

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones (October 2020)

#3: The Losing of the Soul-life, Participating in the Rapture of the Overcomers, and Receiving the End of Our Faith—the Salvation of the Soul (12/21-27) **OL Summary:**

I. If we want to save our soul-life, we will lose it, but if we lose our soul-life for the Lord's sake, we will save it: **A.** In Luke 9:23-25 the Lord Jesus taught the disciples to take up their cross and follow Him by denying their soul-life. /To save the soul-life is to allow the soul to have its enjoyment and to escape suffering; to lose the soul-life is to cause the soul to lose its enjoyment and thereby to suffer. /To lose the soul-life means to preserve the soul in its enjoyment. /To deny the self is to reject the soul's desire, preference, and choice. /If we allow our soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment in this age for the Lord's sake, we will cause our soul to have its enjoyment in the kingdom age; we will share the Lord's joy in ruling over the earth. **B.** In Luke 14:26-35 the Lord taught us to be absolute in following Him and to hate everything, even our own soul-life, that distracts, hinders, and frustrates us from following Him faithfully. /As the salt of the earth, the believers' taste depends on their renouncing of the earthly things. /Believers may lose their taste—their function in the kingdom of God—by not being willing to renounce all the things of the present life. /If the believers lose their taste, their function, they will be fit neither for the land, signifying the church as God's farm, which issues in the coming kingdom, nor for the manure pile, signifying hell, the filthy place in the universe; having been saved from eternal perdition but being unfit for the coming kingdom, they will be thrown out from the glory of the kingdom in the millennium and be put aside for discipline.

II. If we lose our soul-life, we may participate in the rapture of the overcomers: **A.** In order to participate in the rapture of the overcomers so that we may enjoy the Lord's parousia (presence, coming) and escape the great tribulation, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today. /The condition of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the deluge and the generation of Lot before the destruction of Sodom portray the perilous condition of man's living before the Lord's parousia and the great tribulation. /As followers of the Lord Jesus, we need to overcome the stupefying effect of the world's indulgent living by losing our soul-life in this age. **B.** Preserving the soul-life is related to lingering in the earthly and material things. /We linger in the earthly things because we care for our soul's enjoyment in the present age. /Lot's wife became a pillar of salt because she took a lingering look backward at Sodom, indicating that she loved and treasured the evil world that God was going to judge and utterly destroy. /She was rescued from Sodom, but she did not reach the safe place that Lot reached. /Although she did not perish, she was not fully saved, but, like the salt that becomes tasteless,

she was left in a place of shame; this is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers. /Lingering in the earthly things for the sake of our soul's enjoyment will cause us to lose our soul; that is, our soul will suffer the loss of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age. **C.** Luke 17:31-36 speaks of our reaction to the rapture call. /These verses depict the soul-life in its engagement not with sinful things but with the things of earth; the Lord's charge here is related to the believers' overcoming in their practical life. /Whether or not the living believers participate in the rapture of the overcomers depends on their reaction to the call to go; the rapture will occur secretly and unexpectedly. /This call will not produce a miraculous last-minute change in us that has no relation to our previous life with the Lord. /In that moment we will discover our heart's real treasure; if this treasure is the Lord Himself, there will be no backward look. /We need the cross to work in us a thorough detachment in spirit from everything and everyone other than the Lord Himself. /Certain ones are taken because they have overcome the stupefying effect of self-indulgent living in this age to be raptured into the enjoyment of the Lord's parousia. **D.** In Luke 21:34-36 the Lord Jesus warns us to take heed to ourselves and to be watchful at every time, beseeching that we would "prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man". /Prevail here means to have strength and ability; the strength and ability to escape the great tribulation come from watching and beseeching. /All these things which are about to happen are all the things of the great tribulation. /Stand before the Son of Man corresponds with standing in Revelation 14:1, indicating that the raptured overcomers will stand before the Savior on Mount Zion in the heavens before the great tribulation.

III. The proving of our faith being found unto praise, glory, and honor results in the receiving of the end of our faith—the salvation of our soul: **A.** As we live under the government of God, we will be made sorrowful by various trials and experience the proving of our faith. /The trials in verse 6 are sufferings that test the quality of our life as believers. /These trials are used by God to prove and try our faith to see whether we will follow Christ in suffering. **B.** The salvation of the soul in 1 Peter 1:9 means that our soul will be saved from suffering into the full enjoyment of the Lord at His revelation, His coming back. /At the Lord's revelation, some believers will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth. /At the revelation of the Lord Jesus, His coming, our soul will be saved, and we will be qualified to participate in the Lord's enjoyment in the coming age. **C.** If we would receive as the end of our faith the salvation of our souls, we must not be "of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul".

