-life (v. 25), indicating that Peter's word came from himself, his soul-life. His idea and concept were the expression of himself, and this self was just the soul-life.

For further reading on this subject, please see *Life-study of Matthew*, message 48; *The Conclusion of the New Testament Life-study*, pp. 1620-1621; and *The Experience of Life*, pp. 222-244, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

*Blessed are
THE PURE IN HEART
FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.*
Matthew 5:8



The pure in heart have a heart so pure that they just want God and nothing other than God. If Christians are willing to allow God to work in them, the first thing they have to do is to turn their heart to God. God does not have the way to work on many people because their heart is not set on Him. We cannot say that they do not want the Lord. They really do want the Lord, but they also want something other than the Lord Himself.... Their inner being is very complicated, but love should be very simple.

Witness Lee
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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.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS BEING THE ADDITION OF THE ELEMENT OF CHRIST

I hope we can see that our spiritual life is Christ, our spiritual living is Christ, and our spiritual progress is also Christ. Do not think that spiritual progress is merely a change in our outward expression. Genuine spiritual progress is the increase of the element of Christ within us....Some had a bad temper a few years ago and still have a bad temper today. Others have changed their bad temper to a good one, have gotten rid of their bad habits, and have become well-behaved; however, the Christ in them has still not increased. A Christian's progress should not be only outward improvement but should be an inward increase of Christ. A Christian's progress should not be only an outward deliverance from bad habits and bad behavior but should also be an inward increase of the element of Christ.

Some people improve their outward behavior but do not have more of Christ in them. This is not spiritual progress but religious progress. This is not the growth of Christ but the growth of morality. Today very few Christians are able to discern between morality and Christ. They often regard a certain Christian's morality to have its source in Christ and are not able to discern whether the change in a Christian is merely an ethical change or a change due to the increase of Christ. Ephesians 4:13 and Galatians 4:19 clearly show us what Christian progress is. When Christ grows and is formed in a Christian so that there is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ within him, this is Christian progress. When Christ is formed in a Christian, and the measure of his stature is increased within him, this is Christian progress. The revelation in the Bible is very

clear concerning Christian progress. Unfortunately, however, it is difficult for us to change our concept. When we notice that someone has an improvement in his behavior, we say that he has made some spiritual progress. For instance, a person used

God wants us to deny our life and live by Christ's life.

to quarrel with his wife whereas he no longer quarrels with his wife. He becomes diligent whereas he was once slothful, and he no longer has any opinions or things to say but works quietly whereas he used to be talkative and opinionated. We praise him, saying that he has made spiritual progress. This shows that we are still too natural and that we do not know what spirituality and spiritual progress are.

What is real spirituality? Spirituality is Christ Himself. What is spiritual progress? Spiritual progress is the increase of Christ. Whenever Christ increases in the saints, their speaking will be reduced; whenever Christ increases in them, their bad temper will diminish. This is a sure thing. However, if a person's bad temper is reduced, yet there is no increase of Christ, then his change is merely something ethical. The improvement of his temper and behavior is the result of his own effort, his own cultivation. It is something moral but does not come from the increase of Christ in him. He may have entirely changed his living by his own effort, but he has not touched Christ, contacted Christ, or had any inward increase of Christ. He has changed outwardly but not inwardly because Christ has not increased in him.

If we want to have spiritual progress and spiritual growth, we must turn our mind to God to see the light and the revelation that this is not a matter of morality but of Christ. The point is not that since we used to be unethical, we should now be ethical; rather, though formerly we did many things by our own life, now we should do everything by Christ's life. God wants us to deny our life and live by Christ's life. Hence, we have to see clearly that Christ is our life and our living. Once we have seen this clearly, we will spontaneously have a change in our mind to turn from ethics, good deeds, and proper behavior to Christ Himself.

The Crucified Christ, pp. 137-138, 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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