

GOD'S ECONOMY IN FAITH



Central and Eastern Europe and Balkan Conference 2022

April 30th – May 1st

Message One Hymn

473

- 1 No mortal tongue can e'er describe
The freedom of the soul,
When passed beyond all earthly bribe
To God's complete control.
All things are his, yes, life, and death,
Things present or to come;
In Christ he draws in peace each breath,
In Christ he finds his home.

- 2 When such as we the King can choose,
To share with Him His throne,
'Tis passing strange that we refuse
To be our Lord's alone.
O never speak of sacrifice!
A privilege untold
Is to be His at any price,
In Calv'ry's hosts enrolled.

- 3 Arise! The holy bargain strike —
The fragment for the whole —
All men and all events alike
Must serve the ransomed soul.
All things are yours when you are His,
And He and you are one;
A boundless life in Him there is,
Whence doubt and fear are gone.

Message One Hymn

474

- 1 I am one with Thee, Lord Jesus,
One in spirit now with Thee;
All Thyself I now possess, Lord,
All Thou art now lives in me.

One with Thee, one with Thee.
One with Thee, one with Thee.
Day by day I share Thy riches,
Thou art everything to me.
- 2 Now I share Thy human life, Lord,
Filled with Thy humanity,
All of Thy complete obedience
Is available to me.
- 3 One with Thee in crucifixion,
On the cross I died in Thee;
I am dead unto the world, Lord,
And the world is dead to me.
- 4 One with Thee in resurrection,
Risen now to live in Thee,
With that life which is Thyself, Lord,
Now in me, Lord, even me.
- 5 One with Thee in Thine ascension,
In the heavens now with Thee;
Here a pilgrim and a stranger,
My true life is hid in Thee.
- 6 One with Thee in Thine enthronement,
Sharing Thine authority,
Even as I share Thy life, Lord,
I in Thee and Thou in me.

GOD'S ECONOMY IN FAITH

Message One

The Intrinsic Significance of Faith

Scripture Reading: Heb. 11:1, 5-6; 3:7-8a, 12-13, 15a; 4:7

I. Faith is the substantiation of God's facts:

- A. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"; the word *substantiation* means the capacity to make something real (colors are substantiated by our eyes, sounds by our ears, etc.); thus, it is one thing for objects to exist, and it is another thing for these things to be substantiated.
- B. All of God's facts recorded in the Bible are real; however, these facts can be substantiated only by faith, because faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- C. We need faith to substantiate a spiritual, divine fact, just as we need eyes, ears, and hands to substantiate physical objects; faith is not a mental understanding of a truth; it is the seeing of a divine fact and the substantiation of it; the accomplished facts of Christ's person, living, and work must be substantiated by us; that is, they must be made real to us.
- D. Believing is exercising our spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13) to substantiate the divine facts; once we believe by saying Amen to God's word, we substantiate the divine facts, and we have them; Amen does not mean a wish for something to be accomplished, but a declaration that it will surely be accomplished, and that there is no doubt about it; when we believe, we are accepting what the Lord has already promised to do.

II. Faith is the substantiation of the substance of the truth (Heb. 11:1), which is the reality of the contents of God's New Testament economy:

- A. Such a faith is allotted to all the believers in Christ as their portion, which is equally precious to all who have received it—2 Pet. 1:1; cf. Col. 1:12.
- B. As such a portion from God, this faith is objective to us in the divine truth, but it brings all the contents of its substantiation into us, thus making them all, with itself (faith), subjective to us in our experience.
- C. It is like the scenery (truth) and the seeing (faith) being objective to the camera (us); but when the light (the Spirit) brings the scenery to the film (our spirit) within the camera, both the seeing and the scenery become subjective to the camera.

