

TRANSFORMED FROM GLORY TO GLORY

II Corinthians 4:6—For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Let us have a further word of simple prayer:

Lord, we thank You because tonight You have called us by Your grace. We thank You for this glorious theme. Thank You for reminding us repeatedly that Your eternal purpose is to conform us to the image of Your beloved Son. May we see tonight that way that is full of Christ! May we indeed learn Christ! May we declare that it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me! Listen to our prayers; in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We all know that the theme of the conference this year is to be conformed to the image of His Son, and my responsibility is “to learn Christ.” According to Paul’s interpretation, from his experience, when he speaks of “to learn Christ,” his emphasis is not to learn something about Christ. The best explanation is, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” When Paul was alive he did not live according to his own ways, but he lived according to how Christ lived on earth. On the road to Damascus he met the Lord. Previously he had heard about the glory of God, and he saw in Ezekiel what the image of the glory of God was. He never thought that on the road to Damascus he would see the glory of God with his own eyes, and the glory of God would manifest on the face of the Lord Jesus.

MATTHEW REVEALS THE KING

Through the four gospels, the Holy Spirit shows us from four different angles who our Lord is. In Matthew we see that He is King and He became our Savior, and that image is the image of a lion. It is the same theme that Ezekiel saw in his vision. Of the four living beings he saw there were four different faces: lion, ox, man, eagle. What Ezekiel saw was the life before the throne. How do you describe the life before the throne? On one hand, it is described by the lion. And another is represented by the ox. So today we see that the glory of God is manifest on the face of Christ. Not only do we see the glory of God, we are also glorified by faith. How do we gain glory? He has called us, justified us by faith, sanctified us by faith, and also glorified us by faith. To be glorified is to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Image of the Lion

We went through the gospel of Matthew to see the image of the lion. Our Lord is the King. The life that we attain to today is the life of a king. When we are conformed to the image of His Son, however He is King we shall be king as well. First He was humbled; then He was glorified. He first went through the cross, then He received the crown. He was King on the cross, so when we are conformed to His image, however He reacted on the cross, that is how we are to react as well. Under the cross our Lord was silent, but on the cross He spoke seven words. There He had a reaction, and that reaction was a

glorious one. That reaction was a kingly one. When we are conformed to the image of His Son, in our daily life, many times the Lord arranges our environment so that we will turn another cheek, walk a second mile, give our cloak, love our enemies, and pray for them. We love our brother, but that love is but a semicircle. When we love our enemies, that love is complete, and we can be perfect like the heavenly Father is perfect. This is the story of being conformed to the image of the Son.

So what is the way? The entire gospel of Matthew shows us how we can be conformed to the image of His Son. We gain the victory as He gained the victory. This is what we see in Revelation 3 when the Lord calls the overcomers. How do we overcome? Our overcoming is based on His overcoming. In Matthew we see how He overcame. That overcoming life was in Paul, so he said, "It is no longer I, but it is Christ who lives in me." The same way the Lord overcame is how Paul could overcome. On the cross our Lord walked a second mile, so we can walk a second mile. That is how we are conformed to the image of his son.

How to Speak

The twenty-eight chapters of Matthew very clearly point to a way we can be conformed to the image of His Son. In Matthew 10 we see that we are brought into the school of Christ. Yes, we are sons of the kingdom of heaven, and we are just like young lions. But do not forget, we learn these lessons in the school of Christ. In Matthew 10, there are two important lessons. The first lesson is how we speak. We do not speak on our own, but it is the Spirit of the Father who speaks in us. We should know how to speak. In ordinary times we should know how the Holy Spirit speaks in us. Then when we come to an important juncture, or we come before a high official for example, we will know how to speak. Many times when we come to an important juncture in our lives, we do not know how to speak. In our daily life, how you speak shows forth what life you have. When we speak, if it is the Spirit of the Father speaking in us, we have learned the lesson of the Holy Spirit. One who allows the Holy Spirit to speak in him proves that he is king. The way the Lord overcame, he overcomes as well. Beneath the cross the Lord spoke not a single word. We can be conformed to His image. This is the first important point.

The Cross

Here is the second important point, "He that takes not his cross and follows after Me is not worthy of Me." So the second lesson is the lesson of the cross. And when we read Matthew chapter 13, the Lord shows us through His own word that He gave birth to us, and we became the sons of the kingdom of heaven. As the sons of the kingdom of heaven, these good seeds were sowed in the field. When we were saved by grace, we were all the good seeds. And these sons of the kingdom of heaven are seeds that are cast out and sown in the field. And that seed is the same as a grain of wheat fallen into the ground. For the wheat to become mature and ripe, it needs the sun. When the sun shines on the wheat, the portion that is facing the sun, facing the heavens, becomes riper and more mature. But the part closest to the ground nearest to the roots becomes parched. It is dying to the earth but alive towards the heaven, and that life is mature. So On one hand, Christ puts us in the school of Christ, and He also sows the good seed in this world. And in this world we learn many lessons. There are many sufferings in this world, and many

times we encounter difficulties. But through this we can be conformed to the image of His Son.

