

#3 Loving the Lord with the First Love, Enjoying the Lord as the Tree of Life, and Being the Golden Lampstand as the Testimony of Jesus for the Building Up of the New Jerusalem as the Goal of God's Eternal Economy **Bird's eye view** 8/15-21

I In Revelation 2:7 the tree of life signifies the crucified (implied in the tree as a piece of wood) and resurrected (implied in the life of God) Christ, who today is in the church, the consummation of which will be the New Jerusalem, in which the crucified and resurrected Christ will be the tree of life for the nourishment and enjoyment of all God's redeemed people for eternity: Rev. 2:7 To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

II The churches in Asia, including the church in Ephesus, had turned away from the apostle Paul's betrothing ministry; thus, we see that approximately twenty-six years later, when the apostle John wrote the epistle to the church in Ephesus, they had left their first love and lost the genuine enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life: 2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ. A The genuine ministry of the New Testament always stirs us up to love the Lord Jesus with the first love, strengthening us in the simplicity of eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life for our life supply.

B To love the Lord with the first love is to give Him the preeminence, the first place, in all things, being constrained by His love to regard and take Him as everything in our life.

Inspiration:

C Paul's concluding word in the Epistle to the Ephesians is a blessing of grace to "all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility"; in the book of Ephesians the phrase in love, which is rich in feeling, is used repeatedly. Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her. 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility. D The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into

love, God's inner substance, that we may enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did.

E The church in Ephesus failed in the matter of loving the Lord; such a failure became the main reason for the failure of the church throughout the ages. Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.

Inspiration:

F There are four main points in the Lord's epistle to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7; these four main points are four words that begin with the letter I—love, life, light, and lampstand. **G** Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life; Christ as the tree of life is "good for food" so that we may eat Him for our enjoyment and be constituted with Him for God's expression: **1** The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ—the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be; but to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. **2** If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us. **3** These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

Inspiration:

III The Lord's recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus with the first love, the best love, and of eating the Lord Jesus as the tree of life for the building up of the organic Body of Christ, which is the building up of the New Jerusalem as the goal of God's eternal economy: A To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must tell Him all the time, "Lord Jesus, I love You"; if we have a burning love toward the Lord Jesus, giving Him the first place in all things, we will enjoy all that He is. Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent. B To believe in the

Lord is to receive Him as life, and to love the Lord is to enjoy Him as life, to enjoy the very person whom we have received; faith is given to us by God so that by it we may receive Christ as our life; love issues out of such a wonderful faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God in Christ as our life. **C** The very life that we received when we believed in the Lord Jesus is a person, and the only way to apply and enjoy this person is by loving Him with the first love; since the Lord Jesus as our life is a person, we need a new contact with Him to enjoy His present presence at this very moment and day by day. [2 Cor. 5:14](#) For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; **D** “Give yourself to love the Lord. No other way is so prevailing, and no other way is so safe, so rich, and so full of enjoyment. Just love Him. Do not care for anything else”.

Inspiration:

E When we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us, and He and the Father will come to us and make Their abode with us; thus, we need to pray prayers such as, “Lord, show me Your love, and constrain me with Your love that I may love You and live to You”; “Lord, keep me loving You all the time”; we must continually tell the Lord, “Lord Jesus, I love You; Lord, keep me in Your love! Attract me with Yourself! Keep me all the time in Your loving and present presence.” **F** The more we love Him, the more we will have His presence in our fellowship with Him; for us to be in the Lord’s recovery in an intrinsic way is for us to love the Lord Jesus; if we do not love Him, we are finished with His recovery. [S. S. 1:2](#) Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine. [3](#) Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; / Therefore the virgins love you. [4](#) Draw me; we will run after you... **G** Based upon this, we should sing and pray, “I love my Lord, but with no love of mine, / For I have none to give; / I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine, / For by Thy love I live”; “Something every heart is loving: / If not Jesus, none can rest; / Lord, my heart to Thee is given; / Take it, for it loves Thee best”.

Inspiration:

CP1 Loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

A The genuine ministry of the New Testament always stirs us up to love the Lord Jesus with the first love, strengthening us in the simplicity of eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life for our life supply. 2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ. **F** There are four main points in the Lord's epistle to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7; these four main points are four words that begin with the letter I—love, life, light, and lampstand. **1** We must give the Lord Jesus the preeminence in every way and in everything to recover the first love; then we will enjoy Him as the tree of life, and this life will become the light of life. **2** Then we will be shining as the golden lampstand, as the testimony of Jesus; otherwise, the lampstand will be removed from us: **a** The golden lampstand symbolizes the Triune God—the Father as the substance is embodied in the Son, the Son as the embodiment is expressed through the Spirit, the Spirit is fully realized and expressed as the churches, and the churches are the testimony of Jesus. **b** In the divine thought the golden lampstand is actually a living and growing tree with calyxes and almond blossoms; thus, the lampstand portrays the Triune God embodied in Christ as a living, golden tree of resurrection—growing, branching, budding, and blossoming in us, with us, by us, and out of us as the fruit of the light (the fruit of the Spirit), which is good in nature, righteous in procedure, and real in expression, that God may be expressed as reality in our daily walk. **G1** The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ—the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be; but to enjoy Christ requires us to love Him with the first love. **2** If we leave our first love toward the Lord, we will miss the enjoyment of Christ and lose the testimony of Jesus; consequently, the lampstand will be removed from us. **3** These three things—loving the Lord, enjoying the Lord, and being the testimony of the Lord—go together.

