"That They May All Be One, Even As We Are One"

Volume 1

T. Austin-Sparks
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"That They May All Be One, Even As We Are One" - Volume 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

First through Twenty-Second Meeting
Manila Philippines, 1964

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." John 17:21,22

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Publisher's Letter

Dear friends in Christ,

In late summer of the year 2000, we were contacted by brother Herald E. Hsu, and he told us that on January 30, 1964, brother and sister Sparks had come to Manila, at the request of the brethren, to share the Word of the Lord. Some of these brothers and sisters in Manila had served the Lord in China with Watchman Nee, and because of their stand in the Lord, they had endured much persecution when China became a communist nation. Then they came to Manila through the ways of the Lord, which is always the way of the Cross.

The meetings began the evening of January 30, and they had forty-two meetings together which lasted through the evening of March 12. These brothers and sisters in Christ met together, except for a few days, both in the evenings and the mornings. Brother Hsu told us that these messages were taped, and that they had also translated them into English, and that brother Sparks had also edited a few of them. These manuscripts had been carefully preserved, we believe by the Lord, for almost 40 years - for such a time as this. And through God's Grace this brother offered these priceless manuscripts to us.

So we prayerfully began to read and edit these messages; and as we did, we began to realize that the Lord was speaking not only to those who had gathered in Manila, but He was speaking an eternal word to the whole body of Christ. The great theme of those meetings was taken from the Lord's Own High Priestly prayer: "That they may all be one, even as We are One." Let us quote from a letter that brother Sparks wrote, a letter which is just as timely today as when it was written: "The great enemy does not give up his determination to interrupt fellowship and to spoil the work of the Lord by bringing division among His people. Everywhere this evil work is being pressed with increasing intensity. The enemy is set upon destroying anything that will result in the Lord Jesus coming into His full place. We must stand and withstand and do all in our power to keep this ground from him. It is costly, and it demands that we let go all that is only personal, and that we stand for the glory of our Lord's name and His interests alone." Brother Sparks also wrote this, which shows that he knew the cost of this stand: "I am sure that you will never make me or my ministry a ground of division. There is no need to fight for me; the Lord is on the Throne, and He can order things to His Own Will - while we pray and trust Him."

We have done as little editing as possible, and we have left these messages in the order they were spoken day by evening, evening by day. We have done this because we believe that the Holy Spirit spoke through His servant in those forty-two meetings. Therefore, these messages will have eternal results against the archenemy of God, and his evil hosts, as the body of Christ makes this a reality in their lives through the work of the Cross. The brother who sent us these messages wrote this: "A long time ago, I hoped that someone who appreciated brother Spark's ministry would be able to edit and print these messages, in order to serve the whole body of Christ. These transcripts are priceless treasures, only eternity can count their value! Thanks to the Lord." So it is our prayer that these messages will serve the body of Christ, and most important of all, may they give the Lord His full place.

From your brothers and sisters at Emmanuel
Meeting 1 - God's Ways Are Different From Our Ways

First Meeting
(January 30, 1964 P.M.)

Well, I can only repeat the words of my wife by saying, how glad I am to be with you again! The very precious times that we had together on my last two visits have remained fresh as a very joyous remembrance. But I want to thank you, dear friends, for the very warm welcome that you have given us. Manila always gives us a very warm welcome. And I tell you that only two days ago, we left the freezing cold in London; and we got on the airplane with all our winter clothes on. When we arrived in Manila, we arrived with a very warm welcome, in more ways than one. I do not think the heat of the weather here is greater than the warmth of your welcome, when we looked out of the plane at the airport yesterday and saw that crowd of happy faces, and heard those happy voices, and felt those happy hands. You would need to be in our place to understand what I mean when I thank you for the warm welcome. And that is the first thing that I want to say to you. I hope that when we go away, you will not have grown cold towards us.

Now let me say a little word about how it is that we have come and why it is that we have come. I have received quite a number of pressing invitations to come to Manila for nearly two years past. During that time, the invitations have become stronger and stronger. Perhaps you wonder why I have waited for nearly two years. The explanation is a very important one, and it is going to be one of those very vital matters in our time together. We have not delayed so long because we did not want to see you, nor was it because we did not want to come and try and help you. But you know, dear friends, we are the prisoners of Jesus Christ. We cannot go where we would like to go. And we cannot move when we would like to move. When we made Jesus "Lord," we made Him "Lord" of all our movements and all our time. Remember that the Apostle Paul on two occasions did try to go in certain directions. He thought it would be a good thing to go into Bithynia. There was great need in Bithynia, and no doubt the people there were pressing him to come to them, but he said, The Spirit of Jesus would not allow us to go (Acts 16:7). He felt the same about Asia. He began to move in the direction of Asia; and Asia was a very needy part of the world. The churches in Asia were going to be the seven churches to which we have the Letters in the Book of the Revelation. But at that time, he was forbidden to preach the word in Asia. You see, it is not need that governs. It is not when we feel we ought to do something that that is the time to do it. It is not when we think it would be a good thing to do this.

The Lord's time is a very important thing. If you get out of the Lord's time, you may spoil the whole thing. The Lord knows all about the need. The Lord knows all about the people's invitations. But the Lord says, "Not now. I have My time for that." He did not tell Paul why he could not go into Bithynia and Asia. He just told him not to go then. He simply said, "No, not now." And Paul, being the prisoner of Jesus Christ, knew that he could not move until the Lord moves. I hope you recognize that that is a very important principle in all the things of the Lord. It may be quite a good thing, it may be quite a right thing, and it may be a thing that the Lord is going to do, but it must be in the Lord's time. Now, if I had come a year ago or two years ago, something very important might have been lost for two years. And I would have gone away, saying, "No, we have not got there yet." Evidently the time has not come. But that is not the end of our story.
We are here. At last, we are here. And that is not because of the pressing invitation, that is because as we continually waited on the Lord, we had the sense that the Lord was saying, "Now is the time." You know, a very great many things are necessary when it is a matter of going from one side of the world to the other, especially when you get to be so very, very old. We are not young any longer. We used to travel about the world quite a lot. It did not mean so much in our younger days. But it is not so easy nowadays. We are getting old. However, that only makes it more important to go with the Lord. And as soon as we felt that the Lord's time had come, we began to get those various tokens from the Lord which confirmed that. I will not trouble you with all the details, but I think this evening I have learned for the first time what the Lord said to my wife. If she told me about that word from the Lord, I do not remember her telling me. But I went to the Lord and asked Him for a word for me. I said, now Lord, it is very important that you give me a word to go on. One morning I was reading my Bible, I was reading a chapter that I know very well, I was reading chapter fifty-two of the prophecies of Isaiah. I did not know that I was going to get the Lord's answer to my prayer in that chapter. But as I read on, I came to this verse, and it was as though the Lord said, 'That is My word for you over Manila.' And the words are these: "The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your reward" (Isa. 52:12).

So, the Lord said that as we went, we should find that He was always ahead of us. We should find that He had gone before. And then there were a lot of things to leave behind. Quite a lot of responsibilities, and we had to have those taken care of. But the Word said, "the God of Israel will be your reward." The Lord will be before you and the Lord will be behind you. Do you think you could want anything better than that? Well, we have come on the strength of that word; and we are expecting to find the Lord before us every day.

Now, what is it that is in my heart as to this time which we shall be here? I do want you to understand this that I am going to say now. I hope that it will not disappoint you. I do not feel that the Lord has brought me here to give you a lot more teaching as teaching. I mean, I do not feel that I have come to give you something that I have studied from the Word of God, to give you a number of addresses on some subjects. It is not something that I have got from someone else, neither from books nor men. I feel that the Lord wants me to speak out of experience. Experience is a very valuable thing. There are plenty of people who can give us wonderful Bible addresses. But experience is far more important than that. And, as you understand, we have had a long experience with the Lord.

Personally I have been in the Lord's work for a good bit over fifty years. There has been FIFTY years of very wide and very deep spiritual experience in the school of the Lord. He has sought to teach me things in my own life. And the main thing that He is teaching me are the principles upon which He works. I shall have much to say to you about that. But I do want to put the emphasis here. It is not theory that I am going to give you. It is not something studied up for meetings. It is that which comes out of practical experience under the hand of the Lord. Therefore, it is going to be very practical.

I am sure you have got plenty of theory. You have a great deal of teaching. Perhaps I could not teach you much more than you know. But perhaps these gray hairs speak for themselves. They speak of deep experience in the school of God. What I have to say to you, is what God has done in me. You are not going to have an easy time, dear friends. You are going to be faced up with very practical issues. Now if you do not mean business with the Lord, do not come to these meetings. I shall take it that all who come, really do mean business with God.

You have been taught a great deal about God's purpose. I expect if you were asked, every one of you could put down on a piece of paper what you know to be the purpose of God. But there is one thing
more important than the purpose of God. It is how God realizes His purpose. It is almost more important to know how God fulfills His purpose than it is to know what His purpose is. God has a way, not only an end; and it is very important to know the ways of God as well as the end of God. If there is one thing that we have learned more than another thing in God's school, it is this. God's ways are very different from our ways. So often we would do a thing in a certain way, and the Lord would say, "That is not My way. Your ways are not My ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts. I have My own ways of doing what I want done." You just cannot say, "I know the Lord wants such and such a thing done, and therefore, I am going to do it!" The Lord says, "Wait a minute, I have a way of doing that, and My way is just as important as My object." And I think the Lord wants us to learn something of His ways in these days together - to learn those spiritual laws which govern the purpose of God.

Only one last word, especially to the young people, and to everybody else. This learning of God's ways is a life-long business. I do not know it all. I have not yet learned it all. I have still to learn a great deal of God's way. The Lord is constantly having to say to me, 'No, not that way.' 'No, not at this time.' This is a life-long education. But the Lord is very faithful with us. If we are really in His hands, He will teach us His ways. You know the word to Israel was this: "that to Israel the Lord showed His works, but to Moses and Aaron, He showed His ways." And the ways are very much more important than the works. Moses and Aaron were honored servants of the Lord, and the Lord showed them His ways. To all the people, He could only just show His works. Will you be satisfied with just seeing the works of the Lord? Or would you rather be in the secret of the Lord? The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His ways (Psa. 25:14; 103:7). The other people will only see His works.

May I ask that in these days, you will set your hearts upon knowing the ways of the Lord. For that is really the most important thing. Now, I only intended to give you a word of greeting, to thank you for your welcome, and to tell you that a lot of people in London said, 'Give the friends over there our greetings.' And as you can see, I have gone a long way beyond that. But I hope that I have not wearied you.
Meeting 2 - "That They May Be In Us"

Second Meeting
(February 2, 1964 A.M.)

Will you please open your Bible to the New Testament. Firstly, in the Gospel by John, chapter seventeen and verse twenty-one. You know that this chapter contains the prayer of the Lord Jesus just before going to the Cross. In that prayer we have those words of verse twenty-one, Jesus says to His Father, "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (ASV).

I want you to particularly notice how the Lord put this matter in the last clause that is so important, "That they also may be in Us." Now I want you to turn to the Gospel by Matthew, in chapter twenty-seven, at verse forty-six. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is to say, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" These are practically the last words of our Lord on the Cross. All that remained for Him to do was to commit His Spirit to His Father. Really His last words were, "My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" This is the last phase of the death of Jesus Christ and it marks a very great change in His spiritual life and experience. Jesus had lived all His life in the Father. He said to His disciples, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father?" His whole life in everything was lived in the Father. We have many instances of how He refused to move out from the Father.

In the little town of Cana in Galilee, you will remember that He performed His first miracle. It is the miracle of turning the water into wine at the marriage feast. Some way through the feast all the wine that had been provided came to an end. Thus wine was the very important thing in the feast, and there was a serious situation. The mother of Jesus was sitting beside Him at the table and she just turned to Him and she said, "They have no wine!" She, of course, believed that He could do something about it and she presented this situation to her Son. In effect, she said, "You will have to do something about it. This whole marriage feast is going to break down. Everybody is going to be in trouble." Now really He must do something about it.

You notice what the Lord Jesus said. He turned to His mother and He said, "Woman, what do I have to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." There are two things there, a seeming necessity is not the grounds on which Jesus works. Just because it is something that seems to be needy, He does not do that. He is waiting for something. He says, "My hour is not yet come. I cannot do this now. I understand how serious the situation is, but I cannot do it now. I may have perfect sympathy for these people, but I just cannot do anything!"

Why could He not do anything at the moment? He was abiding in the Father, He was not living in the circumstances. In His Spirit He was saying, "Father, do You want this done? These people are in difficulty; My dear mother says I ought to do something. But Father, I cannot do anything unless You tell Me to." He was living in the Father. And as He waited for the Father, it seems that the Father says, "Yes, all right, go on." And then He said, "Fill the waterpots with water." That is the first illustration of how Jesus lived in the Father.

There was another time when there was a feast in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples were not in Jerusalem at the time. His brothers after the flesh were with Him. You know it is said, that they did not believe on Him. They said to Him, "You go up to the feast, we are going up, you see everybody
goes up to this feast. It is a thing that everybody does. If You do not go up to the feast, people will not understand You, they will criticize You, You will lose influence with them. If You want to be popular, You had better do what everybody else is doing. We are going up to the feast." And now they said to Jesus, "You go up to the feast."

What did Jesus do? Did He move in a way that would make Him popular? Did He do things just because everybody else is doing them? Did He do it because it is the custom to do that? No, He turned to His brothers after the flesh and He said, "You go up to the feast; I go not up to the feast." And then His brothers went. And after they had gone, Jesus went to the feast.

Now this is a very strange way to go on. Did He not want to be in the company of His brothers? So He told a kind of untruth? "I do not go up, you go up." Did He play a trick on them? Why did He say that? He was abiding in the Father. He was waiting for the Father's word to go up. He will never do anything because it was the popular thing. He would never do it because all the religious people were doing it. He did not do it because it was the custom to do it. He did not do it because He wanted to stand well with the people. The one thing that governs His life was, "Did the Father want Him to do that?" So after His brothers were gone up, He said, "Father, do You want Me to go up?" And evidently the Father said, "Yes, go up." Then went Jesus up. Not before that. He would never do anything until the Father said so.

There was a time when Jesus spoke to His disciples about His coming death at Jerusalem. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, and said, "This shall never come to Thee." The Lord Jesus turned to Peter, and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of man" (Matt. 16:22,23). If My Father says, I am to go up to Jerusalem and be crucified, that is the last word. I will never do anything to save Myself.

Later on, near the end, Jesus said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judea." Now it was in Judea that they were going to arrest Him and crucify Him. Thomas said, 'No, let us not go to Judea, Lord, in Judea the other day they were going to stone You, will You go back there?' Jesus said, 'What My Father says, I must do. I know that it is going to mean the Cross, but I must abide in My Father.'

Satan was always trying to separate Jesus from His Father, trying to get Him to act without His Father. Those three temptations in the wilderness were just a determination to try and get in between Jesus and His Father. All through His life, Satan was trying to separate Jesus from His Father. When He was hanging on the Cross, in that terrible suffering, Satan came along in some evil men and said, "Come down from the Cross, and we will believe." Now Jesus could have come down. He had said a little while before, that "if I were to ask My Father, He would send Me twelve legions of angels."

Well, you will remember what one angel could do. One angel went out in the Old Testament and killed a whole army of men. If one angel could do that, what could twelve legions of angels do. Jesus had only to ask His Father for the legions of angels, and they would have brought Him down from the Cross. No, He let the angels stay where they were. He had said, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). Right to the end, Satan tried to get in between Him and His Father, but Jesus knew the very great importance of abiding in God.

And now, here at the end the situation has changed. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Jesus is out of God. Jesus is separated from God. There is a great distance between Him and God. That had never happened before. Not for one moment in His life had He had such an experience. God is now far away. There is a great divide between the Father and the Son. Not only is Jesus separated from the Father, He is knowing of the terrible desolation that that means. There is a
terrible, terrible thing bound up in that word, "forsaken," forsaken by God. There is nothing more terrible than that. It is the most awful desolation of soul. Not only distance and desolation, but darkness.

That word "why" is a word which means, 'I do not understand. I am altogether in the dark. This is something that I cannot understand.' "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then, further, He was in absolute weakness. The Apostle Paul says, "He was crucified through weakness." It was spiritual weakness as well as physical weakness. When they mocked Him, and said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." There was a lot of truth in that. "No," He could not save Himself. He had not the power to save Himself. He was in complete weakness, without any strength for saving Himself.

Perhaps the worst feature of all is the sense of God's anger. 'God is no more pleased with Me. God is angry. All this says that God is angry. I am suffering the wrath of God.' Can you imagine what that meant to this One Who had lived all His life in the Father? Well, why was all this happening?

You know that one of the titles of Jesus is the last Adam. We have got to go right back to the first Adam to explain all of this. All this that Jesus was experiencing on the Cross was what the first Adam had brought upon the human race. It began in heaven; Satan rebelled against God. Before he rebelled against God, he lived in God. When he rebelled, he was cast out of God. Not only from the presence of God, but from his life in God. From that moment, Satan was outside of God, there came about a great distance between God and Satan. Satan became the prince of darkness. He was thrown out into the darkness, and he went out under the wrath of God.

Now Satan came to Adam, at that time Adam had his life in God; he was dwelling in God. He lived in God. He had everything in God. And then, through Satan's temptation, Adam did exactly the same thing that Satan had done. He disobeyed God. He rebelled against God. You notice what happened, he was separated, thrust out from God. He was separated from God. He no longer had his life in God. He went out into desolation. The earth was cursed because of him. All the bad things and evil things began to grow in the earth. What had once been a beautiful garden has now become a wilderness. Adam went out into the darkness.

After that, Adam did not understand God. He had not the knowledge of God; and then he was in perfect weakness, entirely incapable of saving himself. He was under the wrath of God, and as the father of the human race, he brought the whole race into that position. Every member of Adam's race is in that position by nature. There is no member of the human race who naturally knows what it is to live in God. Everyone knows that they are far away from God, and God is far away from them. And everybody who truly knows that condition, knows that they are in desolation.

The cry of the human heart is, 'Oh that I knew where to find God! I am out here away from God. I am as though I were in the wilderness. I am in the dark. I do not understand God at all. All these problems of life, I have no explanations for them. Why is this and why is that? I am in the dark about it all. And I have such a feeling that God is against me.' That is what the human race is because of Adam's rebellion. Man and the world are out of God.

Now we come to the real meaning of the Cross. Jesus as the last Adam takes the place of the first Adam. He takes on Himself all the conditions that Adam brought on the race. He goes out from the presence of God. He goes out from the place of life, out of the place of the Light into the dark. The place where Adam was and where we are. All that is gathered into this word, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The answer is this: in order to open the way back into God.
Dear friends, you and I must recognize that we are in that position by nature. By nature we have no life in God. We are separated from God. We have no ability to save ourselves. We have no power to understand Divine things, and we are children of wrath, but the Lord Jesus took all that on Himself.

And now we turn from chapter twenty-seven, to chapter twenty-eight, of the Gospel by Matthew. Chapter twenty-eight is the resurrection. Chapter twenty-seven is a closed chapter; it is a closed history. In resurrection there is a return into God. Everything in the resurrection of Jesus, says, He is back in the Father. That awful story is finished. He is no longer separated from His Father. He is back in the bosom of the Father. And if in the Cross, He represented you and me and all the race, then in resurrection, He represents us all who are believers in Him. It is a new position, but what I want to emphasize is this one little word. It is not only that He has brought us near to God; it is not only that He has joined us with God in an outer way. The great thing is He has brought us into God. Our position now is supposed to be in God. That is why we read that little fragment from John seventeen, "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us" (ASV).

You see, our life as the Lord's born again children is supposed to be a life in God, not just walking alongside of God, but living in God. God is our sphere of life. All that is of God is the realm in which we live. I want to get this over, so be very patient with me, because there is a lot that is hanging upon this. I suppose there is a baptistry here somewhere. When you were baptized, you did not come along and just sit down by the water, perhaps get as near to the water as you could, or perhaps just put your hand in the water. You did not say, I have come to the water of baptism; you got into the water. When you were baptized, the water was all around you, and over you. A Christian life is not just coming to live alongside of God; a Christian is called to live right in God.

Now, the next thing is that the Holy Spirit is given unto them. Why was the Holy Spirit given? Why have you got the Holy Spirit? Why is He in us? Just to teach us what it means to live in God. That is, to make us understand what is in God, and what is not in God. If the Holy Spirit is in us, and if we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and we speak in a certain way that is not right, the Holy Spirit will say, "That is not the Lord speaking, that is you." If we behave ourselves in a certain way that is not right, the Holy Spirit will say, "That is not the Father, that is you. That is outside the Father." So, the Holy Spirit has come to teach us and make us know what is in God, and what is not in God.

If we live in ourselves, we shall not live in God. Jesus says, "Abide in Me, as I abide in the Father." You abide in Me, by that He means you get everything from Me, as I get everything from the Father.

Now did you notice what the great work of the devil is? It is first of all, to come between God and man. Everything in our life, which is not of God, is of the devil. The great work of the devil, first in heaven, then on earth, was to bring division. Every division, which touches the things of God, is of the devil. It is not God. No division amongst the Lord's people is of God, that is the work of the devil. And it is because those concerned have been living in some other place than in God. Perhaps, they have been living in themselves and what they want, and what they think. Or, they may have been touching the world, there is nothing like the world to divide the Lord's people. Or, it may be they have been living in someone else, you know it is possible for us to live in a man. Be careful about living in a man. If you do that, that man is going to let you down. There will be division sooner or later. Do not make any man, no matter how wonderful he is, how great a preacher or a teacher he is, do not make him your life. If you do, you may find yourself out of the Lord. The result is division. That is always what the enemy is after. So abide in God, do what the Lord Jesus always did. 'Father, do you want this? Father, is this what You desire? Father, is this Your way? There are strong arguments that I should do this and that I should do that. At the other side of it, it looks as though
that is the thing I ought to do, but, Father, that is not good enough. By nature I am a child of darkness. Father, do you want this, and do you want this now? We must get it from the Lord, and like the Lord Jesus, we may have to wait for the Lord to speak.

Now, He had gone to the Cross, in order to destroy all that which has come between God and us. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a great return movement into God. You will have to read your New Testament in the light of this. Just take up the Book of Acts, see how it works there. Peter, you know had some difficulties. He thought it was wrong to go and have a meal with Gentiles, he called them unclean things. He had a difficulty about it. He said, "Not so, Lord, not in that way. I have never done anything like that before!" Peter was then abiding in his religious tradition. The Holy Spirit says, "Look here, Peter, I know you are religious, but do you want tradition or God?" Peter came to see the point and to abide in God. He had to do what he never had done before. That opens up a lot, does it not?

I have tried to lay the most important law of spiritual life. I just beseech you, seek to have your life in God, not in things, not in people, not in places, not in circumstances, not in arguments, not in human intelligence, but in God. God's thoughts are different from ours. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). We have been brought by resurrection into a return INTO God.

*May we learn all that this means, and it is going to be a life-long education. May the Lord help us.*
Meeting 3 - "He Loved Them Unto the Uttermost"

Third Meeting
(February 2, 1964 P.M.)

We will read a few verses from the Gospel by John, chapter thirteen, verses one to twenty. You have had it announced that tomorrow night there will be a love feast, but I want to say that the true love feast is tonight. We all believe that the Lord's Table is the full expression of Divine love. All the hymns that we have been singing this evening were about God's love. There have been hymns gathered round the Lord's Table. That table has been speaking to us anew of the love of God in Christ Jesus. In this chapter which we have just read, we have the Lord setting forth His table for the first time. This was the first time that He gathered with His disciples around that particular table. Do you notice how the chapter begins? "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end - unto the uttermost" (ASV).

So, over that table, He wrote His love for His own. In effect He said, 'This table, at which we are now going to eat and drink, is the embodiment of My love for you. Having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the uttermost.' And, then, all that follows in that chapter is an explanation of that love. If I tell you that there are seven things in those twenty verses which define His love, please do not be afraid that I am going to preach a long sermon on seven points. In a short time, I can just point out these seven features of that love of Christ.

"He loved them unto the uttermost." And I think in that statement, there is the most wonderful thing that ever came into this world. Jesus had had a lot of trouble with those men. They had often misunderstood Him. They had often disappointed Him. They were really a very poor lot of men. He knew their history during the past three years. But He also knew what was going to happen after this night. He said to Peter, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice" (Matt. 26:33b-35; ASV). He knew that Peter would deny Him three times, saying, "I know not the Man." He said about them all, 'All of you will be offended because of Me this night. You will all run away and leave Me, and I shall be alone, yet I am not alone, because the Father will be with Me.' He knew what a poor lot of men they were, but He loved them unto the uttermost.

That is the first thing about this love. It is not offended by our failures. He does not withdraw His love because we make mistakes. We may often disappoint Him, we may often fail Him, we may often grieve His heart, but He goes on loving us. He loves us unto the uttermost, right to the end. He is not offended by our failures. That is a very different kind of love from our love. This is God's love in Christ.

The second thing about this love is how condescending it is. You notice in verse three, the first statement in the chapter, "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands." The Father had given all things into His hands. How great He is. Greater than all others. That could never be said of anyone else. God has given Him everything. But it did not make Him too proud to love these men. He was not superior to them, He came right down to them. Great as He is, He loved such men as these. With all His greatness, He came down to their level. How condescending is the love of God.
It is great enough to come down to the smallest and to the weakest.

Sometimes we think of God's greatness in terms of power, in terms of the wonderful things He can do. When we think of men being great, we think of their greatness in terms of the big things they can do. The greatness of God is this, that while He has the whole universe to look after, all the big things of the nations, He can look after the smallest things. Sometimes we say, 'Oh, that is too small to ask the Lord for it. The Lord is so great, He cannot be bothered with our little things.' But, that is the greatness of God, to be able to do that. A really great man is one who can come to small things and make a lot of small things. The Father had given all things into His hands, and then He came to these men, and loved them unto the uttermost. How great is His love!

Point number three: Then look again at the chapter, and see that this love makes no distinction in classes of people. You heard it read this evening, "You call Me Lord, and you are right. I am your Lord. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet...." You see, He had taken the place of the servant that no one else would take. Just outside the door of every guest room, there was a basin and a pot of water and a towel. If it was a wealthy house, there was also a servant. And when the guests had sat down, the servant came, took off their sandals and washed their feet. But this was not a wealthy house. Jesus was poor. The disciples were poor. Now, can you see them going into that room? Perhaps Peter is leading the way, he usually did lead the way. Peter saw that basin and that water, he knew it was there, but he really was not seeing it. He walked past, and all the others followed. They all knew that that basin and that water and that towel were there, but no one was going to be the servant. They all went and sat down.

Jesus took the towel, poured the water into the basin, and went straight to Peter, the man so important in his own eyes, too important to be a servant. The Lord and Master was the servant. They were making distinctions between classes of people superior and inferior. Perhaps Peter said, 'Now, I am superior to this other man, let him do the job.' And perhaps they were all feeling superior. But Jesus knew nothing of that spirit. Love knows no distinction between classes of people. Love knows no distinction between nationalities. The Love of God in Christ Jesus looks upon us all just the same as needing His love. His love is above all earthly distinctions.

Point number four: You know, it is so easy to talk about love, to pretend to love, to use the language of love, to sing hymns about love, and it can all be sentimental; perhaps we all know people who have told us that they love us, but very often they are the very people who have hurt us most. Now, the love of Jesus was not sentimental, it was practical. He did not go in with His disciples and say, 'Brothers, I do love you very much.' He showed that He loved them by what He did for them. It was not sentimental love, it was practical love. And this is the love with which He loved them unto the uttermost.

Point number five: What was the meaning of this washing of their feet? Our dear brother, Watchman Nee, used to speak about the earth touch, he used to say, 'If you touch this earth, you touch evil, you touch death.' These men had walked along the dusty dirty roads. Their feet were literally covered in the dust of this earth. But in this symbolic act, Jesus was saying, 'You have to live in this world, but you must be kept clean from the world.' And this washing of their feet was His way of saying, 'Love, My love, will keep you free from the evil that is in this world.' The love of Christ is a cleansing love. It is not just words, but it helps us to live on a higher level of life.

Point number six: This love is full of spiritual instruction. He said to them, "What I do now, you do not understand, but you shall understand afterwards." This love is going to instruct us as to what God loves and what God does not love. Up to this point, these disciples loved the world. Their hearts
were set upon a kingdom in this world. They wanted the chief places in the Kingdom. They wanted to be important people in Christ's Kingdom. And their idea was that He was going to set up a kingdom in which they would be important. It was the spirit of the world. They loved the world. See what the love of God did in their hearts! It took all love for this world out of their hearts. They went out into the world, and suffered from the world, because of His love in their hearts. They lost all interest in being important people in this world. After all it did not matter whether they were important people in the Church. They had no ambition to be the teachers and the preachers. They had no ambition to be the elders of the Church. The love of Christ had done away with all that kind of thing. They went out to suffer and to die for Him. To lay down their lives for Christ. It was a tremendous thing that His love did in them.

Now we come to point seven, which is not in this chapter, but do you notice that all this came just before Jesus began to speak to them about the Holy Spirit. Jesus is going to give them that wonderful teaching about the coming of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall guide you into all the truth. He shall not speak of Himself, He shall take the things which are Mine, and show them unto you." What did that mean? The Spirit Who was coming would be the Spirit of love. And the Holy Spirit would work in them to produce this same love for others as Christ had for them.

Dear friends, if we have the Holy Spirit, these things at least ought to be found in us. These things which characterize the love of Christ for His own ought to characterize us in love for others. That is why the Holy Spirit has come. So that as He loved us to the uttermost, so ought we to love one another. Forgive me, I have gone four minutes over my time. But, if only we learn this great lesson of His Love, it would be worth staying here all night!
Meeting 4 - "Jesus Christ... Both Their Lord and Ours"

Fourth Meeting
(February 3, 1964 P.M.)

