

## Message Four

### The Vision of the Self

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:21-26; Luke 9:23-25;  
Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17a

#### **I. We need to see a vision of the self so that the self may be exposed and denied and that we may hate our independence from God and from the Body—Matt. 16:21-26; John 15:4-5; Philem. 8-14:**

- A. The self is the soul-life with the emphasis on human thoughts and opinions—Matt. 16:23-25:
  - 1. In Matthew 16:23-25 three terms are related to one another: *mind*, *himself*, and *soul-life*.
  - 2. Our mind is the expression of our self, and our self is the embodiment of our soul-life—vv. 23-25.
  - 3. Our soul-life is embodied and lived out by our self, and our self is expressed through our mind, idea, thought, concept, and opinion—vv. 22-23.
- B. The self is the embodiment of Satan; the self is the essence of Satan in the soul, making the soul independent from God to express its self-opinion and self-will—v. 23:
  - 1. The origin of the self was Satan's injecting his thought into the human mind—Gen. 3:1-6.
  - 2. The soul became the self when something of Satan was added to the soul; the thing that was added to the soul was the thought, or the mind, of Satan—Matt. 16:23; 2 Cor. 11:3.
  - 3. The self is the soul plus the satanic mind—Matt. 16:23, 25.
- C. If we have a vision of the self, we will see what the self is—the self is the soul declaring its independence from God—v. 23; Luke 14:26; Job 42:5-6:
  - 1. Due to the fall, the soul created by God declared independence from God—Gen. 3:1-6:
    - a. Man took the thought, the idea, of Satan into his soul, resulting in the soul becoming the self, which is independent of God.
    - b. The soul is especially independent of God in the opinion and in the will—Matt. 16:22-23:
      - (1) The self is something of Satan in the soul expressed through the opinions—v. 23.
      - (2) We have opinions as the incarnation and manifestation of the self because we are independent of God; the more we are independent of God, the more we have opinions as the manifestation of the self.
  - 2. Whenever we do something by ourselves without depending on God, we are in the self—vv. 22-23; cf. Phil. 3:3.
  - 3. Being independent of the Body is equal to being independent of God.

#### **II. The hindrance to seeing the vision of the Body and to practicing the Body life is the self—Col. 1:18; 2:18-20, 23; 3:15:**

- A. The Body is versus the self, and the self is the enemy of the Body—Matt. 16:18, 23.

- B. Because the self is something independent of the Lord and of the Body, the self is the greatest problem to the building up of the Body—Col. 1:18; 2:1-19, 23:
  - 1. When we have the self, we do not have the Body—Matt. 16:24.
  - 2. When we have the Body, we do not have the self—v. 18; Eph. 4:16.
- C. We should deny ourselves and identify ourselves with the Body; if we do this, the life we live will fully be the Body life, and the Lord will gain the expression of His Body—1 Cor. 12:27; Col 1:18; 3:15.
- D. In order for the Body to be built up, the self, the independent soul, must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced—Matt. 16:18, 21-26; Luke 9:23-25.

**III. We should deny the self, take up our cross, and follow the Lord—Matt. 16:24:**

- A. For a person to overly care for himself is for him to love the self and to always look at, think about, and consider himself—2 Tim. 3:2.
- B. To deny the self is to forget about our self and to forfeit our soul-life; losing the soul-life is the reality of denying the self—Matt. 16:26; Luke 9:24-25.
- C. We need to see how to deny the self, to deal with the self:
  - 1. We need to have the revelation that our old man has been crucified with Christ—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.
  - 2. After seeing this revelation, we need to recognize and accept this fact.
  - 3. We need to apply to ourselves the death of Christ that He accomplished and that we have recognized; this is the correct meaning of bearing the cross—Matt. 16:24:
    - a. This application must be carried out in the Spirit—Rom. 8:13.
    - b. When we live and walk in the Spirit, the Spirit applies the death of Christ to us—Gal. 5:16, 24-25; Rom. 8:4, 13.
  - 4. To bear the cross is to remain under the killing of the death of Christ for the terminating of our self, natural life, and old man; in so doing, we deny the self so that we may follow the Lord, the resurrected Christ, as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Gal. 5:25.

**IV. It is crucial that we deny the self and take Christ as our person for the church life as the living of the one new man—2:20; Eph. 2:15; 4:24; 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11:**

- A. In the one new man there is only one person—Christ—Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17a.
- B. It is vitally important for us to know that our spirit is the inner man and that the person of this inner man is Christ—Rom. 8:16; Eph. 3:17a:
  - 1. If we would take Christ as our person, we must see that our spirit is not merely an organ—our spirit is our person—1:17; 3:16-17a.
  - 2. We should deny our self, our own person, and live by our spirit, our new person—Matt. 16:24; Rom. 8:4; Eph. 3:17a.
- C. For the church life as the living of this new man, we must reject our old person and live by Christ as our new person—Luke 9:23-25; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.
- D. We need an absolute consecration of handing ourselves over to the Lord and yielding our person to Him so that He can be our person; our consecration is to take Christ as our person—Rom. 12:2; 14:7-8; Eph. 3:17a; 2 Cor. 5:15.