

Week 5 - The Best Investment

Monday

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:21-22

“But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)

Cooperating with God’s Working – Dealing with Sins

We thank God for His work in us through His word. The most important thing God is doing in the entire universe is working Himself into us, conforming us to the image of His Son Jesus Christ and saturating us with the Holy Spirit to make us useful vessels for His glory. With God as the Potter and the church as the Potter’s house, we are being worked on. We are on the wheel, in God’s move, so that we might become vessels of honor, sanctified and useful in the hands of the One who possesses us.

We have to thank the Lord that we are the object of this work. Do not look at yourself or at the other saints as hopeless cases. Jeremiah 18 tells us that God is very given to His work. He is not standing aloof merely observing us. Rather, He is working with determination in you and in all of His children. In order for Him to finish His work, the only thing we need to do is be willing and humble ourselves. We simply need to allow Him to work in us. Are you willing?

In order for us to be purified from the condition of dishonor we may be in, we must let God work in us. To do this, the first thing we must do is solve the problem of our sins. As we have seen, the way to deal with sins is by confessing them when they are exposed in our fellowship with God. We must be sincere and transparent in our confession, hiding nothing. For instance, it is very helpful to confess your sins out loud, even though you only hear your own voice. If you do this, it will be harder to fall again into the same sins. Also, through confession your conscience will become more sensitive and at the same time, stronger. When Satan comes to accuse you, saying that you are not worthy of God and thus cannot go to the meetings, don’t accept it. Satan’s intention in doing this is to cut off the spiritual supply you would receive, either in the meetings or in fellowship with the saints. Declare to the enemy that, although you have committed a sin, you have already confessed it and the blood of Jesus has cleansed you of it. Do not forsake the Lord, the meetings, or the saints. Satan’s goal in accusing you is to separate you from the saints. Remember: you do not need to give Satan any explanation. Simply turn to the Lord and deal with your sins by confessing them. Our confession and declaration are not based on our own righteousness. They are based on God’s righteousness which He operated in Christ, who shed His blood to fully cleanse us.

Key Point:

Willing

Your Key Point:

Question:

How can we go on when we feel that we are not worthy?

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Tuesday

Scripture Reading: Heb. 11:24-27; Phil. 3:4-8

“But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ.” (*Philippians 3:8*)

Cooperating with God’s Working – Dealing with the World and Following the Anointing

We also need to be purified from the influence of the world. Many Christians are not aware of the influence the world has on them. They allow the world to come into their life little by little and do not realize that this interrupts their fellowship with God. If we are not watchful, even the church life can be influenced by the world. For example, today, in contrast to years ago, homosexuality is viewed as being normal. Some people are admired and even accepted as such by Christians. Many now accept homosexuality as something normal.

The standard that we Christians should follow is not that of the 60’s, 70’s, 80’s, 90’s, or of 2000, because the standards change with the “age” of the world. The standard we must follow and which can be applied at any time and in any place, is the word of God.

What is normal according to the standard of the Bible? We are the normal ones! You have to see this! Don’t be influenced by the world, which says that you are “out-of-date.” They are the ones that are literally “out” of all reality. The appearance of the world will pass away, but the word of God remains forever. When we touch God, it is like pushing a button that takes the color away from the world and leaves it black and white, with no enjoyment and no attraction for us. The world, with all of its deceiving appearance and falsehood, loses its attraction when we enjoy the sincere and genuine love that is found only in Jesus.

We see an example of this in the lives of Moses and Paul. They were very cultured and highly trained. However, the training they received was only useful to God after they had passed through the process of death and resurrection. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He preferred to be with the people of God. He rejected being the prince of Egypt, which typifies the world of our living, because he preferred to share the reproach of Christ. He saw that it was greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He became a great instrument in the hands of God in relation to Israel (Heb. 11:24-27). Paul, whose life was to be envied among the religious people and leaders of that time, considered all that he possessed as loss, of no value, because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:4-8). As a result, his life and ministry were greatly used by God for the building up of the church. The “brilliant future” the world offered these two men lost its glamour because they had a strong experience and a real encounter with the Lord.