III. Faith means that we believe that God is and we are not—Heb. 11:5-6, 1-2; 2 Cor. 4:13, 18:

- A. Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to God, to make God happy—Heb. 11:6a.
- B. To believe that God is, is to believe that He is everything to us and that we are nothing—John 8:58; Eccl. 1:2.
- C. To believe that God is implies that we are not; He must be the only One, the unique One, in everything, and we must be nothing in everything—Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5.
- D. To believe that God is, is to deny our self; in the whole universe He is, and all of us are nothing—Luke 9:23.
- E. I should not be anything; I should not exist; only He should exist—"it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ"—Gal. 2:20.

- F. Before Enoch's translation, he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God (Heb. 11:5-6); Enoch continually walked upward with God day and night for three centuries, exercising his faith to believe that God is, becoming closer to God and more one with God each day until "he was not, for God took him"—Gen. 5:22-24; cf. S. S. 8:5a.

IV. Faith means that we believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him—Heb. 11:6; Gen. 15:1; Phil. 3:8, 14:

- A. Enoch's reward was the highest degree of life—escape from death—Heb. 11:5a; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 8:6, 10-11; 5:17.
- B. The Lord is a rewarder, and we need to be His seekers—Psa. 27:4, 8; 42:1-2; 43:4; 73:25; 119:2, 10.
- C. We are those who live by faith, looking away to the reward of the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom and, like Moses, persevering as one seeing the unseen One—Phil. 3:14; Heb. 11:26-27.

V. Faith is rooted in God's great, eternal, and divine facts covenanted to us in His holy Word; the believers' subjective faith is in their spirit, which makes their mingled spirit a spirit of faith—2 Cor. 4:13 and footnote 2:

- A. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that God is love—1 John 4:8.
- B. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that God's grace is sufficient—2 Cor. 12:9.
- C. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that Christ is able to save us to the uttermost—Heb. 7:25.
- D. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that we are in Christ, that Christ is in us, and that we and Christ are one—1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:27; John 14:20; 15:5.
- E. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that we are God's children and heirs—Rom. 8:16-17.
- F. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that we have been made full in Christ—Col. 2:10.
- G. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe in the fact that we are the temple of the living God and that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within us—1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16.
- H. We withstand the devil by being firm in our subjective faith in God's protecting power and loving concern—1 Pet. 5:8-9:
1. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord was manifested for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil—1 John 3:8.
 2. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord's death has destroyed him who has the might of death, the devil—Heb. 2:14.
 3. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord's resurrection has put Satan to shame; the resurrection life is a life that cannot be touched by death, that transcends death, that is beyond the boundary of death, that comes out of death, and that death cannot hold—Acts 2:23-24; Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:12-15, 20; 3:1; John 14:30.
 4. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the ascension of the Lord has put Him far above the power of Satan—Eph. 1:20-22; 2:6; 6:11, 13.

5. We must exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the victory of the Lord is complete and that our whole life is included in this victory; we must see that we have already overcome and that we fight from a position of victory in order to maintain our victory; we can overcome because we are all included in the Lord as the leading Overcomer; He is the Head, center, reality, life, and nature of the man-child, and the man-child as the following overcomers is the Lord's Body—Rev. 3:21; 12:5.

VI. All our spiritual possessions in Christ are realized and actualized by faith:

- A. Faith opens the door to every blessing that is ours in Christ—2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 1:3.
- B. Faith cuts off the flesh with its natural energy and effort and gives us access into God's grace and a solid standing in grace, which is the Triune God processed so that we may enter into Him and enjoy Him—Rom. 5:2.
- C. We are all "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"—Gal. 3:26.
- D. The righteousness that is God Himself lived out of us is through faith in Christ; Christ Himself infused into us through our appreciation of Him becomes our faith, the faith of Christ that brings us into an organic union with Him—Phil. 3:9.
- E. We are sanctified dispositionally, which is to be saturated with God as our possession for our enjoyment today and to be transformed by and with the holy nature of God—Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- F. The inward cleansing of man's heart can be accomplished only by the Holy Spirit with the divine life by faith.
- G. Christ makes His home deep down in our hearts through faith; Christ's indwelling is mysterious and abstract, and we apprehend it not by our physical senses but by the sense of faith—Eph. 3:17.
- H. At the time of our regeneration, we believed into Christ and received the Spirit by faith as the ultimate blessing of the gospel; after this, God is supplying the Spirit to us continually, and our receiving the Spirit is a lifelong, continuous matter by the hearing of faith—Gal. 3:2-5, 14.
 - I. We are inheriting the promises of God through faith—Heb. 6:12.
 - J. We have victory over the world through faith, by which we are enabled to overcome the Satan-organized-and-usurped world.
 - K. We have victory over the evil one by taking up the shield of faith, which is able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one, which are Satan's temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and attacks—Eph. 6:16.
 - L. Through faith we are able to overcome in the midst of all our circumstances of suffering and difficulties—Heb. 11:33-34.
 - M. We are kept by the power of God through faith, and we have power through faith—1 Pet. 1:5; Matt. 17:19-20; 21:21-22.