I remember when I was still a student. At that time I wanted to attain to the highest level of education. I had an advisor, and I learned from him. I felt I would attain to that certain level once I learned from this professor. I never thought this professor had a very weird temper, but I knew that he was actually tailor-made from the Lord for me. I remember I had a very good project, and I felt that if I showed it to the professor he would be very glad. When I gave my results to the professor, he did not quite understand what I wrote, so he was very mad. Not only was he mad, but as we stood face to face, he took my paper and threw it to the ground at my feet. And I asked myself, "Do I leave now? Or should I pick it up from the floor?" Thank the Lord, by His grace I was able to pick up that paper from the floor. Once I had finished my thesis, he was the one who had to approve the thesis. And in that thesis was exactly the content of the paper he had thrown to the ground. So when I got my PhD, I had one prayer before the Lord: "I thank You, Lord, that the degree I received is a dual degree. On one hand, I got the degree from my professor; on the other hand, I received this degree from Your own hand."

Thank the Lord, the Lord shows us that on this earth when you can pick it up, you are a lion, and that proves you are strong. But if you are upset and you just leave, that means you are the weakest among all. Our life is the life of a king. Whatever situation, we need to be king. Whatever situation, you should not be defeated. Thank the Lord, this is how the Lord trains His disciples,

How Do We Become Mature?

In Matthew 16-18, the Lord says He will build His church. How do we become mature, and how can we be conformed to the image of His Son? Of course, it is in the school of Christ. There are two facets to the school of Christ. On one side it is in the field; on the other side it is in the church. What lesson do you learn in the church? The Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, except you are converted and become like little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Where did the Lord say these words? He spoke of the universal church first, and then he spoke of the local church. And these words are sandwiched between these two phrases. Here we see that when our Lord builds His church, it is according to the measurement of the kingdom of heaven. In the kingdom of heaven all are little children. That kingdom is a kingdom of little children. But we are too big.

I remember the time when I was in Japan for a year. In Japan everything is small. The refrigerator is small, the TV is small, and the ceiling is very low. You may very easily bump your head. Remember that the church is built according to the measurement of the kingdom of heaven. Why do we always fall and hit ourselves in the church? It is because we are too big. So the cross has to do the work so that we can be converted and become like little children. Then you can seek out your brethren; then you can gain your brethren; then you can be one with the brethren, and then you can forgive your brethren. Thank the Lord, it is this way that we can be conformed to the image of God's Son. Peter thought that if he forgave someone seven times that would be victorious. But a true king forgives seventy times seven. Thank the Lord, this is the way that we see in Matthew.

Peter Learns a Wonderful Lesson

Now let's use a very simple example. When we speak of being a king, it is as if we talk about something that is very high. Everyday we have to speak. When you see somebody speaking, you can tell if he is a king or not. Among the twelve disciples Peter spoke the most. No matter what the event was he would always speak. Once he went to the Mount of Transfiguration, and just like all prayer meetings, everybody fell asleep. Suddenly, our Lord was transfigured. So Peter felt that he had to say something. He said, "Let's build three tabernacles." He had no idea what he was saying. For somebody who likes to speak this is a very big explanation. He cannot contain or control his own tongue; he has to speak. If somebody is to be king, you have to see how the Lord controls his tongue.

Do you remember in the Scriptures the day that somebody came to collect the tax? This tax is actually a temple tax; it is collected for the temple of God. Then somebody came from Capernaum and asked the disciples, "Does your Master pay tribute?" They did not ask Peter whether he paid tribute. If they had asked Peter, he could have said, "Yes." They asked, "Does your Master pay tax?" Peter should have said, "Hold on, let me ask my Master." But he said, "Yes." When they went into the room, our Lord asked him, "What do you think Simon? From whom do the kings of this earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their own sons or from strangers?" Peter said, "Of course, from strangers." The Lord said, "Then the children are tax-free" (see Matthew 17:24-27). The Lord had to teach Peter a lesson that he might be conformed to His image. Peter could not control his mouth. The words that should be up to the Lord to say, Peter had already said for Him. If Peter is to be conformed to the image of God's Son, he has to learn a lesson.

The Lord said, "Go and fish by the sea, and take up the first fish that comes up. And when you have opened his mouth, you shall find a piece of money. Give it to them for Me and you. This coin was one shekel, and the tax was actually half a shekel. So when you catch that fish with the one shekel, it will be for your tax and Mine. You have to learn a lesson; you have to go fishing."