In order for you to be useful in the Lord’s hands as Moses and Paul were, you not only need to be trained humanly, you also need to turn your heart to God. You may pray, “Lord, I don’t want to study in just any way. I want to study in the best possible way. I want to be one of the best in whatever I do. But I don’t want to do it for myself. Lord Jesus, I want to give my studies to You. Lord, use this for Your purpose and keep me so that nothing will usurp Your place in me.” It is fundamental to know what our goal in life is. Many young people become useless to the Lord because they take their studies or their professional accomplishments as their goal. Once you take the Lord and the church as your main goal, God will have the way to use you, either in your studies or in big companies. Never let other things take you away from your goal.

We need to be worked on inwardly in order for God to use us. Firstly, we need to be purified of all our

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wrongdoings. In order for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we need to be emptied of everything that is against God. Being purified inwardly prepares the way for the Holy Spirit to fill us. As a vessel in the Potter's house, our main function is to be filled with God Himself. Ephesians 5:18 says, "And do not be drunk with wine," the wine of the world, "in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit." The more we are filled with the Spirit, the more we will overflow with the Spirit. The more we have of the Spirit, the more anointed we will be. Then, whenever we are talking to someone, whether preaching the gospel or having an informal conversation, we will feel comfortably "anointed" in our speaking. This is the overflow of the Spirit. By being filled inwardly with the Holy Spirit, we will be able to experience all that Jesus has accomplished. When we disobey the teaching of the anointing, we feel an inward displeasure. The purpose of the teaching of the anointing is to give us more of God's life. Many times we do not have a clear answer about what we should do. However, the anointing gives us a sweet, inward indication of what pleases God and what does not please Him. Its function is to lead us to know God more and to know His heart. It also causes us to be more intimate with God. We should be sensitive to the anointing of the Holy Spirit within us.

Key Point:

Filled with the Spirit

Your Key Point:

Question:

What can free us from the attraction of the world and what do we get in return?

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Wednesday

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:27

“And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.” (1 John 2:27)

Jeremiah Understood God's Speaking

We see something interesting in chapter thirty-two of the book of Jeremiah. The facts narrated there occurred during the time of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, at the end of his reign. The army from Babylon was besieging Jerusalem (v. 1) and Jeremiah was imprisoned because of his faithfulness in prophesying the words of the Lord. Unfortunately, people only like to hear what pleases them, even if it is a lie, and do not like to hear the truth. When Nebuchadnezzar was about to invade Jerusalem, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying that Hanamel, the son of his uncle, would come to tell him to buy a field in Anathoth (vv. 6-7). This came to pass. If we read carefully, we will see that the Lord only told Jeremiah that Hanamel would go and make a proposal to him. He did not tell him that he should or should not buy it. However, even though Jeremiah was shut up in a city surrounded by enemies, he understood that this was the Lord's word.

We may use this situation to illustrate the matter of the teaching of the anointing in 1 John 2:27. We like to have clear and definite answers with regard to what we should study or whom we should marry, but the anointing does not work that way. It does not say, "You should study medicine" or "You should marry Marion." Then how can we know what the anointing is saying? The anointing demands that you know God, that you have fellowship with Him. The anointing only gives us a slight indication, but it is up to us to develop the feeling of the anointing. This is only possible if, each time the anointing "moves" within us, we seek the Lord more. We may ask, "Lord, is this Your will? Lord, is this the person I should marry?" We like advice. We like people to tell us what we should do. But God wants us to know what pleases Him, to be more intimate with Him and seek the direction for our life only from Him.

Key Point:

Knowing God

Your Key Point:

Question:

What does the anointing teach us?

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Thursday

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:25

“But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;” (2 Corinthians 5:18)

The Right of Redemption

In Hanamel's message to Jeremiah there were some indications of God's will that the prophet should buy the field. It was told to him, "You have the right of possession, and the right of redemption is yours." The right of redemption is mentioned in Leviticus 25:25. It was applied when someone became poor through some problem or through laziness in working the land, which forced him to sell his house, then his belongings, and eventually, his land. It was the responsibility of the closest relative to redeem the property that had been sold, in order to restore it to the one who had become impoverished. What does this mean to us?