CP1: "The ultimate two choices" toward you:

Deny your soul life to follow the Lord

or Save your soul life to follow yourself

OL1: In Luke 9:23-25 the Lord Jesus taught the disciples to take up their cross and follow Him by denying their soul-life. Luke 9:23 And He said to them all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake, this one shall save it. 25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world but loses or forfeits himself? **OL2:** In Luke 14:26-35 the Lord taught us to be absolute in following Him and to hate everything, even our own soul-life, that distracts, hinders, and frustrates us from following Him faithfully. 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple. 34 Therefore salt is good; but if even the salt becomes tasteless, with what will its saltiness be restored? 35 It is fit neither for the land nor for the manure pile; they will throw it out...

The choice is yours. If you prefer to have your enjoyment today, you are free to do so. But if you save your soul in this age, be assured that you will lose it when the Lord comes back. He will tell you that because you have enjoyed your soul so much, now is the time for you to lose it. Which do you choose—to lose your soul today and gain it tomorrow, or to gain it today and lose it tomorrow?

Suppose the brothers living in a brothers' house have seen the vision concerning Christ and the building of the church. They realize that the Lord desires to recover the church life for His economy. However, ...because of a discouraging situation, some of the brothers may consider moving out of the house. But if they move out, they will be saving their souls to have an easy way for themselves. One brother may actually move from that house to another house, where, after a few weeks, he learns that the situation is the same. Then he moves to a church in another part of the country....When he arrives in the new locality and moves into a brothers' house there, he finds the situation even worse than the one he left. At this point, disappointed with the church life, he may decide to leave the church entirely. If he does this, he will be saving his soul to the uttermost.

Application to New ones and Youth/College students

As a new one or a young person, you have already believed into the name of the Lord Jesus, have been joined to Him, and have been saved. Therefore, you do not have to worry at all about perishing in the lake of fire. The problem now is how you live the church life, and whether you are going to be an overcoming Christian or a defeated one. In the Millennial Kingdom after the church age, this will determine whether **1** you will enjoy and reign with the Lord for 1000 years,

or **2** undergo severe training in darkness for 1000 years. There is no other choice. Please understand well that there is no third choice. Don't be foolish and waste your time thinking that you can create your own third choice. Jesus is Lord, and neither you nor I are Lord. He is presenting you with the "ultimate two choices".

Next, let us look at this ultimate two choices with you. The definition of an overcomer is not the one who is joining the meetings. Of course, one who does not come to a meeting cannot be an overcomer. Because the goal of God's economy is building up of the church, the Body of Christ, so an individualistic Christian cannot be an overcomer. In order to become an overcomer, please carry out the following two matters: **1** Carry out the church life and enjoy Christ as your life. **2** Crucify the enjoyment of the soul life and make Christ as your person. In order to reach **2**, you must first carry out **1**.

To find God, you must come to Christ, for God lives in Christ, and outside of Christ, there is no God. Christ is the mystery of God. Furthermore, the church is the mystery of Christ, and Christ is in the church, in the Body of Christ. Briefly, in the church life, please enjoy Christ as life with the saints. A normal church life includes personal fellowship with the Lord. You should talk to the Lord privately. For example, when you feel weak, you may honestly say, "Lord, I don't love You that much". Then the Lord will say, "I love you with an everlasting love". When you talk with the Lord, He will dispense Himself into you. Then you can love Him back with His love, and can say, "I love You, Lord Jesus.

Next, you must crucify your soul, lose its enjoyment, and become an overcomer. It is not to follow your own preferences, thoughts, and senses, but to make all decisions with Christ as your Person. This is the testimony of an overcomer that the Lord requires in His recovery.

