

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Name:

UK JUNIOR EYPC SCHEDULE

Monday:

18:00	Dinner
18:55	Leave for Meeting
19:00	Meeting
21:15	Room Time
21:45	Prepare for Bed
22:30	Lights out

Tuesday and Wednesday:

7:00	Coordination for Serving Ones
8:00	Rise
8:20	Morning Revival
8:40	Personal Morning Revival
8:45	Breakfast
9:15	Study
9:40	Leave for Meeting
9:45	Meeting
12:30	Lunch
13:00	Activities
17:15	Quiet Time: Rest / Study / Shower
18:00	Dinner
18:55	Leave for Meeting
19:00	Meeting
21:15	Snack Time
21:30	Room Time
22:00	Prepare for Bed
22:30	Lights Out

Thursday and Friday:

7:00	Coordination for Serving Ones
8:00	Rise
8:20	Morning Revival
8:40	Personal Morning Revival
8:45	Breakfast
9:15	Study
9:40	Leave for Meeting
9:45	Meeting
12:30	Group Photo / Baptisms
13:00	Lunch
13:30	Activities
17:15	Quiet Time: Rest / Study / Shower
18:00	Dinner
18:55	Leave for Meeting
19:00	Meeting
21:15	Snack Time
21:30	Room Time
22:00	Prepare for Bed
22:30	Lights Out

Saturday:

7:00	Coordination for Serving Ones
8:00	Rise
8:20	Morning Revival
8:40	Personal Morning Revival
8:45	Breakfast
9:15	Pack and Clean
9:00	Leave for Meeting
9:40	Study
10:00	Meeting & Awards
13:00	Lunch
13:30	Clean Up
14:00	Conference Ends / Departures

Name _____

House _____

Country _____

Team _____

European Young People's Conference

Message Outlines and Ministry Reading Excerpts

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to express their indebtedness to the ministry of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee in their preparation of this material. They have opened up the Word of God and we are entering in. Furthermore, the authors wish to express their appreciation to the Living Stream Ministry, which has graciously granted permission to make use of various quotations in preparation of these outlines for the young people in the Lord's recovery.

All scripture reading verses are quoted from The Recovery Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated. The Recovery Version of the Bible is published by Living Stream Ministry, Anaheim, CA.

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Regulations

In Person Regulations:

1. **Clothing** worn during the conference should be proper and modest:
 - No improper pictures, logos or symbols. No revealing tops or tops that expose the midriff or back. No low-cut jeans or trousers.
 - In the meetings it would be very good for sisters to wear a skirt or dress long enough to cover the knee when sitting and for brothers to wear a shirt with a collar.
 - During the afternoon activities please wear clothes which are modest – for example, it would be good for brothers and sisters to wear loose fitting trousers/track-suit bottoms and a T-shirt which covers the shoulders. No short shorts should be worn at any time.
 - Brothers are not permitted to wear earrings or studs, including while travelling to and from the conference.
2. The use of **phones and other electronic items** is not permitted - they must be stored away out of sight and not used. If they are seen, the serving one must take them away. You should bring a physical Bible and hymnal for use in the meetings, and a camera for taking photos. Serving ones & helpers are requested to keep their phones on them through the course of the conference for emergency use only.
3. A proper **Brother/Sister relationship** should be maintained during the entire conference. Brothers should not be in the areas of the sisters' houses and sisters should not be in the areas of the brothers' houses.
4. **Room assignments** should not be changed without prior approval from your serving one and the conference administrators.
5. **Do not leave** the conference area without permission.
6. **No criticism**, complaining or bad language.
7. Everyone must follow the conference schedule:
 - Be in your seat 5 minutes before the meeting starts – begin to open and exercise your spirit (sing, pray, pray-read, etc.)
 - Once the meeting begins, no one is allowed to leave until dismissed – i.e. no visits to the toilet during the meeting (remember to go beforehand!)
 - Bring Bible, hymnal, notebook, pen, and outline to every session – take notes!
 - Food and drink (except water) are not permitted in the meeting or during room times.
8. **Attendance** at all sessions (including morning revival and room times) is mandatory. Everyone will be encouraged to participate during room times.
9. You must **return promptly to your rooms** after the evening meeting.
10. **Lights out** at the scheduled time! That means everyone should be quiet, with no one leaving his or her room except for emergencies

The serving ones are responsible for the young people both during the journey and at the conference. You must obey them and maintain a respectful attitude to them at all times. Disobedience, rebelliousness or rudeness to serving ones will NOT be tolerated.

We reserve the right to discipline anyone who does not obey the rules. In serious cases this may include sending that young person home. We expect any extra costs incurred by this action to be met by that person.

Online Regulations:

- 1. Speech** – Speak respectfully and appropriately with others as you would in normal circumstances.
- 2. Clothing** – Dress appropriately as you would for a meeting in person. What we wear affects our attitude. We encourage all the young people to dress with modesty that reflects our seeking the Lord and honours the other attendees. No pyjamas, lounge wear, or clothing that is low cut or uncovering.
- 3. Call from a public place** – As much as possible, move your laptop/phone out of your bedroom to the lounge/kitchen. If not possible, keep your bedroom door open.
- 4. Field of View** – Be aware of what is in view of your camera, including things on the wall and other people in the house.
- 5. Parents** – Let your parents or guardians know when you will be in a meeting, and ask them to be nearby or at least in the house.
- 6. Do not distract or abuse others.**
- 7. No photos or videos** – Do not take photos, screen captures, or videos of any young person or serving one, and do not post them online or send them to anyone.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message One

Noah—Finding Grace

Scripture Reading: Gen. 6:1-14; Matt. 24:37-39, 42; Heb. 4:16; 11:7

I. The Lord's coming will be like the days of Noah; this indicates that when the Lord's parousia is about to come, the situation on the earth will be like the days of Noah—Gen. 6:5, 11-13, Matt. 24:37-39, 42; Luke 17:26-32:

- A. Satan caused the evil spirits, the fallen angels, to mingle with man and to join with man through illegal marriage—Gen. 6:1-4.
- B. The earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence; the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually—vv. 11-13, 5.
- C. The people were befuddled by eating, drinking, marrying and were given in marriage—eating, drinking and marriage were originally ordained by God for man's existence, but due to man's lust, Satan utilizes these necessities of human life to occupy man and keep him from God's purpose—Matt. 24:38; Luke 17:27.
- D. They did not know that judgment was coming—v. 39.
- E. "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes"—Matt. 24:42.

II. Noah inherited all the spiritual blessings from his forefathers, including Adam, Abel, Enosh, and Enoch; Noah followed Enoch to walk with God—Gen. 6:9:

- A. Because Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah, we are told that he walked with God—v. 8.
- B. Noah came from a godly family and learned from his forefathers all the godly things; thus, he came to realize his need for grace:
 - 1. God was prepared to give grace to fallen man, because His Spirit was striving with man, ready to give grace to the needy ones—v. 2.
 - 2. Grace is not only something given by God, but it is God Himself coming to us and doing things for us—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9.
- C. No one could stand in such a generation; we need grace in order to face the situation of the flesh today—Heb. 4:16:
- D. Noah walked with God by faith—11:7:
 - 1. Faith is not something produced out from ourselves, but faith is something of God that is transfused into our being—Acts 7:2.
 - 2. The more we touch the throne of God and the more we look to the Lord, the more we are transfused and infused with all that He is; the element is faith—Gal. 2:16.
- E. Because Noah believed in God, he became a righteous person, justified by God—Heb. 11:7.
- F. Noah's work was that of believing and practicing the revelation received from God in order to build the ark, a type of the church as the corporate Christ—Gen. 6:14-16, 22; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 2:12-13.
- G. His work was that of a righteous man and a herald of righteousness who preached righteousness—Gen. 6:14; 2 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 24—25.
- H. His work was that of building the ark and entering into it according to God's revelation by faith to usher in the new age—1 Pet. 3:20, footnote 3; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message One—Verse Sheet

Noah—Finding Grace

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 6:1-14

- 1 And when men began to multiply on the surface of the ground, and daughters were born to them,
- 2 The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose.
- 3 And Jehovah said, My Spirit will not strive with man forever, for he indeed is flesh; so his days will be one hundred twenty years.
- 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them; these were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.
- 5 And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- 6 And Jehovah repented that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart.
- 7 And Jehovah said, I will blot out the man whom I have created from the surface of the ground, from man to beast to creeping things to the birds of heaven; for I repent that I have made them.
- 8 But Noah found favor in the sight of Jehovah.
- 9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations; and Noah walked with God.
- 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
- 11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.
- 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.
- 13 And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and now I am about to destroy them with the earth.
- 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make rooms in the ark and shall cover it within and without with pitch.

Matthew 24:37-39, 42

- 37 For just as the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 38 For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark,
- 39 And they did not know that judgment was coming until the flood came and took all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
- 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord comes.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, having been divinely instructed concerning things not yet seen and being moved by pious fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

1 Peter 3:20

Who had formerly disobeyed when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared; entering into which, a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by water.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message One—Group Time

Noah—Finding Grace

Verses for Pray-reading:

Gen. 6:8 But Noah found favor (grace) in the sight of Jehovah.

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Do you believe that, by himself, Noah was able to find grace in the eyes of the Lord? I do not believe that he did this by himself...Noah came from a godly family and learned from his forefathers all the godly things. Thus, he came to realize his need for grace. His generation was corrupt and filled with violence. The human race had become flesh. Noah lived in a crooked, perverse, and evil generation. Nevertheless, his parents and grandparents taught him the things of God, and he realized that he needed God's grace.

Now we can see why Noah found grace. [Genesis 6:3] indicates that God was prepared to give grace to fallen man, because His Spirit was striving with man, ready to give grace to the needy ones. However, this grace needed human cooperation. Noah gave the necessary cooperation and he found grace.

What is grace? Most Christians think that grace is merely something given by God. If I give you a Bible as a present, that is grace. Although this understanding is correct, in the Bible grace means much more than that. Grace is not only something given by God, but it is God Himself doing things for us. Grace is not merely something objective that is given to us by God. Grace is God Himself coming to us and doing things for us. Are you weak? God will come to be your strength, and that coming of God is grace. Are you unable to face your situation? That need not be a problem, because God will come to stand with you and face that situation for and in you. This is grace. If you read Genesis 6 carefully, you will see that grace here does not mean that God gave Noah many things. It means that God came to Noah and was with Noah. God's presence was Noah's strength and power. Noah not only enjoyed something given

to him by God objectively, but he enjoyed God Himself. In the midst of a crooked, perverse, and adulterous generation, a generation whose temptations no one could withstand, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God came to strengthen Noah that He might stand with him and uphold him. That was the grace that Noah found, and that is the grace that we need today.

Consider the situation in modern society. I do not even dare to look at a newspaper. It contains too many temptations. While I am walking along the street, I do not dare to look into the show windows. This is the reason that I do not like to go into the department store. Department stores are more than devilish, and all the exhibitions and displays in them come from hell. The talk you hear on the radio, at work, and at school is evil, corrupt, and devilish. It is hard for anyone as a fallen person to stand in such a situation. This age is truly crooked, perverse, and adulterous; it is full of fornication and immorality. People talk about immorality without one bit of shame. Who can stand in such a generation? Not one of us is able to stand. We all have a fallen nature within us, the same evil nature that all men have. We need grace. We must come to the throne of grace boldly and say, "Lord, I am here. I need Your grace. I am not coming to ask You to give me good things. I am coming to find grace to meet my need. Lord, I cannot go to work or to school without Your presence. Lord, I cannot go to a department store without Your presence. Lord, I need You to stand with me. Come to be my strength. Lord, uphold me and sustain me."

Do you realize that God's grace came because of the flesh? "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...full of grace..." (John 1:14). In a good sense, where there is flesh, there is grace.

What is flesh? The flesh is Satan's masterpiece. Do you know where Satan is today? He is in our flesh. The flesh is the meeting hall of Satan, sin, and death. These three great enemies continually meet together in the hall of our flesh, and their meeting is never dismissed. I cannot tell you how many thousands of years this meeting has been going on. The flesh is such an ugly thing.

What then is grace? Grace is God Himself enjoyed by us and helping us to face the situation of the flesh. In a sense, if there were no flesh, grace would not be so much needed. If it were not for the flesh, probably God would not have to give us so much grace. We have seen that, according to Hebrews 4:16, we may find grace to meet our timely need. What element causes us to need grace? It is mainly the flesh. I sympathize with the young people, for I was once a young man myself. As I passed through all the human experiences, I came to realize how much we are in the flesh. Although I do not like to be in the flesh, the flesh is here. Once I got mad at the Lord and said to Him, "Lord,

why don't You take away my flesh?" Eventually He showed me that, in a sense, I needed the flesh, for the flesh is the very factor that compels me to come to the throne of grace. I cannot do anything with this flesh. All I can do is go to the throne of grace. Although there is nothing that we can do, yet there is somewhere that we can go—the throne of grace.