Dear friends, it is not my intention to keep you very long. Indeed, I think I shall not say much to you this evening, but there is one thing I must say. How very grateful I am for the opportunity that this love feast has given me. It has given me the opportunity to meet so many of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. I am not conceited enough to think that this love feast has been arranged because I have come to the Philippines. But I do think it is a very great blessing that so many of us can come together like this. Perhaps many of us would not meet at this time were it not for this opportunity. So, I thank my brothers here for making this provision. If you had told me when I was speaking here last night that over seven hundred people would be gathered around the tables in this hall, I think I should have had difficulty in believing it. And what a wonderful feast it has been, but there is something more wonderful than the crowd, and there is something more wonderful than the feast. It is the love of Christ which is in every heart in this hall tonight.

When I was thinking and praying about this time this evening, and asking the Lord for just a little word to give you, there came into my heart the first words of Paul, in the First Letter to the Corinthians, I will just read those words to you. "Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their Lord and ours." It is the last part of that verse which is very much in my heart, "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their Lord and ours." I think the Apostle Paul was a very wise man. He was a very clever man, and in these two verses, that cleverness comes out. You notice he begins by addressing the church of God which is in Corinth. Now the Corinthians had a great gift of division. Later on the apostle would say there are divisions among you. And their divisions were marked by their circling round different men. One group said, "We are of Paul"; another group said, "We are of Apollos"; another group said, "We are of Peter"; so they were people who are very much marked by divisions. It was to those people and to those divisions, that the apostle said this, "To all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus, their Lord and ours."

How big is the church? It is just as big as Jesus Christ. The trouble with the Corinthians was that they were making Jesus much smaller than He really is. So the apostle, right at the beginning, said: No, Jesus is bigger than all the groups put together. To all those in every place who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus, their Lord and ours.

Divisions are always the result of making Jesus smaller than He is. Our Lord Jesus is greater than men. We have a hymn which has a line like this, 'The love of God is greater than the measure of men's mind.' We are always making God, and the love of God, about the size of our own mind. And if people do not agree with our mind, that is where the love of God stops with us. We, here tonight, represent many groups. Perhaps we have our own mind about things, but if this feast really lives up to its name, it represents something much bigger than our mind. We are not gathered to men or a man. No man for us can measure Christ. We are here tonight because this is a true love feast. And
that means that the love of Christ is in our heart. We left our groups. We left our divisions. We are here on the common ground of Christ. What a grand thing it would be if all Christians just took that ground! The ground of so many Christians, the ground of some denominations, some organizations, some special teaching, or many different things, that is their ground. But the real ground of the Christian is Christ. If we all had a greater concern for the Lord Jesus than we had for religious things, what a different thing it would be in the world.

Now, I expect you all agreed with that. You agreed with it in theory, but you know this is very practical. To live next door to some people is a very practical matter. It just finds you out, does it not? How you get on with your neighbor. Now, there is another thing that you will all agree with in theory. It is that this life is a preparation for heaven. You believe that? You would say that you are on your way to heaven. And you expect one day to be there. And you will agree that this present life is a preparation for heaven. Do you really believe that? Because it is very practical. We are all going to be neighbors in heaven. We are all going to live next door to each other. Do you remember that there is a description of the New Jerusalem at the end of the Bible?

I am afraid that the people who have written our hymns have gone astray on this. There is a hymn which says this, 'The streets, I am told, are paved with pure gold.' That is false doctrine. In the Bible, it says there is only one street. Only one street in the New Jerusalem. That one street is of gold. Dear friends, we will all get to live on the same street in heaven. We are all going to be neighbors there. If it is to be taken literally, we shall not be able to go out of our houses without meeting everybody in heaven.

Someone came over to England from America once; they had traveled on the same boat as we had. They had never been to England before. We got into the train to go from the port to London. This person saw all the long rows of houses joined together and she looked shocked at this. 'Look at all the houses joined together. How do you get on if you do not like your neighbor?'

In heaven there is one street. It is paved with pure gold. Now I do not think we are to take that literally. I think it is symbolic, and is meant to teach us two things. (1) We are all going to be in the closest fellowship in heaven. And (2) the gold is the symbol of the love of God. We are all going to be together in the love of God.

Now I said you believe that this life is the preparation for heaven. Do you believe it? You had better begin to know how to live with your neighbor now. I mean your Christian neighbor. All those in every place who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus.

What is going to be the chief characteristics of heaven? It says that Christ will be all in all. Will the characteristics of heaven be the Christ of everything? Not things, not institutions, but just Christ. If it is going to be like that, then we had better begin to make Christ everything now. If we are going to have anything as a foretell of heaven in this life, it will only be just as Christ is more than anything and everything else. So our daily prayers must be, 'Lord, prepare me for heaven, and do it by filling me with more and more of Christ.' Do take these words of the Apostle Paul, "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their Lord and ours." The Lord bless you all, dear friends.
Meeting 5 - "Worshipping in Spirit and in Truth"

Fifth Meeting
(February 5, 1964 A.M.)

I think it is understood that in these morning hours I am not giving addresses. I am just seeking to bring you to the foundation principles of the work of God so that there will be very little at most of our meetings. It may be hard work bringing us back to the Lord Jesus. It was not very long after the apostles had gone that all those things came into Christianity with which we are familiar today. Infant baptism took the place of baptism by immersion through faith in Jesus Christ. That was instituted very soon after the apostle John had gone to the Lord.

Then Christianity became organized into an ecclesiastical system with "Bishops" and "Archbishops" leading on to a Pope. The vestments and ritual of later Christianity came in just about that time. People who were in authority were put there, not because they were spiritual men, but for other reasons. This tendency was already beginning to manifest itself before the apostles had finished their ministry. It is very important for us to take note of this, because we have inherited a Christianity which is not true to the beginnings.

Now take what may be the Last Letter of the Apostle Paul, that is, the Second Letter to Timothy. Of course, there are lots of things in that Letter that we all like very much. We like Second Timothy two fifteen, "Give diligence to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God." But we do not always recognize that those words contain a corrective. They may be a call back to the original position. Of course, we very much like, "Thou therefore, my son, endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." But we do not always recognize that that goes with: "Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). The battle of the soldier of Jesus Christ is the battle for the purity of the faith. That is, the purity of Christianity as it was in the beginning. We have to read Second Timothy in the light of this truth. It was written because people were not behaving themselves properly in the house of God. Paul said that he wrote that Letter that men might know how to behave themselves in the house of God. There was misbehavior in the house of God. And you know that Timothy was, probably, an elder in the church of Ephesus. That was a terrible thing to say to Ephesus. Think of all that you know about Ephesus. And then, Paul said, even at Ephesus men are not behaving themselves properly in the house of God.

Later on we shall touch upon some of the things that had to be corrected. But for the moment, our point is that even so early as that, things were beginning to deviate from their original position. The Last Letters written in the New Testament were the Letters by the Apostle John. He wrote all his Letters and his Gospel after all the other apostles had gone to the Lord. I suppose we all like the Letters of John. And I suppose we like John's Gospel perhaps better than most. But have you really noticed the character of John's Letters? He begins his First Letter with these words, "That which was from the beginning." It takes them right back to the beginning. And then the letters have to do with correcting doctrine and correcting character. They are departing from the original teaching. And they are departing from the original standard of life. Now, note again, John was probably writing to Ephesus. Then, when you come to his Book of the Revelation, the Lord begins with Ephesus. And he says to Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy first love." You have moved away from the original position. I
think I have said enough to prove that at the end of the New Testament writings, on the one side, things were beginning to go away from the original position. And on the other side, the apostles were concerned with bringing the believers back to the first position.

For a long time I used to wonder why the Gospels were written so late in New Testament time. Because Matthew, Mark, Luke and John come first in the New Testament writing, as we have them, because they are the First Books bound up in the volume of the New Testament, we are inclined to have the impression that they were the earliest writings. I want to correct that, if that is your mistake. These four Gospels were written after most of the Epistles were written. I used to wonder why that was? Why should these writers of the Gospels go right back to the earthly life of the Lord Jesus after all this marvelous revelation had been given? They had received the wonderful unveiling of the risen and ascended and heavenly Lord. They had received the wonderful revelation of the Church, which is His Body. They had come to see something of the eternal counsels of God. And when they had received all that, they went right back to His earthly life of three and a half years. Now, for a long time I used to wonder why it was like that? It seemed to me like coming down from heaven to earth, like coming back from eternity to time. I did not understand that. So I went over to the Epistles, and for many years, I was wholly occupied with the Epistles. I was taken up with these eternal counsels of God. I was taken up with the spiritual Body of Christ, the Church. And I almost entirely lived in the later writings of the New Testament. And yet the fact is there that these men wrote those letters after the Epistles had been written. That is, many of the epistles, not all of them. Now you see, I had a question, and for a long time my question was not answered. I did not understand why the Gospels were written so late. And although they were later than some of the Epistles, the Holy Spirit put them as the First Books of the New Testament.

Now, for you, here is a spiritual law. The Holy Spirit is not always very concerned with chronology. Chronology is one thing, spiritual order is another thing. Have you got that? The Holy Spirit is always concerned with spiritual order. Well, here was my question, but I have had that question answered in my own experience. Later, the Holy Spirit led me right back to the Gospels.

Now I want to put in there this other thing, and this is a very important thing. You see, when I started reading the Bible, and especially the New Testament, I did what most other people do. I read the Four Gospels as the story of the earthly life, work, and teaching of Jesus. It is a very interesting story of how He was born a little baby in the town of Bethlehem, all about the shepherds and the wise men and the star and all those things. That is very interesting. And then how He grew up in the carpenter's shop in the town of Nazareth. Then how at twelve years old He was taken up to Jerusalem to the temple. Then how He came to Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. And He went about the country healing people of their sicknesses and helping them in their troubles. And how great crowds of people followed Him everywhere, because of the help which He could give them, usually in a physical way. Then how the rulers became jealous of all this, and they took counsel to put Him to death. It is a wonderful story of how He was condemned and crucified, then how He rose on the third day. All that makes up a wonderful history. Of course, that is how I read the Gospels. I got those standard works, books on the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, very interesting books, and that is all it was to me. And I thought that when Jesus died and rose again that was the end of the Gospel.

Now we go over to Acts. Now we live in the Epistles! I have come to see that is all wrong. Everybody can read the Gospels in that way. I suppose any unconverted person would be interested in reading the story of the earthly life of Jesus, but we have failed to recognize this: that no one can really understand the Gospels until they have passed into the experience of the Book of the Acts. That is the experience of Pentecost. You know even the disciples themselves did not understand that until after Pentecost. They did not understand the work and the teaching of Jesus when He was on
earth until Pentecost. I could fill a whole hour now in showing you that. They were moving, all through the earthly life of Jesus, with a closed heaven. That was the trouble that the Lord Jesus had with them. He said: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me?" And all the way along, His trouble was that they just did not understand what He was talking about.

And because of that spiritual blindness, instead of seeing that in His crucifixion all the Old Testament was fulfilled, they were all offended. About His death, He was always saying to them "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled". And when it came to that, He said, 'This is just what I had been trying to tell you all the time.' But they did not see it, and therefore, they were all offended. They all forsook Him; and you know the position that they were in when you look at those two men on the way to Emmaus. They said to Him, "We had hoped that it should be He Who should redeem Israel. All our hopes are disappointed. Our faith has been mistaken." See how blind they were? It was not until He opened their eyes that they saw. Now my point is this: No one can understand the Gospels truly until they have received the Holy Spirit, and have come into a true, deep, experience of death with Christ, burial with Christ, and resurrection with Christ; because that experience, not that doctrine, that experience brings an open heaven. When I came into a new experience of resurrection union with Christ, and of a new life in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit began to lead me back to the Gospels and He began to show me the real meaning of the Gospels. The Gospels had become alive in a new way. Now all that is preparation for what we are going to say.

Now we come then to the adjustments, which our spiritual life demands, and we are going back to the beginning. We are going to begin in the fourth chapter of the Gospel by John. This chapter, as you know, contains the talk which Jesus had with the woman of Samaria. At a certain point in that talk, the woman said these words to Him, as we have them in verse nineteen. The important part of this whole chapter is in verses nineteen to twenty-four. "The woman saith unto Him, "Sir, (that is, "Lord) I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not we worship that which we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." You turn to chapter five, verse twenty-five, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Now I wonder if you recognize the tremendous things that are contained in those words. First of all, they represent a complete change in dispensation. Up till now, it had been Jerusalem and Samaria; that is, it had been the temple in Jerusalem and the temple in Samaria. Those temples represented a whole historic order of things. It was a matter of a special place in Samaria or in Jerusalem, according to whether you were a Samaritan or a Jew. If you were a Jew, Jerusalem was the center of everything. In the temple there, you would find God and no where else. The order of things in the temple of Jerusalem was everything, and you would never find it anywhere else. The priests and the sacrifices and the altar and everything, that temple was the center of all things.

So it was for the Samaritans in the temple in Samaria. Now Jesus says this tremendous thing. "The hour cometh and now is, when neither in Jerusalem nor in Samaria; neither in this special place nor in that special place." Everything is not going to be centered and contained in some special place. The worship of God is no longer going to be in a certain form. Neither - nor! That is wiping out with one stroke a whole dispensation. That is a tremendous thing. Supposing you were to write on that blackboard and fill the whole blackboard with all your doctrines and your practices and how things had to be done. And you said "Now that is Christianity". Someone came along with a wet sponge and wiped the whole thing out and said, 'That is nonsense; that is not it at all.' What would you do with
that one? You would crucify him. That is what Jesus did. He wiped out a whole dispensation with one stroke of His hand. Then He put something else in its place. What did He put in its place? "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

All that old system of things may be very real to you, but it may not be the truth. It may only be a system of symbols and types, and that is not the truth. You may become wholly occupied with what is on the surface, and what is seen: what you hear with your natural ears, what you see with your natural eyes, and you may not understand the meaning of that at all. It is the meaning which is the truth, not the thing in itself. The very center of everything for the Jews was the ceremony of circumcision. That was the sign that you were a Jew and a true Jew. You could never be a real Jew unless you had been circumcised. Hear the Apostle Paul saying this: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing." Hear a Jew saying that! You are not surprised that they tried to kill him. No, it is not the thing, and dear friends, in Christianity baptism takes the place of circumcision; but baptism as baptism is nothing. In Ethiopia, the Coptic Christians are baptized every year. You could be baptized every day if you like. You could be baptized every hour of every day, and it make no difference. If you go to the Lord's Table every week, and it make no difference. You can take up all the forms of Christianity, and really know nothing about it. That is what we are going to come to in our morning studies.

My time is gone, I promised to keep faith with you to let you go to your work, so I have to break up at this point. Have you got this first thing? We will follow on with this, if the Lord wills, tomorrow morning. When Jesus said, "Believe Me, the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth"; that need not be in Jerusalem nor Samaria nor Antioch nor anywhere else. "Wheresoever two or three are gathered into My name, there I am." John three and verse sixteen is the universal word for salvation. "Whosoever believed in Him," that includes everybody for salvation, called to salvation. Matthew eighteen (verse 20) is another side of things, there you come to the Church. And you have another universal word for the Church. It is not in this place nor in that place; it is not on this ground nor on that ground. It is not Church ground; it is Christ ground! Wheresoever two or three are gathered into My name, worshiping in the spirit and in truth. The dispensation has changed. It is the very first corrective that is needed today. Christianity has become very largely a legalistic system. "You must do it here! You must be here! You must do it in this way, or you are not the Church." The Lord Jesus has wiped all that out at the beginning. That is something that has come in afterwards. He says the only ground that is necessary is, "in spirit and in truth in Me." Christ has taken the place of all other systems. CHRIST IS THE ONLY SYSTEM. But we have got to learn Christ. I must leave it there for this morning.
Meeting 6 - "The Most Important Thing is Spiritual Understanding"

Sixth Meeting
(February 5, 1964 P.M.)

We are going to read the Word of God in the Gospel by Matthew, chapter thirteen, verses one to seventeen:

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.'"

And the disciples came, and said unto Him, 'Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?' He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, 'That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.'"

And then verses fifty-one and fifty-two:

"Jesus saith unto them, 'Have ye understood all these things?' They said unto Him, 'Yea, Lord.' Then said He unto them, 'Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.'"

For some weeks before I knew that I was coming to Manila, the Lord was speaking to me about a certain matter. And then when I knew that I was coming, the Lord indicated that that was the matter about which He wanted me to speak to you. I feel that it is the most important matter in the Christian life. I hope that you will take note of that statement. What is the most important thing in the life of a Christian? It is: "SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING." I do not think that there is anything more important for us than spiritual understanding. Perhaps you noticed that that is the matter around which this thirteenth chapter of the Book of Matthew circles. Everything centers in and focuses upon this matter of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING!
The Lord Jesus is here speaking about the Kingdom of God. That is the great subject with which He was occupied. It is the all inclusive matter, the Kingdom of God. Everything is gathered into this matter of the Kingdom of God. We must understand that the Kingdom of God is an eternal matter. It goes right back into the past eternity. It comes through all the ages of time; and then it is completed in the eternity which is to come. And all that we have in the Bible is gathered into this one matter: the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's Sovereign Rule. The Government of God is over all things in the universe, and especially in this world. That Kingdom was given by the Father to His Son as the Son's inheritance. In the beginning of the Letter to the Hebrews, we have these words about God's Son. It says, "Whom He appointed heir of all things." That must have taken place before this world was created. God, the Father, appointed His Son heir of all things. In other words, He gave to the Son the Kingdom. God's Kingdom is God's Son's eternal right. The Son of God is appointed to reign over all things.

The next thing that is revealed to us in Scripture is that man was created in order to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. God created man in order that man should reign together with His Son. Again, in the same letter to the Hebrews, the question is taken up: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands." "Thou hast put all things under His feet." So we have these three things to begin with; (1) God the Father over all things. The Kingdom belongs to God, the Divine rule over all things. (2) The Son is given a place beside the Father in the Throne. The Father says to the Son, "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet." (3) And then man is created in order to share the Kingdom with the Son. Those are the first three things, the first three things in the Bible.

Then we begin again. The next thing is that man handed over that Kingdom to Satan. Man gave his inheritance into the hands of the devil. So that Satan became the prince of this world. And the Kingdom of this world was taken away from God's Son. There was this other usurper who came into the place of the Son of God. The Apostle John says, "the whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5:19b). That is number (4).

Now number (5). The Son cannot be eternally deprived of His inheritance, but He has to come to win it back again. So the Son of God left the Father's side and came down into this world. He came to redeem the Kingdom unto Himself and unto His Father. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. So He came to preach the Kingdom of God, and to redeem the Kingdom unto Himself and unto God, and to redeem man as the instrument of the Son for reigning with Him in the Kingdom. So that in and through Christ Jesus, we are called back into the eternal Kingdom, into the Kingdom of God.

Now you notice that this Gospel by Matthew is all about the Kingdom of God. And this chapter thirteen is a particular chapter in relation to the Kingdom of God. But we come back to where we began. The Kingdom of God can be lost because of one thing. We may miss our inheritance in Christ because of one thing. We may miss our inheritance in Christ because of one thing. All that the wonderful eternal kingdom means may be missed because of this one thing. The Lord Jesus focuses the whole of the Kingdom of God upon this matter of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. And He proceeds to illustrate this matter of spiritual understanding with these parables. He makes this matter of spiritual understanding the most terrible thing on the one side. He says if you have not got spiritual understanding, you may miss it all. And He says on the other side, if you have spiritual understanding, that is the way into the Kingdom. So we come to this parable, as it is called, of the sower. It is a simple explanation of the meaning of spiritual understanding.

Now the Lord Jesus gave that parable to a great multitude of people. They were perhaps all Jews,
that is, they had all the history of the Old Testament behind them. They knew all that the Old Testament contained. They knew all that Moses had written. They knew all that the prophets had spoken and written. They had that wonderful possession of the Old Testament. And yet the Lord Jesus spoke to them about the Kingdom, just like little children. In a sense, any little child can understand the parable of the sower. It is a very pretty little story for children: 'A sower went forth to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side; and some seeds fell on the rocky ground; and some seeds fell among thorns; and then some fell on the good ground.' Who cannot understand that? If Jesus had said to the multitude, 'Do you understand?' they would have said, 'Of course we understand.' What do you understand? Well, the sower went forth to sow, and this is what happened to his seeds. But Jesus said, 'You don't understand at all. You don't understand a little child's story.' And even the disciples didn't understand. Think of the disciples of Jesus not understanding that!

If I were to ask anybody here tonight, if they understood the parable of the sower, they would say, 'Of course we understand.' Anybody could understand a sower going forth to sow. Really that doesn't want much understanding, you can see it every day. But even the disciples of Jesus did not understand. And they came to Him and they said, "Explain to us the parable of the sower." What they really meant was, 'You mean something more than You are saying. There is something behind Your story, and we don't get what it is. Now will You explain it to us?' So He gave them an explanation. Then He asks them, "Have you understood?" "Oh, yes, we understand." But it is quite evident that for the rest of their life until Jesus was crucified, they did not understand. They were among that great crowd of people who live today, who think they understand the truth, but they do not. They have got all the words of Christian teaching. They have got all the doctrines of the New Testament. They have got the Book itself, and the Book is well in their heads. They can quote the Scripture from anywhere and still they have not spiritual understanding. That is possible, dear friends. It is possible to have all the teaching without having the understanding. And all the trouble in Christianity today is because of this absence of spiritual understanding.

Now, I am not going to spend time on all the details of this parable. You know what the Lord Jesus said about the seed and the various results. But before we come to those details, let us note one of two general truths.

First of all, the sower is the Lord Jesus Himself. It is from the Lord Himself that the Word must come. What we receive of the Word of God must come to us directly from the Lord Jesus. So it is said, the sower is the Son of God. What is the seed? Now note, Jesus calls it the Word of the Kingdom. If any man receives or when a man receives the Word of the Kingdom, the Word of the Lord Jesus is intended to bring us into the Kingdom. That is the all inclusive purpose of the Word of God. Not that we should know the Bible, although it is a very good thing to know the Bible. Not that we should commit the Bible to memory, and have it all in our heads. That is a very good thing, but God's object is that the Word of God should bring us into the Kingdom.

Now notice the different kinds of ground upon which the Word fell. How many kinds of ground are there there? I know what you would say, you would say there are four kinds of ground. Is that what you'd say? Not many of you are nodding your heads, you're afraid of something! You're afraid that I'm going to catch you out, and if you say there are four, I'm going to say you're wrong! There are six. We will come to that presently. We will say for the moment there are four, or there are six. These different kinds of ground represent different kinds of people.

Now I want you to notice this: The same Lord comes with the same Word to every kind of person. The Lord Jesus knew that some people would be like the way-side ground, but He did not say, 'Oh, I know they are no good; I am not going to give them My Word. I know quite well that they will not
bear much fruit, so I shall not waste My Word on them. Leave them where they are.' And, then, what about these rocky ground people? Well, I know quite well how they will respond. I know that of course, that they will be very pleased to have it. They say, 'Oh, this is very good. I see that I am going to get something from this.' And then after a little while, things begin to get difficult, persecution and suffering arises and they are not interested in it any longer. That is the end of them. Jesus knew all about them before He started. But He did not say, 'I'll just be wasting My time, if I give them My Word. I will leave them alone.' And what about these thorny ground people? Well, they're the people who are very much occupied with the business of this world, commercialism is their great concern, how to make the most money and how to make it quickly. Their business is everything to them, and then their profession is taking up all their time. And others, well they are altogether concerned about the pleasures of this life. 'I know quite well that their business and their profession and their pleasures will just choke the Word if I give it to them. So I don't waste My time on them.' Jesus never said anything like that. And He did not say, 'Now I know that this is good ground. I will concentrate all My attention upon these. I know that they will give Me what I want, so they are the only people that I am interested in.' No, He never said anything like that.

Jesus brought His Word and brings His Word to all kinds of people. Why does He do that? Now all you business men here tonight would not do that. And you very spiritual people would not do that. You would say, 'That is not common sense. That is not good business. It is not good judgment to do that. Let us concentrate only upon what we are sure of. It is bad business to take any notice of those other unreliable people.' But you see the sense of Jesus is different from our sense. And that is where SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING comes in, as different from natural understanding.

Why did Jesus do this thing which the men of the world would call foolish? He did it for one reason. He puts the responsibility for His Word upon everybody. The reaction to the Word of God is our responsibility when once He has given it. When once the Lord has brought to us His Word, He has put the responsibility away from Himself onto us. He says to the way-side man, 'You can have just as much as the good ground man if you like.' He says to the rocky ground man, 'This Word of Mine can do in you just as much as it can do in anybody else.' He says to the thorny ground people, 'My Word is just as powerful for you as it is for anybody.'

Now what would you really say if God's Son had come into this world only to save the good people, those people of fine character, those people who had everything in themselves? And if He had left everybody else aside, I know what you would say. You would say, "That is not fair; that is not righteous. Here am I a poor kind of creature. My makeup is of the poor kind. I am just like a way-side creature. My heart is a very stony ground heart. I know that I have a great love for this world. Does that mean that I have no chance to get into the Kingdom?" It would not be right, would it?

So Jesus comes with His Word and He says, 'This Word has in it the same power for all kinds of people.' What you are naturally is not the point. Now He comes to the point. Do you notice one word that repeatedly occurs in these parables? It is the word: "HEART." Heart, a good heart, IT IS A MATTER OF THE HEART, it is not a matter of your poor kind of humanity. It is altogether a matter of where your heart is. Have you got a heart for the Lord? Have you got a heart for the Kingdom of God? Really, is this a heart matter? The Lord says that if you really have a heart, that is going to mean SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. So He takes this terrible passage from the prophecies of Isaiah, which saith, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." The prophet had given the Word of God to these people. The Word of God was read in their hearing every day and every week. But they had not got a heart for the Word of God. They did not respond from their heart. So the Lord brought a judgment upon
them. He says, 'You have closed your eyes; I will close them. You have closed your ears; I will close them. When you want to see, you will not be able to see. When you want to hear, you will not be able to hear. I will take away from you the power of spiritual understanding.' There is a warning for us here. I am afraid we sometimes do meet Christians like this.

May I say this very solemn word to some young Christians? It may be that you have been brought up in a Christian home. You know what your parents have taught you about the Lord. It may be that you have been taken to the meetings; perhaps you were in Sunday school. You know all about it. Yes, you know about the Lord Jesus. You know what is in the Bible. But you are not going on with the Lord. Perhaps you are breaking the heart of your parents. You are not just rejoicing in the Word of God. You are not really a living Christian, taking your place amongst the people of God, coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty evil forces. If you are a Christian at all, you are only a Christian in name. Something happens to you, or something is happening to you, that which you had is being taken away. You are losing the power of spiritual understanding. You are losing the power of spiritual sight and spiritual hearing. You see all that is going on amongst the Lord's people, but it does not interest you very much. You can hear all that is said in the meeting, or in the home, but it does not matter to you.

There are a lot of young Christians like that. And this very thing is happening to them. They are in danger of losing all SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING and, therefore, of losing all the wonderful meaning of the Kingdom of God, of sharing the Kingdom with God's Son, of reigning together with Him in glory. You are in danger of missing it. Spiritual understanding is the necessity. And SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING COMES FROM HAVING A HEART FOR THE LORD. Not being way-side Christians, people who really do not have a mind for the Lord. Here comes the Word with all its mighty possibilities, but because you have not got a mind for the Lord, it means nothing.

Or you may be of the rocky ground kind; superficial nature, living only on the surface of things, showing that that is true by a quick response. Oh, it's a lovely thing to see young people make a quick response to the Lord, but if you have lived as long as I have, you will know that many of those who jump at it very quickly and say, 'Oh, here is something for me', do not last very long. They come to see that the Kingdom of God is not just for their blessing, but for the Lord's glory. You see, there is a wrong idea of Christianity, that it is something all for our good, so we want the blessing, we want the good. We say like Peter said at one time, 'not my feet only, but my head and my hands.' He said that because he wanted everything that he could get for himself. Later on, he came to see that everything was to be for the Lord. And he did not lose anything when he came to see that. When his heart was changed, and he now had a heart only for the Lord, then he came into the fullness of the Kingdom.

Oh, what about the thorny ground? These are the people that have all these wonderful occupations in this life, business and profession and pleasure. And these things take first place with them. Their hearts are divided hearts. A bit of their heart wants the Lord, but the larger bit wants this world. Their heart is not wholly set upon the Lord. They are in danger of missing the Kingdom. It is not until the Lord has our whole heart that we come into the real meaning of the Kingdom. Paul prayed for the believers of Ephesus, that the Lord would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation; that the eyes of their heart might be enlightened. What is your reaction to the Lord? Is it really a whole hearted reaction?

Now I have five minutes and I am coming back to that disputed point on how many different kinds of ground there are. You said four: way-side, the rocky, the thorny, and the good. Is that all? But what about the three different kinds of good ground? The Lord says that even the good ground brought
forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. So that even good ground can be different. It can produce three different degrees of the Kingdom. We can leave the hundredfold people. That is quite all right. But what about the sixty and the thirty? There must be something wrong even with the good people. Why are not all the good people a hundredfold?

