

LIVING UNDER THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST



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Preface

We are the people of God and He is our sovereign Lord. In this universe there is a supreme authority that is called God and He has a position over us called the Headship. We have to seek it in order to come under it. All of us recognize that Christ is the Head and we are members of the Body. Now if that is true - and there is no doubt about it - where can we find this sovereignty? Where are those who live their human life under this authority? Are we these people? Do we find ourselves under the Headship of Christ? How do we live everyday, from dawn to dusk? We need to be brought under the authority of Christ; none should live for himself, but for the One who died and was resurrected for us. This is a vital message to all believers in Christ at the close of this age. I pray that as you put these principles into practice you will develop a strong and an intimate relationship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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Chapter 1: The Lordship of Christ

The People God Seeks

In the course of a week we hold two or three meetings, perhaps each lasting about two hours. Thus, we meet six hours a week at most. What do we do with the rest of our time? As born-again, regenerated Christians, how do we manage our days? How do we live our private and personal lives during those hours when we are alone or with our families? If we live a double life it is a shame to God and a victory for the devil. The devil may then say, They live for God on Sunday and the rest of the week for me. Sadly, though God wants us to express Him on the earth as his glorious Bride, Christ is often neither expressed nor glorified in our conduct. Will He be able to gain this Bride? Are we in a suitable condition? This is what we need to ask ourselves today.

Elijah, the Old Testament prophet, lived in a time of degradation and idolatry, an era full of sin. But we should not deceive ourselves. The picture is the same today. Africa, Europe, USA and the rest of the world are no better than the land of Israel was, three thousand years ago. But God, in the midst of this confusion, seeks a special people. Those people are not just men who meet together for a few hours during the week. God is looking for a people who live a very precise reality, people who

put themselves under the supremacy of Christ. We should have the desire to submit to the Lord, to be wholly brought under His headship. Let us repent of our backsliding and come back to Him.

Jesus, Lord and Christ

It is in resurrection that Christ became the Head of the church. In Acts 2, we are told that at the time of Pentecost, the strangers who found themselves in Jerusalem were confounded, because they heard those who had believed in Jesus talking to them, each in his own language. Then Peter gave them an answer from God: This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16). Peter told them that what was happening had been prophesied many years before and that now, whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:21). Jesus had come to earth, lived as a man, died on the cross, resurrected after three days and ascended to heaven. Now the fruit of all His labour was about to spring forth. On the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after His resurrection, He poured Himself out on His disciples as the Spirit. A hundred and twenty disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on that day and began to express the wonderful works of God in different languages, magnifying the Lord. In the last days, says God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:17). The fact that the Spirit was now poured out meant that the Lord was going to be more real than ever before, among His people. Let all the house of Israel know, assuredly, that God has made Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). Jesus is now the Head of all things! He is the Christ!

A Divine Order

Is He also your Lord, the Head over you? If He is really your Lord, then allow Him to control you as the Master, directing your ways. If He is Lord, then it is He who rules (governs) everyone. We have not chosen to put Him in authority. It is God who has put Him in this position of authority. God Himself wants us to submit to Him. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in the earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). Oh that our knees would bow before Christ as a sign of submission and adoration! Our tongues should openly confess that Jesus is Lord. Do not feel shy to shout aloud, JESUS IS LORD! He Himself did not feel shy, but died openly on the cross for you! Remember we have been taught in the scriptures that, whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3). This verse shows the divine order, according to which we must walk, for God has so decided it. In the world we talk about womens liberation, but in the church we must respect the divine order. We must be brought back under His Headship. The head of every man is Christ and the head of Christ is God. If we were to return (be brought back) to this divine order laid down in the scriptures, all our problems with regard to submission and authority would disappear, for they appear when we do not accept the Headship of Christ. This order was not constituted

simply as an end in itself, rather it has a very precise goal. In Ephesians 1:9 we see that God possesses a mystery and Christ has been highly exalted so that this mystery could be correctly revealed and expressed. He has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He has purposed for Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together (head up) in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth. In order for the church to be built correctly, we must be under the authority of the Head. We cannot live as we like and expect to see a built church. Even in this sinful world, we must obey the rules in order to reach our goals. The universe is arranged according to strict (rigid) laws; all things take place according to them. The sun always rises from the east and sets in the west. How often can we ignore divine instructions? If we obey these principles, God will be glorified.

Eve: An Image of the Church

When Adam found himself alone in the Garden of Eden, he was not satisfied, because he found no creature resembling him. Therefore, God put man into a deep sleep and took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh thereof. He made a helper, from his rib, similar to him. The rib represents here the resurrection life, through which Eve was born. This concerns the church, of which Eve is a symbolic representation. When Christ was on the cross, the centurion pierced His side with the sword and blood and water came out from His side. The blood is for our redemption and the water is for our regeneration. By these two elements from His side, we were born again and the bride would be produced

(John 19:34). So here we see clearly that from Adams side, Eve was produced (Gen. 2:21-24) and from Christs side, the Bride the Church would be produced. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Eph 5:32

Today, the Lord is raising a group of people who have His life and nature to communicate with Him in everything, to be a helper similar to Him. Jesus, when he lived on earth, was the image of the invisible God and the church must be similar to this wonderful Christ. In truth, the Bible reveals that we shall be like Him when we see Him 1 John 3:2. The more we gaze upon Him the more we are changed into His image (2Cor 3:18).

The Goal of Christs Authority

The authority of the Head has a purpose which is to bring all things together in Christ, those things on earth and in heaven. We who find ourselves on earth must be brought back under the Headship of Christ. He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body the fullness of Him that fills all in all (Eph. 1:22-23). All things must be brought back under the supremacy of Christ so that the Church can become His full expression. For it is written, He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things, He might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

Now if He should have the first place in all things, then we should stop claiming the first place. How do we make decisions in our lives? If we accomplish something without consulting the

Head and are confident in our competence, then we are taking the first place. Often, we only return to the authority of Christ when we suffer setbacks or when we are at our wits end. Christ should rather have the preeminence in all things, be it our family life, the education of our children, or the management of our finances. Some people act according to their good heart and thereby achieve good results. But whether we do good things or not means nothing in the eyes of God if we do not submit to Christ.

Colossians 1:18 says, in all things, He might have the preeminence. This sentence is perfectly clear. In all things has never meant in some things or in many things. We know very well what that means! Christ should be all in all in every aspect of our lives. He should have the first place in everything. He is the Head, the Beginning and the Firstborn. He has to be seen in all our actions. He wants to influence our way of speaking, thinking and dressing. We should not attempt to appear like worldly people. On the contrary, all that we are and appear to be should be fashioned according to Him, with the result that God would be glorified.

The Lord is eagerly searching for a people who would live this way, but His search meets with great difficulty because the whole world lives for itself alone. Worldly people do what they wish with their lives, but members of the church must no longer live to themselves. Why? This is because they have been redeemed at a great price and must, therefore, respond by glorifying God in their bodies. The Bible says, Do everything to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). It is quite legitimate to make decisions, but only if they are made in consultation with God and under the direction of the

Head. Then, everything will be arranged according to the divine order and all the daily practical problems among Gods people will be solved. If brother after brother, locality after locality, country after country, are gathered again under His lordship, then Christs sovereign authority will be honoured.

Then comes the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24). God has put all things under the feet of Jesus, His son, by making Him Lord and Christ. When He effectively becomes the Head over every locality and nation, when He gains His glorious Bride on the earth, He will then rule and reign for a thousand years. This is called the Millennium. At the end of the Millennium, Christ will hand the kingdom over to God: For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. God, in effect, has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him it is manifest that He who did put all things under Him is accepted (v. 25-27). In other words, all things are under His feet, except God. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all (v. 28). In the final analysis, all the glory will come back to God. What a marvellous picture! Where are those who submit to His authority today? Yet God has done everything necessary to bring us back under His Headship.