If you read the New Testament carefully, you will see that where the flesh is, there also is grace. This is especially true in the book of Galatians. Galatians 5:4 says that if we attempt to be justified by the law, we are fallen from grace. We are in the flesh. Galatians deals with this matter of the flesh, and it also speaks much about the matter of grace. Do not say that you do not have the flesh. You have a great deal of flesh. Even as you read this message, you have the flesh to contend with. What shall we do? Let us come to the throne of grace for the sake of dealing with the flesh. Because the flesh is here with us, we need grace. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 375-377, 379-380)

Discussion questions:

1. How can we as young people "find grace" in our situation?
2. Share some experiences of how grace allowed you to face the situation of the flesh.
3. In personal and private prayers, open yourself to the Lord at the "throne of grace" to experience the Lord's mercy and grace for timely help.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Two

Moses—a Companion of God

Scripture Reading: Acts 7:20-30; Exo. 3:2-8; 33:11-13; Heb. 11:24-27

- I. Moses was born into the situation of the children of Israel in Egypt under Pharaoh's tyranny when God wanted to deliver the children of Israel out of bondage; God had to wait until Moses had been fully prepared—Exo. 1—2:**
 - A. Moses, on the natural side, learned “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” in the first forty years; through his Egyptian education, Moses became highly cultured and received the highest learning of the world becoming mighty both in words and in deeds—Acts 7:22.
 - B. Moses still needed the preparation on the spiritual side in the second forty years, first to have his natural ability dealt with, so that it became an ability in resurrection, and then to learn to serve God according to God's leading and to trust in Him—vv. 34-36; Heb. 11:28.
- II. Moses was called by God; every overcomer is a person called by God:**
 - A. A person who is called by God must see the vision of the burning thornbush—that he is a thornbush with a fire burning within him and that this fire is the Triune God Himself; as such he is a vessel, a channel, through which God can be manifested—Exo. 3:2-4; 2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 1:20, 25; Acts 7:22-36.
 - B. A person who is called by God must know how to deal with the devil, the flesh, and the world as shown in the three signs of being called and sent by God—Exo. 4:3-9; 1 John 3:8; Gal. 5:17; 1 John 2:15.
 - C. A person who is called by God must have a revelation of who God is and receive the revelation to build the tabernacle as Moses did—Exo. 3:2, 6, 14-15.
- III. Some characteristics of Moses as an overcomer—Heb. 11:24-27:**
 - A. Moses was a man of God; Moses could have become an expert in all the Egyptian knowledge; but because he had been redeemed, called, sanctified, and transformed, instead he eventually became a man of God—Deut. 33:1; Josh. 14:6; Ezra 3:2.
 - B. Moses stood in the breach before Jehovah to turn away His wrath from destroying the children of Israel—Psa. 106:23; Exo. 32:7-14, 11.
 - C. Moses was God's companion, a partner in God's great enterprise; only a person like Moses, a person who knows God's heart and does everything according to God's heart, can be a companion of God, sharing a common interest with God and being used by God to carry out His enterprise on earth—33:11-13; 34:19-29, 32-35.
- IV. We need to realize that this is our golden time to be used by the Lord; the Lord needs us as channels through which He can carry out His move; the way for us to grasp this opportunity is to go to the Lord to open and empty ourselves, give ourselves to Him and allow Him to take us, to possess us; then the Lord will be able to go on through us in a marvelous way; we all need to consecrate ourselves once again to the Lord for His eternal purpose.**

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Two—Verse Sheet

Moses—A Companion of God

Scripture Reading:

Acts 7:20-30

- 20 At this time Moses was born and was lovely to God. And he was nurtured three months in his father's house.
- 21 And when he was thrown out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up and nurtured him as a son for herself.
- 22 And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and works.
- 23 But when he was approaching forty years of age, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel.
- 24 And when he saw one of them being wronged, he defended him, and he avenged him who was being oppressed by striking the Egyptian dead.
- 25 And he supposed that his brothers understood that God through his hand was giving salvation to them; but they did not understand.
- 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting and tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, Men, you are brothers. Why are you wronging one another?
- 27 But the one who was wronging his neighbor pushed him away, saying, "Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?"
- 28 Do you want to do away with me the same way you did away with the Egyptian yesterday?"
- 29 And Moses fled at this word and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begot two sons.
- 30 And when forty years had been fulfilled, an Angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in the flame of a thornbush fire.

Exodus 3:2-8, 14-15

- 2 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with fire; but the thornbush was not consumed.
- 3 And Moses said, I must turn aside now and see this great sight, why the thornbush does not burn up.
- 4 And when Jehovah saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the midst of the thornbush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am.
- 5 And He said, Do not come near here. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.
- 6 And He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.
- 7 And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.
- 8 And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
- 14 And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.

- 15 And God also said to Moses, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial from generation to generation.

Exodus 33:11-13

- 11 And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.
- 12 And Moses said to Jehovah, See, You say to me, Bring up this people; but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.
- 13 Now therefore if I have found favor in Your sight, please let me know now Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may continue to find favor in Your sight. Consider also that this nation is Your people.

Hebrews 11:24-27

- 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
- 25 Choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin,
- 26 Considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward.
- 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he persevered as one seeing the unseen One.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Two—Group Time

Moses—A Companion of God

Verses for Pray-reading:

Heb. 11:24-26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin, considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Although God wanted to deliver the children of Israel out of bondage, He had to wait until Moses had been fully prepared. These chapters of Exodus reveal that God is very patient. Even before the birth of Moses, the children of Israel were suffering in Egypt. But God still waited for at least eighty years. It is easy to be patient if you do not have the strength or ability to do anything about the situation. In such a case, you have no choice except to wait. But for one who is capable and qualified, it is difficult to be patient. God was certainly able to deliver the children of Israel; His power was sufficient. Nevertheless, He waited patiently.

Sometimes we are exhausted by God's patience and ask, "How long, Lord? Have You heard our prayers? Lord, where are You? Don't You care for us? How long will it be before You do something for us?" It seems that there is no God in this universe. In the psalms such questions are asked again and again, for the psalmists were the same as we are.

After forty years of his life had gone by, Moses could no longer wait to deliver the children of Israel. He had received the highest education, and he had become a man powerful in words and in deeds (Acts 7:22). According to his own estimation, no doubt he thought he was qualified and ready to act on behalf of his people. But God set Moses aside for another forty years, until he was fully prepared according to God's standard. In this we see the patience of our God.

What made it necessary for God to wait those eighty years? None of us would have been willing to wait such a long time. Surely God wanted a way to come in earlier than He did, but there was no one among the children of Israel to

whom He could come. Therefore, God had to wait until Moses was born. Forty years later Moses was there, and had grown up, but God still had to wait because Moses was so natural. God had to wait because there was the lack of a prepared one.

Here we see a principle. In every age God has desired to do something. The problem has not been on His side; it has always been on the side of His people. The question has always been this: where is one who is ready to receive God's call? In our age also God is eager to do certain things. But who is ready for His call? More than nineteen centuries ago the Lord Jesus said that He was coming quickly (Rev. 22:7). But He still has not come. If we ask the Lord why His coming back has been delayed so long, He may reply, "Where are those who are ready for Me to come back? When I see that a sufficient number are ready, I shall come. I am very eager to come back, but there must be something for Me to come back to."

In Exodus God could not come in when Moses was a child or when he was still trusting in his natural strength and ability. God had to wait until Moses was eighty years of age. Then, after Moses had been prepared, God came in to call him. The children of Israel cried out because of the tyranny, the persecution, and the oppression, but God still had to wait for Moses to be prepared. In the same principle, the Lord continues to delay His coming back because not enough of His people are ready for Him to return.

In chapters two and three of Exodus we see that the persecuted children of God were crying out to Him and that the God of mercy, grace, and love was eager to rescue them. But Moses

was growing slowly unto maturity. The cry of the Israelites was desperate and the eagerness of God was great, but the growth of Moses was slow. The situation is the same today. Many saints have been sighing and longing for the Lord to come back, and the Lord is yearning to come back. But where are the prepared ones? Therefore, instead of complaining to the Lord about today's situation, we should give ourselves to grow in life.

When by God's sovereignty Moses was set aside, he must have been very disappointed and he must have lost all hope. Having lost hope, he became content to be a shepherd caring for the flock in the land of Midian. A man who had been educated in the royal palace was now forced to live as a shepherd in the wilderness. As the years went by, he lost everything—his confidence, his future, his interest, his goal. Eventually, Moses probably reached the point where he had no further thought that he was the one whom God would use to rescue the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Moses might have said to

himself, "I must care for this flock. But not even this flock is mine; it belongs to my father-in-law. I have no empire, no kingdom. There is nothing left for me to do except to labor in support of my family. My immediate concern is to find fresh grass for the flock and water for them to drink." But one day, when Moses had been thoroughly processed, God appeared to him and called him. At the age of eighty, in the eyes of God Moses was fully prepared and qualified, and at the precise time He came to him.

Moses was the first complete, qualified, and perfected servant of God in history. Noah was used by God to build the ark, but he was not the kind of servant Moses was. Not even Abraham, the father of faith, was perfected as a servant of God in the way Moses was. Because he was the first fully qualified servant of God in the Bible, Moses is the standard model of God's servant, and God's calling of him is the standard for His calling of all His servants. In principle, we all need to be called the way Moses was. (*Life-study of Exodus*, pp. 49-52)

Discussion Questions:

1. Fellowship in your groups about the kind of process the Lord must bring us all through in order for us to be a prepared vessel in His hand and to be useful to Him.
2. Discuss whether we are discouraged over how long it takes for God to fulfill His purpose in us.
3. Consider in your groups how we can give the Lord the best cooperation in our lives to hasten, speed up, the process of preparation.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Three

Gideon—a Valiant Warrior

Scripture Reading: Judges 6—8

I. The children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years—Judg. 6:1:

- A. “And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the children of Israel made for themselves the dens which are in the mountains as well as the caves and the strongholds”—v. 2.
- B. “And whenever Israel sowed its seed, Midian rose up with Amalek and the children of the east, and went up against them”—v. 3.
- C. “And they encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land until you come to Gaza, and they left no sustenance in Israel, or sheep or ox or donkey”—v. 4.

II. The Angel of Jehovah (Christ) calling Gideon—vv. 1-24:

- A. The children of Israel cried out to Jehovah because of Midian, and Jehovah sent a man who was a prophet to reprove the children of Israel—vv. 6-8:
 - 1. Gideon was hiding from the Midianites, beating out the wheat in a winepress—v. 11.
 - 2. Then the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon and said to him, “Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior”; He charged Gideon to save Israel from the hand of the Midianites—vv. 12, 14-16.
- B. Jehovah charged Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal that belonged to his father and to cut down the Asherah that was beside it and then to build an altar to Jehovah his God upon the top of that stronghold—vv. 25-32.

III. The selection of the three hundred stresses the sacrifice of our personal interests and enjoyment for God's purpose—7:2-7:

- A. In 7:2-8a we see that three hundred were chosen by God to follow Gideon to defeat Midian for Israel.
- B. Jehovah told Gideon that the people who were with him were too many for Jehovah to deliver Midian into their hand.
- C. God charged Gideon to proclaim that whoever was afraid and trembling should return and depart; twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained —vv. 2-3.
- D. Out of the ten thousand, only three hundred who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand were chosen by Jehovah—vv. 4-8a:
 - 1. The way God used was to observe how the men took care of their necessities; eating, drinking, and clothing are the basic items of our daily necessities; Gideon led the men to the water and allowed them to drink—vv. 5-6.
 - 2. These were the ones whom God would use for the army; the rest of the men knelt down on their knees and drank; they took care of their necessity much more than God's need, and God sent them back.

IV. The defeat of Midian—vv. 8-25:

- A. Gideon heard the account of a dream in the camp of Midian; there was this round loaf of barley bread tumbling through the camp of Midian—v. 13.
- B. Gideon divided the three hundred men into three companies and put trumpets into their hands, as well as empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers—v. 16:
 - 1. They blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers; then, holding the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands, they cried out, “A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!”—vv. 19-20.
 - 2. Then the whole camp of the Midianites ran off, and they shouted and fled.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Three—Verse Sheet

Gideon—a Valiant Warrior

Scripture Reading:

Judges 6:1-7, 11-12, 24-27, 33-35

- 1 Then the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.
- 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the children of Israel made for themselves the dens which are in the mountains as well as the caves and the strongholds.
- 3 And whenever Israel sowed its seed, Midian rose up with Amalek and the children of the east, and went up against them.
- 4 And they encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land until you come to Gaza, and they left no sustenance in Israel, or sheep or ox or donkey.
- 5 For they went up with their cattle and their tents and came in like a locust swarm in number; both they and their camels were without number. And they came into the land to destroy it.
- 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian. And the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah.
- 7 And when the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah because of Midian,
- 11 And the Angel of Jehovah came and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while Gideon his son was beating out the wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites.
- 12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.
- 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah, and he called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
- 25 And that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's bull, that is, the second bull, seven years old; and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.
- 26 And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner. Then take that second bull, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.
- 27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as Jehovah had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's house and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it at night.
- 33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east gathered together, and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel.
- 34 And the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon; and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called up behind him.
- 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they were also called up behind him. And he sent messengers throughout Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

Judges 7:2-7, 9-20

- 2 And Jehovah said to Gideon, The people with you are too many for Me to deliver Midian into their hand; Israel might vaunt himself against Me, saying, My own hand has saved me.
- 3 Now then proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is afraid and trembling should return and depart from here. And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

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- 4 Then Jehovah said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. And he of whom I say to you, This one shall go with you, he shall go with you. And every one of whom I say to you, This one shall not go with you, he shall not go.
- 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And Jehovah said to Gideon, Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart; likewise everyone who bows down on his knees to drink.
- 6 And the number of those who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand was three hundred men, but the rest of the people bowed down on their knees to drink water.
- 7 And Jehovah said to Gideon, Through the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and I will deliver Midian into your hand. But let all the other people go, each to his own place.
- 9 And that night Jehovah said to him, Arise; go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.
- 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down with Purah your young man into the camp;
- 11 And you will hear what they are saying. Then afterward your hands will be strengthened so that you can go down against the camp. So he went down with Purah his young man to the edge of the battle array that was in the camp.
- 12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay in the valley like a locust swarm in multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand on the seashore is in multitude.
- 13 And when Gideon came, at that moment a man was recounting a dream to his companion; and he said, I have just had a dream. There was this round loaf of barley bread tumbling through the camp of Midian. And it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and it turned it upside down. And the tent collapsed.
- 14 And his companion answered and said, This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has delivered Midian and all the camp into his hand.
- 15 And when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, Arise, for Jehovah has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.
- 16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies; and he put trumpets into the hands of them all, as well as empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers.
- 17 And he said to them, Look at me, and do as I do. Right when I come to the edge of the camp, you shall do just as I do.
- 18 When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, you also blow the trumpets around all the camp and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon!
- 19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They had just then posted the watch. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.
- 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers; and they held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets were in their right hands to blow. And they cried out, A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Three—Group Time

Gideon—a Valiant Warrior

Verses for Pray-reading:

- Rev. 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev. 3:12** He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

How to Be an Overcomer—Gideon

It is easy to be humble before God, but it is very difficult to be humble before man in comparison with others. Saying, "I am the least" is easy, but saying, "I am the least in my father's house" is not easy. Saying, "My family is poor" is easy, but saying, "My family is poor in Manasseh" is not easy (Judg. 6:15). The overcomers do not see the shining on their own faces, though others may see it. All those who see the shining on their own faces through a mirror are not overcomers. Though David was anointed, he still considered himself a dog. The overcomers have the reality of an overcomer rather than the name of an overcomer.