This word serves as a warning to us. If we live in the church life in a loose way, not having fellowship with the Lord, not reading the Bible, missing meetings just because we don't feel like going, the result will be that we will become poor spiritually. Over time, we will "sell" what we have gained because we have no way to preserve it. After you sell your right to enjoy Christ and are poor spiritually, God will rescue you by using a brother who is close to you who is rich in the enjoyment of Christ. The fellowship you have with this brother and his prayers for you, will help you to return to your enjoyment of the Lord. This brother is a redeemer.

On the other hand, we can also apply this situation to all men. All men were created in the image and likeness of God. They were created with the most noble right: to receive God in their spirit as their life and content. All were created to fulfill the will of God. Because of Adam's sin, all men were sold to sin, the world, uncleanness and rebellion. Since then men have become worse and worse. Look at the news casts, newspapers, your fellow students and colleagues. Are they rich inwardly? Although they have many belongings, is the life they are living satisfying to them? The more they are separated from God, the poorer they are. Who will be used to redeem the right they have to enjoy God? If we apply the principle that was established in Leviticus, the one who redeems the impoverished brother is the one closest to him, the one who has the experience of God. In other words, people who are in contact with us daily and who still have not received the Lord Jesus, need us to speak to them about Him and show them God's plan, so that they might be redeemed.

We may also apply these words from Leviticus to all the children of God who have become spiritually impoverished. It is our duty to rescue them. We should not criticize or condemn them or be indifferent to their situation of spiritual poverty. God has given us the word of reconciliation, not of condemnation (2 Cor. 5:18). If you are enjoying Christ and are enjoying the riches in His word, you are able to help someone who has become poor and is separated from God.

Look at those around you, at school, in your neighborhood, your friends. How many are spiritually poor? Remember that if they are not saved they will be vessels of wrath. Remember that if the children of God who have become poor are not redeemed, they will suffer discipline during the millennium. So get ready to be a redeemer. In case you don't feel capable, let the Potter mold you on the wheel. Surely you will become a vessel of honor.

Key Point:

Redemption

Your Key Point:

Question:

How should we respond when we see others who are in spiritual poverty?

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Friday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 32:9-11, 14, 25

“And in nothing being frightened by the opposers, which is to them a proof of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God;” (*Philippians 1:28*)

Do Not be Influenced by Outward Circumstances

Jeremiah was a person like that. Think about the situation he was in: Jerusalem besieged by the Chaldean army; war; the dead; the sword; no food or water in the city; desperate families...what a situation! It was right in the middle of this situation that Jeremiah bought the field of Anathoth. Would you have done the same thing in such a complicated situation? Would you have invested in something that was about to be terminated? Even though all the outward evidence was unfavorable, Jeremiah was firm in obeying the Lord's word and he bought the land. To use the expression of 1 John, he was faithful to the teaching of the anointing.

This purchase was made with a deed, a seal, witnesses and money weighed in a balance. The deed was put into an earthen vessel to be kept for many days (Jer. 32:9-11, 14). Jeremiah did everything exactly as the Lord had commanded him. Only after all this was done did he go to the Lord and ask, "But You, O Lord Jehovah, said to me, Buy for yourself the field with money and call witnesses. Yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans" (v. 25). Then the Lord answered and said that He would gather the Israelites that had been dispersed and would cause them to dwell in that secure place. At the end of chapter 32 and in chapter 33 we only see good news and promises of restoration. It was as if the Lord had said to Jeremiah, "Jeremiah, give no importance to the things you are seeing. Everything is under My control. You are all thinking that this place has no value, that its glory is over and there is no more hope. But I will recover this place."

Here is another lesson we need to learn. Many today despise our Christian life and think it is absurd that we invest our time and money in the church life. They don't understand why, right at vacation time, we go to a conference for young people to speak about the Bible. What is this? To the majority of your friends, you are buying a field in a city that is destined for destruction. They may say, "It's the twenty-first century. Are you going to waste your vacation to study the Bible?" Don't be intimidated by this kind of mocking because this is "to them a proof of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God" (Phil. 1:28). Don't pay any attention to them. Rather, pay close attention to the word of God. If God tells us that we should invest our life in the church life, then we do it because He is the guarantee of our investment.