Oh, yes, there are people whose good hearts are not rebellious to the Lord. They are not the people who say, 'I will not have the Lord's Words.' They make a response to the Lord, and it comes from their hearts. But some good people have reservations. Some very good people say, 'Now if I go all out for the Lord, you know what my friends will think of me? Do you know what the people in my church would say about me? And you know, perhaps my position in business will be interfered with. I must be very careful. I must not lose my influence with others. I must think about what other people will think and say. Now, my committee expects this of me. If I really go all out for the Lord, my committee will be very angry. Perhaps they will ask me to resign.' Do you see what I mean? Very good people, but they are influenced by policy.

I was talking to a man once, and as I talked to him, he saw what I was meaning. And when I was finished, this is what he said. 'Yes, Mr. Sparks, you are quite right. I quite agree with you. But if I was to go the way that you are going, I should offend all my friends. And in my work for the Lord, people would begin to withdraw their support with money. So I must think about my people and about the Lord's work.' Very good people, very devoted to the Lord. There is no doubt about it that they love the Lord, but you see these reservations. It says about Caleb of the Old Testament, that he had another spirit, and he wholly followed the Lord. He, with one other man, Joshua, of that whole generation came into the Kingdom. That is what we mean by SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

I say to you: HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD ALL THESE THINGS? I have much more to say to you about spiritual understanding. But, oh, how important it is that I should have eyes to see, to see behind the things that are said and done, and see the meaning of the Lord. These people only heard His Words, and saw His works, but they did not understand the meaning. And they lost so much. Ask the Lord to give you spiritual understanding. And if you don't understand, don't say, 'I don't understand.' Go to the Lord and say, 'Lord, make me understand. Open the eyes of my heart.' That will show that you mean business with the Lord, and if you mean business with the Lord, the Lord will mean business with you.
Meeting 7 - Christ Corporate is the Church

Seventh Meeting
(February 6, 1964 A.M.)

Reading: John 4:19-23; Exodus 25:8:

"The woman saith unto Him, 'Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.'"

"And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."

In the Gospel by John, chapter 1:14:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

We are seeking to get right back behind all that Christianity has become to its fundamental principle. I think we all recognize that Christianity has become a great buildup system. And very soon after the apostles had gone to the Lord, men began to put their hand upon Christianity. They put its truths into a set system of creeds. They put its testimonies into a form of ritual. Somehow or other man must put his hand on things. From the day when Adam put his hand on the tree of knowledge of good and evil, man has always wanted to put his hand on the things of God. That is, to bring the things of God into his own control. We use our hands in order to bring things under our control.

But when it comes to the things of God, that is a wrong use of our hands. Man has always been doing that. The Philistines put their hands on the ark with disastrous results for themselves. Uzzah in the days of David put his hand on the ark; and the Lord smote Uzzah [so] that he died. And for the time being everything came into confusion in Israel. The ark of the testimony had to be turned aside. The whole progress toward God's end had been brought to a standstill. And even David was angry with the Lord. All the results were man putting his hand on the things of God. It has always been like that. And it is like that in Christianity.

Christianity began in a simple beautiful living way. It was all in the life and the liberty of the Spirit. And while the Holy Spirit has His hand on things, everything is all right. Now men came in and they took hold of Christianity and the result is what we have today. There is no place where there is more confusion than in Christianity. The Lord's testimony is under arrest. It is in limitation because man's hands are upon it. Man has brought it under his control. That is always a dangerous and a disastrous thing. The Lord's attitude is like this, 'I will keep My hands off until you take yours off. While your hands are on My things I will leave it to you.' And things go from bad to worse. Now I think we all recognize that. The more a man or any man puts their hands on the things of God, the more confusion there is. When man brings the things of God under his control and dominates them, that means trouble. That is why the Lord so often had to weaken man and make man know his own weakness. Paul, the apostle, was a strong man naturally. And as Saul of Tarsus, he put his hand on
the things of God. And then the Lord met him and smote him. And in the end, the apostle said, "I will glory in my infirmity and in my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Now let us take note of these things as we go along. I am not concerned about giving you a great mountain of teaching. It does not matter to me how much I give you or how little. The important thing is that you take note of every little bit. And what I have just said is a very important thing. Let me say to my brothers, and sisters, be careful how you put your hand on Divine things. Be careful how you try to bring the things of the Spirit under your control, it may be that the Lord will smite you if you do that. If you do that, you will only bring confusion into the church. With all this tremendous confusion, the system of Christianity exists because man put his hand on Divine things. This brings Divine things within the compass of their own mind, and to say: 'This is how it has to be done. This is what we must do and this is what we must not do.'

Now as we so often said, Peter started doing that, when the Lord showed him that he has to go to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile. Peter always took the position that Jews had nothing to do with the Gentiles. When the Spirit told Peter to go to this home of the Gentile, Peter said, "not so, Lord"; he put out his hand, and he said, "Now Lord, You are wrong and I am right; You must come into line with my Old Testament understanding." That was a very critical day for Peter. And it was a very critical day for the Church. When Peter took his hands off, it became a wonderful day for the Church.

So we have got to get right back to Christianity as a system as we know it. And get right to the first simple spiritual principle of Jesus Christ. And we said yesterday that this passage in the Gospel by John, chapter four, verse twenty-three takes us right back to the beginning. It is the beginning of a new dispensation. Jesus said to the woman, "the hour cometh, and now is." Then He dismissed the whole system that had existed up to that time. It was the whole system of Judaism according to the Old Testament. In one sentence, He dismissed the whole dispensation. And He introduced an altogether new order of things.

What did He mean? Because when He said the hour cometh, and now is, He did not mean literally just an hour and so many minutes. He meant that it was the first hour of the new day. With this hour an altogether new day has come. What is the new day? If you would have asked Jesus to put it into a short sentence, He would have said, 'Well, I am here.' The hour is not just a matter of time but a matter of PERSON. The new dispensation is the dispensation of Jesus Christ. Christ is the new dispensation. I am here, He said. You go through that Gospel of John. He is centering everything in Himself. I am the Way; I am the Truth; I am the Life; I am the Shepherd; I am the Vine; I am the Resurrection. IT IS A PERSON. It is that which lies behind everything. Christianity is Christ. Christ is Christianity. That is where it all begins and it never departs from HIM. The development of the Christian life is only the development of Jesus Christ in the life.

Now in this fourth chapter of John, the focal point is the House of God. The woman said, "Our fathers worshipped God in this mountain." She is referring to the mountain Gerizim where the Samaritans worship. Our fathers said, 'This is the place where men must find God.' But you Jews said, 'It is the temple in Jerusalem.' All the Jews said, 'If you want to find God, you must go to the temple in Jerusalem.' So that was their idea of the House of God. Now Jesus takes that up in relation to the new dispensation. He says, 'The hour cometh, and now is, when neither in Samaria, nor in Jerusalem.'

Now we come to those two passages that we have read at the beginning. Exodus twenty-five, verse eight says: "Let them build Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." That presents to us the great truth of the whole Bible. It begins the Bible and it ends the Bible. And the whole Bible is taken
up with this one matter. In the beginning of the Bible we have God dwelling in men. And the Lord God came into the garden. Showing that God’s great desire is to be with men. He made men for this very purpose: That He might dwell among men. Not to be the God far away somewhere that you do not know, but the God Who comes down and dwells with men. That was something always in the heart of God. So that the one thing - all through history - is God’s desire to be present with men.

The Bible shows what a wonderful thing it is to be in the presence of God. Oh, when the Lord is present, what a blessed thing it is. And the most terrible thing that the Bible shows is for the Lord to withdraw Himself from men. I expect all of us here know something about that. I mean that the most difficult thing in our experience is not to sense the Presence of the Lord. If, when we have a day, when it seems that the Lord is far away, that is a very very hard day. When we have a day, when we realize the Presence of the Lord, that is the best day in our life. You remember the Lord’s servant of old says, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." He could not contemplate going out without God. The Lord says, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And so they were able to go on.

Now the Presence of the Lord is always the most important thing. Do note that, because I am going to make a lot of that now. When the Lord said to Moses, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them," He was, of course, referring to the tabernacle, the tabernacle in the wilderness. And then God gave them the pattern of all things concerning the tabernacle. And when all things were made according to the pattern, God came down and filled the tabernacle. He PRESENCE Himself among the people.

Now we come to John one, and verse fourteen. Here is a little bit of Bible study for you. See if you can trace in the Gospel by John how many allusions there are to the Old Testament. John was a Jew and he was full of the Old Testament. And whenever he wrote, he brought in something from the Old Testament. Now that is a very rich and profitable study. I just leave it to you for the present. He begins his Gospel with, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word became flesh." There, note the word that he uses. "THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND TABERNACLED AMONG US." That is the original word, He made His Tabernacle among us. In John’s mind he was relating Jesus to the tabernacle in the wilderness. And he is saying that as God came to dwell among men in the tabernacle in the wilderness, so GOD HAS COME TO TABERNACLE AMONG MEN IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. What is the Tabernacle of God in this dispensation? It is His Son. What is the House of God? It is Jesus Christ. What is the Church? I wonder what you would put down on paper if you were asked that question. If I were to ask you to write down on one sheet of paper the answer to this question, "What is the Church?" I wonder what I should get. I am sure somebody will give me a wonderful system of Church truth. A wonderful order of Church practice. The answer is simple. The Church is Jesus Christ, nothing less than that, nothing more than that. If Christ is in a number of people, it is He Who forms the Church. It is Christ in us that makes the Church, not first our doctrine, not first our practice, not first the way we carry on when we come together: but first of all the Presence of the Lord. The Presence of the Lord in those who are gathered together, that makes the Church.

But note, I have commenced with the Church. And I am thinking of the Church universal, worldwide. There is no geography in the Church. You understand that? It is not in this mountain or in Jerusalem. There is no geography in the Church. There is no time in the Church. We are here at nearly nine o’clock in the morning. In England, it is eight hours earlier. Take eight from nine and you have one. It is about midnight in that country. You go further west and it is earlier still. But that does not exist in the Church. The Lord never goes to sleep. Darkness and light are both alike to Him. There is no day or night in heaven. Time does not exist with Him. I am very glad about that.
we will leave that for the time being. We may show that again at some other time, in some particular
connection.

We want you to come back to this. Christ is the same at all times in every place. Therefore, the
Church is the same. The Church is not American, British, Chinese, Philippine, etc. The Lord does not
take notice of that. All that matters to the Lord is that He has a place in the heart, and it does not
matter where it is in all the world, or what time it is at all. The Church takes its character from Christ.
CHRIST CORPORATE IS THE CHURCH. You have got to prove that Christ is not in me, in order
to say that I am not in the Church. And you have no right to say to anybody who has Christ dwelling
within, that they do not belong to the Church. Do you understand that? Do you agree with that? We
are getting right back behind Christianity to Christ. Right back behind what man calls the Church to
Christ.

Now, having spoken of the Church, we are going to speak of the churches. What are the churches?
Here we have got to do a lot of rethinking, and make some very big adjustments. Do you know that
most people think that the apostles had the idea that they have got to get out to the nations and form
churches? They believe, for instance, that the Apostle Paul's business was to go out and form
churches everywhere. The real object of Paul was to go out into Asia and into Bithynia and into
Galatia and form churches. Their idea was, we must have a church everywhere. Do you believe that?
If you think that, you are all wrong. Now do think seriously about this. Because this is going to
revolutionize our whole thinking.

What did Paul and the apostles believe was their work? It surely was not to bring churches into
being. They believed that their business was to bring Christ into every place. Will you tell me where
in the New Testament you have any apostle arriving anywhere saying, 'Now, we have come to form a
church. The Lord has sent us to this place in order that we may form a church.' Well, you will spend
a lot of time trying to find anything like that in the New Testament. It is not there. There are lots of
other things that are not there, which we think are there. Things we have come to teach as being
there, and they are not there at all. That is not there; you get back to the Gospel. "And Jesus sent
forth His apostles two by two." And it says, "He sent them into every place, where He Himself would
go." He has never changed that principle. He does not send us to form churches or set up
Christianity. He sends us before His face to bring Himself there. That does not mean that churches
have no meaning. But that brings us right to the point. What are churches? They are just people
gathered into Christ where He Himself is. The supreme thing is this eternal thought of God, the
Presence of the Lord. The Presence of the Lord, that is the purpose of anything that is called the
church. And that is the only Purpose.

You remember in the Old Testament, there was the tabernacle or there was the temple. And when the
Lord withdrew from the temple, it was no longer sacred. It did not matter to God one little bit
whether it existed or not. It was just an empty shell. The Lord is not a bit interested in that. That is
what the Lord Jesus meant when He said that in the temple at Jerusalem, "Your house is left unto you
desolate. The day cometh when there will not be left here one stone upon another." That is how
sacred this thing is to God when His presence is gone. it is no different from any other piece of stone.
That is what the Lord meant when He came to the churches in Asia. He said, 'I know all about your
works and your labour. I know all about your Christian doctrine. I know all about your services. But
repent, and do the first works; or I will remove your lampstand out of its place.' The thing has no
longer any meaning or purpose when the first thing has gone.

What is the first thing? It is not teaching and doctrine. it is not certain Christian practices. It is not
continuation, of your meeting. It is the Presence of the Lord. The first thing was, when they came in
from outside, they said: "God is with you." It says they fell down and said, "GOD IS WITH YOU."

Go back to the Old Testament when the Lord filled the tabernacle and the temple, It says that; even
the priest had to go out. They could not stay in the Presence of the Lord. They were but men. And
they were sinful men. And men as men have no place in the Presence of the Lord. Oh, what a thing
men have made of Christianity. In Christianity, man has made man everything. Sometimes I go to
some places. I am introduced to the congregation. The one who introduces me says, 'Mr. Austin-
Sparks, the great Bible teacher from Europe.' And then a lot of other things. My heart sinks; I feel ill.
I have to stand up and say, 'Do not take any notice of that. I am nobody. The Lord is everything.'

Man has no place in the House of God. We come into God's House in our own importance, in our
own strength, putting our hands on things, our minds on things, our wills on things. We are changing
the whole nature of the House of God. The Lord will be limited there. Indeed, He will not have a
clear way for Himself. This Jesus Who was the very presence of God says, "I am meek and lowly in
heart."

So I finish on this note, I have said we are here to get instruction on the foundation. I am trying to be
very faithful with you. The day is coming when everything is going to be shaken from heaven.
Christianity has suffered a terrible shaking on the main-land China. And now the system of
Christianity is practically gone. And the only true thing that remains is what is of the Lord in the
heart of the men and women. That kind of shaking is going on all over the world. The Bible says it is
going to be so. Christianity is going to have a terrible shaking. And only what is the Presence of the
Lord will remain. Perhaps the meeting will go, and be impossible. Perhaps Christian fellowship will
be exceedingly difficult. Perhaps the preaching of the Word will be suspended. Perhaps all the
externals will just disappear. And then the only thing will be, have we got the Lord? Do we know the
Lord? Is the Lord with us? Be sure! that is something that the Lord will bring about. He very often
does that with the individuals. If our Christian life rests upon things outward, the Lord will separate
us from them. He very often does that. And then the big question is, how much of the Lord have I
got? That is the ultimate thing, because that is the first thing. Do remember, dear friends, that THE
TEST OF ANY CHURCH IS THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD! Not whether it is here or there; not
whether it is done this way or that way. But just how much we find the Lord there. Just how much
men find the Lord there. And to have the Lord in a larger way means having men in a very small
way.
Meeting 8 - "Have You Understood All These Things?"

Eighth Meeting
(February 6, 1964 P.M.)

We will read again the Gospel by Matthew, chapter thirteen, verses one through three:

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow.'"

And verses fifty-one and fifty-two:

"Jesus saith unto them, 'Have ye understood all these things?' They say unto Him, 'Yea, Lord.' Then said He unto them, 'Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.'"

When we read these parables of the Kingdom as given by the Lord Jesus and the many other things which He taught, we are in danger of looking upon them as something in themselves. For instance, we take these parables of Jesus and teach them to the children in the Sunday school, just as stories told by Jesus, and perhaps that is how we read them ourselves. They are very interesting stories.

In Matthew thirteen there are seven of them. Seven very interesting stories, and in other places in the Gospels, there are many more. We are all familiar with the three stories in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. The story of the ninety and nine sheep and the one that went astray. That is a very interesting story. We have heard many sermons on that. Then the story of the woman who had a necklace with ten pieces of silver on it. It was given to her by her husband, when they were married. And one day one of the pieces of silver fell off the necklace. She lit the lamp and swept the house to find it - very interesting story. Then the story of what is called the prodigal son, everybody knows that story. And so with all these teachings of Jesus, we read them as something in themselves, and we forget the most important thing of all.

The teaching of Jesus was given in a day of very great crisis, perhaps the greatest crisis in the history of this world. That is until the day when Jesus comes again. That will be the greatest crisis of all, but Jesus was giving His teaching in a day of very great crisis. The crisis was this: there had been a people in this world who had been the center of everything for thousands of years. That people had been the center of God's interest in this world. All the other nations of the world were watching that people. There was a sense in which that nation was the center of all the nations. What happened to that nation affected all the nations. God had chosen that nation. God had revealed Himself to that nation. God had given to that nation all the wonderful truth that is in the Old Testament. God had raised up the greatest leaders in history to lead that nation. He had given them the greatest prophets that men have ever had. He had given to them the greatest king that ever nations had had. What a lot God had done for the nation of Israel. From the day when He put His hand upon Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, and had said to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation.... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 22:18). What a wonderful history it was from that
day right up to the day when Jesus Christ came into this world.

And now with the coming of Jesus Christ, all that is brought to an end; that nation is being set aside by God. God is rejecting Israel. It will not be long now before Israel ceases to be a nation. Their city will be destroyed. Their great temple will be overthrown. Their priests will be killed and scattered. And from that day until now, they would have no city, no king, no temple, no priest, no altar, no sacrifice. That all has happened, and Jesus knew that that was going to happen. And all these parables were prophecies in relation to that, and He was giving them in connection with that great crisis. He was saying, 'Now the end of your whole history is coming. All that which has made up your life is going to be brought to an end, and an entirely new order of things is going to be brought in and put in its place.'

So the parables, as they are called the parables of the Kingdom, related to the passing of one kingdom and the bringing in of another to take its place. With the passing of that one kingdom and the destruction of all that had to do with it, John the Baptist came on the scene, a voice crying in the wilderness, a great multitude going out to hear what he had to say, and what did he say? "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). That was the message of the forerunner of Christ. When Jesus came from the Jordan, having been baptized, and began to preach, He said the same thing. He said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." And that was the message of the apostles. As Jesus was about to go from this world back to the Father, He spoke to His disciples after His resurrection, and it says that He was speaking to them about the things of the Kingdom. On the day of Pentecost, the great message was the message of the Kingdom. And when the apostles went away over all the world they were preaching the Kingdom. When the Apostle Paul was at the end of his life in prison in Rome, a number of people came to see him in his prison room, and it says he spoke to them concerning the Kingdom.

At the end of that great letter to the Hebrews, everything is gathered up into this. All that the writer has been saying in that wonderful letter is gathered up into this statement, "Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken." The literal tense of the word is this: "Wherefore, being in process of receiving a Kingdom, which cannot be shaken." And the great triumphant cry at the end of the Bible in the Book of the Revelation is this: when all the story is told the cry goes out, "Now is come the Kingdom of our God, and of His Christ" (Rev. 12:10). See what a large and important place this matter of the Kingdom has in the Word of God. What a great thing it is to be in the Kingdom of God. What a terrible thing it is to miss the Kingdom of God.

Israel, as a nation, missed the Kingdom of God. Jesus said a most terrible thing about them, that the children of the Kingdom would go into outer darkness. There would be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. I ask you, is not that true for the last two thousand years where Israel is concerned? Israel has been in the outside darkness for two thousand years. Israel's history for that time has been one of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. We know the terrible stories of Israel's history right up to recent time. Oh! how Israel is hated. Their city is divided in two, and on one side of their own city is a people who hate them and want to destroy them. All this, because they lost the Kingdom of God. It is a terrible thing to miss the Kingdom of God. But on the other hand, it is therefore a wonderful thing to be in the Kingdom of God. Now we come back to where we started last night. May I remind you of what we said then: If the Kingdom of God is a very great and important thing, if it is a terrible thing to miss it, and if it is a glorious thing to be in it, we must have the secret of getting into the Kingdom of God. You notice how these two things are always put together by the Lord Jesus. Here is the Kingdom of God, and the way into the Kingdom of God is by SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. Because they had not spiritual understanding, Israel lost the Kingdom. They could have had spiritual understanding. It was not because it was not possible for
them to have it, they could have had it just as well as anybody else, but they were unbelieving and disobedient. And because of their disobedience of unbelief, their spiritual eyes were closed, and they could not see. They lost the Kingdom, because they did not see.

Now keep that in your head for a few minutes. Jesus spoke these parables, all seven of them, and then He challenged His disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" Everything to do with the Kingdom hangs upon this matter of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

Now let us move over to a very familiar part of God's Word. The Gospel by John, chapter three. You know it is a very convenient thing to have the New Testament divided up into chapters. However, sometimes it is a very unfortunate thing, and here we have an instance of that unfortunate division. Chapter three really ought to begin at verse twenty-three of chapter two. I am glad to see that you have got your Bible, that helps me so much. Now, verse twenty-three of chapter two, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on His name, because they beheld the signs which He did." Before we go on, let us ask this question: Do you think that that is true faith? They believed because they saw His signs. Is that good enough? All right, we will leave it there.

Let us go on. "But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men, and because He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man." Now note: 'now there was a man... He knew what was in man, and He did not trust Himself to man.' "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto Him by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that Thou dost, except He be from God." But Jesus did not trust Himself to him, for He knew what was in man. But what did He say? Jesus answered and said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'"

Now we will see whether Nicodemus was seeing or not. "Nicodemus saith unto Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" And Jesus did not answer his question or explain anything to him. He did not commit Himself to him. Jesus answered, "'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 'Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'"' (John 3:4-6). All right, now Nicodemus, who is he? What is he? He is a representative of all Israel. In the person of Nicodemus, that night all Israel was represented. And to all Israel, in the person of Nicodemus, Jesus said, "You cannot, you cannot. You cannot see and you cannot enter. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. In order to see, and in order to enter the Kingdom, you must be born from above. Naturally, you are a man of the flesh. Only spiritual people can enter a spiritual kingdom. Only spiritual people can see that kingdom." And it is true for Nicodemus.

When Jesus had said these things, Nicodemus said, "Oh, how can these things be? I do not understand this. I do not see what you are talking about. How can these things be?" Jesus said, "Art thou the teacher of Israel and understandest not these things?" There was nothing of all the history and all the teaching of Israel for thousands of years that Nicodemus did not know. He knew all the Old Testament. He knew all that Moses had taught and written. He knew all that was in the Psalms. He knew all that prophets had written. He knew it all. You could not have taught Nicodemus anything about Israel's history, and Israel's doctrine, and yet this man had no ability or capacity for seeing the Kingdom of Heaven.

I am going to stop there for a minute. That is a very solemn thing. It lies behind why I am here in
Manila in these days. I have not come with the idea that I can give you any new teaching, I expect whatever I might say, somebody here would be able to say, 'Well, we have heard that before.' Somebody would say, 'Well, that is not new.' That is not the point, dear friends. There is all the difference in the world between knowing it all here, and seeing it with your spiritual eyes. Now I say this is the most solemn thing. One of the most tragic and sad things that has come into my life has been this: I have known people to come and accept all the teaching that we could give, and to profess to believe it, and then to go out and preach it, teaching it in various parts of the world. And if you had seen them and heard them, you would have believed that they knew it all, and then afterward they have so acted as to deny it all. Just to repudiate it all by their conduct and their behavior and by their way of life. I have known that to happen in more than one case, and it leaves you asking very big questions. They seem to have taken it all. They seem to have believed it all. They talk to other people about it everywhere. And then they have taken a course in life which denies the whole thing. And their whole position and teaching afterward is a contradiction of all that they profess to believe.

What is the trouble? You can only conclude that after all, they did not see it. They saw it in their intellect. They accepted it with their mind. They taught it with their natural ability. But they never really saw it. You know, if you have once really heard the voice of the Son of God, you are never the same again. Many believed on His name, because they saw the signs. But they were like Nicodemus. They thought they understood. They would have said that they understood, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them. He knew what was in man.

Let us look at this man Nicodemus very closely. He is a very intellectual man. He has a fine brain, he is a highly educated man, he is a devoutly religious man, he is a teacher of other people, and he is a lot more than that. Everybody thinks that Nicodemus is a wonderful man. But Nicodemus did not see the Kingdom of God. It is not a matter of intellectual power at all. That may be very useful in other matters. It is not a matter of education. It is not a matter of being very religious. Nicodemus was all that and much more. What is he?

Now we come to this thing that Jesus said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." What does that mean? What did that mean to Nicodemus? What does it mean to us? Have you been in a great storm of wind, on the land or on the sea? Have you been in a hurricane? A really bad one? When the wind really blows, what can you do about it? Can you withstand it? Can you resist it? Can you say to it? 'Oh, I am not going to be moved by you.' Can you say to the wind, 'Oh, who are you? You are nothing?' What can you do about it? You cannot do anything. You are utterly helpless. You are just weak before the power of the wind. You are as nothing before that mighty storm. What is the only thing that you can do? Surrender, let go, you say, 'It is no good, I cannot do anything with this. I must just let the wind have its way.'

So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. The wind bloweth where it likes. You cannot say, 'Today wind you blow this way, and tomorrow wind you blow the other way.' The wind takes things into its own hands and blows where it likes. And you can talk to the wind as much as you like, but it will take no notice of you. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. What has Nicodemus got to learn? What have you and I got to learn? That the Spirit of God is the Sovereign Spirit of God. And the only thing to do is to let go to the Holy Spirit. You will never see the Kingdom, or enter into the Kingdom, until you have surrendered to the Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.

I am going to close with this point. You know the disciples were men who had a lot of self-confidence. When Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be offended because of Me.' And Peter, "this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me." Peter pulled himself up straight. He said, 'Though
all should be offended with Thee, yet will I not be offended. I will go with Thee even to death.' Now note what the writer puts there, the writer puts this in, "Likewise also said all the disciples" (Matt. 26:31, 34, 35).

They were all people with a good deal of self-confidence. They believed that they could do wonderful things. And if they were put to the test, they would come through it all right. But look at the sad story, when Jesus was taken into the judgment hall, even before He got to the judgment hall in the garden, when Judas betrayed Him, and the soldiers took hold of Him, it says they all forsook Him, and fled. Now Jesus is crucified. What a poor lot of men they are.

We hear two of them speaking as they walk to Emmaus. And the stranger draws near, and hearing what they were saying, He said: "What manner of conversation is this that you have as you walk, and are sad?" And they stood still, and looked at Him, "Are you only a visitor in Jerusalem? Do you not know what has happened there in these days?" And He said, "What things?" And they said, "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, He was a prophet mighty in Word and in deed before God. We had hoped that it was He Who should redeem Israel, but our rulers condemned Him and crucified Him!' I think we could take it that those two represented all the others.

What had happened? All their expectations had gone. All their hopes were disappointed. All that they thought they believed had broken down. We say, 'the bottom had gone out of everything.' Dear friends, that had to happen. The Holy Spirit could never come until that had happened. Until these men had entirely lost all confidence in themselves. Until these men had come to see that what was in their heads was not in their hearts. They had heard it with their ears, and seen it with their eyes, but they had no spiritual understanding. They had to come to that position before the Holy Spirit could come.

There always has to be the devastation of the natural man, before the spiritual man can be born. Before we can have the spiritual understanding that leads us into the Kingdom, we have got to have our own understanding brought to an end. Many of you here tonight are thinking that because you have got a good brain and a good education, and that you are very religious, that is a guarantee of your seeing the Kingdom. You are suffering from a great illusion. Only spiritual men and women can see and enter the Kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto you, 'You must be born anew.'" What is true about the beginning of the Christian life, that is, entering into the Kingdom, is also true about everything in the Kingdom when we are there. We can know nothing of what is in this Kingdom, only as we are growing spiritually. Very often our intellectual life goes ahead of spiritual life, and when that happens, we have to come back a long way and start again. We sometimes think we know a great deal more than we really do know. Only a life in the power of the Holy Spirit learns the things of the Kingdom.

Now, I am going to stop. I told you I was not going to give you any new truth, everybody here could say, 'We know all that', but how do you know it? Do you know it because other people have said it? Do you know it because you read it in the Bible? Do you know it because you have studied it as you study other subjects? Or, can you say, 'Truly the Spirit of God has revealed in my heart what is in that Book?' And can you go further and say, 'The Spirit of God is continuously revealing in my heart the things of the Kingdom?' Now, I must say one more important thing, and it is this: We are in just as big a crisis as Israel was in the days of Jesus. It may be that the Lord knows what is coming on us very soon. We are so often in danger of saying, 'Oh, it may happen there, but it will never happen to us.' What has happened in China, of course, will not happen in the Philippines. I beg to suggest to you that it has happened once in the Philippines. It can happen again. It can happen anywhere in the
There is a great unrest in all the nations. Men's hearts are failing them for fear. Anything can happen almost any day. It could come this way much more quickly than you would believe. If all the outward forms of Christianity were removed, what have you got left? If you could not have your lovely meetings and enjoy your beautiful spiritual fellowship, what have you got left? If you could have no more teachers, what have you got left? That is the mark of the crisis. The crisis is, what have we got in our heart? What has really been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit? What has become so much a part of our life that you cannot take it away without taking our life away? The end of this dispensation is going to be marked by crisis like that. And that is the big question. How much have we got by the Holy Spirit? "Have you understood all these things?" Make sure that you have spiritual understanding.
Meeting 9 - Has it Come From Heaven by the Spirit of God?

Ninth Meeting
(February 7, 1964 A.M.)