VII. "Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God. But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called 'today,' lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin..." "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts"—Heb. 3:12-13, 15a:

- A. *Falling away* also means “turning away”; when we exercise our spirit of faith and keep our heart turned to the Lord, the veil is taken away, and we can behold Him as the God of glory with an unveiled face, so that we may be continually transfused with Him, with His believing element, so that we can live by Him as our faith and remain in the process of being transformed from one degree of glory to another degree of glory into the same image of the resurrected and glorified Christ—2 Cor. 4:13; 3:16-18; cf. Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7.
- B. We need to see that unbelief is the greatest sin; we are believers who walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7); a believer is one who does not trust in things that can be seen, but he takes certain unseen things, confesses them, and realizes them by faith.
- C. We overcome the devil, the accuser of the brothers, by our declaration of the divine facts, which is the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:10-11); we follow the Lord as the One who confronted the enemy not by His own word but by repeatedly saying, “It is written...”—Matt. 4:4, 7, 10.
- D. We should not believe in our feelings but believe in the divine facts in God’s holy Word; we must learn to declare the divine, mystical, and eternal facts of what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do in us, for us, and through us for the accomplishment of His eternal economy; when God says a certain thing, we should also speak that thing simply because the Bible tells us so.

VIII. As people of faith, we are people of “today”; the first point of the up-to-date way to practice the Lord’s present move is to be filled with the Spirit inwardly and outwardly, essentially and economically, for our life and our work “today”—Acts 2:4; 13:52; Heb. 3:7-8a, 13, 15; 4:7:

“Forget about yesterday’s enjoyment of Christ. You need a fresh enjoyment. You need something up to date. The Lord was there in Elden hall, but He is not there now. He is here presently moving in His recovery, and He is in you. Wherever you are, He is in you, and He is in you right now. Do you believe that He is repeating all the things He did in the past? He is not repeating anything. He is always going on and on and on. The Lord is working. He is moving.

“Are you a person of yesterday? All of us should be people of today. Every day is a today. With some people every day is tomorrow, and with others every day is yesterday...Do not look ahead to the future, and do not look back to the past. We are people of today. Do not talk about your old experiences in the past. Talk about your experience today...Every day is a today. We do not have yesterday. We had yesterday, but we do not have it now. We will never have tomorrow. All the time we have is today. Every day is a today. When we enter into the New Jerusalem, we will have today since every day in eternity is today. The only day we have is today. Be filled inwardly [with the Spirit] today. Be filled outwardly [with the Spirit] today. Be filled today” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 5, “The Way to Practice the Lord’s Present Move,” pp. 484-485).

Special Fellowship Hymn

784

- 1 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
In the spirit seek His face;
Ask and listen in His presence,
Waiting in the secret place.

Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
In the spirit seek His face;
Ask and listen in His presence,
Waiting in the secret place.
- 2 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Fully opened from within,
With thy face unveiled, beholding,
Single, pure, and genuine.
- 3 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Seeking Him in confidence;
Learn to touch Him as the Spirit,
Looking up in reverence.
- 4 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Speaking nothing in pretense;
Ask according to the spirit,
Praying by the inner sense.
- 5 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
List'ning earnestly to Him;
Be impressed with His intentions,
Yielding to Him from within.
- 6 Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Bathing in His countenance;
Saturated with His beauty,
Radiate His excellence.

