

# CHRIST—THE LIVING WORD OF GOD

## Message 3

### Christ as the Spirit—God’s Spoken Word

Scripture Reading: Matt. 4:4; Luke 1:38; John 3:34; 6:63, 68; 15:7; Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18; Num. 11:29; Acts 1:8; 8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 14:1, 3-4, 31

#### I. The Greek word *rhema* refers to the instant and present spoken word:

- A. *Logos* is the written word (Matt. 24:35; Mark 7:13a; Col. 1:25; 2 Pet. 1:19), but *rhema* is the present word, the word that is spoken to you by the Lord for a particular purpose at that very moment (Luke 1:38; John 6:63, 68; 15:7; Eph. 5:26):
  - 1. *Logos* is the written word as the expression of the living Christ; *rhema* is the word spoken within us by the Spirit of Christ just at the time we need it; we have *logos* in our hands, but we have *rhema* in our spirit.
  - 2. The inner *rhema* always corresponds with the outer *logos*; the Spirit speaking the *rhema* within never speaks differently from the written *logos*.
  - 3. The outward, written word becomes the living word within your spirit; then you can experience it and apply it to your life.
- B. The words that the Lord speaks are Spirit and life—John 6:63:
  - 1. The Lord’s spoken words are the embodiment of the life-giving Spirit; He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words—1 Cor. 15:45b; John 3:34.
  - 2. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we receive the Spirit who is life—Eph. 6:17-18.

#### II. We need to attend to the living *rhema* within, allowing it to have its full sway within us—John 15:7; cf. 14:21, 23:

- A. According to our experience, if we keep ourselves in the fellowship of the Lord, we have *rhema* within from the Lord all the time:
  - 1. We need to exercise our spirit to receive God’s written Word so that it may become the present, spoken word to us—John 3:34; 6:63.
  - 2. When we pray-read the Word, every word becomes *rhema*—Eph. 6:17-18.
- B. In order to allow the living word to have its free way within us, we must go along with it—John 15:7:
  - 1. We must be very submissive and obedient to the living *rhema* that is speaking now within us—cf. 14:21, 23.
  - 2. The Lord mainly speaks one word to us—no; however, at times His speaking is a requirement or a demand; we need to love Him and keep His instant words—cf. v. 23.
- C. Concentrating on the inner *rhema* will make the living Lord so real to us in our spirit; it will make Christ so available and practical.

#### III. God’s desire is that we speak; we all have the qualification, the right, the ability, and also the responsibility to speak the Word of God—Num. 11:29; 1 Cor. 9:16-17; 14:31:

- A. Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1), and we are the members of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13); therefore, we are members of the Word of God; as such we must be the oracle of God, the speaking ones, to spread God for the multiplication and increase of Christ (John 3:34).
- B. We are the Lord’s witnesses; therefore, we are those who speak—Acts 1:8; 5:42; 8:4:
  - 1. The members of our family, our relatives, our friends, and our neighbors are our Jerusalem.
  - 2. We need to pray, be filled with the Spirit and speak the word of God—6:4; 4:31.
  - 3. We need to speak the word of God everywhere and at all times—8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2.
  - 4. Our speaking for God is for the fruit-bearing of God’s multiplication and spreading—John 15:5.
- C. In God’s oracle we become the prophets of God speaking God, speaking for God, and speaking forth God—1 Cor. 14:1, 31:

1. To prophesy is to speak for the Lord and to speak forth the Lord.
2. Prophesying makes us an overcomer; prophesying is the function of the overcomers—vv. 3, 4b.
3. Prophesying fulfills the greatest prophecy in the Bible, which is to build up the church—Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 14:4b.
4. We must learn and be perfected to organically prophesy, to speak the Lord into others, for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ.

**Focus:** By exercising our spirit over God’s written Word we can receive His spoken, instant Word, which brings the Spirit and life into us. In this way we will be equipped to rise up to be the witnesses of the Lord and the prophets of God speaking the Word of God for the building up of the church.

**Hymns:** 1310, 1294

**Excerpts from the Ministry:**

***LOGOS AND RHEMA***

The Greek word translated “words” [in John 3:34] is *rhema*, which refers to the instant and present spoken word. It differs from *logos*, which refers to the constant word, as in John 1:1. In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” Here also the Greek word *rhema* is used. The Spirit is living and real but rather mysterious and intangible and difficult for us to comprehend. But the Lord’s words are substantial. First, the Lord indicated that for giving life, He would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the life-giving Spirit. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we receive the Spirit who is life. (*CWWL*, 1982, vol. 2, “The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John,” p. 156)

*Logos* is the written word, but *rhema* is the present word, the word that is spoken to you by the Lord for a particular purpose at that very moment. According to our experience, if we keep ourselves in the fellowship of the Lord, we have *rhema* within from the Lord all of the time. *Logos* is the outward word as a message spoken or written; *rhema* is the present, inward word. We have *logos* in our hands, but we have *rhema* in our spirit. *Logos* is the written word as the expression of the living Christ; *rhema* is the word spoken within us by the Spirit of Christ just at the time we need it. For example, perhaps while you are fellowshiping with another brother, something within tells you to stop talking. This is *rhema*. Perhaps you are thinking about a certain matter that you want to do today, but again something within you tells you not to do it. This also is *rhema*.

