

TONIGHT'S READING



GOD'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR MAN (2)

Scripture Reading:

- Matthew 1:8 Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother, Mary, after she had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together, was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.
- Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel" (which is translated, God with us).
- Matthew 26:28 For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.
- Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace.
- Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are purified by blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.
- I Corinthians 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

The Second Step—Incarnation

In the second step God Himself became a man at the appointed time. This is the story of incarnation. When the Lord Jesus came to the earth, God was fully mingled with man. In six thousand years of human history there has been one unique man. He was truly a man, and every part within Him was God. The Lord Jesus was a man, yet He was God. The difference between the Lord Jesus and us is that every part within us is man, but every part within Him was God. The Savior we believe in and have received is not merely God, and He is not simply man. He is God mingled with man. Within every part of the man from Nazareth, Jesus our Savior, was God. Everything of God was mingled with this man in a full and undiminished way.

Our Savior is a wonderful person, and God demonstrated His eternal purpose in Him. God's eternal purpose is to mingle Himself with man to be man's element and his enjoyment. In order to accomplish this,

when He saves man, He mingles Himself with man. Our Savior is the very One in whom God is mingled with man.

This may sound strange to us, but gradually we will understand. In order for God to become our enjoyment, He not only created us with a spirit to receive Him, but at the appointed time He also came into man to be fully mingled with man, thus becoming man's Savior. When we receive Him as our Savior, a mingling work is carried out in us.

The Third Step—Crucifixion

In the third step our Savior, who was both God and man, died on the cross. He accomplished two main things on the cross. First, the Lord shed His blood to deal with everything that prevents God from mingling Himself with us. In other words, His blood dealt with every barrier between God and us; He dealt with everything that frustrates us from contacting God or from touching Him, and everything that disqualifies us from standing boldly before Him.

If we want to contact the Lord and fellowship with Him, we must see the significance of the blood. God is altogether righteous, and we are altogether unrighteous. We need the blood so that we can fellowship with the righteous God. Whenever filthy and dirty men, such as we, want to fellowship with God, who is absolutely holy, the blood is needed. Without the blood shed on the cross, we would not dare come to God or even speak of contacting Him. It would be impossible for us to come near Him. We would die in His light; we would fall before His holiness. But now the blood shed on the cross has cleansed us. All our unrighteousnesses, filth, sins, trespasses, mistakes, and offenses against God, as well as all that is incompatible between us and God, have been removed by the cleansing of the blood. The blood has solved all our problems. Now we can come boldly to God through the blood. We can joyfully contact God under the blood. We can even remain in His presence and live in His countenance. As sinners who are unrighteous, unholy, and filthy, we can now contact the holy God and live in Him, and He can live in us and fellowship with us. All of this is possible through the cleansing of the blood shed on the cross.

The Epistle of I John, a book on fellowship between man and God, begins by saying that God's life has entered into man and enables man to fellowship with God. God is light and He is righteous, but man is evil and in darkness. How can we fellowship with God? According to I John 1:7, we can fellowship through the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of God's Son cleanses us from every sin. Through the blood we can fellowship with God, but apart from the blood there is no possibility of fellowship. In order for there to be fellowship between God and us, there is not only the need of life but also the need of the blood. The first aspect of the cross provides the blood, which removes all the barriers between us and God.

The second aspect of the cross is that it terminates the old creation. Through the death of the cross, our flesh, our self, and our old nature have been terminated. On the surface, it seems as if the only barrier to our fellowship with God is sin. As such, we are thankful to the Lord that His blood cleanses us from every sin and enables us to fellowship with Him. However, there is still a hidden problem in our being, which is the problem of the flesh, the self, the natural man, and the old creation. These frustrate our being mingled with God.

For example, a brother who is cleansed by the blood can boldly come to God and fellowship with Him. However, when he comes before God, he may be full of the self, full of his own views, his own thoughts, and his own desires. Everything about him is full of the self. This makes it difficult for him to fellowship with God. Although his sins are washed by the blood, his self remains intact. The death of the cross needs to be applied in this situation. The cross not only gives us the blood, but it also puts us to death. The blood of the cross takes away our sins, but the crucifixion of the cross deals with the self. It deals with our old man. This is the third step.

The Fourth Step—Becoming the Spirit in Resurrection

In the fourth step, after our Lord was crucified on the cross, He resurrected from the dead and became the Spirit. Very few people understand fully the meaning of the Lord becoming the Spirit. We need to see that in resurrection He became the Spirit. In so doing, He brought the perfect man into God. We have said that in incarnation the Lord Jesus brought God into man. Now in resurrection He brought man into God. If there were only incarnation, the mingling of God and man would be only half accomplished. God entered into man, but man had not yet entered into God. However, after the Lord Jesus' resurrection the mingling of God and man was complete; God had entered into man, and man had entered into God. In incarnation the Lord Jesus brought God into man. In resurrection He brought man into God. Today in this universe the man Jesus is sitting on the throne. He is God who has become a man, and He is also man who has entered into God. This wonderful Savior is God mingled with man and man mingled with God. As this One, He is the Spirit.

Our Savior today is the Spirit. He is beyond time and space. He is everywhere. No matter where we are, as long as we open our heart and our spirit, and we touch Him, His Spirit will come into us, and we will have "spirit-to-spirit" fellowship. His Spirit will touch our spirit, and our spirit will receive His Spirit. The Spirit does not only include divinity; there is also incarnation, the effectiveness of the blood shed on the cross to deal with man's sins, the killing of the cross that solves the problem of the flesh and the self, and resurrection that brings man into God. This Spirit includes so much. When we believe into Him and open our spirit to contact Him, He enters into us. When He enters into us, we enjoy and absorb God.

We have taken a brief look at these four steps. God created us with a spirit for the purpose of receiving Him. He also came in the flesh to be mingled with us. Furthermore, He was crucified on the cross. On the cross He shed His blood to remove the barrier of sin between Him and us, and He dealt with the self and the old creation. Finally, He resurrected and brought humanity into divinity, thus fully mingling God with man. God has taken these four steps to become our enjoyment.

Questions:

1. What are the four steps that God has done for us so that we can enjoy Him in a practical way? Please explain each step briefly.
2. How can we, the unrighteous sinners, have fellowship with God, the righteous and holy One?