

# AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PERSON IN THE SPIRIT

## Message 1

### **Ministry through the Cross & a Person in the Spirit**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 1:4-6, 8-9, 12, 19-22; 2:13; 4:13, 16; 12:18; 10:3-4; 3:14; 4:4

#### **I. Second Corinthians gives us a pattern, an example, of how the killing of the cross works, how Christ is wrought into our being, and how we become the expression of Christ:**

- A. The experiences mentioned in this book are experiences in the Holy of Holies.
- B. This book gives a portrait of a person who is in the Holy of Holies.
- C. The experiences in this book are the deepest; they are experiences in the spirit, in the Holy of Holies.
- D. Second Corinthians may be considered as the autobiography of the apostle Paul; if you are going to know what kind of person the apostle Paul was, you have to look into 2 Corinthians.

#### **II. Second Corinthians speaks concerning the ministry, which is constituted with, and produced and formed by, the experiences of the riches of Christ through sufferings, consuming pressures, and the killing work of the cross:**

- A. The ministry is not merely a matter of gift; what the church, the Body, needs today is the ministry—1:4-6:
  - 1. The Body needs some brothers and sisters who have been thoroughly wrought by God and with God so that they may have something of Christ, not merely in their mentality as knowledge to teach others but as the very riches of Christ in their spirit and in their entire inward being to pass on to others.
  - 2. Today there are many teachings, much knowledge, and many gifts, but there is a great shortage of the ministry.
- B. If we are going to minister something of God in Christ to others, we have to suffer to have the experience—v. 8:
  - 1. When the apostles were under the pressure of affliction, despairing even of living, they might have asked themselves what the issue of their suffering would be; the answer or response was “death”—v. 9.
  - 2. The experience of death, however, ushers us into the experience of resurrection—John 11:25.
  - 3. The experience of the cross always issues in the enjoyment of the God of resurrection; such experience produces and forms the ministry—2 Cor. 1:4-6; 4:7-12.
- C. If we have been dealt with by the cross so that the cross has brought us to an end, we will be peaceful persons who are enjoying and experiencing the grace of God taking care of everything for us—v. 12.

#### **III. God has anointed us, has sealed us, and has given us the pledge, the foretaste, of the Spirit—1:21-22:**

- A. If we are going to minister something of Christ to others, we have to experience Christ by the working of the cross, and the working of the cross is for the anointing, the sealing, and the pledge of the Spirit:
  - 1. The anointing imparts God’s elements into us.
  - 2. The sealing forms the divine elements into an impression to express God’s image.
  - 3. The pledge of the Spirit is the foretaste of God as a sample and guarantee of the full taste of God.

- B. Through these three experiences of the Spirit as the anointing, the sealing, and the pledge, with the experience of the cross, the ministry of Christ is produced.
- IV. In 2 Corinthians 1 Paul told us that he and his co-workers were “excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living” (v. 8); they had the response of death in themselves, that they should not base their confidence on themselves but on the very God, who raises the dead (v. 9):**
- A. If we have really learned the lesson to trust no more in ourselves, we would not exercise our mind first but our spirit.
  - B. Immediately, we should turn to our spirit and exercise our spirit to contact God; this practically means that we do not trust in ourselves but in God.
- V. Because Paul was such a person living in the Holy of Holies, he could say, “I had no rest in my spirit” (2:13):**
- A. Paul was a person living, walking, working, and even having his being in his spirit.
  - B. Paul did not care for the circumstances or for what he thought or could see; he only cared for his spirit.
- VI. “Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (4:16):**
- A. The outer man is our body as the organ with our soul as its life and person; the outer man is perishing, decaying, or being weakened, reduced, and consumed.
  - B. The inner man is our regenerated spirit as the life and person with our renewed soul as its organ; the inner man is being renewed, refreshed, encouraged, and strengthened by being nourished with the fresh supply of the resurrection life.
- VII. In 2 Corinthians there are three passages related to the matter of thoughts:**
- A. In 3:14 Paul told us that the thoughts of the children of Israel were “hardened.”
  - B. Then in 4:4 he said that the thoughts of the unbelievers have been “blinded” by the god of this age.
  - C. Finally, in 10:5 Paul indicated that the thoughts need to be captured unto the obedience of Christ.
  - D. When you have the ministry, when you are a person really living, walking, in the spirit, you are not fighting the battle according to the flesh, but you are equipped, qualified, to do a work to capture the thoughts of people, to bring all their thoughts into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.
- VIII. Today the church needs the ministry of Christ:**
- A. If we would be humbled by the grace of the Lord and learn how to live in the spirit, the sovereign Lord will assign each one of us a certain amount of suffering.
  - B. The more we love the Lord Jesus, the more we will suffer something and the more we will be reduced.
  - C. Eventually, a certain amount of ministry will be produced, and the church will be built up.