Peter knew how to net a fish but he did not know how to actually use a hook. Somebody who likes to speak does not have patience. A man of few words can fish with a hook, but when Peter fishes, he has to catch many fish at once. Now he has to catch only one fish. How long would you have to wait for the fish to be caught and in it would be one shekel? You can imagine what lesson Peter learned. The Sea of Galilee is such a great sea! Today we know that near Capernaum there are seven warm springs; so we know that many big fish actually swim toward Capernaum. But finally, he was able to hook a fish. Now people call that fish *Peter's fish*. And if you go to the Sea of Galilee today you can still find Peter's fish.

What is this lesson? How did the Lord teach Peter? We know in that area is the so called Peter's fish. When it is still a small fish, it actually has other little fish in its mouth. The mother fish will allow the small fish to be in its mouth, to come in and out. But when the small fish have grown up, there are no longer small fish inside the mother's mouth. But because it's used to the small fish, it will still keep opening and closing its mouth. So if it finds a coke bottle cap, immediately that fish will go and grab it. If it sees a shekel it will go and grab it. What does that mean? This fish has a big mouth, and because of that, it can contain many fish. And even though it does not have any fish anymore it still has a big mouth. So the Lord showed Peter: "You said you would pay tax. That means you

have a big mouth; you cannot control yourself.” So when he actually hooked a fish, he learned a lesson.

Peter cannot be a big mouth. Many people actually claim that Peter was the first pope of the church, and that is the difficulty of the church; the church spoke. The church should have no words. The church’s words should all be the words that Christ spoke. Whenever the church has a big mouth, the church will fall. Who is speaking in the church where you are? Who is king? Peter cannot be a big mouth; the church cannot be a big mouth. Thank the Lord, whenever you have no words for yourself, then the Lord’s words can flow. Thank the Lord, Peter learned a wonderful lesson.

On the day of Pentecost, when Peter rose up and spoke, his mouth became a golden mouth. When he opened his golden mouth, three thousand were saved; then five thousand were saved. What is this story? It is being conformed to the image of God’s son! This is what Matthew’s gospel shows us. Thank the Lord, that face contains four faces, including the lion’s face. That is the gospel of Matthew.

MARK REVEALS THE SERVANT

The gospel of Mark shows us that Jesus is the Servant of God. On one hand, He is diligent, so in the gospel of Mark, the word “immediately” is spoken forty-one times. When there is a request from heaven, immediately it happens on earth. Slow obedience is disobedience. Today, we are also the servants of God. We also serve God, but do we go immediately? In the first four chapters of Mark you will be amazed because they are like the working diary of our Lord. He was so busy He did not even have time to eat.

A Marred Face

When we speak of the Servant of God, we see the description in Isaiah 53. His visage was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of man. When people saw our Lord, they said, “You are not yet fifty years old and You have seen Abraham?” The Lord was only thirty-some years old, but many people thought He was over fifty.

Brothers and sisters, He is indeed a faithful Servant, He suffered so much as He served that His face was very much marred. When you read Matthew, you see that our Lord’s face is the face of a lion, but the face was full of spit. They covered or blindfolded His face, and they smote His face. This is a king. But in the gospel of Mark, from chapter 1-16, very clearly you see a marred face.

I have seen two people, and I was very shocked. I thought that they were seventy years old. But one of them was a little over forty and the other a little over fifty. These two brothers showed that they had lived an unusual life. From their faces you could see their entire life. Many of those who are mothers, before they were married were princesses. Every evening they had to sleep eight hours. If they did not sleep eight hours they would have wrinkles in the morning. You see many mothers, especially young mothers, and which of them does not like to be beautiful? But their faces are marred for their children.

Like an Ox

From chapter 1-16 of Mark, you see that our Lord is like an ox. The gospel of Mark has 16 chapters. The first ten chapters show us the ox in the field, and the last six chapters show us the ox on the altar. The servant of God is one who serves; his sphere of work is

of course in the field. But the highest service is on the altar. Our Lord gave the highest service to God when He put Himself on the altar and fulfilled God's purpose. Oftentimes today, when we serve God, we are so busy. Everyday we are in the field. Our story has only the first part, but not the second part. Yet the Lord wants us to be conformed to His image.

Serving in the Church and in the World

In the first ten chapters you see our Lord in the world. He healed many who were sick. This world has a need. It is diseased and polluted by sin. He came to seek the sinners, but before He became the Savior of the sinners, He first became their friend. In the world or in the field, He was the servant of God. But at the same time, He served in the house of His disciples. He had two spheres. On one hand, He served in the house, and on the other hand, He served in the world. He told his disciples, "But it is not so among you. Whoever is great among you shall be your servant." Since our Lord is the greatest, in the house He served the disciples. Why did He say "shall be your servant"? It is because the Lord wants us to be conformed to His image. How ever He served at home, He wants us to serve at home.

Then the Lord said, "Among you, whoever shall be the first shall be the slave of all." And that speaks of all the people in the world. On one hand, He served at home; on the other hand, He served in the world. It is just like us today; on one hand, we serve in the house of God. Yet when we preach the gospel, we save souls in the world. Thank the Lord, the Lord shows us that if we are to be great, we shall be the servant of all brothers. And if we are to be the chief of all, we shall be the slave to all. Thank the Lord, here we see how this ox is in the field.