Chapter 2: Christs Headship Over the Body

God Wants to Enliven Us

It is made clear in the scriptures that if the Father desires to bring us under the Lordship of Christ, it is first with the goal of enlivening us, so that we can become His body. Even when we were dead in sins (God) made us alive with Christ (by grace you are saved) (Ephesians 2:5). The authority of Christ has the goal of making us alive so that those who are lukewarm will be burning, so that those who lead a slack and indifferent life in the church will be awakened. All things are put under the feet of Christ and He has been made the Head over all things to the church, which is His fullness. His demands are not insurmountable. He simply wants to fill us, He who is all and in all. He can thus make each of us living and active members of the Body so that we, in turn, can supply other members. We were not saved to remain lazily seated, arms and legs crossed, waiting to go to Heaven. We were not saved to act as we wish, deciding according to our mood if we are going to the meeting or not. Christ has a much higher work than that. If we give ourselves to Him, He will fill us with His life, making us members capable of supplying the growth of the Body.

Headship, Lordship and Kingship

The Bible gives us a clear explanation that Christ is the Head over His people the Church. However, at the consummation of this age, He (Christ) will head up everything in this universe. Today, the whole world is in degradation, darkness and confusion and is heading toward a big crash. The only answer to such degradation is Christ. Therefore, God has ordained that Christ will be the only salvation to save this universe from collapse. Therefore, when we talk about Lordship, we mean that He will rule over each individual believer in the body. Furthermore, when we speak of Headship, it is about His absolute authority over the body the church. However, when we speak of Kingship, it is about His total rule and reign over the entire universe. This will be fulfilled during the millennial kingdom: Lordship individual believer, Headship the body, which is the Church, then Kingship the whole universe.

In effect, as He heads up every individual member and rules over our conduct and transforms our character, there will be an impact on the entire assembly, until He finally fills the entire universe. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself

will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15: 23-28.

Then in Ephesians, Paul stated that: And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Eph 1:22-23

When the truth of Christs Headship gets its proper place in our hearts, when we know and believe that there is one body and that we are members of one another, we will understand that each one of us, in our individual path and service, is responsible to the One Lord. The grand practical result will be that our walk and ways affect every member of the body of Christ on earth. The scripture says, If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it! And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 1 Cor 12:26

Therefore, we can no longer view ourselves as independent, isolated islands in ourselves. We are incorporated as members of one body by one Spirit and this links us with the one Head in heaven. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13

The Old Testament saints understood lordship, but not headship. The headship of Christ became an accomplished fact when Christ resurrected from the dead and as Peter puts it:"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36

The headship of Christ did not exist until Christ took His seat on high, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Stephen, when he was being stoned, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:55-56). The enemy seemed to have triumphed when the first man was expelled from Eden, but the second man has made His victorious way into heaven and taken His seat on the eternal throne of God.

Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and his earnest gaze was fixed on a glorified Man in heaven. This is the way the Christian life should be. The true Christian is a man full of the Holy Spirit, looking up, with the steady gaze of faith, into heaven and occupied with a glorified Christ. It is the happy privilege of every believer to be full of the Holy Spirit and to have the eyes of faith fixed on the glorified Man in heaven. There is no divine reason why it should not be so. Redemption is accomplished. Sin is put away. Grace reigns through righteousness. There is a man on the throne of God. The Holy Spirit has come down to this earth and taken up His abode in the believer individually and in the church corporately. Amen.

Holding the Head

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God (Col. 2:19). Most problems arise from attaching ourselves to things other than the Head. When we come under the Headship of Christ, it means that we submit

completely to His will and that we receive His supply. Do you know why sometimes we are so poor spiritually and come to the meeting thinking we have nothing to say? It is because we are not holding the Head. The growth of the body does not come from an isolated individual or a pastor. It comes from the supply of the Head to which all members must hold. When all brothers and sisters put this principle into practice the Body is solidly fitted and divisions dissipate. Then, at last, Gods grace increases in all aspects of our lives. Those who meet us will taste God and when we come together the growth of God is visible. Unbelievers will then fall on their face and acknowledge, It is true; God is here. 1 Cor. 14:25.

The Growth of the Body

That we will no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the deceit of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Eph 4:14). This verse describes what happens when we do not hold the Head. We are naturally like children, carried here and there by the tricks of mortal men. In contrast, verses 15 and 16 show the result of our submission to Christ: But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increasing of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

No religion or activity brings growth. The Lord is giving us here the key to the growth of the Body: holding onto the Head and

submitting in all things to Christ. When we live by these verses, the Church will experience the Head. We sometimes hear brothers and sisters pretending that they cannot change their way of life because they were born like that. Such thoughts are the lies of the devil, because Christ now lives in us. Let us give Him the opportunity and He will respond by expressing His life and nature through us. There are so many verses in the Bible that reveal the nature and disposition of Christ. Such verses can become a reality in our practical life. We will begin to walk according to His life and light and we will love the brothers and sisters, because He loves them. He wants us to live a holy life, because it is His nature!

Thus we must no longer live in sin, because the One who lives in us cannot sin. Christ in us will make us do what pleases the Father. It is by obeying Him that we are brought back under His headship. When all is under His authority, His kingdom will come and at last Christ will give it back to the Father. When at last He gains the people He is waiting for, He will come back.

Unfortunately today, rebellion against the divine order is considered normal among Christians. Yet, when He was on earth, Christ never did anything on His own. His every word came from the Father. He learned obedience through suffering. He submitted even to the death on the cross. He is our most perfect example and we must follow Him. The sisters will not have difficulty submitting to their husbands if they themselves remain under the authority of the Head. In this way, the divine order will be respected.

The condition of the world is deplorable. The iron fists of sin and darkness are in control. Wickedness and violence accompany immorality. As for us, we live in the world, but we are not of the world. For us to pass through the world without being contaminated, we must attach ourselves firmly to the Head. When unpleasant situations overtake us, when the whole world seems to press against us, instead of murmuring and complaining let us attach ourselves to Christ.

I will like to conclude with this hymn from LSM Hymnal #132:

1 Lo! in heaven Jesus sitting, Christ the Lord is there enthroned; As the man by God exalted, With Gods glory He is crowned.

2 He hath put on human nature, Died according to Gods plan, Resurrected with a body, And ascended as a man.

3 God in Him on earth was humbled God with man was domiciled; Man in Him in heavn exalted, Man with God is reconciled.

4 He as God with man is mingled, God in man is testified; He as man with God is blended, Man in God is glorified.

5 From the Glorified in heaven The inclusive Spirit came; All of Jesus work and Person Doth this Spirit here proclaim.

6 With the Glorified in heaven Is the Church identified; By the spirit of this Jesus Are His members edified.

7 Lo! a man is now in heaven As the Lord of all enthroned; This is Jesus Christ our Saviour, With Gods glory ever crowned!

Chapter 3: Practical Effects of Christs Authority

Two False Ideas

To many Christians, God is merely a distant authority, indifferent to our affairs on earth. They have not understood that He is among us. This way of thinking is reflected in our prayers when we petition God like the prophets of Baal who through their ranting and raving on Mount Carmel sought to draw the attention of gods who had forsaken them (1 Kings 18:21-30). Perhaps we are not conscious of it, but this is what we traditionally do. This is why when we want to do something bad we look to the right, left, forward and backward and if we do not see anybody, we think we can go ahead, because God is so far away. Oh, may our traditional concepts be overthrown! God is very close to us! He Himself lives in us. The scriptures say, Draw near to God and He will draw near to you (James 4:18). We must have the consciousness of his intimate presence. We should not forget to look above, for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12). If there is nobody around us, God is still above us.

