

## The Economy of God - Excerpts from Chapter 5

### THE PERSONS OF GOD AND THE PARTS OF MAN

*2 Corinthians 4:3-7 Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.*

These verses tell us that Satan, the god of this age, blinds the minds of the unbelievers, lest “the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ” should shine on them. The enemy is afraid of the shining of the gospel of the glory of such a Christ. *The gospel of the glory of Christ* in verse 4 corresponds to *the knowledge of the glory of God* in verse 6. The treasure is the very God in Christ who has shined Himself into us, the earthen vessels.

We have seen the economy of God and the mark of His economy. We have pointed out that the main thing in the economy of God is that God intends to work Himself into us. He works Himself into our different parts through His different persons. If we read the Scriptures carefully, we will realize that this is the main thing. I have such a burden that I could say this to the Lord’s children hundreds of times, yes, thousands of times: in the whole universe God’s intention is nothing other than to work Himself into man.

For what purpose did God create man? It is only that man might be His container. I like to use this word *container* because it is clearer than the word *vessel*. It is clearly seen in Romans 9:21 and 23 and 2 Corinthians 4:7 that God created us to be His containers in order to contain Himself. We are only empty containers, and God intends to be our only content... Man was made purposely to contain God. If we do not contain God and know God as our content, we are a senseless contradiction.

Regardless of how much education we may obtain, what kind of position we may have, or how much wealth we may possess, we are still meaningless, since we were purposely made as a container to contain God as our sole content. As containers, we must receive God into our being. Although this word may seem simple, it is the exact word needed to point out the main thought of the whole Scripture. The basic teaching of the whole Scripture is simply this: God is the very content, and we are the containers made to receive this content. We must contain God and be filled with God.

### THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE SPIRIT

In order that God may put Himself into us as our content, He must exist in three persons. We can never adequately understand the mystery of God’s three persons.

Let us read Genesis 1:26 and 27: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...God created man in His own image.” In verse 26 it says, “In Our image,” whereas in the following verse it says, “In His own image.” Please tell me, is God singular or plural? Who can explain this? God Himself used the plural pronoun for Himself: “Let Us make man in Our image.” But if you say God is more than one, you are a heretic, because the Bible tells us God is only one. In the whole universe there is not more than one God. Why, then, if God is only one, is the plural pronoun used?

Let me illustrate it in this way: If you buy a watermelon, your intention is to eat and digest this melon. In other words, your intention is to work this melon into you. How can this be done? First, you buy the whole melon; second, you cut it into slices; then, thirdly, before this melon enters your stomach, you chew it until it becomes juice. The sequence is melon, slices, and finally juice. Are these three different things or just one? I believe this is the best illustration of the Trinity. Most melons are larger than your stomach. How can you swallow a large melon when your mouth is so small and your throat is so slender? Before a melon can become the proper size

for you to eat, it must be cut into slices. Then, once it is eaten, it becomes juice. Are the slices not the melon? And is the juice not the melon? If we say that they are not, we must be most ignorant.

The Father is illustrated by the whole melon, the Son by the slices, and finally, the Spirit by the juice. Now we see the point: The Father is not only the Father but is also the Son. And the Son is not only the Son but is also the Spirit. In other words, this melon is also the slices to eat and the juice within us. The melon disappears after it is eaten. Originally, the melon was on the table, but after being eaten, the melon is in the whole family.

### **THE MIND, THE HEART, AND THE IMAGE**

Let us now turn to ourselves and consider what we are as containers. Do not think that we are so simple. I believe the medical doctors could tell us that the human body is very delicate and complicated. A human being is not a simple container, like a bottle containing a beverage; on the contrary, man has many different parts. This is why we must know the different parts of man as well as the three persons of God in order to hit the mark of God's economy. God's economy involves His three persons, and the mark of His economy involves our different parts.

Before defining the mind and the heart from the Scriptures, let us use a camera as an illustration. A camera is made to take something in. To take a picture means to take something into the camera... Several years ago when I was traveling on a train, I took some pictures. After the film was processed, many of the pictures were blank. What had happened? I discovered that I was in such a hurry to take the pictures that I forgot to take the cover off the lens. The lens was "blinded" by the covering.

Many times when an unbeliever comes to hear a good message of the gospel, we think, "Tonight this man will surely be saved." But eventually, he is still "blank." The enemy of God has blinded his mind. The mind is the understanding organ, and Satan has blinded the understanding of this listener. Regardless of how good the message is and how much he has heard, his understanding has been blinded, or covered. His mind is still a blank; nothing has been taken in.

Spiritual experiences are just like taking pictures. We ourselves are the cameras, and we must learn how to use our camera in order to receive God in Christ as the picture. It is regrettable that so many dear Christians simply do not know how to handle their minds and their hearts. In fact, they do not even know that they themselves are cameras.

Christianity is not, strictly speaking, a religion teaching people to do this and to do that. It is simply Christ Himself, the living One, being wrought into us. He is the very object, the very figure, and we are the camera. As the object, He must be wrought into us by the shining of the divine light through the lens onto the film. Day by day and moment by moment, we need the divine light to shine more of the image of Christ through the understanding of the mind that we may receive Him into our heart. Therefore, we must learn how to adjust the mind and the heart.

What are the spiritual experiences? They are simply the pictures of Christ taken into us, the camera, and impressed upon our spiritual film. With some Christians the lens is nearly always covered, and the film is usually improperly adjusted. If you look at their film, there is no picture; every photo of the film is blank, because there are no experiences of Christ. But if the apostle Paul came and we opened his camera and took out the film, we would find that every photo is a picture full of Christ. Everything depends on how much we adjust the lens and take care of the film—that is, how much we deal with our mind and properly tune our heart. If we do this well, whenever the divine light shines upon us, the image of Christ will be shined into us. We will have a beautiful picture of Christ. This is God's economy with its mark.

Now we know the importance of learning our different parts. We were made to contain God in every part. We must go on to know them all—more than even the mind and heart. In the next chapter we will consider in detail all the parts, and later, how they function and how to adjust them.