Two Blind Men

But we thank the Lord because not only is our Lord like this, He wants us to be like Him. In the gospel of Mark there are two blind men. One blind man was found at the entrance of the River Jordan at the Sea of Galilee, and the other blind man was found where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee represents life; the Dead Sea represents death, and the Jordan River traverses both bodies of water. At the two entrances of these bodies of water you meet the blind men, and both blind men represent the disciples. The Lord was showing the disciples that they were like these blind men, but He wanted to open their eyes. Only when the Lord opened their eyes did they know how to serve God. So the issue with the first blind man was a matter of the bread because they forgot the bread. And the Lord said, "Don't you understand? With five loaves and two fish, five thousand were satisfied. And seven loaves of bread enabled four thousand to be satisfied. Do you still not understand? In the field, you were cast into the world. Finally, the wheat is mature."

What is the problem? You cannot give that wheat to people because it needs to be turned into bread. So in the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, the Lord said, "You give them to eat." In the miracle of the four thousand, the Lord asked how many loaves they had. Out of the thirty-five miracles that our Lord performed, these are the only two miracles which the disciples participated in. What is service? The Lord has a miracle. When He moves his finger, the miracle happens. Every work is a miracle. Some of the

miracles the disciples observed, but they participated in these two miracles. The Lord wanted to show them that they could not just give the grain of wheat to others. This life is a mature life; you can only feed them with the loaves of bread. So the first ten chapters in Mark are the bread. If we serve man today, this grain of wheat will have to be ground to powder, be mixed with oil, and then baked in fire. It is the work of the cross, and oil represents the work of the Holy Spirit. So now you see that their eyes were blind; they could not see. Yet they were allowed to work with God and participated in the miracle of Christ. God has a purpose in our life, and it is that bread.

When we reach the Dead Sea from the River Jordan, again we see a blind person. What did the Lord say? He said, "The cup I drink you shall also drink." The last six chapters of Mark show us the matter of a cup. What do you use to serve God? The Lord put Himself on the altar at the end, and He became the burnt offering and the atoning offering.

Brothers and sisters, what can we do? We are just like Paul. He said, "For I am already poured out as a drink offering and my time of departure has already come." What is this drink offering? When the high priest in the Old Testament offered sacrifice, he would take a cup of wine and pour it on the offering. That is the drink offering. Paul said, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Christ's image is the image of an ox, so Paul co-worked with the Lord. Before he was martyred, he said, "It is time for me to be poured out as a drink offering." Paul was like a grape vine. When the vine becomes ripe, those grapes go through the wine press. Paul had learned his life's lesson and he became the wine in the cup. Do not forget: for one who is truly conformed to the image of God's Son, at the very end is that cup. For one who serves the Lord, you do not ask how much wine he has drunk, but how much wine he has poured out. The life of service is the life poured out. When Paul poured out the drink offering, that is when we see the ox on the altar.

May the Lord open our eyes! How ever the Lord is we shall be too. How ever the Lord served on the earth is how we should serve on the earth as well, in the field and on the altar. Can we have the highest form of service before God? Have we consecrated ourselves to the Lord? Have we had His sculpting and His work in our lives? At the end we shall be poured out. This is the story of the gospel of Mark.

Union with Christ

How then can we be conformed to the image of our Lord? The Lord told us how. He said, "I am gentle and humble; you shall take up My yoke and learn of Me; and you will find rest in your soul; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Why did our Lord speak of a yoke? The yoke is always put on the ox. He said, "You must take on My yoke."

How are we to be conformed to His image? If we are an ox we must be a wild ox, so if we work today we must work according to our will. Then the farmer's field will be in a mess. We, the so-called workers, have wasted countless pieces of the Lord's field. We need to be conformed to His image. What does this mean? The Lord said, "Take up My yoke." So He took Himself as an example of an ox and we are a wild young ox. We need to be co-yoked with Him. When we are co-yoked with Him in tilling the ground, at the beginning we want to go our own way, and we are not obedient. But the older ox is obedient, and the more you see Him, the more you see His humility and gentleness. So

when we are co-yoked, we learn His ways. Previously we had no peace, and we had no rest. We always worked. Even the conferences are the ground of work. Brothers and sisters, we are wild like that young ox. But thank the Lord, the Lord loves us. He wants us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so He allows us to be co-yoked with Him.

