

THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE MAJOR ITEMS OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY TODAY

(Thursday—First Morning Session)

Message One

The Recovery of the Economy of God

Scripture Reading: Acts 26:16-19; 1 Tim. 1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3;
Rom. 16:17; 2 Tim. 4:22

- I. We must walk in the truth of the heavenly vision of God's economy, of the mark of God's economy, and of the goal of God's economy; this vision must be renewed in us day by day to be the controlling vision of all our life, work, and activity—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:16-19; 1 John 1:7; 3 John 3-4:**
- A. God's economy is His plan to dispense Himself into His chosen, predestinated, and redeemed people as their life, their life supply, and their everything to produce, constitute, and build up the organic Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Titus 1:9; Col. 2:19.
 - B. The mark of God's economy, the strategic and central point of God's economy, is the indwelling, subjective Christ as the Spirit in our spirit, our mingled spirit—2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17:
 - 1. We must be narrowed down to and even zeroed in on the all-inclusive divine Spirit in our human spirit so that we may be kept from missing the mark of the divine economy—1 Tim. 1:6; Mal. 2:15-16; Rom. 1:9; 8:4, 6; Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:3; 2 Cor. 2:13.
 - 2. In the "blueprint" of God's original intention, man is the center of the entire universe, and the center of man is his spirit—Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27:
 - a. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, contain God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, express God, and be one with God—Zech. 12:1; John 4:24.
 - b. Without God being the Spirit and without our having a spirit to contact God, to be one with God, the whole universe is empty and we are nothing—Eccl. 1:2; 3:11; Job 32:8; cf. Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7.
 - 3. Christ as the life-giving Spirit can be everything to us when we live in and exercise our spirit; to live in our soul is to live in the principle of antichrist—Zech. 4:6; 12:1; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; 1 John 2:18-19.
 - 4. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness in our spirit; to be in our spirit is to be in Jerusalem, the place of simplicity and oneness, whereas to be in our mind is to be in Babylon, the place of confusion and division—John 4:24; Eph. 2:22; Rom. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.
 - 5. Our spirit is a "country" of grace to swallow up race for the one new man; our mind is a "country" of quarreling; to enjoy the Lord as the Spirit being in our spirit is to have grace with us; when this is lost, the degradation of the church is present—4:22; Gal. 6:18; 5:15; Col. 3:10-11.

- C. The goal of God's eternal economy is the reality of the organic Body of Christ, consummating in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:22-23; Rev. 21:2-3, 9-10:
 - 1. Without the local churches, there is no practical expression of the Body of Christ, and there can be no reality of the Body of Christ—1:10-13; 2:7.
 - 2. God's eternal economy is to obtain the Body of Christ; any work outside of this is not on the central lane of God's economy—Eph. 4:1-6, 11-16.
 - 3. We must follow the footsteps of the apostle Paul to bring all the saints into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:24; Rom. 16:1-20.
 - 4. For the Lord's recovery in this age, we must cooperate with the Lord to be the overcomers as today's Zion in today's Jerusalem (the church life) for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—Rev. 3:21-22; 14:1-5; Judg. 5:15-16, 31.
- D. Teachings that differ from the unique and healthy teaching of God's economy, the teaching of the apostles, separate us from the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as our life and our everything—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- E. Today we can be in one accord because we have only one vision, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 1:9-10; Jer. 32:39.

II. God's economy was unveiled through the apostles, but because the believers lost the proper understanding of God's economy, there is the need for it to be recovered by the Lord:

- A. The words *recovery* and *economy* refer to one thing as seen from two different viewpoints; with God it is a matter of economy; with us it is a matter of recovery—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9.
- B. *Recovery* means to go back to the beginning; we need to go back to the beginning, receiving the Lord's grace to go back to God's original intention, to what God ordained in the beginning—Matt. 19:8.
- C. There is a strong and solid principle that whenever the majority of the people of God fail to carry out God's purpose, God comes in to have a recovery; His recovery is always with the minority, with a remnant of overcomers, not with the majority—2 Kings 22:8; Ezra 1:3-11; Neh. 2:11, 17; Rev. 3:21; 18:4.
- D. Our vision should be governed not by the present situation nor by traditional practice but by God's original intention and standard as revealed in the Scriptures according to the present advance of His recovery:
 - 1. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of Christ as our center, reality, life, and everything—Col. 1:17b, 18b; Rev. 2:4, 7, 17; 3:20; Psa. 80:1, 15, 17-19.
 - 2. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ—John 17:11, 21-23; Eph. 4:3-4a; Rev. 1:11.
 - 3. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the function of all the members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 26, 31.
- E. We in the Lord's recovery must have a clear vision of God's economy and then be governed, controlled, and directed by this vision, for we are here to carry out God's economy in His recovery—Acts 26:18-19; Prov. 29:18a.