Special Fellowship Hymn

770

- 1 In the holiest place, touch the throne of grace,
Grace as a river shall flow;
In the holiest place, touch the throne of grace,
Grace as a river shall flow.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Grace as a river shall flow;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Grace as a river shall flow.

- 2 In the holiest place, live before His face,
Light of glory thru me will shine;
In the holiest place, live before His face,
Light of glory thru me will shine.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Light of glory thru me will shine;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Light of glory thru me will shine.

- 3 To the spirit turn, and the incense burn,
Touch the living fountain of life;
To the spirit turn, and the incense burn,
Touch the living fountain of life.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Touch the living fountain of life;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Touch the living fountain of life.

Lord's Table Hymn

132

- 1 Lo! In heaven Jesus sitting,
Christ the Lord is there enthroned;
As the man by God exalted,
With God's glory He is crowned.
- 2 He hath put on human nature,
Died according to God's 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 heav'n 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 Savior,
With God's glory ever crowned!

Lord's Table Hymn

223

- 1 On the table of Thy love,
 With the bread, the cup is spread.
By partaking of these signs,
 We with Thee are richly fed.
How we thank Thee for this cup,
 For the cup of blessing, Lord,
Cup of Thy Salvation full,
 Cup of all Thou dost afford.

- 2 'Tis the blood Thou shedd'st for us,
 That our sins may be forgiv'n;
'Tis the cov'nant made for us,
 That Thy blessings may be giv'n.
Thou didst drink the cup of wrath,
 Thou hast tasted death for us,
Thus the cup of blessing bought,
 As the portion gained for us.

- 3 In this portion we have God,
 Whom we lost thru Adam's fall;
By the shedding of Thy blood,
 God becomes our all in all.
In this portion all we have —
 Life and peace, redemption sure;
All that God has planned and willed,
 In this portion we secure.

- 4 An eternal portion, 'tis,
 Overflowing cup divine;
Heav'nly taste do we enjoy
 In this cup of God's design.
Here in love we drink this cup
 In remembrance, Lord, of Thee;
Thus in spirit we partake
 All Thy work on Calvary.

Lord's Table Hymn

116

- 1 How wonderful redemption is,
My gracious Lord, in Thee!
Not seen, nor heard, nor e'er conceived
What Thou hast done for me!
Thou art divine, mysterious,
Beyond my grandest phrase!
Redemption is so marvellous,
Beyond all pow'r to praise!
- 2 For us Thou on the Cross wast pierced,
And blood and water streamed;
That life divine be giv'n to us,
That we may be redeemed.
Thy precious blood has made us clean,
That we accepted be;
Regenerated by Thy life,
We now are one with Thee.
- 3 Thou art the grain divine that died
The many grains to bear,
Which, blent and formed, Thy Body are,
And all Thy nature share.
We are the increase of Thyself,
And Thou our content art;
Through us Thou livest and dost move
And manifested art.
- 4 Since we're Thy Body, Thou may come
And settle down in us;
In us Thou may obtain Thy home
And we become Thy trust.
Thy heart to satisfy and please,
We are Thy counterpart,
Now in one Body with Thyself,
Enjoying all Thou art.
- 5 While in remembrance now we meet
And here the symbols see,
For Thy redemption great and full
We're filled with praise to Thee.
Since we are made Thy Body, Lord,
Thy dwelling place and bride,
We would give thanks and worship Thee
And in Thy praise abide.

Lord's Table Hymn

16

1 Our Father, as the evergreen,
Thou art forever new;
Thou art the ever living Lord,
Thy freshness as the dew.

O Father, Thou art unchanging,
Thou never hast grown old;
Thru countless ages, ever fresh,
Thy newness doth unfold.

2 O Thou art God, and Thou art "new";
Without Thee all is worn,
But all with Thee is ever fresh,
Though many years have gone.

