

**WCCC 2021**

**Brother Ted Peng**

## **The Abundance of the Life of Christ (2)**

This afternoon I would like to share with you on experiencing the abundance of the life of Christ. Last session we shared on the preciousness of the life of Christ in us. This time we would like to go into the experiencing of the abundance of this life.

### **Scripture Reading**

Luke 10: 27 *'But He answering said, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thine understanding; and thy neighbor as thyself.'*

We want to emphasize the first part where it says 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your understanding'.

John 10: 10 *'The thief comes not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.'*

Here the Lord talked about the sheep. 'I come so that they may have life and have it more abundantly'.

John 13: 34 *'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.'*

It was the night before the Lord was crucified. The Lord loved them and this night He gave this very important commandment to His disciples.

Numbers 14: 21 *'But surely as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah.'*

This is the Lord Jehovah speaking. And the LORD said this when His people, Israel, failed miserably when the 12 spies reported on the land of Canaan. This failure involved the whole generation of Israelites, especially the men. So the

LORD said that they would not be able to enter into the land of Canaan until thirty-eight years later. It would not be their generation but the next generation. And then the Lord said, as surely as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

### **Let us pray**

Lord, we have read Your words. Lord, when we looked at the older generation, we know Your people failed You, but Lord, You never fail. And Lord, You brought up the new generation and finally brought them to serve You and to represent You. Lord, we really thank You and we pray that this afternoon, You will be with us. In the name of our Lord, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

### **The Church in Philadelphia**

Brothers and sisters, I am sorry that last time I did not finish the church in Philadelphia. Today, I will take about five minutes to share what I wanted to share with you.

Yesterday we said from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the Lord actually showed us four very beautiful pictures. These pictures are about when God's children are gathered together and are filled with the life of Christ. When that happens, then you see some beautiful pictures. We mentioned Psalm 133 – how sweet and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. We also mentioned the picture in Isaiah 60: 15 – the Redeemer of Zion shall come. And He will make Jerusalem an eternal excellence and a joy from generation to generation.

Yesterday we did not have time to go through the church at Philadelphia. The apostle Paul described in very simple sentence in Ephesians 1: 23 'The body of Christ, the fullness of One who fills all and in all'. He also used a similar verse in Colossians 3: 11 'Christ is everything and in all'. That is the secret of having Psalm 133 and Isaiah 60: 15.

Psalm 133 is one thousand years B.C. The picture in Isaiah 60 was around 700 years before the Lord came. And the pictures that Paul gave us in Ephesians and Colossians are like 60 years after our Lord came. This was after Paul followed the Lord for about thirty years. And 30 years after that, there was a

little city in Asia minor called Philadelphia. There the Lord saw something beautiful.

When the Lord saw Philadelphia, He was very happy. In Revelation 3, there are only six verses that describe Philadelphia – verses 7 – 12. At the end of the description, the Lord said, he who overcomes, I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and my new name. In a sense, our Lord feels that these brothers can represent God, represent the city of God and represent the Lord Himself. This is talking about the future.

In Revelation 3: 11 the Lord said that the brothers in Philadelphia already had a crown. This is talking about the past. A crown means the Lord really approved all that they got. In Revelation 3: 9, our Lord said to the church and to brothers and sisters in Philadelphia, I have already loved you. The last time the Bible mentions that Christ loves the church is in Ephesians 5. There Paul said Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her. And because the church was loved, it can be a glorious church without blemish. So, when the Lord said I have loved you, He was really saying I have seen that you are on the right path to being a glorious church. Brothers and sisters, Philadelphia really warmed the heart of our Lord, Jesus. At the very beginning of book of Revelation, John said, I am doing this for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The beautiful thing is that somehow our Lord saw in the church of Philadelphia His own testimony. This is one point.

Another point was the spiritual condition of the church in Philadelphia; they loved the Lord. The Lord said they have kept my word and have not denied my name. Brothers and sisters, for Philadelphia, this was not just a superficial thing. It was something deep. They really loved the word of the Lord and the name of the Lord. They would not do anything that would compromise the name of the Lord.