Another dangerous concept is that we require an intermediary. Some years ago, if you question a true Catholic about the authority of Christ, he will first make reference to the Pope. He is supposed to be such an accurate representative of

Christ that to fail to submit to him would be heresy. It is because of this mind-set that the Pope has become so powerful. The Lord does not like this attitude, as we see in John 2. At the marriage feast when there was a lack of wine, instead of going directly to Jesus, they went through His mother. Jesus was not tender. Instead of saying, Mother He said, Woman, what have I to do with you? Possibly it was a way of saying, Do not come to me as an intermediary for others.

Not all Christians recognize the authority of the Pope as an intermediary. In spite of this, several Christian leaders, including bishops and pastors, act as intermediaries. In this regard, the situation has not changed much since the Reformation. Many believers, unfortunately, do not understand that their prayers are heard directly by God. They feel more at ease if they have an intermediary. It is for this reason that they look for pastors, evangelists, prophets and others whom they think God will hear, on their behalf. But we do not need an intermediary authority between God and us. The Lord is not a symbolic Head, as is the case, for example, with the Queen of England. Every country in the Commonwealth respects her, but she has no real political power, she is just a ceremonial head. The Lord, however, is the real Head.

In many African households there is a plaque with the inscription, Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation. This inscription helps ease their consciences, but it can merely be a religious custom. Christ is not a silent listener! He wants to take active part in our conversations and to have a say in all our

conduct. Let us then give Him the first place that is rightfully due Him.

Beware Of Philosophy

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ (Col. 2:28). This verse presents a serious warning. Many pious persons live only according to philosophy, perhaps under the teachings of a certain professor (teacher) or author, but not according to Christ. If Christians live this way, what kind of church life are we going to have? Let us ask ourselves who and what regulates our lives today? Is it a doctor of philosophy or a book of theology? We must stand up against philosophy, the principles of this world and bad tradition. We should beware not to act according to the vain traditions of our fathers. For instance, we are so proud of our nationality. But nationalism is part of the traditions of our fathers. So, when tradition, philosophy and nationalism conflict with our faith, we should stand against them and maintain our faith. A good example is seen in the lives of Daniel and his three friends (Dan. 3:14-18). We should remember that we are strangers and sojourners on earth and our citizenship is in the heavens (Phil. 3:20). Sometimes husbands are bitter towards their wives, because they want perfection from them. If even one single thing about their wives goes against their traditional views, they feel hurt and become bitter. It should not be so.

Rebellion and Presumption

Quite often in our lives, two fatal character traits show up that do not agree with the authority of Christ. The first is rebellion and the second is presumption. Rebellion is not doing what we have been told to do and presumption is doing what we have not been asked to do. Unfortunately, it does not happen only with disobedient children, but it is also one of the biggest problems among Christians. When God tells us nothing, we take initiatives and when He asks us to do something, we refuse to do it. Some among us are timid. When God tells them to get up to call a song, pray, or give a testimony in a meeting, they prefer to listen to their feeling of fear and they stay seated. Let us submit to the Head and speak when the Lord asks us to speak. It is by this way that the Body will be edified.

Christs Authority in Our Situations

He is the Head, of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things, he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18). Christ Himself is the head and He wants to bring us under His authority, individually and collectively. If we open ourselves to Him to receive His supply, purposing to walk according to his ways and build the church, what a glorious church life we will have. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity. Eph. 2:14

Consider a husband and wife who have misunderstandings between them. If each of them come to the Head and submit to

His authority, their misunderstandings will flee away. But if they do not place themselves under the authority of Christ, there will be an open door to reproach. Without submission to Christ, it is not possible to truly correct such situations. The only recourse is to turn to Him who is our peace and who has power to break down walls. What a defeat for the devil to see couples living under the authority of Christ, forgiving each other in love and oneness.

If a brother offends another brother, even when his mistake is obvious, the offended brother does not have the right to tell him, I will never forgive you. The first has made a mistake by hurting the other, but the latter is also wrong in not forgiving. Can obeying the authority of Christ cause these brothers to behave any other way? When these two dear brothers come under the headship of Christ, their relationship with one another will be renewed and their fellowship with Christ will be restored.

Chapter 4: The Preeminence of Christ

Christ Himself

In verses 20 to 22 of Ephesians 2, we read that we have been built upon the foundation of the apostles, Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. No one but Christ knows how to build the church. If in all situations we attach ourselves to Him, receiving supply from Him, then He Himself is the cornerstone; it is He who is gathering us, uniting Jews and Gentiles. Only Christ can do it. It is only He who can unite on the same foundation, Americans, Poles, the Swiss, Englishmen, Africans, Spaniards, Germans, Chinese, Indians, and make them one. Such a thing is not possible in the world, but in Christ it is a reality. How? Only one thing can keep us together: our submission to the Head. It is neither a common philosophy book nor a great leader, but it is Christ Himself. All is done by Christ, in Christ and through Christ, In whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows (v. 21) In whom you are also builded (v. 22).

And He gave some to be apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:11). Nowadays, one has to attend a Bible school, study there for some years and then pass examinations to become

a pastor or an evangelist. But, according to the Bible, no institution has the power to make us pastors or ministers. It is only Christ who makes us what we are. What does the word say? And He gave some to be apostles and some prophets. For what purpose? For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

How shameful it is to hear people talk about their ministry as if it belonged to them. Brothers and sisters, the gift to be an apostle is for the work of the ministry and the church, not for the vainglory of man. There is only one work and only one ministry: the building up of the Body of Christ. No ministry must be independent or be for man; it must be for the building up of the body of Christ.

Christ loves the Church. He gave Himself for her. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church which is His body and for which He is the saviour (Eph. 5:23). Husbands, do not take only the first part of this verse. If, effectively, you are the head of your wife, then given your position, you must also give yourself to your wife, just as Christ, who gave Himself for the Church. Emphasis is not put on a position to be claimed, but on the responsibility that accompanies the position. Will you agree to die for your wife and to take care of her as Christ takes care of the Church? Since Christ is the head of the church, the same principle must be applied. The husband has responsibility in the home, but not superiority. His relationship must be established not on position, but on the practical and spiritual aspects of the responsibility that flow from it. As wives have to submit to their husband in all things, in the same way, we also who are the Bride must collectively submit to

Christ in all things. In 2 Cor. 11:2, Paul says, For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. God does nothing without the Son who in the end will head up all things in this universe. Let us give Him the first place in our lives now.

In Matthew 17 Jesus took three of His disciples to the mountain and they saw Who He really was. On the way, they did not know Who He was, but on the mountain God came to reveal the wonderful Christ whom they had been with every day. They also saw Moses and Elijah. Peter, stunned by this extraordinary vision, said: If you will, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah (v. 4). The Bible says he had not yet finished talking when a cloud covered them, And behold a voice out of the cloud said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear Him (v. 5). The disciples were so afraid and they fell on their faces, but Jesus approached them and assured them. When they lifted up their heads they saw no one except Jesus. There was neither Elijah nor Moses, nor was there any other person. This passage reveals to us how important it is to return to the authority of the Son. We should not act according to the seemingly good behaviour of a brother, but let us listen only to what the Son says. For it is said that in the days of old, God spoke through the prophets but today He speaks through the Son (Heb. 1:1-2). Let us turn our hearts to Him and cease from looking at other things. It is by contemplating and reflecting on Him that we are changed into His image from glory to glory (2 Cor.3:18).