There may by one or two who have joined us this morning who have not been with us on these other mornings this week. For their sake and for the sake of all of us, may I just repeat what it is that is occupying us at this time. We are all aware that during the centuries, Christianity has become a tremendous buildup of things which were not at the beginning. The Christianity which we know today is a very complicated thing. The hands of men have come upon the things of God, and men have tried to build this great thing according to their own judgment. And so we have all the confusion, all the divisions, and all the complications. It is really hard going in Christianity. Christianity has become its own great hindrance. So what we are being led to do in these mornings is to get back behind all this accretion of Christianity, and to rediscover and redefine the first basic principles. We are asking the Lord just to bring us into a clear definition of those things which are true to Christianity. We have said quite a lot in these mornings which we cannot repeat. And those who join us for the first time must understand that.

We are proceeding this morning from a somewhat advanced point. May I remind you of the two fragments of Scripture which are governing our consideration just now. One in the Old Testament, and the other in the New. In the Old Testament, the Book of Exodus, chapter twenty-five and verse eight: "LET THEM MAKE ME A SANCTUARY; THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM." The other is in the Gospel by John, chapter one, verse fourteen: "AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US." We have seen that word "dwelt" is really in the original: "Tabernacled." "THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND TABERNACLED AMONG US." In these two passages we have the eternal thought of God, first set forth in type, and then set forth in reality. That thought of God was always that He might dwell among men. We have seen how, when things were according to His mind in the beginning, the Lord God came into the garden, found His pleasure in dwelling with man. And then He had to withdraw. The desire of God for the time being was suspended. Now in the Book of Exodus, we find God taking up His thought, and commanding them to build the tabernacle, that He might dwell among them. That was all imperfect. We cannot say that God was always happy to be amongst the people of Israel. There was something that still needed to be done to make Him perfectly satisfied. So that it was only in a type and figure that God was with them. But when it comes to His Son, God is in Christ, and GOD'S SON BECAME FLESH, AND TABERNACLED AMONG US.

Now it is at that point that we are going to take things up this morning. Christ, the Son of God, is the Tabernacle of God. We need to be very clear about that. The dwelling place of God now and for eternity is in His Son. The Person is the residence of God, not in type, but in reality; not for a time, but for all eternity. Christ is God's Tabernacle. His name is Emmanuel, "God with us." His ministry was, and is, the service of the Tabernacle. His sacrifice, His Cross was the all-inclusive sacrifice of the Tabernacle. As there was an outer door to the Tabernacle, He is the door. He, alone, is the Way unto God. As there was the great altar just inside the door, His Cross is the altar. As there was the laver of brass a little further on, so through His Cross and by His Spirit, the Spirit of life, He cleanses us to come into the Presence of God. These things, and everything, had to do with just one thing:
God's Presence with man. Everything is related to this one issue, the Lord being with us.

Now, just as God was very particular about every detail in the old tabernacle, so God is very particular that everything for His Presence expresses Christ. With God there are no mere things. Things are not sacred to God. It does not matter what it is; it is not sacred to God apart from one thing. It is in this matter that we have got to change our whole mentality.

You will go about this country, you will go about this city, and you will see these great religious buildings with a cross at the top. And when people enter those buildings, they bow themselves; they look very reverent. And they think that this is a sacred building. If you interfere with anything there, it is called sacrilege. To God that is all nonsense. It does not mean anything at all. The only thing that matters to God is not the wonderful building and all the wonderful things inside the building, and not even the cross on the top. The one thing that matters to God is whether He is there. Is God Himself present in this place?! For God, it is no different from any other place, if it is not the place of His Presence.

Of course, most of you here this morning agree with that. But what about ourselves, we hear Christians who come into a meeting like this speaking about coming into the house of God. Perhaps they say when they are going to this meeting place, 'I am going to the house of God.' And when they pray, they say, 'We are very glad to be in the house of God this morning; it is a good thing to be in the Lord's house.' What makes any place the house of God? What makes this place sacred? If it is sacred at all, what makes it sacred? It is not the building, this is not a sacred building. It is not a congregation gathered here. The only thing that makes it sacred is that the Lord is Present. The Lord is not interested in our places or in our congregations; He is only concerned that He may find a place for Himself where He may be present in pleasure. I wonder where the tabernacle in the wilderness is now?! I expect it is buried somewhere deep under the earth. I wonder where the great temple of Solomon is now?! I think you would be wasting your time to try and find it. You see, God had buried those things. Well, they were so sacred that God ought to preserve them. But He has not done it. When the tabernacle ceased to fulfill its real meaning, it was no longer sacred to God.

When the temple ceased to fulfill its real purpose, God just left it. And again and again, He allowed the heathen to come and destroy it. THE PURPOSE IS THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

Now all this sounds very elementary and simple, but we are right back at the first thing. John begins by saying, "In the beginning, God," and it is not only God in the beginning, it is God right through to the end. God is only where His Son is. But, wherever His Son is, God is there. We have got to be very careful indeed that we do not set up false ground for the presence of God. It is not here or there, in this mountain or in Jerusalem, it is where His Son is. And we will have to put aside all other matters and say, if the Lord is with you, I am with you. But in order for that to be true, there are two things that are most important.

We are keeping very close to the beginning. We got right back behind Christianity as we know it. You see, the Christianity that we know is not like that. Indeed it is very largely very different from that. Of course, we could spend a lot of time showing how different Christianity is from that. And that is all negative. We want to keep to the positive.

Now note then, the first thing that relates to the Presence of God is this: God always begins with a presentation of His Son. In some way, a revelation of the Son of God is the basis upon which God always begins. If it is in the Old Testament, it is in a type or a figure, but whether men saw and understood it or not, there it was. Of course, that is a very big Bible study. If you understood the
works of God in creation, as in the Book of Genesis, you would see Jesus Christ. You would see in every detail some expression of God in Christ. That is a very wonderful thing for those who have had their spiritual eyes opened. It says about God’s Son, 'that all things were created by Him, and through Him, and unto Him.'

Now when you create something, you may be an artist and you may be painting a picture, you may be a sculptor, you may be making a statue, or it may be something else. If you are really a craftsman, if you are not just doing things for the sake of doing them, you put yourself into your work. When people see your work afterwards, they say, 'What a wonderful man or woman they are.' They can see your mind in this. They can see your heart in this. The whole thing speaks of the creator. You pass from the thing that was made to the one who made it. If the Son of God really did make all things, He did not do it just in an objective way, He put Himself into it. And if you have spiritual understanding, you will see more than the creations. You will see in everything the One Who created it. There it is, God has presented His Son. It is a revelation of the Son of God. That is where God began. That is the beginning.

When you come to this matter of the tabernacle, do remember that man never thought of this. This never came out of the mind of man. This came out of the mind of God. God said to Moses, "See," saith He, "that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). God has only one object in His mind, and He works everything in relation to that one object. The one object which God has in His mind is His Son. So that this TABERNACLE was a typical representation of the Son of God in every detail. This was another beginning of God. The beginning was the constitution of the nation Israel, a definite people on this earth.

Let me just re-emphasize this: with God everything begins with a revelation of His Son. If we go beyond that, God will bring us back to it. That is true in the matter of Salvation. There is no true beginning of the Christian life without a seeing of Jesus Christ as God’s Son. And that is true of all the progress of the Christian life. God keeps all our spiritual progress true to the revelation of Jesus Christ. And that is true of all the work of God. All the true work of God has got to be done by our seeing the Lord Jesus. Jesus Himself lived on that principle. He said: 'The works that I do, I do not out from Myself, but whatsoever the Son seeth the Father doing, that doeth He.' 'The words that I speak, I speak not out from Myself. The Father doeth the works and the Father gives the words' (John 5:10; 14:10). Jesus lived His life in full view of the Father. And He would not speak, or do one work, unless the Father told Him to. What is true of the Lord Jesus has got to be true of us all. We can only live this life of the Christian as we see the Lord Jesus.

To return to the tabernacle, we will use it as an illustration for a little while. The inclusive fact about the tabernacle is that it was not a thing. It was not a thing at all. It was a Divine meaning. That meaning was covered. If other people, which were not of Israel, came and looked at that tabernacle, they would have said, 'Well, that is a funny thing, what sort of a thing is that?' But the truth was inside. The truth was a mystery, and it required the opened eye of the heart to see the truth in that.

John, many years after the life of the Lord Jesus, said: "He became flesh, and Tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." He was only saying, in other words, 'We saw inside of Him. We saw the Divine meaning in Him.'

Now when Jesus was here on this earth, He was the very Tabernacle of God. He was the very Dwelling Place of God in this world. But what did men see? Well, Isaiah said, "And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:2,3). Just as the stranger would have said about the tabernacle, 'There is no beauty in that. It is all
covered over with these skins. We see no beauty in that.' They would have despised and rejected it. But John said, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). John had the inward revelation of Jesus Christ.

And, of course, John was not the only one. The Apostle Paul placed everything upon this truth. All his life and all his ministry was the result of what he said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15,16). It is a revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart, which is always God's beginning, both for life and for service and for the Church. We ought never to do anything in the work of God, unless we get it from the Lord.

That is why committees are often very dangerous things. We gather together a number of men. Why do we gather them together? Well, we think that they are intelligent people. Perhaps they have been successful in business. And perhaps they have influence in this world. And we get them together to consider the work of the Lord. Well, do not be surprised if the work of the Lord goes slow. In the New Testament, THE PRAYER GATHERING WAS THE TIME WHERE ALL THE WORK WAS ORIGINATED. Now I have got a lot to say about this later on.

But let us come right back to the beginning. Nothing whatever in that which is of God begins with man. When this tabernacle was to be made, first of all, the pattern came from Heaven. That was a revelation of Jesus Christ. But, even then, the Lord did not say, 'Now put this pattern into the hands of the people and let them get on with the work.' It says that the Spirit of God filled two men, and it was by the Spirit of God filling these two men that all the work was produced. They were anointed by the Spirit of God, it says, "unto all the manner of work." Whether it was this kind of work, or that kind of work, or another kind of work in relation to the tabernacle, it all came through the Spirit of God. Jesus Himself did not begin His great work until He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. It says, "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit." And if Jesus Who was born of the Spirit, and lived a good, a perfect life up to thirty years of age, if He needed the anointing for the work of God, surely we do.

There is a difference between being born of the Spirit, and being anointed by the Spirit. To be born of the Spirit is to be brought into the new life, to be made a child of God, to enter into the Kingdom. But the anointing has to do with the work of God. We need anointing for the work of God. These two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab, were anointed. It says, "filled with the Spirit unto all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:1-6).

This tabernacle in the wilderness, when it was finished was the work of the Holy Spirit, passed from the type to the anti-type, passed from the tabernacle in the wilderness to the Lord Jesus, THE TRUE TABERNACLE, and every detail about Him is the work of the Holy Spirit. And if the Lord said to Moses, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Now He says, just as particularly about the work of God, "See, that thou make all things according to My Son." Every detail has got to be according to Christ.

You notice that God never left anything to the mind of man. It was made known that many kinds of things would be required. Gold for the things of gold, silver for the things of silver, the different colors and the different kinds of fabric. No one ever said, 'Now if you [have] got any kind of material, just bring it along and we will fit it in.' No woman came along and said, 'Now I have got some good material, just use this for the curtain.' Bezaleel and Aholiab would have said, 'But that is not the right color, that is silver, and for this purpose I need gold.' Nobody was allowed to come along and say, 'Now I have got something for this job, and I am prepared to give it. You just take it and use it.'
The Spirit of God was saying, is this thing of Christ? Is it an expression of Christ? It is not what you think about this work of God. Not your ideas and your judgments, not how you do things in the world. It is, Has it come from Heaven by the Spirit of God? Have you waited on God to get it from Him? That is how it has always been in the beginning. That is how it was in the beginning of THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

I have dealt with a lot of beginnings this morning. I have not got as far as I thought I would get, but I do hope that you are seeing more than I am saying. Everything that is not of Christ is going to be dissolved. Make no mistake. This whole structure of Christianity is going to be tested according to Christ. Christianity is just going to be tested as to how far it was the work of the Holy Spirit of God according to Christ. Yet once again, says the Lord, "I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven." The things which can be shaken shall be removed. The things which cannot be shaken shall abide. And what is it that abides forever? Not the tabernacle in the wilderness, but Jesus Christ. ALL and only ALL that is Christ will remain.
Meeting 10 - Jesus Came to Form a New Heavenly Israel

Tenth Meeting
(February 7, 1964 P.M.)

We began last night by pointing out a very great truth. It is: that all the teaching and all the works of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth related to one of the greatest crises in history. That crisis was the removal of Israel as a nation from the eyes of the Lord for at least this whole dispensation. That crisis had already begun when Jesus commenced His ministry. And it was sealed and established when Jesus finished His ministry. The nation of Israel, which had held the central place in the interest of God in this world for many hundreds of years, was then being set aside. The prophets had foretold that that would happen. And it began to happen when Jesus came into His ministry in this world. When John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, and the multitudes went out to him, he saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming. These were the representatives of all Israel. And he said to them, "You generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father:' for God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones." That is only another way of saying, that those children of Abraham were rejected.

Now this is a very important thing when you read the four Gospels. Everything that is in the four Gospels relates to this great crisis. On the one hand, there was the rejection and the removal of a people that had been called the people of God for many centuries. As we said last night, that is what Israel as a nation has been through all these nearly two thousand years. But that is only one side of the story. Jesus had come to do a new thing. And by His teaching and His works He was showing what the new thing is. And that new thing has been going on all through these two thousand years. It is going on today. It is going on in this very hall. The thing which Jesus began to do - and is still doing - was and is the formation of a new, heavenly, spiritual Israel. While that nation which bore that name is removed from God's sight, God never gives up His idea. And Jesus came to take up that thought of God about a new Israel. If you carefully read the Gospels, you will see that Jesus took up all that was of God in the old Israel, and brought it over in a spiritual way into a new Israel. For instance, Israel of old was God's Kingdom in this world. Amongst the kingdoms of this world, Israel was God's Kingdom. That is dismissed with Israel.

But the idea of the Kingdom is introduced again with Jesus Christ in a new way. Jesus said to Israel, "The Kingdom of Heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." So the first words of Jesus, when He began to preach, were: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This is a new Kingdom that He is building. This Kingdom is a spiritual and heavenly Kingdom. Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." But that does not make it any the less real. Indeed, this SPIRITUAL KINGDOM is a far more real thing than the old temporal kingdom. But, you see, the first thing that is taken over by Jesus is God's intention to have a Kingdom. Matthew prefers to call it "the Kingdom of Heaven," John prefers to call it "the Kingdom of God." We will not take the time to discuss whether there is any difference. The fact is, that it is a Kingdom. It is God's Kingdom. And it is a Heavenly Kingdom.

Then you notice that the old Israel was built upon the twelve sons of Jacob. Twelve is the number of
representation. Those twelve sons of Jacob represented the whole nation. Jesus chose twelve disciples. They were a representative company of the new Israel. Moses had seventy elders that went up into the mount with him. Jesus chose seventy apostles and sent them out two by two.

Israel of old had a tabernacle. John says, "The Word became flesh, and Tabernacled among us." Jesus is the Tabernacle of the new Jerusalem. It is in Him that we meet God. And in Him all the spiritual meaning of the old tabernacle is come to fulfillment. Israel of old had a high priest. The New Testament teaches us that Jesus is the High Priest of the new Israel. Israel had the great sacrifice, the whole burnt offering. Jesus has become THE GREAT SACRIFICE. Israel had a great altar. The Cross of the Lord Jesus is THE GREAT ALTAR of the new Israel. And so we could go on. But, I think, we have said enough to indicate that Jesus came to form a new heavenly Israel.

Now, when God began the formation of the old Israel, He began with Abraham. And Stephen tells us that the God of glory appeared unto Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees. Do you notice the title given to God? "The God of glory appeared." That was the beginning of the old earthly Israel. The beginning of the new spiritual Israel is on the same principles. You open your Gospel by John, at the first chapter, and after that wonderful description of the Son of God, John says, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of an only begotten of the Father." That is where the new Israel began. The God of glory appeared. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it." We do not know exactly when that was, or where that was, but somehow Abraham saw the day of Jesus Christ and was glad. That is always a mark of glory. Where there is glory, there is always rejoicing. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham" (Acts 7:2). And it is as though the Apostle John was singing a song when he opened his Gospel: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of an only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." I am surprised that there is not a smile on every face in this hall, "full of grace and truth." Surely that is glory. Surely that is something to make us rejoice. The Grace of God has appeared in Jesus Christ. But we must get on.

Will you just look for a moment at those first verses in John’s Gospel? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness overcame it not." And verses eleven through thirteen: "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not." THE WORD WAS GOD. And they that were His own received Him not. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (KJV; NASV). So the new Israel is introduced. It is formed of those who received Him, and to whom He has given the right to be the sons of God. That is something better than was ever true of the old Israel. Here is introduced the greatest idea that has ever been revealed from heaven, and the idea is that our God is to have sons of God. First of all, you see the Son, and then the sons, and the sons with the Son form the new Israel.

Now I want you to turn to another part of the New Testament. It is, listen to me, it is the Book in the New Testament which embodies the whole of this truth of the new heavenly Israel. If I were to ask you, 'What is that book?' I wonder what you would say. What book in the New Testament gathers up into itself everything about the new heavenly Israel? It is the Letter to the Hebrews. It is interesting that it has that name, because it is all about the new Israel. Will you please open your Bibles at the Letter to the Hebrews? We have seen that John introduces the new Israel with a presentation of the Son of God. Now this great letter to the Hebrews begins with a presentation of the Son of God. It has eight wonderful things to say about Him, but let us begin.
And we begin with God. God is always the beginning. Well, what about God? "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." Now, what does that mean? I am trying to be very simple for the sake of the young people. That just means this: that God has gathered up all His old ways of speaking into One Person. In old times, He spoke in various portions and in different ways. Now, at the end of those times, He has gathered it altogether in His Son. That is the first thing about the Son. He is the final and the full speech of God. After this, God will not speak again. At the end of these days, He has spoken, and that is final. Reject the Lord Jesus, and God has no more to say to you. But in His Son, God has everything to say. He gathers together all His speech in His Son. Christ is final, and Christ is full, as to the mind of God.

I do not know whether you have the saying in Chinese, or in the other languages which you represent, but in England, we sometimes speak about the person and say, he or she is speaking their mind. That is, they are letting you know what they are thinking. Now in that way, in His Son, God has spoken His mind. And having spoken His mind in His Son, He has said, 'That is all I have got to say to you.' Well, that is the first thing. God has spoken unto us in His Son.

The second thing: "Whom He appointed heir of all things." As we said yesterday, at some time God said, 'I appoint My Son to be heir of all things.' And when God makes an appointment, nobody can set it aside. So He gathered up His created universe, and put it into His Son as His Son's inheritance, "Whom He appointed heir of all things."

The third thing: "By Whom He made the ages." The Son was employed by the Father for the making of the ages. That is what John said at the beginning, "through Whom He made all things." The Son was the Father's instrument in creation. "All things were created by Him." Of course, we usually speak about God as the Creator, and we sometimes overlook this fact that God did it through His Son.

Now, the fourth thing: "Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance." That simply means that the Son is the full expression of the Father. Jesus said, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." He is the full expression of God.

The fifth thing: "And upholding all things by the Word of His power." That is a tremendous thing to say of anybody. There is ONE PERSON in this created universe Who is upholding all things by the Word of His power. The world cannot go to pieces until Jesus Christ says the time has come for that. Let there be as many atom bombs as man can create. Everything is going to hold together until Jesus says it can go. He upholds all things by the Word of His power.

The next thing, number six: "When He had made purification for sins." Out of glory, into creation, and then redeeming creation by His blood, making purification of sins. My, that could hold us for many hours, but we have to go on.

The next thing, number seven: "When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." He took His seat at the right hand of God, and that is where He is now, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The right hand is the place of honor. The right hand is the place of power. And that is where the Son is. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now, number eight: "Having become so much better than the angels." He is Superior to all the angels. Now, of course, I would like to stop to put in about an hour on angels. But you just go through your Bible, and see how mighty they are. What tremendous things one angel could do. A
mighty army came against Israel once, and they besieged the city, and they vaunted themselves and spoke of how great they were. No one had ever been able to stand against them. All right, you mighty Assyrian armies. It says that God sent an angel, just one angel. And when men arose in the morning, the whole mighty army was dead. And the captain of the army went home without his army. Only one angel. Angels are mighty beings. And they are a mighty host. Jesus said, "If I were to ask My Father, He would send Me twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26:53).

Now, here it says, that Jesus is Superior to all the angels. Why have I said all this? Not just for a Bible study. Of course, it is all very interesting. But we have one object. We are talking about this new heavenly Israel. And this new heavenly Israel, which the Lord is now building, rests upon the greatness of the Lord Jesus. Until we understand something of the greatness of the Lord Jesus, we cannot understand what we are called to as members of this heavenly Israel. What a wonderful Israel this must be, if it is built upon such a One as He is! If all this that we have been saying about Jesus, the Son of God, is the foundation of Israel, how great a thing this Israel must be!

Now, Christ has this place by God's own act. Earlier, we quoted Matthew twenty one, and verse forty three: "The kingdom of Heaven shall be taken away from You, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Now, if you look at that verse in Matthew twenty one, you will see that it follows something very impressive. It follows this quotation from the Old Testament: "THIS IS THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, Which has become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes." Israel rejected This Stone, and Israel was rejected in turn. But This Stone was appointed Head of the corner by God. And, therefore, Head of the corner He will be. He is the Headstone, the corner of this new Israel.

Now my time is practically gone, and I have not gotten anywhere. I wanted to take you further along this line of the correspondence between the new, and the old, on spiritual principles. I will try to get something more of this important thing into the next ten minutes.

We are saying that the new spiritual Israel follows in principle the line of the old Israel. We have seen that the beginning of the old was in the appearing of the God of glory. So it is with the new. But what was it that the God of glory said to Abraham? "I will make of thee a great nation." "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." What was the first seed of Abraham? It was Isaac. Isaac was a miracle in his birth. He could never have been at all but for a miracle of God. But this is our point: Isaac must go down into death and come up on the ground of resurrection. Why was that? Why did Isaac have to go into death? And I think everybody here knows the story of Isaac. When God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and offer him a sacrifice." Isaac had to go into death. And in type, Isaac had to be raised from the dead. Why was that? You see, God's principles are eternal. The means that He uses may change from time to time, but His principles are always the same. And this going down into death of Isaac, and being raised as from the dead, was in order to keep everything on supernatural ground. His birth was supernatural, but now his life work was to be supernatural; it must all be on God's ground only.

Now, I expect, I think I know that there are some doctors here tonight. You can do a lot for people while they are alive. And we thank the Lord for all that you can do for us while we are alive. We say, 'While there is life, there is hope.' And we never give up until the last breath has been breathed. But when that last breath has gone out of the body, all the doctors have to walk out. You might bring all the doctors from all over the world into that room, all the cleverest doctors that there are, they may all have wonderful names and reputations, but when they look at that body, they all have to say, 'We can do nothing. All our learning and all our knowledge and all our skill is as nothing. He is dead. Nobody can do anything at all.' Now you see, if that one is really raised from the dead, that is
something more than natural. That is supernatural. And only God can do that. There is no other being in this universe who can do that. And if anybody is raised from the dead, that is God's work only. That is why Isaac had to die and be raised. Because this Israel that was coming through Isaac had to be something of God only. Nothing of man about this. All man's education, and all man's skill, is put out. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God." Every member of this new Israel has to be on that ground.

Dear friends, the deepest reality about a child of God is the most wonderful thing in this universe. The deepest thing is this, that there is something there in that life which only God could do. No man, or number of men, can make a child of God. There is nothing in this universe that can make a child of God. Only God can make a child of God. So that this new spiritual heavenly Israel is something which in its very beginning is on supernatural ground. We are a wonderful lot of people. We do not look like very much. Of course, I do not mean to insult you, I include myself. We do not look like very much. In this world, we are not very much. But God has in this world the most wonderful thing that He has done. He has a people which are of the result of His own unique Divine work. That is the beginning of the new Israel.

You see, we are right back with Abraham and Isaac as the beginning of this thing. God has brought that over into this new Israel. That is the beginning. Oh, that the Lord would give us spiritual understanding about this. I had thought that I might be able to say something about how true this is of the Christian life after its beginning. But if the Lord wills, I have got another evening tomorrow, and we can go on then.

Oh, but we have said enough surely to make it very clear that Christ is doing a very wonderful thing. Our name is Israel. That means a prince with God. May the Lord help us to live up to our name, recognize the great dignity that has been put upon us, and to understand the wonderful thing that He has done in us. The Lord bless you.
Meeting 11 - The Presence of the Lord: "The Lord is With Us"

Eleventh Meeting
(February 8, 1964 A.M.)

Reading: Exodus 25:8; John 1:14:
"And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."
"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

We are going to continue this morning with this great desire of God to dwell among men. In our own personal life, in our life together as the Lord's people, in all the work of the Lord, THE MATTER OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE IS THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. There is nothing so important as the Presence of the Lord. I think we realize that because we pray very much about it. We pray every day that the Lord will be with us. When we come together for our meetings, we pray that the Lord will be with us. When we go to any part of the Lord's work, we pray that the Lord will be with us.

But we very rarely realize that no amount of prayer can secure the Presence of the Lord. We may pray all day and all night, and have many nights of prayer for the Presence of the Lord. And we may think that because we pray so much for the Presence of the Lord, that is going to guarantee that He will be Present. It is not only a matter of how much we pray for this. The Presence of the Lord depends upon whether things are suitable to the Lord. We may pray for the Lord to be Present, but because things are all wrong, the Lord will not be Present.

No, it all depends upon things being suitable to the Presence of the Lord. There is a sense in which the Lord is not with people. The Lord is only with His Son. And it depends upon how far things are according to Christ, whether the Lord will be Present. When the Lord Jesus said, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered into My Name, there I am." It did not mean wherever a few people gather together, and say, "We are here in the name of Jesus." Anybody can say that. All Christian religion says that. Jesus said, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered into My Name." THE NAME OF JESUS IS ALL THAT JESUS IS IN HIMSELF. The Name gathers up all that He is. All that He is to God the Father. And all that He is from God the Father to us. See, it is INTO the Name of Jesus. It is being found in what Christ is.

That brings us back to this matter of the Presence of God as in the tabernacle of old. We were seeing yesterday that the Spirit of God took hold of Bezaleel and Aholiab, so that they could fulfill the pattern which had been shown to Moses. Now, you see, you have three things. You have the pattern which had been shown. Then you have the people who are to do the work. Between the pattern and the people is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes hold of the pattern. And the Holy Spirit takes hold of the people. And the Holy Spirit makes the people carry out the pattern to the finest detail. All things according to the pattern shown.

Now do you see, why the Holy Spirit takes men off of the natural ground, and puts them onto the spiritual ground? So that the men will not do the work of God with their natural understanding or with their natural strength. They do the work of God by the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, one of the things which we take the longest to learn in this work of God is this: It is that
God leaves nothing to man's own judgment. I wonder how many of us have really learned that lesson.

You see, some of us had the idea at the beginning that we were called into the work of the Lord. Well, the idea may have been quite right. And then we had our idea as to what the work of the Lord is. And so we got busy about it. We use all our mind and all our strength to do this work of God. We organize the work. And we organize the people. And we appointed this one to do this work, and that one to do that work. We were like the general manager of a big business. And for many years there was very little or real spiritual results. The fruit of all that was spiritually very small. We may have built up big things. People may have said, 'Well, that is a very successful work.' But, as we look back upon it today, we see how poor it was in spiritual value. It is not the number of people. It is not the amount of work. It is not wonderful organization and machinery. It is just how much the Lord is in it. And it is better to have something quite small with the fullness of the Lord in it, than something quite big with just a little of the Lord in it.

Now Bezaleel and Aholiab were given understanding by the Spirit. How important that is. The Holy Spirit is very particular about the work of God. What a lot of trouble and waste of time would be saved if we were really led by the Spirit in what we do.

I give you an illustration from my experience. Many years ago when the Lord was doing something, and it was something that the Lord was doing, a dear man came along and he said, 'I think this is the Lord's work.' And he came to the meetings. And he prayed in the meeting and he was one who had been used to preach in different places. And I thought at one time, Well, it might be a good thing to have this brother in the work. So, I asked him to preach. Well, he did preach. And then I asked him again, and he gradually became a part of the work. But the time came when I realized that that brother had not got the same vision. We who were in that work of God had gone through a very deep experience. We had come to know something very truly of the work of the Cross. The Cross had broken all our old ideas about preaching and organization. Now this dear brother had never gone that way. He had not come up from the root. He had been added from the outside. The real basic revelation had not come to him. So he was a preacher and a Bible teacher. But the time came, years afterward, when I said: 'Oh, I made a terrible mistake in bringing the brother in.' The day came when he went away. He tried to start some other things. And though we still loved him, and recognized much of the Lord about him, it brought a great deal of trouble and distress among us that he had come into the heart of the work. And when he went away, it meant a lot of difficulty.

Another brother came a little later. This was before I had learned the lesson. He was a dear brother, he really loved the Lord. He had been an evangelist. And he had done some Bible teaching. But he was a lonely man. And he came to me one day and he said, 'You know I feel the need of being a part of something else. I need to have a company of people around my ministry who will pray for me when I go out and where I can find spiritual fellowship.' Oh, in my sympathy for him, in my desire to help a brother, I said: 'Brother, we will provide you with what you need. We will gather around you. We will pray for you. You just find your place amongst us.' He had not grown up from the root. He may have been quite good fruit. But you know, there is a difference between the fruit that grows out of the root, and a piece of fruit that you come and tie on the tree. Now I have no fault to find with that brother. But I lived to see the day when I felt very sorry indeed that ever I had brought him in. He also went away and tried to start something else. And that has caused us quite a lot of trouble. We love him very much, we have no fault to find with him.

