

VITAL GROUPS (II)

Scripture Reading:

Rev. 1:13-14 And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And His head and hair were as white as white wool, as snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

Eph. 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church.

VII. Cherishing people in the humanity of Jesus:

- A. The humanity of Jesus is His human life in resurrection.
- B. The humanity of the New Man of the believers in God's new creation, is also in resurrection-Eph. 4:23-24.
 - Eph. 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
 - Eph. 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
- C. The first way of the members of the vital group to contact people is by cherishing them.
- D. To cherish people is to make them happy, to comfort them, to make them feel that you are pleasant to them, easily to be contacted by them in every thing and in every way.
- E. Not by your natural man, but by your regenerated man that has been conformed to the death of Christ.
- F. The model of Jesus in cherishing people in His humanity:
 - 1. In the Gospel of Matthew.
 - 2. In the Gospel of Luke.
 - 3. In the Gospel of John.

VIII. Nourishing people in the divinity of Christ:

- A. The members of the vital groups have to learn how to nourish people to continue their cherishing of the people.

- B. To cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant and comfortable; to nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in the three stages of His full ministry.
- C. Both cherishing people and nourishing people should be by the divine and mystical life in resurrection, not by the natural life in the old creation.
- D. The model of Christ cherishing the churches and nourishing the churches in taking care of the churches.
 - 1. He takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His humanity as “the Son of Man”, to cherish them.
 - 2. He, as the High Priest, Takes care of the churches a the lampstands in His divinity, Christ with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches.

Reference: *The Vital Groups*, Chapter 10-11.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CHERISHING PEOPLE IN THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

The Humanity Of Jesus Being His Human Life In Resurrection

When we go out to contact people, we must be persons living a human life in resurrection. In John 11:25 the Lord told Martha, "I am the resurrection." Martha complained to the Lord that if He had come sooner, her brother would not have died. But the Lord revealed that resurrection is not a matter of time but a matter of His person, because He is the resurrection.

The main vision of Jesus in the four Gospels, especially in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is that He lived a life that was human but in resurrection. Jesus was not a man living a natural life. He always put His humanity aside. He was in His humanity, yet He did not live a life of His humanity. Every day while He was on the earth, Jesus was in the flesh, but that flesh was in resurrection. Apparently, He was a Nazarene, a natural Galilean. He was in that flesh. But His living was in a humanity in resurrection. (*Vital Group*, p.92)

The Humanity of the New Man of the Believers in God's New Creation is also in Resurrection

The humanity of the new man of the believers in God's new creation is also in resurrection (Eph. 4:23-24). In the new creation, we are exactly the same as Jesus. We were reborn, regenerated, not with Adam's life but with Christ's life. Ephesians 2 says that we were once dead in offenses and sins, but God made us alive together with Christ and raised us up together with Him (w. 1, 5-6). The crucified Christ was quickened, made alive, and we were made alive with Him. After this resurrection follows. We were made alive with Him and then we were resurrected with Him. Regeneration firstly makes us alive and then raises us up from the dead. Actually, regeneration itself is resurrection. Regeneration made us God's new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). This is the main stress in the New Testament. (pp. 93-94)

The First Way to Contact People

The first way of the members of the vital group to contact is by cherishing them. Because we live by our natural visitation is fruitless.

To Cherish People

To cherish people is to make them happy, to comfort them, them feel that you are pleasant to them, easy to be contacted in everything and in every way. Our contact with people must be so genuine. Genuineness can be produced only by the cross plus resurrection. Only a crossed-out, resurrected person can be genuine in everything.

Not by Our Natural Man but by Our Regenerated Man

We should cherish people, not by our natural man, but by generated man that has been conformed to the death of Christ. We have two men within us. Ephesians 4:22-24 reveals that we must put off the old

man and put on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind. The mingled spirit must invade, take over, occupy, and saturate our mind with divinity; then our mind becomes a renewed mind. Romans 12:2 says that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. That renewing is to put off the old man and put on the new man. We must be a new man living not by our natural man but by our regenerated man with God Himself.

The Model of Jesus in Cherishing People in His Humanity

In the Gospel of Matthew

As the King of the kingdom of the heavens in His humanity, Christ came to cherish people by shining over them a the great light and by preaching the kingdom of the heavens as the gospel by charging them to repent (4:12-17). We should be such a shining light by cherishing people in the humanity of Jesus.