A brother's testimony: When I was a college student, I preached the gospel to all the members of the club activities, but I had a hard time with one of my friends and secretly thought, "I don't want him to get saved". One day, he said, "All themembers have become Christians except me, so I'm next in line. But I will never believe." I immediately repented and prayed, "I confess the sin of my wrong decision. Please save him." When I visited him, he suddenly insisted on taking a bath even though it was daytime. Feeling the need for the cherishing for the sake of the gospel, and denying the feeling of "dislike" in my soul, I followed him to the big public bath in the dormitory and washed his back. He was very happy. After that, he was also saved, and all six friends in the club were saved.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, I have seen that You are presenting me with the 'ultimate two choices'. In order to be an overcomer, I must first enjoy Christ as life in the church life, and then crucify the enjoyment of my soul life and make Him my person. Let me honestly open to the Lord, receive dispensing from Lord, deny my feelings, and follow Him. "

CP2: You have ability to become an overcomer and be raptured before the great tribulation and stand before the Lord

OL1: Luke 17:31-36 speaks of our reaction to the rapture call. These verses depict the soul-life in its engagement not with sinful things but with the things of earth; the Lord's charge here is related to the believers' overcoming in their practical life. The rapture will occur secretly and unexpectedly. This call will not produce a miraculous last-minute change in us that has no relation to our previous life with the Lord. In that moment we will discover our heart's real treasure; if this treasure is the Lord Himself, there will be no backward look. We need the cross to work in us a thorough detachment in spirit from everything and everyone other than the Lord Himself. Certain ones are taken because they have overcome the stupefying effect of self-indulgent living in this age to be raptured into the enjoyment of the Lord's Parousia. Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to preserve his soullife will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive. 34 I tell you, In that night there will be two on one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 There will be two women grinding together; the one will be taken but the other will be left. OL2: In Luke 21:34-36 the Lord Jesus warns us to take heed to ourselves and to be watchful at every time, beseeching that we would "prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man". Prevail here means to have strength and ability. Luke 21:34 But take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be weighed down with debauchery and drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare. 36 But be watchful at every time, beseeching that you would prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man.

The words "grinding" in Luke 17:35 and "in the field" in Matthew 24:40 signify working for a living. Although the believers should not be stupefied by the necessities of this life, they need to work for a living. Any thought of giving up proper work for a living is another extreme of Satan's tactics.

Whether or not we shall be raptured before the great tribulation and be taken away to meet Christ on the throne does not depend on Him. It depends on our watchfulness and on our praying in a particular way.

We should prevail to escape, prevail to be kept away from the great tribulation....This is to be raptured to stand before the Son of Man on the heavenly Mount Zion. Then He will begin His parousia with us. When He leaves the throne to come back to earth, we shall be with Him. How exciting that will be!

Application to business person/graduate students

At the end of this age, right after the Lord's coming (Parousia), three and a half years of great tribulation will begin. And at the end of the great tribulation, the

Lord will come back openly and set up the Millennial Kingdom. The great tribulation is the unprecedented great tribulation, including the supernatural calamities. The Lord will cause the overcoming ones escape from the great tribulation and rapture them to heaven.

Matt. 24:21 For at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor shall by any means ever occur. 29 And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

To keep the soul life is related to remain in the earthly and physical things. Our remaining in the earthly matters is due to our caring the enjoyment of our soul in this age. The reason Lot's wife became the pillar of salt was that she stopped to look back Sodom. She loved and treasured the evil world which God judged and was about to destroy thoroughly.

You as a businessperson, should overcome the stupefying effect in this age including the love of money in the midst of the practical life of work which is grinding or being in the field. Please notice that Luke 21:36 says "prevail to escape all these things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man". "Prevail" means you have strength and ability to be an overcomer. And the strength and ability to escape the great tribulation come from being watchful and praying.

Please declare by faith as follows, "I am able to be an overcomer in Christ through prayer". God is not requiring you what you cannot do. Christ who indwells in you has ability. Your need is to read the Word in the Bible, believe the Word and cause the indwelling Christ grow by praying according to the Word. In the practical environment of your office or laboratory, call on the Lord's name unceasingly and practice short prayers and train yourself to be one Spirit with the Lord. Prayer1: "Oh Lord, Amen, Hallelujah! I can do all things in the Lord. I have ability to become an overcomer. Amen!"

The more you pray to be an overcomer like this by faith, the more you come out of culture and make Christ your person and able to be an overcomer.

2 Cor. 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

FN "spirit of faith": The spirit of faith is the Holy Spirit mingled with our human spirit. We must exercise such a spirit to believe and to speak (pray)....Doubts are in our mind.

Prayer2: "Oh Lord Jesus, when I work diligently at my office or laboratory, let me call on the Lord's name unceasingly and practice short prayers. Let me overcome being stupefied by the love of the money or anxieties of the living. Let me pray by exercising faith, come out of culture, make Christ my person and become an overcomer. Amen!"