What does it mean to be conformed to the image of His Son? What is the secret? The secret is to be in union with the Lord. Many mystics tell us that if you want to be in union with the Lord, since God is high above and you are very low, you must climb a ladder. And finally you can be one with God. But what did Paul say? Once we are saved by grace, He has already put us in Christ. In Philippians he said, "I consider all as dross to gain Christ." Then he said, "That I can be found in Him." Wasn't he already in Him? How could he say that he wanted to gain Christ and be found in Him? He actually went from union with Christ to union with Christ. His starting point was union with Christ, and his ending point was union with Christ. So those who have mystic experiences, they begin with man, and then they have union with Christ. That is how they are conformed to the image of His Son. The conforming to the image of the Son becomes their accomplishment. No, it is not so, brothers and sisters. Do you see that our starting point is union with Christ? And because we are one with Him we learn from Him, and we gain rest in our soul. Now we know how to serve God. One day, when we can serve God as our Lord serves His God, it is not because we have done anything; it is the result of union with Christ. So union with Christ is not only the goal; it is actually the starting point. His power is my power; thank the Lord. Do you see? For this reason, this young ox has learned the lesson of obedience and the lesson of rest.

There was a true story about a convalescent center in England that was especially for the terminally ill. Those who are terminally ill generally do not have a good temper. Because they do not have many days to live, they tend to let go and show their displeasure in bad temper. So every time they got a new patient they got a new headache. The patient would cry and yell, and they could not do anything. Soon they found a solution. There was a missionary who had just returned from India who also had a terminal illness, but he was different. On his bed he looked like an angel. So the health officials thought of something. Every time they got a new patient, they would put his bed right beside the bed of this missionary. In the beginning the new patient would be very loud and in bad temper, but when he looked at the one on the next bed, he was always smiling and calm. And slowly these other patients became calm. Brothers and sisters, this is the secret of union with Christ. This is the secret of being conformed to the image of His son. This is how Paul learned Christ.

LUKE REVEALS THE SON OF MAN

When we come to the gospel of Luke, we see that Jesus is the Son of Man. Not only is He the Son of Man but He is a perfect Man. You know that the only author in the New Testament that was a Gentile is Luke. The gospel of Luke was mostly written for the Greeks, and the Greeks always speak of perfectionism. Their purpose is to be a perfect man. When you ask them what a perfect man is, they say he has to be a philosopher, a poet, an athlete, a priest, and he is everything. They want to find such a perfect man.

Now Luke has a testimony. He is to tell the entire Greek world that the perfect man that you have been seeking cannot be found on this earth. But I found Him. I am a physician, and all the physicians observe life. They inspect and see the newborn, and they

see how a person becomes older. He understands what life is all about. Now Luke has a report, and that is the gospel of Luke. The gospel of Luke wants to show us that the Lord Jesus is a perfect Man. His life is a perfect life; He is one hundred percent Man. He began in a manger and it was His cradle. Nobody described the birth of our Lord all the way until He was raised to heaven as clearly as Luke. Because He was a perfect Man He had a perfect growth, no doubt about it. This is our Lord.

The gospel of Luke can be split into three stages. They actually represent the three stages of our Lord's growth. When you speak of growth, you speak of His being the Son of Man. The Son of God began in glory and in fullness. In the concept of the Son of God, there is no such thing as growth. But when our Lord came to earth, the way an infant grows, our Lord grew as well, but He did not sin. Here we have a perfect Man. His growth went through three stages. How do you know there were three stages? It is because twice the voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." So, very naturally it splits His life in three stages. The first thirty years were one section; they were the hidden years. Then He bore much fruit in the next three years. And at last was the way of the cross for half a year. This is our Lord's entire life. But remember, in the life of thirty-three and a half years, our Lord was before the Father as a tender shoot for thirty years. It was like a root in parched ground, and that life was a hidden life.

Thirty Years

How did He grow? The Bible tells us that if you see a babe wrapped in swaddling cloth that is a sign. They wanted to find the Lord Jesus. What is the Lord Jesus Christ? When you see an infant wrapped in swaddling cloth in the manger, that is a sign. Our Lord's life began in a manger.

Do you know that the IQ of an infant is zero? An ox is different; a shark is different. When an ox is born, its IQ is very high. It can stand up and breast feed. If an infant were to stand up the very first day of his birth the mother would faint. When a shark is first born, it is full of teeth. A mother would also faint if her child was born with a full set of teeth. The infant's IQ is zero. That is why man is the masterpiece of God. After many years, however, if you compare yourself to a monkey you cannot. Given two piles of peanuts, the monkey can tell you this pile is more than that pile. But if you ask him how many, he cannot tell you. When a child grows up, he can tell you this is ten and that is twenty. If you see a monkey standing beside a person, you see that the eyes, ears, and nose are about the same. When they are born, the person's IQ is zero. But many years later, science tells us, comparing the same thing between both ears, the brain of a person is as big as the universe, and the monkey's brain cannot compare.

When our Lord was born, He was an infant. He was wrapped with cloth in the manger; that is a sign. Thank the Lord; the Bible says He grew in wisdom and stature in favor of God and man. When He was twelve, He listened and spoke in the temple. We want to understand the Bible. He listened and He spoke. For the Son of God, it should not be that complicated. He just had to put his Bible on His head and scan it in. Actually, He did not even have to do that; He is the Son of God.