As the human King of the kingdom of the heavens, Christ cherished the kingdom-seekers by blessing them with a ninefold blessing (5:1-12). Christ's mouth was full of blessing not cursing. When we visit people, our mouth must be filled up with the divine blessing. Our blessing people in this way is our cherishing them.

When the disciples asked Him to dismiss the crowd to buy food for themselves, He, being moved with compassion for the crowd, told the disciples to give what they had to the people for them to eat that He might nourish the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, having a leftover of twelve baskets (14:14-21). The disciples are like us. When it became late in the day, they wanted the crowd to buy food for themselves, but the Lord was moved with compassion for them to cherish them which resulted in their being nourished.

When His disciple rejected people bringing their children to Him, He stopped their preventing and asked them to bring the children to Him, and He cherished the parents by laying His hands on their children (19:13-15). The disciples' preventing surely offended the parents. Quite often we are preventing people instead of cherishing people. The Lord stopped the disciples' preventing.

In the Gospel of Luke

Christ as the Man-Savior came to a synagogue in Nazareth and read a portion from Isaiah that says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of jubilee," to cherish people with the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth (4:16-22). If we were the Lord, we might have read the law from Exodus 20 to the people instead of the jubilee of grace from Isaiah 61. To read the law to them would have condemned them. Instead, the Lord read a portion from Isaiah to them to cherish them with the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth.

Christ as the Son of Man came to eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners, even as their friend, to cherish them that they might be nourished by Him with His redemption and salvation (7:34). The

Pharisees criticized the Lord for this, but His making friends with these sinful people was to lay the foundation so that He could nourish them with His redemption and salvation.

Christ as the Son of Man went to Jericho, passed by the tree from which Zaccheus was expecting to see Him, and looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay in your house," in order to cherish him that He might nourish him with His salvation (19:1-10).

In the Gospel of John

When Christ as the God-Savior was recognized by Nathanael as the Son of God, He answered him that he would see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on Him as the Son of Man, like the heavenly ladder seen by Jacob in his dream, as a kind of cherishing to encourage Nathanael to follow Him that he might participate in His nourishment with all the divine benefits as revealed in the entire Gospel of John (1:45-51).

Christ in His humanity is the standing ladder. The ark with the tabernacle, built of acacia wood overlaid with gold is also a type of Christ. Acacia wood signifies Christ's humanity, and gold signifies Christ's divinity. This wood is the standing part; the gold is the overlaying part. To stand we need to be human in resurrection. Jesus became the ladder not by His divinity but by His humanity, not by Him as the Son of God but by Him as the Son of Man. He is the heavenly ladder, the uplifted stairway, to bring heaven to earth and to join earth to heaven for the building of the house of God.

When Christ as the God-Savior wanted to save an immoral woman of Samaria, He had to travel from Judea to Galilee through Samaria and detoured from the main way of Samaria to the city of Sychar, and He waited at the well of Jacob, near Sychar, for His object to come that He might cherish her by asking her to give Him something to drink so that He might nourish her with the water of life, which is the flowing Triune God Himself (4:1-14). On His way to Galilee, Christ had to detour to a city in Samaria to cherish an immoral woman. He waited at the well of Jacob for her to come in order to cherish her so that she could be nourishes with the living water of the Triune God.

When none of the accusing Pharisees could condemn the adulterous woman, Christ as the God-Savior, in His humanity, said to her, "Neither do I condemn you," to cherish her that He, as the great I Am, might nourish her with the freedom from sin and enable her to "sin no more" (8:3-11, 24, 34-36). Christ is the divine, great "I Am," who can set people free from sin.

NOURISH PEOPLE IN DIVINITY OF JESUS

Learn How to Nourish People

The members of the vital groups have to learn how to nourish people to continue their cherishing of people. Cherishing without nourishing is in vain. When a mother wants to feed a naughty child, she will first make him happy by cherishing him. But without nourishing him, her cherishing is meaningless. After cherishing the child, the mother nourishes him with food. This is the way that Christ as the Head takes care of His Body, the church. He nourishes us after cherishing us.

Revelation 1 shows us how Christ cares for the churches. Revelation is a book of signs. A sign is a symbol with spiritual significance. The first sign in Revelation shows us Christ in His humanity as the High Priest, and the last sign is the New Jerusalem. As the Son of Man, Christ as the High Priest is taking care of all the churches as lampstands (1:12-13). On the one hand, He is cherishing the churches in His humanity; on the other hand, He is nourishing the churches in His divinity. The members of the vital groups have to learn these two things. When we visit people, invite them to our home, or contact them before and after the meetings, we must be one with Christ to cherish and nourish them.