III. In order to realize the recovery of the Lord for the carrying out of the economy of God, we must stay away from death and division:

- A. We must stay away from death and be swallowed up by Christ as life; everything in the church must be in the nature of life, with the content of life, and in the flow and imparting of life—2 Cor. 5:4; John 7:38; 1 John 5:16a.
- B. We must reject any kind of division (1 Cor. 1:10), stand against any wind of teaching and any spreading of spiritual death (Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim. 2:16-17), and mark and turn away from those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching of God's economy (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10).
- C. Leviticus reveals that the first thing that we as God's priests need to deal with is our listening; our moving (feet) and working (hands) are always under the direction of our hearing—8:23-24; 14:14-17:
 - 1. If we do not take care of our hearing but give ear to negative speaking, our deeds and our work will be affected in a negative way.
 - 2. If any church would stop hearing negative things, that church would be very healthy and living; the church that is the weakest and the most deadened is the one full of criticism, gossip, and reasoning.
 - 3. Because we often hear unclean things, things that are unhealthy and contagious, we need to wash our ears with the blood of Christ; after the washing of the blood, we will enjoy the anointing of the Spirit.
 - 4. Positive listening will rescue us from negative listening; if we listen to God's word from morning to evening, we will not have an ear to listen to any negative speaking—Rev. 2:7; John 10:3-5, 16, 27; S. S. 2:8, 14.
- D. In order to enjoy Christ as our meal offering to live a meal offering church life, we must be purified from any leaven (ambition for leadership) and honey (natural affection)—Lev. 2:11:
 - 1. Ambition and natural affection go together; a person who is ambitious will love anyone who helps him to gain what he desires, but whoever hinders him from fulfilling his ambition will be regarded as his enemy—3 John 9.
 - 2. We should neither take the way of the Lord's recovery nor leave this way because of any person; we are following the vision of God's economy in the realization of the Lord's recovery—Acts 26:19; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:1-15.
- E. For us to live a holy life for the church life, we must be careful about the kind of people we contact; in Leviticus 11 all the animals signify different kinds of people, and eating signifies our contacting of people—cf. Acts 10:9b-14, 27-29:
 - 1. To eat is to contact things outside of us and to receive them into us with the result that they eventually become our inner constitution; whatever we contact, we will receive, and whatever we receive will reconstitute us, making us a different person from what we are now.
 - 2. "Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals"—1 Cor. 15:33.
 - 3. "He who walks with wise men will be wise, / But the companion of fools will be troubled"—Prov. 13:20.
 - 4. "Avoid profane, vain babblings, for they will advance to more ungodliness, and their word will spread like gangrene, of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have misaimed...But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"—2 Tim. 2:16-18, 22.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE DEFINITION OF GOD'S ECONOMY

What is God's economy? The Scriptures, composed of sixty-six books, contain many different teachings, but if we would make a thorough and careful study of the Scriptures with spiritual insight, we would realize that God's economy is simply His plan to dispense Himself into humanity. God's economy is God's dispensation, which means nothing else than God dispensing Himself into the human race. It is regrettable that the term *dispensation* has been misused by Christianity. Its definition is nearly the same as the Greek word *economy*. It means the administrative arrangement, the governmental management, or the dispensing, distributing stewardship of God's plan. In this divine dispensation God, who is almighty and all-inclusive, intends to dispense nothing other than Himself to us. This needs to be repeated many times in order to impress us deeply.

God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful businessman who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has. All of this capital is simply Himself, and with it He intends to "manufacture" Himself in mass production. God Himself is the Businessman, the capital, and the product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production and free of charge. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation, a divine economy, in order to bring Himself into humanity.

Let us be more specific. Now that we know that God's purpose is to dispense Himself, we must discover what God is in order to know what He is dispensing. In other words, what is the substance of God? When a businessman plans to manufacture a product, he must first of all be clear about the substance, or its basic constituent. God's substance is Spirit (John 4:24). The very essence of the almighty, all-inclusive, universal God is simply Spirit. God is the Manufacturer, and He intends to reproduce Himself as the product; therefore, whatever He reproduces must be Spirit, the very substance of Himself.