CP3: Apply the blood of the Lord's redemption, enjoy the Lord as life, deny the self and make Christ your person

OL1: The proving of our faith being found unto praise, glory, and honor results in the receiving of the end of our faith — the salvation of our souls. 1 Pet. 1:7 So that the proving of your faith, ...though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

OL2: At the Lord's revelation, some believers will enter into the joy of the Lord, and some will suffer in weeping and gnashing of teeth. **OL3:** If we would receive as the end of our faith the salvation of our souls, we must not be "of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul". Heb. 10:35 Do not cast away therefore your boldness, which has great reward. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul.

The young people may expect to finish their education, find a good job, and then have a very pleasant married life. They need to realize, however, that on this earth there is no paradise. We must wait for the Lord's coming to be saved from the realm of suffering into a realm of comfort. That will be the full salvation of our soul. I can testify that although I have a good wife and although I am loved by the saints and the churches, I continue to suffer a great deal in my soul. No one can help me to avoid this suffering. Therefore, I am waiting for the unveiling of the Lord Jesus. At the time of His coming back, I shall be rescued from this realm of suffering into a realm of enjoyment. In that realm we shall have the full enjoyment of the Triune God and of all that He is, has, and has accomplished, attained, and obtained.

Losing our soul in this age is to suffer for the Lord's sake in a human way. If we follow the Lord today, we shall certainly suffer for His sake. Because you are a faithful and straight follower of Jesus Christ, your teachers may not give you the higher grade, and you may not receive a promotion on your job. Many such things are related to losing our soul....This loss of our soul today is the condition of our gaining it in the next age. To gain our soul in the next age is to enter into the Lord's joy and reigning. According to the parable in Matthew 25, the Lord said to the faithful servants, "Enter into the joy of your master". To enter into the Lord's joy is to enter into His reign in the coming kingdom. This age is for us to suffer; the next age is for our enjoyment.

The gaining of the soul equals perfection, and perfection equals glorification. To be glorified, to be perfected, and to gain our soul in the next age all refer to one thing—the reward.

Application to the serving ones

Your faith needs to be tested (or proved) by trials through hardship. For example, students are tested to

prove and evaluate the results of their studies. When you heard "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake, this one shall save it." (Luke 9:23~24), you said "Amen" and accepted. However, there is conflict within when you try to do this in a real situation.

For example, in the fellowship of service, we decided on a certain thing. However, when you actually serve, there can be things such as forgetting the decision in the fellowship, disrespecting the decision, or ignoring it because you do not want to follow the decision. These are to please the soul by serving according to the life of your soul. At times like this, you need to be open to God's dispensing and fellowship with the Lord.

Prayer 1: "Lord, I can't do anything apart from You. Nothing can be done when the branches of the vine are separated from the tree. Lord Jesus, I will live in the Lord and continue to receive fresh dispensing from You. Let me I deny myself, bear my cross, and carry out the service of the Body according to the fellowship in the practical service!"

If you have short prayer like this, open to God's dispensing and crucify your soul in this way, your faith will be proved by trials. It is for your soul to be saved and enter into the joy of the Lord at the time of His appearance. There are three important things about denying your soul life and becoming an overcomer:

1 Apply the Blood of Redemption that Christ fulfilled on the cross: Believers have already been saved by faith on the basis of the redemption. But if you fail and sin in your life, confess your sin immediately and apply the effective blood of His Son Jesus. Then you can recover the fellowship of life with the Lord. **2** Enjoy Christ as life: Eat, drink and enjoy the Lord every day in your church life and personal fellowship with the Lord. **3** Take Christ as the person: Making Christ the person can be seen in your decision. There are two ways in your decision: to decide according to your soul, or to deny your soul, take Christ as the person, and live Christ. You either deny your soul or deny Christ as the person. The soul has a person and function. The person of the soul must be denied. However, its function will be uplifted and renewed. Denying the soul means denying the person of the soul and accepting Christ as the person. You can't decide things with two people inside. May you deny yourself and reach the testimony of making Christ as the person under the Lord's dispensing! This is the testimony of the Lord's recovery. Never remain in stage **2** above.

Matt. 7:26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

Prayer 2: "Let me deny my self, make Christ my person and have the testimony of the Lord's recovery under the Lord's dispensing. His recovery is to produce overcomers and bring forth His second coming. Hallelujah!"