The other thing was their attitude towards the Lord. This is in Revelation 3:10. It is something that the Lord called “my endurance”, or “my patience”. Somehow the brothers and sisters in Philadelphia identified with that. And they actually walked along with Him. The Lord Jesus’ patience is the way of the cross. So, these brothers and sisters in Philadelphia walked in the way of the cross with the Lord. You can see how close the hearts of these brothers and sisters in Philadelphia were with the Lord Jesus.

The Lord said of the people, who said they were Jews and were not, to be of the synagogue of Satan. The key thing was that they were liars. The brothers and sisters in Philadelphia wanted to have nothing to do with them. Before the Lord, they were pure and they were honest. They were simple in their hearts and they were sincere. They did not want to have anything to do with any lies. And the Lord Jesus said, I want these people from Satan to come and prostrate before you. So, you see, the brothers and sisters here in the church of Philadelphia had a testimony.

And when you think about Philadelphia you are reminded of this eternal excellency and joy from generation to generation. This statement 'I would have them come and prostrate before you' is found only in Isaiah 60: 14 and Revelation 3: 9. Afterwards, the Lord Jehovah went on to say in the book of Isaiah that He will make them an eternal excellency, a joy from generation to generation. Brothers and sisters, you see in the eyes of our Lord, what were described in Psalm 133 and Isaiah 60:15 did happen in Philadelphia.

A lot of times when we look at Philadelphia, we not only tell others but we also think in ourselves that it is not possible. In the Lord's mind, as long as He – the one who fills all and in all fills us, then for sure that will happen. Brothers and sisters, let us actually have a desire for the glory of the Lord to shine regardless of where we are, or how many people there are in the meeting. We want the glory of the Lord to shine. Philadelphia was the place where the Bible said "had a little power". They did not have too many people. But the Lord saw the spiritual reality there.

### **Our spiritual experience: In Him, through Him, and unto Him**

We will now move on to today's subject. Colossians 1: 16 says, '*because by Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by Him and for Him*'. Put it another way, it is 'in Him, through Him and unto Him'. This verse was talking about the creation of the universe. But it also applies to any spiritual experience we have. It starts with Him. He is the initiator and provider, so it is in Him – in Christ first. All abundance comes from Christ Jesus. It is through Him because He is the resource – the force and enabler in the process. He is our strength in all circumstances. It is unto Him because He is the purpose and the owner at the end. This is how the universe was created, and this is true in any of our spiritual experiences.

It is the Lord Jesus who started. It is He who is our resource when we do not know where to go. If we do not know what to do, we go to Him and He will tell us. And when we go through a very difficult period, we go to Him and He is our strength and He is our direction. And finally, when we get to the end, we find it is wonderful that He is there. And we find that He is much more glorious and beautiful than we knew before.

Dear brothers and sisters, when we think about last year during the pandemic, it was very difficult for all of us. And not just the pandemic, that was the easy part. But there was a whole bunch of lies and conspiracy theories floating around. However, we have our Lord and we can go to Him and ask Him, 'Lord what does this whole thing mean? What should I or we do?' And all through this year, the Lord helped us to reject all the lies. And the Lord has told us again and again that we are a people with a purpose. And when we come to WCCC, we are actually inspired, because the Lord is absolutely right.

We do not know when this pandemic will be over or whether other things will happen. But we have the assurance the Lord is with us. We know we are in Him. He is our resource and He is our rock. Even if there is another year of difficulty, yet He is with us. And we are going through that through Him. And finally, when we get to the end of next year, we will discover more wonders of our Lord Jesus.

### **Spiritual reality is in the eyes of the Lord**

Brothers and sisters, spiritual reality is really from the eyes of the Lord. We need to learn to see things from His point of view. And then we will not be blown left and right by all these lies and conspiracies. We know our spiritual experience is always in the eyes of the Lord. Whether I or we have the spiritual reality is according to the Lord. On one hand it is very humbling and on the other hand it is comforting. On one hand it makes us really humble. On the other hand, it is very comforting. We may make mistakes here and there, but we know it is according to how He sees us. So, we can quickly come back to Him. Even if we make some mistakes, we can immediately come back to Him. And our Lord Jesus is most gracious and most loving. And He will forgive us for sure. And He will make our next step strong.