Our problems should in no way prevent us from going on with the Lord. If at any time we encounter problems, it means there is lack of supply, but the Lord, our Head, is ready and willing to

provide what the body lacks and to take care of all our weaknesses. The Bible says He is the fullness of the one Who fills all in all. Often God permits certain things to happen to us so that we may understand our lack. When we do, He is certain to bring us back under His Headship.

Our only Expectation: Christ

Before the Lords ascension He was busy speaking about the kingdom with His disciples. They had many expectations and asked Him many questions. In the middle of these discussions, the Lord was suddenly taken up as they beheld Him. What a surprise! While they were looking up two angels appeared to them and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up to heaven? This Jesus Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in the like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven (Acts. 1:11). When Jesus sat down at the right hand of God, all power was given to Him. He was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. All authority in heaven and on the earth and under the earth was given to Him. In His ascension, He became the ruler of the kings of the earth. Then He poured out the Spirit upon His disciples on the day of Pentecost. That is why on that day, Peter was able to say, This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16). He assured the people assembled that the disciples were not drunk, but filled with the wonderful Spirit of God. The Lord wants to do the same thing with us today. This same Lord who is now in heaven is also working in His church on earth. Paul says that every knee should bow before Jesus, that every tongue must confess that He is Lord.. He has been made Lord and Christ. In the book of Revelation we see the same Jesus walking in the midst of

the golden lamp stands, the churches, for which he continually cares. (Rev.1:10-17)

The best Christian life consists in listening to what the Head says and then obeying it! When we walk according to this principle, the result is always wonderful.

Chapter 5: Examples of Christs Headship

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

In Acts 8, we read the story of Philip who went to Samaria to announce Christ at a time when Christians in Jerusalem were being persecuted. The crowds in Jerusalem listened and believed him, but in the midst of such a great awakening, God told Philip, Arise and go towards the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza which is a desert (v. 26). We often like to stay where we see God doing great things, but God sometimes likes to send us to the desert. Philip obeyed and he saw a minister of the Queen of Ethiopia who was going back to his country. Sitting in his chariot he was reading the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, Go near and join the chariot (v. 29). The Lord gives us such orders in our daily life saying, Go near this man, this brother or that sister. We should not, at that time, listen to the seemingly sensible notion that people will not listen to our word and accept our fellowship. Rather, we should obey immediately the inner speaking, otherwise we shall miss the opportunity of Gods leading. It was not so simple to approach this important Ethiopian dignitary. Travelling in a chariot in those days was just like riding in a Rolls Royce today! However, Philip obeyed; when the Spirit speaks to us we must obey, no matter how difficult the task may seem. Philip was the precise instrument God had

designed for explaining the scriptures to the Ethiopian. This man believed what Philip told him and received the Lord. He was baptized in water and was added to the kingdom of God. It was the first time that the gospel came to Africa. When they came out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip and the eunuch saw him no more and he went on his way rejoicing (v. 39). What countless saints will rejoice when we obey like Philip? With a simple obedience on our part, the Spirit can do many great things despite our ignorance of His plans. The Head knows all that the body needs.

Paul and Ananias

When Saul met the Ascended Christ on his way to Damascus, Saul had a real personal encounter with the Lord. The Lord asked him, Why are you persecuting me? (Acts 9:4). Saul replied, Who are you, Lord? He replied, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting... Then Saul again asked, Lord, what do you want me to do? Jesus instructed him, Arise and go into the city and you will be told what you must do (Acts 9:4-6). At the same time the Lord was speaking to Saul, He was preparing another vessel to receive him and usher him into the Body of Christ. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Here I am, Lord. So the Lord said to him, Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in

Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name. But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My names sake. (Acts 9:10-16)

Both men were in two different places, but they were both responding and corresponding in obedience to the Head. And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. (Acts 9:17-22)

Peter and Cornelius

Chapter 10 of the book of Acts teaches us something more about what the Head does. There we see a man called Cornelius who lived in Caesarea. Cornelius was praying in his house. He was an officer of the Roman army. The Head knew that this man had a heart for God. At the same time another man, Peter, was praying in the city of Joppa.

**The Head brought the two
into contact with each other.
Christ is not so far away that**

**He cannot do many
wonderful things among His
people! On the one hand,
Peter was a Jew and on the
other hand Cornelius was a
Gentile. But the Lord wanted
to bridge the gap between
the two, to break down the
wall of partition in order to
bring these two people**

**together into one new man.
It was only possible because
the two were ready to
respond to the word they
received from the Head. God
gave Peter a vision to
explain the situation of the
Gentiles. He showed him in a
trance many animals (which
by law were impure)
descending from heaven
and ordered him, Rise, Peter,
kill and eat (v. 13). But three**

**times in succession Peter
replied, in effect, No, I am a
Jew, I cannot eat impure
animals! He attached
himself strictly to the law
and neglected the directives
of the Head. We may
compare him to a motorist
who remains motionless at a
red light, even when the
policeman tells him to move.
The Word tells us Peter was
perplexed. A little while**

**later, the messengers of
Cornelius called at the door
of a house and asked
whether it was there that
Simon called Peter lived.
And whilst Peter thought
about the vision, the spirit
told him, three men seek
thee, arise, get down and go
with them, doubting
nothing; for I have sent
them (Acts 10:19-20). It is
always good to put our**

thoughts on what God tells us, because it allows the Spirit to direct us. Here the Lord did not give Peter a chance to reply; the apostle simply obeyed. We know very well the rest of this story. Thanks to the obedience of Peter, the door of the kingdom was opened to the Gentiles. The Spirit came upon Cornelius and those assembled in his

house, the same way that it came down on the day of Pentecost. Peter proclaimed the truth by saying that God does not discriminate and that He will accept all who believe in Him. We should now be ready to respond immediately to the orders of the Head; if we do so, many things will happen. God has often been restricted, because few of His children

have been ready to respond to His word. Having initially been unwilling, Peter finally obeyed and was able to recount later what happened in Acts 11. He spoke with boldness, because he knew that those events were initiated by God.

Saul and Barnabas

In Acts 13, we learn other lessons about the way the Head sends word to the body. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted the Holy Spirit said: separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them. And when they had fasted and

prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away (vs. 2-3). We really need to do the same thing they did, not doing things according to our thinking, but waiting for directives from the Spirit. The Lord, the Head of all things, knew exactly what was necessary and He ordered that Barnabas and Saul be set aside for the work for which He had called them. Barnabas and Saul were sent by the directive of the Spirit, not by the opinion of the brothers in Antioch. In all our actions, we should wait for the Lord, that He may take the initiative. In this way, we cannot be deceived.

In chapter 15, when Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, they recounted all that happened on their first voyage. During the discussion, they encountered problems with the brothers who had a religious past (v. 5). They said it was necessary to circumcise the believers who had pagan background. Paul and Barnabas did not agree with them. Do we not encounter the same problems when certain brothers want to impose on others their traditional and natural practices? And the Apostles and the elders came together to consider this matter (Acts 15:6). It is always good to come together to seek Gods mind in all circumstances. When everyone seeks the leading of the Spirit, everything goes well. Everything is done in oneness with one another and with the will of God.

