

## **THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

### **SIX MAJOR ITEMS OF CHRIST FOR OUR ENJOYMENT**

For us to live, we need life, light, food, drink, air, and an abiding place to rest. The Lord is all of these items to us. Although there are many other items of Christ in John's Gospel, these are the six major items for our enjoyment. Christ is our life (1:4; 14:6), but for life to be maintained there is the need of Christ as our light (1:4; 8:12), food (6:35), drink (7:37-39; 4:14), air (20:22), and abiding place (15:5). All these items are different aspects of Christ as the tree of life. We need to be impressed that the Lord is the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the Spirit to be everything to us. I hope this fellowship will enlarge our apprehension and our vision of the Lord Jesus. I came to know Him in a living way many years ago, but when I was a young believer, I did not know the Lord in such a full way. We need to tell the Lord, "O Lord, You are everything to me." We need the heavenly vision to see all the different aspects of Christ in the Word.

According to our experience, when we breathe the Lord in as the fresh air, we also enjoy Him as the water. In this water we have Him as food, and in this food we have Him as light. Learn to breathe Him in. The more you breathe Him in, the more you will have Him as the dew to water you. In the living water is the tree of life growing, the food, and with this food there is always the light. The water is in the air, the food is in the water, and the light is with the food. The more you breathe Him in, the more you will be watered. The more you are watered, the more you will be nourished. And the more you are nourished, the more you will be enlightened. You will be in the light and be full of light. We need to enjoy the Lord in such a way. When we go to the Lord to spend personal time with Him, we have many aspects of His wonderful person for which to praise Him.

### **BORN OF GOD IN OUR SPIRIT**

John 1:12 says that "as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God." Because we have received Christ, we have been born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (v. 13). As many as received Christ were born of God. When we initially received Christ as the tree of life, a birth occurred, and a life relationship with God was established. When I received Christ as my Savior, I only realized that I was a sinner who was saved from eternal perdition. I did not realize that Christ was life to me and that I had a life relationship established with the Father God. We need to realize that when we received Christ, we were born of God, and God was born into us. As those who have been born of God, we have a life relationship with God.

Now we have to go on to find out what part of our being this birth was accomplished in. Were we born of God in our mind, our body, or our heart? Some say that the heart and the spirit are the same. But the Bible reveals that the heart and the spirit are distinct entities. Ezekiel 36:26-27 says, "I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you..." The new heart in these verses is different from the new spirit, and this new spirit is not God's Spirit, because in verse 27 the Lord said, "My Spirit." These are three things—a new heart, a new spirit, and My Spirit. You cannot say that the heart is the spirit. We need a new heart, and we also need a new spirit.

In John 4:24 the Lord Jesus did not say that God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in the heart. We must worship God in spirit. John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Our second birth, our spiritual birth, which happened when we received Christ, was accomplished in our spirit. To be born of the Spirit means to be born of God. We were regenerated, reborn, in our spirit. Before we were regenerated, we were dead in our spirit (Eph. 2:1). When we received Christ by calling upon His name, Christ as the Spirit came into us just like the air.

This living One, this spiritual air, is so wonderful. All of the processes that the Triune God has passed through, including incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, are included in this air along with all that the Triune God is, has accomplished, attained, and obtained. Whenever a sinner opens himself to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I am a sinner. Forgive me of all my sins and come into me to be my life," the living air, the breath of life, the Holy Spirit, the very reality of the Triune God incarnated as a man, comes into this person to make his deadened spirit alive and impart the Triune God into his spirit. Now all that the Triune God is, is in this person. May the Lord grant us all a revelation of this wonderful, all-inclusive Triune God indwelling our spirit.

### **OPENING OURSELVES TO THE LORD**

John 3:6 tells us that we were born of God in our spirit, and John 4:14 says, "The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water..." The small phrase *in him* is crucial in John 4:14. This living fountain of water is Christ, the very embodiment of the processed Triune God, who has become the life-giving Spirit in our spirit. As the fountain of living water, the Lord is always waiting for a chance to spring up within us. Since you initially received the Lord, you may not have opened to Him from the depths of your being. If this is true, your spirit has become a prison, a jail, to Christ. Christ may be imprisoned in you. You may be thirsty because the fountain, the spring, is closed within you. There is no flow.

If you expect that the Lord will quench you from the heavens, water you from above, that is wrong. If you are going to ask the Lord to quench you, to water you, you have to open yourself to Him. By your opening, the indwelling Christ will spring up and flow out (7:37-39a). The more He springs up, the more He will water you. You will be quenched from within, not from above. The fountain has been put into you. The spring of water is in us, in our spirit. This can be proved by John 4:24. The Lord is the Spirit, and if we are going to contact Him, we have to contact Him in our spirit. This means that we have to learn to open ourselves. To exercise our spirit, we have to open ourselves.

Praise the Lord that the tree of life has been planted into us. What we need is to release Him. We must learn how to release the Spirit. Then we will enjoy Him as the air, water, food, and light, and in a full way as the very tree of life. This is what we Christians need today. We should not just take this as a teaching. We have to put what we have heard into practice and always go to the Lord with such a realization that He is so much to us and lives within us.

We must exercise to open ourselves to contact Him. Then we will realize how real, how available, how fresh, and how refreshing He is to us. This enjoyment of the indwelling Christ as the tree of life will not only save us, deliver us, adjust us, regulate us, and correct us but will also transform us. We need to know Christ as the tree of life in the way of life. We need to know this living One in a living way so that the indwelling Christ as the inner life can transform our entire inward being.