Application to young people, college students, new ones

Testimony 1 When I was working as a working

young saint, I enjoyed eating and drinking of the Lord in the meetings, but after the meetings, the presence of the Lord disappeared and I repeatedly returned to the enjoyment of this world by going to the movies, watching the paintings, shopping, and so on. I had an inner sense of life that said, "I can't go on like this," but I ignored that sense. One day, however, I was enlightened that I lacked love for the Lord and had not surrendered myself to Him with the Lord Jesus as preeminence. I felt that I needed to spend more time for the Lord and the church life, so I started going out to the gospel with brothers and sisters after work and on weekends. I want to love the Lord Jesus with the first love, and eat, drink, and enjoy Christ as life, and be the one who bears His testimony.

Testimony 2 From the beginning of my church life, I have loved and enjoyed the Lord together with the brothers and sisters. This has been the foundation of a very good life for me. After I got married and had children, I often hesitated to leave the house when I had to go to meetings or to visit new ones during gospel propagation, because of the condition of my children. Sometimes I was worried if I woke my children up to go now, they may not sleep well, what if they cried during the meeting, or it was OK if they were outside for a long time. At times like this, I always prayed to the Lord just as I was. As I prayed to the Lord, I remembered the testimony of brother Yoriki. When brother Yoriki was building the Motoyama Meeting Hall, he had to go to the construction site after work to supervise it on weekdays when there were no meetings, which meant he could not work overtime. In a Japanese company with a culture of overtime work, brother Yoriki concentrated and worked hard during work hours, and when it was time for work to end, he said to the Lord, "Lord, I am now going to see Motoyama meeting hall. Please work overtime for me." I was also encouraged and prayed to the Lord, "Lord, I enjoy You first and take care of Your needs. Take care of my children." I was given the sense within and power to put the Lord first. As a result of praying and doing this with the Lord as my preeminence, strangely enough, my children were always taken care of more than I expected.

I thank the Lord.

Prayer Oh Lord Jesus, in all aspects and in all things, I need to give the Lord Jesus preeminence and restore the first love. The more we enjoy the Lord, the richer the content of the church life becomes. If I leave the first love for the Lord, I lose my enjoyment of Christ and the testimony of Jesus.

CP2 Have a burning love toward the Lord Jesus, give Him the first place in all things, and enjoy all that He is

III A To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must tell Him all the time, "Lord Jesus, I love You"; if we have a burning love toward the Lord Jesus, giving Him the first place in all things, we will enjoy all that He is. Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love. Song of Songs 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. 3 Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; your name is like ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you. 4 Draw me; we will run after you...

Give yourself to love the Lord. No other way is so prevailing, and no other way is so safe, so rich, and so full of enjoyment. Just love Him. Do not care for anything else. Teachings, doctrines, gifts, and power do not mean much. We must continually tell the Lord, "Lord, keep me in Your love! Attract me with Yourself! Keep me all the time in Your loving presence!" If we will pray in this way, we will see what love we will have toward the Lord and what kind of life we will live. We will simply live by the Lord Himself. As long as we love Him from the deepest part of our being, everything will be all right. If we need wisdom, He will be the wisdom to us. If we need power, He will be the power. If we need the proper and adequate knowledge, He will even be that to us. Whatever we need, He is. Do not try to get anything else; just look to Him that He would reveal His love to you. Song of Songs 1:4 says, "Draw me; we will run after you." We must ask the Lord to draw us, and then others will run after Him with us.

Application to business person/graduate students

Testimony Brother Andrew Yu had just returned from cancer treatment and during one conference in Taiwan, he was so constrained by the Lord's love that he broke down in tears and was unable to give his message. The meeting

was a wonderful meeting, filled with an atmosphere of the constraining love of the Lord and consecration to the Lord. He asked, "When was the last time you shed tears before the Lord?" 2Cor.5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; 15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised. I was so moved by his tears that I was searched deeply inside by the Spirit. And I asked myself in business life, "Do I love the Lord?"

In my business life, especially when business was being blessed by the Lord, I asked myself, "Do I love His blessings about business or do I love the Lord Himself?" And I prayed, "You loved me and died for me. Lord Jesus, I am touched by Your love and I love You in Your love. Your indwelling presence is my blessing, protection and guidance. If I lose You, I lose everything. Have mercy on me and let me continue to love You all my life." Gal.2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Especially after this experience, I experienced many times in personal fellowship with the Lord that I was constrained to tears by His love. They are not the special environments in any way, but the experiences of being touched by the Lord's love and renewed consecration in the intimate fellowship with the Lord in His presence. "Lord Jesus, draw me. I will run after You with the brothers and sisters."

Prayer Oh Lord Jesus, the Lord's recovery is a recovery of loving the Lord Jesus with the first love, the best love, and of eating the Lord Jesus as the tree of life. May I put other things aside and look solely and only You, so that I may love You from the deepest part of my being. Oh Lord, draw me with Your love. "Lord Jesus, I love You," I continually tell the Lord, and enjoy Christ as the tree of life every hour of every day.