But, you see, God was doing something. And those who were connected with that had to come up from the inside. You cannot just put your hand on people, this one and that one and say, come and
join us. Come and take up work amongst us. They have to be right in that which God is doing with you. The work of God is an organism, not an organization. And everything has got to grow out of the root. I hope you understand what I mean. It is so important that everything should be in the Spirit and not by man’s judgment.

I began these morning meetings by telling you that the Second Letter to Timothy, which is Paul’s last letter, was in order to correct things in the house of God. And one of the things that he was correcting there, was elders in the house of God. We are sure that they had already commenced that condition of things, which led to the organization of the Church - in man appointing officials in the church. I do not know whether you can understand the differences between an official and a living organism. Do you understand that difference? See, we have got organisms in our body. We do not call them by official names. They are just living organisms. They function by life. We do not say, 'Now this body needs a heart. Let us go and find the heart somewhere. And we give it some official name and we put it in.' No, the heart grows out of the whole organism. Now in late New Testament times there was this thing beginning, when men began to call elders bishops and archbishops and deacons and then at last popes.

Now that was beginning before Paul finished his ministries. And Paul wrote that letter to Timothy to put that right. In effect, Paul was saying this, "Elders in the church are not just officials. They are not chosen because they are intellectual men. They are not chosen because they are wealthy men. They are not chosen because they have influence in the world. They are not chosen because they are known to be successful businessmen. Elders are elders before ever they are called elders. Do you understand that? It is not the name at all. It is what the man is. And what the man is, is wholly a matter of how much of the Lord is in him. It is the Presence of the Lord which decides what the man is. You can leave out the name if you like. We just use the name for convenience. The name has taken on a meaning which it was never intended to have. Elders in the church are nothing more and nothing less than spiritual men. Let me repeat, IT IS JUST A MATTER OF HOW MUCH OF THE LORD IS IN THAT MAN.

You see, I am keeping true to the New Testament. Right at the beginning it was like this: 'Choose you out men filled with the Holy Spirit.' That was the thing that decided the man. Whether they were deacons or whether they were elders; whether they were apostles, it was a matter of man filled with the Holy Spirit. You see, the Holy Spirit makes everything according to Christ. And when we meet a true elder, we do not meet the man first, some important man, some very forceful man, some man who has gotten everything in his hand: WE MEET THE LORD JESUS. That is the thing that makes us what we are in any capacity. And these are very important principles. "See, that thou make all things according to the pattern shown." And although the people were to do the making, they could only do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. If it is not like this, there will be a waste of time, and a waste of strength.

Several years ago, I was having a long talk with a leader of a great world movement. It was something that had a very blessed and beautiful beginning. God raised up a servant of His, and took that man through a very deep experience, then began to use him in this work. It became a world wide work. Many of you would know about it if I mentioned his name. But you need not ask, I shall not tell you. The thing is that in its early years it was a great spiritual power. I think it was one of the most spiritual things God has done in the last hundred years. But today it has lost its original power. It goes on; it is a big worldwide evangelical movement. It has hundreds of churches all over the world, but it has lost its original spiritual depth. It is quite different today in its character from what it was in the early years. Now I was having a talk with one of the leaders of this work, and he was deploiring this loss of spiritual life in the work. He was very sad about it. And he said to me, 'Mr.
Sparks, what would you do?' And that was a very big question to ask any man. So I had to think for a moment, and then I said, 'I think this is what I would do. I would call all the leaders together, and take them right away from all the work, and for two or three weeks I would wait on God. I would ask them to seek the Lord to recover the original vision and life.' He said, 'Mr. Sparks, you are right, that is the only thing to do.' But then he said, 'It cannot be done.' I said, 'Why?' 'They are all too busy. You see, we have got into something which so takes up our time and our strength that we have not the time to keep our spiritual life deep and strong.'

That brings me back to another very, very important thing about this tabernacle in the wilderness. Not only did all things have to be made according to the pattern, but when that was done, the people set forth led by the testimony. The tabernacle was taken down, and all its parts were put upon the shoulders of the Levites, and the camp went forward. Well, that is very good, we like to think of that. But it was not long before the Lord said, 'STOP, we are not going on, put up the tabernacle again, and stay here till I say MOVE!' That happened again and again. I wonder why that was. You know, we cannot get things on our shoulders, and we cannot go on, and just keep going on. The Lord says: 'Stop, I want you to have a further understanding of My Son. I want you to understand that progress is only by My Presence. You have got to gather round this tabernacle, but realize that I am Present there in the midst. Now, for a time you have got to be occupied with Me. So far, you have been occupied with getting on; but I say STOP, and be occupied with Me for a little while.' The point is, that spiritual progress is always a matter of the Presence of the Lord, and of our understanding what that presence means. So if it happens in our lives that the Lord sometimes says, 'Stop, stop all your going on, stop all your activities, stop all your work, be still and know that I am God. Be occupied with Me for a little while.' Progress, spiritual progress is only by THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

You know, when the people came to the border of the promised land, they refused to go over and take the land because they heard from those who had spied out the land that there were giants in the land (Numbers 14). Therefore they would not obey and follow the Lord. Then the Lord said to Moses: 'Say unto them, 'As I live, saith the Lord, surely as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against Me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning what I sware that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness'' (Numbers 14:28-33; ASV).

When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. And they rose up the next morning and they said, "We have sinned, but we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised." But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the Lord, when it will not succeed? Do not go up, lest you be struck down before your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the Lord. And the Lord will not be with you." The people said, 'We are going over.' And the Lord said, 'No.' But they said, 'We will go over, we are going on.' The Lord said, "I AM NOT GOING ON." And they went on, or tried to go on, and it was a most disastrous thing. And at the end of forty years they all died in the wilderness, just as the Lord had said (Num. 14:41-43; NASB).

It is a dangerous thing to go on without the Lord. We can only go on if we know that the Lord is with us. And so in all our activity, it is very important that we know that the Lord is in what we are doing,
that we are not going ahead of the Lord.

It is just as dangerous not to go when the Lord does go. Supposing on one of those days when the priests sounded the silver trumpets, sounded that call on the trumpets which said, 'Today, we move on, today the Lord is going on.' Supposing the people said, 'Oh, well, I am not going. I am going to stay here, I am not going to move.' All right, the Lord would have gone up, and they would have been left alone in the wilderness without the Lord. See it works both ways. The Lord is going on, we must go on. The Lord says, 'Wait a little while, and get a new knowledge of Myself.' Then we must be prepared to wait. You see, I am giving you the foundation principles of life with God.

I think I am going to finish there this morning. I have said a lot of things. I do not want them all to be lost in the mass. I want you to be able to see this because that is a vital factor in the Presence of the Lord. It is not always what we think the Lord wants to do. We must bring our thoughts into the Presence of the Lord. 'Lord, it would be a good thing for me to go to such and such a place. I think they need me there. Indeed, they have invited me to come, and it seems to me to be quite good if I were to go.' Is that all that you have to consider? We have got to bring all that back to the Lord, and we have to say, 'Lord, do you want me there, and do you want me there at this time? If I get out of the Lord's time, I am going to waste time. Perhaps the Lord means it for next year. If I do it now, I have wasted a whole year.' You see what I mean? This is life in the Spirit, and the Lord can only be with us as we live in the Spirit.

Now, we are not perfect, we make our mistakes. I have told you a mistake that I have made. It was not because I had not got a heart for the Lord, it was not because I was not very jealous for the Lord, but you see I had not learned the lessons in the school of Christ. I have told you at the beginning that I was just going to bring you some of the lessons that I had learned in that school. I have learned them by failure, and I have learned them by suffering. God is very practical. You see, God never puts a textbook into our hands and says, 'Now you study that textbook and do things just as in the textbook.' Oh no, God never does it like that, that would be easy. Perhaps we would like it like that, but God teaches us by experience. He leads us into situations, and then we learn His deep lessons, that is the only way in which we really learn. True knowledge is the knowledge which comes by experience. Somebody else may write a textbook; they come along to you with the textbook. They say, now this is the textbook of the New Testament church, and you have got to do everything as we put it down here, and it is not long before you find yourself in a lot of confusion.

The Holy Spirit is our textbook, He knows it all. He has got all the principles, and it is only as we live in the Spirit that we learn by experience. But there is some value in our being able to tell you these things. I do not say to you now do this because I tell you to do it. I tell you that this is what I believe to be the way of the Lord. You give heed to it. You let the Spirit teach you, try to remember these things and they may save you from a lot of the trouble that I have had. But it all comes back to one thing, THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. That is the most important thing in the world. It is truly a great thing to be able to say, "The Lord is with us."
Meeting 12 - "This Kingdom is an Everlasting Kingdom

Twelfth Meeting
(February 8, 1964 P.M.)

As this is the last meeting of these series this week, it will be necessary for us to do a little reviewing of what has been said. Not very much, but just enough to be able to go on from where we left off last night. But before we come to that I want to take you back to the Old Testament. Those of you who are familiar with the Book of Daniel, will remember that in the second chapter of that book we have the account of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which he saw a great image. The different parts of the body of that image from the head downward to the feet were made of different materials. The head was made of gold, and the other parts of the body were made of other materials, until the feet and the toes were made partly of iron and partly of clay.

When Nebuchadnezzar woke up from his dream, he wondered what it all meant, for people in that part of the world always believed that dreams meant something. Perhaps you do that. If you have an unusual dream, you wonder what it is all about. The next morning, you tell somebody about it, hoping that they will be able to explain your dream. Well, that is what Nebuchadnezzar did. He called all his wise men, but he did not tell them his dream. Now he said, 'You tell me what is the meaning of this dream.' But none of them could give the interpretation.

Then at last Daniel was brought in and Daniel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord explained the dream to Daniel, and Daniel said this: 'These four parts of the image represent four great kingdoms. The head of gold is great Babylon, your kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar. After you will come another kingdom, and then that will pass away, and another will come; and then that one will pass away, and another one will come.' Daniel told him the names of most of these kingdoms, but the last one he did not name. Well, Daniel explained all that, and then he said this: 'In the days of those kingdoms, the God of Heaven shall set up a Kingdom. And that Kingdom, unlike all these others, will never pass away.' The Kingdom of the God of Heaven - what the New Testament calls the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven - and, beloved, we are living in the days of that Kingdom.

Now that is what we have been talking about this week. We are just going to leave that for the present and come back to where we were last night. It is rather impressive that in the days of Daniel, Daniel said that the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom even while Israel still existed. The kingdom of Israel had not yet passed away at that time; although Israel was in captivity in Babylon, it was not finished with. A remnant did come back to Jerusalem, and rebuild the city and the temple, and for some four hundred years Israel went on. It was having a bad time with these other kingdoms. But what we have been seeing is that when the God of Heaven did begin to set up His Kingdom, the kingdom of Israel began to disappear. This great kingdom of Israel was also set aside by the God of Heaven. And what we have been seeing is that the God of Heaven brought in a new Israel, a heavenly and a spiritual Israel, to take the place of the older one. The God of Heaven, Who had dismissed the others, now brought in His new spiritual Israel. We, who are the Lord's true born-again people, are the new Israel. And this Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. It will never pass away. Everything is being done in the world to destroy it. The world powers are seeking to destroy this
Kingdom. But as surely as those other four kingdoms had gone, and the Kingdom of the God of Heaven remains, so they are doomed to failure. THIS KINGDOM IS FOREVER.

Now we are coming over again to where we left off last night. We come into the Gospel by John. I think you know that John wrote this gospel toward the end of the first century of this dispensation. All the other apostles had gone to be with the Lord. John had had a long life, and through long years, he had meditated much upon the relation between Jesus and the Old Testament. John knew the Old Testament very well, and through all those years of his life, he thought about it. More and more clearly, by the light of the Holy Spirit, he saw the connection between Jesus and the Old Testament. John knew that the old Israel of the Old Testament had been rejected by God, and he knew that Jesus had come to form a new Israel.

This new Israel was not something of this world. It was a heavenly Israel, a spiritual Israel. Everybody knows that the Gospel by John is the most spiritual of all the Gospels. John had come to see that the new Israel embodied all the spiritual principles of the old Israel - although the Old Testament Israel had been put away. God's thoughts in Israel were eternal thoughts and John saw that all those thoughts of God, which were represented by the old Israel, were now taken up by Jesus in a spiritual way in a new Israel. John saw that when God began with the old Israel, He appeared as the God of glory unto Abraham. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham," and that was the beginning, the first step of God toward the old Israel. Then John took that over into the new Israel, so that when he began to write his Gospel, he spoke about this coming of the God of glory. "And the Word was God... and we beheld His glory" (John 1:1,14).

So John began the new Israel where God began the old. And then he knew that God promised Abraham a son, and through that son He would make a great nation, and through that son all nations of the earth would be blessed. He introduced a new idea. This was not creation. He was not creating a new man; He was bringing one to birth. There is a difference between being created and being born. The new idea was sonship. Isaac was to be Abraham's son.

Now John begins in his first chapter all about the Son, God's Son. And then God was going to have a new Israel of sons in His Son. So John says, in His birth. Isaac was on supernatural ground, he was "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And then John knew another thing about the beginning in the Old Testament. He knew that the God of glory had appeared to Abraham, he knew that He had spoken about the son, and then he knew that that son was quite impossible along natural life. Isaac could not be born in the natural way. Probably you know all about that. We simply make the statement. Isaac was a natural impossibility. Nevertheless, Isaac was born.

Now John takes that over, and he knew quite well that Jesus was not born in a natural way. JESUS WAS THE RESULT OF A DIRECT INTERVENTION OF GOD. Isaac was a miracle. Jesus was a miracle not on natural ground. Jesus was on supernatural ground from His birth. But then we saw that even Isaac had to go into death and resurrection. You know the story quite well. I am having to take it for granted that you know your Bible. If you do not know what I am talking about, go back and read your Bible (Genesis 22). You will find it all there. Isaac had to be offered as a sacrifice, and then as in a figure raised from the dead.

Now here is a rather impressive thing! You are not far into the Gospel by John in the first chapter before this Son of God comes to the river Jordan. He comes to be baptized by John the Baptist. You know the meaning of baptism; it is a figure of death and burial and resurrection. But the impressive thing is this: John has been talking about the eternal Son of God, through Whom all things were
created. And now, before he had got much further, he calls Him "The Lamb of God." There you have it repeated, "Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world" (verse 29). The Lamb has to be slain. When you come to the Book of the Revelation, the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and all are worshipping the Lamb (Rev. 5). This great Isaac has gone into death and into resurrection.

Now we must just stop in this course for a moment to make the application. You see, we have said that believers in this dispensation are God's new heavenly Israel. What is it that makes us members of this heavenly Israel? In the first place, it is that we have seen the greatness of the Lord Jesus. We are able to say in a measure, "We have beheld His glory." Every true believer ought to be able to say that I have seen at least something of the greatness of the Lord Jesus. You may not put it in these words, but this is what it means, "that the God of glory has appeared to me." "I have seen the Lord of glory." We may put it in different ways, but that is what it amounts to. Something of the greatness of the Lord Jesus as God's Son has been revealed in our hearts, that is the first step toward the new Israel. I wonder how many of you in this hall tonight can say, I am a member of that Israel; I have seen the Lord! The Lord of glory has appeared in my heart. If not in the same words as Paul, you could say the same thing. "For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6). That is the beginning of the new Israel.

The next thing is, we have become sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We are amongst those of whom it can be said, our real spiritual life is not by the will of man, it is not by natural blood. We have not inherited it from anybody. We have not got it because some people persuaded us into it. Not by the will of man, not by natural blood, but we have been born of the Spirit of God. We are children of God by the will of God. Now all that is very simple and very elementary, I know, but we have not finished yet.

The next thing in this new Israel is this: You and I have got to come through death unto the ground of resurrection. We have got to know something of the power of His resurrection in our life. What Paul calls, "being in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). This is a very important thing, not only at the beginning of the Christian life, but this is something that has got to characterize the new Israel all through history. Just look at the history of the people of God during these two thousand years. Before God finally destroyed that great Roman Empire, that Roman Empire massacred ten million Christians. How many Christians there must have been? That mighty iron empire determined to destroy this new Israel, that was the first great historic baptism into the death of Christ. You wonder that anybody remained. But it was the Roman Empire that was destroyed. The only thing you know about that Empire today is to go to the city of Rome and see a few ruins.

But where is the heavenly Israel? It is everywhere in the world. You see, this Israel is indestructible. But since that first baptism into death, it has had many others, right up to our own day. The heavenly Israel has been baptized into death in China, has been baptized into death in Russia, and it is the same in other parts of the world.

Well, what is going to be the end of this? It is a great pity that those people who do this do not read history; if only they would read history, this is what they would see. The Jewish nation tried to kill Christianity and the Jewish nation has been set aside. The far greater Roman Empire determined to kill the heavenly Israel, but it is the great Roman Empire that has been killed. The heavenly Israel just goes on and many other great powers have tried to do that. But where is the heavenly Jerusalem? This spiritual Israel just goes on. THE GOD OF HEAVEN HAS SET UP A KINGDOM WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED.
Now this baptism into Christ's death and resurrection is not only a historic thing, it is not only a thing in history, it is a thing in personal experience. The Lord, again and again, takes us into an experience of death - an experience when we feel that the end of everything has come, and it looks as though we are never going to get through. It may be for one reason or another, but there it is. It looks as though we are at the end. And that has happened to us many times. But we are still alive. We are still going on.

The Apostle Paul spoke of his own experience of this when he said, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of what befell us in Asia. We were pressed beyond our measure. We had the sentence that it was death. We despaired of life, that we might not trust in ourselves, but in God Who raiseth the dead" (II Cor. 1). When the apostle wrote that, that was an experience in the past, and he was now writing in resurrection. Sometimes, it is like that in the work of the Lord. Things seemed to go right into death. We feel that the end has come - there is no more. We go through deep experiences like that. Why does the Lord allow this? Why has He allowed it in the history of the Church? Why does He allow it in His own work? And why does He allow it in our own personal experience?

Well, why did He allow it in the case of Isaac? You remember where we finished last night, we said that it was in order that everything should be kept on supernatural ground, This new Israel is a supernatural thing, and it has got to be kept on that ground. Because resurrection is something which belongs to God alone, and it has got to be said about everything that is God's. "This is of God, and not of man." Our lives have got to bear the mark of God in them. While we have strength, we feel we can go on. But sometimes the Lord takes away our strength, and we feel that we can go on no more, and then His strength comes in. His strength is made perfect in weakness. Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is not only something which happened 2000 years ago. It is something that has got to be continually happening in all of us. The Apostle Paul had lived a long life. He had lived a very full life. I doubt whether there was anyone else who had a fuller knowledge of the Lord than he did. But right at the end of that life, he was saying, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). Right to the end, there is still more in the power of His resurrection for us to know. That is the nature of the new Israel. You see how John is following the course of the old Israel in a spiritual way?

I wonder if I have time just to take you one step further. Do you notice the next thing that comes in John's Gospel? You will find it at the forty-third verse of the first chapter. Now note how true to principle John is keeping. At that point Jesus is calling His twelve apostles. He is saying to this one and to that one, "follow Me." He is selecting twelve. That is the number of the tribes of Israel. So, He is constituting the new Israel on the principle of twelve. But as He is doing this, He calls one man, and that man's name is Nathaniel. One of the others brings Nathaniel, and as Nathaniel is coming and Jesus sees him, Jesus says, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Jacob!" Nathaniel said, "Master, how do You know me?" Jesus said, "Before your friend called you to come, I saw you under the fig tree." Why had Nathaniel gone under the thick fig tree? He wanted to pray, and he did not want anybody to see him. He wanted to be alone, quiet, where no one would see him and disturb him, and so he went under the fig tree. Jesus said, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree." It must have been a very thick fig tree, because Nathaniel was so surprised, so surprised that anybody could have seen him that he said, "Master, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." Now listen to what Jesus said to him. "Because I said, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than that. Afterward thou shalt see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Starting with Abraham, we went to Isaac, now we come to Jacob. Everybody knows the story of Jacob's dream - how he journeyed and when the sun went down, he lighted upon a certain place, and
he went to sleep, and he had a dream. He saw a ladder set up on the earth. The top of it reached into heaven. And he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. And the Lord was above the ladder. And the Lord spoke to Jacob. Now John has taken that over also. Perhaps we would be better to say the Holy Spirit is taking it all over. So we come to Jacob. Where did everything of God begin with Jacob? What is the great thing about Jacob? There are many things about him that we can forget for the moment. And we just remain with this dream because Jesus put His finger upon that. He said to Nathaniel, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" And then to him He said afterwards, "Thou shalt see the heavens open, the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Of course, that was all type and figure. We will see in a minute what it meant. We have got to go back to the Old Testament again. You know right from the day when Adam sinned in the garden, the presence of God was shut and closed to him. All through the Old Testament, God is so separate from man that man cannot come near God. Everything in the Old Testament says to man, "Keep out! Come not near, this is holy ground." That court around the tabernacle said to man, "Keep out. You cannot come in here, only the priests can come in here, you keep out." You see, man was excluded from the Presence of God. It was a terrible thing to come into the Presence of God. If ever anybody felt that God had come near, they would have been afraid for their life. Heaven was closed. The old Israel had a closed heaven. "Thou shalt see the heaven open." A WONDERFUL FEATURE ABOUT THIS NEW ISRAEL IS THAT IT HAS AN OPEN HEAVEN IN JESUS CHRIST.

When did Nathaniel come to experience what Jesus said he would? You open your New Testament at the beginning of the Acts of the apostles. You will read the names of the people who were gathered together after the resurrection of Jesus. It says now there were so-and-so, so-and-so, so-and-so, and Nathaniel. Oh, Nathaniel is there! And they were all gathered together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The heaven is open. Why? Because Jesus has gone through and opened it. And on that day, and from that day, they lived under the open heaven. That is, they had a freeway through to God. No longer were they kept outside. The Holy Spirit says now you can come with boldness to the Throne of Grace. It is no longer a closed door to God. The heavens are open. That is the inheritance of the new Israel.

I think we are having a little bit of the experience of that today. We have an open heaven here tonight. We know something about the Lord speaking to us from heaven in the Lord Jesus. God's messages are coming to us from heaven. I trust that is true. That is our great privilege as the new Israel. Now I have got to stop. And I only got to the first chapter of John, and that goes right through the whole Gospel of John to the end. All that which is in that wonderful gospel has to do with this new spiritual Israel. We are brought into a wonderful thing through the Lord Jesus, to the God of glory, to the wonderful miracle of spiritual sonship. We are learning to know the power of His resurrection and we are coming to experience more and more of the meaning of the open heaven. This is not just Bible teaching. This is wonderful spiritual experience. IT IS ALL THE INHERITANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF THIS NEW ISRAEL!
Meeting 13 - The Lord Will Never Have Mixture in Our Life or in Our Work For Him

Thirteenth Meeting
(February 9, 1964 A.M.)

We are going to read again the fourth chapter of the Gospel by John. (And the reader will benefit from reading this chapter). I want to turn you again, especially to verse twenty-three in that chapter: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father doth seek such to be His worshippers."

I want to put alongside of that passage a verse from the Letter to the Hebrews, the fourth chapter, verse twelve: "For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit" (ASV).

We have been noting during the past week that the teaching and the acts of the Lord Jesus all related to a time of transition from one old order to a new. Jesus stood between these two orders, the old order which was passing and the new order which He was bringing in. And this fourth chapter of the Gospel by John stands in a very real way in that transition period. In this chapter the two things are meeting, and here we find the state that is not by any means clear.

Let us look at some of the features. It was not just an accident that Jesus went through Samaria and met that woman. It was all a part of one great whole of this gospel. Jesus is in Samaria, and Jesus meets this Samaritan woman. Now if you know anything about the Samaritans, you know that they were a mixed race. When Jerusalem had been invaded by a foreign country, and the whole land of Israel had been overrun by those foreigners, many of the Jews were taken away into captivity. But some remained in the land, and they married the foreigners. Jews married those who were not Jews. So, the Samaritans were a mixed blood people. They were neither one thing nor another. That is why they were hated by the Jews, as it is said, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Samaritans were a mixture in their very makeup (John 4:4-9).

Then it was at the well that the Lord met this Samaritan woman. And you notice that it was Jacob's well, and that Jacob gave this land to his son Joseph. So here in this mixed situation is something of old Israel: Jacob and Joseph are here. And you notice that that well never satisfied this woman. She came out every day to draw water from that well but was never satisfied. Jesus said to her, 'Those who drink of the water of this well will just be coming, and coming, and coming again. They will never be satisfied.' That is the old dispensation. It never satisfied anybody.

You remember all the millions of sacrifices that were offered in Israel in the Old Testament. Sacrifices were offered morning and evening every day for hundreds of years. And still there had to be more sacrifices because they never made anything perfect. The priests went into the tabernacle or the temple and offered their prayers every day. But all their praying every day never brought anything to perfection. The law of Moses was read to the people continually, but it never made any difference to their character. It never brought satisfaction to their hearts. And that is just how things were in the old dispensation, and this well where Jacob and Joseph are found represents the old dispensation. You may come and drink of it every day of your life and you are not satisfied. Because
as the New Testament writer says, 'The law could make nothing perfect.' So that this poor woman came out every day to get her water and had to do it all her life and was never satisfied. Well, we have got the Samaritan woman. She represents a mixture of two things, nothing distinct or nothing clear, neither one thing nor the other. And we have got the well, and it speaks of the disappointment of the Old Testament.

What about these disciples? We read that the disciples went away into the town to buy bread. They left Jesus alone. The woman was not there when they went into the town. But while they were gone, the woman came out of the town to the well. And then there commenced this conversation between Jesus and the woman. When the disciples came back, and saw Jesus talking to this woman, of course, they did not know what kind of woman she was, they did not know all about her sinful life. They only knew that she was a Samaritan woman. And they were very shocked when they saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. They were Jews. The Jews have nothing to do with the Samaritans. And here is their Master talking in a friendly way to a Samaritan woman. They thought that was a terrible thing. Why? Just because they were Jews, they belong to the Old Testament, where Jews and Gentiles have nothing to do with each other. They are still on Old Testament ground. They have their Old Testament prejudices, and they thought this was a terrible thing, so they had better break in on this.

And so they brought their bread, 'Master, here is the bread we went to buy. You must eat.' They thought they would just break up this little conversation. They said, "Master, eat." Jesus said, "I have meat to eat that you know not of." Once again, they were found to be people without new understanding. They said, 'Has anybody brought Him food?' They can only think in terms of the material and not of the spiritual. Jesus said, 'My meat and My drink is to do the will of My Father' (John 4:27-38).

Now you can see that in almost every feature of this story, on the one side, there is mixture. Nothing is distinct. It is neither one thing or the other. But when you move over onto the side of Jesus, there is no mixture here. The water that He says He will give is quite clear water. There is no mixture in that water. It is the water of Life. And it brings perfect satisfaction. IT IS THE WATER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now you know our verse, verse twenty-three. It is interesting that although this woman was such a great sinner, Jesus said, 'You have had five husbands; and you have got somebody now who is not your husband.' Although she was such a sinner, Jesus is speaking to her about some of the most wonderful things in the Bible. Why I say that, is this: Some people may think that the things that I am going to say this morning are for advanced Christians, that they are not for beginners. But I want to say that what I am saying is right at the very foundation of true Christianity. This is not something for those who have been on the way for many years. Although I think that many people who have been on the way for many years need to go back and learn the first lesson. But here is a woman right back there at the beginning of the Christian life. And Jesus is saying to her this one thing. Everything in this story points to this one thing. The beginning of the Christian life, like all the rest of the Christian life, must be absolutely clear as crystal. Now all the old Christians as well as the young ones can take notice of this. The Bible reveals that there is one thing that God hates. It is the one thing that God will not accept and will not bless, and that is mixture. Mixture is the bringing together of two contrary things. A situation where you bring in something that is not of God and try to link it up with something that is of God. That is mixture. That is what the devil did at the beginning and God hates it. He will never accept mixture.

There is an Old Testament illustration of this. One of the commands of the Lord to Israel was this,
'Thou shalt not wear a garment made of two kinds of materials. Thou shalt not wear a garment made of wool and cotton.' Of course, today a lot of people do that. There are various kinds of materials that are made up into our garments. But God said to Israel, You are not to wear a garment made of wool and cotton together. You see, that is an Old Testament parable. It is an outward story with an inward meaning. What did God mean by that? Well, there are not many people in this hall this morning wearing woolen garments. And I think in a few weeks time, there will not be many people in this whole city wearing woolen garments. Why is that? Because wool makes you perspire. The heat of your own body is brought out. The natural life expresses itself in wools. But most of you this morning are wearing cotton. Why are you wearing cotton? Because cotton keeps down the natural heat.

Now you see God's lesson. You cannot bring together in your own person that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit. You see, clothes speak of our character. Perhaps not so much in this country, but if you were to go to the West, you would see how people dress there. You would say of this person, 'Well, I do not think much of her.' Or you might say about someone else, 'What an extraordinary person!' You would be judging their character by their dress. And dress is usually an expression of character. So God in His Old Testament parable says, 'You cannot have two characters, if you are a true Israelite. My people must be one thing or the other. I cannot have mixture.'