Guided by the Head

In Acts 16, we observe brothers who began to take action, but then changed their plans because they were not convenient to the Holy Spirit. They initially went in a direction the Holy Spirit did

not want to go. What would you have done in their place? You have made plans, arranged everything, convinced yourself that the Lord has led you, but is it truly the way to go? In Acts 16:6, we read they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word. These brothers wanted to go to a certain place, but the Holy Spirit did not agree with their decision. In response, they did not argue with the Spirit's opposition. They simply obeyed. After they had come to Mysia they prepared to enter Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. They therefore went by Mysia and came down to Troas (Acts 16:7-8). They wanted to enter Mysia, but the Spirit did not allow them. The Head wanted to tell His servants that they should desist from making their own decisions. How wonderful it would be if all of us would listen with our hearts to the word of the Head! There would no longer be rivalry, dispute, or competition, for everyone would obey the Lord. In the night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared to him and said this prayer to him: come over to Macedonia and help us! After this vision of Paul, we sought immediately to go to Macedonia to preach the good news (Acts 16:9-10). The brothers must have been a little perplexed. The spirit had twice prevented them from stopping in the countries where they had decided to preach the Gospel and now they probably did not know which way to go. Yet the Spirit took care to guide them and gave this vision to Paul. We know the events that transpired: the Lord was able to do many great things in Macedonia. Many churches were raised through the obedience of the brothers. May the Head lead us to good places where we can accomplish great works for Him.

Paul in Corinth

When Silas and Timothy arrived in Macedonia, they saw Paul, who was being greatly opposed by the Jews. Paul gave himself wholly to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. When the Jews opposed the word and insulted them, Paul shook his garments and declared, Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean: henceforth I will go to the Gentiles (Acts 18:5-6). Paul was right to be angry, because the Jews refused to receive the word. He acted according to the inner leading of the Head. (1 John 2:27). He then entered the house of a certain man called Justus, a man who feared God and whose house was joined to the synagogue. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord with his entire household and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul also believed and were baptized. In the night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision do not be afraid, but speak and do not stop. For I am with you and no man shall set on you to harm you; speak for I have many people in this city. And he stayed there for one and a half years, teaching the word of God amongst the Corinthians (Acts 18:7-11). If Paul had left the city on impulse, nothing of what has been recounted in these verses would have happened! In the same way, the Lord often tests us by instructing us to stay when we want to leave. Such instances are good opportunities for us to learn endurance, as it was for Paul who had to stay at Corinth for one and half years! And what was the result? The result was glory, not for the apostles, but for the Lord. The Lord prevented Paul from leaving by urging him, speak and do not be quiet for I have many people in this city. One after another, the Corinthians were saved and baptized. This was the

result of a man who was one with the Head and lived under the Headship of Christ.

Paul in Jerusalem

On his return to Jerusalem, as Paul prayed in the temple, he was in a trance and saw the Lord who told him, Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem because they will not receive your testimony concerning me (Acts 22:17-18). Perhaps Paul (knowing his steadfastness and courage) would have been willing to stay in Jerusalem. But the Head did not wish it; He knew what was good for him. This time Paul had to quickly go away. This is an instance of wonderful coordination between Paul and the ascended Head. In Corinth, he wanted to leave, but the Head said, You must stay. In Jerusalem Paul was willing to stay, but the Head said, You must leave quickly. This is a marvellous oneness with the Head.

Some years later, Paul, then a prisoner of the Romans in Jerusalem, received another word, an encouragement from the Head: The following night, the Lord appeared to Paul and said, Be of good courage, for as you have testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must you bear witness also in Rome (Acts 23:11). Here was a man who lived daily under the Headship of Christ. Let us therefore learn to walk under the authority of the Head; then He will direct us as to what to do and where to go. If God has such people on earth today, then, the Lord will come back quickly. It is by our unbelief and disobedience, our quarrels and disputes, our divisions and lack of unity, that we are still delaying Him. Let us forget about everything and obey His speaking, so that we may hasten the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul in the Shipwreck

Paul was being taken to Rome in a ship when there was a huge storm. The ship was about to be wrecked and everybody was afraid. Paul then declared: An angel of God to whom I belong said to me: Paul, fear not, you must be brought before Caesar and behold, God has given you all those who are sailing with you. Wherefore, Sir, be of good cheer for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me (Acts 27:23-25). How we often need words like these! Paul, even though a prisoner, in a ship on dangerous seas, remained under the headship of Christ. He himself was assured and he re-assured his companions. Our boldness, power, courage and strength come from the Head even when everything seems dark and gloomy around us. When the ship is ready to break and sink, when nothing goes right and everything looks stormy and bleak, we should stay strong in our oneness with the Head. In such situations men of God should draw near to Him with strong faith and receive His supply and then pour out His encouragement to the whole church. We belong to God and we serve Him. Therefore, we should have no fear knowing He is with us always (Matt. 28:20). The church will not be built by theories and books, but with men and women who know the Word of God and remain under the headship of the Head. When such people speak, the church is built because of their oneness with the ascended Head and the saturation of the Word of God in their lives.

The Thorn in the Flesh

So that I should not be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me, a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me to prevent me from being exalted above measure. For this thing, I prayed to the Lord, that it might depart from me (2 Cor. 12:7-8). Paul cried to the Lord for Him to take away this thorn, but it was not removed from him. And the Lord spoke to him again saying, My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Paul immediately responded and he accepted the word from God with joy saying, I will gladly rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2 Cor. 12:9). We often find ourselves in situations similar to that of Paul when the Lord's answers to our prayers do not agree with our expectations. What is our reaction? We rather blame God and react negatively. Let us learn to reply in the same way as Paul! We shall then see the power of God operating in our weaknesses and we shall be happy as we submit to the Head.

Chapter 6: Christs Headship Through the Gospel

Preaching the Gospel According to The Head

After the resurrection of the Lord, the disciples were in a room, having locked the doors, because of fear of the Jews. Then Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst despite the physical obstacle posed by the closed doors. He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). For the first time, the life of God entered into them and they were regenerated. After Jesus had ascended on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the disciples to give them heavenly power to be His witnesses. It was like the mantle of Elijah on Elisha. We need the two aspects of the Spirit: the Indwelling and the Outpouring. We need first to be filled with the inner life (indwelling), but for the preaching of the gospel, we must be clothed outwardly with the economic Spirit (outpouring). If we are not filled with the Spirit it will be difficult for us to preach the Gospel. Without the power of the Spirit, there will be no anointing for the preaching of the gospel. However, if we are living in the presence of God and walking under the authority of the Head, we will have courage and boldness to speak His word with authority. Such preaching will have impact with great results. As believers, we must have our eyes unceasingly fixed on the resurrected Christ in ascension, then the gospel preaching will become something natural and easy.

Pauls Burden for the Gospel

We should not preach the gospel grudgingly, but willingly. We need a heart full of love and concern to bring the good news to the unsaved. Paul says, For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel (1 Cor 9:16-18). In his entire ministry Paul kept a close contact with Christ who is the Head. His preaching was one with the Head. Therefore, he could say with all boldness: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17).

In Romans 9:1-3, Paul was willing to sacrifice himself for Israels salvation. I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh. In Romans 10:1, we read, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. Pauls greatest desire and burden is for his own countrymen to be saved. Do we have this same burden and compassion for our nation?

The Example of Matthew 9

In Matthew 9, the Lord gives us an excellent example of how to preach the Gospel under the leading of the Head. Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:35-38)

Jesus had a full agenda. He had much to do before going to the cross and yet He went about the cities and villages to preach the Gospel, the good news about the kingdom. The cities represent people of high social standing and the villages, lower class people. Jesus went to all, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. We read earlier that Seeing the multitude He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered as sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36). Such a seeing and burden can only come from our oneness with Christ. If we are not one with the Head, there is no way we can be burdened for people on earth. Before we can reach and gain people, it is necessary to have a real compassion for them and to love them. Nobody can save people by preaching the gospel as a duty. We need a heart to rescue the perishing. Jesus was moved with compassion because He was one with the Father's will on earth and we need to be one with Him to fulfil the Father's desire for mankind on the earth.

