

Message Two

The Blessings of the Jubilee

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:9-13, 39-41, 54; Luke 15:11-32; Rom. 6:6; 8:2; Col. 1:12

- I. **The blessings of the jubilee show us that as believers in Christ, our destiny is to be blessed—Eph. 1:3-6.**
- II. **The first and greatest blessing in the year of jubilee is that we are returned to God as our possession and our dwelling place—Lev. 25:9-13; Psalms 90:1:**
 - A. God's intention in creating man was that man would take God as his possession, as shown by God's placing man in a garden for lodging and in front of the tree of life for eating—Gen. 2:8-9:
 1. The man created by God has two important needs: he needs God to be his food and he needs God to be his garden, his dwelling place—John 6:35, 57; 15:4.
 2. Both the garden and the tree of life are symbols of God being man's enjoyment—Gen. 2:9; Psalms 34:8; 36:8; 1 Peter 2:3.
 - B. However, Adam fell by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thereby losing God as his possession and causing all of his descendants to be without God as their possession—Gen. 3:6, 22-24; 4:14, 16; Eph. 2:12.
 - C. Once we repent and turn to God by receiving the Lord Jesus as the fulfillment of the jubilee, we are brought back to God as our possession—Acts 26:18b; Eph. 1:14; Col. 1:12.
 - D. The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 illustrates that in the New Testament jubilee we have all been brought back to God as our inheritance and to the Father's house as our dwelling place and family—Luke 15:11-32; Eph. 2:19, 22:
 1. Although the prodigal son sold his possession and himself, the Son as the Shepherd tenderly sought him out, and the Spirit as the woman carefully searched for him—Luke 15:13-14, 1-7, 8-10.
 2. When he "came to himself" he desired to be one of his "father's hired servants"—to be one who sowed, reaped and harvested (things forbidden in the year of jubilee) by exerting his own effort—vv. 17-19.
 3. The father, not having an ear to hear such nonsensical talk, interrupted him and brought out the fattened calf to be slaughtered so the prodigal son, the father, and those in the household could "eat and be merry," signifying the enjoyment of the rich Christ as our inheritance—vv. 22-24.
- III. **The second blessing in the year of jubilee is that those who have sold themselves as slaves are freed from their slavery—Lev. 25:39-41, 54; Rom. 6:6:**
 - A. At the time we were saved, we were freed from the yoke of slavery—Rom. 6:17-18; Gal. 5:1.
 - B. In Luke 4, the Lord spoke of the condition of three kinds of people: the poor, the captives, and the oppressed—Luke 4:18.
 - C. All human beings, regardless of their occupation, gender, or age, are slaves of sin and captives of Satan under his authority, usurpation, and oppression—Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; 1 John 5:19:
 1. When man fell, we were "sold under sin" as Satan entered into our being intrinsically to be embodied as sin in us—Rom. 7:14, 18; cf. Matt. 16:23.
 2. Satan as sin dwells in us as the inciter, instigator, and our illegal master to kill, control, and oppress us as his captives so we are unable to do good and only commit sins—John 8:34; Rom. 7:11, 14, 20, 24.
 3. Satan is an evil "surgeon" and the people of the world are the "patients" lying on his "operating table," remaining passively in the sphere of Satan's influence, control, usurpation, and manipulation, with no consciousness of what is happening as he "operates" on them—1 John 5:19; cf. Matt. 24:38.
 - D. When we receive Christ as the year of jubilee, however, we obtain freedom and are delivered from poverty, captivity, and oppression—Luke 4:18; 2 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 6:18; Acts 10:38:

1. When we received the Lord Jesus, He as the great I Am, the Emancipator, entered into us as the light of life with the divine reality to gradually and spontaneously set us free from the bondage of sin—John 8:58, 12, 32, 34, 36; Eph. 5:8-9; cf. 1 John 3:9; 5:18.
2. If we want to be freed from sin, we must enjoy the Son of God who passed through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit operating within us as the law of the Spirit of life—Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.
3. By living in our mingled spirit and contacting the living Lord, we “switch on” the law of the Spirit of life and enjoy its automatic operation to free us from the law of sin and of death—Rom. 8:2, 4-6, 13-16, 23; cf. 1 Cor. 6:12; Gal. 5:1.
4. If we do not enjoy God sufficiently, we will still be in bondage to many things; making up our mind will not work; we must learn to contact our living Lord to enjoy Him—2 Cor. 3:17; cf. John 4:24; 1 Cor. 1:9.

