

Message 3

GOD'S PROCEDURE OF LIFE

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-16:

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created. When Jehovah God made earth and heaven, ⁵and no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up— for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground— ⁷Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

⁸And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵And Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it. ¹⁶And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely.

I. God's procedure to accomplish His twofold purpose is by means of His life—2:9:

- Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
- Num. 17:8 And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds.
- Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

II. The first step God took was to create man as a tripartite vessel with a spirit to contain Him as life—Gen. 2:7:

A. Man is a vessel:

- Rom. 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom. 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory.
- 2 Cor. 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

B. Man was created with a spirit:

- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.
- Rom. 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.
- Prov. 20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.
- Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him.

- Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, / And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.
- Rom. 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- 2 Tim. 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
- C. Man was created with three parts—body, soul, and spirit:
- 1 Thes. 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

III. The second step God took was to place man in front of the tree of life—Gen. 2:9:

- A. Christ is the real tree of life:
- John 1:1, 4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
- B. God intended man to take Christ as life:
- John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.
- Matt. 15:27 And she said, Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
- John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

IV. We now have a choice—eat either of the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—Gen. 2:9, 16-17:

- A. The principle of the tree of life is dependence on God:
- John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
- Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.
- B. The principle of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is independence from God:
- John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
- C. The two trees in Genesis begin two lines in the Bible—the line of life and the line of death—and ends in a city of living water and a lake of burning fire in Revelation:
- Deut. 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live.

- Rev. 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
- Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Focus: To fulfill God's purpose, we need to choose to take God as the tree of life to fill our tripartite being with Him as life.

Ministry Excerpts:

God's Procedures to Fulfill His Purpose by Life

God is going to accomplish His purpose by means of His own life. How can one person express another if he does not have that person's life? A dog cannot express a cat because a dog does not have a cat's life. A dog has a dog's life, and this life is only suitable for expressing a dog. According to the same principle, a cat can never express a dog. If we think otherwise, we are dreaming. How can we human beings express God? There is no way except by having the life of God...Man is destined to express God. Are we able to do this? It is impossible for us to do it by our life because it is simply a human life. God is transcendent. Our life is too low to express Him. If we are going to express God, we need the life of God. If we have the life of God, we will express Him spontaneously and unconsciously. Once we have His life, we will express His image. Life is the way to fulfill God's purpose. This life is not our natural life, but the divine and eternal life of God.

Authority is also related to life. Neither a table nor a chair has authority, for authority is always related to a certain life. Look at yourself. The more life you have, the more authority you have. Human beings have authority over the animals because we have more life than the animals. Even in the area of human relationships we find it true that the more life a person has the more authority he has. If I am more mature than you, I have authority over you. If a teenager comes to me, there is no need for me to threaten him. He spontaneously will come under my authority. This authority was not given to me by the President of the United States. It came from my age. If you are 110 years of age and I am 70, I will come under your authority. Your age assigns you the authority. In order to represent God with His authority, we need His life.

The First Step—Creating Man as a Vessel to Contain God as Life

The first step of God's procedure in fulfilling His purpose was to create man as a vessel to contain Himself as life. I like this word vessel. Do you realize that as a human being you are a vessel? A vessel is like a bottle or a cup. Today, while I was with the Lord, I was rejoicing because I am a vessel. I said to myself, "Man, you are exactly like a bottle. Your mouth resembles the mouth of a bottle. The purpose of a bottle is to contain something, not to contain yourself. You are a vessel designed to contain God." This is not my concept. It was presented initially in Genesis and then stated emphatically by Paul in Romans 9 when he said, "Who are you, trying to argue with God? Don't you realize that you are clay? The potter has sovereign authority to mold the clay into vessels." Romans 9:21, 23 reveals that God created man as a vessel. We are vessels to contain God as life.

The Second Step—Placing Man in Front of the Tree of Life

After God created man as vessels with a human spirit to receive Him and to contain Him, He took another step by placing man in front of the tree of life. ...God did not charge him to obey ten laws and requirements. There were no commandments, but there was a placement. God placed man in front of the tree of life; He wanted man to eat this tree.

This tree enables man to receive God as life. How can we prove this? The following books of the Bible reveal that God is life. Therefore, the tree of life in the garden was the indicator that God intends to be our life in the form of food. One day, according to the Gospel of John, God came in the flesh (John 1:1, 14). In Him was life (John 1:4). The life displayed by the tree of life in Genesis 2 was the life incarnated in Jesus, God in the flesh. Jesus told us that He Himself is life (John 14:6). Furthermore, John 15 tells us that Christ is a tree, the vine tree. On the one hand, He is a tree; on the other hand, He is life. When we put together all these portions from John, we see that Jesus is the tree of life. Jesus said that He is the bread of life, meaning that He has come to us as the tree of life in the form of food. (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 10, pp. 118, 121, 136, 140-41)

The Principle of the Tree of Life—to Be Dependent

The principle of the tree of life is dependence. Perhaps many of you are not clear about this principle of dependence. Allow me to use the illustration of graduation. Nearly everyone reading this message has graduated from some kind of school, either elementary school, high school, college, or university. Although we may graduate from such schools, we can never graduate from a restaurant. We may graduate from studying, but we should never graduate from eating. Furthermore, we cannot graduate from drinking water or from breathing air. I encourage you to study well and to graduate from school as soon as possible. However, I would never encourage you to graduate from breathing, for if you do that you will die. What is the meaning of this? It means that knowledge creates independence and that life demands dependence....Regardless how old we are, we remain dependent upon breathing because breathing is a matter of life. (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 13, pp. 162-63)

The Principle of the Tree of Knowledge—to Be Independent

If we know the principle of the tree of life, we will also know the principle of the tree of knowledge, for it is opposite the principle of the tree of life. The principle of the tree of life is dependence; the principle of the tree of knowledge is independence. Anything we do in dependence upon the Lord is in the principle of the tree of life. Anything we do independently of the Lord is in the principle of the tree of knowledge. ...Everyone wants to be independent. However, we should never be independent of the Lord. Spiritual independence means death. If we are independent, we kill ourselves....To be independent of the Lord means to have an insulation separating us from the Lord, an insulation which cuts off the flow of divine electricity. Although we may have an electrical power plant with tremendous resources and all the necessary equipment properly installed, all is useless if there is insulation at the switch. That insulation severs the flow of electricity. Only a slight amount of insulation, perhaps a paper-thin layer, will cut off the flow. Independence is a spiritual insulation, disconnecting us from the life of God. ...One second of independence means death. (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 14, pp. 171-72)

Two Lines—Life and Death

[N]early everything in Genesis 1 and 2 is a seed of the divine revelation. The two trees are such seeds. Along with all the other seeds sown in Genesis 1 and 2, these seeds grow in the following books of the Bible and are reaped as a harvest in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 20:10, 14 we see that death is cast into the lake of fire. In Revelation 22:2 we see that life abides in the New Jerusalem. At the beginning of the Bible we find death and life, and at the end of the Bible we again see death and life. Between the two ends of the Bible two lines are set forth—the line of death and the line of life. Both lines begin in the book of Genesis and end in the book of Revelation. Death begins with the tree of knowledge of good and evil and ends with the lake of fire. Life begins with the tree of life and ends at the New Jerusalem. Before we were saved, we were on the line of death. After we were saved, we were put on the line of life. (*Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 13, p. 162)