

## LIVING IN AND SERVING BY THE MINGLED SPIRIT

### Message 5

#### **Being Desperate to Overcome Deadness and Lukewarmness in Order to Be Vitaly Living and Active for the Increase of the Lord's Recovery and the Building Up of the Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:1-6, 14-22; Rom. 12:1-2, 11; Hag. 1:8; Eph. 4:16

#### **I. According to the book of Revelation, we need to overcome spiritual deadness and spiritual lukewarmness—3:1-6, 14-22:**

##### A. We need to overcome the deadness of Sardis—vv. 1-6:

1. The defilement in Sardis was not the defilement of sin, but the defilement of death; death is more defiling before God than sin—vv. 1, 4; Lev. 11:24-25; Num. 6:6-7, 9.
2. The characteristics of the dead include a loss of function, a loss of feeling (Eph. 4:19), impotence (Rom. 7:15, 18), the odor of death (John 11:39), being buried (v. 17), and being bound (v. 44; Rom. 7:23).
3. Darkness, uneasiness, dissatisfaction, weakness, and dryness are signs of inward spiritual death—Rom. 8:6.
4. When we fail to exercise our spirit we leave it in a deadened situation.

##### B. We need to overcome the lukewarmness of Laodicea—Rev. 3:14-22:

1. Laodicea means to know everything, but in reality to be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God—vv. 15-17.
2. To be lukewarm is to be self-satisfied, indifferent, and inactive, not taking any action—vv. 16-17.
3. "I am concerned that, although we may have much doctrinal knowledge and may consider ourselves spiritually rich, we may not be living and active but indifferent and lukewarm. A great number of saints in the churches have heard many truths, yet they do not take action to work for the Lord. Hence, there is the need to be made vital"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 1, pp. 269-270.

#### **II. The overcomers are those who are vital—living and active—vv. 4-5, 21:**

##### A. The overcomers are living, which is versus the deadness of Sardis—vv. 4-5:

1. We can conquer the deadness of Sardis in the Body life—Rom. 12:3-10; Ezek. 37:7-10; *Hymns, #842, #843, #844*.
2. We can conquer the deadness of Sardis by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God and being transformed from the fashion of this age by the renewing of our mind—Rom. 12:1-2; cf. Gen. 12:7-8:
  - a. We are deadened because we do not present ourselves to the Lord and because we secretly follow this age—Rom. 12:1-2; cf. Exo. 7:17, note 1.
  - b. To present our body is to give ourselves to the Lord without any reservation; we need to repeat our consecration every day and even many times throughout the day; every day and every moment in everything, we need to stand on the ground of consecration—v. 1; Lev. 6:9, 12-13.
  - c. We also should not secretly follow this age; we cannot conquer deadness if we follow this age even partially.
  - d. In the United States today there are two very negative things: sin and the age; these two things are deadening the Christians in this country; our mind needs to

be renewed so that we will not be fashioned according to this age—Rom. 12:2; Exo. 7:17, note 1.

3. We can conquer the deadness of Sardis by keeping our spirit living, pulling it out of death through the exercise of our spirit—1 Thes. 5:23, 16-18:
    - a. We should not leave our spirit in a deadened condition; we should struggle to have our spirit freed from that kind of condition.
    - b. We can release our spirit from a situation of deadness through exercising our spirit by rejoicing, praying, and thanking—vv. 16-18.
  4. We must be released, living, and refreshed persons—cf. Acts 2:46-47:
    - a. We must live a life that is released, living, and refreshing, keeping a constant fellowship with the Lord all day long, living in the Lord's presence, and spending time daily with the Lord to study His Word—1 Thes. 5:16-18; Eph. 6:17-18.
    - b. If we all become such persons, after a short time the entire church will be revived.
- B. The overcomers are active, which is versus the lukewarmness of Laodicea—Rev. 3:21; Rom. 12:11:
1. We can conquer the lukewarmness of Laodicea by seeking the riches of Christ—Rev. 3:17-18, 20:
    - a. We may be enjoying Christ to a certain extent, but we need to enjoy Him in a deeper, higher, broader, and richer way; we should tell the Lord that we want to have new experiences of Him—Phil. 3:12-14.
    - b. We may be seeking Christians, but we may pursue Christ only to a certain extent, being content with a routine church life and routine work and service for Christ; because so many Christians do not pursue Christ in order to gain Him, God needs the overcomers.
  2. We can conquer the lukewarmness of Laodicea by not being slothful in zeal but being burning in spirit, serving the Lord—Rom. 12:11.

**III. We need to be vitalized so that we can be burdened by the Lord for two things: the increase of the churches and the building up of the organic Body of Christ; this is the Lord's burden today, and this should be our burden—Acts 16:5; Eph. 4:16:**

- A. If we are vital, we will realize that among the churches there is a desperate need for the proper increase—Acts 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 16:5; Ezek. 36:37-38; Hag. 1:8, and note 1.
- B. Today the Lord desires to see the churches have the proper increase, and He also desires to see a real building up in the churches as the organic Body of Christ.
- C. The Lord will carry this out through our begetting sinners through the gospel, nourishing the new believers, perfecting the saints, and prophesying for the building up of the church; therefore, we need to be burdened and vitalized to take this way absolutely and desperately—1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Thes. 2:7; Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 14:4.
- D. After we pick up such a burden, we need to take definite action to go and contact others, including those who are unsaved among our relatives, friends, colleagues, and classmates, as well as Christians who are seeking, backslidden, or dormant.

**IV. "Today [God] has prepared the U.S.A...for the preparation of the bride...[His desire] is for us to live Christ, to have Christ as our living, to have Christ as the reality, the real contents of the church life, making every church a golden lampstand. The Body life will reach the reality of Romans 12, and this will be the spontaneous preparation of the bride for His coming back"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 308-309.***