No one can work without seeing a vision. If one has the vision, though he may encounter difficulties, he will still reach his goal. When we have the Lord's word, we can cross to the other side. When we have the vision, our footsteps will be steadfast in our work.

We need to offer up ourselves, even what we regard to be the least, to the hand of God. It does not matter whether we see ourselves as big or as small. If we do not put ourselves in the hand of God, both are equally futile. All living sacrifices that are according to God's will are acceptable to God. The overcomers were called by God. Have you heard and answered the call to the overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3?

After one has consecrated himself in his heart, he still needs to tear down the idols as an outward testimony. We need to be aware of ourselves, our family, and those with whom we have contact. Anything that occupies equal standing

with God should be torn down. Only those who have seen God know what an idol is. Only those who have seen the Angel of God, who is the Lord, know that anything besides the Lord is an idol. Only after one has seen the Angel of God will he realize that the wooden image is not God. The sacrifice on the rock (Judg. 6:21) is for the individual, but the sacrifice on the altar (v. 24) is for the multitude.

After having passed through these four steps, the Holy Spirit came upon Gideon. The filling of the Holy Spirit does not come as a result of prayer for power. When a man stands in the proper condition, the Holy Spirit will come upon him.

The blowing of the trumpet (v. 34) is a call for others to join the ranks of the overcomers. Overcomers should not act independently. We should separate ourselves from the defeated ones, but we should not separate ourselves from the other overcomers.

**How to Select the Overcomers—
the Three Hundred Men**

The First Selection

The first selection resulted in twenty-two thousand people leaving. They left because (1) they wanted to glorify themselves. We are willing to give up our life but not to give up our glory. Not only do we have to overcome Satan, we have to overcome ourselves as well. God wants only those who will work for Him without boasting about it. After working for God, we should merely say, "We are unprofitable slaves" (Luke 17:10). We should forget how much we

have plowed, how many sheep we have shepherded. God cannot divide His glory between Him and us. If we still expect anything for ourselves, we will be eliminated. These ones also left because (2) they were fearful and afraid (Josh. 7:3). Whoever is fearful and afraid will be asked to leave. One must not love himself but must endure suffering. The greatest suffering is not material but spiritual. Whoever wants to glorify himself and is fearful and afraid will be eliminated. Overcoming does not depend on the number of people but on knowing God.

The Second Selection

The selection this time was based on a very small matter, that of drinking. A small matter always exposes what we are. In those days both the Jews and the Arabs carried their luggage on their backs when they traveled. There were two ways to drink water along the way. One was to put down the luggage and kneel, bowing down to the ground to drink with the mouth. The other was to leave the luggage on the back and drink by putting the hand to the mouth. The latter was done for the sake of saving time for the journey and also for guarding oneself from robbers. Among the ten thousand, nine thousand and seven hundred drank with their mouths directly to the water, while three hundred drank by putting water in their hand to the mouth. Those who drank directly with their mouths were eliminated by God. Those who drank by bringing water in their hand to the mouth were selected by God. A person who has the chance to indulge himself but who will not do so is one who has been dealt with by the cross. This kind of person can be used by God. God can only use those who are willing to be unconditionally dealt with by the cross.

The three conditions by which God selects

the overcomers are: (1) being absolute for God's glory, (2) being afraid of nothing, and (3) allowing the cross to deal with the self. One can judge for himself if he is an overcomer. God will test us, and we will be exposed as to whether or not we are overcomers. Only those who know the victory of the cross will be able to maintain the victory of the cross.

The Oneness of the Overcomers

God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body. Individual victory is not proper. Gideon and those three hundred men moved together and acted in one accord. All of their flesh was cut off, so they could be one. This is the oneness in the Spirit and a living in the Body. The record in the New Testament is a record of meetings rather than a record of working.

The Result

The three hundred men fought the battle, yet the whole congregation chased the enemy. The three hundred labored, yet the whole congregation reaped the harvest. When we overcome, the whole body is revived. To stand at the bottom of the river is not for ourselves, but for the whole body. "I...fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church" (Col. 1:24). To be an overcomer, we also have to suffer the murmurings of the people, in the same way that Gideon suffered the murmurings of the men from Ephraim. Gideon not only defeated the Midianites from without but also defeated the Midianites from within. Only this kind of person can continue to overcome. They were "faint, yet pursuing them" (Judg. 8:4b). (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 11: "The Present Testimony (4)," ch. 11)

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss in your groups how we at this time can be one of Gideon's three hundred?
2. Fellowship with your group about our need to make a corporate consecration and learn to lean on one another.
3. Consider together your life at school or at work, do you have a torch, a trumpet and a pitcher?

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Four

Ruth—the Redemption of the Birthright

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1:16-17; 2:1-3; 4:9-10, 13-17; Eph. 2:12

- I. Ruth was one of the Moabites, who were forbidden to enter the holy congregation of Jehovah—Deut. 23:3:**
 - A. Ruth's ancestor was Moab, who was the fruit of Lot's incestuous union with his daughter—Gen. 19:31-38.
 - B. According to Deuteronomy 23:3, the Moabites were forbidden to enter the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation.
 - C. Ruth was not only a Gentile sinner but also a descendant of a people born in incest and rejected by God; thus, Ruth was an excluded one.
 - D. She was a person of low birth, and she had nothing to do with God, having no God and no hope—Eph. 2:12.
- II. Although, as a Moabite, Ruth was not allowed to enter the congregation of the Lord, she was seeking God and God's people—Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11-12:**
 - A. Ruth chose the goal of God and His kingdom in order to participate with God's elect in the enjoyment of Christ.
 - B. Eventually, she became an important ancestor of Christ, one who helped bring forth Christ into mankind—Matt. 1:5.
 - C. Regardless of who we are and what our background is, we are in a position to be accepted into the birthright of Christ as long as we have a heart that seeks God and His people.
 - D. You may have been born of a poor origin and have a pitiful background, but do not be bothered or frustrated by that; forget it!
- III. Exercising her right to glean the harvest of God's elect—Ruth 2:1-3, 15-23:**
 - A. Ruth came to the good land, and according to her threefold status as a sojourner, a poor one, and a widow, she exercised her right to glean the harvest.
 - B. This portrays that sinners have the way, the position, the qualification, and the right to participate in Christ and to enjoy Christ and to claim salvation from God.
- IV. Gaining a redeeming husband—4:1-17:**
 - A. Ruth and Naomi had lost the enjoyment, the birthright, but according to God's regulation there was a way to restore the birthright, to redeem it; but it had to be redeemed by someone else—Lev. 25:25.
 - B. Boaz redeemed his kinsman's inheritance and married the man's widow; hence, he became a notable forefather of Christ, a great associate of Christ.
 - C. As a brother and a Boaz, you should take care of others' birthright of Christ, not only your own birthright; in other words, you should not only take care of your own enjoyment of Christ, but also others' enjoyment of Christ.
- V. Although the Moabites were rejected to the tenth generation, in the case of Ruth we see the far-reaching and unsearchable mercy of God—Ruth 1:2, 4-5, 8, 15-19, 22; 4:13, 17:**
 - A. Through seeking God absolutely, Ruth a widow Moabite, entered into the holy congregation of God's people, married Boaz, and became the great grandmother of King David; this is the far-reaching and unsearchable mercy of God.
 - B. God's mercy is waiting for us to seek Him and His people.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Four—Verse Sheet

Ruth—the Redemption of the Birthright

Scripture Reading:

Ruth 1:16-17

- 16 But Ruth said, Do not entreat me to leave you and turn away from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you dwell, I will dwell; and your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.
- 17 Where you die, I will die; and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more as well, if anything but death parts me from you.

Ruth 2:1-3

- 1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a man of great wealth, from Elimelech's family; and his name was Boaz.
- 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I find favor. And she said to her, Go, my daughter.
- 3 So she went. And she came and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to glean in a portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

Ruth 4:9-10, 13-17

- 9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, You are witnesses today, that I buy from Naomi's hand all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's.
- 10 Furthermore Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, I acquire as my own wife so that I may raise up the dead man's name upon his inheritance and the dead man's name may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place. You are witnesses today.
- 13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and Jehovah made her conceive; and she bore a son.
- 14 And the women said to Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, who has not left you today without a kinsman; and may his name be famous in Israel.
- 15 And he will be to you as a restorer of life and a sustainer in your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.
- 16 And Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and she became his nurse.
- 17 And the women neighbors gave him a name, saying, A son has been born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Ephesians 2:12

That you were at that time apart from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Four—Verse Group Time

Ruth—The Redemption of the Birthright

Verses for Pray-reading:

Ruth 1:16-17 But Ruth said, Do not entreat me to leave you and turn away from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you dwell, I will dwell; and your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die; and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more as well, if anything but death parts me from you.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Ruth

We come now to Ruth (Matt. 1:5). We may say that Ruth was certainly a good woman, but she had a great shortage. Although she herself was not involved in incest, her origin was a matter of incest. Ruth belonged to the tribe of Moab (Ruth 1:4). Moab was the son of Lot, the fruit of Lot's incestuous union with his daughter (Gen. 19:30-38). According to Deuteronomy 23:3, the Moabites were forbidden to enter the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation. Thus, Ruth was an excluded one. However, not only was she accepted by the Lord, but she became a wonderful person who partook of the enjoyment of Christ.

Although, as a Moabitess, Ruth was not allowed to enter the congregation of the Lord, she was seeking God and God's people (Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11-12). This reveals a most prevailing principle: no matter who we are or what our background is, as long as we have a heart which seeks after God and God's people, we are in a position to be accepted into the birthright of Christ. Ruth married Boaz, a godly man among God's people, and brought forth Obed, the grandfather of David the king.

Boaz's mother was Rahab, a Canaanitess, and his wife Ruth was a Moabitess. Both were Gentiles. Nevertheless, they were associated with Christ. This is a strong proof that Christ is joined not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, even the Gentiles of a low and mean class.

You may have been born of a poor origin and have a pitiful background, but do not be bothered or frustrated by that. Forget it! Nothing can be worse than a person born of Moab. But as

long as you have a heart to seek after God and God's people and as long as you become involved with the proper person, such as Boaz, you will enter into the double portion of the enjoyment of Christ. (*The King's Antecedents and Status*, ch. 3)

Choosing God and His Kingdom

Both Ruth's husband and his brother died without leaving any descendants, and her husband had no other brother who could marry her to bear children for her husband. Nevertheless, she followed her widowed mother-in-law to the land of Judah to be a citizen of Israel and to receive the God of Israel as her God.

When her mother-in-law urged her to return to her people and to her gods, Ruth said, "Do not entreat me to leave you and turn away from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you dwell, I will dwell; and your people will be my people, and your God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16). Ruth chose the goal of God and His kingdom in order to participate with God's elect in the enjoyment of Christ. Eventually, she became an important ancestor of Christ, one who helped bring forth Christ into mankind (Matt. 1:5).

Regardless of who we are and what our background is, we are in a position to be accepted into the birthright of Christ as long as we have a heart that seeks God and His people.

Exercising Her Right to Glean the Harvest of God's Elect

Ruth returned to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22b). However, they returned empty,

having nothing, and thus became needy ones among God's elect. According to God's loving care, when the children of Israel reaped the harvest of their land, they were not to completely reap the corners of their field, neither were they to gather the gleanings of their harvest; they were to leave them for the poor and the sojourner (Lev. 23:22; 19:9-10). If they forgot a sheaf in the field, they were not to turn back to gather it; it was for the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow (Deut. 24:19). Ruth came to the good land, and according to her threefold status as a sojourner, a poor one, and a widow, she exercised her right to glean the harvest. Her gleaning was not a begging; it was an exercising of her right. Ruth, a Moabitess, a heathen sinner, alienated from God's promises (Eph. 2:12), was privileged to partake of the crumbs under the table of the portion of God's elect children (Matt. 15:25-28).

