

## **Houston Christian Conference Schedule**

### **Saturday - December 10**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm -- Session 1

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm -- Lunch (Boxed Lunch)

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm -- Gospel Time/Visitations

5:30 pm -- Dinner

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm -- Session 2

### **Lord's Day - December 11**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm -- Session 3

## **Questions for Study Groups**

### **Message One Questions**

1. What are the two choices before man in Genesis 2?
2. What do the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil signify?
3. Identify and give examples of two ways by which we can stay on the way of life.

### **Message Two Questions**

1. What is the significance of the two trees in Genesis 2:9? How does it apply to a Christian's living?
2. What is the difference between the standard of good and the standard of life?
3. What is the sense of life and what is the source of the sense of life? Share an experience of following the sense of life.

**Outline of the Messages  
for the Houston Christian Conference  
December 10-11, 2022**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
TAKING THE WAY OF ENJOYING CHRIST AS THE TREE OF LIFE**

Message One

**Taking the Way of Enjoying Christ as the Tree of Life  
for the Accomplishing of God's Eternal Economy**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:7; 22:14; John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:35, 57, 63

- I. In Genesis 2 we see two choices before man—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—vv. 7-9:**
- A. The two trees show that in this universe there are two wills, two sources, and two possibilities for man to choose with his free will—cf. Deut. 30:19-20.
  - B. The tree of life signifies Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, as life to man in the form of food for man to enjoy Him and be constituted with Him for His glory, His corporate expression, thus accomplishing God's original intention according to His eternal economy—Gen. 1:26; Isa. 43:7; Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; 22:14; John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:35, 57, 63; Rev. 21:10-11; cf. 4:3:
    - 1. The tree of life, the tree of God, the God-tree, is the center of the universe.
    - 2. The Old Testament begins with the tree of life (Gen. 2:9), and the New Testament ends with the tree of life (Rev. 22:2, 14); thus, the thought of God being man's life runs through the entire divine revelation.
    - 3. God's placing man in front of the tree of life indicates that God wanted man to receive Him as his life by eating Him organically and assimilating Him metabolically, so that God might become the very constituent of man's being—John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4.
  - C. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death to man—Heb. 2:14:
    - 1. It also signifies all things apart from God, for anything that is not God Himself, including good things and even scriptural things and religious things, can be utilized by Satan, the subtle one, to bring death to man—John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6b.
    - 2. Good and evil are not signified by two trees but by one tree, the second tree; thus, seeking good other than God belongs to Satan.
    - 3. The genuine good is God Himself; hence, gaining God equals gaining the genuine good—Matt. 19:17a; Mark 10:17-18; Psa. 16:2.
  - D. The tree of life causes man to be dependent on God (John 15:5), but the tree of knowledge causes man to rebel against God and be independent from Him (cf. Gen. 3:5):
    - 1. Eating indicates dependence; that God is our food, signified by the tree of life, means that we must depend on God continually.
    - 2. The tree of knowledge indicates independence; in the eyes of God, man's first sin and the greatest sin is independence.
  - E. The two trees issue in two lines, two ways—the way of life and the way of death—that run through the entire Bible and end in the book of Revelation:
    - 1. Death begins with the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) and ends with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14).

2. Life begins with the tree of life and ends with the New Jerusalem, the city of the water of life—22:1-2.

**II. We must stay on the way of life, the line of life, in the maintenance of life by enjoying Christ as the tree of life for God's building in life by our growth in life—John 10:10b; Rev. 22:1-2; Eph. 4:16; 2:21-22; Col. 2:19:**

- A. We stay on the way of life by living and serving according to the principle of life, not according to the principle of right and wrong:
  1. We must live and act according to the inner sense of life in our spirit, the leading of life, not according to right and wrong—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13.
  2. The standard for Christian living is the presence of the indwelling Christ within us; it is not a question of what is right or wrong but of whether or not the divine life within us agrees with something—Matt. 17:3, 5, 8; cf. Mal. 2:15-16.
- B. We stay on the way of life by loving the Lord to the uttermost, drawing others to run after Him—Mark 12:30; S. S. 1:4a:
  1. 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. 2:4-5, 7.
  2. To enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must betroth people to Him, bringing them into the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus—2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- C. We stay on the way of life by eating Jesus through pray-reading the Word, musing on the word, and ministering the word as the Spirit into others by the exercise of our spirit of faith—John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15; Matt. 4:4; 24:45; 1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13:
  1. We must enjoy Him in the Word early in the morning to have a new start of each day, and we must receive His word with much and careful consideration—Psa. 119:15, 147-148; cf. Lev. 11:3.
  2. We must speak Christ to all kinds of people daily in season and out of season (Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2) and desperately endeavor to build up a habit of speaking in any meeting (1 Cor. 14:26, 4-5, 12, 31).
- D. We stay on the way of life by enjoying the Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life with its divine capacity—Rom. 8:2; Jer. 32:39:
  1. In the garden of Eden with the two trees, we see life, good, and evil; we are a miniature garden of Eden with the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit, the law of good in our natural, independent mind, and the law of evil in our flesh—Rom. 7:23; 8:2, 16.
  2. We must “switch on” the law of the Spirit of life by walking according to the spirit and setting our mind on the spirit for the dispensing of the Triune God as life into our tripartite being—vv. 2, 4, 6, 10-11.
- E. We stay on the way of life by living in resurrection, in the reality of the church as the Body of Christ, signified by the golden lampstand as a tree of resurrection life; this is so that we may bear the glory of God for God's expression as the city of life, the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:22-23; Exo. 25:31-40; Rev. 1:11-12; 21:10-11.