Brothers and sisters what is humility? Jesus was full of the glory of the Son of God. But at the age of twelve, you could not see that side of glory; you see a life that is growing. On the one hand He listened, on one hand He asked.

What did he do in the next eighteen years? The Bible says He was a carpenter, and that His father was a carpenter as well. As the Son of God He had created the entire forest; every tree was created by Him. But as the Son of Man, when He took a saw, He had to imitate how Joseph used the saw. That is humility. He became a man, and He humbled Himself and was obedient. Inside, He was God; He did not have to do any of these things. But do not forget that how ever He was the Son of God is how He was the Son of Man. Through being the Son of Man He was the Son of God. To live before God He is the Son of God. He obeyed the Father's voice. How did He listen? How ever He listened to Joseph is how He listened to God. So what did He say? He said, "Verily I say unto you, by Myself I cannot do anything but what I see the Father do. Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. How do you learn this lesson? He imitated Joseph. How ever Joseph used the saw, He used the saw. Thank the Lord, He was one hundred per cent the Son of Man. He was indeed obedient.

Three Years

When He was manifested after thirty years, He indeed was very fruitful. And from the heavens came the sound, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." At this step, He came in the form of man, and He humbled Himself. What does it mean that He humbled Himself? He was the Son of God; He should be seen by men. But He humbled Himself.

Once, when we were in Taiwan, we met a very high official in the government, but he was also a brother. One day they were looking for him because there was a very important issue to resolve. They finally found him in the meeting place. When they saw him, they were shocked because our brother was sweeping the floor. He was a high ranking official, but amongst brothers and sisters we did not see that. What is that? That is humility.

Our Lord humbled Himself and was completely obedient, and on the Mount of Transfiguration He showed forth His glory. That glory was the glory of the Son of Man. The life within grew up. As to life He had matured. As to work He had completed the will of God. He could now return to the Father; He could ascend. So when He spoke with Elijah and Moses of His exit, could He exit? He did not. Why? What does the Bible say? He was obedient unto death. If He ascended into heaven He could be obedient and He needed not enter into death. He had reached the apex. But for you and me, and for God's purpose, He went from the Mount of Transfiguration and descended and descended and descended. He crossed the valley of the Jordan. Jordan means "to descend." He descended all the way to Golgotha. When He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It was when the grapes were ripe. Our Lord was like that grape that was ripe. But He chose a way, and that way was that one day he would be on the cross accomplishing God's will. The cross was that winepress. The cross not only gave us salvation, but through the cross that life was imparted to us. And that explains the way the Lord walked during his last half year.

The Last Half Year

Then the Bible tells us that as our Lord walked the last stretch, He said the time had come that He should be received up, and He steadfastly set His face to Jerusalem. Here we see man's face. He could have ascended to heaven. He had already achieved perfect

obedience and had completed God's will on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet He chose the cross. And when He chose the cross, He walked ahead. The disciples said, "We will go to Jerusalem."

Brothers and sisters, His face was facing the winepress. Not only was He to accomplish the work of salvation, but He would also be able to impart the life of the grape to all. This glory is of the Son of Man. So the way of the last half year is from Luke chapters 9-19. Thank the Lord, our Lord went through the winepress for us, and at the very end He ascended to heaven.

God became Man, so that man can be man of men. God's purpose was for us to be the man which was His original will in creating us. When we accepted Jesus as our personal Savior, His cross was a tree. That tree is our tree of life. For this reason, we can be a man. Don't forget that our Lord came down to be Man. The more you are a Christian, the more you are like a man. Many people who become more like a Christian become less like a man. Brother Watchman Nee once said that a man such as this could not be found on earth, and you could not find him in heaven. That is amazing! Thank the Lord, if today we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, you are a better husband; you are a better wife; you are a better child. Why did the Lord say, "We shall go to Jerusalem"? He did not just say, "I go by Myself." The way He went we should go also. How are you to be a man of men? Where do you set your face? Our Lord steadfastly set His face to the cross. Nowhere else will you find a clearer picture of the way to the cross than in Luke 9-19. The result of this way is that we can become more like man. Thank the Lord, this is the gospel of Luke.

So what is the way Luke shows us? The way is very easy. We see that the Lord began in the manger and finally arrived at the throne. That is the locus of his growth. We, men, arrive in the world horizontally and we leave the world horizontally. It is very difficult for a Chinese to remember the word hospital. So they thought of a trick, calling hospital *wo-si-bi-dao* which means "when I die I must arrive." It is a play on the sound of the word. They say hospital means you arrive horizontally and you leave horizontally. But do not forget that the Son of Man, a perfect Man, entered horizontally but left vertically. His starting point was the manger, but His ending point was the throne. And in the middle He went through the cross. This is the way of growth for our Lord.