How to experience spiritual reality?

Lord Jesus's word: Love the Lord your God

The Lord Jesus has some words for us with regards to experiencing spiritual reality. The first thing Jesus said is that you have to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. Dear brothers and sisters, when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He loved His Father all the time. There was not a single day that He did not draw close to His Father. Everything He did was according to His father. And in His last prayer in John 17, He said, 'Father, what you have sent me to do, I have done'.

Dear brothers and sisters, our Lord loves the Father with whole heart. If we walk with our Lord but we do not love the Father, then it would be like what Amos said, '*Shall two walk together except they be agreed?*' (Amos 3:3). We have to have the same mind with the Lord if we want the life of Christ to be abundant in us. He loves the Father so much, and we have to love the Father that much.

### **You cannot serve God and Mammon**

Our Lord also tells us we cannot serve God and mammon. I John said, you cannot love the Father and love the world. You just cannot do that. If we love the world for one day, we will not be walking with our Lord for that one day. And for that day, Christ's life in us will just pause and not grow. And if I love the world for a whole year, then the growth of the life of Christ in me will stop for that whole year. And without knowing it, five years or ten years passed and we have lost all those years. So, this matter of love not the world is very important. Now John explained that the world does not necessarily mean bank or high-tech companies. Rather, the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of this life. The world is totally in us – lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride of this life. If you put these three things together, it simply means 'self'. And this is what John in his old age tried to warn us.

### **Seek the Father's will**

Then what should we do? The Lord tells us we have to seek the Father's will. When our Lord taught the disciples to pray, He said, Our Father, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And finally, when He was to be crucified, He told His Father, not my will but Thy will be done. Brothers and sisters, so should we actively seek the will of the Lord.

In Acts 13: 22, the Lord said, I have found David, a man after my heart. David sought after God's heart. He was never idle. He would ask, "Lord what do you want me to do?", all the time. "What is your will for your people? "

The Bible has another example, and that is Ezra. Ezra 7: 10 said, Ezra set his heart to know the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach the law to the people in Israel. When we have a seeking heart, and set our heart to know and to do the word of God and the will of God, then what happens is that our heart becomes a fertile ground. Then, when the word of God comes in, it will bear fruit fifty times. If we just say, well I will wait till one day the word and the will of God hit me, it may work but our heart will never become a fertile ground. We need to set our mind to seek the Lord. It is a good thing to seek the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, we just passed last year and during that time we sometimes felt so confused. We do not know how next year will be. Every month and every year and every circumstance is precious in the eyes of the Lord. We should take every month and every year to be precious. We should not waste our time on unimportant things. Let us very actively and positively seek the Lord. That is loving God.

### **Follow Me**

Another thing that the Lord said is 'follow me'. In John 10, the Lord said you should follow me like a sheep and I will make your life more abundant. In Matthew 16, the Lord actually said, you have to take up your cross and follow me. In John 12: 26, the Lord said you have to follow me and serve me as a servant. The Lord wants us to follow Him as a sheep. He wants us to take up our cross and follow Him and to follow Him as a servant. In other words, the Lord wants us to follow Him in every aspect. The cross is difficult. But we need to take up our cross and follow Him. Being a servant is not easy, but the Lord said, if you want to follow me, be a servant and follow me.

### **The sheep, the cross, the servant**

Brothers and sisters, we have to remember that we have to follow our Lord in every aspect. We have to be a sheep. We have to take up the cross and follow Him. And we have to be a servant to Him. Brothers and sisters, what will happen if we do that? You will find that following the Lord is really fulfilling. You will find that following the Lord is not a difficult thing. But rather it is very rewarding. And you will gradually find that wherever the Lord goes, you want to follow. Even if He goes to a place where if you follow, you will suffer, yet you still want to follow. And then you will find His choice becomes your choice; His feelings become your feelings; and His purpose becomes your purpose. If we really follow the Lord as a sheep and as a servant, and carry our cross to follow Him, we will find that by His mercy, we will follow with gladness in heart and joy in spirit. And we will happily follow Him wherever He goes.