**III. The unique way for us to be overcomers is by eating and enjoying Christ as the tree of life so that we can be transformed in life to become the man-child for the display of Christ's victory and for us to become the bride for Christ's satisfaction—2:7, 17; 3:20-21; 12:5-12; 19:7-9; 22:2, 14.**

## Message Two

### **The Two Trees and the Two Principles of Living**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:4, 6; Eph. 4:18-19; 2 Cor. 11:3

#### **I. The two trees in Genesis 2:9—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—represent two principles of living:**

- A. The two trees show that a Christian can live according to two different principles—the principle of right and wrong or the principle of life—1 Cor. 8:1.
- B. Being a Christian is not a matter of the principle of right and wrong, the principle of good and evil, but is a matter of life—1 John 5:11-13, 20.
- C. When we received the Lord Jesus and gained a new life, we obtained another principle of living—the principle of life; if we do not know this principle, we will set the principle of life aside and follow the principle of right and wrong.
- D. Being a Christian is not a matter of asking whether something is right or wrong; it is a matter of checking with the life inside of us whenever we do something—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19.

#### **II. Our Christian life is based on an inner life, not an outward standard of right and wrong; our principle of living is inward instead of outward:**

- A. If we live by the principle of right and wrong, we are the same as the worldly people—v. 17.
- B. Right and wrong are not decided by an outward standard but by the inner life.
- C. We should not only avoid all that is evil but also all that is merely good:
  1. Christians can do only that which comes from life; there are evil things, good things, and the things of life—John 1:4; 10:10; 1 John 2:25; 5:13.
  2. In Genesis 2:9 “good and evil” are put together as one way, whereas “life” is another way.
  3. There is a standard that is higher than the standard of good; it is the standard of life—John 11:25; 1 John 5:11-12.
  4. The standard of Christian living deals not only with evil things but also with good and right things.
  5. Many things are right according to human standards, but the divine standard pronounces them wrong because they lack the divine life.
- D. Christian living is based on the inner life—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11:
  1. No Christian should determine anything apart from life—1 John 5:13.
  2. Whatever increases the inner life is right, and whatever decreases the inner life is wrong.
  3. Our pathway is God’s life, not right and wrong; the difference between these two principles is immense, and the contrast here is great.
  4. The one question we must ask is whether the divine life within us rises or falls; this is what must determine the path we take.
  5. God requires us to satisfy the divine life; we must do things in a way that satisfies the life God has given us—John 1:4; 3:15.
  6. As Christians, we should not only repent before God for the sins we have committed; often, we need to repent before God for the good things we have done.
  7. The principle of our living is not one that differentiates between good and evil; we must come before God to determine what is of life and what is of death—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 3:14.

**III. If we would live according to the principle of life, we need to discern the spirit from the soul and know the spirit—Heb. 4:12; 1 Cor. 2:14-15:**

- A. The Lord who is the Spirit is living, dwelling, working, moving, and acting in our spirit, and we are one spirit with Him—2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17:
  - 1. If we desire to know the Lord in a practical way and experience Him in our daily life, we must learn to discern our spirit—2:14-15.
  - 2. If we do not know our human spirit, we cannot understand God's moving within us and cannot follow the Lord, because the Lord is the Spirit living within our spirit—1 John 2:27; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- B. We need to know the difference between our spirit and our other inward parts—Psa. 51:6; Ezek. 36:26; 1 Pet. 3:4.
- C. To do anything in our soul, whether it is right or wrong, is to live in the old man; thus, we need to deny our soul-life, our self—Matt. 16:24-26.
- D. When we follow our spirit, we follow the Lord Himself, because the Lord is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17.

**IV. In order to live according to the principle of life, we need to follow the inner sense of life—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19; Isa. 40:31:**

- A. The sense of life is subjective, personal, and practical:
  - 1. The sense of life on the negative side is the feeling of death—Rom. 8:6a.
  - 2. The sense of life on the positive side is the feeling of life and peace, with a consciousness of strength, satisfaction, rest, brightness, and comfort—v. 6b.
- B. The source of the sense of life is the divine life (Eph. 4:18-19), the law of life (Rom. 8:2), the Holy Spirit (v. 11; 1 John 2:27), Christ abiding in us (John 15:4-5), and God operating in us (Phil. 2:13).
- C. The function of the sense of life is to make us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life and whether we are living in the flesh or in the Spirit—1 Cor. 2:14-15; Rom. 8:8-9; Gal. 5:16-17.
- D. A believer's growth in life depends on how he deals with the inner sense of life—Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:6-7.
- E. We need to pray ourselves into the sense of life and live under its controlling, guiding, and directing element day by day—Rom. 8:6; Eph. 4:18-19; 1 John 2:27.
- F. The more we walk according to the spirit and follow the sense of life, the more we will live according to the principle of life—Rom. 8:4, 6.

**V. If we live according to the principle of life, we will discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—2 Cor. 11:3:**

- A. The Gospel of John emphasizes the fact that the tree of life is versus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that we should care not for good or evil but for life—4:10-14, 20-21, 23-24; 8:3-9; 9:1-3; 11:20-27.
- B. The best way to discern a matter—the secret of discernment—is to discern according to life or death; we must learn to discern, to differentiate, matters by life and death, rejecting any speaking that deprives us of the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply but receiving the genuine ministry of the Lord, which always strengthens us in the enjoyment of Christ as our life supply—Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 11:3.