3 Each blessing Thou hast given us
Thy newness doth contain;
Thy covenant, Thy ways are new,
And ever thus remain.

4 Now we Thy new creation are —
New spirit and new heart;
We're daily from the old renewed,
New life Thou dost impart.

5 The earth and heavens will be new
And Thy new city share;
New fruits each month will be supplied,
For all is newness there.

6 O Father, Thou art ever new,
And all is new in Thee;
We sing the new eternal song,
New praise we give to Thee.

Message Two

Running the Christian Race So That We May Obtain the Prize by Looking Away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Scripture Reading: Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; Rom. 12:3; S. S. 1:4; Jer. 31:3

I. “Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and run with endurance the race which is set before us”—Heb. 12:1:

- A. The cloud is for leading people to follow the Lord (Num. 9:15-22), and the Lord is in the cloud to be with the people (Exo. 13:21-22); in Greek *witnesses* implies the sense of martyrs (Acts 1:8):
 - 1. With the people of faith, we can have the Lord’s presence and His leading; all the people of faith, the church people, are the cloud; the best way to seek the Lord’s presence is to come to the church.
 - 2. If anyone is seeking the Lord’s leading, he must follow the cloud, the church; the Lord is in the cloud, meaning that He is with the people of faith.
 - 3. Since we are the people of faith, we are today’s cloud, and people can follow the Lord by following us; those who seek Him can find His presence with us—cf. 1 Cor. 14:24-25; Psa. 36:8-9; 16:11.
- B. The Christian life is a race; every saved Christian must run the race to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24); the prize is not salvation in the common sense (Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 3:15) but a reward in a special sense (Heb. 10:35; 1 Cor. 3:14); the apostle Paul ran the race and won the prize (9:26-27; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8):
 - 1. An encumbrance is a weight, burden, or impediment; the runners of the race strip off every unnecessary weight, every encumbering burden, that nothing may impede them from winning the race.
 - 2. The unique entangling sin in this context was the willful sin of forsaking the assembling together with the saints, of giving up the new covenant way in God’s economy, and of going back to Judaism (Heb. 10:26); both the encumbering weight and the entangling sin would have frustrated the Hebrew believers and restrained them from running the heavenly race in the new covenant way of following Jesus.
- C. We need to run with endurance, asking the Lord to direct our hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ—2 Thes. 3:5:
 - 1. This love is our love toward God, issuing from the love of God (1 John 4:19) that has been poured out in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).
 - 2. This endurance is to endure with the endurance of Christ that we have enjoyed and experienced—cf. Rev. 1:9.

II. “Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God”—Heb. 12:2:

- A. We can live the Christian life, run the Christian race, by looking away unto Jesus with undivided attention by turning away from every other object:
 - 1. The wonderful Jesus, who is enthroned in heaven and crowned with glory and honor (2:9), is the greatest attraction in the universe.
 - 2. He is like an immense magnet drawing all His seekers to Him—S. S. 1:4; Hosea 11:4; Jer. 31:3.
 - 3. It is by being attracted by His charming beauty (loveliness, pleasantness, delightfulness) that we look away from all things other than Him—Psa. 27:4.