### **They follow the Lamb wherever He goes**

Revelation 14: 4 said, they follow the lamb wherever He goes. We are very familiar with the hundred and forty-four thousand. Many years ago, I thought by God's grace, at the end I may be in the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Then at that time I will follow the Lord wherever He goes. That was what I thought: only when I became one of the hundred and forty-four thousand, then I will follow Him wherever He goes. But here the Lord Jesus shows me that if I follow Him like a sheep, carry the cross, and be a servant, then I find that wherever He goes, I will happily and joyfully follow Him.

### **Example: Caleb, Joshua and a new generation**

Brothers and sisters, I want to give you an example. The example was a group of people who followed the Lord in a very difficult situation. And the choice given to them was between the purpose of God and the world. By the grace of the Lord, they chose the purpose of God. And by the grace of God, they endured thirty-eight years. Not only the older brothers and sisters chose the purpose of God, but also the younger ones, and especially the younger ones. And the rest of the time, I would like to share their story.

### **God's wonderful purpose and expectation for Israel**

The second year after Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt, suddenly something happened. The Lord rejected the first generation from going into Canaan. When the Lord first brought them out of Egypt, the Lord had a wonderful expectation for them. The basic purpose God brought them out of Egypt was that they would have the freedom to serve their own God. Now these people had been in Egypt for four hundred years. At that time, they did not have the Bible. There were six hundred thousand men and then there were the women and the children. When they came into the wilderness, the Lord Jehovah told them one thing: Israel is my son, my firstborn. The Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh, let my people go so they can serve me. Then He said, Israel is my son, is my firstborn.

Brothers and sisters, being a son is a love relationship. Being a firstborn is even bigger. It means that one of these days, Israel will represent God. The LORD expected about 2 million people who had never read the Bible to be His firstborn.



Another expectation of the Lord for Israel is in Exodus 19: 6. The LORD said, you are going to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. At that time, these people did not know anything about priesthood and they did not know anything about serving God. But God said, you are going to be a kingdom of priests – every single one of you. The other thing is – you are going to be a holy nation. A holy nation means they will be separated from any sin and any defiling thing. They are going to be separated from all these dirty things and they are going to be holy. We can see how high the expectation of God was on these people. God essentially said: “one of these days, you are going to represent me. You are the firstborn and you are going to serve me as priests. The entire kingdom will become a kingdom of priests. And then all of you will be holy, separated from the nations.”

### **The generation from Egypt failed because of unbelief: their hearts turned back to Egypt**

But there were so many men who could not believe this in their heart. They actually did not think it was any good. Their heart was back in Egypt. They thought Egypt was good. Egypt had water and pasture. And during their journey, when they met any difficulty, they would complain and said, Lord we wanted to go back. They told Aaron to build a golden calf and said this was the golden calf who led them. And after they spied Canaan, they complained to the Lord that their kids were going to die in the desert. And they asked for someone else to bring them back to Egypt. And another case was the rebellion of Korah. And they said something which was very funny. This is in the Book of Numbers chapter 16. It had to do with a land flowing with milk and honey. In Numbers 16: 13 they told Moses, you brought us out of the land of milk and honey and you want to kill us in the desert. And then you cannot bring us into another land of milk and honey.

Brothers and sisters, when we think about the land filled with milk and honey, is it really the land physically filled with milk and honey that was in God’s mind? In God’s mind the land filled with milk and honey is really the land where the life of the Son of God flows. It is spiritual. And these people did not see that. They thought the land filled with milk and honey was back in Egypt. Brothers and sisters, God felt that these people were not ready to go in and conquer Canaan. So He said, your generation cannot go in. But the next generation will go in thirty-eight years later. Why would it take thirty-eight years? It was because the next generation at that time was only twenty years and younger. The LORD saw it so clearly that in thirty-eight years, this next generation would grow up. Now they were twenty, after thirty-eight years they would be near sixty. For those who were just born, they would be nearly forty. And for those that were not yet born, they would be twenty and up. And God would make this next generation ready to go into Canaan. This was the background of the story.