This portrays that sinners have the way, the position, the qualification, and the right to participate in Christ and to enjoy Christ. According to God's ordination, we have been qualified and positioned to exercise our right to enjoy Christ. We do not need to beg God to save us. We can go to God to claim His salvation for ourselves. This is the highest standard of receiving the gospel. We have the position, qualification, and right to claim salvation from God. (*Truth Lessons, Level 3*, vol. 2, ch. 24)

Boaz

Boaz redeemed his kinsman's inheritance and married the man's widow (Ruth 4:1-17); hence, he became a notable forefather of Christ, a great associate of Christ. As a brother and a Boaz, you should take care of others' birthright of Christ, not only your own birthright. In other words, you should not only take care of your own enjoyment of Christ, but also others' enjoyment of Christ.

Ruth was the daughter-in-law of Naomi. As we read this story, we see that Ruth and Naomi had lost the enjoyment, the birthright, but according to God's regulation there was a way to restore the birthright, to redeem it. But it had to be redeemed by someone else. The principle

is the same in the church life today. If I lose the birthright, the brothers have a way to redeem it for me. Quite often, some dear ones lose their enjoyment of Christ. In a sense, they become Naomi or Ruth. If so, you need to be a Boaz, able to redeem the lost birthright and marry the redeemed one.

Suppose I am a real Ruth who has lost her husband. To lose the husband means to lose the enjoyment of the birthright. I have the birthright, but I have lost the enjoyment of the birthright. Thus, I need you, as my brother, to redeem my birthright. But you need to be somewhat richer in Christ. You need to have some riches with which to redeem my birthright. Then you pay the price to regain my birthright, and you also marry me. This means that you become involved with me. This kind of spiritual involvement will produce Obed, the grandfather of David. Boaz became one of the great forefathers of Christ. In a spiritual sense, he was the one who enjoyed the largest and richest portion of Christ. If a brother becomes a Boaz to me, he will be the one with the greatest enjoyment of Christ. Because he redeemed my birthright and became so involved with me, our involvement in the Lord will eventually bring forth the full enjoyment of Christ.

In the church life today we need to have a number of Boazes. The book of Ruth tells us that there was another kinsman who was even closer to Ruth than Boaz was. But that man was selfish; he only took care of his own birthright. He was afraid that taking care of another's might mar his own. This is exactly today's situation. Some brothers should take care of me, the poor Ruth, but they are selfish in the spiritual enjoyment of Christ. Even in the spiritual enjoyment of Christ it is quite possible to be selfish. However, a Boaz will be generous and pay the price to redeem my birthright. All this indicates that we should take care of not only our own birthright, but also others' birthright. Day by day we should take care of others' enjoyment of Christ. The more we do this, the better. (*Life-study of Matthew*, msg. 3)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the ways we can seek God and God's people?
2. How do you exercise your right to participate and enjoy Christ after a failure?
3. How can we help a brother or sister to recover their birthright?

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Five

Esther—Under the Secret Care of the Hiding God

Scripture Reading: Isa. 45:15; Esth. 1:1-2, 10-12, 19; 2:16-17; 3:1-5, 8-10; 4:14-16;
6:1-2; 7:1-2, 5-7, 9-10; 8:1-2

- I. Esther is a sweet book, covering, as its central subject, the secret care and the open salvation of the hiding God in Israel's captivity; God is omnipresent and also omnipotent, yet He is hiding; nobody knows where He is—Isa. 45:15:**
 - A. During the years of the captivity, God was hiding, and He is still hiding; even today, in the church age, God is hiding Himself—v. 15.
 - B. Both for the children of Israel and for us today, it seems that there is no God in this universe; we need to realize that God is living and real, but He is hiding; He is a God who hides Himself—v. 15; cf. 1 Kings 19:11-12.
- II. The book of Esther supplies a vivid record of how the hiding God of Israel secretly took care of His oppressed elect in their dispersion—1:1—2:23:**
 - A. First, the hiding God established a top king in the Gentile world in prosperity, power, and glory over a great empire extending from India to Ethiopia (Africa)—1:1-2.
 - B. Next, the hiding God caused the top king to depose his queen because of her disobedience to his word at his great banquet with his high officials—vv. 3-22.
 - C. Finally, in His secret care the hiding God raised up Esther, a Jewish orphan virgin, to be crowned by the top king as his queen—2:1-18, 19-23.
 - D. Today we need to realize that the omnipotent God whom we are serving is still hiding Himself, especially when He is helping us; we cannot see Him, and apparently, He is not doing anything for us; actually, He is with us all the time and, in a hidden way, He is doing many things for us—cf. Luke 24:15-16; John 20:14-16a.
- III. The open salvation accomplished by the hiding God in secrecy for His persecuted elect in their captivity is seen in Mordecai—Esth. 3:1—10:3:**
 - A. After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, and set his seat above all the princes who were with him; an Agagite was an enemy of God—3:1; 1 Sam. 15:2-3; 8-12, 22.
 - B. All the king's servants who were in the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, but Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage—Esth. 3:2.
 - C. Haman was filled with rage and plotted not only to kill Mordecai, the one who refused to pay him homage, but also to destroy all the Jews and to plunder their spoil—3:5-15:
 1. Mordecai urged Esther to stand up for God's people, saying, "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"—4:14.
 2. Esther responded "So will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish"—4:14-16.
 - D. The king could not sleep, so he gave orders to have the book of the records of the chronicles brought, and they were read before him—6:1:
 1. The king found in the records the report of how Mordecai had saved him from being assassinated by two of his eunuchs, and he decided to bestow honor and dignity on Mordecai—vv. 3-11.
 2. At her feast with the king and Haman, Esther the queen pointed out that Haman was the wicked adversary and enemy who conspired to kill all the Jews—7:1-10.
 3. The king immediately sentenced Haman to death and commanded his men to hang Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai—7:9—8:2.
 4. In Esther we see the open, triumphant victory of the Jews—the open salvation of their hiding God to rescue them from their persecutors—8:3—10:3.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Five—Verse Sheet

Esther—Under the Secret Care of the Hiding God

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 45:15

Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.

Esther 1:1-2, 10-12, 19,

- 1 Now in the days of Ahasuerus (this is the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred twenty-seven provinces)
- 2 In those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Susa the capital.
- 10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,
- 11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the peoples and the princes; for she was beautiful in appearance.
- 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command given through the eunuchs; and the king became very angry, and his wrath burned within him.
- 19 If it please the king, let a royal order go forth from him...that Vashti come no more into the presence of King Ahasuerus and that the king give her royal estate to another who is better than she.

Esther 2:16-17

- 16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.
- 17 And the king loved Esther more than all the other women. And she obtained favor and kindness with him more than all the other virgins, so he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.

Esther 3:1-5, 8-10

- 1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and he advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.
- 2 And all the king's servants who were in the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for so had the king commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage.
- 3 Then the king's servants who were in the king's gate said to Mordecai, Why do you transgress the king's command?
- 4 And when they had spoken to him day after day and he did not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.
- 5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.
- 8 And Haman said to King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples throughout all the provinces of your kingdom; and their laws differ from those of all the people, nor do they keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.
- 9 If it please the king, let it be decreed in writing that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's affairs, that they may

bring it into the king's treasuries.

- 10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

Esther 4:14-16

- 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?
- 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,
- 16 Go; assemble all the Jews who are to be found in Susa, and fast for me; and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day; I also and my maids will fast in the same way. And so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 6:1-2

- 1 On that night the king could not sleep, so he gave orders to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.
- 2 And it was found written that Mordecai had given a report concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, among those who were in charge of the threshold, who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

Esther 7:1-2, 5-7, 9-10

- 1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Esther the queen.
- 2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day during the banquet of wine, What is your petition, Queen Esther? And it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be done.
- 5 Then King Ahasuerus spoke and said to Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, who presumes to do so?
- 6 And Esther said, An adversary and an enemy, this wicked Haman. Then Haman became terrified before the king and the queen.
- 7 And the king arose in his anger from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden, and Haman stood up to make a request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king.
- 9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king, said, And also there is the gallows standing in Haman's house, fifty cubits high, which Haman has made for Mordecai, who spoke good on behalf of the king. And the king said, Hang him on it.
- 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's anger subsided.

Esther 8:1-2

- 1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.
- 2 And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Five—Group Time

Esther—Under the Secret Care of the Hiding God

Verses for Pray-reading:

- Isaiah 45:15** Surely You are a God who hides Himself, / O God of Israel, the Savior.
- Esth. 4:14, 16b** For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from some other place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?...And so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Esther is a sweet book, covering, as its central subject, the secret care and the open salvation of the hiding God in Israel's captivity. God is omnipresent and also omnipotent, yet He is hiding. Nobody knows where He is.

The people of Israel had been scattered, dispersed, in their captivity. They probably told the Gentiles among whom they were living that their God was Jehovah. Gentiles, especially the rulers, might have said to the Israelites, "Where is your Jehovah? Is your Jehovah real and living? If He is, why are you here in captivity as slaves?" During the years of the captivity, God was hiding, and He is still hiding. Even today, in the church age, God is hiding Himself. Both for the children of Israel and for us today, it seems that there is no God in this universe. We need to realize that God is living and real, but He is hiding. He is a God who hides Himself (Isa. 45:15).

Because God's people became degraded and rotten, God disciplined and punished them by handing them over as slaves to the Gentile nations. Yet in His severity there is mercy (Rom. 11:22). While the people of Israel were in dispersion and captivity, God was taking care of them in a hidden way, and at the right time He came in openly to save them. Even when the captives of Israel were in the lowest situation, at the bottom, Christ was among them, suffering with them (Zech. 1:7-17).

On the one hand, God used the Gentile nations as tools to discipline His people. On the other hand, the hiding God was with the people of Israel, caring for them. Eventually, God used the Medo-Persian Empire to overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Cyrus, the king of Persia, was

even called God's shepherd, one who would fulfill His desire (Isa. 44:28), and His anointed, one who would serve God's purpose (45:1-4). From this we see that the hiding God did many things for Israel in a secret way.

The crucial point of Esther is that the very God who chose Israel, the descendants of Abraham, as His elect, after He gave them into captivity to the Gentile nations, became a hidden God to them to take care of them secretly and save them openly in secrecy (Isa. 45:15). This is the reason that this book does not mention the name of God even at occasions when the name of God should be mentioned (Esth. 4:3, 16). Because this book shows us a hidden God, it does not mention the name of God.

Our God is omnipresent, omnipotent, merciful, and full of forgiveness. Although He is such a God, He is also the hiding God. Because our God is a hiding God, others may check with us and ask, "Where is your God? Where is His kingdom?" When we are questioned in such a manner, we may want to answer in this way: "My God is hidden. I cannot see Him, and you cannot see Him either. But you need to realize that sooner or later my hidden God will come in to do something on my behalf and to deal with those who do not believe in Him."

I can testify concerning this from my experience. More than forty-five years ago, I, along with several other co-workers, was arrested and imprisoned by a small Chinese army that betrayed China and worked for the Japanese military police. The entire Christian community in that city was shocked, because they knew that we could very easily be executed like other

Chinese who had fallen into the hands of the Japanese invading army. We did not know what to expect, but the hiding God intervened in a wonderful way using a particular person as an Esther.

The wife of the captain of the Chinese army under the Japanese military police had been the wife of a schoolmate of mine who had died of tuberculosis. When he was dying, his wife asked me to visit him, and I did so and had an intimate conversation with him. He eventually died, and some time later she remarried. After I was arrested and imprisoned, a medical doctor who was meeting both with us and with other Christians heard about my situation. He then went to speak to the woman who had married the captain of that Chinese army. The two were close friends, and the doctor who was meeting with us told the woman that I and several others had been imprisoned and that she should ask her husband to release us. She spoke to her husband about us that very day. He loved her and was willing to fulfill her request.

That night he appeared to judge our case. We

were taken from our cells and stood before him to be judged. I was the first one to be examined by him. He looked at me, asked me my name, and told me that everything was all right and that I was free to go home peacefully. He said the same thing to the others who had been arrested with me. At the time none of us knew what had taken place behind the scene. Later I realized that, in His secret wisdom, the hiding God had prepared an Esther for us. He had raised up a Chinese widow to become the wife of the man who would judge our case. Just as the king of Persia listened to Esther and did what she said out of his love for her, so this man listened to his wife and released us from prison. This surely was due to the care of the hiding God.

