

Message 4

Being Intensified in Order to Become the Overcomers who Meet God's Need in this Age

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21

- I. **The history of Christ is in three stages: incarnation, inclusion, and intensification; in the first stage—incarnation—Christ was the Christ in the flesh (John 1:1, 14); in the second stage—inclusion—Christ is the pneumatic Christ, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b); now in the third stage—intensification—Christ is the sevenfold intensified Spirit (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6).¹**
- II. **We need to see the accomplishments of Christ in the stage of His intensification from the degradation of the church to the consummation of the New Jerusalem:²**
 - A. In the stage of intensification Christ intensifies His organic salvation:
 1. For His ministry in the stage of His inclusion, Christ became the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ, to carry out His organic salvation for the producing of the church and the building up of His Body to consummate the New Jerusalem.
 2. On the way of Christ's ministry in the stage of His inclusion, the church became degraded to frustrate the accomplishment of God's eternal economy.
 3. Hence, Christ as the one life-giving Spirit became the seven Spirits of God—not seven individual Spirits but the one Spirit who is intensified sevenfold to intensify the organic salvation of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate God's eternal goal—the New Jerusalem—Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6; 3:1:
 - a. According to Revelation 3:1, Christ is the One “who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.”³
 - b. The seven Spirits of God enable the church to be intensely living, and the seven stars enable her to be intensely shining.
 - B. In the stage of intensification Christ produces the overcomers:
 1. Through the degradation of the church nearly all the believers in Christ became defeated in their old man by Satan, sin, the world, and their flesh.
 2. In His seven epistles to the degraded churches, Christ calls the defeated believers to be His overcomers by Himself as the sevenfold intensified Spirit for their experience of His organic salvation in His sevenfold intensification.
 - C. In the stage of intensification Christ consummates the New Jerusalem:
 1. According to the entire revelation of the New Testament, the unique goal of the Christian work should be the New Jerusalem, which is the ultimate goal of God's eternal economy.
 2. The degradation of the church is mainly due to the fact that nearly all the Christian workers are distracted to take many things other than the New Jerusalem as their goal.
 3. Hence, under the degradation of the church, to be an overcomer answering the Lord's call we need to overcome not only the negative things but even more the positive things that replace the New Jerusalem as the goal.
 4. An overcomer's goal should be uniquely and ultimately the goal of God's eternal economy, that is, the New Jerusalem.

III. In the last age, there is a need for an even more intensified operation of the Spirit; thus, Revelation speaks of the seven Spirits (1:4); we also need to be intensified sevenfold:⁴

- A. We need to be intensified in our consecration:⁵
 - 1. We need to gradually strengthen, intensify, and increase our consecration to God.
 - 2. Consecration is not once for all; instead, it needs to be intensified and increased anew every morning and evening, every week, every month, every year, and whenever there is a change in our life and environment.
- B. We need to be intensified in our spirit:⁶
 - 1. The seven Spirits are the sevenfold intensified Spirit; in essence and existence God's Spirit is one, but in the intensified function and work of God's operation, God's Spirit is sevenfold.
 - 2. We need to be intensified in our spirit; we should not come to the meetings in a loose, relaxed, and unexercised way; among us, whose spirit is intensified?
- C. We need to be intensified in our pursuing Christ to gain Him—Phil. 3:8, 12:⁷
 - 1. Philippians 3:12 says, "Not that I have already obtained...but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus."
 - 2. The Greek word for *obtained* refers to obtaining in an ordinary way, and the word for *lay hold* means to obtain in an intensified way.
 - 3. This means that we must not only obtain Christ but that our obtaining of Him must be intensified.
- D. We need to be intensified in our bearing of the cross:⁸
 - 1. Intensification is not only to give us more of the Spirit; it is also to cause us to be conformed sevenfold to the death of Christ.
 - 2. Our being crucified, our denial of the self, and our bearing of the cross should be intensified sevenfold.
- E. We need to be intensified in our burden and care for people:⁹
 - 1. If we have the heart to care for people, we will have a way; love can do everything; there is nothing impossible with love—1 Cor. 13:7.
 - 2. If we have an intensified burden and care for people, there will be a way to express this care.

