

Message 1

The Three Aspects of the Word, the Word and Spirit Being One, and Dealing with the *Logos* and *Rhema*

Scripture Reading: John 10:35; 1:1; Eph. 6:17; John 6:63; Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16-17; (Logos) Matt. 7:24; 24:35; Mark 7:13a; John 8:31b; 17:17; 1 Cor. 1:18; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:25; 3:16; Heb. 4:12; 5:13; 2 Pet. 1:19; 1 John 2:14b; Rev. 3:8; 22:18-19; (Rhema) Matt. 4:4; Luke 1:38; 2:29; 3:2; 5:5; John 3:34; 6:63, 68; 14:10; 17:8; Acts 5:20; Eph. 5:26; 6:17; Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:25

I. There are three aspects of the word; first, there is the written word of God—the Bible (John 10:35); then there is the living word of God—Christ (1:1); finally, there is the applied word of God—the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; John 6:63)—*Hymns*, 801:

- A. First, God spoke, and what He spoke was written in a book; that is the Bible; there is only one book that is the word of God; the term *Bible* means “the book”; the Bible is the book of books—2 Tim. 3:16a; Rev. 1:3.
- B. When the word of the Bible is spoken to us and heard by us, right away the written word becomes the living word; that is Christ—John 1:1; 1 John 1:1.
- C. When the living word is applied to us and received by us, it becomes the word of the Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
- D. Faith comes from the hearing of this applied word by the Spirit through the living Christ out of the written Bible—Rom. 10:17:
 1. We can gain God by coming to the Bible, the written word; but if we merely read the Bible, it could only be the dead letter to us—John 5:39-40; cf. 2 Cor. 3:16-18.
 2. Before reading the Bible, it is good to call on the Lord at least two or three times, “O Lord Jesus. O Lord Jesus”; right away, the written word of the Bible becomes the living word; that is Christ.
 3. Then we react to Him, and He becomes the word as the Spirit, the word applied by the Spirit; then we have God; God is added into our being, and this God is the source of faith.

II. We must pay attention to the wonderful relationship between the Holy Spirit and the word; the word and the Spirit are one—*Hymns*, #802:

- A. By comparing Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:16-17 we can see that while these two portions show the same result, they have different causes:
 1. Ephesians says that when the believers are filled with the Holy Spirit in their spirit, they are able to praise and thank the Lord, whereas Colossians says that when the believers are filled with the Lord's word, they can praise and thank the Lord.
 2. This shows that the word cannot be separated from the Spirit; they are two aspects of one thing; a person who can praise and thank God must be one who is filled with the Spirit as well as with the word.
- B. Being filled with the word and being filled with the Spirit are not two different types of filling but two aspects of one filling; in other words, the word and the Spirit are actually one, not two:
 1. In order to be filled with the Spirit, one must be filled with the word, and in order to be filled with the word, one has to be filled with the Spirit.
 2. John 1:1 says that the Word was God, 4:24 says that God is Spirit, and 6:63 says that the Lord's words are spirit; the Word is God, God is Spirit, and the Lord's words are spirit; the three—God, the Word, and the Spirit—are one.
 3. Hence, when we touch the Word, we touch the Spirit; moreover, when we touch the Word and the Spirit, we touch God, because the Word is God, and the Spirit is also God.

- C. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed”; the Scripture as the word of God is breathed out of God; it is what God breathed out—*Hymns*, #799:
 - 1. We should never regard the words in the Bible as merely words; the words in the Bible should not be regarded as merely black and white letters.
 - 2. They are God-breathed; they are God's breathing out; therefore, when we touch the words in the Bible, we touch God.
- D. In John 6:63 the Lord said, “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life”:
 - 1. Since the Bible is God-breathed, God's breathing out, the words in the Bible convey God; since God is Spirit, the words that come out from within God are also Spirit.
 - 2. The words of God are breathed out from within God and are God; therefore, in essence the words in the Bible convey God.
- E. If we would understand the relationship between God, His word, and the Holy Spirit, we need a proper attitude toward the words in the Bible; the Lord's word and the Holy Spirit are one.

III. **There are two Greek words for *word*—*logos* and *rhema*:**

- A. *Logos* is the written word, but *rhema* is the present word, the word that is spoken to us by the Lord for a particular purpose at that very moment—Matt. 24:35; Luke 5:5:
 - 1. *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—John 8:31b; 6:63.
 - 2. *Logos* is the written word as the expression of the living Christ (1:1, 14; 8:31b); *rhema* is the word spoken within us by the Spirit of Christ just at the time we need it (6:63; Eph. 6:17).
- B. If we want to abide in Christ and let Christ abide in us, we must deal with both kinds of words—John 15:7:
 - 1. We must deal with the written word without and the living word within because by the written word without we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord and by the living word within we have the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord.
 - 2. 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 also know the Spirit who is within us, giving us some living words at the right time to meet our needs.

IV. **The outer *logos* and the inner *rhema* always correspond with each other, and the inner *rhema* interprets the outer *logos*:**

- A. The inner *rhema* always corresponds with the outer *logos*; the Spirit speaking within never speaks differently from the written word.
- B. At times we may fail to understand the written *logos* or to apply it to ourselves in a living way; for this reason, the Spirit anoints us from within with the word, giving us the right meaning and even the right emphasis.
- C. As a result, we not only understand it in our mind but also apprehend it in our spirit; the outward, written word becomes the living word within our spirit, and we can experience and apply it in our life; the *logos* becomes the *rhema*.

V. **We need to attend to the living *rhema* within, allowing it to have its full way within us:**

- A. In order to allow the living word to have its free way within us, we must go along with it.
- B. In other words, we must be very submissive and obedient to the living *rhema* that is speaking now within us.
- 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; we shall sense the moving and the working of the Lord who energizes us inwardly.

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994-1997*, vol. 1, “Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans,” ch. 8,
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1959*, vol. 2, “Christ Making His Home in Our Heart and the Building Up of the Church,” ch. 7,
3. *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 34, “The Glorious Church,” ch. 3.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967*, vol. 2, “The Experience and Enjoyment of Life for the Building Up of the Church,” ch. 3.
5. *Life-study of John*, msg. 34.