Today we need to realize that the omnipotent God whom we are serving is still hiding Himself, especially when He is helping us. We cannot see Him, and apparently He is not doing anything for us. Actually, He is with us all the time and, in a hidden way, He is doing many things for us. (*Life-study of Esther*, msgs. 1-2)

Discussion Questions:

1. Consider together in your group how the hiding God has been caring for you in a secret way.
2. Fellowship among yourselves how we can know God even if we cannot see Him.
3. Discuss why it is so hard to tell our friends about the Lord.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Six

Daniel's Companions—in the Furnace with Christ

Scripture Reading: Dan. 2:13, 17; 3:1-30; Rev. 12:11; Phil. 4:11-13; 2 Cor. 12:9

- I. The principle of the Lord's recovery is seen with "Daniel and his companions" (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah), who were absolutely one with God in their victory over Satan's devices—Dan. 2:13, 17; cf. Rev. 17:14; Matt. 22:14.**
- II. Daniel and his companions were victorious over the seduction of idol worship—Dan. 3:1-30:**
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar made a great image of gold, sixty cubits (thirty meters) in height, and set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon; Nebuchadnezzar sent word to come to the dedication of the image and commanded all the peoples, nations, and languages to worship his golden image—vv. 1-7.
 - B. Daniel's three companions stood against the devilish worship by refusing to worship the image; the Chaldeans, being jealous of Daniel and his companions, took their refusal as grounds to accuse them before Nebuchadnezzar—vv. 8-12.
 - C. Nebuchadnezzar, in a rage and fury, tempted the young overcomers by giving them another chance to worship his golden image, with the threat of throwing them into a blazing furnace of fire; the three young overcomers' response to Nebuchadnezzar was impolite and very bold—vv. 13-18:
 1. Although they were bold, they were not so experienced and had something of the natural thought in their response; they said that God was able to deliver them *from* the blazing furnace; actually, God did not need to deliver them *from* the furnace; rather, He kept them in the furnace and made the fire of no effect—vv. 17, 25; Rev. 12:11.
 2. If they had been more experienced in God's economy, they would have been happy to go into the blazing furnace, because when they go into the fire, He comes; He makes the furnace a very pleasant place.
 - D. Nebuchadnezzar commanded that the furnace be made seven times hotter than usual, and that certain mighty men in his army bind the overcomers and throw them into the blazing furnace of fire—Dan. 3:19-21:
 1. Nebuchadnezzar was astonished to see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire not harmed; the appearance of the fourth was like a son of the gods—vv. 24-25.
 2. The fourth one was Christ; Christ had come to be with His three suffering, persecuted overcomers and to make the fire a pleasant place in which to walk about—Phil. 4:11-13.
 3. Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the blazing furnace of fire and called the young overcomers to come out of the fire and saw that the fire had no effect on them—Dan. 3:26-27; 2 Cor. 12:9.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Six—Verse Sheet

Daniel's Companions—in the Furnace with Christ

Scripture Reading:

Daniel 2:13, 17

- 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his companions so that they might be slain.
- 17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

Daniel 3:1-30

- 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, its height sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.
- 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the chief judges, the treasury officials, the law officials, the judges, and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 3 Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the chief judges, the treasury officials, the law officials, the judges, and all the rulers of the provinces assembled themselves for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
- 4 Then a herald proclaimed loudly, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,
- 5 At the time that you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up;
- 6 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into the midst of a blazing furnace of fire in that very hour.
- 7 Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 8 Because of this at that time certain Chaldeans drew near and accused the Jews.
- 9 They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king, O king, live forever!
- 10 You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music shall fall down and worship the golden image;
- 11 And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into the midst of a blazing furnace of fire.
- 12 There are certain Jews, whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego — these men have not respected you, O king; they do not serve your gods nor worship the golden image that you have set up.
- 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and fury commanded men to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; then they brought these men before the king.
- 14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, Do you, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, purposely not serve my gods nor worship the golden image that I have set up?
- 15 Now then, if, at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of music, you are ready to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well; but if you do not worship, you will be thrown into the midst of a blazing furnace of fire in that very hour; and who is that god who will deliver you out of my hands?
- 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, there is no need for us to give you an answer in this matter.

- 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing furnace of fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.
- 18 But if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image that you have set up.
- 19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury and the countenance of his face was changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. He responded and commanded that the furnace be made seven times hotter than it was usually heated.
- 20 And he commanded certain mighty men who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and throw them into the blazing furnace of fire.
- 21 Then these men were bound in their shirts, tunics, and mantles, and other clothing, and thrown into the midst of the blazing furnace of fire.
- 22 For this reason, because the king's word was so harsh and the furnace had been heated to an extreme, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.
- 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the blazing furnace of fire bound up.
- 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished and stood up in haste; he responded and said to his counselors, Did we not throw three men into the midst of the fire bound up? They answered and said to the king, Certainly, O king.
- 25 He answered and said, Look, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not harmed. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.
- 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the blazing furnace of fire. He responded and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, servants of God the Most High, come out and come here. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.
- 27 And the satraps, prefects, and governors, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw concerning these men that the fire had no effect on their bodies and that the hair of their heads was not singed, nor had their clothes been affected, nor had the smell of fire come upon them.
- 28 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him and changed the king's word and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God.
- 29 Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language that speaks something offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be cut into pieces and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.
- 30 Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

Philippians 4:11-13

- 11 Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.
- 12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.
- 13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Six—Group Time

Daniel's Companions—in the Furnace with Christ

Verses for Pray-reading:

- Rev. 12:11** And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.
- 2 Cor. 12:9** And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

In chapter three Satan's strategy was to seduce the young overcomers among God's defeated elect in the worship of idols through Nebuchadnezzar's blindness (Dan. 3:1-7). Nebuchadnezzar made a great image of gold, sixty cubits (ninety feet) in height, and set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon (v. 1). He might have been influenced to make such an image by the interpretation of his dream in chapter two. Nebuchadnezzar sent word to assemble the high officials and all kinds of officers and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image he had set up and commanded all the peoples, nations, and languages to worship his golden image (vv. 2-5). Whoever did not fall down and worship was to be thrown into the midst of a blazing furnace of fire (v. 6). Daniel's three companions were among the high officials gathered, but Daniel, the chief of the prefects over all the wise men in the province of Babylon, was not present. This seems unusual. I believe that Daniel stayed in a hidden place and prayed concerning the situation.

Daniel's three companions, the young overcomers among the Jewish captives, stood against the devilish worship and were accused by the Chaldeans (vv. 8-12). The Chaldeans were jealous of Daniel and his companions and took their refusal to worship the golden image as grounds to accuse them before Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, tempted the young overcomers by giving them another chance to worship his golden image, with the threat of throwing them into a blazing furnace of fire (vv. 13-15).

The three overcomers answered, "If it be so,

our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing furnace of fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king" (v. 17). Their response to Nebuchadnezzar was impolite and very bold (vv. 16-18). Yet there was still something of the natural thought in their response. They said that God was able to deliver them from the blazing furnace. Actually, God did not need to deliver them from the furnace. He kept them in the furnace and made the fire of no effect (v. 25). They were bold, but they were not so spiritual. If they had been spiritual, they would have said, "Nebuchadnezzar, we are happy to go into the blazing furnace, because when we go He comes. He makes your burning furnace a very pleasant place."

Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the countenance of his face was changed toward the young overcomers. He commanded that the furnace be made seven times hotter than usual, and that certain mighty men in his army bind the overcomers and throw them into the blazing furnace of fire (vv. 19-21).

The mighty men were slain by the flame of the fire, and the three young overcomers fell into the blazing furnace of fire bound up (vv. 22-23).

Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and said to his counselors, "Did we not throw three men into the midst of the fire bound up? ...Look, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not harmed. And the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods" (vv. 24-25). This fourth one was Christ. Christ had come to be with His three suffering, persecuted overcomers and to make the fire a pleasant place in which to walk about.

Our natural thought is that we need to leave the fire of our circumstances. We may think that if we have a troublesome husband or a bothersome wife, we should pray and ask God to deliver us out of such a situation. But the Lord would say, "I do not like to deliver you from this situation in your married life. Instead, I will keep you there, and I will come and make your environment a pleasant place."

When the enemy throws us into the furnace, we should realize that we do not need to ask the Lord to deliver us. He will come to be with us and take care of us in our suffering, making our place of suffering a pleasant situation. I can testify of this from my experience of imprisonment under the Japanese invading army in China. During that time of suffering, the Lord was with me. One day, as I was talking to the Lord, I had the deep sense that He was there in prison with me. I wept before Him, saying, "Lord, You know why I am here." Instead of delivering me from prison immediately, the Lord, by His presence, made that prison a pleasant place. As the Lord was with those suffering overcomers in Babylon, so He will be with us in our suffering today.

Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the blazing furnace of fire and said to the young overcomers, "Servants of the Most High God, come out and come here" (v. 26). Then the young overcomers came out of the fire, and all the high officials and the king's counselors saw concerning these young overcomers that the fire had no effect on their bodies and that the hair of their heads was not singed, nor had their clothes been affected, nor had the smell of fire come

upon them (v. 27).

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him and changed the king's word and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God" (v. 28). The three young overcomers did not simply frustrate the king's word—they changed it. Instead of caring for Nebuchadnezzar's word, they changed it in nature and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god other than their own God.

Nebuchadnezzar went on to make a decree that any people, nation, or language that spoke something offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego should be cut into pieces and their houses should be made a dunghill, because there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way (v. 29). Then the king caused the three young overcomers to prosper in the province of Babylon (v. 30).

The three young overcomers gained the victory over the seduction of idol worship. The whole universe saw their rejection of that devilish worship. Thus, God could boast to Satan that even in his territory, He had a people worshipping Him. They did not care for Satan. Today, in this dark age, everything seems to be discouraging. But there is still a group of overcomers to stand against the tide and to carry out God's worship, testimony, and interest on earth. (*Life-study of Daniel*, msg. 5)

Discussion Questions:

1. Fellowship among yourselves how sometimes we find ourselves in a furnace; did you realize that the Lord was with you in that situation?
2. How can we experience the Lord's presence in hard circumstances?
3. Do you have companions to pray with, to be with, and to go through things with?

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Seven

Joseph and Mary—Obedience, Cooperation, and Surrender

Scripture Reading: Matt. 1:18-24; Luke 1:26-38

- I. Joseph and Mary were poor people who lived in the despised region of Galilee in the city of Nazareth—Luke 1:26:**
 - A. Joseph was a descendant of David's son Solomon, whereas Mary was a descendant of Nathan, another son of David—Matt. 1:16; Luke 1:27.
 - B. When these two were married, however, both were poor, so they lived in Nazareth, a despised city in Galilee, which was a despised region—v. 26.
- II. According to Matthew 1:19-25, the birth of Christ was carried out with Joseph's obedience and cooperation:**
 - A. The conception of the Lord Jesus is a mysterious matter; He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary—v. 18.
 - B. Joseph and Mary had not come together as man and wife, yet Mary was pregnant; this caused Joseph to doubt about their marriage—vv. 18-20; Luke 1:26.
 - C. At this juncture an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, because "that which has been begotten [born] in her is of the Holy Spirit."—Matt. 1:20.
 - D. Joseph's pondering afforded God an opportunity to speak to him and to lead him—vv. 20-23.
 - E. "I would take this opportunity to say a word to the young people: Do not make decisions too fast or act too quickly; be a little slow and give the Lord a chance to come in; at least, give the matter another night." (*Life-study of Matthew*, p. 56)
 - F. Joseph obeyed the word of the angel—v. 24.
 - G. The bringing forth of Christ cost him a great deal, for it caused him to suffer shame.
- III. According to Luke 1:26-38, the birth of Christ was carried out through Mary's surrender:**
 - A. "Here I would say a word to the young people; it was not easy for a young virgin like Mary to accept the commission to conceive a child; if I had been she, I would have said, 'Lord, if You would ask me to do anything other than this, I would do it.'" (*Life-study of Matthew*, p. 55)
 - B. After listening to the word of the angel, Mary said, "Behold, the slave of the Lord; may it happen to me according to your word"—Luke 1:38.
 - C. This may appear simple, but the price was extremely high.
 - D. To bring forth Christ, Mary paid a very high price—the cost of her whole being.
- IV. Although Mary was a young woman, she was very knowledgeable concerning the Old Testament and could quote verses from it in her praise to God—vv. 46-55:**
 - A. Mary's praise indicates that in order for us to be used by God, we need to have certain qualifications; one qualification is the proper knowledge of the Word of God.
 - B. "I hope that the young people in particular will learn of Mary in this matter; do you intend to be used by the Lord to bring forth something of the Lord...? If so, then you need to be qualified by being filled with the Scriptures, filled with the Word of God." (*Life-study of Luke*, p. 34)

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Seven—Verse Sheet

Joseph and Mary—Obedience, Cooperation, and Surrender

Scripture Reading:

Matt. 1:18-24

- 18 Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother, Mary, after she had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together, was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.
- 19 And Joseph her husband, being righteous and not willing to disgrace her openly, intended to send her away secretly.
- 20 But while he pondered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife, for that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.
- 21 And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.
- 22 Now all this has happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,
- 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel” (which is translated, God with us).
- 24 And when Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to himself his wife.

Luke 1:26-38

- 26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
- 27 To a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
- 28 And he came to her and said, Rejoice, you who have been graced! The Lord is with you.
- 29 And she was greatly troubled at this saying and began reasoning what kind of greeting this might be.
- 30 And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God.
- 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.
- 32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of David His father,
- 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.
- 34 But Mary said to the angel, How will this be, since I have not known a man?
- 35 And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God.
- 36 And behold, Elizabeth your relative, she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who is called barren,
- 37 Because no word will be impossible with God.
- 38 And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Seven—Group Time

Joseph and Mary—Obedience, Cooperation, and Surrender

Verses for Pray-reading:

Matt. 1:21, 23 And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins...“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel” (which is translated, God with us).

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Through Mary's Surrender

According to Luke 1:26-38, the birth of Christ was carried out through Mary's surrender. Here I would say a word to the young people. It was not easy for a young virgin like Mary to accept the commission to conceive a child. If I had been she, I would have said, “Lord, if You would ask me to do anything other than this, I would do it. But You ask me to conceive a child! This is not humanly possible; it is neither moral nor ethical. I can't do it!” For us to read this record is easy. However, suppose a young sister among us were to receive such a commission tonight. Could she accept it? This is not an insignificant matter. Mary might have said, “Gabriel, don't you know that I am espoused to a man already? How can I conceive a child?” Who among us would accept such a commission? If an angel spoke such a word to you, could you accept it?

After listening to the angel, Mary said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). This may appear simple, but the price was extremely high. To bring forth Christ Mary paid a very high price—the cost of her whole being. It is not easy to bring forth Christ; it is not cheap. If we would bring forth Christ, we must pay a price. Mary did.

Joseph reacted immediately, planning that he would put Mary away secretly (Matt. 1:19). Thus, Mary was in trouble. I assure you, whenever you accept the commission to bring forth Christ, you will find yourself in trouble. All the angels will understand you, but not one human being will understand. Do not expect anyone to

be like the angel Gabriel. Everyone will misunderstand you. In fact, the person closest to you may misunderstand you the most. Nevertheless, in large measure, the birth of Christ was accomplished through Mary's surrender.