But God did not leave it there. He added something else to it. He says, 'Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.' What is the difference? Well, the ox in the Old Testament is a clean beast. It is included among the clean creatures of the Old Testament. That was particularly the case in Israel. Now God says, 'You shall not bring into your work for Me this contradiction.' The plow is the symbol of work. And God, by His parable says, 'When you do My work, you must not do it with two things that are of contradictions. I will not have a mixture of what is spiritual and what is carnal in My work. I will not allow there to be what is the flesh and what is the Spirit brought together in My work.' I think I have said enough about God's parables in the Old Testament. It shows how God will not have mixture. Everything with God must be quite pure. It must be one clear thing. There must be no contradiction in life or in service.

Now we come back to our chapter in John. We have seen that on the one side, everything was mixture; and therefore, it was all disappointing. It did not go through. It just went so far and then it failed. But there is the other side. There is the side of the Lord Jesus. What is He talking about when He speaks about the water that He will give? Well, He is only illustrating these words, spirit and truth. He says: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The Holy Spirit is the characteristic of this new dispensation. I think it would be a good thing if you have not done so; if you would just take this gospel by John and go through it looking for the Holy Spirit. You will find that the Holy Spirit is mentioned thirty times in this gospel. And the Lord Jesus gives large sections of His teaching to this matter of the Holy Spirit. You see, the movement is from the old to the new. AND THE NEW IS THE LIFE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

May I just for the moment speak about the nature of our new birth. Perhaps the young people need to have this made clear, and we all need to be reminded of it. You know we all have a human spirit, and we all have a human soul, and of course, we all have a human body. But not many people understand or know the difference between our spirit and our soul. Our spirit is that which God gave in order that we might have fellowship with Him Who is Spirit. Jesus said to the woman, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Now God gave Adam a spirit as well as a soul and a body. Before Adam was disobedient, he had
fellowship with God in his spirit. God was able to speak to him because Adam's spirit was alive to God. Adam had the faculty in him for receiving things from God. When Adam sinned, his spirit died unto God, that is, he was separated from God in his spirit - the link between himself and God ceased to be. Fellowship with God, which is always spiritual, was destroyed, and the spirit sank down into subjection to man's soul. The soul came to dominate the spirit! What is the soul? Well, it is our reason, it is our emotion, and it is our will. Everybody has that, more or less. You have a reason. That is why you argue about things. And you have a will. Some people have a stronger will than others, but we all have a will. And you have feelings. You have strong emotion. All that makes up your soul. But that only has to do with this world. It has nothing to do with God. And, of course, I need not say anything about the body. We all know that we have a body. And until we are born again, we cannot understand the things of God. We cannot hear God speaking in our spirit. We cannot have fellowship with God. Now what happens when we are born again? That spirit in us, which has been separated from God, is brought back into life. Then God becomes alive to us again. We are able to hear God speak to us. We are able to begin to understand the things of God. We now call God "Father."

Before, if ever we spoke of Him, we thought of Him just as Almighty God. Now He is our Father and is very near. The spirit in us which died, which was separated from God, has been brought into life. And now we are called upon to live in fellowship with God in the Spirit.

But there is another thing that happens when we are born again. The Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit of God comes into our new spirit. We do not hear God speaking out from heaven to us. But we know that God speaks in our hearts. We know that the Holy Spirit in our spirit tells us when we are wrong, and gives us the joy of the Lord when we are right. That is the order of this new dispensation. Does it sound very difficult to you young people? Really it is very simple. I think this is one of the first lessons that ever I learned in the Christian life. I used to do certain things before I was born again. I did not see any harm in it at all. Indeed, I would argue with this soul of mine, 'What is wrong about that?' I will not tell you what those things were. They are just the things that all the people of this world do, and the places to which they go.

Well, I used to do those things before I was born again. Then I had a very real experience of the Lord. No one said to me, 'Now you are a Christian, you may not do those things.' But one day I just did one of those old things, and do you know - all the joy went out of my heart. I had been able to do that for years and not be troubled about it. Now when I did it, I lost all my joy. Everything seemed to have gone wrong, and I had to go home and go into my room and got down on my knees, and ask the Lord what had happened. Why do I feel so miserable, what does this mean? And the Lord simply said, 'You are bringing over the old life into the new. And I cannot have this mixture. You are now a new creation in Christ, and the old things are passed away.'

Now I say that was one of the first lessons I learned in the Christian life. This was very real then. I was born again, the Holy Spirit had come in, and He was just teaching me what the Lord was pleased with, and what the Lord was not pleased with. You can all understand that, I am sure. That is how it ought to be at the beginning of the Christian life. But it ought to be like that all the way through the Christian life. You, my dear friends, along with myself, who have known the Lord for a long time, who have worked for the Lord for a long time, we must remember that these laws of the beginning remain to the end. We may not bring into our Christian character the old life. We may not be two things, a Christian, and something else. The Lord will not have it. His blessing will not be upon that. In our Christian work, we may not bring that which is of the world alongside of that which is of Christ. There must be no worldly methods in our Christian work. God will not have that mixture. Sooner or later it will all be brought to confusion. The Lord will never have mixture in life or in work. He says, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch no unholy thing, and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and My daughters" (II Cor. 6:17,18).

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So you see the great lesson that the Lord was teaching the simple woman of Samaria: Everything around her and in her spoke of mixture. But the Lord spoke to her about THE WATER OF LIFE in which there is no mixture. You know when you get to the end of the Bible, to the last chapters of the Book of the Revelation, we have another great parable of God, another great illustration. It is the heavenly Jerusalem. It is just a representation of the perfected work of God in the Church. GOD'S PERFECTED WORK IN HIS NEW HEAVENLY ISRAEL. It is a new spiritual Jerusalem. And it says that right in the center of that city is the river of THE WATER OF LIFE, clear as crystal. There is no mud in that river. You can look into it, and look right through it, it is so clear. It is the river of THE WATER OF LIFE. And in that, God is saying that in the end, all defilement will have been removed! All mixture will have been put away and everything will be perfectly clear and pure. So the Lord is calling us to a life of holiness. And holiness just means everything is of God and nothing else, not some of us and some of the Lord, not some of the Lord and some of the world, but ALL and only of the Lord. That is the meaning of our verse: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."
Meeting 14 - The New Israel's Passover

Fourteenth Meeting
(February 9, 1964 P.M.)

Read: Exodus 12.

This evening I am going to say just a little to you about the Lord's Table. This is perhaps the most universal of all the features of Christianity. Almost every section of Christianity in some way or another has the Lord's Table. In the different sections, of course, it goes by different names. The Roman Church calls it by one name. And other bodies call it by other names. We call it "The Lord's Table." But in some form or another, by some name or another, it is an almost universal characteristic of Christianity. It is so general and so often observed that we are in danger of losing something of the greatness of its meaning. It has become something that we do as a part of our order of things, perhaps every week. And there is, as I have said, a peril attached to that. We preserve something of its value. We rejoice in something of its meaning. But, as I have said, the peril is that we may lose something of the greatness of its meaning.

I think we all understand that the Lord's Table or the Lord's Supper is the new Israel's passover. The Lord's Table is the successor of the Jewish passover. When the Lord Jesus began to form the new heavenly Israel, He put the Lord's Supper in the place of the old passover. But although the form of it was somewhat changed, the meaning was never changed. The Lord Jesus took over the spiritual meaning of the passover into the Lord's Supper. I am just going to speak a little about the passover as it is found in the Lord's Table. I think perhaps we are a little apt to forget that there are two sides to this matter. And we spend most of our time on the one side, which is, what the Lord has done for us. Now we can never make too much of what the Lord has done for us. And this table of the Lord does speak of the wonderful thing that the Lord has done for us in His Cross. So that we are quite right in being very largely occupied with praising Him for all the love that He showed in dying for us.

If I say that is only one side, I do not mean to take anything away from it, but there is another side to this. It is what this involves us in. On the one side, it is what the Lord has done for us. On the other side, it is the greatest possibility that it brings upon us. Of course, this evening we ought to have read the twelfth chapter of the Book of Exodus, but there is no time to do that. As you are all the Lord's people, I take it that you know that chapter. It is there that we have the account of the first great passover in Israel. That great passover night, when Israel went out of Egypt. And you will remember that passover was the climax of a mighty conflict between God and all the gods of the Egyptians. All the gods of the Egyptians represented the prince of this world, the great kingdom of Satan, which had set itself against the redemption of the people of God. God had determined to redeem His people from that evil world. And all the gods of the Egyptians said, 'They shall not go.' It was not only Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the Lord said it was the gods of the Egyptians - the evil spiritual forces behind the Egyptians and Pharaoh. And God entered into a great conflict with those forces of evil. He sent judgment upon judgment on them. Nine terrible judgments He poured upon the gods of the Egyptians. But still the battle went on. Then God said, 'I am going to finish this. One more judgment, and we shall have victory.'

You remember that last tenth judgment. It took place on this passover night. Now the point that I want you to notice here, first of all, is that the passover marked the climax of a great spiritual conflict. When Jesus took up the meaning of the passover in His Own Person, to give His Body like
the passover lamb, and His Blood, He entered into this great conflict with all the power of evil. AS HE WENT TO THE CROSS, He cried, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). And Paul says, "He stripped off principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His Cross" (Col. 2:15). THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS WAS THE CLIMAX OF A GREAT BATTLE WITH THE POWER OF EVIL. That was the first meaning of the passover. And that is the first meaning of the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table means that we have been brought into the great victory of the Lord Jesus over all the power of evil. We sometimes forget that, if ever we remember it, when we come to the Lord's Table. In this table we are celebrating the victory of the Lord Jesus, and we are brought into the good of that victory. Let us remember that! Whenever we come to the Lord's Table, we are celebrating the victory of our Lord. And when we take of the symbols of His body and blood, we are saying, 'We stand into the good of His victory.'

Now the second thing about the passover. The focal point of the passover, was the first-born son. The Lord said, "I will go over the land of Egypt, and I will slay all the first-born in Egypt." Now the first-born in those days was always the representative of the whole family. Really, the first-born was the family. If the first-born son died, it was as though they had lost everything. All the fathers' hopes were gone because they were centered in the first-born. The first-born son was the priest of the family. He represented the family before God. He functioned as a priest for the whole family. We, in our day, do not understand how important the first-born was in those times. The Lord was going out with this final judgment to kill the first-born in every family in Egypt.

But He gave a sign to the people of Israel. It was in the blood of the Passover Lamb. And He commanded them to sprinkle that blood on their door posts. He said, 'When I come to Egypt to smite all the first-born, when I see the blood, I will not smite the first-born in that house. I will preserve all the first-born alive.' You see, the focal point of the whole thing was the first-born. In the Letter to the Hebrews, which has so much to say about this matter, the writer called the Church, the Church of the First-born ones. This means that judgment and death lie upon all those who are not protected by the blood. But the blood of THE PASSOVER LAMB has saved the Church of the First-born ones from judgment and death. This is a great thing that the passover means. If this has its true meaning in our lives, then we belong to the Church of the First-born ones. All that I said about the First-born is true of us; we represent the whole family of God. We are made priests unto our God. Ours is a place of great honor in the Father's house. We are in that position because of the blood of the Lamb. And that, again, is something that could occupy a great deal of time.

And another thing about the passover, there is a picture behind this passover in Exodus twelve. It is the picture of the rightful King coming to claim His rights. He is coming to a country where His authority and His rights have been rejected. In New Testament language they have said, 'We will not have this Man to reign over us.' They have refused to recognize His position as King. And they have refused to recognize His right amongst them. So the King comes to claim His rights and His place. And He brings His executioner with Him. Now He has sent a messenger before to tell the people that if they will put a certain sign on their door, He will not send His executioner in there. So He comes with His executioner. And as He passes through all the streets, He is looking at every house. He is looking for this sign on the doorposts. And when He sees this sign, He says to His executioner, 'Do not go in there, leave them alone, they are My loyal people, they recognize My authority.' But where He does not see the sign on the door, He says to the executioner, 'You go in there and slay the first-born.'

That is the picture that is behind the story of the passover. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. You shall be delivered from judgment and from death. That is the meaning of the precious blood of Jesus, being taken by us and being put upon our lives. That sign of the precious blood is our
salvation, our deliverance from all the power of judgment and of death. That is what is meant every time we come to the Lord's Table. We are a people who have been delivered by a mighty deliverance from all the judgment of God, and all the power of death. Why is that? Because we have taken, by faith, all the virtue of the precious blood of Jesus. And in taking the blood of Jesus, we have said we are the Lord's people. We are on the Lord's side! We own Him as King! We recognize all His rights! He is our Lord. He is our King. That is the meaning of the Lord's Table.

One other thing for now. The passover marked the absolute divide between the people of God, and this evil world. It was an absolute separation. Though sometimes when Pharaoh was having a bad time under those judgments, he relented a little. And he said, 'Well, some of you can go out. Leave your women and your children behind. Just some of you men go.' What did Moses say? He said, "We shall go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds." When we go, we go absolutely. We will not leave anything behind at all. It has to be an absolute separation from this world. 'This whole world', says the apostle, 'lieth in the wicked one.' And we do not belong to it. The passover, then, marked a complete and absolute separation of the people of God from this world. And you know how the Lord put that into effect. First of all, He smote all the first-born in Egypt. And when later Pharaoh repented and pursued the Israelites, the Lord drowned all the army of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and put the Red Sea between the Lord's people and Egypt.

The passover marked a very clear-cut division between the Lord's people and this world. And it is so clear that is what the Lord Jesus meant by the Lord's Table. As He was praying as the High Priest before He was about to offer Himself as the sacrifice, He said to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world... I pray that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." That is another meaning of the Lord's Table. When we come to the Lord's Table, do we mean this? Do we mean, I am of the people whom God has absolutely separated from this world? I have been delivered from this evil world. I do not belong to it. The only thing that I am going to do while I am in it is to testify for the Lord Jesus. So we remember or testify to the Lord's death every time we come to the table.

Now I think you understand what I meant when I said at the beginning, we are in danger of forgetting something of the great meaning of the Lord's Table. While we rejoice exceedingly in all that He has done for us in His Cross, we must remember that it involves us in something. It involves us in recognizing the Absolute Lordship of our Lord over us. It involves us in recognizing that we are not of this world, because Christ is not of this world. May the Lord give us spiritual understanding. And, the next time we come to the Lord's Table, may we remember these things.
Meeting 15 - God Has Shown Us the Pattern: He Has Shown Us That Pattern Who Is Christ In Perfection

Fifteenth Meeting
(February 10, 1964 A.M.)

As this is the last of these series of special morning meetings, I think that it would be most helpful if, at the beginning, I were just to go right back and remind you of the ground which we have been covering. We commenced with saying that Christianity has become something very much more than it was at the beginning, that much has been added to the foundation which does not belong to the foundation. So that we find ourselves today in a Christianity very different from that which was at the beginning. Christianity today is a very complicated thing. There are all the divisions, and the organizations, and so very much more than was in the simple basic realities of the beginning. And we said that we were going to ask the Lord to bring us back to those first beginnings of that Divine work in our Lord Jesus. We went on to say that we believe that the Word of God shows that there is going to be a great shaking of everything at the end. And in that great shaking, only the things which were and are really out from heaven will remain. A very great deal of what has been built upon the foundation will disappear. We believe that this is stated in the Word of God.

Then when that time comes, and we feel that it has already begun, everything will be tested by the foundation. The ultimate question in the great shaking will be just how much the Lord is Present. So we went on to consider that fundamental thing, the Presence of the Lord. That is where the Lord began with the old Israel. And we quoted Exodus twenty-five, verse eight, "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." That is the eternal thought of God, which goes beyond all time, THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM. We saw that that tabernacle or that sanctuary was, for the old Israel, the place of God's Presence.

Then we passed over to the New Testament, and found the new Israel being formed by the Lord Jesus. When the old Israel was put aside by God, then it says, "That the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us." So that in this dispensation, THE TABERNACLE IS THE LORD JESUS. It is not a thing, it is a Person. The Presence of God is wherever the Lord Jesus is. That governs everything. It is all a matter of whether the Lord Jesus is Present. Where He is, there is the Tabernacle of God. Just as in the Old Testament where the people were gathered around the tabernacle. The tabernacle was the governing thing in their lives by which they were made one people. All united by that one center, receiving all their life and their light from it. So in this dispensation, the Lord gathers people to Himself, He becomes the center of everything. It is in Him that they are united as one people, and from Him they received all their life and light. And this is all the matter of the Presence of the Lord.

So we went on to see something of the meaning of the Presence of the Lord as illustrated in the tabernacle of old. The first thing that we saw was that it was something presented to them by God from heaven. The Lord said, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount." The mount was a type of heaven, where the Lord came down to meet His servants, and there He showed the pattern of all things. That pattern was brought down from the mount and made known
to the people. It was a presentation to them of the pattern that was in the mind of God.

We know that that tabernacle was a representation in every detail of the Lord Jesus. So that in this new dispensation, everything begins by a presentation of the Lord Jesus. That is why we have the Four Gospels, which were written after many of the Epistles, put in the first place in the New Testament. Those Four Gospels contain a presentation of the Lord Jesus. And He is there as God's pattern for His Presence. We must recognize the very great importance of those Four Gospels. They are God's pattern given down from heaven for us to see. God has shown us the pattern: and He has shown us that pattern in perfection. When Jesus finished His life on this earth, He was able to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." What was the work that God gave Him to do? Well, supremely it was to reveal the mind of God, so that He was able to say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." In other words, He could say, 'I am the expression of the mind of God. And I have come down from heaven that you may have in Me the expression of the mind of God in every detail.'

Of course, I can only say this in a general way this morning. I could take up these Gospels and show you a thousand ways in which the Lord Jesus was revealing the mind of God. In everything that He said, and in everything that He did, there was something of God. And He was personally the comprehensive embodiment of the thoughts of God. Now God has given that pattern to us. In giving His Son, He has given the pattern of all things for His Presence.

May I, dear friends, appeal to you on this matter. I told you when I first came that I have not come to give you Bible teaching as such. When I go away from this country, one question that will be in my heart will be this: 'What is the practical results of it all?' That is going to be the great deciding factor on the value of this time together, so I have to seek the Lord very earnestly every time I speak to you. And I have to ask the Lord that He will not just give me a lot of things to say but that He will leave you with something that you have to face up to. So I say to you, that the fundamental thing is always the Presence of the Lord. It is not any one of the thousand things that make up Christianity. The ultimate criterion is, 'Is the Lord there?' and 'Is the Lord in all things there?' 'Is the Lord in what they do?' and 'Is the Lord in how they do it?' Because with the Lord how things are done is as important as doing the things. Is the Lord in the people individually there? And are their lives marked by this supreme thing? THE LORD IN THEM.

I have no doubt that you love the Lord. I am not raising any question about that. But, I do say again, we are involved in a great system which is a very complicated thing, and a great deal of it is not of the Lord. It is something that man has brought in. Man has put his hand upon the things of the Lord, and man has made things according to his own mind, and therefore a great deal has come in which is of man and not of the Lord. And when we say that, we are not only thinking of Christianity in general, we are thinking of ourselves. This is true of ourselves. We have all come into something called Christianity, and we have all taken on something of Christianity, and there may be a great deal that we have to get rid of, and come back to the simple fundamental reality. And the fundamental reality of all realities is THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. We have got to know that the Lord is with us, and that the Lord is with us in all that we do, that this did not originate in our mind. It did not originate in our will, it did not originate in our emotion. It did not come from our soul, this thing has come from the Lord in every detail like the tabernacle. Just like Jesus Christ, in every detail it has to come to us from God.

That ought to send us back to our knees - to go through all our work. It may be necessary for us, from time to time, to stand back and ask the Lord about all that we are doing. 'Is this out from God, or is it something out from ourselves? Is this way of doing things the mind of God, or is it our mind?
Is the Lord in this, or have we come into it? You see, that is a great deciding matter. Make no mistake about it! Everything that is only of man is going to perish. Sooner or later it will be shaken. Every man's work shall be tried in the fire, says the Word of God.

So the first thing, then, is a presentation and a seeing of the Lord Jesus. I wonder if I may refer to a personal experience in this matter. I do not want to talk about myself, but I want to help you by illustrating. For many years, I was what was called a minister in the denominations. I was a minister of what are called churches. I was a minister of two denominations at the same time. So I had the big religious buildings. And I wore a clerical collar and attire, and I was in that whole system of organized Christianity. I had a big pulpit. And I preached sermons, and I was paid to do it. Well, I was very earnest. I really believed that I belonged to the Lord. My heart was reaching out to the Lord.

But, the time came, when the Lord showed me Jesus Christ. He began to reveal His Son in me. You see, I knew the Bible. I was teaching the Bible everywhere. When I went to a big church in the north of London, they had no Bible teaching meeting. They had only a very small prayer meeting. But I decided that we would have, what we called, a Bible school. So I got a big blackboard made, a blackboard as big as this whole platform. I decided that I would give Bible lectures. So I started going right through the Bible. I went from Genesis to Revelation. The result was that that place was crowded with people for the Bible lecture. I say that to show you that I did know something about the Bible.

The day came when I saw the Lord Jesus, and all these other things were like nonsense. All this church business was like little children playing at going to church. All this dressing up in clerical clothes, oh, how silly it was! I really had not seen the Bible. I had it all in my head, but really the Bible was a closed book. When the Lord showed me His Son, all these other things went. It was like nonsense to me, I saw that the Lord Jesus is the Church, not these things. I saw that the Lord Jesus is everything in the Bible. The Bible is not a book, the Bible is Christ. I saw the Bible in Genesis, I mean, I saw Christ in Genesis. All through the Bible I saw Christ. It made everything else so foolish. It simply turned me inside out and upside down. All those other things had to be left behind. I saw the Lord Jesus. I do not mean I saw Him with these natural eyes. But what Paul meant when he said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." That is what happened in my case.

And a new thing began from that time. A new ministry began, a new work of God began. And I am here today on the other side of the world because of that. I have come to you not as a Bible teacher, but to speak to you of what I have seen of the Lord Jesus, and to say to you that the fundamental thing is seeing Jesus. Of course, that is not something that happened years ago. It only began to happen forty years ago, and it is still going on today. If I am faithful to the Lord, it will go on to the end of my life. It is a continuously growing seeing of the Lord. You see, that is where it began in the Old Testament, and that is where it began in the New Testament. We have to come back from all our things to the Lord.

Now after the pattern was shown, both in the case of Israel in the tabernacle, and in the case of the Lord Jesus to the apostles, the next thing was to instruct the people concerning the pattern. So the people were told about it. It is quite clear that all the people were gathered and told about this pattern. They were all involved in this. They had to do the making of all things. They had to provide the gold, and the silver, and everything else. So, although it is not said in the Bible, it is quite evident that Moses called all the people together. And he said, 'Now the Lord has shown us a great pattern.' And then he would have begun to explain to them all the detail. He would say, 'Now there are things to be of gold, and there are other things to be of silver, and then there are the various fabrics that are
needed, and the different colors of the different fabrics.' And so he would go through the whole pattern. He would say, 'Now this is what the Lord has commanded, and all you people are involved in this.' He instructed them concerning the pattern.

Now the Lord Jesus came from heaven as the Tabernacle. "HE TABERNACLED AMONG US," said John. He is the full revelation of God's mind. And then the Lord Jesus began to instruct His disciples concerning Himself, by word and by deed, He was instructing them concerning Himself. As they watched Him, and listened to Him, they were really coming to the knowledge of God's mind for them. So we have our New Testament, and the New Testament is the embodiment of all things concerning Christ, with one object only in view. All these many details about the Lord Jesus relate to only one thing. It will take you a long time to count up all the details of the tabernacle. It will take us all eternity to sum up all the things concerning Christ. But in the New Testament we have a great many things concerning the Lord Jesus. But in the great many things is only one thing. And that thing is the Presence of the Lord. You see, it is a comprehensive thing; it is a detailed thing. The Presence of the Lord relates to that little detail. I could show you that from the New Testament. If things were not done according to the mind of the Lord in the New Testament, everything went wrong. The Lord only went on with them when everything was according to Christ.

So the second thing is for us to be instructed concerning Christ. There is a little fragment in the New Testament, which to me is a very important and significant one; the apostle is writing concerning things which were wrong. He just used this phrase 'You have not so learned Christ!' That is not the way in which you learn Christ; that is not the learning of Christ. See, how important that is? It is as though the apostle was saying, everything must come from your having learned Christ. These things have come from men, from yourselves. In all things we must learn Christ.

Now the third thing. We spoke about the two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab. It says that these men were filled with the Spirit of God, for all manner of workmanship. So that the work, when it began and was carried on, was not just done in the wisdom of men. The Lord did not say, 'Now, here is the pattern, you get on with it. You take it into your hands and just work it out.' The Lord did not do that. He took these two men, and He filled them with the Spirit. And they became His instruments in showing how things have got to be done. My point for the moment is not the men, the Lord may take hold of men for this kind of thing. But my point is this, THAT IT HAS GOT TO BE DONE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. If men come into this as God's instruments, they must be men filled with the Holy Spirit. As we pointed out, this is how it began in the New Testament, 'Seek ye out seven men filled with the Holy Spirit.' That related to the carrying on of the work. It must all be done under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Dear friends, today I can see in much of the Lord's work, men who are in positions for which they are not anointed. They have been put into the position by men. Men have thought that they would be, well, good men to have in the work. Of course, they love the Lord, they are very devoted to the Lord, and they want to work for the Lord. So, the leaders take them and put them into positions. As you go on you will see they were never anointed of God to hold that position. Leadership in the work of God is anointed leadership. It has to be seen by all spiritual people that that man and that woman is anointed for the position which they hold. They are not there because they themselves have pushed themselves in, and they are not there because the other responsible people thought it would be a good thing to put them in. No, it is quite evident that the Lord had anointed them for that position, and therefore the Lord is with them. They may have many human imperfections, there may be things about them that you naturally do not like. You know how faulty they are naturally, but you have to say, the Lord is with that man and that woman. They are in the right position because the Lord has put them there.
The anointing is the great factor in all things concerning Christ for this reason, it is not individual anointing. There are not so many anointings as there are people. There is only one anointing, and that is on Christ as the Head. We only come into the anointing when we are in Christ, and when we are under the Headship of Christ. We are not under the anointing if we choose our own position, or if men put us into positions. The anointing is Christ's anointing, we have the anointing when we are entirely under His Headship. Well, of course, that is too big a matter for us to consider just now. But my point is here in the course of the formation of things according to Christ, the governing principle is the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The next thing that we saw was that all spiritual progress is governed by the Presence of the Lord. You can imagine a situation in the wilderness. I can imagine that all these people, when the tabernacle was taken down and packed up, and the trumpets were blown to march on, the people were full of enthusiasm - 'Now we are going on to the promised land, now we shall soon be in the promised land.'

So they were all full of interest about this going on business. And then the cloud over them stopped, and the Lord told them to unpack the tabernacle, and to set up the tabernacle. We are going to stay here for a while, and perhaps the people said, 'Oh, why have we got to stop and wait and lose time, we want to get there, why stop here and wait? How long are we going to stay here?' And if the cloud remained many days, as it did, they could have said, 'Oh, why are we losing all this time? Why are we not getting on with the business?' And why was it? You see, the Lord wanted them not to be occupied with the journey alone, but with Himself. He wanted them to move as they were occupied with Him, and so when they had some time of being occupied with the Lord, the Lord said, 'Now, we will go on.' He did not say so, but He meant, We will stop again later on. Now the Lord does that in different ways. We get hold of things and we want to go on with things. We get full of our own energy in the things of God and we say, 'Now let's get things done.' And we go on like that. Sometimes the Lord says, 'Stop a bit.' He may bring us up short by something that happens, some kind of adversity, or suffering. Something happens and we know the Lord has said, 'Stop, you are too busy to listen to Me, you are too occupied with My things to be occupied with Me personally.' And so we must have a time of being occupied with the Lord. My point is that all spiritual progress is by the Lord's Presence.

Now when Moses called the people together, all the willing hearted people brought what they had for this work. In that way, the Lord put responsibility upon the people. You see, the tabernacle did not fall out of heaven all completed, only the pattern came out from heaven. And then the Lord said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern." He put responsibility for this matter upon the shoulders of the people. They had to understand the pattern and take the responsibility for the fulfillment of it. When they did that, then the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

But there were some times when they departed from the pattern, we will look at just one of those times. Aaron had two sons, they were Aaron's two elder sons. Their names were Nadab and Abihu. Nadab and Abihu came after Aaron in the priesthood. Now Nadab and Abihu must have known all about the pattern. They must have known what God had said about every detail, and there was one thing amongst all the others that God had said. When the priests go in before the Lord with their censers, they are to take the fire from off the altar. Now where did that come from, that fire on the altar? I expect you have read the story. Here is the altar, here is the wood on the altar, everything is ready. Did the priest go and strike a match and light the wood? Or, whatever was the way in which they made fire, did they do it like that? Did they make the fire and take it to the altar? No, that altar fire came from heaven. When the altar was set up, and the wood was put on it, and the sacrifice was slain and laid on the wood, the fire of the Lord came down, and that fire never went out. They never
had to do that a second time. All the time that the tabernacle was in that place, the fire continued day
and night. No man had to make fire. Nadab and Abihu did not take the fire from the altar, but they
went and made some fire themselves. They got it from somewhere else by some other method, and
they put that fire in their censers, and went in before the Lord, and the Lord smote them [so] that they
died before the Lord. They offered strange fire. It was not the fire that had come from the Cross. It
was their own fire, the fire of the flesh, the fire of the natural man, the fire of their souls, and not of
the Spirit. The Lord says that is strange fire. It was not according to the pattern, and the Lord judged
that. I must leave you to interpret it.

You see what a big thing 'responsibility for Christ' is? THE LORD HAS PUT THE
RESPONSIBILITY ON US. He says, 'If you make all things according to the pattern, I am with you.
You will have blessings; I will go on with you. If you begin to introduce things that are not according
to the pattern, but of man, that will bring spiritual death.' May the Lord give us spiritual
understanding.
Meeting 16 - "I Will Not Offer Unto the Lord That Which Cost Me Nothing"

Sixteenth Meeting
(February 11, 1964 P.M.)