This generation needs Jesus! Many people go about their daily business without hope, without God. Should that not move us to do something to reach these lost souls for Christ? The disciple on the road to Emmaus testified and said, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) Such a burning can only come when we touch the resurrected Christ. Many Christians are miserable simply because they lack the oneness with the Heavenly Christ. They live their lives in fear and superstition, but once they come under the headship of Christ they become alive again. Inner satisfaction and contentment make them complete and satisfied.

We Need A Passion for Souls

We have to be moved with compassion for sinners, because they do not have a shepherd and they need a Saviour. Man can have all that he desires in this temporal life, but without God he is empty and frustrated. Outwardly, everything may look okay with people, but inwardly, they are miserable and are crying out in pain for a Saviour. What can we do about their condition? Once you touch the resurrected Christ, He will direct you toward your neighbour. How is your heart for the unsaved? We should open up to the leading of the Head and reach them for Him. People are not happy without Christ: the only Saviour of the world is Jesus Christ. There are many places to go with the message of Christ, but where are the workers who will take the truth to this dying world? The Lord has saved us so that we can have the same burden for others. Due to our lack of oneness with the Head, we are not clear what He will want us to do. The Heavenly Christ

spoke to His disciples, The harvest is truly plenty, but the labourers are few. Pray, therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the harvest (Matt. 9:37-38). The world is a big harvest field, but for lack of gatherers the fruit becomes rotten and falls to the ground. Each day, thousands die without Christ and are eternally damned. Christians pass by these great multitudes of people, but have no heart for them. What are you doing about these people without Christ? Let us have the heart to stop and tell them about the saving grace of Jesus. We have received a great commission from the Head saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20. We have received His authority, He has given us His Word and He has promised us His Divine Presence. We have received all these for one unique purpose: to reach the unsaved with the gospel. Every day people go to hell because we refuse to tell them about Jesus. Each day thousands of people die without hearing the good news about Jesus Christ.

Those who preached the gospel with great boldness on the day of Pentecost were not extraordinary people. They were simple fishermen. Before that time, they had argued about who would have the first place in the kingdom and even one of them denied the Lord three times, the same night! This means that we are more qualified to preach the gospel. It is within the reach of any brother or sister who is willing to open his or her mouth to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We should not listen to

our cultural way of thinking which says we must mind our own business and not poke our noses into other peoples affairs. We should remember that if we do not preoccupy ourselves with the salvation of other people, they will die and go to hell. But God will hold us responsible for not speaking to them about Jesus (Ezekiel 3:16-21). We must save those who are dying! Imagine that you see a man preparing to jump from a roof. Will you say that it is not your concern? Certainly not. You will do everything possible to prevent him from dying. You will not feel shy of saving this man. It is strange that we feel ashamed when it comes to saving people from hell! Jesus had deep compassion for people to the extent that He gave His life on the cross to save His fallen creatures. When we have a true burden, it will be easy to talk, to look at people in the face and tell them, You need Jesus.

In Acts 2, the disciples had a heavy burden: But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said to them you men of Judea and all that dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen to my words (Acts 2:14). The people stood there and wondered what was happening. Peter, seeing them, was moved with compassion. This same person who was ashamed to confess Jesus to a simple servant girl (he had said that he did not know Jesus) was now addressing a huge crowd and speaking boldly about Jesus. We need a burden like the one Peter had on that day for the multitudes that are going to hell. We must proclaim that, whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21). Be strong in your spirit to tell people that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Salvation is only in Jesus! There is no way for people to be liberated from their burden of sin, sickness and bondage except

in Jesus Christ the Ascended Head. Christ has already opened the way by dying on the cross so that all may be saved, healed and liberated. All they must do is to believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom. 10:9).

The Key of the Gospel

There is a crucial point in the preaching of the gospel: the death and resurrection of Christ. Without His death and resurrection, there could be no gospel: Let all the house of Israel assuredly know that God has made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). The hearts of those who were listening to Peter were greatly touched and they asked, What shall we do? Peter told them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). We need to have a true compassion for people that they might be brought to the knowledge of salvation. I declare to you, brothers, the Gospel which I preached to you which also you have received and in which you stand, by which you were saved, if you keep the memory what I preached to you unless you believed in vain. I delivered to you what first of all, that which I received, how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that He was buried and that He rose again on the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-3). This is the gospel, that Christ died for our sins and resurrected for our justification (Rom. 5:6-11). What is said here is the key of the gospel: Christ died for our sins; for every man is a sinner. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). People have to know this. We have to declare this, that He was buried and He rose again on the third day according to the scriptures (1

Cor. 15:4). This is what it means to preach the gospel! Speak to people about these two works of Jesus Christ. Tell them about the efficacy of His death and resurrection.

To Be Filled With the Spirit

Then Peter filled with the Spirit said unto them you rulers of the people and elders of Israel (Acts 4:8). This verse gives us the secret of Peters boldness when he preached the gospel. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. How can you preach the gospel if during the whole day you never called on the name of the Lord? What if you never prayed nor read the Bible? The power of the gospel is the power from the Spirit and it is in these essential practices that the experience comes. A carnal person cannot preach the gospel and have impact. When Peter began to speak to the rulers of the people and the elders of Israel, he was under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He told them that Jesus had lived among them and had moved in their midst, but they did not recognize Him. They rather crucified Him, but God had resurrected Him from the dead. In Acts 4:12 he added that there is no salvation in any other person. In effect, he said there is salvation in no other person apart from Jesus Christ. He is the only way to God (John 14:6). When you preach the gospel, do not be too complicated, be simple. Preach Jesus Christ, not stories or philosophies, just Christ. You do not necessarily have to explain that neither Buddhism nor Confucianism brings salvation. You can simply say that there is no salvation in any other, except Jesus. It is the only name given to us by God through which we might be saved. It does not matter whether people want to hear us or not. Our duty is to preach the gospel. Jesus will open their ears and touch their hearts. In Acts 4,

we see that the rulers and the elders of the people forbade Peter and John to speak in the name of Jesus. They were afraid of the consequences, because this name is terribly efficacious. The people believed en masse and were saved! The name of Jesus later opened the prison doors for the apostles and set them free.

What We Have Seen and Heard

Peter and John replied, Judge whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God; for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard (v. 19-20). How do we preach the gospel? It is quite simple: we talk about what we have seen and heard! Have you not seen and heard many things since you were saved? Think about it: Many people envy the way you live and numerous questions run through their minds. They wish to know your secret, to know why you are not like others. Simply say what you have seen and heard and let your life be a testimony. When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they were shocked, knowing they were uneducated men and they recognized them as having been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). That is exactly what must happen to us. We should be recognized as those who have been with Jesus.

Preaching All the Words of This Life

In Acts 5, we find the apostles in prison, because of the jealousy of the high priest. However, an angel of the Lord, having opened the doors of the prison in the night, brought them out and told them, Go stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life! This is

all that we have to do. Go into the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life. Do not be frightened any time you hear the word gospel. Simply share what Christ has done in your life. Speak about what you have read in the Bible. Converse about the Lord Jesus Christ; speak about the unchanging impact of His death and resurrection in your life. Often we wonder whether an acquaintance will receive the word we preach, if the moment is well-chosen. We should refrain from asking ourselves questions, because each minute is an opportunity for testifying about the Lord. The next moment the person might not be there. Seize every opportunity! When we are obedient and are drawing near to the Ethiopian the Lord puts on our way, let us realize it is not us who will speak, but the Spirit. We shall meet people who ask questions, who do not understand the purpose of man on this planet; they may neither know where they came from nor where they are going. The Bible has the answers to all these questions. We shall be surprised to observe how happy people will be when we talk to them about Christ. Even those who seem unwilling to accept salvation often receive the Lord!