Of the Holy Spirit's Power

However, Mary's surrender was not directly related to the conceiving of Jesus. The conceiving of Jesus was directly related to the Holy Spirit (vv. 18, 20; Luke 1:35). Without the Holy Spirit, Mary's surrender would have meant nothing. No matter how much we may surrender, without the power of the Holy Spirit our surrender means nothing. Do not estimate your surrender too highly. Our surrender means little; it simply affords the opportunity for the Holy Spirit's power to come into us and accomplish something.

Joseph's Obedience and Coordination

Although there was the sovereignty of God, the surrender of Mary, and the power of the Holy Spirit, there was the need of Joseph's obedience and coordination (Matt. 1:19-21, 24-25). What would have happened if Joseph had insisted on a divorce? He was planning this. However, he was the person selected by God for the birth of Christ. Therefore, he was not so rough and quick; rather, he was considerate and thoughtful. Because at that time Joseph was a young man, I would take this opportunity to say a word to the young people: Do not make decisions too fast or act too quickly. Be a little slow and give the Lord a chance to come in. At least, give the matter another night. During that night,

the angel may come and speak to you. This happened to Joseph. While he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream (v. 20). Joseph obeyed the word of the angel.

Suppose you were engaged to a young girl and discovered that she was with child. Would

you still take her? To take such a woman would surely be a shame. Therefore, not only Mary paid a price, but Joseph also paid a price. The bringing forth of Christ cost him a great deal, for it caused him to suffer shame. (*Life-study of Matthew*, msg. 5)

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we give the Lord the chance to come in when we make decisions?
2. What are some of the ways we can be misunderstood by those close to us when we choose to follow Christ?
3. What are some ways we can be filled with a proper knowledge of the Word of God?

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Eight

The Lord Jesus—Tempted in All Respects Like Us

Scripture Reading: Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15; 2:18

- I. After being baptized in water and anointed with the Spirit of God, Jesus, as a man, moved according to the leading of the Spirit; the Spirit led the anointed King to be tempted by the devil—Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:1; Heb. 4:15; 2:18:**
- A. Matthew 4:2 says the Lord fasted forty days and forty nights; these forty days and forty nights were a time of testing and suffering—cf. Deut. 9:9, 18; 1 Kings 19:8.
 - B. The Lord was led to fast for forty days and forty nights; after these forty days and forty nights, He was physically hungry, and the tempter came to Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves of bread”—Matt. 4:3:
 - 1. This first test was in the matter of human living, in the matter of making a living; the matter of our living touches us deeply, and even the Lord Jesus was tested regarding it.
 - 2. The tempter tempted the new King to take His position as the Son of God; but He answered with the word of the Scriptures, “Man,” indicating that He stood in the position of man to deal with the enemy—v. 4.
 - a. This word indicates that the Lord Jesus took the word of God in the Scriptures as His bread and lived on it.
 - b. This word reveals that while the Lord Jesus was fasting, He was eating; physically He was fasting, but spiritually He was eating.
 - C. The second test is a matter of religion; the most exciting thing in religion is miracles; according to the human concept, any religion that does not have miracles is powerless; the most powerful religion is a religion of miracles—vv. 5-6:
 - 1. If the devil does not tempt us in the matter of our living, he will tempt us in the matter of religion; you may desire to be a great one in religion, to be recognized as a powerful person.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus said to Satan, “You shall not test the Lord your God”; do not test God; do not go to the wing of the temple and cast yourself down; the Lord Jesus overcame the tempter by not taking his proposal to test God—v. 7.
 - D. The third temptation is a matter of worldly glory, promotion, ambition, position, and a promising future; all this is the glory of the world—vv. 8-9; Luke 4:6; John 12:31:
 - 1. The temptations of the subtle one always come in this way: firstly, in human living; secondly, in religion; and thirdly, in worldly glory; in any temptation, all three of these items will be present.
 - 2. The new King rebuked the devil’s presentation and defeated him by standing on the ground of man to worship and serve God only—Matt. 4:10:
 - a. The Lord seemed to be saying to Satan, “Satan, as a man, I, Jesus, worship God and serve Him only; you are God’s enemy, and I will never worship you; I don’t care for the glory of the world or for the kingdoms of the world; Satan, get away from Me!”
 - b. The Lord Jesus overcame every aspect of the enemy’s temptation; therefore, as the One who passed the test, the Lord Jesus was qualified to be the King of the kingdom of the heavens.
- II. The devil’s temptation of the first man, Adam, was a success; his temptation of the second man, Christ, was an absolute failure; this indicates that he will have no place in the new King’s kingdom of the heavens.**

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Eight—Verse Sheet

The Lord Jesus—Tempted in All Respects Like Us

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 4:1-11

- 1 Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.
- 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He became hungry.
- 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves of bread.
- 4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
- 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and set Him on the wing of the temple,
- 6 And said to Him, If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, "To His angels He shall give charge concerning You, and on their hands they shall bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone."
- 7 Jesus said to him, Again, it is written, "You shall not test the Lord your God."
- 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
- 9 And he said to Him, All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me.
- 10 Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."
- 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Hebrews 4:15-16

- 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.
- 16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Hebrews 2:18

For being tempted in that which He Himself has suffered, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Eight—Group Time

The Lord Jesus—Tempted in All Respects Like Us

Verses for Pray-reading:

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.”

Heb. 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

First of all, the Spirit led the anointed King to be tempted by the Devil. This temptation was a test to prove that He was qualified to be the King for the kingdom of the heavens. The Greek word translated Devil is *diabolos*, meaning accuser, slanderer (Rev. 12:9-10). The Devil, who is Satan, accuses us before God and slanders us before man.

[Matthew 4:2] says the Lord fasted forty days and forty nights. These forty days and forty nights were a time of testing and suffering (Deut. 9:9, 18; 1 Kings 19:8). The newly anointed King was led by the Spirit to fast such a period of time that He might enter into His kingly ministry.

To Change Stones into Loaves of Bread

The first test was in the matter of human living, in the matter of making a living. Our relatives and in-laws, especially those of the older generation, are always concerned about how we shall make our living. They may say, “It is all right to love the Lord, but do not love Him in a foolish way. You must consider your need to make a good living.”

The Lord was led to fast for forty days and forty nights. After these forty days and forty nights, He was physically hungry, and the tempter came to Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, speak, that these stones may become loaves of bread” (v. 3). To this proposal the Lord replied, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God” (v. 4). Many Christians think that because the Lord was fasting during this time He did not eat anything. However, this word reveals that while the Lord Jesus was fasting, He was eating. Physically He was fasting, but spiritually He was eating.

The first test we must pass is the test regarding our living. We must care for the spiritual food more than for the physical food. Whether we live or die is secondary. We only care that our spirit is fed, that our spirit feasts on the Word of God, on God Himself.

Verse 4 says, “But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.” The tempter tempted the new King to take His position as the Son of God. But He answered with the Word of the Scriptures, “Man,” indicating that He stood in the position of man to deal with the enemy. The demons addressed Jesus as the Son of God (8:29), but the evil spirits did not confess that Jesus came in the flesh (1 John 4:3), because by confessing Jesus as a man, they would be defeated. Although the demons confess Jesus as the Son of God, the Devil does not want people to believe that He is the Son of God, because in so doing they will be saved (John 20:31).

The word “man” spoken by the Lord Jesus to the tempter was a killing word. The Lord seemed to be saying, “Satan, don’t tempt me to assume My position as the Son of God. I am here as a man. If I were only the Son of God, I could never be here, and I could never be tempted by you. But because I am a man, I am being tempted. Satan, I know that you are not afraid of the Son of God, but you are afraid of man. The first man, the man whom God created to defeat you and to fulfill His purpose, was defeated by you. Thus, God sent Me as the second man to defeat you. Now you are tempting Me to leave My position as a man to assume My position as the Son of God. But I tell you, Satan, I am standing here as a man.”

Tempted to Make a Show That God Would Protect Him

Verse 5 says, "Then the Devil took Him into the holy city and set Him on the wing of the temple." The Devil's first temptation of the new King was in the matter of human living. Defeated in this, he turned his second temptation to religion, tempting the new King to demonstrate that He is the Son of God from the wing of the temple. In verse 6 the Devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, He shall give charge to His angels concerning You, and on their hands they shall bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone." There was no need for the Lord Jesus to do this. It was simply a temptation to show that as the Son of God He was able to do things in a miraculous way. Any thought of doing things miraculously in religion is a temptation of the Devil.

The second test is a matter of religion. The most exciting thing in religion is miracles. According to the human concept, any religion that does not have miracles is powerless; the most powerful religion is a religion of miracles. Therefore, Satan brought the new King to the wing of the temple and tempted Him to leap down from it by saying that the angels would protect Him. Do not think that you have never had the thought of doing this kind of thing.... When the Devil tempted Jesus to cast Himself down from the wing of the temple, Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (v. 7). Because the Lord Jesus defeated him the first time by quoting the Scriptures, the tempter imitated His way and in his second temptation tempted Him by also quoting the Scriptures, however in a subtle way. To quote the Scriptures concerning something in one aspect requires us to take care of the other aspect as well, in order to be safeguarded from

the deception of the tempter. This was what the new King did here to counter the tempter's second temptation. Many times we need to tell the tempter, "Again it is written."

Tempted to Gain the Kingdoms of the World and Their Glory

Verses 8 and 9 say, "Again, the Devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me." Defeated in his temptation in the religious sphere, the Devil presented his third temptation to the new King, this time in the realm of the glory of this world. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...The third temptation is a matter of worldly glory, promotion, ambition, position, and a promising future. All this is the glory of the world.

Luke 4:6 says that the kingdoms of the world and their glory were delivered unto the Devil; hence, to whomever he wills he gives them. Before his fall, Satan as the archangel was appointed by God to be the ruler of the world (Ezek. 28:13-14). Thus, he is called the ruler of this world (John 12:31), holding all the kingdoms of this world and their glory in his hand. He presented all these to the newly anointed King as a temptation in order to secure worship. The heavenly King overcame this temptation, but the coming Antichrist will not (Rev. 13:2, 4).

In verse 10 the Lord Jesus said, "Go, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve"...The Lord seemed to be saying to Satan, "Satan, as a man, I, Jesus, worship God and serve Him only. You are God's enemy, and I will never worship you. I don't care for the glory of the world or for the kingdoms of the world. Satan, get away from Me!" (*Life-study of Matthew*, msg. 11)

Discussion Questions:

1. Consider together how the first temptation applies to us today.
2. Fellowship together whether you have had the thought to do or see a miracle to prove that the Lord is real and to vindicate yourself.
3. Discuss how the third temptation is a strong attraction to us today.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Nine

The Lord Jesus—As the Servant of Jehovah

Scripture Reading: Isa. 53:2; 52:14; Matt. 2:21-23; 4:18-22; 19:13-15; John 1:45-46

I. The Lord Jesus' lowly birth and suffering in His humanity:

- A. The Lord Jesus was the Lord of the universe, the great God, but He became an infant; He went from being lofty to being lowly, from being great to being small, and from being rich to being poor—Luke 2:7.
- B. Isaiah 53:2 says, “He grew up...like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him.”
 - 1. *Dry ground* signifies a difficult environment; like a root out of dry ground, He grew up in the midst of hard circumstances.
 - 2. Our Lord was born to a poor carpenter's family, became the son of a carpenter, and grew up in the city of Nazareth of the despised region of Galilee—John 1:45-46; 7:52; Matt. 2:21-23; 13:53-57; Mark 6:3.
 - 3. He did not have a physically attractive form nor an appearance that people would desire; Isaiah 52:14 says, “Even as many were astonished at Him — / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men.”:
 - a. The Jews thought the Messiah would be admired by people, like Moses and David, who were attractive in appearance—Acts 7:20; 1 Sam. 16:12.
 - b. The Jews never thought the Messiah, the anointed One of God, Christ the Servant of God, would grow up in Nazareth of Galilee like a root out of dry ground, having no attractiveness or majesty.
- C. Our Lord is altogether lovely, altogether beautiful, and altogether rich, but these features are not visible to the naked eyes; only spiritual eyes can see them.

II. Christ expressed in His humanity the bountiful God in His rich attributes through His aromatic virtues:

- A. The record in the four Gospels shows that when some people brought their little children to Jesus that He might lay His hands on them and pray, they were rebuked by the disciples—Matt. 19:13-15:
 - 1. But Jesus said, “Allow the little children and do not prevent them from coming to Me, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens”—v. 14.
 - 2. God has chosen the foolish, the weak, the lowborn, and the despised of the world; throughout the generations according to His love, forbearance, and forgiving grace, He has called, one by one, those who are weak and have nothing, who are like the little children—1 Cor. 1:27-28.
- B. Furthermore, Christ in His humanity expressed God through His aromatic virtues by which He attracted and captivated people:
 - 1. The record in Matthew 4 shows that when the Lord Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Peter, John, and James, who were either fishing or mending nets with their fathers.
 - 2. Then He called them, saying, “Come after Me”; immediately, they followed Him, giving up their net mending, abandoning their boats, and forsaking their father—vv. 18-22.
 - 3. At that time the Lord Jesus must have displayed an aromatic power in His countenance and His voice that could really attract and captivate people.