4. Without such a charming object, how could we look away from so many distracting things on earth?
- B. Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith; in our natural man we have no believing ability, but when we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element.
- C. Then, spontaneously, a kind of believing arises in our being, and we have the faith to believe in Him; this faith is not of ourselves but of Him who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us.
- D. Faith is Christ Himself believing for us in a very subjective way; He transfuses us with Himself, working Himself into us, until He, the very person, becomes the believing element in our being.
- E. Thus, it is not we who believe; it is He who believes within us; in this way He makes us a believing being (cf. Acts 6:5; 11:22-24a); apparently it is our believing, but actually it is His believing; this is genuine faith.
- F. Faith is a substantiating ability, a sixth sense, the sense by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things unseen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
 1. Substantiating is the ability that enables us to realize a substance.
 2. The function of our five senses is to substantiate the things of the outside world, transferring all the objective items into us to become our subjective experience.
 3. As the eye is to seeing, the ear to hearing, and the nose to smelling, so faith, our spirit of faith, is the organ whereby we substantiate everything in the unseen spiritual world into us—2 Cor. 4:13.
 4. In the divine and mystical realm of the consummated Spirit, we can exercise our spirit of faith with the spiritual senses of seeing the Lord (Eph. 1:18; Matt. 5:8; Job 42:5), hearing Him (Gal. 3:2; Rev. 2:7a), touching Him (Matt. 9:21; 14:36; John 4:24), tasting Him (Psa. 34:8; 1 Pet. 2:2-3), and smelling Him, being permeated with Him to such an extent that we become “a fragrance of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15), with our Christian walk in love being a sweet-smelling savor to God (Eph. 5:2); furthermore, as His loving seekers, we eventually become mature in life to the extent that we have a spiritual intuition and olfactory sense of high and sharp discernment in order to discern the things that are of God and are not of God (S. S. 7:4b; Phil. 1:9).
- G. Faith, as the substantiation of things hoped for, assures and convinces us of things not seen; therefore, faith is the evidence, the proof, of things unseen—Heb. 11:1:
 1. “We were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await it through endurance”—Rom. 8:24-25.
 2. Our life should be a life of hope, which accompanies and abides with faith (1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 13:13); we should be those who “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Rom. 4:12), who “beyond hope believed in hope” (v. 18).
 3. We need to exercise our spirit of faith in order to walk by faith and not by that which is seen (2 Cor. 4:13; 5:7); we do not regard, look at, “the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (4:18).
 4. The Christian life is a life of things unseen; the degradation of the church is the degradation from unseen things to seen things—Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
 5. The Lord’s recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen.
- H. Jesus is the Perfecter, the Finisher, the Completer, of our faith—Heb. 12:2a:

1. As we look away unto Him continually, He will finish and complete the faith that we need for the running of the heavenly race—v. 1.
2. We all have the same faith in quality, but the quantity of faith we have depends upon how much we contact the living God so that we may have Him increased in us—Rom. 12:3:
 - a. Faith in the progressing stage comes through our contacting the Triune God, who is faith in us—1 Thes. 5:17.
 - b. The way to receive such a faith is to contact its source, the Lord, the processed and consummated God, by calling on Him, praying to Him, and pray-reading His word—Heb. 4:16; Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Eph. 6:17-18; Heb. 4:2.
 - c. When we contact Him, He is overflowing within us, and there is a mutuality of faith among us; we are encouraged through the faith that is in one another—Rom. 1:12; Philem. 6.
3. Our regenerated spirit, our spirit of faith, is the victory that overcomes the Satan-organized-and-usurped world—1 John 5:4; John 3:6; 2 Cor. 4:13; 1 John 5:18.
4. The great irrepressible and unlimited power of faith motivates thousands to suffer for the Lord, risk their lives, and become overcoming sent ones and martyrs for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, which is in faith—Luke 18:8; Phil. 2:30; Rom. 16:3-4; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim. 1:4; Heb. 12:3; cf. Judg. 8:4.
- I. According to Hebrews 12:2, for the joy set before Him, Jesus “endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God”:
 1. The Lord Jesus knew that through His death He would be glorified in resurrection (Luke 24:25-26) and that His divine life would be released to produce many brothers for His expression (John 12:23-24; Rom. 8:29); for the joy set before Him (John 16:20-22), He despised the shame and volunteered to be delivered to the Satan-usurped leaders of the Jews and Gentiles and to be condemned by them to death.
 2. Therefore, God highly exalted Him to the heavens, seated Him at His right hand (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33-35), bestowed on Him the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9-10), made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and crowned Him with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9).
 3. If we look away unto Him as such a wonderful and all-inclusive One, He will minister Himself as heaven, life, and strength into us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is, so that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth; in this way He will carry us through all the lifelong pathway of faith and lead and bring us into glory—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8.