### **But Caleb and Joshua wholly followed the LORD**

Of course, the Bible shows us people like Caleb and Joshua. In the entire generation of men, only Caleb and Joshua warmed the heart of God. What was so special about Caleb? The Bible said Caleb had another spirit, wholly following the will of God. Brothers and sisters, there were two things here. One was that Caleb had another spirit, and the other was that he was wholly following the Lord. Having another spirit does not come by chance. It was because this man, Caleb, had loved God for years. At that time Caleb was about forty years old. He was a young leader of the tribe of Judah. For the past forty years although they did not have the Bible yet they knew the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

### **Caleb's heart never left Hebron**

God's relationship with Abraham touched Caleb's heart. There was a place in Canaan called Hebron. And that was where Abraham first settled after he separated from Lot. And this was also the place where Abraham met Melchisedec. And it was also there that God appeared to Abraham at night and told him to go out of the tent and see and count the stars in heaven, and his people would be that numerous. And it was there that he produced a son that Jehovah said that was not it. And fifteen years later, the Lord Jehovah appeared to Abraham again in that place. And the Lord said, you and Sarai were going to bear a son and his name would be Isaac. And my covenant will be with him. And finally, Abraham and Sarai died and they were all buried in Hebron. And Isaac was also buried in Hebron. Jacob died in Egypt. But He told his son Joseph that he had to bring him back and bury him in Hebron.

When Caleb approached this Hebron high land from afar, he felt that this was the place where the grace and relationship of God to his forefathers were established. The other ten spies did not feel much. And when they all came back, Caleb told Moses that God had given us this land and we all ought to go in. Brothers and sisters, God said Caleb had another spirit, wholly following the Lord!

### **Joshua's heart never left the tabernacle**

Joshua was the same. The Bible recorded that when Joshua was young, he went with Moses to the tabernacle and Moses saw God face to face. And when Moses left, Joshua stayed there. God did not tell Moses to tell Joshua to stay

there. Joshua himself stayed there. And years later, God wanted Moses to choose Joshua to succeed Him. The Lord said, choose Joshua because the Spirit is with Him. This young man's heart never left the tabernacle. And as a result, the Spirit of the Lord was with him.

### **The LORD brought up a new generation to follow Him**

It was very difficult for this younger generation. First of all, it was in the desert. The Bible said it was a great and terrible wilderness. And then it was going to be thirty-eight years down the line. There were difficulties outside. Inside was also difficult. I think for these young men. They were twenty years and younger, they must have felt that they had failed the LORD. Even though the older generation did all these, yet they would feel that we all have disappointed the LORD. And then a lot of the young men must have this growing pain. They were about twenty years old, and they had another thirty plus years ahead of them in the desert. They had so much to think about. Some of them were just born. When they grew up, they would have this growing pain just like many of you.

But thank the LORD, He did something wonderful. He brought this generation up. And thank the LORD that this generation had an obedient heart. They knew the issue was that God wanted them to go into Canaan and yet the whole older generation wanted to go back to Egypt. Thank the LORD that in their heart, they knew that God's purpose is in Canaan.

And they also had heard from the older generation that God once said: the whole world should be filled with His glory. God essentially said, Canaan is my destination; the whole earth shall be filled with my glory.

And also, thank the LORD, as they grew up there were Caleb and Joshua with them. Caleb loved the Lord so much. Joshua was such a wonderful servant. By the way, Joshua was willing to learn lessons. People could correct him. Moses could correct him. And the young men that grew up saw that. They saw this brother Caleb and this brother Joshua. And they were an inspiration and encouragement to them.

## **Characters of the life of Christ seen in the new generation**

Last time we talked about that the life of Christ in us has some characteristics. One is the resurrection life. Think about these young men. At the beginning of the period of thirty-eight years, the future seemed so dark. They thought they were just a failure before God. They were just like dead. Thank the Lord that in these forty years they were growing in the Lord. It was like the resurrection life.