Dear reader, in what are you investing your future? Why are so few young people being brought into the church? Is it because the Lord has not given you this commission? Or, is it because He commissioned you but you are not interested? Where are your friends? Are they rich inwardly and spiritually? Be bold in following God's orders: redeem your companions, bring the young people you know to the church, to the Potter's house. If you invest your life in rescuing people, not worrying about the difficulties, there will surely be an abundant harvest for the Lord. Let us pray that this book may be used by God to wake up many young people so they can become useful in the Lord's hands. Practice to be cleansed of worldly sins and live by the anointing. Invest the best time of your life in that which does not pass away. Invest the best of your energy in the things of the Lord. Give yourself to serve the Lord! Invest your life in "buying the field of Anathoth."

Key Point:

Invest

Your Key Point:

Question:

What is God calling you to invest?

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Saturday

Scripture Reading: 2 Chron. 34

“And in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.” (2 Chronicles 34:3a)

Josiah Invested His Youth in God

The history of Josiah, recorded in 2 Chronicles 34, is a good example for us that is very encouraging. Josiah began to reign in Jerusalem when he was eight years old. After that, he did what was right before the Lord and walked in the ways of David, a man according to God's heart. What an example! An eight year old child is normally given to playing and running around. Our children today only think about video games, martial arts heroes, comic strips, etc. But here in this section we see a young person who decided to walk in the ways of the Lord; he did not despise his youth.

Josiah began to seek the God of David, his father, when he was sixteen years old. Let us suppose that the time when he was "eight years old" corresponds to a person's experience of regeneration, of receiving Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Although he is saved, it is only after a period of time that something happens in him. This would correspond to the "sixteen years old." At that time, a believer is awakened to live to God. It is at that time that an "awakening" occurs in his life and he really begins to seek the God to whom he had given himself to years before. From then on, this person begins to seek to have his own experiences with God. Before, he only belonged to God, but now he is personally related to Him. Firstly, God came to seek him; now he is the one seeking after God.

What about you? Have you had this awakening? What are you seeking after today? What is your spiritual age, comparing it to the experience of Josiah? Have you made the same decision as Josiah? When do you pray to the Lord? Is it only when you are in trouble at school? Or do you seek the Lord with all your heart because you love Him? From the experience of Josiah, we see that there has to be a day when we begin to seek after God, whether others are seeking Him or not.

After seeking and having fellowship with the Lord for four years, at twenty years old, Josiah began to purge Judah and Jerusalem (34:3b-7). He discovered that there were many idols, many things that were replacing God. Consequently, he performed a thorough, drastic cleansing, not only in his own life, but also in that of all the people. Here we see a progressive, normal experience in the life of someone who has given himself to the Lord. He is saved, begins to seek after God, and, as a result of this seeking, begins to purge out all of his wrongdoings and to help others to be purged also.

This is how, at twenty-six years of age, Josiah was at the high peak of his experience. He saw the need for the house of God to be recovered. It is not enough for us to only take care of our own spirituality. After we have a strong experience with God we will begin to seek what is on His heart. In the Old Testament, God's heart was set on having a place of rest. David saw this and this is why he was a man according to God's heart. The temple was built so that God could have a place of rest. Through the temple in Jerusalem, God was able to have an expression of Himself on the earth.

Today, God's dwelling place is the church. After he sought the Lord very much and purged out all the idols, Josiah saw that the temple needed to be restored. In the same way, we need to be today's "Josiah's." We need to be concerned for the recovery of the proper church life, the oneness of the Body of Christ, so that God may have His expression and His testimony among men and thus His glory will be manifested.

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When Josiah began to restore the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law (vv. 14-18) and read what was written in it to the king. When the king heard the words God had spoken to Moses, he tore his clothes because he saw that his fathers had not kept all the words of Jehovah (vv. 19-21). Something that spontaneously arises when the proper church life is recovered is the revelation of the word of God. We have seen how clear His word is regarding the church life, the oneness of the children of God, the practical expression of the church in each city and many other things. We also see how many divergences from the biblical truths there are among Christians today.