- C. Christ expressed His aromatic virtues by which He attracted and captivated people, not by living His human life in the flesh but by living His divine life in resurrection—John 5:19, 30.
 - D. When the attributes of God became the virtues of Christ in His humanity, these virtues were very aromatic and sweet; this is why so many people throughout the centuries have been captivated by Jesus and love Jesus—Heb. 12:2.
- III. Today the kind of living we have depends upon the kind of life by which we live in our physical body; we must not live by the human life but by the divine life—Gal. 2:20.**

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Nine—Verse Sheet

The Lord Jesus—As the Servant of Jehovah

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 53:2

For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him.

Isaiah 52:14

Even as many were astonished at Him — / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men —

Matthew 2:21-23

- 21 And he arose and took the child and His mother and entered into the land of Israel.
22 But because he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and having been divinely instructed in a dream, he departed into the regions of Galilee.
23 And he came and settled in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Matthew 4:18-22

- 18 And while He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
19 And He said to them, Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men.
20 And immediately leaving the nets, they followed Him.
21 And going on from there, He saw another two brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.
22 And immediately leaving the boat and their father, they followed Him.

Matthew 19:13-15

- 13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.
14 But Jesus said, Allow the little children and do not prevent them from coming to Me, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens.
15 And after He laid His hands on them, He went on from there.

John 1:45-46

- 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.
46 And Nathanael said to him, Can anything good be from Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Nine—Group Time

The Lord Jesus—As the Servant of Jehovah

Verses for Pray-reading:

- Isa. 53:2** For He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him.
- Isa. 52:14** Even as many were astonished at Him — / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men —

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**Growing Up Like a Tender Plant
and a Root out of Dry Ground,
Having No Attracting Form nor Majesty**

Isaiah 53:2 prophesies of Christ, saying, “He grew up like a tender plant before Him, / And like a root out of dry ground. / He has no attracting form nor majesty that we should look upon Him, / Nor beautiful appearance that we should desire Him.” In the Bible plants often typify humanity. For Christ to grow up like a tender plant before Jehovah means that Christ grew up before Him in His humanity. In His divinity Christ has always been perfect and complete, and thus there was no need for Him to grow in His divinity. However, He needed to grow in His humanity. First, He was born as a child, and then He grew up into boyhood and eventually into manhood.

He grew up in humanity not only like a tender plant but also like a root out of dry ground. *Dry ground* signifies a difficult environment. Our Lord was born to a poor carpenter's family, became the son of a carpenter, and grew up in the city of Nazareth of the despised region of Galilee (John 1:46; Matt 13:53-57). Like a root out of dry ground, He grew up in the midst of hard circumstances. He did not have a physically attractive form nor an appearance that people would desire. Isaiah 52:14 says, “Even as many were astonished at Him— / His visage was marred more than that of any man, / And His form more than that of the sons of men.” The Jews thought the Messiah would be admired by people, like Moses and David, who were attractive in appearance (Acts 7:20; 1 Sam. 16:12). The Jews also thought that when the Messiah came, there would be the royal scepter,

an open ceremony, and the support of the people. But they never thought the Messiah, the anointed One of God, Christ the Servant of God, would grow up in Nazareth of Galilee like a root out of dry ground. His visage and form were marred, having no attractiveness or majesty, such that He was reckoned as nearly fifty years old when He was thirty (John 8:57). This certainly astonished the Jews. Our Lord is altogether lovely, altogether beautiful, and altogether rich, but these features are not visible to the naked eyes; only spiritual eyes can see them. (*Truth Lessons, Level 4*, vol. 1, ch. 5)

**To Express in His Humanity
the Bountiful God in His Rich Attributes
through His Aromatic Virtues**

In His full ministry in the first stage of His incarnation, Christ also expressed in His humanity the bountiful God in His rich attributes through His aromatic virtues. No one can deny that the human virtues of Christ were aromatic; even when non-Christians read the four Gospels, they sense that the Jesus recorded in these books was a sweet and fragrant One, whose virtues were aromatic. This is because He expressed in His humanity the bountiful God in His rich attributes.

The record in the four Gospels shows that when some people brought their little children to Jesus that He might lay His hands on them and pray, they were rebuked by the disciples. But Jesus said, “Allow the little children and do not prevent them from coming to Me, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt. 19:13-15). The Lord's way was different from the disciples' way. The disciples did not act in accordance with

God's attributes. God has chosen the foolish, the weak, the lowborn, and the despised of the world (1 Cor. 1:27-28); throughout the generations according to His love, forbearance, and forgiving grace, He has called, one by one, those who are weak and have nothing, who are like the little children. In this way Christ expressed God's attributes in His humanity.

God is bountiful; hence, He is rich in His attributes, His characteristics. Only some of the rich attributes of the bountiful God were lived out by the Lord on the earth in His humanity and seen by men as the virtues expressed in His humanity, yet these virtues were so aromatic and sweet. In His human living Christ expressed the bountiful God mainly in His rich attributes, that is, in the unsearchable riches of what God is.

Furthermore, Christ in His humanity expressed God through His aromatic virtues by which He attracted and captivated people. The record in Matthew 4 shows that when the Lord Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Peter, John, and James, who were either fishing or mending nets with their fathers. Then He called them, saying, "Come after Me." Immediately, they followed Him, giving up their net mending, abandoning their boats, and forsaking their father (vv. 18-22). To this day I still do not

understand why it is that when He simply said, "Come after Me," the disciples forsook everything to follow Him. I truly believe that at that time the Lord Jesus must have displayed an aromatic power in His countenance and His voice that could really attract and captivate people.

Christ expressed His aromatic virtues by which He attracted and captivated people, not by living His human life in the flesh but by living His divine life in resurrection. He was in the flesh, but He did not live by His human life in His flesh; rather, He lived by His divine life in His resurrection. Today, as God-men, by which life do we live? No doubt, we are all in the flesh. Nevertheless, we can get out of the realm of the flesh and enter into resurrection to live by the divine life in resurrection, that is, in the divine and mystical realm.

Today the kind of living we have depends upon the kind of life by which we live in our physical body. We must not live by the human life but by the divine life. Galatians 2:20 says, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." This means that we should not live the life of the old "I" but the life of the new "I." (*How to be an Elder and Co-worker and How to Fulfill Their Obligations*, ch. 1)

Discussion Questions:

1. Consider together with your group how the Lord's outward appearance and family situation affected Him.
2. Discuss how He was able to attract people, even when He was outwardly not attractive.
3. Share together how His aromatic virtues became so pleasant to the ones He encountered.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Ten

Peter—Tested and Failed but Not Forsaken

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:69-72; 16:7; John 20:21-22; Acts 1:15-16a; 2:14

I. Peter is our pattern for the building up of the church; he was faithful to the Lord's vision, though not in himself; he failed in himself, yet he succeeded in Christ:

- A. Peter is our representative; as far as our natural life is concerned, we are all Peter; God shows through failure the kind of person one is.
- B. The Lord took special care to train Peter in a particular way; he was trained concerning Christ's being the Son of God, concerning the building up of the church, and concerning the pathway of the cross; he was dealt with on the Mount of Transfiguration and corrected regarding the paying of the poll tax—Matt. 16:13-27; 17:1-9, 24-27.
 - 1. Under God's sovereignty the environment would not let Peter go until he had been tested to the uttermost, that he might realize that he was absolutely untrustworthy and should no longer have any confidence in himself.
 - 2. For the kingdom, we must have another life and be another person; only after we have passed through all the tests and have suffered all the defeats and failures will we realize our need for another life—Gal. 2:20.
 - 3. After denying the Lord three times, Peter wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62), but God's mercy was upon him.

II. "But go, tell His disciples and Peter"—Mark 16:7:

- A. Three days before the resurrection, Peter committed a great sin in denying the Lord (Matt. 10:33); after His resurrection, the Lord had the women tell the disciples "and Peter" about His resurrection; the words *and Peter* have a very deep meaning—Mark 16:7.
- B. When you want to come close to the Lord, but feel that you are very far from Him and have no strength to come near to Him, you need to remember the words *and Peter*.
- C. The more Peter fell, the more the Lord wanted to remember him; although Peter dared not come too close to the Lord, the Lord's heart attracted him and kept him from running away from Him:
 - 1. May we not misunderstand the Lord's heart; when we hear the words *and Peter*, we should know that the Lord has not forsaken us.
 - 2. The Lord did not desert Peter, and neither has He forsaken you; *and Peter* means "and you"—"you" who have failed like Peter.

III. In the four Gospels Peter often behaved in a foolish, nonsensical manner; but in chapter 1 of Acts Peter is a very different person; "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers and said, Men, brothers..."—Acts 1:15-17; cf. 2:14.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Ten—Verse Sheet

Peter—Tested and Failed but Not Forsaken

Scripture Reading:

Mark 14:69-72

- 69 And the servant girl, seeing him, began again to say to those standing by, This man is one of them!
- 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while, those standing by again said to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean as well.
- 71 But he began to curse and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak!
- 72 And immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered the word, how Jesus had said to him, Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times. And thinking upon it, he wept.

Mark 16:7

But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.

John 20:21-22

- 21 Then Jesus said to them again, Peace be to you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.
- 22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:15-16a

- 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers and said (there was a group of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty),
- 16 Men, brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who seized Jesus;

Acts 2:14

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them: Men of Judea, and all who are dwelling in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

PATTERNS OF LIVING AN OVERCOMING LIFE ON THE LINE OF LIFE

Message Ten—Group Time

Peter—Tested and Failed but Not Forsaken

Verses for Pray-reading:

- Mark 16:7** But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.
- Acts 2:14** But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them: Men of Judea, and all who are dwelling in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Please consider this: If He was willing to go to the cross because He loved you, would He stop loving you just because you failed, fell, and backslid? Would the love He had on the cross decrease? It may be very easy for you not to love Him, draw near to Him, or return to Him; but it is impossible for Him to forget you, forsake you, or not love you. During the three days after the Lord was crucified, Peter was silent because he had fallen. But the Lord did not forget him. Therefore, if you do not have the strength to come to the Lord, as long as you are willing to believe in His words, He will give you the strength to draw near to Him. If you fall, He can make you rise up again. Although it seems that you will not be able to draw near to Him anymore, remember in faith the words “and Peter,” and you will be able to draw near to Him. When you want to come close to the Lord, but feel that you are very far from Him and have no strength to come near to Him, you need to remember the words “and Peter.” The more Peter fell, the more the Lord wanted to remember him. Although Peter dared not come too close to the Lord, the Lord’s heart attracted him and kept him from running away from Him. May you not misunderstand the Lord’s heart. If you ever hear the words “and Peter,” you should know that the Lord has not forsaken you. The Lord did not desert Peter, and neither has He forsaken you. “And Peter” means “and you”—“you” who have failed like Peter. May you see the Lord’s heart for you. If you see the Lord’s heart, you will run toward Him. (*And Peter*)

When we were saved, we thought that since our sins were forgiven, they would never come back to us. We felt that once we had joy and

peace, they would abide with us forever. Unfortunately, the sins and temptations came back. There were fewer high experiences, and low experiences became common. There were fewer joyful times, and sorrowful times became common. In these circumstances, we experience two things. On the one hand, temptations, pride, jealousy, and temper return. On the other hand, we endeavor to suppress ourselves. As soon as these sins come back, we struggle to suppress them and to stop them from manifesting themselves. Those who are successful in suppressing themselves think that they have overcome. Those who have failed live in a cycle of failure, victory, sin, and remorse.

Brothers and sisters, I would like to ask you a question before God: When the Lord Jesus went to the cross, did He expect us to have the kind of experience we have today? When He was crucified on the cross, did He know that our life would be victorious one day and defeated the next? Is His blood shed on the cross only sufficient to save us from the coming eternal pain of sin, without saving us from the pain of sin today? Oh, brothers and sisters, I cannot refrain from saying “Hallelujah!” The Lord has accomplished everything on the cross! When He was on the cross, He dealt not only with the pain of hell but also with the pain of sin. In other words, His redemptive work has given us not only the position and basis to be saved in a shallow way, but also the position and basis to be saved to the uttermost. We do not have to live the way we do today. We have to say “Hallelujah!” because there is a gospel for sinners and a gospel for “Christian sinners”! The gospel for Christian sinners is preached in the same way that the

cross was preached to us before. Hallelujah! There is a gospel today for Christian sinners! (*The Overcoming Life*, ch. 2)

The Spirit of reality did come on the day of Christ's resurrection, and Peter was probably the first one to be infused with this Spirit. This explains why the Peter in the first chapter of Acts is so different from the Peter in the Gospels. In the Gospels, Peter often spoke in a non-sensical way. In Acts 1, however, Peter did not speak like this. Rather, when he stood up to speak, he was transparent, crystal clear. Peter

became transparent because the Spirit of reality had entered into him. This wonderful Spirit, who had been infused into Peter, then reminded him of all the things he had seen and heard. This can be proved by Peter's own writings. For instance, in 2 Peter 1:16-18 he refers to the time he, James, and John were with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. This indicates that the Spirit of reality had reminded him of that event and had shown him the significance of it. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 1)

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced failure and disappointment? Fellowship concerning what you can do in light of this message.
2. In what ways does Peter give us a pattern of an overcoming life?
3. Discuss why it seems so easy to relate to Peter, and how we see ourselves in his life.

1 Choose to Be an Overcomer

1. Noah's life was one that surely changed
the age,
When he found the grace of God;
He was not afraid to stand against
the world,
So he built the ark of wood.

Chorus:

Would you choose to be a living overcomer,
Be a person not ashamed to be a Jesus lover,
One who eats the tree of life,
And drinks the living water?
Would you choose to be a living overcomer,
To leave the world and consecrate
To be today's age-turner?
I give myself to You for Your return.