The Lord is very mysterious. For this reason, we can never understand Him by our imagination. Rather, we must read the sixty-six books of the Bible. We must read these sixty-six books word by word because all of the words express, explain, and define our mysterious Lord. If we want to know Him, we must know the Word and how to deal with the Word. But, on the other hand, the Spirit is within us, giving us some living words at the right time to meet our needs. At the very hour of our need, the Spirit within us gives us a timely word for our particular case. The inner *rhema* always corresponds with the outer *logos*. The Spirit speaking the *rhema* within never speaks differently from the written *logos*. The outer *logos* and the inner *rhema* always correspond with each other, and many times the inner *rhema* interprets the outer *logos*. Perhaps you read the written *logos* in the morning but fail to understand it or to apply it to yourself in a living way. While you are working, the Spirit anoints you from within with the word, giving you the right meaning and even the right emphasis. You sense the living *rhema* with its living emphasis by the Spirit. As a result, you not only understand it in your mind but also apprehend it in your spirit. Now the outward, written word becomes the living word within your spirit. You can experience it and apply it in your life. In this way the *logos* becomes the *rhema*; the outer word becomes the inner word. We need to attend to the living *rhema* within, allowing it

to have its full way within us. In order to allow the living word to have its free way within us, we must go along with it. In other words, we must be very submissive and obedient to the living *rhema* that is speaking now within us. Concentrating on the inner *rhema* will make the living Lord so real to us in our spirit. It will make Christ so available and practical. We shall sense the moving and the working of the Lord who energizes us inwardly. (*Life-study of John*, pp. 411-413)

### **GOD'S DESIRE THAT WE SPEAK HIS WORD**

In the book of Numbers in the Old Testament there is the concept that everyone must speak the word of God, or that everyone may speak the word of God, or, we might say, that everyone is able to speak the word of God. In summary, we might say that one who is saved, one who serves the Lord, has the qualification, the right, the ability, and also the responsibility and burden to speak the word of God.

In Numbers 11 Moses felt that the responsibility on him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan was too heavy (v. 14). God then told him, "Gather to Me seventy, each one from the elders of Israel,...and bring them to the Tent of Meeting" (v. 16). Moses obeyed, and out of the seventy persons, sixty-eight came before the tabernacle. Then the Spirit fell upon all of them, and they were moved to speak. The original text says that they were all prophets (v. 29), but the Chinese Union Version of the Bible did not dare to translate it this way. The sixty-eight persons all became prophets, and all were speaking for God. Meanwhile, the Spirit also rested upon the two who remained in their own tents, and they prophesied in the camp. Some saw it and were jealous and told it to Joshua, Moses' helper. Then Joshua came to beseech Moses and said, "My lord Moses, restrain them!" (v. 28). Moses rebuked him immediately, saying, "Are you jealous for my sake?" (v. 29). Then he spoke this sentence, "Oh that all Jehovah's people were prophets!"

Paul also spoke this kind of word. In 1 Corinthians 14:31 Paul says, "You can all prophesy one by one." The Chinese Union Version says, "All may prophesy." The Greek has both meanings: *all may* means also "all can." However, *may* refers to right, and *can* refers to ability. This word in Greek includes the right and also the ability. The Chinese Union Version translated this word "may"; our Recovery Version renders it "can."

God's desire is that we speak, and the most pleasing thing to God is our speaking. Parents love to hear their children speak, and whenever the children speak, the sound of their speaking is pleasant, even if they do not speak well. Similarly, in the meetings whenever the newly saved ones speak, the sound of their speaking is very pleasant. Even if they do not speak well, they still sound pleasant. (*CWWL, 1985*, vol. 4, "Everyone Speaking the Word of God," pp. 196-199)

Christ's multiplication spreads God through His speaking and our speaking. His speaking and our speaking should be the same. They should be followed by the Spirit. Christ is the Word of God, and we are the members of Christ. Therefore, we are members of the Word of God. As such we must be the oracle of God, the speaking ones, to spread God for the multiplication and increase of Christ. (*The Vital Groups*, p. 27)

### **References and Further Reading:**

1. *Life-study of John*, msg. 34.
2. *The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John*, chs. 12-13.
3. *Everyone Speaking the Word of God*, chs. 1, 2 and 5.
4. *The Vital Groups*, chs. 3-4.