Then they had this overcoming life. What were they overcoming? The older generation at that time continued to have a heart in Egypt. In Acts 7 Stephen said that their hearts turned back to Egypt. Thank the Lord that this new generation could overcome that.

And you also see the fruit bearing life. When you read about Caleb and Joshua in Numbers and in Joshua, you see that they really did care for the younger generation. Otherwise, this group of young men would not be able to grow up.

We also talked about the life that rejoices in the purpose of God. And you can see that life in this group of young men. That was why they set their mind on God for thirty-eight years and got themselves ready to go into Canaan instead of going back into Egypt.

And then also there was the servant life. They all have seen Joshua. He was indeed a perfect servant.

It seemed to me that the Spirit in the life of Christ was really in Caleb, Joshua and all young people. Thirty-eight years later, they were ready. Brothers and sisters, their time was more difficult than the time of the older generation because they could not see or did not see any future except for the word of God. But they were ready at the end.

These days we are reminded and encouraged again and again to be ready for the Lord's return. How are we to be ready? Now the Lord made them ready in these thirty-eight years. Caleb represented another spirit, wholly following the Lord. Joshua represented a servant heart and also wholly following the Lord was part of it. And this group of young men and women chose to believe in the purpose of God instead of believing in the pleasure of Egypt. And they are our example too.

## **Who are the new generation today?**

Brothers and sisters, who are the new generation today? I think the new generation and the old generation have nothing to do with age. It has to do with where our heart is at. Is our heart towards Canaan or is our heart towards Egypt? And more seriously, is our heart towards God's purpose or is our heart towards the world? And the heart of that generation for thirty-eight difficult years had always been on God's purpose. And six hundred thousand of the new generation got themselves ready in the end. Apart from them, there were Joshua and Caleb who entered Canaan. They were already eighty-five years old. So I think the old generation or new generation had nothing to do with age. It has to do with where our heart is at.

## **Testimonies of the new generation**

The new generation in that story left some beautiful testimonies in the Bible. In Numbers 23, there was this very crooked prophet by the name of Balaam. He was actually bought by King Balak of Moab. The king of Moab wanted Balaam to curse Israel. At that time, it was the last year in the desert. Every single one of them was the new generation. When Balaam went to this mountain and he looked down, he saw this Israel. And the Lord Jehovah told him to tell the truth. He said, these are the people who dwell alone. They are separate from the nations.

Brothers and sisters, remember at the beginning, the Lord told the Israelites that they were to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. The older generation of men did not believe that. And they totally failed. The new generation then was ready to go into Canaan. And Balaam gave the testimony that these were the people who dwell alone and separated from the nations. Balaam was essentially saying the same thing that God had said in the beginning that they are to be a holy nation.

And then there was the story of the two spies that went into Jericho in Joshua 2. And then we saw the story of Othniel, Joshua 15 and Judge 3. There was also the story of Achsah, in Joshua 15. I do not have time to go into these stories; but if you read them, you will thank the Lord. Indeed, God had brought up a new generation that fulfilled His purpose.

The position of this new generation, and Joshua and Caleb, was in Christ. Their process in thirty-eight years was through Christ. And at the end, they entered into Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, these are real stories of spiritual reality. May their stories inspire us! May our new generation today follow the

Lord with joy and with force, and that they treasure the purpose of God more than anything else.

**Let us pray**

Lord, we thank You for what You have done. Lord, we also praise You because Your people did not disappoint You. There was this new generation, the youngest was not even born and the oldest was only twenty years old. They faced a very difficult situation. And sometimes inside was depressing. But Lord, Your goodness always inspired them. And You have also told them the whole earth shall be filled with Your glory. They followed You all thirty-eight years. And finally, they were ready. How we thank You and praise You. And this is the wonder of wonders. Lord, we pray that You will humble us so that we will follow You as they did. And that the abundance of the life of Christ will be manifested. We praise You. In the name of our Lord, Jesus, we pray. Amen.