Due to Josiah's stand, the punishment that was coming upon Jerusalem was delayed (vv. 27-28). Josiah commanded all the people to gather together to read the words of the book of the covenant. Later, he made a covenant before Jehovah and made everyone serve the Lord; he celebrated the Passover as it had never been celebrated, since the days of Samuel; and he established priests and encouraged them to serve Jehovah. As a result of Josiah's living it is written, "Throughout his days they did not turn from following after Jehovah, the God of their fathers" (v 33). If all the young Christians would have such a progressive experience and invest their youth in the Lord and in the church, how strong the Lord's testimony would be in their city!

Key Point:

Recovery

Your Key Point:

Question:

What difference can young people make in the church life?

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Sunday

Scripture Reading: Jer. 22:14-19, 21

“I spoke to you in your prosperity; But you said, I will not listen. This has been your way from your youth, That you have not listened to My voice.” (*Jeremiah 22:21*)

The Negative Example of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah

Jeremiah 22:14 shows us a contrast between the life of Jehoiakim and that of his father, Josiah. Jehoiakim said, "I will build myself a large house with spacious upper chambers." He said he would cut out windows for it, panel it with cedar and paint it with vermilion. Jehoiakim was planning his life, only concerned about himself. As for you, what is your goal? Are you also only thinking about yourself?

Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, did not follow the example of his father. He was only concerned about having a good house and was also competing with another king about how much cedar he would put into his house. He had no concern for the things of God as his father had. It is like this today. People are motivated by competition and rivalry. Truthfully, people are enslaved by the desire to have more than their neighbors or their colleagues at work. Many get new cars or electrical appliances, not because they need them, but rather because they want to "keep up," so that others will see. We must be careful not to fall into a situation like this because it is too expensive. Many in the world sell their lunch time, their rest time, their time with their family and even their own health to keep the appearance of having a salary that can pay for this kind of competition. Why do they take out loans for this? It is because of envy and rivalry.

In Jeremiah 22:15-16 the Lord reminded Jehoiakim that his father Josiah, though he didn't seek these extravagances, lived very well: he had enough to eat and drink; he helped those with afflictions and the needy ones; and everything went well for him. The Lord took care of all of Josiah's needs. He was someone who sought the kingdom of God first. He knew the Lord. Everything he had was for the Lord and, because of this, the Lord added much to him.

On the other hand, Jehoiakim's eyes and heart were only seeking unjust gain (v. 17). Because of the unjust gain, rather than practicing righteousness, he practiced violence and extortion. The Lord even tried to speak to him in the midst of his prosperity, but he refused to listen (v. 21). Actually, the times we least hear the Lord's voice are in times of prosperity. When we are in difficulty, we spontaneously seek the Lord, but when everything is going well, we forget about Him. The Lord said to Jehoiakim, "I spoke to you in your prosperity; but you said, I will not listen. This has been your way from your youth, that you have not listened to My voice."

How did Jehoiakim become like that? It is because this was his way from his youth. The Lord spoke to him, but he would not listen. He wouldn't listen because his heart and his eyes were set on his own plans, competition and gain for earthly things. The Lord spoke to him many times, but he refused to listen. As a result, his end was like that of an animal that is dragged and cast out beyond the gates of the city. His end was very sad and pitiful.

We hope that all those who read this book will follow the positive examples of Jeremiah and Josiah. We must invest the best that we have in God's plan, which is to rescue people who have become poor and bring them back to the Lord. Let us not be content to be passive Christians. We must long to be active Christians who are seeking the Lord and having intense fellowship with Him. Get rid of everything that replaces God in your life, seek fellowship with the saints, actively participate in all the meetings, serve the Lord and bring others to serve Him. Young person, receive God's calling. Purify yourself from your wrongdoings and become a vessel unto honor, sanctified and useful in the Potter's house.

Key Point:

Listen

Your Key Point:

Question:

How can you avoid becoming like Jehoiakim?