THE STEPS OF GOD'S ECONOMY

We have seen God's purpose and what is dispensed by God; now we must realize how God is dispensed through His economy. In other words, Spirit is what God dispenses into man, but now we need to see the means by which He does this. It is by the Trinity. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is the very economy of the Godhead. Christianity during the past centuries has had many teachings about the Trinity, but the Trinity can never be adequately understood unless it is related to the divine economy. Why are all three persons of the Godhead required for the development of His economy? We know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not three different Gods but one God, who is expressed in three persons. Yet what is the purpose of there being three persons of the Godhead? Why are there God the Father, God the Son, and also God the Holy Spirit? It is because only through the Trinity can the essential means be provided whereby His Spirit is dispensed into us.

Second Corinthians 13:14 shows the steps of God's economy by the Trinity. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Here we have the grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What are these? Are these three different Gods? Are love, grace, and fellowship three different items? No. Love, grace, and fellowship are one element in three stages: love is the source, grace is the expression of love, and fellowship is the transmission of this love in grace. Likewise, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one God expressed in three persons: God is

the source, Christ is the expression of God, and the Holy Spirit is the transmission bringing God in Christ into man. Thus, the three persons of the Trinity become the three successive steps in the process of God's economy. Without these three steps, God's essence could never be dispensed into man. The economy of God is developed from the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit.

From the Father

God the Father is the universal source of all things. He is invisible and unapproachable. How can God the Father, who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16), be within us? How can we see the invisible Father? If God is only a Father, He would be inaccessible and could not be dispensed into man. But through the divine arrangement of His economy, He put Himself into His Son, the second person of the Trinity, in order to make Himself available to man. All the fullness of the Father dwells in the Son (Col. 1:19; 2:9) and is expressed through the Son (John 1:18). The Father, as the inexhaustible source of everything, is embodied in the Son. The incomprehensible God is now expressed in Christ, the Word of God (v. 1); the invisible God is revealed in Christ, the image of God (Col. 1:15). So, the Son and the Father are one (John 10:30), and the Son is even called the Father (Isa. 9:6).

Formerly, it was impossible for man to contact the Father. He was exclusively God, and His nature was exclusively divine. There was nothing in the Father to bridge the gap between God and man. But now He has not only embodied Himself within the Son; He has also become incarnate in human nature. The Father was pleased to combine His own divinity with humanity in the Son. Through the incarnation of the Son, the unapproachable Father is now approachable to man. By this, man can see the Father, touch the Father, and fellowship with the Father through the Son.

We can demonstrate this relationship by dipping a white handkerchief into blue dye. The Father's divinity could originally be likened to the white handkerchief. This handkerchief, dipped into blue dye, represents the Father in the Son becoming incarnate in humanity. The white article has now become blue. Just as blue was added to the handkerchief, so the human nature was added to the divine nature, and the once-separated natures have become one. The first stage of God dispensing Himself into man, therefore, is through the embodiment and incarnation of Himself in the Son as a man—thus, reproducing Himself in man.

In the Son

The second step of bringing God into man is through the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. In order to understand the second stage of the economy of God, we need to know what Christ is. What are the elements that make up Christ? What are the ingredients combined together that constitute Christ?

There are seven basic elements that make up this wonderful person, six of which were added through His history. First, Christ is the divine embodiment of God. This first element in Christ is God's divine essence and nature.

The second element, His incarnation, is the mingling of His divine nature with the human nature. Through His incarnation He brought God into man and mingled the divine essence of God with humanity. In Christ there is not only God but also man.

The third element which was added to His divine and human natures was His human living. This glorious God-man lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years and experienced all the common and ordinary things that make up the daily human life. The Gospel of John, which emphasizes that He is the Son of God, also tells us that He was tired, hungry,

thirsty, and that He wept. His human sufferings were also part of His daily life, which included many earthly troubles, problems, trials, and persecutions.

His experience of death is the fourth element. He went down into death. But He not only stepped into death; He passed through death. This produced a very effective death. The death of Adam is terrible and chaotic, but the death of Christ is wonderful and effective. The death of Adam enslaved us to death, whereas the death of Christ released us from death. Although the fall of Adam brought many evil elements into us, the effective death of Christ is the killing power within us to slay all the elements of Adam's nature.

Therefore, in Christ there is the divine nature, the human nature, the daily human life with its sufferings, and also the effectiveness of His death. But there are three additional elements in Christ. The fifth element is His resurrection. After His resurrection Christ did not put off His manhood to become solely God again. Christ is still a man. And as man, He has the additional element of resurrection life mingled with His humanity.

The sixth element in Christ is His ascension. By His ascension to the heavens He transcended over all enemies, principalities, powers, dominions, and authorities. All are under His feet. Mingled with Him, therefore, is the transcendent power of His ascension.