Read: I Chronicles 21:1,7-30.

I think that you will probably all know that this threshing floor of Ornan became the site of the great temple. It was the place where the great temple built by Solomon was constructed. And this setting up of the altar there marks the movement of the house of God from Gibeon to Jerusalem. It is very impressive that the house of God was built upon a threshing floor. We all know what a threshing floor is. It is the place where the rod is brought heavily to bear upon the wheat, the place where the wheat is separated from the mere husks. And that is exactly what happened in a spiritual way in this threshing floor. It was the place where sin was judged. The first thing about the house of God is, that it is built upon the ground of the judgment of sin. David had already said, "I have sinned greatly, and done very foolishly." His sin was terribly judged by God. And the foundation of the house of God was where sin was judged. We know that is true in the New Testament.

Before you have the Church, you have the Cross. Before there can be any house of God, there must be the threshing floor where sin is judged. It is the place where all pride is abased. This sin of David was a sin of pride. When Satan moved him to number Israel, the idea was that David might be able to boast of the greatness of Israel. Even Joab, who was a very carnal man, warned David that he was doing wrong. He said to David, Israel is a very great people, you need not bother about counting them. It was just pride that prompted this. To be able to say, you see how many people we have got. See what a wonderful people we are. See how many converts we have got. The Word says, "And the Lord was displeased with this thing." And that threshing floor was the place where all pride was brought down to the dust, the place of confession of sin, and the judgment of sin, and then forgiveness of sin. The place where judgment and mercy met together. That is the foundation of the house of the Lord. Before the altar could be set up publicly, it had to be in the very experience of David himself. That altar had struck into the heart of David like a sword. THE CROSS HAD DONE A DEEP WORK IN DAVID, BEFORE DAVID COULD SET UP THE ALTAR PUBLICLY.

These are abiding principles of the house of God. But in this brief word in II Samuel twenty-four, I want to come to that verse twenty-four. "Neither will I offer unto the Lord that which cost me nothing." To have a part in the house of God is a very costly thing. There is nothing cheap and easy about this. No, it is a very costly thing to come into the house of God. First of all, it cost God everything in giving His only begotten Son. It cost that Son everything in emptying Himself of all the fullness and glory of Heaven. The sin of man is a very costly thing. We cannot come into the good of that in the house of God without recognizing that it is a costly thing to come into God's house. A house of God is the place of fellowship. A house of God is the fellowship of the people of God. But fellowship is a costly thing. Surely you are learning that lesson as you go on. The fellowship of God's people is not a cheap and easy thing. Everything to do with that fellowship costs us something.

If that fellowship is disturbed between two people in the house of God, it is not an easy thing for one
to go and confess that they are wrong, not an easy thing to apologize for doing that harm. It is not easy to humble ourselves before one another, we will do anything rather than humble ourselves to another brother or sister. No, fellowship is a costly thing. It costs humiliation and confession. What is true between two is often true between a number. If we are going to keep the fellowship in the house of God, it's got to cost us something to do that. There is a price attached to it. And if we are not prepared to pay the price of fellowship, it is because we hold fellowship cheaply. You see, if a thing to us is of little value, we are not prepared to pay very much for it. If we really do love the house of God, that is, the fellowship of the Lord's people, we will be prepared to pay any price to keep that fellowship. A thing which is of value to us is a thing for which we will pay the price. It is the same in our service to the Lord.

Here we are gathered this evening for prayer. Well, you know, sometimes in our gatherings for prayer, some people can pray without it costing them very much; it is very easy for some people to pray. It is like turning on the tap, and it just comes without any effort. But for some people it is very costly to pray. If some people pray, it is not at all easy for them. It is something that is just wrung out of their hearts. It is when prayer costs us something that it is really of value.

The same is true of ministry. Now, all here tonight are not ministers of the Word. But there are those people who just love to get on the platform and talk. They are never more happy than when they are in public speaking. And they can do it so easily. Now that which really is of value costs something. The Cross, the Altar, has got to be right at the heart of our praying. It has got to be right at the heart of our ministry. So that we cannot minister unless the Lord does it through us. We would rather run far away from the platform than speak on it unless the Lord is going to do it. Well, I think you see the point. 'I will not offer unto the Lord that which costs me nothing.'

How much does the house of God really mean to us? How much does prayer really mean to us? How much does the fellowship of the Lord's people mean to us? Do we value it very highly? Then we will be prepared to pay a big price for it. If we do not value all this, and what the Lord has done for us, we will just throw it over so easily. Now this story of David has many lessons for us. Read it again, and think as you read. But always remember this one thing: THAT WHICH IS OF VALUE, WE ARE PREPARED TO PAY FOR; AND WHAT WE VALUE MOST, WE WILL PAY MOST FOR!
Meeting 17 - The Parable of the Two Seeds

Seventeenth Meeting
(February 13, 1964 P.M.)


I feel that the Lord has very definitely led me back to these parables of the Kingdom. Therefore, I can only give you what the Lord has told me to say. These seven parables in Matthew thirteen are a prophecy. The Lord Jesus was foretelling things that would happen during this dispensation from the time of His first coming to His coming again. You will notice that the last of these parables ends with THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE. The Lord knew that in this dispensation up to His coming again, certain conditions and situations would come about. These conditions which would come about would greatly perplex and distress His servants. Therefore, by means of these parables, He did two things.

Firstly, He made it very clear that these things would happen. He provided a Word which perfectly described what would arise in this dispensation. In these seven parables, we have a perfect description of the things which have really come about in this age.

Then He did the second thing. He showed that, however difficult it would be for His servants to understand, all these things would be within the compass of the Sovereign Rule of God. When He said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto," He meant that all these things which would happen, which would be so discouraging and perplexing, would be within the realm of the Sovereign Rule of Heaven. The name, the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God, simply means the Sovereign Rule of God or of Heaven. It is within that Sovereign Rule that all these things are permitted. We do not understand them. They give us a lot of trouble. They are very discouraging, but they are all under the Sovereign Rule of Heaven. You notice that is how it comes out at the end of every parable. It is the end which matters. It is the end of every parable that we have to take note of. Certain very difficult things would come about, but in the end, GOD WINS. God has the end in His hands. This is the only way in which to read these parables. Sometimes you read a book. It begins very good, and then trouble arises. Everything seems to go wrong. And some people, when the trouble begins, turn over to the end of the book and see how it ends. And, of course, it always ends all right. Well, that is how it is with these parables. Things began very well, soon trouble arises. But when you look at the end of the story, it is all right.

We were thinking the other day of the parable of the sower. The sower went forth to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side. Well, when he started, it was all right. Things have gone wrong. Some seeds fell by the way side, some seeds fell on the rocky soil, some seeds fell among thorns. All three of those seem to be wasted. That is very discouraging. To the workers who go out with the seed, it is very discouraging to see how much of it seems to be wasted. A lot of people do not seem to bear very much fruit, if any at all. But the end of the parable, some fell ON GOOD GROUND, bringing forth an hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold. It is the end which matters. All is not in vain at the end. At the end everything is not wasted. However people may react, Heaven Rules. It is all within the compass of the Sovereign Rule of Heaven.

Now we come to this second parable, the parable of the two seeds. Of course, the disciples called it the parable of the darnel. That is the word which is in the original, it is not tares but darnel. We shall
see that in a minute. They called it the parable of the darnel. I call it the parable of the two seeds.

Now let us break up this parable in order to get to its message. There are eight parts to this parable, we can pass over them very quickly and come to the message at the end. First of all, there is the field, and here we must get our mentality quite clear. This thing has been very much misunderstood because men have thought that this field was the Church, and that the two kinds of seed were in the Church. That is not the teaching of the parable. The field is the same field as the sower went to sow. And the Lord Jesus said, "The field is the world." No, we are not dealing with the Church now, we are dealing with the world. It is important to recognize that for this reason. This field or this world is the rightful property of the Son of Man. He that sows the seeds, it says, is the Son of Man, and the field belongs to Him by right. It is His property. This world really belongs to the Lord Jesus, and this world is intended to be occupied by His people. The seed that He sows are the children of the Kingdom. And this world which belongs to Him is intended to be inhabited by the children of the Kingdom. It is very important for us to recognize that. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." When we go out to the Lord's work, and come into any place, we have the right to say, this place by right belongs to the Lord Jesus, and we put our feet down there and claim that for the sovereign rights of the Lord Jesus. The field is the world and it by right belongs to the Lord Jesus. The good seed, it says, is the children of the Kingdom which He sows in the world. What the Lord Jesus is doing through this dispensation is sowing children of the Kingdom in this world. We are here in this world as children of His Kingdom to claim His rights in this world.

Then the next thing is the enemy. He comes to sow his bad seed. Jesus says, 'The enemy is the devil.' You notice this devil, this enemy, comes into what does not belong to him. Satan is a trespasser in this world. He is an invader. The world does not belong to him by right. He has come into it as an enemy. It is enemy occupation. He comes to sow his seeds and to sow his seed alongside of the seed which the Son of Man sows. This one hates the Son of Man. Jesus calls him an enemy, and He gives him the name 'the devil', which means, 'the adversary,' the one who just hates this Son of Man, and is determined, as far as he can, to spoil the work of the Son of Man. And so he comes into the field of the world and sows his own seed alongside the good seed.

Now you have got to note a very special thing here. The Lord Jesus is not here saying that all the unsaved people in this world are the children of the devil. There is truth in that. The Apostle John says, "The whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). There is a sense in which it is true that all unsaved people are in the power of the devil. But that is not what the Lord Jesus is teaching here. He is not here teaching especially that all unsaved and all unevangelized people in this world are children of the devil. If He were teaching that, there is not much point in the parable. Everybody knows that there are children of God, and that there are other children in this world. There are children of the Kingdom and there are those who are not children of the Kingdom. We all know that. We know that the other children are alongside of us every day. We do not need a parable to tell us that. We do not need the Lord Jesus to especially teach us that, we know that.

But you see, here is the point. These children of the devil, of whom the Lord is speaking are a special kind. Jesus calls them darnel. Now, darnel in the east is something that is almost exactly like wheat. It is so much like the true wheat that it is not until it is full grown that you see the difference. This darnel is something that is false. It is something that is an imitation. It is something that is a lie. It is something that pretends to be like the children of the Kingdom but is not.

The enemy comes and sows something that looks very much like the true thing but it is false. It is something that is the devil's lie. This kind of people talk the same kind of language as the children of the Kingdom. They can use the Scriptures. They can use the same phraseology. They can talk about
Jesus. They can talk about the Scripture. They can talk about the death of Jesus. But they mean something different.

The Jesus of whom they talk is not God incarnate. They talk about Jesus, but they do not believe in the deity of Christ. They can talk about the Bible, but they do not believe the Divine inspiration of the Word of God. They can talk about the death or crucifixion of Jesus, but they just mean something quite heroic like other men's death. They take out of the death of Christ all the Divine meaning of atoning sacrifice. And in many other ways these children of the devil speak the language but they have not the voice. They are imitation Christians. They have not been born of God. They are not the fruit of a definite work of the Spirit. And the devil brings them alongside of the children of the Kingdom in order to make confusion, to make the children of the Kingdom look something different. It is just this work of mixture amongst people. Very often you cannot on the surface see the difference. So the servants of the householder went to Him and said, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Whence then had it darnel?' And the Lord said, 'An enemy has done this thing.'

Remember, this is one of the works of the devil, to imitate Christianity. To set up alongside of the truth something that is false.

Then the servants said, 'Shall we go out and root up these darnel?' The Lord said, 'No. If you do try to do that, you may not be able to discriminate between the true and the false, and you will be pulling up some of the true as well. Let both grow together unto the harvest.' This is the Lord's governing principle in this dispensation. Oh, there is a lot of meaning in this. Our business is not to be always trying to expose what is wrong. Many servants of the Lord had been caught in doing this. They are spending their lives and their energies in trying to track down something that they think is false and to root it out. This world is full of suspicion, suspicion among the people of God. It is almost impossible to go anywhere without somebody saying, 'Now what is wrong with this man? We must find out where he is not sound in doctrine. We must not trust him until we have examined him.' This world is full of that sort of thing, all the time trying to find some error somewhere, to find out the imperfection of this one and that one. And they are using their own judgment about this. The result is, that many who are true children of God are being rooted up by these people. Many a true servant of God has been simply rooted up and thrown away by this kind of suspicion. The Lord Jesus has said very emphatically, do not do that, that is not your business, just let both grow together, and as things grow, you will be able to recognize what they are. The evil will show itself more and more as time goes on, you will be able to recognize that that is not of the Lord. By the process of development it will show its true nature. In the course of time and in the end it will be manifested that that thing is of the devil; it is against the Lord.

But on the other side, and this is the real message of the parable, that which is truly of the Lord has got to grow and grow and grow more like the Lord. It is, of course, true that the Church is in the world, and what is true of the world can be true of the Church. There can be those who are not truly born-again children of God. They mix with the Lord's people. They profess to believe the things that are in the Word of God. My point is that there are a lot of people mixing with the true children of God who are not really born-again. They are not truly children of the Kingdom. The Lord Jesus wants us to understand that the true children of the Kingdom will grow more and more like the Lord Himself. The others will not grow like the Lord. They will just be false professors.

Now the message of the parable is this, when the Lord comes or at the end of the age, those who are His will be perfectly clearly known as His. There will be no mistake in the children of the Kingdom. You will know who are the children of the Kingdom. There will be no doubt about it. They have been growing more and more like the Lord. The true divine nature which He had put into them at the beginning is showing itself more and more. This process of intensification is the law of the Kingdom.
The parable raises this big question for us all, 'Am I growing more and more like my Lord? Is there more and more of Christ in me as time goes on?' The great consummation of the age is the manifestation of the sons of God. The word is, 'When He shall be manifested, then we shall be manifested with Him.' In the end, the sons of the Kingdom will be clearly identified, but that is a thing which has got to go on every day. See, these two seeds were growing every day, and as they grew, it was possible to see which was which.

Let me say to the young people here, begin by making very sure that you are a truly born-again child of God, that you are a true child of the Kingdom, that you are not just where you are because other people have said you ought to be there. But it is because of a very real work which God has done in your own heart. And that being your beginning, make sure that you are growing and growing and growing more like your Lord every day. So that those who look on are able to say, there is no doubt about that man or that woman, that boy or that girl. They are the true and genuine things. There is no falsehood about them, there is no hypocrisy about them. They are not pretending to be Christians; they are the real thing. In the end, it will be manifested to all the world who are the sons of God!

One other thing to notice here. What happens at the end? Well, the Lord here says that it is that which is of the devil, which is to first be destroyed. It is all that which the devil has done, which the devil has planted, which will go to judgment first. He says, 'First gather the darnel into bundles and burn it.' All that is false, all that is not true, is going to burn in the judgment. And then the Lord says, 'Gather the wheat into My barn.' It is a long story of the evil work of the enemy. It created great difficulties for us, but in the end the Lord wins. In the end the Lord has the true thing, and all the other has gone. It is the end that matters.

Now, I do not know why the Lord made me say this. I said to the Lord, 'Now if I say this to that company of people, they will all think that I am teaching them like little children. They have got so much teaching. They know so much of the deeper things. If I go right back to this picture book of parables, they will think that I am just regarding them as a kindergarten.' But the Lord said, 'You say what I tell you. We have got to get right back behind all this Christianity. We have got to get right down to [the] foundation. We have got to make sure that everybody knows exactly where they are. The great judgment fires are coming. We are working for a future day, the day when everything will be manifested for what it is, and we must be very faithful, and leave nothing to chance. We must not assume that the people who think they are the Lord's people are really the Lord's people. We must do everything that we can to remove falsehood. The devil has put very much falsehood into Christianity. He has brought very much that is a lie alongside of the truth, and we must be very faithful to see that people know exactly what they are and where they are before God.'

So you must forgive me for being simple in this way, I can only say what the Lord tells me to say. Well, I think that most of you will agree that this is the sort of thing that has to be done. If you are a true child of God, you will not mind being talked to like this. Well, if you are not a true child of God, take a word of warning, nothing that is false or a lie is going to get into the Kingdom. Only that which is the truth. So, may we all be those who are children of the Kingdom, and are growing day by day like Him Who planted us.
Meeting 18 - An Impossible Situation was Turned into a Glorious Possibility by the Presence of the Lord Jesus

Eighteenth Meeting
(February 14, 1964 P.M.)

Well, it is very good to be here tonight, and we want to thank our dear friends for inviting us. And what we have just listened to forms a very good background to what I have to say to you.

In thinking about this feast today, and about a little word that I might say to you, there came to my mind three feasts in the New Testament; and every one of them had an unnaturally impossible background. It was an impossible situation naturally in every case. BUT THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF EACH OF THOSE THREE FEASTS WAS THE LORD JESUS. And because He was at the center, what was impossible was made possible. The situation was changed from one of absolute impossibility to one of actuality. I think you are wondering what feasts I am referring to.

Well, one was the marriage at Cana in Galilee. All of you remember that story. There was a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. Jesus and His disciples were invited. When they got to about the middle of the feast, all the wine failed. I do not know which of all these many dishes is the most important. I do not know which one, if it were to fail would let the whole feast die, and make our friends who provided it feel very embarrassed. But in that marriage feast at Cana, the wine was the most important thing, and the wine failed. The most important thing of the feast failed. And the mother of Jesus, full of consternation, turned to Him and said, "They have no wine." Well, you remember the rest of the story. That was a naturally impossible situation. Nothing could be done. No one could do anything about it. There it was; all the wine had gone, and the feast was not halfway over.

But Jesus was at the center. That made all the difference. He commanded that they fill the big waterpots with water. Now, those waterpots were not filled with water to drink; they were not there for that purpose. The water had been used up, but not by drinking. It had all been used up in washing the feet of the guests. They were empty. They were quite big vessels. Jesus said, "Fill the waterpots with water." The servants would have been very surprised at this. They would have said, 'We used all the water for washing the feet. Why wash their feet again?' But the mother of Jesus said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." So, they filled the waterpots with water, wondering what this meant and what was going to happen; perhaps wondering if they had to wash all the people's feet a second time. Well, they filled all the pots with water, and you know what happened. Jesus, with His heart lifted to His Father, probably lifted His hand over those waterpots, and the water immediately turned to wine. An impossible situation was turned into a glorious possibility by the Presence of the Lord Jesus. It was so remarkable that the master of the feast said, "The best wine has been kept to the last." It is usually like that when Jesus does anything. We have to say, 'Well, this is better than anything before.'

We leave that one and go to the next feast. It is a feast of a different kind. There was a little man, a little man in every way. Not only in physical stature, but in every other way he was a little man. He was a little man morally and spiritually. Of course, you all know his name. The story is this: When
the Romans came and took possession of Palestine, they imposed taxes upon the people. All the people had to pay taxes to Caesar. But there was one difficulty. It is the same difficulty as we have here tonight. It was the language difficulty. The Romans could not speak the Jew's language. What were they to do? The only thing to do was to get some Jews to work for them; some Jews to go and collect these taxes. Now that was something that was a very very low-down sort of thing to do. Everybody despises people who do that sort of thing. People who not only work for an enemy in occupation, but those who take advantage of the opportunity to get a lot for themselves as well. And these men who lent themselves to that kind of thing not only exacted the tax for the Romans, but they put something extra on for themselves, and they made themselves very rich in that way. Therefore, they were the most despised people. They were regarded as the low-down moral people.

Now the little man of whom we are speaking was one of them. He was a little man in every way. You remember the story of Zacchaeus. Great crowds of people were coming and Jesus was with them. Everybody had heard of the wonderful things that Jesus was doing. So the little man thought he would like to see this Jesus. Here was a big crowd, and he, a little man, even by stretching his neck, he could not see Jesus. So he climbed up a tree, and to his surprise, Jesus came out of the crowd and looked up into the tree. And He said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for I must abide at your house today." Jesus went into his home, and Zacchaeus made a great feast, and called all his friends together. I expect that most of the people were like himself.

Zacchaeus was wonderfully saved that day. If you had asked the people before then, if Zacchaeus could ever become a true Christian, they would say: 'Impossible.' Why? 'Because that little man worships money. That little man thinks everything is a personal advantage. He will do any unkind thing to get something for himself.' You tell me that that man could be saved; that man could be so changed; that he will say, 'What I have got, I give; everything that I have taken, I will restore.' That was a wonderful feast. When Zacchaeus gave his testimony before all his old friends, it was another impossible situation naturally. But because Jesus was there, the impossible became real.

Now we pass on to our third feast. And if the other two were impossible, this was very much more impossible. We are going to Bethany, the little town of Bethany. There was a lovely home in Bethany with two sisters and a brother, and they loved one another very deeply, and Jesus used to love to go to that home. If ever He could get away from the crowd and from the city, you would find Him at Bethany. But now Jesus is a long way up country, and something quite serious is happening in that little home. The dear brother, Lazarus, is very sick; so sick that it is quite clear he is going to die. I think they were people who were not poor. What we read of that home and those sisters and that brother would say that they did have some means. Therefore, I think that we can conclude that they got the doctor. They paid for all the help that they could get to get that brother well. But nothing made any difference. The brother was sinking to death. And they thought of Jesus, and they sent a messenger swiftly to Jesus. The message he carried was: "He whom Thou lovest is sick."

Jesus received the message. And then the writer of the story says, Now Jesus loved Mary, and Martha, and their brother Lazarus, and yet He did not then respond to their appeal. It says, He stayed where He was for two days, and then He said, 'Let us go, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, our friend Lazarus is dead, but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep.' I think you know the rest of the story. Yes, Lazarus died. Lazarus was put in his grave clothes and put in the tomb. And four days in that country was quite serious. Jesus came. Well, to make the story short, Jesus went out to that tomb. He said, 'Take away the stone from the mouth of the tomb.' They said, 'Lord, Lord, by this time he is decomposed.' Jesus said, 'Did not I say to you, that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?' Then they took away the stone. And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead, and had been dead for four days, came forth. Then the next
chapter tells us they made Jesus a feast. Lazarus sat at the table and Mary sat at the table and Martha, as always, served, BUT THE FEAST WAS FOR JESUS. The feast was made in thanksgiving for the One Who had changed an impossible situation into something so glorious.

Now two things are related to all three of the feasts: One thing was that in every case the situation was naturally impossible. The other thing was that Jesus took hold of the impossibility and turned it upside-down. I think that this feast tonight contains all of those three feasts. Most of us here know something about the disappointments of this life and this world. We tried to find our satisfaction in the wine of this world, and that wine failed us; it let us down. We tried to find our satisfaction in these broken systems, and they failed us. Like the wine in Cana, we were disappointed with this world, and we said, 'This life is impossible.' Then Jesus came in and changed the whole situation for us. We are all enjoying the new wine of the Kingdom tonight. That is the eternal life which Jesus gives. And we all know something about the impossibility of this natural life.

We may think badly of little Zacchaeus, but we are a poor lot ourselves. We are no better than he. We would do just as mean a thing as he. Naturally we are quite impossible people. And if it had been said that we would be entirely changed into a new creation, people would have said, 'No, I do not think so.' But Jesus has done it. He has changed these Zacchaeuses. And we were all dead in trespasses and sins. We were all dead to God. We were as dead as Lazarus. BUT THE LORD JESUS HAS COME INTO OUR LIVES, AND WONDERFULLY RAISED US FROM THE DEAD, AND MADE US TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. All these things are in this feast here. Therefore, this feast is a wonderful testimony to the glory of the Lord Jesus in our history. Our brother John has told us a little of the impossibility of the situation which the Lord changed. And we all have, I hope I can say all of us here have, a testimony to the wonder-working power of our Lord Jesus. So it is good to have a feast when it is like that. It is not just a social occasion, it is a testimony to the glory of our Lord Jesus.
I want you to read with me two or three short passages of the Word of God:

"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Holy Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself - but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:12,13).

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:16-19).

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?' And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.' And he said unto them, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.' Then said Paul, 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.' And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-6).

Now what I want from these verses are just two fragments, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." And the other one is this: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" These Scriptures, which we have just read, present to us a matter about which the apostles were very particular. And what was it that the apostles demanded as the proof of this matter? It was that these people had definitely received the Holy Spirit. I expect some of you may say, 'Well, how do we know if and when we have received the Holy Spirit?' Now there are quite a number of things that are the proofs that we have received the Holy Spirit. And I am just going to choose several of the most normal things in this connection.

The first thing is that we have recognized and acknowledged the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ over our life. You notice that when the apostles preached, they always began their preaching by setting forth Jesus Christ as Lord. The first thing that they said about Jesus was not "He is Savior," but the first thing that they said about Him was "He is Lord." "God has made this Jesus Whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ." They said, we preach Jesus Christ as Lord. It was the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ that came first in their preaching.

Now this coming of the Holy Spirit was only the earthly side of what had taken place in heaven. Jesus had been received up into glory, and in glory God made Him Lord: God had said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand." In heaven, Jesus Christ was recognized as Lord. All the angels of heaven worship Him as Lord. The Father God called Jesus, "Lord." This is what happened in heaven. When
that happened in heaven, the Holy Spirit came right down from heaven to this earth, and He came
down to make what was in heaven true here on this earth. He came to make earth and heaven agree
on this one thing, "Jesus is Lord." The first proof that you and I have the Holy Spirit is that Jesus
Christ is absolute Lord in our life. We bow to the Lord Jesus and we say, "Lord." And we mean from
that time Jesus is Lord of all things in and over our lives.

When Jesus is Lord, there is always one thing that the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit brings into
the heart the glory of the Lord Jesus. Jesus was glorified in heaven, because Jesus was Lord there.
When Jesus becomes Lord in our lives, some of that heavenly glory comes into our lives. You notice
how the people in the New Testament were filled with joy because they had received the Holy Spirit.
And that joy was the expression of the glory of Jesus. That is why when we truly make Jesus Lord,
we feel so happy, so joyful. We cannot keep it to ourselves. We want everybody to know about it.
The Holy Spirit has brought the glory of the Lord Jesus into our lives. That is the first way in which
you can tell whether you have received the Holy Spirit. Have you got something of the glory of Jesus
in your heart?

You know that Christianity is the only true singing religion in the world. Some other religions make
some very funny noises. Perhaps they think it is singing. But it is a miserable noise. It is just an awful
noise that they make. We Christians sing, and why do we sing? Because the Holy Spirit makes us
sing. You notice what a good time Christians have when they are singing about the Lord Jesus. Well,
that is the first evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit.

Another thing, which is the proof that we have received the Holy Spirit, is the complete change that
is made in our lives. Now you have only to look in your New Testament to see how true this is. Look
at the disciples before the day of Pentecost. Look at them up to the time that Jesus was crucified.
Now we cannot say very much that is good about them up to that time. Those disciples up to the time
of Pentecost were defeated disciples. When Jesus was taken by the soldiers, they all ran away from
Him. Not one of them stayed with Him. They were so afraid. And Peter, poor Peter, went down
lower than all of them. Three times, Peter very strongly denied that he knew Who Jesus was, he said,
"I know not the Man." Just think of Peter talking like that. That wonderfully self-confident Peter
behaving like that, seeking to save his own life by denying his Lord. Yes, they were all defeated men
when it came to the Cross.

Now look at them on the day of Pentecost, and from that time onward, they are men in absolute
victory. Let the same rulers that crucify Jesus take these men prisoner, and threaten to put them to
death. And what do these men do now? Do they run away? Do they say, 'We do not know Jesus?'
Oh, no, they are very different men. They are just full of courage. They stand up to the rulers. And it
says, "They counted it joy to suffer shame for Christ's Name." Before they received the Holy Spirit,
they were men who were very much afraid, very fearful indeed. You know, we are told that after
Jesus rose from the dead, these disciples were all in the room and they had bolted the door for fear of
the Jews. If they heard some footsteps coming along the road, all their faces went white, and they
began to tremble, 'Are they coming for us now?' Men full of fear. Now look at them, after they have
received the Holy Spirit. No white faces now. No trembling with fear now. Fear has given way to a
wonderful courage. They can stand up to anybody.

Then look again at them after Jesus was crucified. It says about two of them who were walking to a
village called Emmaus, that they walked and were sad. They were very sad and unhappy men. And I
think that was true of all the disciples at that time. They thought that they had lost everything. Yes,
they were very sad men.
Now look at them when they had received the Holy Spirit. It says they were full of joy and of the Holy Spirit. Rejoicing had taken the place of the sadness. How weak they were before that. They could not stand up to even a little servant maid. You remember the story? Jesus is being tried, and Peter is in the hall near by, and he is warming his hands. You know, you always feel cold when you are afraid; and Peter was feeling very cold, because he was very afraid. And there came a little maid - just a little girl, a serving girl. And she said to him, "You are one of His disciples." And he was afraid of a little girl. He said, "I do not know the Man." Yes, he was afraid of a little girl. How weak they were. Now after Pentecost, you can bring all the girls and all the men in the world, and you can let them say all they like to Peter and the other disciples, for now they are no longer weak, but they are strong.

Then there was another thing. Before the day of Pentecost, the Bible was a closed book to them. They knew it as a book. They had read Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, but they did not understand it. They did not understand what it was all about. They knew it as a book, but to them it was a closed book. Now look at them on the day of Pentecost. Why, they had a new Bible! I would like for you to read carefully Peter's address to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. See how much of the Old Testament he quotes. See how he explains the Old Testament. Now his eyes are opened, and he sees Jesus everywhere in the Old Testament. Yes, they had a new Bible. The Bible was no longer closed, it is an open book. All these things were marks of their receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made defeated men into men of victory. The Holy Spirit made fearful men into men of courage. The Holy Spirit made sad men into rejoicing men. The Holy Spirit made weak men into strong men. And the Holy Spirit gave them all a new Bible. This is the proof that they had received the Holy Spirit. Now I am sure you will agree with me that the Holy Spirit is very important.