What Cornelius Did

And the next day they entered into Caesarea, Cornelius was waiting for them and invited his family and close friends (Acts 10:24). Cornelius was a great man who loved God. On the day that Peter arrived he invited his parents and friends to his home. Peter spoke and the Spirit came upon all of them. What favour did Cornelius do for these people? He did something small. He simply invited his family and close friends. Even if we are not able to speak to people, we still have no excuse. We can do exactly what

Cornelius did by inviting the people to whom we wish to preach the gospel and also inviting another brother to come and speak. Elisha (the prophet who succeeded Elijah) crossed the Jordan twice. For the first time, he did so with Elijah, but without the Spirit of Elijah and for the second time, without Elijah, but with a double portion of Elijah's spirit. He was able to separate the waters of Jordan, the same way Elijah did and crossed on dry ground. Anything others can do, we can also do the same and even more, when we saturate ourselves with the Divine Spirit. The Jordan symbolizes death with Christ, but everywhere Elisha went he brought life. It must be the same with us. If we are to bring life to other people then death must work in us (2 Cor. 4:12). It is for this reason that we should not be ashamed to preach the gospel. Whatever the personal consequences might be, if the one to whom we speak gains Christ, it is profitable.

Jesus Delivers Even the Demon Possessed

In Mark chapter 5, we see the story of a man who was possessed by demons, who had left everything and lived among tombs. He was naked and devoid of reason, to the extent that he cut himself with stones. We see this in our day. Many people are destroying themselves with things like drugs, sex and alcohol. They are damaging humanity created by God. Some even do this against their will, because they are under the influence of demonic spirits. We have to lead these poor souls to Jesus to deliver them. In Mark 5, when Jesus came to the man and chased away the demons the man was set free and he came back to his proper mind. Immediately, he realized his condition, he cleaned himself

up and covered his nakedness. He became clean. Let us pray for many others to be saved in this way!

Mark 5 further gives us another view of the gospel. When Jesus came into the ship, he that had been possessed with the demons sought permission to stay with Him. Jesus did not permit him, but instructed him, Go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you and has had compassion on you (Mark 5:19). This demon-possessed man, who had now been liberated departed and began to publish in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him and all men marvelled (Mark 5:20). How should you preach the gospel? Go to the people and tell them of Gods graciousness upon your life. Every day of your life in Christ is a miracle. Begin with your relatives and friends and tell them all that the Lord has done for you. The Bible says when, They came to Jesus and they saw the one who was possessed by the devil and had the legion sitting and clothed and in his right mind and they were afraid (Mark 5:15). They saw that this mans life was a testimony without him speaking a word. We also are a living testimony for the Lord. Rather than organizing large gospel campaigns, first let every believer go to his neighbours and proclaim what God has done in his life (Matt. 5:16).

All You Who Labour and Are Heavy-Laden

In 2 Pet. 3:9, Peter says that God is patient towards men, not wishing that anyone perish, but that all will repent. John tells us that God gave His only Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). Again in

Matthew 11:28, the Lord sent out a call: Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. These three verses show the importance of the gospel in the eyes of God. We see in it His compassion for all humanity. In the last of these three verses, Jesus launches an appeal to all who are tired of their sins, to all who are struggling under a heavy load of care, to all who are oppressed by their own failures and disappointments, to all who struggle perpetually to reach a standard they cannot attain and to all those who condemn themselves because they cannot attain that standard. To all those He says, Come unto Me and discontinue your efforts. The more you work, the less you succeed. Jesus addresses His appeal to all those who are heavy-laden. It is addressed to Christians as well as unbelievers. We are often over-burdened with anxieties and accusations such that we are neither free nor happy. Many believers daily live under condemnation. If you are heavy-laden, come to the one who said, I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28). In Africa, it is customary for people to carry burdens on their heads. This serves as an example to us: we should not try to carry our loads ourselves, but let the Head do it for us. The message we must carry to the world is that there is a Saviour who wants to take our place, to carry our loads of care. Jesus is ready to save you now. He says, Come to Me and I will give you rest.

The scripture says, That is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God desires that all men be saved! If we see this, then we will also willingly cooperate with Him. Our part is to preach the Gospel. He will take care of saving the people. As for those who do not want to be saved, that

depends entirely on them. A young man one day asked D.L. Moody a question on this subject. Why should I preach the gospel, in case God has predestined that person not to be saved? To this, Mr. Moody replied with an illustration: the gospel is like a house with a sign post which says, WHOSOEVER WILL MAY ENTER, but when you enter, you will see another sign behind the door: YOU HAVE BEEN PREDESTINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Remember that it is a necessity to preach the gospel. However, it should not be a burden that should be breaking our shoulders. If the gospel tends to become a burden too heavy to carry, we should go to the Lord, pray for the people and begin to hand out journals or brochures or tracts. Find another way to spread the good news, but whichever way, it is our responsibility to preach the gospel. Concerning the preaching of the gospel, Paul said: my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of mans wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power (1 Cor. 2:4). This means that our gospel is not founded in the domain of philosophy. Corinth was full of Greek artefacts and philosophical teachings. One would have thought that it was necessary to adopt the Corinthian style and to preach to the Corinthians using philosophical language accompanied by great wisdom. But the best way of preaching the good news is to be simple, speaking with the demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:5). Preaching the gospel is not reserved for the most intelligent, even the simplest brother and sister can do it. Remember that it is not you, it is Jesus who saves people!

The Preaching of Paul

The Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel should live according to it. I have used none of these things and I have not written these things that it should be so done to me, for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void (1 Cor. 9:14-15). Paul demonstrated here the heart he had for the gospel was not for material gain or profit. Today many are entering into the ministry without divine calling, but just for financial gain. They serve God for their stomach. What a shame! Paul's heart and burden for the salvation of people were stronger than his desire for material things. Preaching the gospel is not a profession for bread-winning. The Apostle Paul wrote, If I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me and woe unto me if I do not preach the gospel. When preaching the gospel he did not expect personal gain lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect (1 Cor. 1:17).

Chapter 7: Our Responsibility in Christs Authority for the Gospel

Edification or Destruction?

