

## Message Five

### **The Increase of Christ in the Believers Being Their Spiritual Progress and Growth in Life**

Scripture Reading: John 3:30; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:13, 15, 23; Phil. 3:7-12

#### **I. Spiritual progress is the increase of the element of Christ within the believers—John 3:30; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:7-12:**

- A. The first condition for spiritual progress in a believer is hunger—Luke 1:53:
  - 1. All spiritual progress depends on our hunger; in order to have sustained progress before the Lord, we need a sustained hunger—Matt. 5:6.
  - 2. God's principle is to fill the hungry with good things and to send the rich away empty—Luke 1:53.
  - 3. Regeneration is free, but spiritual progress comes with a price; in order for a believer to make progress, he must pay a price—Rev. 3:18.
- B. We need to see that our spiritual life is Christ, that our spiritual living is Christ, and that our spiritual progress is also Christ—Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21a.
- C. Real spirituality is Christ Himself; spiritual progress is the increase of Christ.
- D. A Christian's spiritual progress should not be only an outward improvement but should be an inward increase of the element of Christ—Eph. 3:17:
  - 1. Some believers improve their outward behavior but do not have more of Christ in them; this is not spiritual progress but religious progress.
  - 2. Very few Christians are able to discern whether the change in a believer is merely an ethical change or a change due to the increase of Christ.
- E. Spiritual progress is being free from everything that usurps the place of God—Matt. 6:33; 5:8:
  - 1. On the positive side, spiritual progress is the increase of the element of Christ within us; on the negative side, spiritual progress is the removal of all things other than Christ within us—Phil. 3:7-8.
  - 2. Spiritual progress is not only addition but also subtraction; when something that has usurped God's place is removed from us, there is spiritual progress—Matt. 5:8; 6:33.
- F. When Christ grows and is formed in us so that there is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ within us, this is spiritual progress—Eph. 4:13; Gal. 4:19.

#### **II. The growth in life is the increase of Christ in the believers—John 3:30:**

- A. The real growth in life is the addition of Christ as life into our being—14:6.
- B. Christ in Himself does not need to grow, for He is perfect and complete:
  - 1. In Himself Christ is fully mature, but in us Christ may still be very small; we need to gain more of Christ—Eph. 4:15.
  - 2. When Christ increases in us, we grow in Him—Col. 2:19.
- C. The growth in life is Christ increasing within us and we decreasing all the time—John 3:30.
- D. Because life is Christ, the growth of life is the increase of Christ within us—11:25; 14:6; 1 John 5:11-12; Eph. 3:17:

1. Christ came into our spirit as life, and now we need to open ourselves and let Christ spread within us and fill, saturate, and permeate us.
2. The growth of life is the increase and expansion of Christ—Gal. 4:19.
- E. We need a revelation to see that genuine growth in life is not a mere change in behavior or the improvement of ourselves but the increase of Christ within us—Eph. 1:17; 3:17:
  1. The work of religion is to improve the self, whereas the Lord's desire is that we open ourselves to Him so that He may increase in us—v. 17.
  2. What the believers lack today is the increase of Christ as life within them.
- F. The growth in life is Christ wrought into us and formed in us—Gal. 4:19:
  1. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ fully grown in us—Eph. 4:13.
  2. As Christ is being formed in us, He makes His home in our hearts; He desires to saturate every part of our heart, our inward being, until He takes full possession of it—3:16-17.
  3. If we desire to grow in life by having Christ increase within us, we need to experience Christ in a full way—Phil. 3:7-12.
- G. In order for Christ to increase within us and for us to decrease, we need a renewed mind and a submissive will; the more we are renewed in our mind and subdued in our will, the more Christ will grow in us—Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 2:12; 2 Cor. 10:6:
  1. We need to be renewed in the spirit of the mind—Eph. 4:23:
    - a. A regenerated spirit is a renewed spirit; this renewed spirit must be strengthened to invade, subdue, and occupy every part of our soul—John 3:6; Eph. 3:16.
    - b. Christ as the life-giving Spirit is now in our spirit, and these two spirits mingle together to form the spirit of the mind—2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17.
    - c. When the life-giving Spirit, who is mingled with our regenerated spirit, spreads into our mind, this mingled spirit becomes the spirit of our mind; it is by this mingled spirit that our mind is renewed—Eph. 4:23.
    - d. To be renewed in the spirit of our mind is inward and intrinsic; this renewing revolutionizes our logic, philosophy, thought, concept, and psychology—Rom. 12:2.
  2. Our will must be subdued and be in harmony with God—Phil. 2:12-13:
    - a. Since our whole being moves according to our will, our will is the most powerful part of our being and represents our whole being—John 7:17.
    - b. The neck stands for the human will under God; the Lord considers the submission of our will a most beautiful thing—S. S. 4:4.
    - c. In order for us to have a union of our will with God, He must subdue the activities of our will and the life of our will—v. 1:
      - (1) Submission is in the aspect of activities; harmony is in the aspect of life, nature, and tendency—vv. 1, 4.
      - (2) A submissive will stops its own activities; a harmonious will is one with God and is of the same heart as God—John 4:34; Matt. 26:39.
    - d. A will that is in complete harmony with God is a will in which one's whole heart is placed in the will of God; only when our will is in harmony with God can we know God's heart—John 7:17; Eph. 1:9.