IV. We need to advance from inclusion to intensification:¹⁰

- A. For the last Adam to become the life-giving Spirit was for Christ to become the all-inclusive Spirit; in the stage of inclusion, many things are included in the pneumatic Christ; now we need to see that the all-inclusive Spirit has been intensified sevenfold.
- B. "I would urge you to consider this matter of intensification and to pray desperately, saying, 'Lord, I must advance. I need Your grace to bring me onward. I do not want to remain in the work of incarnation or even in the work of inclusion. I want to advance from inclusion to intensification. Lord, You have been intensified sevenfold, and I pray that I also will be intensified sevenfold to overcome the degradation of the church that the Body may be built up to consummate the New Jerusalem'"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 4, "Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification," ch. 2, p. 197.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CHRIST IN THE STAGE OF HIS INTENSIFICATION

In this chapter we want to see the accomplishments of Christ in the stage of His intensification from the degradation of the church to the consummation of the New Jerusalem. Recently, we have seen that John 4:14b shows that the goal of God's eternal economy is the New Jerusalem: "The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life." The Father is the fountain, the source, emerging in the Son as the spring, who flows out as the Spirit, the river, into eternal life. The phrase *into eternal life* means into the totality of the eternal life. Each human being is a totality of the human life. The totality, the aggregate, of the eternal life is the New Jerusalem. Our God is the flowing God, flowing to impart and dispense Himself as life into all His lovers. Eventually, this eternal life will have an aggregate, a totality, a consummation. That will be the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is the totality of the eternal life in the entire Bible.

The apostle Paul said that we are God's farm to grow Christ, and we are God's building (1 Cor. 3:9). As we grow in the divine life, we are transformed into precious material for God's building: gold, silver, and precious stones (v. 12). The New Jerusalem is constituted with transformed precious material: gold as the base, pearls as the gates, and precious stones for the city's wall. If we build up the church with ourselves, with the world, or with earthly things, we are building with wood, grass, and stubble, which are fit only to be burned (vv.12b-13). But if we build the church with the Triune God—the Father as the gold, the Son as the pearl or silver, and the Spirit as the precious stone—our building work will be a part of the New Jerusalem. In other words, our work will go into eternal life. The New Jerusalem as the totality of the eternal life is God's goal. The chorus of *Hymns*, #976, a hymn concerning the New Jerusalem, says, "Lo, the holy city, / Full of God's bright glory! / It is God's complete expression / In humanity." Christ has become the sevenfold intensified Spirit to intensify His organic salvation and to produce the overcomers for the consummating of the New Jerusalem.

To Intensify His Organic Salvation *Christ Becoming the Life-giving Spirit, the Pneumatic Christ, in the Stage of His Inclusion*

For His ministry in the stage of His inclusion, Christ became the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ, to carry out His organic salvation for the producing of the church and the building up of His Body to consummate the New Jerusalem.

The Church Becoming Degraded

On the way of Christ's ministry in the stage of His inclusion, the church became degraded to frustrate the accomplishment of God's eternal economy.

Christ as the One Life-giving Spirit Becoming the Seven Spirits of God

Hence, Christ as the one life-giving Spirit became the seven Spirits of God (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6; 3:1). These are not seven individual Spirits but the one Spirit who is intensified sevenfold. This is to intensify the organic salvation of Christ sevenfold for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate God's eternal goal—the New Jerusalem.

To Produce the Overcomers *Nearly All the Believers in Christ Becoming Defeated*

Through the degradation of the church nearly all the believers in Christ became defeated in their old man by Satan, sin, the world, and their flesh.

***Christ Calling the Defeated Believers
to Be His Overcomers***

In His seven epistles to the degraded churches, Christ calls the defeated believers to be His overcomers by Himself as the sevenfold intensified Spirit for their experience of His organic salvation in His sevenfold intensification.

***To Consummate the New Jerusalem
The Unique Goal of the Christian Work***

According to the entire revelation of the New Testament, the unique goal of the Christian work should be the New Jerusalem, which is the ultimate goal of God's eternal economy.

The Main Cause of the Church's Degradation

The degradation of the church is mainly due to the fact that nearly all the Christian workers are distracted to take many things other than the New Jerusalem as their goal.

***Overcoming Everything
That Replaces the New Jerusalem as Our Goal***

Hence, under the degradation of the church, to be an overcomer answering the Lord's call needs us to overcome not only the negative things but even more the positive things that replace the New Jerusalem as the goal.