If Christ abides in us, how He lives we live, and how He grows we grow. If the manger represents life, and if life begins there, then the throne obviously represents character, the character of the King. So here we see how we are conformed to the image of His Son. First you have to give the Lord time. Our Lord gave the heavenly Father thirty years. Of the thirty-three and a half years He gave thirty years. As a result the character of Christ was formed in him. Here we see the life of Christ that goes through one's nature or temperament until character is formed. However the Lord is, we should also be. Beginning with life, beginning from zero, through the work of the cross, the character of Christ is formed. Thank the Lord, that is the gospel of Luke.

JOHN REVEALS THE SON OF GOD

The Life of an Eagle

Finally, we arrive at the gospel of John. We cannot go into much detail because we do not have much time. So like a dragonfly hopping on the water, we are just pointing out a

few different things. Young brothers and sisters, you are to use your whole life to read the four gospels, because it takes a lifetime to be conformed to the image of God's Son. In the gospel of John, the Son of God is like the form of an eagle. This life is a transcendent life because in the gospel of John when he was describing our Lord, he said, "He came down from heaven and is still in heaven." Remember, this is the life of an eagle. When an eagle comes down from heaven, he is very fast. But suddenly, he is in heaven again. The life of an eagle is a transcendent life. Thank the Lord, the entire gospel of John shows us that Jesus is the Son of God. The life that He gives us is a risen life. It is not just a resurrected life; it is a risen life. This is what the gospel of John wants to show us.

In the Bosom of the Father

How do you use two keys to open up this book? "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the father, He declares Him." Here we have the word *bosom*. In the entire gospel of John this word is only mentioned twice. These are the two keys. The first key is that God is the only begotten Son; not only the begotten Son, but the only begotten Son in the bosom. Because He is in the Father's bosom He abides in the Father and the Father abides in Him. And then He has a manifestation: He declares the Father. In the Son man sees the glory of the Father. This is one key.

But do not forget that this gospel is both objective and subjective. There is another verse that says, "A disciple whom Jesus loved, and he was leaning on Jesus' bosom." This is another key. John represents you and me in the bosom of our Lord Jesus. Do you see these two pictures? The Son is in the Father's bosom. When we are conformed to the image of His Son, we are in the bosom of the Lord because He is in the bosom of His Father. The Son abides in the Father and the Father abides in the Son. Because we are in the Lord's bosom, the Lord says, "You abide in Me and I abide in you." What is the result? Without knowing it we manifest the Lord. This is the entire gospel of John.

Abide in the Lord

So there is a way to be conformed to the image of God's Son. What is this way? Abide in the Lord; be in His bosom. On one side it is objective. He, God's Son, said, "I, I, I, I," one hundred and twenty times. He also mentioned Father, Father, Father, Father, one hundred and twenty times; the Father and I are one. Thank the Lord. We see that he is indeed the Son of God; He is an eagle. But do not forget, how He is, we should be too. That is why we can live Christ. Where is that way? It is not only the way of the cross, but it is also the way of fellowship with the Lord. When we abide in the Lord, His word is in us, and His love abides in us. We are then conformed to the image of God's Son.

Another thing about the eagle is that of all God's creation He has given the eagle a special eye. If we used our human eyes to look at the sun we would be blinded. If all the animals on earth looked at the sun, they would be blinded. But the eyes of an eagle can look directly at the sun without being blinded. Our Lord is in the Father's bosom, and when He looks at the glory of the Father He is not blinded. He can look at the beauty of the glory of His Father. That is the secret. How our Lord looks at the beauty of God the Father, we who are just like eaglets and in the Lord's bosom, can look at His glory and beauty. "With open faces we are beholding His glory as if in a mirror, and we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

In I John we read, “When He is manifested, we shall be like Him, and then we will see Him as He is.” You can be like Him because you see Him. You can only see Him with eagle’s eyes. When you see Him, naturally you are conformed to His image, glory upon glory unto His image.

This is why we see so many couples, who have been married for many years, and the husband looks like the wife and the wife looks like the husband. We say these two faces are the faces of husband and wife. Why? For twenty or thirty years he looked at her and she looked at him. They have learned each other’s small movements.

How are we conformed to the image of His Son? The entire gospel of John shows us we need to be in His bosom, just like the Lord was in the Father’s bosom. Young brothers and sisters, if you watch too much television, your two eyes will become rectangular. What you watch, you will become. May the Lord be gracious to us, that we see His image today as seeing the image of the eagle! The glory of God is manifest on the face of Jesus Christ. This way we can be conformed to His image.

“THOU HIDDEN LOVE OF GOD”

I would like to share a true story to end the message. We sang a hymn when we began this evening, “Thou Hidden Love of God.” If I am not mistaken this hymn is the hymn that John Wesley loved the most and is perhaps one of the hymns that Watchman Nee loved the most. Whether it is in English or Chinese, if you look at it in a literary way it is really a masterpiece. The author of this hymn is Tersteegen. He was a German, and he grew up near the River Rhine. He loved the Lord. He was one of the Pietists, and when you think of him, you think of Zinzendorf. And when you think of Zinzendorf, you think of Tersteegen.