2. Moses was a person who was called by God,
He was meant to turn the age;
He was God's companion, he was for
God's move,
He was faithful, meek, and sage.
3. Samuel ministered to be a God-pleasing
priest,
He was absolute for Him;
Samuel gave himself to be a Nazarite,
Saved from death, the world, and sin.
4. Daniel had companions, and they ate
God's Word,
From the world, they stood apart;
Through a praying spirit were aligned
with God,
For His people, God's own heart.

Chorus:

I will choose to be a living overcomer,
Be a person not ashamed to be a Jesus lover,
One who eats the tree of life,
And drinks the living water.
I will give myself to be an overcomer,
To see a heav'nly vision,
Keep my flaming spirit burning!
I give myself to You, to turn this age.

2 Back in my Father's house again

1. I'm so happy here,
With my Father dear,
Once lost, now I'm near again!
(It was) First His smiling face,
Then His warm embrace,
I'm surprised by grace again!

Chorus:

I was lost, now I'm found again!
I was dead, but now I live!
Come rejoice with us, and be merry then.
Back in my Father's house again!

2. Robe, ring, sandals on
And my hunger's gone!
Back where I belong , again!
(Because He) Clothed me thoroughly,
(And then He) Reinstated me!
(Now I'm) Back in the family again!

3 Wherever you go, I will go,

1. Wherever you go, I will go,
Wherever you dwell, I will dwell;
Your people will be my people,
And your God will be my God.
Wherever you go, I will go,
Wherever you dwell, I will dwell;
Your people will be my people,
And your God will be my God.
2. Wherever you die, I will die;
And there will I be buried.
Jehovah do to me, and more as well,
If anything but death parts me from you.
Jehovah do to me, and more as well,
If anything but death parts me from you.

4 Reigning in life

1. The heavenly vision
Concerning the function
Of God's chosen people on earth today
Controls and directs us,
Restricts and perfects us
To minister Christ and close this age!

Chorus:

Reigning in life:
Being ruled by the Spirit,
Restricted and limited;
Reigning in life:
To bring in God's kingdom
And realize the kingdom life.

2. A time of confinement
To seek the experience
In being alone with our Lord today
And speak forth with boldness
The dreams of our father,
Discipling the nations to close this age!

5 This is the year of jubilee

1. The Lord has given freedom
To all who just believe Him.
Be no longer enslaved.
Come now! Return to Jesus.
Receive the Life that frees us!
Call on Him and be saved.

Chorus:

This is the year of jubilee!
Proclaim our liberty in Him!
Throughout the land we sound out:
The slaves have been returned to Him,
Released from toil, anxiety, and sin!
This is the year of jubilee!

2. Reclaim the land, our portion,
God as our rich possession.
Feast on Him ev'ry day!
Enjoy Him with God's fam'ly;
Find satisfaction and peace.

6 Hidden behind every scene

1. Hidden behind every scene,
Lovingly, sweetly operating,
One who is sovereign and wise,
Patiently guides even our eyes.
Look at My Son, the Beloved,
Sitting here at My right hand.
Jesus is King, yet He's bound,
He cannot move until His people
Give Him ground.

Chorus:

Lord, we see You! Lord, we love You!
Lord, we submit everything to You.
Each day, Your ruling and Your reigning
Brings a sweet supply.
Oh, what a rich blessing!
We're in the hand of our King.
Everything You hope to accomplish,
Do in me.

2. In us a small Kingdom seed,
Orders our steps, governs our deeds.
Jesus, enthroned in our hearts,
Gently He touches our every part.
Do you not know you're the temple
Of your God, King of Kings?
Through us our Lord has a way,
To rule and reign here on the earth
Day by day.

7 Come Forward

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot
Be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses,
But One who has been tempted in all respects like us,
Yet without sin, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come forward
With boldness to the throne of grace
That we may receive mercy and find grace
For timely help.

8 Do you love Me?

1. After breakfast on the seashore,
Jesus set about to restore
Peter's love, that he would henceforth
Not trust himself,
He committed some big failures,
Three times denying the Savior,
Then leading others to waver,
Yet Jesus said...

Chorus:

Do you love Me? Feed My lambs,
Do you love Me? Shepherd My sheep,
Do you love Me?
Then give My sheep something to eat.

2. We, like Peter, all have stumbled,
Such defeats make our strength crumble,
Our once proud hearts become humble,
We are so low,
In these moments the Lord comes in,
Seeking our love and affection,
As we listen, we can hear Him
Saying to us...
3. In these days the Lord is hindered
Because of a lack of shepherds
Who dispense the milk of the Word
To the lost sheep,
He needs man's cooperation,
To let Him shepherd from within,
Will you be one who is open
And say to Him...

Chorus:

Lord, I love You! I'll feed Your lambs,
Lord I love You! I'll shepherd Your sheep,
Lord I love You!
I'll give Your sheep something to eat.

9 In this godless age

1. In this godless age,
Lord, You need some Samuels.
Burdened with a vision clear of Your
economy.
Where's Your ark today?
And the ones who'd care for You
E'en to put themselves aside
To gain Your heart's desire?

Chorus:

Raise up some to meet Your need,
Some Nazarites—
Prophets, priests, and judges
And men of prayer,
Speaking forth Your word
With Your authority;
A photo of Your heart for Your move.

2. Train us up today,
Full of vision, seeking You.
We'd await Your timing,
Fully subject to Your will.
Treasuring Your face
Staying in Your presence, Lord
E'en the very index of Your eye
Would we obey.

Chorus:

Raise up some to meet Your need,
Some Nazarites,
To bring in Your kingdom
On earth today,
Taking You as King
That You might return
To usher in the end of the age.

10 The day approaches; Jesus soon is coming

1. The day approaches; Jesus soon is coming.
Redeem the time; it must not slip away.
Lord, make us ready for the cry:
“Behold Him!”

By using every moment of each day.

When Jesus comes,
Will we go in to meet Him?
When Jesus comes,
Will we from self have ceased?
He’s coming soon
To take the wise ones with Him.
Oh, let us not be left outside the feast.

2. Lord, help us to redeem these golden moments;
Our vessels fill with ointment from above;
Help us amen each trial and tribulation;
Increase in us; make us abound in love.

He’s coming soon—
These moments are so precious.
The oil is here—
Oh, let us buy the more.
Amen the trials
And welcome tribulations—
The kingdom’s ours
Through these afflictions sore.

3. Lord, ever turn us from our soulish pleasures
To gaze upon Thy tender, loving face.
Oh, keep us running forth
To meet the Bridegroom
And patiently attending to the race.

When Jesus comes,
Will we be in His presence?
When Jesus comes,
Will we His face behold?
Oh, let us not return to sloth and folly,
But jealously His loving presence hold.

4. As His dear Bride,
Let us go forth to meet Him,
Our lamps well-trimmed,
Our fires burning bright,
Our vessels filled, our eyes set on His glory,
To be with Him completely satisfied.

Yes, satisfied—
Christ and His Bride together,
Yes, satisfied—throughout eternity.
Oh, what a rest, what joy,
What love, what favor
To be His Bride
When He comes to His feast!

11 Kiss the Son

Chorus:

Kiss the Son, kiss the One
Who for love to me has come,
Cheering me, charming me,
And has died upon the tree,
He died for me, saving me,
Now His Spirit joins to me,
I’ve kissed the Son!

1. Serving in my mingled spirit
In the gospel of His Son,
First receiving Christ the Spirit;
He’s the processed Triune One.
2. Jesus Christ in our experience
Is the worship God desires;
This true worshipping in spirit
Is the service God requires.
3. Serving Christ, just let Him kiss you,
Living with Him all the day,
Worshipping God by our living
Is the gospel-serving way.
4. In the Body let us serve Him,
Nothing natural, there, can be;
Through Christ’s death and resurrection,
Worship in reality.

12 Matt. 24:27

For just as the lightning comes forth from the east
And shines to the west
For just as the lightning comes forth from the east
And shines to the west
So will the coming of the Son of Man be
As the lightning comes forth from the east

Come Lord Jesus!
Grow in us,
Make us ready for Your coming.
Gain our hearts, our love, gain Your bride!
Make us those, who bring You back.

13 Steal me away

Chorus:

Steal me away, I want to be well-pleasing to You.
Through all my time with You, would You fill
me through and through?
You're coming as a thief, my house will be
broken into, so
while I still have today, make me precious to You.

1. Lord, restore the years the locusts have eaten.
You redeemed me from a life that is fleeting;
A life of much activity, but no concern for
Your deep need.
May we find grace like Noah in Your eyes.
2. We can choose, will we be foolish or prudent
Vessels filled when we go forth to meet Him?
We'll be with our Bridegroom sweet, and
we'll enjoy the wedding feast.
May we grasp every opportunity.
3. When we rise, we must make time in the
morning.
Lord, You'll hear, our voices singing and
praising.
Lord, grow in us day by day, make us stones,
transform the clay;
Constitute us the men of preciousness.
4. We must not forsake assembling together
As we see the day draw nearer and nearer.
Thus together we'll possess, the vast
dimensions of this Christ.
May we be those who hasten Your return.

14 God needs the overcomers

1. God used John, the Baptist,
Who left his home and good past;
Left the religion of his age.
He turned from the oldness,
And spoke the Word with boldness,
"Repent and leave this crooked age."

Chorus:

God needs the overcomers,
"Our dear Lord Jesus" lovers!
Make us those who live to turn the age!
God needs the overcomers,
"Our dear Lord Jesus" lovers!
Make us those who consummate the age!

2. God called Saul of Tarsus,
For His own plan and purpose,
Who became Paul, the apostle;
He saw a heav'nly vision,
Where there is no division,
In the one Body of the Lord.
3. God called Timothy, now,
Like-souled with Paul, who knew how
To pray and be soaked in the Word;
His spirit fanned into flame,
Lord, make my spirit the same,
An overcoming man of God!

Make us the overcomers,
Christ's Bride, and God's age-turners.
Make us those who consummate the age!

15 They walked along the road

1. They walked along the road:
Two disciples, all alone,
Their Master dead and gone.
A man to them drew near,
Spoke to them and calmed their fears,
They told Him everything.

(He said:)
Why don't you believe?
For it was necessary
For the Christ to suffer all these things
And enter His glory.
Why don't you believe?
Why don't you believe?

2. They came to journey's end;
He came in to eat with them,
He blessed and broke the bread.
Then opened were their eyes;
Jesus Christ they recognized.
He disappeared from them.

(They said:)
Did not our hearts burn
As He spoke those words?
While we walked with Him
The Scriptures were opened.
Did not our hearts burn?
Did not our hearts burn?

3. We walk along our road
He reminds us we were told
"I'm with you every day".
No matter how we feel,
He's the Spirit, He is real,
Indwelling you and me.

(We say:)
Do not our hearts burn
When we hear His word?
Jesus Christ, within,
In resurrection lives!
Do not our hearts burn?
Do not our hearts burn?

16 Thou art my Beloved, the most lovely Beloved,

Thou art my Beloved,
The most lovely Beloved,
My heart and my soul are
Seeking after Thee;
Thou art my Beloved,
The most lovely Beloved,
My heart I open wide to Thee.

Come now! Fill me! With Thy Spirit!
Fill up this vessel! I belong to Thee!
Come now! Fill me! With Thy Spirit!
That I Your expression may be!

Come and fill me, Lord, to the brim!
Yes, Lord, even me!
Capture me, never let me win!
Come and fill me, Lord, to the brim!
Overflow in me!
Overcome in me!

17 Consecrated One

1. You need the Nazarites to turn this age.
Move in me to turn my heart and
consecrate.
Save me from all selfish seeking, search
my heart.
Set me free, make every bondage
break apart!

I need You, but You need me too,
To do what You want to do.
Rekindle all of my love for You,
To be a voluntarily consecrated one
2. You need the Nazarites to turn this age.
Strengthen us to overcome in these
last days—
All rebellion, natural affection, even death,
Worldly pleasures, every enjoyment of
the flesh.

I need You, but You need me too,
To do what You want to do.
Rekindle all of my love for You,
To be a voluntarily consecrated one.
3. Sanctify me absolutely,
Take my life and have Your way.
Overcome in me, give me victory
Through Your life and end this age.

I need You, but You need me too,
To do what You want to do.
Rekindle all of my love for You,
To be a voluntarily consecrated one.

18 Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return

Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall
return,
And come with singing unto Zion;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their head.

Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall
return,
And come with singing unto Zion;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their head.

They shall obtain gladness and joy;
And sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

19 Now the Lord is the Spirit!

1. Now the Lord is the Spirit—that's how
He can get inside of you right now.
It's so easy to be filled with Him.
He's made it really simple.
One, two, three—
That's how easy it can be.

Chorus:
O Lord! Amen!
That's the way to let Him in.
Hallelujah! I love to hear it.
He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
2. Now the Lord is the living air;
You can breathe Him in anywhere—
Anytime of day, whenever you please.
He's made it really easy.
O Lord! Amen!
Let's sing it again.
3. Now the Lord lives inside of me.
And He's filling me constantly.
Yes, He's filling up every gap.
He makes me really happy.
I'm so happy!
Hallelujah! Taste and see!

20 Whispers from above

1. There are times and times again,
When my love seems far away;
The hours would stretch, the days turn gray;
All the while, I know not how,
In my darkest hour, He prays
In the saints, oh, for my sake.

Chorus:

By a touch of His dear love,
By the sound of His sweet voice,
Whispers from above,
Spoken through men of clay.
And this world just fades away.
(Let this world just fade away.)

2. Blinded soul, I cannot see
What this world has done to me;
My heart grows cold and life would bleed;
Then He comes, knocks on my door,
Through the saints—and there they stand
With the Lord, oh, for my need!

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