An Overcomer's Goal

An overcomer's goal should be uniquely and ultimately the goal of God's eternal economy, that is, the New Jerusalem. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "The Vital Groups," ch. 14, pp. 177-179)

***The Third Stage—Intensification—the Stage of Christ
as the Sevenfold Intensified Spirit
To Deal with the Degradation of the Church***

Shortly after the church was produced, it began to become degraded. This is clearly seen in Acts. In chapter 5 Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit; in chapter 6 there was a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews regarding the daily dispensing; and in chapter 15 there was trouble concerning circumcision. The separation of Barnabas from Paul (vv. 35-39) should also be regarded as a part of the degradation. Eventually, the church degraded to such an extent that the Lord could no longer tolerate it, and He reacted by intensifying Himself sevenfold to become the sevenfold intensified Spirit (Rev. 1:4; 5:6). He became intensified sevenfold to deal with the degradation of the church.

***To Produce the Body of Christ
to Consummate the New Jerusalem***

In his Epistles Paul speaks about the Body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 1:23; 4:4, 16; Col. 2:19), but I do not believe that Paul saw the actual building up of the Body. Paul could see the church expressed in various localities, but he could not see, in actuality, the church as the Body in a perfect and complete way. In order for the Body to be produced in a full and complete way, there is the need of the third stage of Christ, the stage of intensification in which Christ becomes the sevenfold intensified Spirit.

After Paul died, the Lord waited more than twenty years until John wrote the book of Revelation. Revelation is an Epistle, but it is very different in character from all the other Epistles in the New Testament. In this book Christ, who became the compound, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, has become the sevenfold intensified Spirit. In Revelation 1:4 the third of the Divine Trinity, the Spirit, becomes the seven Spirits and is ranked as the second of the Divine Trinity.

We have pointed out that in His second stage, the stage of His being the compound, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, Christ has produced the churches, but not much of the Body was produced and built up in an actual and practical way. For this reason Christ has become the sevenfold intensified Spirit to overcome the degradation of the church that the overcomers may be produced to bring forth the Body.

The issue of Christ in the flesh was a group of redeemed persons, and the issue of Christ as the compound, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit was the churches. For the Body to be produced, there is the need for the compound, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit to be intensified sevenfold. This sevenfold intensification deals with the sevenfold situation of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

The Brethren and those who followed their teaching saw something concerning the prophetic significance of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. From their study of these chapters, they discovered that the church is in seven conditions, in seven stages, and in seven periods of time. However, they did not see the matter of overcoming. Jessie Penn-Lewis saw this matter and published a paper called *The Overcomer*. Although Mrs. Penn-Lewis wrote something concerning the seven churches producing the overcomers, the light she received was not full, and thus she did not see that the overcomers are for the building up of the Body to consummate the New Jerusalem. The stage of incarnation produced a group of redeemed people, and the stage of inclusion produced the church. The stage of intensification will build up the Body to consummate the New Jerusalem...

ADVANCING FROM INCLUSION TO INTENSIFICATION

My use of the word *inclusion* is based on our use of the word *inclusive*. For the last Adam to become the life-giving Spirit was for Christ to become the all-inclusive Spirit. His becoming all-inclusive was a matter not just of incarnation but of inclusion. As we have pointed out, inclusion involves many complications. In the stage of inclusion, many things are included in the pneumatic Christ, in the Christ who is the life-giving Spirit. Now we need to see that the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit has been intensified sevenfold.

I would urge you to consider this matter of intensification and to pray desperately, saying, "Lord, I must advance. I need Your grace to bring me onward. I do not want to remain in the work of incarnation nor even in the work of inclusion. I want to advance from inclusion to intensification. Lord, You have been intensified sevenfold, and I pray that I also will be intensified sevenfold to overcome the degradation of the church that the Body may be built up to consummate the New Jerusalem." (*CWWL, 1994-1997*, vol. 4, "Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification," ch. 2, pp. 194-197)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 4, "Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification," chs. 1-2.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 14; "A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord," ch. 3.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1973-1974*, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church," ch. 2.

¹ CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification," ch. 1, pp. 186-187.

² CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 14, p. 175.

³ The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 411, p. 4192.

⁴ CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 2, "Serving in the Flow of the Age," ch 4, p. 164.

⁵ CWWL, 1956, vol. 3, "Witness Lee's Personal Notes," p. 80.

⁶ CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 2, "The Christian Life," ch. 3, p. 376.

⁷ CWWL, 1978, vol. 1, "The Experience of Christ," ch. 8, p. 383.

⁸ CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord," ch. 3, p. 35.

⁹ CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church," ch. 2, p. 538.

¹⁰ CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Incarnation, Inclusion, and Intensification," ch. 2, p. 197.