To Cherish People is to Make Them Happy, Pleasant and Comfortable; To Nourish People is to Feed Them With the All-inclusive Christ

To cherish people is to make them happy, pleasant and comfortable. We must have a pleasant countenance when we contact people. We should be happy and rejoicing. We should not contact anyone with a cheerless countenance. We must give people the impression that we are genuinely happy and pleasant. Otherwise, we will not be able to cherish them, to make them happy.

After (the cherishing) we should go on to nourish them. We do not nourish people when we speak to them about marriage, courtship, politics, the world situation, or education. To nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry in three stages. When we speak to people about Christ, we should not speak to them in an incomprehensible way in a kind of language which they do not understand. We have to find a way to present the all-inclusive Christ to everyone. If a person wants people to eat beef, he must find a way to cook it to make them desire to eat it. Similarly, we have to “cook” the all-inclusive Christ. There are many different ways to cook the same thing. I have been cooking Christ in this country...with about three thousand messages (until today).

In order to nourish people with Christ, we first have to seek Christ, experience Christ, gain Christ, enjoy Christ, and participate in Christ. In Philippians, especially in chapters two and three, Paul used different expressions and utterances to portray how he was seeking and pursuing Christ in order to gain Christ. He told us that we should do all things without murmurings and reasoning. The sisters who are seeking Christ should learn not to murmur, and the brothers should learn not to reason. If you murmur and reason, you will offend the indwelling Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God, because this God is working in you that you may work out your salvation (2:12-14). Our salvation is our gaining and experiencing Christ. To gain Christ is to work out our own daily organic salvation.

Nourishing people in the divinity of Christ

Both cherishing people and nourishing people should be by the divine and mystical life in resurrection, not by the natural life in the old creation. When something divine is operating in a human being, this human being becomes very mystical. When I was a young man, I worked for more than seven and a half years in a big corporation. Suddenly, I resigned from my job so that I could preach Christ with all of my time. They asked me how I could make a living. My answer was that the Lord Jesus would

provide for me. I became mystical to my classmates and friends and also to my relatives. They could not understand why I would give up my job to serve the Lord with all of my time. I was a mystery to them.

We should cherish people by the divine and mystical life in resurrection. *In resurrection* means that there is nothing natural in our care for people. Anything that is of our natural life should not be used. Our life must be in resurrection. In other words, our natural life must be crucified and resurrected to become a human life in resurrection. The young people have to learn how to labor in the gospel on the college campuses not by their natural life but by God within them as their life. This is the divine life, and this divine life makes us a mystery. (*Vital Group*, pp.102-104)

The Model of Christ Cherishing

the Churches and Nourishing the Churches in Taking Care of the Churches

Christ is the best model of cherishing and nourishing as seen in Revelation 1. In verses 12 and 13 John said, "I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle." This shows that Christ is taking care of the lampstands by being the Son of Man with a long garment. This garment is the priestly robe (Exo. 28:33-35), which shows that Christ is our great High Priest.

He is also girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle. This girdle is a long piece of gold. The girdle and the gold are not two separate things. The girdle is the gold. The golden girdle is one piece of gold to become a belt. The Son of Man is in His humanity, and the golden girdle signifies His divinity. This golden girdle is on His breasts, and the breasts are a sign of love.

The priests in the Old Testament were girded at the loins for their ministry (Exo. 28:4). In Daniel 10:5 Christ also is girded at His loins, with fine gold. To be girded at the loins is to be strengthened for the work. Christ has finished His divine work in producing the churches. Now by His love He is caring for the churches which He has produced. This is why He is girded at the breasts. Today Christ is our High Priest taking care of His churches established by His labor. But now He takes care of the churches with the girdle not on His loins but on His breasts, signifying love. I hope we all could realize that in these days even among us, Christ is wearing a golden girdle on His breasts.

The golden girdle is a sign, signifying Christ's divinity becoming His energy. Christ's energy is totally His divinity. A piece of gold is now a girdle. The totality of Christ in His divinity has become a girdle. The golden girdle signifies Christ's divinity becoming His energy, and the breasts signify that this golden energy is exercised and motivated by His love. His divine energy is exercised by and with His love to nourish the churches. (p.100)

Questions:

1. How do we cherish people in the humanity of Jesus?
2. How do we nourish people in the divinity of Jesus?

3. By what means do we cherish and nourish people?