Focus: The two main blessings of the jubilee are that first, we are returned to God as our lost possession and the Father’s house as our dwelling place, and second, that we are freed from the slavery of sin and the captivity of Satan by the enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit who is the law of the Spirit of life.

Ministry Excerpts

THE TRUE HUMAN CONDITION—POOR, CAPTURED, AND OPPRESSED

Man has lost God and is without God because of the fall. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of the year of jubilee, the first thing it teaches is that man must be returned to God. Then when we have God and enjoy Him, we have the real freedom. According to the Old Testament type, when the year of jubilee came, a person who had sold himself into slavery was returned to his own possession and to his own family to be reunited with his relatives, and at the same time he was also released from the yoke of slavery and was no longer a slave. In the New Testament age, in Luke 4, the Lord spoke of the condition of three kinds of people. Verse 18 says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed.” The three categories of people in this verse are the poor, the captives, and the oppressed. On the one hand, these are three kinds of people, but on the other hand, they are three human conditions. When we lost God, we became poor, and the result of poverty was that we were captured. Then after being captured, we were oppressed. When the year of jubilee comes, however, we obtain freedom and are delivered from poverty, captivity, and oppression...

Luke 4:18 says, “To proclaim release to the captives.” America today is the freest country; no one can wrongly capture anyone here. In reality, however, nearly everyone is a captive. The leaders have been captured, and the people have also been captured. Who captured them? According to Acts 26:18, the Lord told Saul of Tarsus that He would send him to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God.” Strictly speaking, we have all been captured by Satan. All human beings, regardless of their occupation, gender, or age, are captives of Satan and are under his authority. Apparently, human beings are free, but actually in the whole world no one is free because all are captives under the authority of Satan. First John 5:19 says, “The whole world lies in the evil one.” All the people of the world remain passively in the sphere of the evil one’s influence, under the evil one’s usurpation and manipulation.

The Bible never says that fallen people are the slaves of Satan; rather, it says that fallen people are the slaves of sin and the captives of Satan. Satan has captured us, and sin has enslaved us. Being a captive is much like being a slave, but there are some basic differences. In Romans 7:14 Paul says,

“I am fleshy, sold under sin.” To be sold under sin means that we have sold ourselves as slaves to sin. However, we are not the captives of sin; we are the captives of Satan and the slaves of sin.

Now we must go further to see what sin is. The common definition is that rape, robbery, sorcery, and fornication are sin. Likewise, extravagant eating, drunkenness, sexual indulgence, and gambling are also sin. Similarly, murder and arson are sin; not honoring one’s father and mother is sin; stealing and looting are sin; lying and cheating are sin; and cursing and hating are sin. However, in the intrinsic sense, these are not the real sin. Sin is something intrinsic in man’s being; murder and arson are merely the outward, sinful acts that are carried out and manifested. They may be regarded as the results of sin, but they are not sin itself. What, then, is sin? The Chinese followers of Confucius studied this matter carefully. The result of their studies produced the two great and opposing theories of human nature in Confucianism: the theory that human nature is good and the theory that human nature is evil. Advocates of the former asserted that man is born good, while proponents of the latter maintained that man is born evil. However, they did not carry out their research to the extent of knowing the real meaning of sin. In actuality, sin is just Satan. Romans 7 says that sin can dwell in us (v. 20). Normally we say that a table is placed in a house; no one would say that a table dwells in a house. Only living persons can dwell in a house. The fact that sin dwells in us proves that sin is in us as a living person. Romans 7 also says that the sin which dwells in us has killed us (v. 11). A table cannot kill, but sin kills. Before sin kills a person, it oppresses him, forcing him to do what he does not want to do. Sin is a “gangster” who coerces people to do what they do not desire to do. Paul said that he did not want to covet, but the sin that dwelt in him made him unable to control himself. He said that to will to do good was present with him, but to work out the good was not, because someone who was stronger than him dwelt in him. This one not only overcame him but also killed him. In this way, the Bible reveals that sin is Satan.

Before Satan entered into man, sin was not embodied; after Satan came into man, sin was embodied in man. There is no school of sin to teach people to sin. No parents would teach their children how to sin, but it is remarkable that as children grow, they spontaneously commit sins without anyone teaching them. This is because the sin that dwells in them drives them to commit sins. As a person’s will develops, he may feel that sinning is not good, and he therefore no longer wants to commit sin. However, the sin within him does not let him go, and it forces him to do that which he does not want to do. We can see this particularly in those who smoke opium, drink, and gamble. When some people do these things, even their visage appears demonic. They are very clear that if they keep gambling, they will lose all their money and become poor, but the addiction within them drives and pressures them to gamble. An addiction is a lust. Addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs comes from Satan. Once a person has become addicted to gambling, he cannot stop himself from gambling, and once someone has become addicted to alcohol, he cannot stop himself from drinking. When his addiction to alcohol makes its demand, he must have a drink, and when the addiction to gambling rises up, he must gamble. There are no exceptions to this pattern. After the addiction abates and a person comes to his senses, he regrets what he has done. He regrets that he has shamed his parents, wife, and children. Then he may call upon heaven and earth to witness his oath that he will never do it again. However, only a few hours later when the addiction returns, he is powerless against it.