If I should boast somewhat more of our authority which the Lord has given us for edification and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed (2 Cor. 10:8). God has given us a defined position: we are a new creation, for the old things have passed away and everything has become new. Now we have Christ in us and He has given us His authority. All that we have received is for our edification, to nourish the Body and to allow it to grow. We should not preach the gospel to frighten people. In fact, the word gospel means good news. Some think we need to frighten people to bring them to the kingdom of God, thus they dwell much on hell and on Gods judgement. Of course, we must preach about hell fire (Rev. 20:15), but we should not forget to tell people that Jesus loves them, that He died for them. We should not approach people and threaten them with hell and destruction if they do not listen to our message. We should rather give them words of life, approach them with a compassion that demonstrates the life of the Lord Jesus. Let us bring them the goods news of salvation: For God so loved the world (sinners)... (John 3:16). Everyone needs love. If the Lord, in a certain situation, desires that people become frightened

of His wrath and as a result turn to His salvation, then tell them of Gods judgement on sinners. All the same, let not such preaching become systematic and habitual, for God is a God of love; He so loved us that while we were yet sinners (He did not wait for us to become better) He died for us! (Rom. 5:8)

When Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem where He was to be crucified, He asked for hospitality in a village of the Samaritans. They refused to accommodate Him and His disciples. Seeing that the disciples James and John said, Lord, will you allow that we command fire to come from heaven and consume them, Jesus turned and rebuked them, saying, you do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of man has not come to destroy mens lives but to save them (Luke 9:54-56). What James and John were asking for, was fire to consume the Samaritans, because they did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. If they believed that Jesus was the Christ, they would have welcomed Him with joy. Jesus reprimanded His two disciples and added that the Son of man came not to destroy mens lives, but to seek and save those who were lost. Bring this hope to people even if they do not receive your word right away. Not everyone will listen to us with joy or respond to our word immediately. Despite whatever rejection we may endure we have the responsibility not to keep quiet. We do not know the secret work of the Lord in peoples hearts, no matter how rebellious they may be.

When Elijah was praying on mount Carmel for rain, he put his head between his legs and sent his servants to see if clouds were forming. When the servant came back the first time, he told Elijah that there was nothing. Elijah could have been discouraged, but he sent his servant six more times. And it was only the last time

that the servant reported that he now saw a cloud as small as the palm of a hand . . . and in just a little while it rained (1 Kings 18:41-46). We should not wait for a big show! A little cloud is sufficient! We shall be shocked about what the Lord can do. We should not give up too quickly and too easily. On the contrary, may the Lord give us a true heart for everyone, whether they be unbelievers, brothers or sisters.

The Heart of Paul for Israel

Paul, in Romans 9:1-3, said he had a great sadness and a continued sorrow in his heart for the children of Israel, to the extent that he wished that they would be saved at his own expense! He wrote, For, I could wish, that I, myself, were cursed, from Christ, for my brothers, my relations according to the flesh. He preferred to be cursed, separated from Christ rather than see Israel perish. In writing these words he was not speaking lightly, for remember that he first said, I say the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience, also, bears me witness in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 9:1). He took God Himself as witness when he was speaking the truth! Do we also have such a heart for those who are perishing?

The Heart of Moses for Israel

Moses had a similar reaction after the golden calf episode at Sinai. God wanted to destroy the people of Israel and to raise a new people from the descendants of Moses. But Moses pleaded in favour of the people in order that God would not destroy them (Exodus 32:1-14). He went to the mountain to intercede and pray

for the people. May God give us a heart similar to that of these two men.

The Heart of Rachel for children

Another such example is in Genesis 30. Jacob loved his wife Rachel very much, but she was barren. Leah, the other wife of Jacob, could have children and Rachel was jealous. When Rachel saw that she was barren and bare Jacob no children, she envied her sister and told Jacob: Give me children or I die (Gen. 30:1). She was desperate, because she saw the importance of having children. For us, this corresponds spiritually to bearing fruit. From the viewpoint of principle, the reaction of Rachel was not correct because children are an inheritance of God. She made a mistake by asking Jacob for children. But her words in this verse give us a glimpse of a burning heart for souls.

The Heart of Hannah

Hannah was the mother of the prophet Samuel. She prayed that the Eternal God would give her a son, whom she would give back for His service. God responded so generously that she had four sons. Rachel asked for children and in giving birth to her second son she died. She was so desperate for fruit-bearing that she exchanged her life for her children. These examples show us that we should not resign ourselves to our present situation. We should go to the Lord and cry out to Him, asking Him to make us fertile, to give us children. The Lord is able to grant us our wishes, but He is waiting to see whether our hearts are desperate for

fruit-bearing. There was a Scottish Reformer named John Knox. He prayed desperately to the Lord, Give me Scotland or I die. May the Lord create in us such a desire for our nation.

Our Responsibility

And you, O Son of Man, I have set you as a watchman in the house of Israel, therefore you shall hear the word from my mouth and warn them on my behalf (Ezek. 33:7). Brothers and sisters, this verse concerns us all: we should listen to the word of God and warn the world. When I say to the wicked, o wicked man, you shall surely die, if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood I will demand from your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked of his way to turn from it and he does not turn he shall die in his iniquity and you have saved your soul (Ezek. 33:8-9). The lives of all men on this earth will end. If we do not warn them and they die in their sins, we shall answer before God and their blood will be required from us. On the other hand, if we warn them and they do not listen, we are cleared of our responsibility towards them; the Lord will not require their blood from our hand. In other words, we have a debt and duty towards all to preach the gospel. Let us warn the people of the judgment to come. Let us talk about the love of the Lord Jesus and about the grace made available to all men, about the coming Kingdom, the reward, the rapture and all the positive things in the Word. If they do not listen to us, we would have done our part and their blood will not be demanded from us. If they listen to us, they will be saved and added to the Kingdom!

Manpower Shortage

In Matthew 9:36-38, Jesus gave His twelve disciples power over unclean spirits just before He sent them out. Carefully read this Scripture: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Jesus saw the multitudes and had compassion on them. Oh, if only He had Spirit-filled and prepared workers to teach, win, and save them! Therefore, He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." There was no trouble with the harvest; the harvest was great and plenteous. There was a shortage of labourers! We have no excuse. We are to blame for our powerlessness and fruitlessness. The trouble is with the labourers, not with the harvest! Therefore, Jesus beseeched the twelve to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers into His harvest!

After the twelve disciples had been sent out to preach, teach and heal, Jesus appointed seventy other workers and told them the same thing. Read the record in Luke 10:1-3: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Go

your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." The twelve earlier went forth to preach, but there was the need to send more workers out. The harvest truly is great, but the trouble is with the labourers. Again these seventy are commanded, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." These were only new converts. They were not even full-grown "sheep," they were only "lambs"; but Jesus said, "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." They were all He had and with yearning heart, He sent these new converts out to win souls. Again we see that there was no trouble with the harvest. The trouble was with the labourers. God had a manpower shortage then and He has one now. They could have had a revival then if they had the workers who meant business, workers with the power of God upon them, workers who would pay God's price for revival.

For a third time Jesus spoke on the same theme. It was an entirely different place and a different occasion. Jesus was at the well of Sychar in Samaria. He had just won the loving trust of a poor shabby woman whom He met at the well. The disciples seemed wholly indifferent about the concern of the Saviour for sinners. They had been to the town to buy food and they had won no one. They wanted Jesus to eat, but He was so involved in saving this poor woman and was so full of joy for her and too concerned for others, that He wanted no food. Jesus told them: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he

that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."--John 4:34-36.

How many professing Christians are living the Christ-life before men? Oh, how like the world we are becoming! How little opposition we find! Where are the persecutions that were heaped on the Early Church? How easy it is now to be a Christian! And what of the Ministry? Does the minister enthrall, convert and save by his message? How many souls are won through the preaching of the Word? Oh! my friends, we are loaded down with countless Church activities, while the real work of the Church, that of evangelizing the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected! This is because Christians today are not living under the headship of Christ. The trouble is not with God, the trouble lies with us. God is willing to move if only we are ready to cooperate with Him. How long are we going to keep Him waiting? We should do well to walk under the authority of the Head Christ. As we do this, we will experience oneness with Him. It is therefore my fervent prayer and desire that every true believer in Christ will walk in absolute oneness with the resurrected Christ for the fulfilment of Gods eternal purpose. Oh! May the Heavenly Fathers Name be sanctified, may His Kingdom come and may His Will be done on earth as it is in the heaven. (Matt.6:9-10) Amen.

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