Message Three Hymn

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- 1 How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.
- 2 It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.
- 3 Dear Name! The Rock on which we build;
Our shield and hiding-place;
Our never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.
- 4 Jesus, our Savior, Shepherd, Friend,
Our Prophet, Priest, and King;
Our Lord, our Life, our Way, our End,
Accept the praise we bring.
- 5 Weak is the effort of our heart,
And cold our warmest thought;
But when we see Thee as Thou art,
We'll praise Thee as we ought.
- 6 Till then we would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And triumph in that blessed Name
Which quells the pow'r of death.

Message Three Hymn

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- 1 The name of Jesus is our stand,
It is our victory;
Not on ourselves do we rely,
But, mighty Lord, on Thee.
Our weapons are not arms of flesh,
But ours the Spirit's sword,
And God's whole armor putting on,
We battle in the Lord.
- 2 Behold, the foe doth meet and plot,
Stand firm in one accord!
Though war be fierce and darkness thick,
Resist him in the Lord!
If one thru fear should backward turn,
He undermines the rest.
Oh, do not let your brothers down,
Nor by you be distressed.
- 3 The devil knows his time is short,
He is the more enraged,
And by his wiles would weaken us
Before the battle's waged.
The trials now more numerous are,
The suff'ring e'en more sore,
The force of hell opposing us
More dreadful than before.
- 4 What should our posture be today
In such a desperate hour?
Should we our ease and pleasure seek
And let the foe devour?
Or with increasing conflict strong,
Courageous to endure?
'Tis here that life or death is won!
Who will God's praise secure?
- 5 For Christ the Lord we then would stand,
He is the Conqueror!
For Him we would endure the pain
Until the fight is o'er.
The hour of triumph soon we'll see —
The Lord will come again;
If now we suffer for His sake,
Then we with Him shall reign.

Message Three

**Taking Up the Shield of Faith,
Experiencing the Proving of Our Faith,
and Receiving the End of Our Faith—the Salvation of Our Souls**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:12, 14-16; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5;
1 Pet. 1:7, 9; 4:12, 16; Heb. 10:35, 37, 39

I. As members of the Body of Christ engaged in warfare “against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies,” we need to take up the shield of faith, with which we “will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one”—Eph. 6:12, 16:

- A. The shield of faith is not something that we put on but something that we take up in order to protect ourselves against the attacks of the enemy and to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one—v. 16.
- B. We need to realize that faith is a shield placed between us and Satan:
 - 1. Faith is a safeguard against the flaming darts of the enemy—accusations, temptations, proposals, doubts, questionings, lies, snares, and attacks—2 Cor. 2:11.
 - 2. Satan’s flaming darts come as thoughts injected into our mind; these thoughts may seem to be our own thoughts, but they are thoughts coming from Satan.
 - 3. When the darts come, they hit the shield, and we are able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one—Eph. 6:16.
- C. Faith comes after truth, righteousness, and peace—vv. 14-15:
 - 1. We need the truth to gird our loins, righteousness to cover our conscience, peace as the standing for our feet, and faith to shield our entire being.
 - 2. If we have truth in our living, righteousness as our covering, and peace as our standing, we will spontaneously have faith—vv. 14-16.
- D. The shield of faith has several aspects: faith in God (Mark 11:22), faith in God’s heart (Rom. 8:31-39), faith in God’s faithfulness (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9), faith in God’s ability (Eph. 3:20), faith in God’s word (John 6:63, 68; Acts 20:32), faith in God’s will (Eph. 1:9, 11), and faith in God’s sovereignty (Rom. 9:19-29).