Thus, there is a sinning factor, an addiction to sinning within man. This factor, this addiction, is Satan himself, and man is his captive. He has captured man and dwells in him as the inciting sin. First Satan captured us; then he came to dwell in us as the inciter, the instigator, of our sins. The result is that he has become our illegal master, and we have become his captives to the extent that we are unable to do good and can only commit sins. In the Bible, Satan is also called Beelzebul. According to the original language of the Bible, Beelzebul means the lord of the dunghill, from the name meaning the lord of flies. The top of a dunghill is covered with flies. As the lord of the dunghill, Satan specializes in leading flies to feed on dung; hence, he is also the lord of flies. Since he is the lord of flies, all sinners are like flies that follow Satan to “feed on dung.” They go wherever there is a stench, following Beelzebul

to feast on dung. Even upper-class people are like flies. Beelzebul can disguise himself with a high-class appearance so that all the “flies” following him appear to be of a high class. Such persons hold dancing parties in upper-class places, but such places are merely cultured “dunghills.” These people dress nicely and are very cultured, and when they dance they seem elegant. In actuality, however, they are “eating dung.”

All the descendants of Adam are the captives of Satan; everyone has been captured by him. After he captured us, he entered into us as Beelzebul, the lord of flies, and began leading us about to commit sins. Deep in his heart, no one wants to sin, but when a person becomes addicted and is stirred up by Beelzebul, he has to follow, allowing himself to be led around “by the nose.” Afterward he regrets it and may say, “I am so stupid; what was I doing? Why did I have to do that?” Although deep in his heart no one wants to sin, eventually everyone sins. No one has control over himself, and everyone has become a slave of sin. This is why the Lord Jesus said, “Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34)...

BEING RELEASED AND HAVING REAL FREEDOM ONLY BY ENJOYING GOD AS THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

In Luke 4:18-19 the Lord Jesus quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah, saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of jubilee.” As we have seen, to announce the gospel to the poor is to preach the gospel to those who have lost God, and those who are oppressed refers to those in slavery. We should not think that the year of jubilee came to free us only on the day we were saved. Actually, the entire age of the New Testament is the age of the jubilee. We have our entire Christian life in the jubilee, living a life of liberty, release, and freedom from bondage.

Announcing the gospel to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, and sending away in release those who are oppressed are the freedoms of the jubilee. These are the blessings of the jubilee, the blessings of the gospel. The blessings of the gospel are the return to God and the gaining of God as our possession. Once we enjoy God as our possession, we are free. Only those who enjoy God do not commit sin and are really free. John 8:36 says, “If therefore the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed.” If we want to be free, if we do not want to commit sin, then we must obtain the Son of God and enjoy Him. The Son of God today is the life-giving Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is the Spirit of life, who is in us as the law of the Spirit of life. Therefore, the law of the Spirit of life is just the Lord Himself, who passed through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of life. Every life has a law, so the Spirit of life also has a law. The law of the Spirit of life releases us from the law of sin. We enjoy the freedom of the jubilee not only at the moment we believe in the Lord, but beginning from that day we should enjoy this freedom all our life and for eternity. This freedom comes from our enjoyment of God. He has become our possession for our enjoyment, and when we enjoy Him, we obtain freedom. This is how we have the real freedom and are no longer in bondage. However, if we do not enjoy God sufficiently, we will still be in bondage in many things.

In conclusion, the year of jubilee is for us to be returned to God as our possession and as our enjoyment so that we may become free and be released from all oppression. Thus, we are returned to God from the authority of Satan and are freed from the slavery of sin. Hence, it is useless to struggle and strive. The only effective way for us is to believe the gospel and enjoy God. Some may say, “I will go home and make up my mind not to be angry or lose my temper again,” but whereas one can make up his mind to do good, he does not have the power to perform the good. Making up our mind will not work; we must enjoy the Lord. We must learn to contact this true and living Lord to enjoy Him. In this way, He becomes our release within us and our freedom. As a result, we have not only our possession but also our freedom. (*The Jubilee*, pp. 32-38)