Finally, the seventh element in Christ is His enthronement. Christ, the man with the divine nature, is enthroned in the third heaven as the exalted Head of the whole universe. He is in the heavenlies as the Lord of lords and the King of kings.

We need to remember, then, the seven wonderful elements that are in Him: the divine nature, the human nature, the daily human life with its earthly sufferings, the effectiveness of His death, the resurrection power, the transcendent power of His ascension, and the enthronement. All these elements are mingled in this one marvelous Christ.

Through the Spirit

God, however, cannot come into us through the Son. According to the first stages of His economy, the Father placed Himself in the Son, and the Son has the seven elements mingled within Himself. But we still need another stage, a third and final step, for God to dispense Himself into man. The first step was that the Father embodied Himself in the Son; the second step was that the Son became incarnate in humanity to have all the seven wonderful elements mingled within Him; the third step is that both the Father and the Son are now in the Spirit. All that is in the Father is in the Son, and both the Father and the Son, containing all the elements in Christ, are brought into the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, after the Lord's ascension, is no longer the same as the Spirit of God in the Old Testament times. The Spirit of God in the Old Testament had only one element—the divine nature of God. As the divine Spirit, He did not have the elements of the human nature, the daily human life, the effectiveness of death, the resurrection, the ascension, and the enthronement. Today, however, under the New Testament economy all the seven elements of Christ have been placed in the Spirit, and, as such, this all-inclusive Spirit has come into us and upon us. In other words, He is in us and we are in Him. This is the real mingling of God with man, which we may experience at any time. We are mingled inwardly and outwardly with the Holy Spirit.

What is the Holy Spirit? He is the Spirit of truth (John 15:26). But what is truth? The meaning of the Greek word for *truth* is "reality." Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of reality, the full reality of Christ. Just as God is embodied in Christ, so Christ is realized in the wonderful person of the Holy Spirit. Christ is not separate from God, and the Spirit is not separate from Christ. Christ is God expressed, and the Spirit is Christ realized in reality.

“The Lord is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17). This verse proves that the Holy Spirit is not separate from Christ. The Lord is Christ Himself and is referred to as the Spirit. “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). Again, the Scriptures point out that Christ, the last Adam, is the Spirit. We must admit that this life-giving Spirit is the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, God the Father is also the Spirit (John 4:24). Hence, all three persons of the Godhead are the Spirit. If God the Father is not the Spirit, how could He be in us, and how could we contact Him? Moreover, if God the Son is not the Spirit, how could He be in us, and how could we experience Him? Because the Father and the Son are both the Spirit, we may easily contact God and experience Christ.

Notice the following verses (*italics added for emphasis*): “One God and Father of all, who is...*in* all” (Eph. 4:6). “Jesus Christ is *in* you” (2 Cor. 13:5). “His Spirit who *indwells* you” (Rom. 8:11). These three verses reveal that God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are *in* us. How many persons, then, are in us? Three or one? We should not say that three separate persons are in us, nor should we say that only one person is in us; rather, we should say that the Three-in-one is in us. The three persons of the Godhead are not three Spirits but one Spirit. The Father is in the Son, and the Son with all His seven wonderful elements is in the Spirit. When this wonderful Holy Spirit comes into us, the Godhead is then dispensed into us. Because the three persons are in one Spirit, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit within us. Later, we will see that the Triune God is in our human spirit to be our spiritual, inner life. This is the very mark of God’s economy, and this is the method whereby the Godhead is dispensed into us. The goal of the divine economy is to dispense the Triune God in one Spirit into our human spirit. Hence, we must now focus our whole attention upon living by the Triune God, who dwells within our human spirit. If we are distracted from this, however good and scriptural other things are, we will surely miss the mark of God’s economy. The Lord today is recovering His children by causing them to center on this mark of His divine economy.

O Lord, Thou art in me as life
And everything to me!
Subjective and available,
Thus I experience Thee.

O Lord, Thou art the Spirit!
How dear and near to me!
How I admire Thy marvelous
Availability!

To all my needs both great and small
Thou art the rich supply;
So ready and sufficient too
For me now to apply.

Thy sweet anointing with Thy might
In weakness doth sustain;
By Thy supply of energy
My strength Thou dost maintain.

Thy law of life in heart and mind
My conduct regulates;
The wealth of Thy reality
My being saturates.

O Thou art ever one with me,
Unrivaled unity!
One spirit with me all the time
For all eternity!

(Hymns, #539)

(The Economy of God, pp. 8-15)