These are the true characteristics of a Christian life. I am not going to keep you any longer tonight. Perhaps at some other time we will have another talk, and I will go on from this point, showing something more of the meaning of the Holy Spirit, what the Holy Spirit means to us in our lives. But for tonight this is the point: The absolute necessity of our receiving the Holy Spirit. And be sure that we have received the Holy Spirit. And we can test this matter by these things that I have mentioned. We can test it and prove it because to us Jesus is Lord of all. He is absolute Lord of our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that does that. If that is true of us, then we have the Holy Spirit. And these other things that I have mentioned must also be true.

We can prove it by this: 'Have you received the Holy Spirit?' Or to put it in Paul's way, 'When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit? Have you really got the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?' And you say, 'How do I know?' Well, I have told you just a few of the things which can make you know whether or not you have received the Holy Spirit. Of course, we often put it in another way. We ask people if they have received the Lord Jesus. And we speak about having the Lord Jesus in our hearts, but it is just the same thing. Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). And the Holy Spirit and Jesus are one. The Holy Spirit has come to make Jesus live in us. It is the same thing. But it is something that we must be very sure about.

Well, I will leave the question with you. You see, I am trying to be very faithful, and really to get right down to the foundation of the Christian life. I think that one of the greatest weaknesses in Christianity of our time is that we take too much for granted. That is why the apostles were so particular about this matter. They made it a personal matter. They made it a matter of supreme importance. They said, "When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?" THE ONLY TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS THE LIFE IN WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES JESUS LORD.

Well, that is my simple word to you this evening, but it is a very important word. I have come a long
way to speak to you, I may not be here very long, then I shall be gone and may never meet you again on this earth. But I want to be quite sure that when I speak to you, I am very faithful with you, that I leave you in no doubt as to the true nature of the Christian life - the life in which the Holy Spirit makes Jesus Christ Lord! Perhaps we shall say something about the going on of the Christian life, but this is how it must begin.
Meeting 20 - "This One Thing I Do"

Twentieth Meeting
(February 16, 1964 A.M.)

We are going to read some Scriptures in the Word of God:
"And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' And I answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said unto me, 'I Am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.' And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said unto me, 'Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.' And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus" (Acts 22:6-11).

"Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (II Cor. 1:8-10).

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (II Cor. 11:23-28).

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13,14).

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"; "This one thing I do." IN THOSE TWO SHORT WORDS, THE APOSTLE PAUL SETS THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF HIS LIFE. The beginning of his Christian life was when he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" When he wrote the Letter to the Philippians, he was at the end of his earthly journey. He was in prison in Rome waiting to be executed. Right at the end of his life, he was still saying, "This one thing I do." He began with, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He ended by saying, "This one thing I do." There were thirty years between the beginning and the ending of his Christian journey. And what a tremendous thirty years they were. All his traveling and all his labors, all his teaching and his preaching, and then, as we have read, all his sufferings. How very full his thirty years of Christian life were. And there was plenty in those thirty years to bring him to an end. Many of those sufferings might have brought him to an end. He might have despairsed long ago, he might have said, 'I cannot bear any more, everything
is too much for me, I must give it all up.' But he went right through to the end. And among his last words are these, "This one thing I do. I press on toward the mark of the prize of the of God."

Now, what we are concerned with this morning is just this, we must know the secret of being able to go right on to the end triumphantly. We may not have all the kinds of sufferings that the Apostle Paul had. But there will be enough difficulties in our Christian experience, and sometimes they will seem to be too big. And we shall wonder whether we can go on any longer, and perhaps we shall be tempted just to give up. What we want to know then is the secret of victory at the end. You know there are many Christians who do not go right through to the end. Perhaps you know some, and I know many, who have given up. They made what looked like a good beginning, they were full of promise. And then they left the Lord. They went away from the Savior. And there are very many in this world like that. They have begun but they have not gone through. Many, many Christians have gone away from the Lord. And many have gone away because they found the way too difficult.

So it is very important that we know how we are going to be able to continue unto the end. And the case of the Apostle Paul has something to teach us on this matter. Everything depends so much upon our BEGINNING. The end so often relates to the beginning. In the case of Paul, it was his beginning that kept him going right to the end. The Apostle Paul put his beginning into a very short sentence. He called it "the heavenly vision." When he was on trial before king Agrippa, he said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision!" And we have read what the heavenly vision was. The heavenly vision for him was the Lord Jesus. Paul had not decided to come into Christianity, to turn from one religion to another. Paul had not decided to accept certain teaching about Jesus Christ. It was not because some people had persuaded him to become a Christian. It was none of those things. And it was none of the many other things that call some people to become Christians.

Paul saw Jesus Christ. For him the beginning was not a religion or a teaching, it was a Person. Later on, he put it in this way. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15,16). He had a very personal encounter with Jesus Christ; it was very personal. Paul, at that time, or Saul of Tarsus as he was, was one of a crowd. We do not know how many were going with him to Damascus. But it is quite evident that there were a number of others with him. He says that they saw the light, but they did not hear the voice. He was the only one who met the Lord Jesus; it was very personal. Jesus knew his name. He said, "Saul, Saul." Jesus knew exactly where he was. Jesus knew where to find him. And Jesus knew exactly what he was doing. You see, Jesus knew all about this man. And He came down to him on very personal grounds. This beginning of his Christian life was something very personal between himself and the Lord. Let us look again at this beginning.

Oh, let me say again how important the beginning is. You know if you are putting up a building, and you want that building to last a long time, and to stand up against all the storms of wind and rain, and to carry all the heavy weight that is going to be put upon it, you must have a good foundation. Everything for the building depends upon the foundation. And so it is with the Christian life. Everything for our endurance is going to be a matter of our foundation. So we look at this foundation again. We have seen that it was something very personal between the man and the Lord. It must be like that with every one of us. We must be able to say, 'The Lord has met me personally, and I have met the Lord personally. This is not something that other people told me. This is not something that I read in a book. This is not something that was taught me in the Sunday school. This is not something that I heard the preachers preach about. This is something very personal between me and the Lord. If there was not another Christian in the world, I know where I stand. If I am the only Christian in the world, I am a Christian because I have met the Lord Himself. I know the Lord for myself.'

Let me tell you that this is a very important thing. Although I have not had all the experiences that
the Apostle Paul had, I have been in the work of the Lord many more years than Paul was in it. You know sometimes as we look at Christianity, our hearts sink. We see all the divisions, we see all the inconsistent Christians. We see so much in Christians and Christianity that is not the Lord. And we could easily give it all up and say, 'Well, we have made a mistake, we are on the wrong road!' What is it that keeps us going when there are all the false teachings and the false teachers? You notice that Paul included in his list of sufferings, false brethren. When there are many false brethren, oh, how easy it would be for us to wash our hands of the whole thing. Perhaps you may feel like that sometimes; you may look at other Christians, and you may be disappointed. And you may say, 'Well, I am sick of Christianity, this is not what I expected to find.' What is it that will keep us going? Only one thing, we know the Lord for ourselves personally. To us the Lord is very real. Our foundation is very strong. Our foundation is not a teaching, a religion, or a society. Our foundation is a Person. Do remember that as the very first thing and seek to have that as your foundation.

Then there was another thing about the beginning of Saul or Paul. You notice how he spoke to the Lord? Jesus said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Now I do not think that Saul knew what he was saying when he said the next sentence. We sometimes say things and we do not know what we are saying. The next thing that Saul of Tarsus said, he did not know what he was saying at that moment; he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And when Jesus said, "I Am Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 9:4,5) I wonder if Saul, just for a moment, said: 'Oh, I did not mean to call You Lord. I am persecuting Jesus of Nazareth. I had no intention of ever calling Him Lord.' But Saul did not do that. When he realized that he had called this terrible Jesus of Nazareth, Lord, he did not take it back. He did not say, 'I have made a mistake. Oh, I apologize for saying that.' He doubled it. And said, "What wilt Thou have me to do, Lord?" To call Jesus of Nazareth 'Lord' twice was a tremendous thing for this man.

If you had met Saul when he started out on that journey to Damascus, with authority from the chief priest to imprison all that followed Jesus of Nazareth; and as it says, "Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the people of this way" (Lit. "The Way"). If you had met him when he started on that journey and said to him, 'Saul, before you finish this journey, you will be calling Jesus of Nazareth, Lord.' What do you think Saul would have done? Well, he would have put you in prison right away. The last thing in all the world that ever this man intended to do was to call Jesus of Nazareth, "Lord." It did represent a tremendous surrender.

In that word, "Lord," there was the surrender of everything. That was his beginning. A complete and absolute surrender to Jesus as Lord. It was a tremendous thing for him. Notice, "What wilt Thou have me to do." Here was a young man who had always decided for himself what he would do. Here was a young man who had a very strong natural will. No one could stand against that will. If his parents had pleaded with him, he would not have listened to them. No matter who would have urged him to change his mind, he would have said, 'I will not, I am going to do this. It does not matter what anybody says, I will do this.' That is the kind of will that Saul of Tarsus had. And now, here he is saying, "What wilt Thou have me to do." That strong self-will was completely surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That was a very deep thing. You see, that is the kind of beginning that is going to see a man right through to the end. That was his beginning. He put everything over into the hands of Jesus Christ as his Lord. In effect he said, 'It is no longer my will, but Your will. It is no longer my way, but Your way. It is no longer my plans for my life, but Your plan for me, Lord.' That was a foundation which would carry a very heavy load. You think of all those things that we have read that came into the thirty years. Just go home and read them again.

The thirty years of sufferings, of afflictions, and of trials prove two things. First, they prove how genuine Paul's surrender was to the Lord Jesus. Now this man did not say, 'Lord, I will live for You
if You give me an easy time. I will be a good Christian if only You see that no troubles come into my life. I will be a Christian and follow You if only You would just fill my life with blessings.' He never said anything like that to the Lord. What he meant was, blessing or no blessing, You are my Lord, and I am Your bondservant. And for thirty years, that kind of surrender was tested by all these trials. He said, "Three times I was beaten with rods." "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes except one" (II Corinthians 11:25,24). Why did he say except one? Because the fortieth stroke was always regarded as the fatal stroke. Thirty-nine strokes and the next one, you are dead. Three times that happened with him. Don't you think the devil said to him when that thirty-ninth stroke came on him, 'Now, do you still surrender to the Lord? Do you still call Him Lord? If you would like to stop calling Him Lord, you can stop having all these strokes. A whole situation can change for you for the better, if only you will stop this surrender to Jesus Christ.' I expect Satan often spoke to him like that. And as the strokes were coming on him, Satan would say, 'You are still going to call Him Lord?' But there was very much more than three times with thirty-nine strokes. There were the imprisonments. Once he was stoned and left for dead, then he was in the shipwrecks at sea, and all these other things. There was plenty in all that kind of thing to make him reconsider his surrender to the Lord Jesus. But those troubles were only proving that his surrender was genuine. This was not just some artificial thing. This was something more than the man himself.

That leads us to the second thing that the thirty years were proving. All these thirty years of difficulty and trial were just proving how great the Lord Jesus is. The Lord Jesus is greater than all the imprisonments. He is greater than all these many kinds of sufferings. The Lord could bring a man through all that, and often at the end, saying, 'I am still going on.' Paul used the phrase in one of his later letters. He spoke of, "according to the power that worketh in us!" It was the power of the Lord working in him.

Now here is a thing that we must all remember. The mighty power of the Lord may be working in us and we may not be conscious of it at the time. Appearances may argue that Satan is having it all his way. Things may seem to say that Jesus is not Lord, but circumstances are Lord. But what is it that decides whether the power has been working in us? It is not that we are conscious of that power at the time of trouble. It is that that power brings us through the trouble. That mighty power of the Lord Jesus working in Paul brought him through all those troubles to the place where at the end he said, "This one thing I do." So the troubles were necessary in order for Paul to discover what a great Lord had come into his life. If everything was easy, we could never discover how great the Lord is.

Now you come over to this letter to the Philippians. In chapter three, from which we have taken that little fragment, the Apostle Paul is telling of all the worldly advantages which were his before he met the Lord Jesus. He says, 'If any man thinketh that he can boast, I can go beyond any man. Any man thinks he has confidence in the flesh, I have much more than any man. Circumcised the eighth day, that made me a true child of Abraham, and that is a big thing. Of the stock of Israel, I come right up out of the root, I am not something that has put on the outside. I belong to the tribe of Benjamin. And Benjamin produced the first king of Israel. I belong to the tribe of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew of Hebrew parents, there is no mixed blood in me. As touching the law, a Pharisee. A proud, self-sufficient Pharisee. As touching zeal, persecuting the church. As touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.' What does a man want in all the world more than that? Here is a young man who has got to the top of his profession. He is a great success in this world. Now what does he say? 'The things which were gain to me, I have counted it loss for Christ. Yea, I count all things but refuse for the knowledge, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. There is nothing that all this world desires for fame and success which can compare with the Lord Jesus.' How the Lord Jesus had captured this man's life. He said Jesus is Superior to all these things.
Well, we must hurry to the close now. There is a lot more that we could say, but we just close with one thing. When Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he wrote it from his prison. As we have said, he was waiting the sentence of death. He was no longer able to travel about the world preaching. He was no longer able to visit his beloved people in all parts of the world. A lot of his friends had left him. There was not much that he could do in a public way now. All that is at an end. So that it was not the churches and it was not the works; it was the Lord Jesus. Paul's life was not just his work. It was not just his traveling about all over the world preaching. When all those things were taken away, he says, 'I am still going on.' 'This one thing I do, I press on. Take away my work, I am going on with the Lord. Take away my friends, I am going on with the Lord. Take away my liberty, I am still going on with the Lord.' How great a Lord He must be.

Well, when the Lord Jesus is like that to us, we will go right through to the end. Paul started with saying, "What wilt Thou have me to do, Lord." He finished by saying, "This one thing I do." One thing, how important it is to have a single eye. Not one eye looking this way, and the other eye looking that way, not two hearts divided, but one eye, or both eyes on one object. I have but one interest in life, and that interest is the Lord Jesus. In my business, it is the Lord Jesus. In my college, it is the Lord Jesus. In my home, it is the Lord Jesus. Among my friends, it is the Lord Jesus. In all things in this life, I have but one interest, that is, that my Lord Jesus may have all that He ought to have in my life. I say, if it is like that, while many others will fall out by the way, we shall go through to the end.
Meeting 21 - It is Real Worship to be Broken Before the Lord

Twenty-First Meeting
(February 16, 1964 P.M.)

I want to say just a brief word again about the Lord's Table. I would like to read three passages of Scripture:

"For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me" (I Cor. 11:23-25; ASV).

"Him Who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21).

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14).

HE WHO KNEW NO SIN HE MADE TO BE SIN. He offered Himself without spot unto God. Here are two statements which seem to be a direct contradiction of each other. They both refer to the same time. That is, they both refer to the Cross of the Lord Jesus. One statement is, that He Who knew no sin was made to be sin. The other statement is, that He offered Himself without spot unto God. It looks like a contradiction, but there is no contradiction. They are only two sides of one thing. That is, two sides of Christ's work on the Cross. One is what He was in Himself, that is, a Lamb without spot. One Who knew no sin. That is what He was in Himself. Absolute sinlessness, without a spot of sin.

The other is what He was made to be on our behalf. He was made to be sin although He knew no sin. There is an Old Testament type of this twofold work of the Lord Jesus. You will find it in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus. It is the account of the two goats. These two goats were brought before the Lord by the priests. They were both without spot or blemish. One of them was offered to God a burnt offering there on the Altar. The goat without spot or blemish offered to God. But there was the other goat. That goat was equally without spot or blemish. But the priest laid his hands on the head of that goat, and confessed the sin of the people over that goat, and in figure transferred the sin of all the people to that goat. And then the priest took the goat and led it out through the camp, right away from the Presence of God, out beyond the farthest bounds of the people of God, right away unto the wilderness. The people all turned to watch the priest leading this goat away. They watched it until it had gone right beyond their sight. And then the priest let it go. He drove it away into the wilderness. And he returned to the Presence of God without the goat. That is the Old Testament illustration of this very thing.

On the one side, Jesus was an offering without sin, acceptable to God. On the other side, He was made sin for us, and was driven out far from the Presence of God. He cried in that moment, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If that scapegoat could have spoken far away into the wilderness, it would have just used one word, he would have cried, "Forsaken." 'I am forsaken: I am
driven far from the Presence of God and man. I am despised and rejected of men.' That is the other side of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus in His Cross.

Now, I am just going to speak about one thing in that connection. When Jesus on the night of the passover sat down at the table with His disciples, He took a loaf and He broke it. He tore it to pieces, and He said, "This is My body which is broken for you." And then He took the cup, and Matthew tells us that He said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you." My body broken, My blood poured out. What did that mean? I am only speaking of this one side of things just now. Jesus had taken the place of our broken humanity. Sin is that which breaks our humanity. It tears our human nature to pieces. Sin disintegrates us. That is what happened at the beginning.

After Satan had done his work and Adam had accepted the temptation, the humanity of Adam was no longer whole. It was a broken humanity. Before that, it was complete, it was just one thing. But after that unbelieving disobedience, that humanity was torn asunder. It was just broken to pieces. And that is how God views humanity now. When Jesus was broken, He was just taking the place of our broken humanity. He was saying, 'I represent the whole human race in its broken condition. I enter into the brokenness of the world's humanity. My life is no longer in Me, it is poured out unto death.' That is the effect of sin and Satan's work. And in that day at the Cross, on that one side, that is what Jesus meant by, 'My body broken, My blood poured out. I represent the state of all men, no longer whole, no longer complete.'

Now, when we come to the Lord's Table, we should always remember this. We should always remember when we take the broken bread, and the cup, we are acknowledging and confessing before God that in ourselves we are broken. There is no wholeness about us. Sin has destroyed that wholeness. We are broken in the sight of God. That is what we mean when we take the loaf and the cup. We are acknowledging that before God in ourselves we are a broken humanity. We cannot stand up before God as something that is whole and complete and perfect. He was made sin for us. He was broken as we are broken. He took the place of our destroyed and disrupted humanity. And God had to turn His face away. Just as that scapegoat in the desert felt its utter desolation, not one eye to pity it, not one word of consolation, not one hand to help, alone, far away from the habitation of God and man. That is where the Lord Jesus went on our behalf, bearing the judgment of God upon our broken humanity. Before ever the other side can become true of us, the other side is that we are made complete in Him. All our brokenness is mended in Christ; we who were afar off are now made nigh. We can now, through faith in Jesus Christ, stand before God as those who have been made whole. But before we can do that, and have a standing in the Presence of God, we have got to recognize that naturally we are broken.

You see how these two things are blended in the New Testament? Take the great Apostle Paul, before he met the Lord Jesus, he thought he was a very whole and complete being. He thought that he could stand up in the Presence of God. He thought that there was nothing wrong with him but everything was right. There was no brokenness about Saul of Tarsus. When he met the Lord Jesus, it changed that situation. The first thing that he discovered was that he could not stand in the Presence of God. Before God, he was a broken man. There was nothing whole about him. That was one side of history; and he went all through his life keeping that always before him. How many things he said about himself referring to his own weakness. He said, 'I am weak, but I glory in my weakness.' I have entered into the brokenness of the Lord Jesus. I have shared His broken body. In myself I am worthless. I am like a shattered vessel. But on the other side, how the Lord blessed that man, how the Lord was with that man. Yes, he was now accepted by God. Now he could stand up straight before the Lord. Two sides.
If you and I want to stand well with the Lord, if we really do want to find favor with God, if we want to come onto the life side of the Cross, and come right into the Presence of the Lord, and offer our worship to the Lord, we must first of all be very conscious of our own brokenness. God only really uses broken men and women, those who have come to recognize that in themselves they are very poor creatures. There is about them a spirit of real brokenness. Such ones come into this wonderful word of the Lord, 'To this one will I look, even to him who is of a broken and a contrite spirit' (Isa. 66:2; Ps. 51:17).

Now you notice that this was all to do with the service of God. In the Book of Leviticus, it is the service of God; it is all service being offered to God. And that just means this: That before ever we can receive the blessing from the Lord, the Lord has got to be satisfied. It has first got to be unto the Lord before it can be from the Lord. This brokenness is our offering to the Lord. It is real worship to be broken before the Lord. The broken and contrite spirit is the spirit of true worship. That is acceptable service. That is the real service to God. And when God is satisfied, then we can come into the blessing. The proud man, the self-sufficient man, the man who stands up in his own strength, he is not the man who inherits the blessing. He is not the man whom the Lord will use. He is not the man who can really serve the Lord. But the man who dare not lift up his eyes to heaven, but with bowed head says, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:11-13). This man goes to his house justified. This man has the recognition and blessing of the Lord. Will you always remember this word when you come to the Lord's Table? When the loaf is broken, in your heart you say, 'This is my brokenness. He was broken for me. He was broken as me. In myself I am broken before God. He was broken in order to make us whole.'

So, when we take the broken bread, we are testifying and acknowledging our brokenness before God. But not only at the Lord's Table; the Lord's Table is the center of our whole life. Our entire life is gathered into the Lord. The Lord's Table has got to have a meaning every day and every hour, and this has to be the meaning: I in myself am poor and broken before God. And I can only dwell in the Presence of God because Jesus makes me whole. "This is My body, broken for you."
Meeting 22 - The Prayer of Our High Priest:
Father, I Want My Whole Family to be There With Me

Twenty-Second Meeting
(February 18, 1964 P.M.)

Read: John seventeen.

There is another prayer in the New Testament which the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples. That prayer is usually called the Lord's prayer. You remember that prayer, that it begins: "Our Father Which art in Heaven." But that prayer was not the Lord's prayer. That prayer never could be the Lord's prayer. He gave it to the disciples just to indicate lines along which they could pray. It is a mistake to call it the Lord's prayer. The Lord Jesus could never say to the Father, "Forgive us our trespasses." He never had to ask for forgiveness. That would have made Him a sinner. And in Him, there was no sin. The true Lord's Prayer is the one that we have just read. John seventeen is truly the Lord's prayer. Here, we can learn much from His prayer as to how we should pray. So we will follow Him through this prayer.

I expect most of you know that this prayer has been called 'the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus,' And I think that is the right name for it, because in this prayer the Lord Jesus is following the course of the high priest of old. The high priest of old prepared himself to pass through into the most holy place, and there meet God. He took the blood from the altar. He took the fire from the altar. He took a censer and put the fire into it, and then he put the sweet incense on the fire into the censer, and passed from the outer court through the holy place and through the veil into the most holy place. And there he swung his censer before the mercy seat, having sprinkled the blood upon the mercy seat, and there rose unto God a cloud of sweet incense: - something acceptable and well pleasing to God, a savor of Christ.

Now you will see by the position of John seventeen, that Jesus is just beginning that course. He is about to go to the great Altar of sacrifice - the Cross. He is about to take His Own blood from the Cross. He is about to take the fire of judgment from the Cross. And He is about to pass through the veil. We are told that the veil is His flesh. His body is about to be rent from top to bottom like the veil of the most holy place. And His body, having been broken, He is about, in the spirit, to enter into the Presence of the Father. HE IS NOW GOING THROUGH, IN SPIRIT, TO THAT HEAVENLY HOLY OF HOLIES WHERE GOD IS. And there in the Presence of God He will sprinkle the blood of testimony. And in the Presence of God He will present the sweet savor of a perfected work, well pleasing to God. And all that is gathered into this prayer. As this High Priest, our Lord Jesus is moving toward the heavenly sanctuary, He is praying, and He is praying for the people who are represented by Him. He is praying for the family that He is leaving outside.

You notice this is a family matter. He begins His prayer with the word, "Father," and He ends the prayer with "Thy name." They are the things which make the family - The Father and His name. Now you notice how He prays for the family. As He moves toward the Father, He says, first of all, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself," on their behalf "I sanctify Myself." And if we want to know the
meaning of the word, "sanctification," it is the same word as being made holy, same word as consecration. It just means being wholly set apart for God. For their sakes I wholly consecrate or set apart Myself unto God.

You must realize that that is the first basis of effectual prayer. If that is the basis of the prayer of the Lord Jesus, how much more ought it to be our basis of prayer. If He said, 'For their sakes I consecrate over to God everything, I Am wholly separated unto God. God has everything where I Am concerned.' That is His basis of prayer, and that is our basis of prayer. When we come to pray, or whenever we go to the Lord in prayer, I think the Holy Spirit would ask this question: Are you holding anything back? Are you keeping something back for yourself? Have you any personal interest? Or has the Lord got everything? Is it as true of you, as it was of your Lord, that everything is on the Altar? You have only one motive in life, and that is to be wholly for the Lord, ourselves for the Lord, our homes for the Lord, our business for the Lord, everything in life for the Lord. That is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "I consecrate Myself." That is the essential basis of effectual prayer. The Lord Jesus said this because He was setting an example for the family.

There are three directions and respects in this prayer in which the Lord Jesus wanted the family to be consecrated or separated. Firstly, what He meant by saying, "I sanctify Myself - Myself. I separate Myself from My Own will - separate from My Own interest." You see, the Lord Jesus had a human nature as well as a Divine nature, and all through that earthly life this question was arising for Him. Could He be tempted to take the life of His human nature, instead of the Divine. It was not a sinful human nature, but it was a human nature. You see, those temptations of the devil in the wilderness were just the temptation to get Him to come down onto the ordinary ground of human nature. And from the temptation immediately after His baptism right up to the Cross, that was the battle. In the garden of Gethsemane, the battle was this: "Not My will, but Thy will." His was not a sinful will, but it was a human will; and He had the power to choose. It was within His power to say, "No," and when it came to the Cross, that choice was a great battle. It was a terrible battle in the garden; between what He called, "My will, and Thy will."

Now, if that was true of the Lord Jesus, how much more true it is of us. If it was true of One Who had no sinful will, how much more true is it of us who have a sinful will. So He said, 'I consecrate Myself. I step away from what I am in My mere humanity over onto God's side. I leave My ground for God's ground.' You know, that is a part of true prayer. We shall never get through in prayer to God, if we are standing on our own natural ground. We have got to take God's ground, even if that means against ourselves and our own wills. So, He said, 'I consecrate Myself, I put My whole self onto this Altar of the Cross.' That is the way He prayed as He moved up to the Father.

Do you notice the second thing that consecration meant? Listen to Him praying for the family. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but Thou shouldest keep them." He knew that the world is one of the greatest powers against consecration. What a big force this world is to cause us to keep something back from the Lord. In this prayer, the Lord Jesus makes it perfectly clear that the world is an enemy to God. The world is an enemy to the spiritual life of God's people. The same man, John, who recorded this prayer, later on recorded this: He that is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. So that consecration is separation spiritually from this world while we remain in it. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world!" So consecration for Him and for us means that the world has no place in our hearts. And that again is a great principle of true prayer. I think that much prayer is defeated, and is a failure, because there is so much of the world in our lives.

And then the third thing that He said about consecration was this: "I pray that Thou will keep them
from the evil one." That evil one is always very near, he is always trying to do his evil work, he is always trying to lead or to ensnare us into something that is of himself. He is always trying to tempt us. Jesus says, "I pray, Father, 'That Thou wilt keep them from the evil one.'" You know, when the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, the final chapter of that great letter brings us into this realm of conflict with the evil one and the evil powers. And he says that conflict is in prayer. He says, in effect, THAT THE GREATEST BATTLE WITH THE FORCES OF EVIL IS THE PRAYER BATTLE. We have got to get into a position of victory over the evil one in order to pray effectively. So that is the Lord's basis of prayer.

I have said it in a very few words. It needs very much more, but that is not the whole prayer. He breathes out His desire to the Father about this family, and He makes two requests of the Father: "I pray that where I Am, there they may be." Where He is going, we shall come. And where is He going? He said, I am going to the Father, and I want My whole family to be there with Me. And He has to pray that, because they will not be there unless He does pray. Our coming to the Father so much rests upon the prayer of our High Priest. That is one of the great inheritances of the Lord's family.

I do not know how it is with you, but very often I pour out my heart to the Lord in prayer, and when I have prayed all that I can pray, I have to add this: 'But Lord, it is not, after all, my prayer; it is the prayer of Your Son that is going to get me through.' He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift thee as wheat: but I have prayed for thee." And He believed so much in His prayers, that He said, 'When you turn again, strengthen your brothers, because I have prayed for you' (Luke 22:31-33). Peter, you will come through it all. You will come out on the other side. And that is how it is with us now. "This High Priest ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25). And we owe far more to His prayers for us than we realize.

And then the second part of that petition was this: "That they may behold My glory!" That is very beautiful. They have beheld My humiliation. They have seen Me despised and rejected of men. And they will share that rejection themselves. They will know something of this humiliation which I know now. But Father, I want them to see the result of it all. I want them to see how all the rejection and the humiliation and the suffering will turn out in the end. I pray that they may behold My glory, and when they behold My glory, they will say, 'It was all worthwhile.' The suffering and the rejection were worthwhile.

So His prayer for us, done here, is going to have its glorious end in our beholding His glory. Now, as I said at the beginning, all this is a way of praying. I left a lot out from this prayer. He prayed for the family THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE. And surely that is something to pray about, perhaps more than ever in history today we need to pray about the Lord's people, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE. Well, I just leave that brief meditation with you. Let us follow our High Priest through into the Presence of the Father, praying as He prayed.

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one" (John 17:21, 22).