Why did this hymn “Thou Hidden Love of God” touch so many lives? How is God’s love hidden? In the life of Tersteegen there was a period over five years when it was as if he could not see the face of God. It was as if God’s love was hidden. I am not sure if he wrote the hymn at that time, but I believe he wrote it afterwards. But no matter, it was a true experience. He loved the Lord. He was very simple, so when he looked for a profession, he wanted a profession that would enable him to draw close to the Lord. Finally, he rented a house, and he bought a weaving machine. He felt that weaving would enable him to spend time with the Lord. He could have the Bible open and at the same time he would be weaving from five in the morning until nine in the evening. He would only eat one meal. He came from a well-to-do family, but his family could not get used to his lifestyle. So they ignored him. Even when he was sick, his family ignored him. That period lasted five years. He told us afterwards that our Lord hid himself for thirty years, and he felt the lessons he learned were like the same lessons our Lord learned. After five years, thank the Lord, he was delivered from it. He went home and he re-consecrated himself. When he consecrated himself, he wrote a letter; and it was a covenant to the Lord. He wrote it with his blood. I am only going to read a certain portion,

*Our Lord,
From this evening to all eternity,
Thy will, not mine, be done.
Command and rule and reign in me,
I yield myself up without reserve.*

*And I promise with Thy help and power,
Rather to give up the last drop of this my blood,
Than knowingly and willingly in my heart or in my life,
Be untrue or disobedient to thee.
Thy unworthy possession,
Tersteegen*

So he used this blood covenant of love to express his heart. But when he was thirty, there was a great revival in that area. Many people needed help, so he had no more time to weave. It was just like the Lord after He was hidden thirty years. And then the burden of work became heavier. At that time the government did not allow any meetings, so he acquired a large house. He opened up all the windows. When people began to sing in the house, many people were drawn to it, and they received his help. Throughout his life thousands of people came to him. Many people came from afar. They would only have fifteen minutes of time with him, but they were helped much.

THE REFINER'S FIRE

But his body was not healthy; his health was always poor. He said that every second of his life was lived by the Lord Jesus, especially in his last thirty years. He called himself a candidate for death because at anytime the Lord could call him home. At the end he developed dropsy, and it was very painful. Once he had a dream, and he wished that when he died, he would die like a hero. But now, he said, if he could die like a child he would be satisfied. Many people went to see him. What did he say? He said, "Today Malachi has preached to me." What did he mean? He actually used the verse from Malachi 3:2-3a: "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver."

Right before Tersteegen went to be with the Lord, he said, "Malachi has preached to me today. He will sit; it is not all done at once. He still finds something to refine in me." And then he went to be with the Lord. This is the author of that hymn. That is why this hymn became the most beloved of John Wesley and Watchman Nee.

There was a missionary to India named Amy Carmichael. She saw somebody who was refining silver on the roadside, and of course this silver began to melt. Amy Carmichael asked this person, "When is your job done?" The refiner said, "When I can actually see in the liquid of this silver the reflection of my face, then my job is done."

Brothers and sisters, the Lord is seated at the right hand of our Father today. What is he doing? He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. He will sit at the refiner's fire to purify gold and silver. When is His job done? It will be done whenever He sees in us His own face. For the glory of God is manifest in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." How ever He lived on earth, He also lives in me. Thank the Lord. May the Lord speak to us! Through His own words He touches the very depths of our hearts.

Young brothers and sisters, when you are at the dawn of your life, consecrate your life to the Lord. Are you willing to be like our Lord? Long to live before the Lord like a tender shoot. Thank the Lord. May the Lord work in our lives through the work of the

cross and the Holy Spirit! May we lean on the Lord's bosom, abide in Christ, and look steadfastly upon His glory and beauty. When we look upon His face, we will be transformed to His image from glory to glory. Then, when people see us, they will see the humility of Christ, the patience of Christ, and the gentleness of Christ. When the church gathers together, man can see the personality of Christ. The personality of Christ is His image, the image of the Son of God. Thank the Lord, at the end, may we be like what St. Augustine said, "I tremble and I fear, but I also burn. I tremble and I fear because I am not like Him; my heart burns because I am like Him."

Lord, we want to commit these words into Your hands. If You are willing, please use these to comfort the elderly brothers and encourage the younger brothers. May we not return the same way we came! May this weekend be a special weekend in our lives! Perhaps many were actually born this weekend. May we not only hear the glorious truth, but be able to walk in the glorious light! Hear our prayer, in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ponder over these questions.....

- (1) If to learn Christ is to "learn from Me" (Mat. 11:29), then how so we learn the lesson of humility in the likeness of Christ?
- (2) If the secret of learning Christ is to "abide in Me" (John 15:4), then how are we going to bear much fruit as Christ in His days on earth?