II. First Peter 1:7 speaks of the proving of our faith:

- A. The proving of faith is the testing for approval; the Greek word rendered “proving” means “testing for approval.”
- B. We are put into trials because our faith needs to be tested, approved—4:12.
- C. No one who has believed in the Lord and has received grace can avoid the testing of faith—John 3:15, 36; 1:16.
- D. The Bible shows that there is no faith without testing; all faith must be tested—1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12:
 - 1. God tests our faith in order that we may grow in faith and in life—Eph. 4:15:
 - a. No Christian can grow without first having his faith tested.
 - b. When our faith is tested, we spontaneously grow—1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 2. God tests our faith to satisfy Himself—proving that we have genuine faith—1 Pet. 1:7:
 - a. It is genuine faith that satisfies God—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5.
 - b. A faith that is approved is a glory to God’s name—1 Pet. 4:11; John 12:28:
 - 1) God’s name is glorified in this world through an approved faith—1 Pet. 1:7.

- 2) When we pass through tribulations, persecutions, obstacles, and darkness, and we still believe after these tests and still stand fast after these trials, this faith will glorify God's name—2:12; 4:12, 16.
- E. The approval of faith comes out of the proper faith; the stress here is not on faith but on the proving of faith by trials that come through sufferings—1:7.
 - F. In verse 7 Peter says that the proving of our faith is “much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire”:
 1. The words *much more precious than of gold...by fire* do not modify *faith*; they modify *proving*.
 2. This means that the proving of our faith is much more precious than the proving of gold:
 - a. The comparison here is that between the proving of our faith and the proving of gold.
 - b. Gold is proved by the purifying fire; in like manner, our faith is proved by trial.
 - G. It is the trying, the proving, of faith, not the faith itself, that may be found unto praise—vv. 7-8:
 1. This is like the school's examination of the student's studying: what is found to be approved is the examination, not the student's studying itself.
 2. If the proving of our faith is positive, the proving will result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ—vv. 7-8:
 - a. The Lord is with us today (Matt. 28:20) but in a hidden, veiled way.
 - b. His coming back will be His revelation, when He will be seen openly by all—Rev. 1:7.
 - c. At that time not only He but also the proving of our faith will be re-vealed.

III. The proving of our faith being found unto praise, glory, and honor results in receiving the end of our faith—the salvation of our souls—1 Pet. 1:9:

- A. The salvation in verse 5 is full salvation, ultimate salvation, the salvation of the Triune God; it refers specifically to the salvation of our souls from the dispensational punishment of the Lord's governmental dealing at His coming back.
- B. This is the salvation—the salvation of our souls—which is ready to be revealed to us at the last time, the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ in glory; the salvation of our souls is the end of our faith—vv. 9, 13; Matt. 16:27.
- C. Our soul will be saved from sufferings into the full enjoyment of the Lord at His revelation, His coming back—25:31:
 1. For this salvation we must deny our soul, our soulish life, with all its pleasures in this age so that we may gain it in the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming age—10:37-39; 16:24-27; Luke 17:30-33; John 12:25:
 - a. To lose the soul-life means to lose the enjoyment of the soul, and to save the soul-life means to preserve the soul in its enjoyment—Matt. 16:25.
 - b. We will either lose our soul-life today and gain it in the coming age, or save our soul-life today and lose it in the coming age.
 - c. If we would enter into the Lord's joy in the coming age, we need to pay the price in this age by losing our soul-life—25:21, 23.
 2. At the Lord's revelation, through His judgment seat, some believers will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth—vv. 21, 23; 24:45-46; 25:30; 24:51.
 3. To enter into the Lord's joy is the salvation of our souls—Heb. 10:39:
 - a. The saving, or gaining, of our soul depends on how we deal with our soul in following the Lord after we are saved and regenerated.

- b. If we lose our soul now for the Lord's sake, we will save it, and it will be saved, or gained, at the Lord's coming back—Luke 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:9.
- c. The gaining of the soul will be the reward of the kingdom to the overcoming followers of the Lord—Heb. 10:35; Matt. 16:22-28.
- D. The power of God is able to guard us unto this salvation so that we may obtain it; the power of God is the cause of our being guarded, and faith is the means through which the power of God becomes effective in guarding us—1 Pet. 1:5.
- E. We should eagerly expect this marvelous, full, and ultimate salvation and prepare ourselves for its splendid revelation—Rom. 8:19, 23.