

Message Three

**Experiencing and Enjoying Christ as the Tree of Life,
Growing Christ as the Tree of Life,
and Planting Church Trees
for the Corporate Expression of the Triune God as Life**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; John 11:25; 15:1; Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:19; Rev. 1:11-12, 20

I. For the universal spreading of the church as the testimony of Jesus, we need to experience and enjoy Christ as the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7:

- A. The tree of life in Genesis 2:9 signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ as life to man in the form of food.
- B. We may experience Christ as the tree of life in our regenerated spirit; the church, the kingdom, the New Jerusalem, and all spiritual and heavenly things issue from the experience of the tree of life—John 11:25; 15:1.
- C. Eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Rev. 2:7:
 - 1. For the church life we need to eat Christ as the tree of life—John 6:57b.
 - 2. All the aspects of the all-inclusive Christ revealed in the Gospel of John are the outcome of the tree of life—1:51; 3:29a; 6:32-35; 8:12; 10:11; 14:6.
 - 3. The content of the church life depends on the enjoyment of Christ; the more we enjoy Him, the richer the content will be—Eph. 3:16-19.
 - 4. To enjoy Christ as the tree of life requires that we love Him with the first love; to give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love, the best love—Rev. 2:4; Col. 1:18.
- D. In Revelation 22:1-2 there is the river of water of life and the tree of life:
 - 1. Because the tree of life is in the water of life, the way to enjoy the tree of life is to drink the water of life—John 4:14; Isa. 12:2-6.
 - 2. The essence of the tree of life is in the water of life; thus, in order to enjoy Christ as the tree of life, we must drink of the river of water of life—John 4:14; 7:37; 1 Cor. 10:4; Rev. 22:1-2, 17d.
- E. The principle of the tree of life is dependence on God; the experience and enjoyment of the tree of life causes us to be dependent on God—John 15:5.
- F. The Lord wants to recover the church back to the beginning—to the eating of the tree of life—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 2:7; 22:14.

II. For the universal spreading of the church as the testimony of Jesus, we need to grow Christ as the tree of life within us—Col. 2:19; John 11:25; 15:1:

- A. Christ as the embodiment of God is our tree of life, and this tree is growing in us—Col. 1:27; 2:9, 19; 3:4.
- B. God in Christ has sown Himself into our spirit as the life seed to grow a tree, a miniature of the tree of life—Mark 4:2-8, 26-29.
- C. In Genesis 2:9 the tree of life was unique, but today the tree of life grows in all of us, causing each one of us to be a small tree of life; as small trees of life, we need to grow in life—1 Cor. 3:6-7; Eph. 4:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

III. For the universal spreading of the church as the testimony of Jesus, we need to plant “church trees” for the corporate expression of the Triune God as life—John 5:26; 11:25; 1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11-12, 20:

- A. In the eyes of God the universal church, the Body of Christ, has been formed; now, after the formation of this universal church as a complete entity, there is the need for the spreading of the church—Acts 8:1; 9:31:
 - 1. The local churches are established, not formed; the apostle Paul could plant a church, and Apollos could water it, but it was God alone who formed it and gave it life, and it is God who gives it growth—1 Cor. 3:6-7.
 - 2. The way to spread the church and to establish a church is to bring it to a certain locality and plant it—Rom. 16:5a; Col. 4:15.
- B. Although we cannot form the church, we have the position, the right, the opportunity, and even the commission to go to the uttermost part of the earth to establish local churches—Acts 1:8; 13:1-3; Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:11.
- C. What we are doing today is simply establishing churches in different localities by planting “church trees”; this planting of church trees is the establishing of the church—1 Cor. 1:1-2; 1 Thes. 1:1.
- D. The local churches as church trees are golden lampstands, which are actually living, golden trees—Rev. 1:11-12, 20:
 - 1. The golden lampstands signify the local churches as the reproduction of Christ and the reprint of the Spirit—Exo. 25:31-40; Zech. 4:2, 6, 10; Rev. 5:6; 1:11, 20.
 - 2. In figure, the golden lampstand signifies the church as the embodiment and the expression of the Triune God—vv. 11-12.
 - 3. As saints in the local churches, we all are parts of a wonderful golden tree.
 - 4. The symbol of the golden lampstand indicates that the Triune God is a living tree, growing, budding, and blossoming, and the description of the lampstand conveys the idea of growth—Exo. 25:31-32; Eph. 4:14-16:
 - a. The lampstand is growing through the branches and within them; this indicates that Christ is growing in us—Col. 2:19; John 3:29a, 30a.
 - b. It is crucial for all the branches to give the lampstand a free way to grow in them and through them—Eph. 4:15-16.
 - c. The more the lampstand grows in the branches, the more it will blossom and shine, and the more light there will be—v. 15; 5:8-9.
 - 5. To plant a church tree is to establish a local church as a golden lampstand.
- E. Our burden is to bring the church as a tree to every city, town, and village and plant a church there—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Col. 4:15-16:
 - 1. We all need to be faithful to carry out the burden to establish local churches by planting church trees—Rom. 16:16b; Gal. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2:14.
 - 2. The married couples should be like Prisca and Aquila, who planted a church tree wherever they went; wherever they were, they were willing to bear the burden of the practice of the church by opening up their home—Rom. 16:3-5a; 1 Cor. 16:19.
 - 3. If we all have the desire to establish churches by planting church trees, the establishing of the churches will be very fast and prevailing—Acts 19:20.